

= William Montagu , 1st Earl of Salisbury =

William Montagu , alias de Montacute , 1st Earl of Salisbury , 3rd Baron Montagu , King of Mann (1301 ? 30 January 1344) was an English nobleman and loyal servant of King Edward III .

The son of William Montagu , 2nd Baron Montagu , he entered the royal household at an early age and became a close companion of the young Prince Edward . The relationship continued after Edward was crowned king following the deposition of Edward II in 1327 . In 1330 , Montagu was one of Edward 's main accomplices in the coup against Roger Mortimer , who until then had been acting as the king 's protector .

In the following years Montagu served the king in various capacities , primarily in the Scottish Wars . He was richly rewarded , and among other things received the lordship of the Isle of Man . In 1337 , he was created Earl of Salisbury , and given an annual income of 1000 marks to go with the title . He served on the Continent in the early years of the Hundred Years ' War , but in 1340 he was captured by the French , and in return for his freedom had to promise never to fight in France again . Salisbury died of wounds suffered at a tournament early in 1344 .

Legend has it that Montagu 's wife Catherine was raped by Edward III , but this story is almost certainly French propaganda . William and Catherine had six children , most of whom married into the nobility . Modern historians have called William Montague Edward 's " most intimate personal friend " and " the chief influence behind the throne from Mortimer 's downfall in 1330 until his own death in 1344 . "

= = Family background = =

William Montagu , born at Cassington , Oxfordshire in 1301 , was the second but eldest surviving son of William Montagu , 2nd Baron Montagu , and Elizabeth de Montfort , daughter of Sir Peter Montfort of Beaudesert , Warwickshire. by Matilda / Maud de la Mare daughter and heiress of Henry de la Mare of Ashted , Surrey , Royal Justice , Seneschal of William Longspree II Earl of Salisbury . The Montagu family , a West Country family with roots going back to the Conquest , held extensive lands in Somerset , Dorset and Devon . The father , William Montagu , distinguished himself in the Scottish Wars during the reign of Edward I , and served as steward of Edward II 's household . Some members of the nobility , including Thomas of Lancaster , viewed Montagu with suspicion , as a member of a court party with undue influence on the king . For this reason he was sent to Aquitaine , to serve as seneschal . Here he died on 18 October 1319 . Even though he sat in parliament as a baron , the second lord Montagu never rose above a level of purely regional importance .

= = Early service = =

The younger William was still a minor at the time of his father 's death , and entered the royal household as a ward of the king in 1320 . On 21 February 1323 he was granted his father 's lands and title . His service to Edward II took him abroad to the Continent in both 1320 and 1325 . In 1326 he was knighted . After the deposition of Edward II in 1327 , Montagu continued in the service of Edward 's son Edward III . He helped the new king in repelling the Scottish invasion of 1327 , and was created knight banneret in 1328 .

Montagu enjoyed a close relationship with Edward III , and accompanied him abroad on a diplomatic mission in 1329 . That same year he was sent on an embassy to negotiate a marriage alliance with King Philip VI of France . His most important task , however , came in connection with a mission to the Papacy in Avignon . The young king ? along with his government ? was under the dominance of his mother Isabella and her lover Roger Mortimer , who had been responsible for the deposition of the king 's father . Montagu explained the king 's situation , and Pope John XXII asked for a special signal that assure him that he was dealing with the king in person . After Montagu 's return , Richard Bury , Keeper of the Privy Seal , wrote to inform the pope that only letters containing the words pater sancte (holy father) , in Edward 's own handwriting , were indeed from the king .

Only Edward , Bury and Montagu were party to the scheme .

= = Coup against Mortimer = =

When Mortimer discovered the conspiracy against him , Montagu was brought in for interrogation ? along with the king ? but gave nothing away . Afterward he supposedly advised Edward to move against his protector , because " It was better that they should eat the dog than that the dog should eat them " . On 19 October 1330 , while Mortimer and Isabella were entrenched in Nottingham Castle , the constable of the castle showed Montagu a secret entrance through an underground tunnel . Along with William de Bohun , Robert Ufford , and John Neville and others , he entered the castle , where he met up with the king . A short brawl followed before Mortimer was captured . The queen stormed into the chamber shouting " Good son , have pity on noble Mortimer " . Edward did not obey his mother 's wishes , and a few weeks later Mortimer was executed for treason in London . As a reward for his part in the coup , Montagu was given lands worth £ 1000 , including the Welsh lordship of Denbigh that had belonged to Mortimer . His family also benefited ; his brother Simon Montacute became Bishop of Worcester and later of Ely . Another brother , Edward Montagu , 1st Baron Montagu , married Alice of Norfolk , a co @-@ heir of Thomas of Brotherton , 1st Earl of Norfolk .

= = Service under Edward III = =

In the years to come , Montagu acted as Edward 's closest companion . In April 1331 , the two went on a secret expedition to France , disguised as merchants so they would not be recognised . In September of the same year , Montagu held a tournament at Cheapside , where he and the king were costumed as Tartars . From 1333 onwards , Montagu was deeply engaged in the Scottish Wars , and distinguished himself at the Siege of Berwick and the Battle of Halidon Hill . It was after this event that his lordship over the Isle of Man was recognised , a right he held from his grandfather . The lordship was at the moment of a purely theoretical nature , however , since the island was still under Scottish control .

