

The Provisions

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If there was anyone who made sure Henry's defeat at Lewes was total, it was Edward. His murderous joyride in pursuit of the Londoners had allowed the Montfortians to sweep the other royalists off the field, but he still had upwards of five hundred horsemen under his command when he returned, enough to regroup and thwart repeated attempts to smoke the king out of the priory. Instead, impulse led him to plunge directly into the fray again, ending with him in captivity alongside his father. Modern accounts tend to forget this other bit of Edward's brashness that day in favour of lavishing praise on him for securing the release of Mortimer and other marcher henchmen as part of the Mise of Lewes. While the marchers were instrumental in bringing down Montfort's government, they were little more than a nuisance until the treachery of the Clare clan ultimately turned the tide.



The ruins of Lewes priory

Leaving Edward at Dover under the care of his cousin and erstwhile warden Henry de Montfort, Simon installed the king at St Paul's in preparation for summoning what would be a truly innovative parliament. As many as 140 knights elected from the shires were assembled to approve a Montfortian frame of government that basically gave England a constitutional monarchy. The king was to be stripped of independence and all power put under conciliar control. The knights didn't come just to do Montfort's bidding, however, and won the right to appoint their own sheriffs. And so this parliament enacted the best initiatives of the reform movement: the Provisions of Oxford on the national level, and those of Westminster for the localities. The 750th anniversary of the sealing of this important 'ordinance' (*ordinatio*) is 28 June, but you won't find anything about it on the official website of the [UK Parliament](#). It's just as well for Henry, who was understandably none too happy about his new role as mere figurehead. At least he got that much, compared to what would be in store for later kings of England caught in similar predicaments, starting with Edward's son.



What Edward's
Montfortian parliament
might have looked like

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