

When William of Orange came to Hungerford

When William of Orange came to Hungerford – Dr Hugh Pihlens

Thank you, Helen, for your kind introduction!

Tonight, I am going to talk about **the most important** piece of national history to have taken place in Hungerford – the story of **William of Orange**, and his visit to **The Bear in 1688**.

I am going to explain quite a lot of the **background history** leading up to his visit – and indeed something about what happened after it.

(**) [The Bear Hotel, Hungerford](#)

The Bear in Charnham Street is, of course, Hungerford's **most historic hotel**.

It started in the **13th century** as a **lodging house associated with the adjacent Priory of St John the Baptist** for travellers along the **King's Way** – the ancient and important east-west route that became the Bath and Bristol road.

(**) [The Bear Hotel, Hungerford](#)

(**) On the wall of the Bear Inn is a **round slate commemorative plaque** – to an event that took place here 330 years ago - in 1688. It says....

(**) *“William and Mary.*

On 7th December 1688 William of Orange arrived at The Bear on his march from Torbay to London

Meeting here on the morning of the 8th James II's Commissioners Lords Halifax Godolphin and Nottingham.

Hungerford Celebration 1688-1988”

As I have said, this event was Hungerford's most important contribution to our British national history.

My task this evening is to explain exactly what the plaque commemorates, but we need to start **the background story right back in the 16th century**.

(**) [Britain in the 16th and 17th century](#)

Most countries around the world have endured periods of strife and conflict at some stage of their history.

Sometimes this has involved wars with their neighbouring countries, sometimes with themselves – civil war. Britain is no exception.

Fights with neighbouring countries were largely about power, influence and territory.

But underlying so much of this internal conflict was...

(**) **religion – the source of much conflict.**

Let's look at our Tudor royal family, who started it all!

(**) [The Tudor Royal Family](#)

Henry VIII was born near the start of the 16th century in **1509**. The Reformation was soon spreading across Europe – started by **Martin Luther in 1517**.

In the 1530s, as part of his efforts to divorce Catherine of Aragon who had failed to give him his much-wanted son and heir, he famously broke away from the Pope and the Catholic Church and established the **Church of England in 1531**. He began the **Dissolution of the Monasteries**.

I doubt he ever imagined that that this schism with Rome would have ongoing repercussions in England for centuries to come, with ongoing conflicting loyalties to the two religions.

(**) Edward VI: His son Edward VI was an even more fanatical Protestant. He completed the dissolution of the monasteries and priories (including our own Priory of St John in Bridge Street).

(**) Mary I, the daughter of Catherine of Aragon, was an ardent Catholic – “**Bloody Mary**”. She had at least **280 key dissenters burned at the stake**.

(**) Elizabeth I, daughter of Anne Boleyn, was Protestant again! Never having married, she died with no heir.

She had relied heavily on her trusty advisor **William Cecil**, and after his death in 1598, on **William Cecil's son Robert**. Robert schemed to set up James VI of Scotland to succeed Elizabeth, but...James was the son of Elizabeth's Catholic cousin Mary Queen of Scots, who Elizabeth eventually had beheaded as Mary had plotted to take the English throne.

...there was trouble ahead!

(**) [James I, 1603-1625](#)

So, when Queen Elizabeth I died in 1603 the crown went to James VI of Scotland. He was a great-great-grandson of Henry VII of England and became King James I of England.

Despite his mother having been a staunch Catholic, James was a protestant, and only partly tolerant of Catholics.

There were ongoing religious problems – exemplified by **The Gunpowder Plot of 5th November 1605**, when dissident Catholic Guy Fawkes attempted to blow up parliament.

(**) After the Gunpowder Plot, James sanctioned harsh measures to control non-conforming English Catholics. The **Popish Recusants Act of 1605**

- forbade Roman Catholics from practising the professions of law and medicine
- it allowed magistrates to search their houses for arms
- it provided a new oath of allegiance, which denied the power of the Pope to depose monarchs, and
- any recusant was to be fined £60 or to forfeit two-thirds of his land if he didn't receive the sacrament at least once a year in his Church of England parish church.
- The Act also made it high treason to obey the authority of Rome rather than the king

But James was conciliatory towards **all Catholics who took the Oath of Allegiance** and he tolerated crypto-Catholicism even at court. There were very few prosecutions under this Act.