In February 1334 Montagu was sent on a commission to Edinburgh , to demand Edward Balliol 's homage to Edward . In the great summer campaign of 1335 , it was Montagu who provided the largest English contingent , with 180 men @-@ at @-@ arms and 136 archers . He was well rewarded for his contributions : after the Scots had been forced to cede the Lowlands , Montagu was granted the county of Peeblesshire . He was also allowed to buy the wardship of Roger Mortimer 's son Roger for 1000 marks , a deal that turned out to be very lucrative for Montagu . At this point , however , the fortunes were turning for the English in Scotland . Montagu campaigned in the north again in 1337 , but the siege of Dunbar met with failure . Following the abortive attempt in Scotland , Edward III turned his attention to the continent .

= = The Hundred Years ' War = =

Montagu was created Earl of Salisbury on 16 March 1337 . This was one of six comital promotions Edward III made that day , in preparation for what was to become the Hundred Years ' War . To allow Montagu to support his new status , the king granted him land and rent of a value of 1000 marks a year . The money was provided from the royal stannaries of Cornwall . A contemporary poem tells of a vow made by the earl on the eve of the wars ? he would not open one of his eyes while fighting in France . The story is probably a satire ; the truth was that Montagu had already lost the use of one of his eyes in a tournament .

In April 1337 , Montagu was appointed to a diplomatic commission to Valenciennes , to establish alliances with Flanders and the German princes . In July 1338 , he accompanied the king on another mission to the continent , again providing the greatest number of soldiers , with 123 men @-@ at @-@ arms and 50 archers . In September of that year he was made Marshal of England . After the death of Thomas of Brotherton , Earl of Norfolk , this office had come into the hands of Norfolk 's

daughter Margaret . The king did not trust the office with her husband , so he decided instead to bestow it on his trusted companion , Montagu . Edward 's policy of building alliances put him in great debt , and when he left the Low Countries to return to England late in 1338 , Salisbury had to stay behind as surety to the king 's debtors , along with the king 's family and the Earl of Derby . The earl had earlier voiced concerns about the costly alliances , but he nevertheless remained loyal to the king 's strategy .

While Edward was away , Salisbury was captured by the French at Lille in April 1340 , and imprisoned in Paris . Reportedly , King Philip VI of France wanted to execute Salisbury and Robert Ufford , Earl of Suffolk , who was captured with him . Philip was , however , dissuaded by John of Bohemia , who argued that the earls could come in handy in an exchange , should any French noblemen be captured . Though released on parole in September , it was not until May 1342 that he reached a final settlement with the French . Salisbury was freed in a prisoner exchange , but only on the condition that he never fight in France again .

= = Final years = =

Salisbury had long been frustrated by the failure of the government in England to provide sufficient funds for the war effort . On his return , however , he played little part in the conflict of 1341 between King Edward and Chancellor John Stratford . In May that year he was appointed to a committee to hear the king 's charges against Stratford , but little came from this . In 1342 ? 43 he fought with Robert of Artois in the Breton War of Succession , and in 1343 helped negotiate the Truce of Malestroit . It was probably sometime after this he made good his claim on the Isle of Man , by conquering the island which was until then held by the Scots .

His final international commission took place late in 1343 , when he accompanied Henry of Grosmont , Earl of Derby , on a diplomatic mission to Castile . Early in 1344 he was back in England , where he took part in a great tournament at Windsor . It was during this tournament , according to the chronicler Adam Murimuth , that he received wounds that would prove fatal . Salisbury died on 30 January 1344 . He was buried at Bisham Priory in Berkshire , adjoining his home , Bisham Manor . He had founded the priory himself in 1337 , on his elevation to the earldom . King Edward 's financial obligations were never paid in full during the earl 's lifetime , and at Salisbury ' death the king owed him £ 11 @ , @ 720 . Of this , some £ 6374 were written off by his executors in 1346 .

= = Family = =

In or before 1327 Salisbury married Catherine , daughter of William de Grandison , 1st Baron Grandison . Two anecdotal stories revolve around Catherine Montagu ; in one she is identified as the " Countess of Salisbury " from whose dropped garter Edward III named the Order of the Garter . In the other , Edward III falls in love with the countess , and arranges to be alone with her so he can rape her . Neither story is supported by contemporary evidence , and the latter almost certainly is a product of French propaganda .

William and Catherine had six children , most of whom made highly fortunate matches with other members of the nobility . The first Earl of Salisbury made enormous additions to the family fortune ; at the time of his father 's death , the lands had been valued at just over £ 300 . In 1344 , only the annual income of the lands has been estimated to more than £ 2 @ , @ 300 , equivalent to about £ 1 @ . @ 83 million in present @ - @ day terms . Edward was also free with granting franchises to Salisbury , including the return of writs , which gave the earl authority in his lands normally held by the royally appointed sheriff . Salisbury 's oldest son William succeeded his father in July 1349 , while still a minor , as William Montagu , 2nd Earl of Salisbury . The younger William was one of the founding members of the Order of the Garter , but he never enjoyed the same favour with the king as his father had .

The children of William and Catherine were as follows :

= = In fiction = =

Salisbury is a character in *Les Rois maudits* (*The Accursed Kings*) , a series of French historical novels by Maurice Druon . He was portrayed by Serge Maillat in the 1972 French miniseries adaptation of the series .