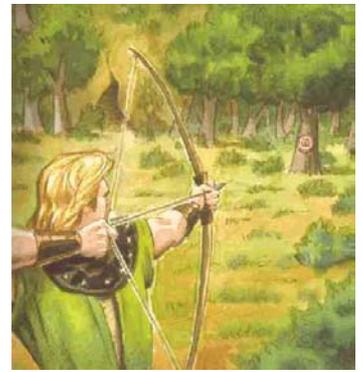


Babes in the Wood



Babes in the Wood is the story of Robin Hood, but not quite in the conventional sense you may be used to!

Bob (a Builder) and Dermot (a Gardener) are looking for work in the woods when they realise they are lost. Bob wonders what kind of work they could hope to find in the woods, and Dermot explains that they have come to find Robin Hood to join his band of merry men.

Once they find Robin, he sets them the task of entering the castle of the Sheriff of Nottingham to steal some gold to see if they are worthy of joining his group. Robin is feeling particularly down because he is missing Maid Marion. Friar Tuck soon puts his mind at ease when he informs him that she is in town, under the protection of the Sheriff .

Meanwhile, in the castle, Nursey is looking after the babes of the Sheriff's brother while he is away fighting in the crusades. Maid Marion is also down in the dumps because she is missing Robin Hood. As Nursey takes Marion away to get her mind off of Robin, the Sheriff hears news that his brother has been lost in action, news that he welcomes with open arms. Bob and Dermot enter the castle and rather inconveniently bump into the Sheriff, who decides to put them in the dungeon unless they agree to take the babes into the wood and get rid of them.

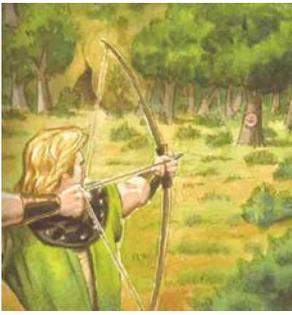
That afternoon, Nursey is out walking the babes with Marion when Dermot turns up disguised as the new aerobics instructor. While the two ladies are exercising, Dermot runs off with the pram! The ladies shout for the Sheriff, who arrives feigning grief. Marion calls for Robin Hood to help, but as he arrives he is arrested by the guards. Marion pleads for him not to be arrested and the Sheriff agrees on the condition that Marion marries him.

Deep in the middle of the woods, Dermot and Bob are still escaping with the babes. They just so happen to pass some fairies, who place a spell on them so they fall asleep. The fairies take the babes, and when they wake up Dermot and Bob call for Robin Hood to help them find the babes. Robin gathers all of his merry men, and he then asks Dermot and Bob to join the crew. As one big fighting force, they advance on the castle to confront the Sheriff.

The final scene, and the Sheriff is just about to wed Maid Marion. Trying her best to stop the proceedings, she calls for the help of Robin Hood. He enters in a daring, heroic fashion, and has no trouble fighting his way to the Sheriff (well, that's because the Sheriff's guards have been given the day off to celebrate the wedding, so it wasn't really that daring and heroic I suppose).

After chasing the Sheriff, Nursey finally catches him and sits on him to stop him from going anywhere (he then breaks out into tears, but is that because he's been caught or because of the whale sat on top of him!).

Marion glances at Robin with a romantic sigh of 'My Hero' and they live happily ever after.



Who Was Robin Hood?

No-one knows for sure whether the legend of Robin Hood was based on a real historical character. It is a subject which is still hotly debated amongst scholars.

There have been several candidates. A certain Robert Hod, later called Hobbehod, was a tenant of the Archbishop of York in Henry III's time. Legal records show him to be an outlaw. He was summoned to appear before York Assizes in 1225 and 1226 but fled, and is described in the records as an outlaw or fugitive.

In 1852, Victorian scholar Joseph Hunter claimed to have located the 'real' Robin Hood in the shape of one Robert Hood, recorded in the royal household records as a servant of King Edward II. Later, Hunter discovered the same name (but was he the same man?) in the court rolls for Wakefield, which included Barnsdale in South Yorkshire, one of the outlaw's legendary homes.

The search is complicated by the fact that Hood, Hod and Hode were all common surnames in medieval England. Robert or Robin were equally popular Christian names. The phrase 'Robinhood' became a nickname used in court records for an outlaw, and there is evidence of at least eight people before 1300 who adopted it or were given it as a pseudonym. The word 'hood' still means a gangster or outlaw in America.

Robin Hood is famous for his gallantry, robbing the rich to feed the poor and fighting against injustice and tyranny. Anyone who knows of Robin has also heard the stories of his outlaw band. The names of Little John, Friar Tuck, Maid Marion, Allan a Dale, Will Scarlet, Much the Miller and the evil Sheriff of Nottingham are as much a part of the legend as Robin Hood himself.

The stories of Robin portray him as a fearless outlaw leading his band of "merry men" (and women) against the tyranny of Prince John, The Sheriff of Nottingham and Sir Guy of Gisborne. A brilliant archer, Robin lived a life of adventure - poaching the King's deer from the outlaws' retreat in Sherwood Forest.

Stories about the adventures of Robin have been told and retold for over six hundred years. In Robin's time, few people could read or write and consequently little was written down about the exploits of our hero. Instead, people learnt about Robin and his band through the ballad and song of wandering minstrels who wove a patchwork of fact and fiction into the contemporary culture of the time.

When did Robin Live?

of views but generally believe that Robin Hood was alive around the thirteenth century. The earliest reference to Robin Hood is in William Langland's poem "The vision of William concerning Piers Plowman" which was written in 1377.