James I married Anne of Denmark – and they had three children. The elder son died, but on the death of James I in 1625, the next son became king – as Charles I

(**) [Charles I, 1625-1649](#)

Now Charles was a different kettle of fish! He was a covert (hidden) Catholic.

He married the **Catholic Henrietta Maria of France**. His own Catholic leanings caused increasing tension.

Charles believed in the Divine Right of Kings to govern. There were ongoing battles with parliament which sought to curb his royal prerogative.

Underlying the unrest was **absolutism** – the supremacy of the Crown over all individuals and interest in the state, over parliament, the law, the church and the nobility.

As time went on, Charles wanted Catholicism to be imposed on England by absolutism. But **Catholicism and Absolutism were out of date** in England by this time.

The Reformation, nearly a century earlier, had resulted in the majority of the country being Protestant – but some Puritans felt it was not Protestant enough, and some Roman Catholics continued to support Rome.

The situation deteriorated to such an extent that the country found itself in a major Civil War – Crown v Parliament.

(**) [The English Civil War, 1642-1649](#)

Crown versus Parliament.

Catholic versus Protestantism.

The war dragged on – tearing families apart up and down the country. In the end about 100,000 people were killed.

Eventually, in 1649 the Parliamentarians won – and King Charles I was killed...

(**) Charles I beheaded, 30 Jan 1649

... in a very public beheading at the Banqueting House in Whitehall, London on **30th Jan 1649**.

(**) The Commonwealth, 1649-1660

There then followed a period of “Commonwealth”, with the Puritans led by Oliver Cromwell as Lord Protector.

(**) But after his **death in 1658**, when his **son Richard took over**, things were less well organised.

People grew tired of rule by the Puritans, and support for the Crown grew again.

The monarchy was restored in 1660 with the crowning of a new king - Charles I's son became Charles II.

(**) Charles II, 1660-1685

So.. Charles II was the eldest son of Charles I. He returned from exile in France and **landed at Dover on 29th May – his 30th birthday!**

The country breathed a **sigh of relief** when the monarchy was restored under Charles II.

With Charles II on the throne, they felt things were getting “**back to normal**”.

But there were problems – Charles spent money in great excess. The court was extravagant, spending huge sums on buying back lost art collections, and in general profligate living.

Furthermore, Charles II still believed in absolutism and the Divine Right of Kings.

(**) And there were other problems. This was the time of the Great Plague in London in 1665, when around 100,000 people died in London, and of the Great Fire of London, that destroyed so much of the city in 1666.

What about religion?

(**) The Church of England was re-established as the national religion, although Charles himself favoured religious tolerance.

Indeed in **1672** he passed a **Declaration of Indulgence** in an attempt to extend religious liberty to both Protestant nonconformists and to Roman Catholics in his realms, by suspending the Penal Laws that punished Catholic recusants.

However, this was withdrawn by Parliament the following year – and replaced by the **1673 Test Act**, which required anyone entering public service in England to deny the Catholic doctrine of transubstantiation and take Anglican communion.

Despite Charles being popular, the underlying old problems persisted – many of them religious, and others related to Charles' ongoing belief in the “divine right of Kings” – at the expense of parliament.

(**) In the end he **dissolved the English Parliament in 1681** and ruled alone until his **death on 6 February 1685**. (Interestingly, he was received into the Catholic Church on his deathbed).

(**) Charles II and his wife Catherine of Braganza had no legitimate children, although Charles himself acknowledged at least twelve illegitimate ones!

On his death the throne of England passed to his younger brother, who became King James II.

(**) [King James II, 1685-1688](#)

The trouble is that James had definite Catholic leanings – he was pro-Catholic and had actually converted to Catholicism in 1668...., and he was pro-French. And he still believed in the Divine Right of Kings to govern!

His first wife, Anne Hyde, was Anglican, but she died in 1671, and he then married the staunch Catholic **Mary of Modena (in Italy)**. But whilst Mary of Modena had many pregnancies, none of the babies survived.

(**) Across the country there was increasing opposition to his Catholic ways. Parliament grew restless, and James suspended it - and two years later he dissolved it.

