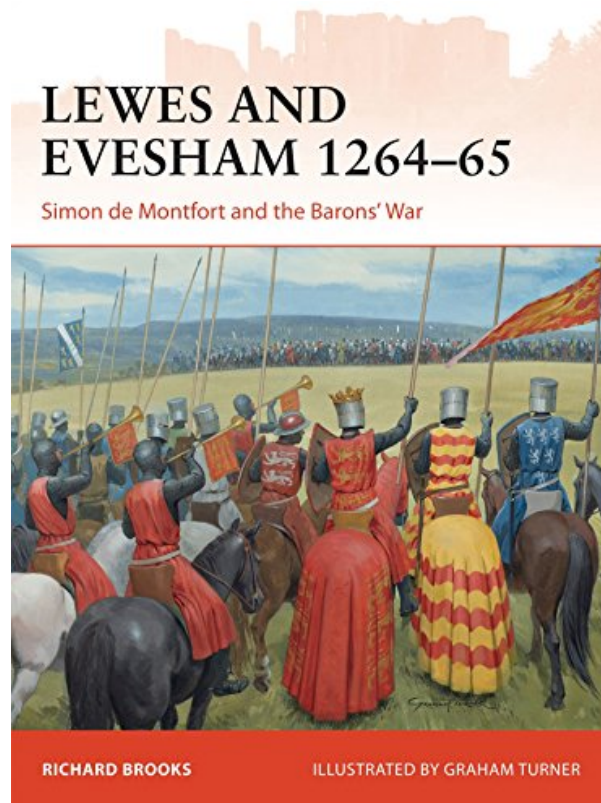


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# LEWES AND EVESHAM 1264–65

Simon de Montfort and the Barons' War



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### About the Author

Richard Brooks is a freelance military historian with a particular interest in the intersection of naval and military history, and the use of hitherto untapped sources to develop fresh insights into past campaigns. Richard has published seven books, beginning with a biography of Fred T. Jane, the founder of Jane's Fighting Ships. His other books have covered naval brigades, the Royal Marines and battlefields of Britain and Ireland; previous books for Osprey include *Solferino 1859* and *Walcheren 1944*. He was also Consultant Editor for *The Times History of War*. He has a BA in Modern History from Oxford University and an MSc in International Relations from Southampton. The author lives in Southsea, England.

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At the crescendo of the Second Barons' War were the battles of Lewes and Evesham. It was an era of high drama and intrigue, as tensions between crown and aristocracy had boiled over and a civil war erupted that would shape the future of English government. In this detailed study, Richard Brooks unravels the remarkable events at the battles of Lewes and Evesham, revealing the unusually tactical nature of the fighting, in sharp contrast to most medieval conflicts which were habitually settled by burning and ravaging. At Lewes, Simon de Montfort, the powerful renegade leader of the Baronial faction, won a vital victory, smashing the Royalist forces and capturing Henry III and Prince Edward. Edward escaped, however, to lead the Royalist armies to a crushing victory just a year later at Evesham. Using full color illustrations, bird's eye views and detailed maps to generate an arresting visual perspective of the fighting, this book tells the full story of the battles of Lewes and Evesham, the only pitched battles to be fought by English armies in the mid-13th century.

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### Most helpful customer reviews

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful.

Good and clear presentation of the military campaign

By JPS

This is indeed a detailed study of the campaign that led to the battle of Lewes, where Simon de Montfort triumphed and captured the King and his heir (the future Edward I), and the battle of Evesham, which he lost and during which he and one his sons were killed. Readers should be aware, if only not to be disappointed,

that this title is NOT about the whole of the Second Barons' War but only about its climax, the aforementioned campaign. It is NOT either about the events prior to the campaign, the Barons' grievances with their "feckless and divisive" King, although the author does provide a very short introduction that touches briefly on this.

Instead, the whole focus of the title is on explaining and detailing the campaign itself, the respective armies and commanders and the two battles. It is very successful in achieving this and in making a number of key points. The first of these is that the whole campaign was marked by a high degree of mobility, strategy and tactics. Both sides trapped the other one each in turn. At Lewes, Simon de Montfort attacked downhill and trapped the more numerous Royalists against the town. At Evesham, he was in turn caught by Edward with his back against a river with no time to retreat across its bridge.

The author also describes and discusses in detail the two battlefields, making a convincing case for slightly different locations than those that were traditionally admitted. He also demonstrates the relatively small size and similar composition of armies on both sides. In both cases the Royalists outnumbered their foes.

As shown by the author, this was especially the case at Evesham after Edward had managed to defeat the forces of Simon de Montfort the Younger and prevent him from joining with his father's troops. The desertion of the Earl of Gloucester who rallied the Royalists also made sure that the odds were against the elder Simon de Montfort. Richard Brooks also shows that the later committed errors and let himself be trapped but nevertheless refused to flee and seems to have fought a battle that he could not hope to win. Also well shown was the fact that Simon de Montfort and his son were deliberately targeted by Mortimer and a few others who did not intend to let them leave the field alive or surrender.

Finally, the illustrations, maps of army movements and schematics of the two battles are good and support the main text rather well. All in all, this is a valuable title that delivers exactly what it promises: a detailed description of an eventful campaign that included several battles and sieges. Five stars.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful.

A Short History of the Two Main Battles of the Second Barons' War is Reviewed

By Brian Wayne Wells

This is a great reference book on the two main battles of the Second Barons' War (1264 C.E.[Common Era] until 1267 C.E.). The Second Barons' War was a civil war in England that broke out during the reign of King Henry III. The barons of England revolted because of the moneys that King Henry was demanding from the barons to finance his expensive foreign policies defending the territorial holdings of the English throne on the continent of Europe. The French throne was seeking to unite, under its control, all the lands on the continent of Europe that now make up the modern nation of France.

King Henry III's father, King John, had also been desperate for money to pursue a war on the continent of Europe. As a result King John signed the "Magna Carte" on June 15, 1215. By this agreement King John surrendered some of his royal authority to the barons and the "parliament" of England. However, once King John had the money from the barons that he needed, he refused to abide by, or even accept, the terms of the Magna Carte. This resulted in a civil war against King John from 1215 C.E. through 1217 C.E. which became known as the First Barons' War. The Second Barons' War was really the second round of that same civil war.

Simon de Montfort, who had married Eleanor of Leicester, the sister of Henry III, was the leader of the barons in the Second Barons' War. Simon de Montfort beat Henry's army at the Battle of Lewes on May 14, 1264 C.E. and at the same time captured Henry III and his son Edward (the future Edward I of England). At

this point, Simon de Montfort assumed the throne of England and called two parliaments to reassert the Magna Carte and assume further royal authority from the King. Following his victory at Lewes, Simon de Montfort sought to extend the powers of the barons (through the parliament) at the expense of traditional royal authority. In this way, the legend of Simon de Montfort has become that of a hero in the growth and development of the parliament.

However, young Edward, the future Edward I, was able to escape the captivity of Simon de Montfort and raise an army larger than Simon de Montfort's army. Edward used this army to rescue his father and to beat Simon de Montfort at the Battle of Evesham on August 4, 1265.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful.

Nice book. I look forward to reading

By Stuart Packard

Nice book. I look forward to reading it

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