

## LESSON 2

- a. Blank map showing key centres of Revolt

*Have students stick this into the centre of a double-page spread, and then annotate around it to identify what happened in key locations, using either the online map, or the stories (below).*

(For copyright reasons the map cannot be displayed. Insert image of a map such as the one from p. 76 of the textbook *Medieval Minds: Britain 1066–1500* by Byrom, Counsell and Riley (Longman, 1997) – reproduced here on p. 1: [www.educationforum.co.uk/KS3\\_2/peasantsrevoltinfosheet.pdf](http://www.educationforum.co.uk/KS3_2/peasantsrevoltinfosheet.pdf))

b.) OPTIONAL – stories of the rebels from around the country

*These could be used in place of the online map – either give students copies of all four stories or ‘jigsaw’ the groups to have students trade stories. The latter may be better for encouraging students to spot patterns.*

### **The rebels from Kent**

I wish I’d just gone home. The King gave us everything we asked for – more than we could have DREAMED of – at Mile End. He sent us away with a full pardon, and his commissions [orders] to execute all the traitors. No more government nosy parkers digging through my business, interfering where they shouldn’t, asking questions they don’t need to know the answers to. AND the King said HE’D punish the traitors too and sort the war out – no more French savages burning the coastal towns and disrupting trade. Everything would have been fine; I’m sure it would have been.

But no – Tyler (if that’s even his name) said we needed more. He said the King was on the back foot and would give us anything we asked for. I mean, getting rid of those lords who just take our money and don’t do anything for us sounded like a great idea, and Mile End showed how good it was when there was no one between the King and us. And I didn’t really MEAN to go to the Tower, but there were just so many people and I got a bit swept up in it.

Then I saw the heads. The Archbishop of Canterbury and the Treasurer. On spikes. Paraded around London like some kind of disgusting trophy. That’s what did it, I reckon. No way was King Richard going to let us all get away with that. They’re the most important people in the country – except for the King’s uncles, and both of them had the sense to stay well out of the way. I suppose that Sudbury and Hales did have it coming, though; they were the ones who sent more officials out to collect the taxes we’d ALREADY paid. For the ninth time. In eight years. Did they really think that we could afford to give them more money to waste on pointless ‘campaigns’ that never happened? So they were traitors. And the King told us to go and kill the traitors – he gave us documents and everything. They deserved it really. Even though it’s really Gaunt we were after.

Still, the Smithfield thing was a mistake. A big mistake. That fat mayor and his cronies had got organised this time, and when Tyler went forward to meet the King, they killed him! Just pulled a sword out and slashed at him, knocked him off his horse! But the King, he was still on our side. He came over and told us to take the pardons and go; we had what we’d come for. And well, Tyler was a bit of a message really, wasn’t he? Time to go, I said to my mates, no point hanging around any longer. And home we went.

But the King – he lied to us! We’d just got home when down the road came a bunch of soldiers who were arresting anyone who’d been in the Revolt. Put them on trial, they did, and hanged some. We had our pardons, I showed my pardon, signed by the King’s scribes, with his seal and everything, and they laughed in my face and took me anyway. I was lucky to escape with a fine – old John from the farm couldn’t get a pardon because someone said they saw him at the Tower. They hanged him. And now Simon from the next village over has his farm. I reckon Simon’s the one that told them soldiers about John, you know. He’s been after that farm for years, but the law was taking too long.

### **ON THE MAP...**

1. *What were the Kent rebels upset about?*
2. *What happened after the meeting at Mile End?*
3. *Who were the rebels angry with?*
4. *What happened after the meeting at Smithfield?*

## Goditha de Stathum and her sons (Derbyshire)

[www.1381.online/people\\_and\\_places/?story\\_id=26](http://www.1381.online/people_and_places/?story_id=26)

I said it was a stupid idea, didn't I? I told them they'd get caught and we'd all be in trouble. We had a reputation, we did. My Ralph, he was an important man. Elected MP four times. FOUR TIMES. We were respectable. And even when my Ralph died, I still had my lands. We were never going to be poor, were we? We'd have done alright.

Then that messenger came up from London. There's a rebellion going on, he says, the King says we're to kill all the traitors. He had it on paper, it was all legal and proper, I checked. So of course, my boys, William and Richard, they think it's a good idea to go and sort out my little problem. See, I'd been having a bit of trouble with Henry Massy. He was trying to change the boundaries between my land and his, saying that some of what was our land belonged to him. I had it in the courts, it was going to be sorted out, but it takes forever to get anything done with the law these days and, well, my boys decided to speed things up a bit. So, that morning – 18 June it were – they goes to his house and they kill him. Him and John Parker. Then they goes to the Priory – the one up at Breadsall Park. They set the church on fire! And the kitchens and the buildings round it. Then they went on to the castle – the King's OWN CASTLE at Horston – and they walks in and takes over. Hangs the cross of St George from the ramparts, just to tell everyone what they did.

Now, Massy, him I get. That was a long old thing, that was. My Ralph had problems with him going way back when, and the boys – well, they knew about the problems. Plus, that messenger from London, he says the folks down there burned down the Savoy. John of Gaunt's own palace! I wish I'd been there to see that. Serves him right, the old fraud. It were him who made Massy so bold, kept fining us for 'infringing on his lands'. His lands! As if they weren't MY family lands. Wasn't I a Massy, before I married my Ralph?

Anyway, they're my boys, they are. What was I supposed to do when they came home and told me what they'd done? Hand them over to the JP? Have them arrested? It wasn't only their fault; I might have killed Massy myself if I'd known what they were doing. Of course I took them in. Of course I lied for them and said they'd been with me. AND I'd do it again. Everyone was going after Gaunt's lands, it wasn't just us! They're saying that because they know we hated him. My boys were pardoned – all five of them took the pardon, even them that wasn't involved, just to be on the safe side. And I'm going to get one too; it's free to all of us, so I might as well. Just in case anyone comes after me in the courts and tries to damage my reputation.