But these were sensitive times. On 4th April 1688, King James passed his **Declaration of Indulgence**, allegedly a first step at establishing freedom of religion in the British Isles, although the king's intention was really to promote his own minority religion, Catholicism, reviled by the majority of his subjects.

But what could be done?

And Who would inherit the Crown?

(**) [James, Duke of York and Anne Hyde, with Mary and Anne](#)

This is a painting of James (then Duke of York, before he was King) with his first (Protestant) wife Anne Hyde.

They had many children (at least eight) but all died young except two daughters – Mary (born 1662) and Anne (born 1665).

Both were brought up as Anglicans even after their mother died, as had been commanded by Charles II. This continued even after their father had married the Catholic Mary of Modena.

(**) Mary

As I said, Mary was born in 1662 and at the age of 15, in 1677, she was betrothed to her first cousin – protestant William III of Orange in the Netherlands. She had little say over this.

This rather melancholy painting is said to have depicted her on the day before her marriage. As you see, she does not look too happy at the prospect of marrying Prince William!

After the wedding, they went to live in the Netherlands, and it seems that she gradually fell in love with William and they both became very happy in their marriage.

(**) Prince William III of Orange

But what of this William of Orange?

Incidentally, there is a large cross-over of the terms Low Countries, United Provinces, Holland and Netherlands. Each is slightly different, but for simplicity tonight I will use “Netherlands” during this talk.

His mother was the daughter of Charles I, sister of Charles II.

He was, of course, a Protestant.

William inherited the principality of Orange from his father, William II, who had died of smallpox a week before William's birth.

From 1672 he was Stadholder (virtually national leader) of the Netherlands. He was **a very influential and ambitious man.**

William participated in several wars against the powerful **Catholic King of France, Louis XIV**, in coalition with Protestant and Catholic powers in Europe. Many Protestants across Europe heralded him as a champion of their faith.

(**) So it was in 1677 that he married his 15-year-old first cousin, Mary, the Protestant daughter of the Duke of York (later James II) and Anne Hyde (you remember the painting I showed?).

He arrived in England on 19th October 1677, met Mary a few days later, married her on 4th November, and took her back to the Netherlands on 29th November. Job done! He was making a significant political investment.

(**) However, as I said, they did go on to have a very happy marriage, and a few years later they built a wonderful new palace to live in - the wonderful palace of **Het Loo** (1684-86).

(**) Het Loo Palace (Two pics)

(**) Everything changes in 1688

But everything was to change in 1688 – one of the most important years in British History.

I have explained that when William of Orange's Catholic father-in-law became King James II, his reign was unpopular with the Protestant majority in Britain. The thought was that Stuart Britain, under the Catholic James II, might align with Catholic France under **the Sun King Louis XIV**.

It would be good to pre-empt this.

William had a double link with the English throne (through both his wife and his mother). If Mary of Modena remained childless during the reign of James II, then the succession must come to his wife Mary, and, William hoped, to himself as consort.

(**) In April 1688 King James II issued the **Declaration of Indulgence** (of Catholics) forcing clergy to read it in their churches.

But, unpopular though this was, everyone knew that the situation with James was "temporary". James II was 52, and childless. When he died, the first in line of succession was his (protestant) daughter Mary, safely married to the staunchly protestant William III of Orange.

(**) However, in late 1687 Mary of Modena, somewhat out of the blue, and after a string of miscarriages and still births, became pregnant again. This time the pregnancy seemed to progress well. It was realised that **IF** the child was a boy, then he would take precedence over Mary. Mary (and William) could see the throne of England slipping away.

(**) William had to start making plans. In April 1688 William began to assemble his forces, planning a possible future invasion of England. But he knew that England would not take kindly to a foreign invader – so he had to encourage Protestant leaders to invite him.

(**) On 10 June 1688 Mary of Modena did indeed give birth to a son - a Catholic heir - James Francis Edward Stuart.

Mary was therefore no longer first in line to the English throne.

(**) William has to consider invading to claim the throne of England

So, after the birth of James Stuart on 10th June 1688, William and Mary had no alternative to invading England if they sought the throne.

