

## **Describe the main events of the Peasants' Revolt**

**(20 marks)**

### **SYK paragraph**

The revolt I have chosen to describe is the Peasants' Revolt that took place between May and June 1381. It was also known as the Great Rising or Tyler's Rebellion

In May a tax collector arrived at the Essex village of Fobbing to find out why the people there had not paid their poll tax. He is thrown out by the villagers. Early in June soldiers arrived in Fobbing to establish law and order. They too were thrown out and many other local villages in Essex joined the rebels. One man emerged as leader of the peasants, Wat Tyler from Kent

On 7th June Tyler and his followers captured Canterbury. They opened up Maidstone prison and freed John Ball, a priest who had been arrested shortly before on the orders of the Archbishop of Canterbury. The rebels marched towards London attracting followers along the way.

On 10th June throughout the country, peasants marched towards London. As the peasants from Kent marched to London, they destroyed tax records registers. Buildings which kept government records were burnt down.

On 11th June nearly 40,000 rebels arrived in London and waited to present their demands to the king. A meeting at Rotherhithe was cancelled as the King's advisors fear for his safety.

On 13<sup>th</sup> June Richard II agreed to meet them at Mile End. Richard II listened to the rebels' demands which included free labour contracts and the right to rent land at four pence an acre. Richard promised them justice and gave the peasants all they asked for and told them to go home in peace. Some did. However others entered London when the people there opened the gates to them. The Tower of London was captured by the rebels. The Archbishop of Canterbury Simon Sudbury and Sir Robert Hales, the Treasurer were killed on Tower Hill. They burnt John of Gaunt's palace, the Savoy. Richard II spent the night in hiding for fear of his life.

On 15th June Richard II met the rebels again. Wat Tyler gave the king his list of demands, to which the king readily agreed. Suddenly after a few cross words, one of the King's lords (Walworth or Standish) approached from behind with a sword and killed Wat Tyler. This was the signal for the king's troops (8000 men) to attack the rebels: 1500 of them were killed.

### **Conclusion/summary**

Historians cannot be sure about what happened at the meeting on 15<sup>th</sup> June between Richard II and Wat Tyler because the only people who could write about it were on the side of the king, and so their evidence might be biased. However, we do know that the Peasants' Revolt did not last long. The death of Tyler, and another promise by Richard to give the peasants what they asked for, was enough to send them home.