1. *How did the de Stathums hear about the Revolt?*
2. *What did the de Stathum sons DO? (Who did they attack?)*
3. *Why? What reasons are given here?*
4. *How had Goditha tried to resolve the disputes before 1381? Why wasn't this working very well?*

## **Bridgewater (Somerset)**

Thomas Engilby knew of his guilt, but his pardon said exactly the opposite. Banners of St George were raised by Adam Brugge himself and others who threatened to burn down and kill the master of St John's hospital, William Cammell. He was only released after signing away property rights to the vicarage hospital to the rector, Nicholas Frompton. Frompton had much to gain, as it was this case that brought him to London, imprisoned and released by the Kent rebels at the height of the Great Revolt. He no doubt encouraged three days of attacks or else why did he race to Bridgewater at such speed? The burning of property continued for some days before order was restored. The worst I saw was against my master, John Sydenham, who lost two properties burnt to the ground, and an enormous amount of £100 of valuables were robbed.

This surely is proof enough of the serious nature of the Risings heard in the East, and that my home of Bridgewater had been the scene of rioting if not full-scale rebellion. It was Nicholas Frompton's stories of being released and hearing the proclamation from King Richard at Mile End that sparked the attacks on certain gentlemen of the north Somerset town. It might have first been the vicarage at St John's, but Engilby took the King's proclamation at his word to root out traitors. So, Friday 21 June, Thomas forced out the very man living in his Bridgewater home, John Bursy, who knew the road to Long Sutton well (as this was his home), and but a few miles on to Ilchester Gaol. They arrived after midday to no fanfare, demanded entry to the prison, dragged Hugh Lavenham out of the yard and forced John to behead him and carry said head back to Bridgewater on a lance, the like of which, God willing, I hope not to see again in my lifetime!

1. *What did Engilby and his fellow rebels DO?*
1. *Why did he carry out these acts? (Several reasons revealed here...)*
2. *Are there any clues here as to why these particular individuals/institutions were targeted?*



## John Peper (Cambridgeshire)

[www.1381.online/people\\_and\\_places/?story\\_id=8](http://www.1381.online/people_and_places/?story_id=8)

It was Hanchach who told me about it. The Great Rising. He heard that the men in Bocking, down Essex way, had risen up against their landlords, and were attacking the JPs and burning the records. And Staunford – that old soldier – he had a box and he said it had a commission from the King himself to destroy the traitors. Well, it just made sense to join in. The JPs have been sticking their noses in far too much recently – all in business they don't need to know about. So off we went, over to John Sibill. Attacked his house – though he weren't there, of course – then raided across the county. Plenty of other traitors to get our hands on.

Gaunt's man, now he deserved it. Anyone who looks after property for that scoundrel and tries to defend him should be punished. Is there a greater traitor in England? We all know why we're losing the French War. Him and his useless brother wasting money on expeditions that don't happen, setting sail in the wrong direction at the wrong time... I could tell you how to run a proper campaign, I could. I was there, wasn't I? Didn't I see how badly led we were? Didn't I tell Sir William how it was going wrong? Do they listen? Nah, 'course not. Why would any of those higher-ups listen to a man like me? It's only men like me who pay the taxes that get spent on these campaigns. It's only men like me that die on these campaigns. What would I know?

So, of course, we took out Hasleden's houses – why does he need more than one anyway? – then we burnt down the manors of the Hospitallers. Them monks are supposed to live in poverty, serving their community and caring for people. Instead, they own manors all over the place, and their prior was the one who ordered the raising of the latest poll tax. As if the people haven't already had enough. Hales was executed in London. I wish I'd been there, I'd have loved to see that head on its spike.

Then we caught one of the JPs, Walsingham. Burnt down his houses, then executed him. He deserved it too, all the JPs were interfering in local business, making their little investigations to find out why they didn't get as much money from this poll tax. Because the people have had enough, you fools, that's why. Because we've got nothing else to give you after you ask for taxes every single year to pay for a war you don't know how to fight – how's that for a reason?

'Course we were telling people to join us; the whole of Essex was up now, and the Kent group was at Blackheath talking to the King himself. This was our chance – no way we were going to let it pass. So we got a bigger group, and we kept moving. That MP for Cambridge – John Blankpayn – he voted in favour of the taxes, so we attacked his house. And that crook who swindled land off of the Commons – Harleston – got him too.

What you have to understand is, them houses is where they keep the records of who owns what. Once we've got ahold of those, we can burn them. Then no one can tell us that our land isn't our land. We can have PROPER records made that show who ACTUALLY owns it. We didn't care about all that town and gown stuff, though, that was just a distraction. Hanchach wanted the interfering busybodies, so our band, we kept moving. Burnt down another JP's house the next day.

'Course, they got us in the end. Hanchach was executed. Not even a trial. Just picked up by that group sent out to stop the burning. They wouldn't let me have my pardon, though; apparently killing traitors isn't allowed any more. Even when the King said we could. I should have looked in that box Staunford had; bet that letter was a fake. Must have been, or why would the King send more people out to stop us? The Bishop sorted it all out eventually though. I've got my paper shield now, and my letters. They can't execute me, not now.

1. *Who do you think Peper was? What was his 'job'? What does this tell us about the Cambridgeshire rising?*
2. *What is a 'JP'? Why would the rebels have wanted to target these people?*
3. *Who else had property destroyed in Cambridgeshire? Why do you think this was?*
4. *Why did the Cambridgeshire rebels think that they could attack these people/properties?*