On 29th June, less than three weeks after the baby was born, public anger rose when **seven Bishops of the Church of England** were tried for publicly opposing the Declaration of Indulgence granting religious liberty to his subjects, a policy which appeared to threaten the establishment of the Anglican Church.

The next day, 30th June, the Seven Bishops were found **not guilty** - a major embarrassment to the Crown. There were bonfires lit across London to celebrate the acquittal of the Bishops.

(**) On the same day, 30th June 1688, a group of political figures, known afterward as **the "Immortal Seven"**, (nothing to do with the seven Bishops) sent a formal invitation to William in the Netherlands (The Hague), inviting him to invade. The invitation was carried by a respected senior naval officer, Admiral Arthur Herbert, who was disguised for the mission as a common sailor.

This was the invitation from responsible men that William had been waiting for.

Parts of it read...

“your Highness may be assured there are nineteen parts of twenty of the people throughout the Kingdom who are desirous of change..”

“We will not fail to attend your Highness upon your landing to do all that lies in our power to prepare others to be in readiness”.

It was signed in a numerical code in place of names – 25, 24, 27, 29, 31, 35, 33 – for Shrewsbury, Devonside, Danby, Lumley, Compton, Russell and Sidney.

(**) William progressed his plans to invade, and his intentions were public knowledge by September 1688

(**) [William's invasion force is assembled](#)

William could not simply abandon his native Netherlands to the risk of invasion by France (under Louis XIV). However, just at this time Louis decided to invade the “Palatinate” on the Rhine, and laid siege to Phillipsburg. So, for William, the way to England lay open.

Then there was the problem of the North Sea – how and when to cross it

What about the weather?

Would James II defend in force? James II fighting fleet at the time comprised 40 fighting ships and 18 fireships, which could be set ablaze and sent into an invading fleet to cause chaos and panic.

How would the country react? What sort of reception would he get on landing?

Would he have good support in England, or should he bring everything he needed with him?

On the surface, he was being lots of advice – but was the advice impartial? Much of it was from family members, and those close to King James II (who was, of course, his uncle and father-in-law!).

(**) He appointed an English admiral, Arthur Herbert to command the invasion fleet. (You will remember that it was Herbert who had brought over to the Netherlands

the letter from the aristocracy of England encouraging William to invade). William judged that it was good that his fleet was not seen as a foreign invasion. Having Herbert commanding this would help.

To be safe, he decided that he must at least initially be independent of help in England. He must bring his own horses and hay to feed them, his own coach and printing press, together with provisions for the force, 10,000 spare boots, and clothing (including 9,000 spare coats), beer, water, brandy and tobacco, his own bullion (including 3 month's pay for the soldiers), mint and even his own portable bridge.

The troops had a strongly English flavour – 18 battalions of infantry, a third of them in the Anglo-Dutch Brigade together with two regiments of British refugees. There were 11,200 foot soldiers and 15 regiments (4,050) of cavalry – nearly all Dutch.

There were three ships of “English lords” – although it's unclear just what their function was!

There was a total of 8,000 horses and 35,000 men!

In total 52 fighting ships, 250 transport ships and 50 fishing vessels.

Some records state there were as many as 40,000 men and 463 ships!

Whatever, it was a formidable force – at least twice the size of the Spanish Armada.

(**) William's invasion force sets sail

But, it was October – in the North Sea! Not a season he would have chosen.

William assembled the entire invasion fleet at the island of Brill and they set sail “during the silence of night” on 19th October.

They were largely at the mercy of nature and the prevailing wind. They were driven north along the coast of Holland. Through the next day the wind gathered force, until by nightfall there was a real storm raging and by the following morning the fleet was scattered – no two ships could be seen together.

In truth only one ship had been sunk in the storm, but there had been much damage, and the battening down of the hatches had resulted in the death of 1,000 horses.

The naval chaplain reported “you could hear the men groan after a pitiful manner”.

They returned to Hellevoetsluis to re-provision.

This news reached England – along with the false news that the invasion had been postponed until the following spring.

(**) Two weeks or so later, the fleet set out for the second time on the 1st November (English Julian calendar - 11th November Gregorian calendar).

(**) Departure from Hellevoetsluis painting

This wonderful painting gives an idea – a somewhat romantic idea perhaps(!), of the scene when the armada departed from Hellevoetsluis on 1st November.

