

Letter to the Editor

I'm sorry to rattle on about Anglo-French history, but I do think that the nearest town to France ought to avoid perpetrating schoolboy blunders. Succeeding generations may claim that they read it in the Newsletter of the Dover Society and that therefore it must be true!

The latest offender is Mrs. Robson (or possibly Mr. Grant) in the glimpse of the past entitled 'Sea Pirates'.

The Hundred Years' War was not started by Edward I because the French king 'annexed some of Edward's castles in Aquitaine'. In fact the Hundred Years' War began in 1340 when Edward III claimed the French throne in the right of his mother, Isabella. The latter was the eldest daughter of the king of France and, when the direct male line died out, would have succeeded according to the English rules of inheritance. The French, however, invoked the 'Salic Law', which gives precedence to the male heir general over all females, and installed the Valois family- a cadet branch of the Capet dynasty.

This is the reason why the French lilies figured on the English royal coats-of-arms down to the time of George III.

Perhaps you should have all references to French history checked by an historian before printing them.

Neil Turns

Editor's Note

Once again our thanks to Mr. Turns for spotting an historical mistake in Newsletter 46. There is no doubt that the king who started the Hundred Years' War was Edward III and not Edward I. The mistake seems to be that of Mr. Grant rather than Mrs. Robson, who accepted the facts in Mr. Grant's article printed in the Daily Telegraph in 1969.

I cannot find verification of the sea battle off Brittany of St. Mahe, referred to in his article, but it seems unlikely that this was connected in any way to the start of the Hundred Years' War. There was a major sea battle in 1340 which assured English supremacy in the Channel. This was the battle of Sluys, in which the French fleet was defeated by 250 English ships led by Edward III.

Perhaps Mr. Turns would be willing to check any doubtful details for us in the future.