(**) Crossing the North Sea:

This time the wind was kinder, and the fleet travelled south through the Channel and along the south coast of England. It was always William's preference to land in the south west.

By 4th November, the fleet was off the Isle of Wight, the pilot came on board, and a change of wind to southerly saw the fleet gently waft into Torbay on 5th November.

(**) William landing at Torbay

This painting, by an unknown Dutch artist, gives another slightly romantic image of the scene.

Allegedly, the horses were thrown overboard into shallow water where they had to swim to shore. Hundreds were off in just three hours. The men, all 35,000 of them disembarked around Torbay, and William himself landed on the ship Brill at **Brixham**.

(**) William's statue at Brixham

There is a splendid stature of William of Orange on Brixham harbour.

(**) From Torbay to Salisbury:

The first night was spent on the beaches and around. But when dawn came, there was an urgent need to press on to Exeter, the capital of the south west.

(**) There is a cottage at Yalberton, six miles inland, called "King William's Cottage" said to be where he took a break.

The propaganda started – Declarations had been printed in their thousands. Some reached King James in London.

(**) (to remove pic of cottage)

Exeter offered no resistance to William – though little enthusiasm either. William became anxious – how could he hope to **conquer eight million people** with an **army of 35,000?**

But the tide was to turn. Key "men of fashion" began to join the Prince, and as they joined in increasing numbers, they forced "volunteers" to sign up too.

William's force gradually marched north east in the general direction of London, gathering more support from the West Country landowners as they went.

They progressed slowly, keen not to outrun their supply lines. And they were ordered **not to forage**, for fear it would degenerate into plunder and alienate the local population.

They marched through Brixham, Paignton, Newton Abbott, Exeter, Ottery St Mary, Honiton, Beaminster, Sherborne, Weston to Wincanton in Somerset, where he paused.

James and his 19,000 troops had meanwhile headed west from London, and reached Salisbury on 17 November, where he waited.

There was a skirmish at Wincanton – but neither side won a convincing victory.

King James II stayed with his army at Salisbury for several days. The men were “steady” in their support of the king, but the officers could not be relied on. It was, of course, a family war – and several key family members switched from James to William’s side. *“Even my children desert me”* said James. On 26 November he returned to London.

William started to advance again on 21 November and reached Salisbury.

He sent out reconnoitring forces to test the King's army. One force of 150 foot and 500 dragoons, under the Count of Nassau, marched against Reading. They found Reading well defended by the King, with three companies of the Irish dragoons and a large regiment of Scots horse holding the bridge. In the skirmish that followed, the King's troops were driven back from the bridge in complete rout with a loss of 20 killed and 40 prisoners.

However, hearing that there were three battalions of the King’s royal infantry coming up, Nassau retreated to Newbury, but the news soon followed him that this force, leaderless save for a sergeant and two corporals, was anxious to desert to William's standard. However, with the sergeant raised to captain, and the corporals to lieutenants, the army was sent back to hold Reading for William!

On 5 December William left Salisbury and stayed the night at Collingbourne Kingston.

(**) King James decides to negotiate

James had to plan to negotiate with Prince William – but the king’s position was so weak that he had to agree to some prior concessions to keep key people on his side.

These concessions included

- a new parliament,
- the dismissal of all Catholics in official positions,
- a general pardon and
- strict neutrality in the European struggle.

(**) James appointed 3 Commissioners:

James had to agree, and on 30th November he announced his commissioners to be

- George Savile, Marquis of Halifax,
- Daniel Finch, Earl of Nottingham and
- Sidney, Earl of Godolphin.

All three were moderate supporters of the King, although none was keen about the mission!

(**) Agreeing where to meet

On 2nd December the Commissioners along with ten personal servants each, left London heading west.

A Royal trumpeter was despatched to demand safe-conduct and a place for the planned meeting.

The Commissioners' party slept first at **Windsor**, and the next night at **Reading**, where they **found the royal trumpeter too drunk to move!**

Another trumpeter was sent off west to find Prince William, who was still near Salisbury.

They agreed that the meeting place should be **Hungerford**.

It is thought that this was because of its being on the main road from London to the west, and also halfway between Oxford and Salisbury, so easily reached.

(**) Lords Halifax, Nottingham and Godolphin stayed at Ramsbury Manor

So, on Thursday 6th December, the three Commissioners acting for King James and their party made their way along the muddy lanes and came to Ramsbury, just over the Wiltshire border, where they took up quarters at Ramsbury Manor.

Ramsbury Manor was newly built. It was built for Charles II's Attorney General, Sir William Jones, in 1683, just five years previously.

(**) William reaches Hamstead Marshall House

William meanwhile pressed on from Collingbourne Kingston to reach **Hamstead Marshall House** (the massive mansion built by Lord Craven between 1660-1680) also on Thursday 6th December. Here he found several hundred northern troops able to join his army. (Hamstead Marshall House was soon to burn down in 1718).

(**) The Hungerford negotiations, Dec 1688:

We now reach the climax of our story! The negotiations at The Bear Inn.

May I just say that all that went on reminds me a lot of Brexit!!

Some of my text is now taken from Lord Macaulay's "The History of England from the Accession of James the Second":

(**) So William came on from Hamstead Marshall House and arrived at The Bear Inn just after dark the same evening – Thursday 6th December.

The modest Bear Inn must have been overwhelmed by troops. William himself had a bedroom and anteroom and the use of what was called ‘the great room’ (which is probably today’s main dining room).

The town was soon crowded with men of rank and note who came thither from opposite quarters. The Prince was escorted by a strong body of troops. The northern lords (many of whom had joined William at Hamstead Marshall) brought with them hundreds of irregular cavalry, whose accoutrements and horsemanship were said to have “moved the mirth of men accustomed to the splendid aspect and exact movements of regular armies”.

(**) *On the Saturday, Lords Halifax, Nottingham and Godophin rode over from Ramsbury Manor for a meeting that had been arranged for 10 o’clock.*

They were met by the William’s bodyguard with drums beating. Halifax, whose rank, age, and abilities entitled him to precedence, was spokesman. He asked for a private audience with Prince William – but that was declined. Prince William was resolved to hear them and give an answer in public.

The audience therefore was given in Prince William’s bedroom before a crowd of English nobles and gentlemen.

The proposition which the Commissioners had been instructed to take, was that the points in dispute be referred to Parliament, for which the writs were already sealing; and that in the meantime the Prince’s army would not come within 30-40 miles of London.

Halifax, having explained that this was the basis on which he and his colleagues were prepared to treat handed over a letter from King James. The letter is said to have moved William – the first he had received from his father-in-law since they had become enemies. It was not in English, but in formal French.

Anyway, William decided that all the Lords and Gentlemen whom he had brought together for the purpose should consult together, unrestrained by his presence, and come to a consensus. But he retained the final decision in his own hands.

(**) [Prince William stays at Littlecote:](#)

So William left them at The Bear and retired to Littlecote Hall (as it was then called), just two miles away.

(**) That afternoon, William’s team met in the great room of The Bear Inn.

Negotiations went on. Couriers were dashing to London to keep the king in the picture.

By the evening, a message was sent to the king that the invaders showed no intention to cut short their march. There was frustration, and delay.

- Did William intend to take King James prisoner? By no means – for we would not hurt his person.
- What would happen if the King fled? Nothing was so much wished for.
- How could they arrange for a new parliament to be called in January? The trouble was that James had the Divine Right of Kings – and only he could summon parliament.

The King's points were taken into consideration but after much altercation a vote was taken amongst William's team. The majority present was for rejecting the proposition which the three King's Commissioners had been instructed to make.

This was reported to Prince William at Littlecote, but he overruled the opinion of his over-eager followers and declared his determination to **settle** on the basis proposed by the King.

Despite much further to-ing and fro-ing, William continued to be immovable.

(**) Both teams dined at Littlecote

On Sunday 9th December, the Commissioners dined at Littlecote with Prince William and his close followers. It must have been a wonderful sight.

The old hall was, of course, festooned with that marvellous collection of Civil War clothing and armour.

Final discussions went on through the afternoon and evening, but on Monday 10th December a fair copy of the proposals made by William was made:

(**) William's proposals:

In summary...

1. All Catholics in official positions should be removed
2. There must be assurance of the personal safety of William's adherents.
3. Both armies should be no nearer than 40 miles to London.
4. The Tower of London and Tilbury fort should be put in the hands of the City of London
5. James must pay, out of revenue, for the maintenance of William's troops.

(**) The Glorious Revolution

The Commissioners said, of course, that James must be consulted – they set off for London and reached it on the afternoon of Tuesday 11th December.

They might have informed the King that his position was not lost, that the Prince was no firebrand extremist, and that his enemies were divided. They might have done this – but they did not, for the King had fled the country - to France.

Meanwhile, the Prince William had left Littlecote. Having received a pressing invitation from the University of Oxford, he set off for Abingdon.

However, on hearing of James II's flight, he turned downstream through Wallingford and Henley to Windsor, receiving the submission of the King's troops as he passed.

For all practical purposes the Glorious (bloodless) Revolution of 1688 was over.

William became King on 13 Feb 1689, and William and Mary were both crowned in Westminster Abbey on 11 April.

(**) Kensington Palace

Initially they lived in Kensington Palace,

(**) but William suffered from asthma – and he much favoured living outside London. Sir Christopher Wren was commissioned to build a huge extension to

(**) Hampton Court Palace:

Hampton Court Palace – around what is now known as

(**) Fountain Court.

(**) William and Mary's reign

William was the last person to have successfully invaded England by force of arms.

But it was not quite “all over”.

The very next summer, July 1690, James II came over from France, supported by French soldiers and French money to fight William in Ireland. This was, of course, the notorious great “**Battle of the Boyne**”. William had amassed an army of 36,000 men and won decisively.

Later on there followed a series of **Jacobite Risings** led by James II's son and grandson – the Old and Young Pretenders - ending with the **Jacobite Rebellion of 1745** (way after William and Mary were no longer with us).

Sadly, Mary II died of smallpox on 28 December 1694, leaving William III to rule alone. William deeply mourned his wife's death, and his popularity plummeted during his reign as a sole monarch.

(**) He died in 1702 after falling from his horse. Allegedly his horse stumbled after stepping in a mole-hole, which gave rise to the famous Jacobite toast “to the little gentleman in black velvet”!

William and Mary had no children, so William was succeeded by Anne, Mary's younger sister – but that's another story!

(**) The Importance of the Glorious Revolution:

So what was the importance of The Glorious Revolution?

Remember that this “Glorious Revolution” took place only 40 years after the terrible Civil War and the beheading of the king - Charles I.

- Britain **ceased** being the most **ungovernable** state in Europe – and became **the most stable**.
- The establishment of the Civil List (in 1697) meant the King had personal money, separate from the national expenditure.
- The emergence of political parties (the Whigs and Tories) strengthened alignments and political friendship, on which the various ministries were based.
- It brought to an end the **struggles** between **King and Parliament**. There was clear reduction in the power of the Crown, a big step from the personal rule of the Stuarts to the more Parliament-centred rule of the House of Hanover. Ministers took over from the King more and more of the day-to-day business of government.
- Power was passing from the crown to the nobility and gentry and
- They were able to enjoy it for 150 years or so before
- But only with the Reform Acts of the 19th century and the Suffrage Acts of the 20th century did we really achieve democracy

The Glorious Revolution was just the biggest step on this journey.

And the key meeting that achieved all this took place at The Bear in Hungerford!

But I want to add just one small addendum:

(**) [The Constable of Hungerford in 1688](#)

I thought you might like to know that the Constable of Hungerford in 1688, who was, no doubt, was much involved with all that went on that busy weekend in December 1688, was a mercer called Joseph Butler. He lived and worked at what is now.....

(**) Styles Silver, 12 Bridge Street.

Joseph Butler died less than five years later in 1693 and was buried in the churchyard at the Parish Church.

Indeed, most of you will have walked past his memorial stone.....

(**) It's just to the right of the entrance path. The stone is badly weather-worn, but it says...

(**) “Here lieth the body of Mr Joseph Butler who died 17th June 1693 aged 45 years”

(**) [The commemorative plaque on The Bear Hotel](#)

So... this was the story of the great “Glorious Revolution” – and the key part that Hungerford played in December 1688.

I hope you've enjoyed hearing more about it all!