The poem says:

"I do not know my paternoster perfectly as the priest sings it.
But I know the rhymes of Robin Hood and Randolph,
earl of Chester".

Historians and researchers have a range



Other historical evidence places Robin anywhere between 1190 and 1307.



Richard the Lionheart

While Richard Plantagenet is revered as one of the great warrior kings of England, he is perhaps best known as "the absent king." This is due to the fact that during his reign from 1189-1199, he spent a total of six months in England. This aside Richard I was well known for his bravery which earned him the nickname "The Lionheart". A name that has reached epic and mythological proportions, best seen in literary works such as Robin Hood and Sir Walter Scott's novel Ivanhoe.

Richard Plantagenet came into the world September 8th in the year 1157 AD Although born in Oxfordshire England, Richard was a child of Aquitaine a part of Southern France. His native language was not English and throughout his life he spoke little of it.

He had four brothers and three sisters, the first of which died at a young age. Of the remainder; Henry was named heir to the English throne, Richard was to succeed his mother's Aquitaine and Geoffrey was to inherit Brittany. John was the poorest to fair out receiving nothing from his father. It is this action that gave him the name John Lackland.

At a young age of twelve, Richard pledged homage to the king of France for lands of his. At the age of fourteen, Richard was named the Duke of Aquitaine in the church of St. Hillaire at Poitiers which was one of the lands made homage to the French King. Henry's sons, who had been given lands but no real power revolted against their King father aided by their mother. In retaliation King Henry had Eleanor jailed. She remained there for many years.

Off To The Crusades

In 1183 the younger Henry died leaving Richard as the heir to the English throne. Another family dispute occurred when Richard received the lands of his brother. Henry was expected to give his Aquitaine to his brother John. Richard refused to give up the homeland of his mother. While this dispute over family land raged on, Richard learned of the tragic loss at Hattin, where the Crusaders had lost Jerusalem to the Saracen leader Saladin. Richard soon took up the cross of the crusades, much against his father's approval.

In 1189, upon the death of Henry II, Richard was crowned king of England in Westminster Abbey London. One of his first actions was to free his mother from prison. His second was to begin to raise funds for his crusade known to history as the Third Crusade. He imposed a tax on the English people called a Saladin tithe as a means of aiding his war effort.



A King Imprisoned

After the Third Crusade, Richard began his homeward journey to England. Put ashore by bad weather he found himself in Austria home of Leopold, whom Richard had angered by actions during the crusade. Leopold captured King Richard and imprisoned him in his castle. Eager for a piece of the action the Emperor of Germany offered Leopold 75,000 marks for Richard taking him into custody in Germany.

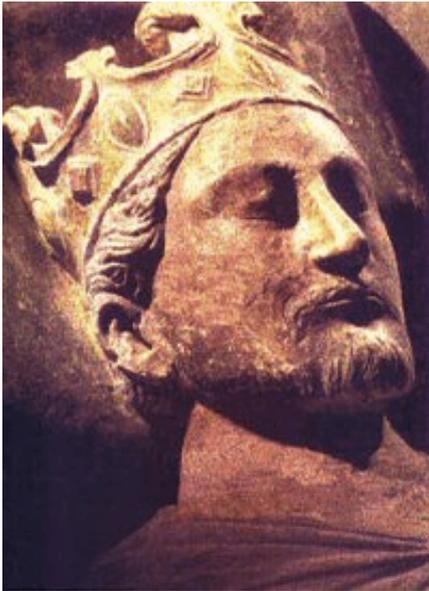
Rumours ran rampant throughout England over the missing king. There is a legend that the troubadour Blondel heard his king singing in a castle and responded with a song that the both of them were sure to know. Whether true or not the fact remains that two Abbots were soon dispatched to journey for him through the network of the church. Even Eleanor, Richard's mother wrote to the Pope for assistance

in the matter. Richard was found and soon a ransom was set for his return to England. The sum was 150,000 marks an amount equal to three years of annual income and weighing at three tons in silver.

Return Of The King

Richard returned to England receiving a hero's welcome. He forgave his brother John, by saying he was manipulated by cunning people and vowed to punish them and not his brother. Unfortunately for the King he returned to a land in financial troubles. The cost of the Crusade and his large ransom had tapped out the finances of the land. This monetary trouble was to plague him for his remaining five-year reign. He created a new great seal as a means to raise funds and made void all documents signed with the old.

Death Of A King



For such a brave and noble man, King Richard's death came about in a rather strange way. In Chalus, Aquitaine, a peasant plowing his fields came upon a treasure. This treasure consisted of some gold statues and coins. The feudal lord claimed the treasure from his vassal, Richard in turn claimed the treasure from the lord, who refused. This prompted Richard to siege the village.

During the siege Richard was riding close to the castle without the protection of full armor. He spotted an archer with bow in hand on the wall aiming a shot at him. It is said Richard paused to applaud the Bowman. He was struck in the shoulder with the arrow and refused treatment for his wound. Infection set in and Richard the Lionheart died on April the 6th 1199. He was buried in the Fontvraud Abbey in Anjou France.

John Becomes King

When Richard died in 1199, John became the king of England. His reign started in an unfortunate way. In 1202, John's nephew, Arthur of Brittany, was murdered. Many in Brittany believed that John was responsible for his murder and they rebelled against John. In 1204, John's army was defeated in Brittany and John had no choice but to retreat. His military standing among the nobles fell and he was given a new nickname - John Softsword. The defeat in north France was a major blow for John and a costly one. To pay for the defeat, John increased taxes which was not popular with anybody other than John and his treasurers.

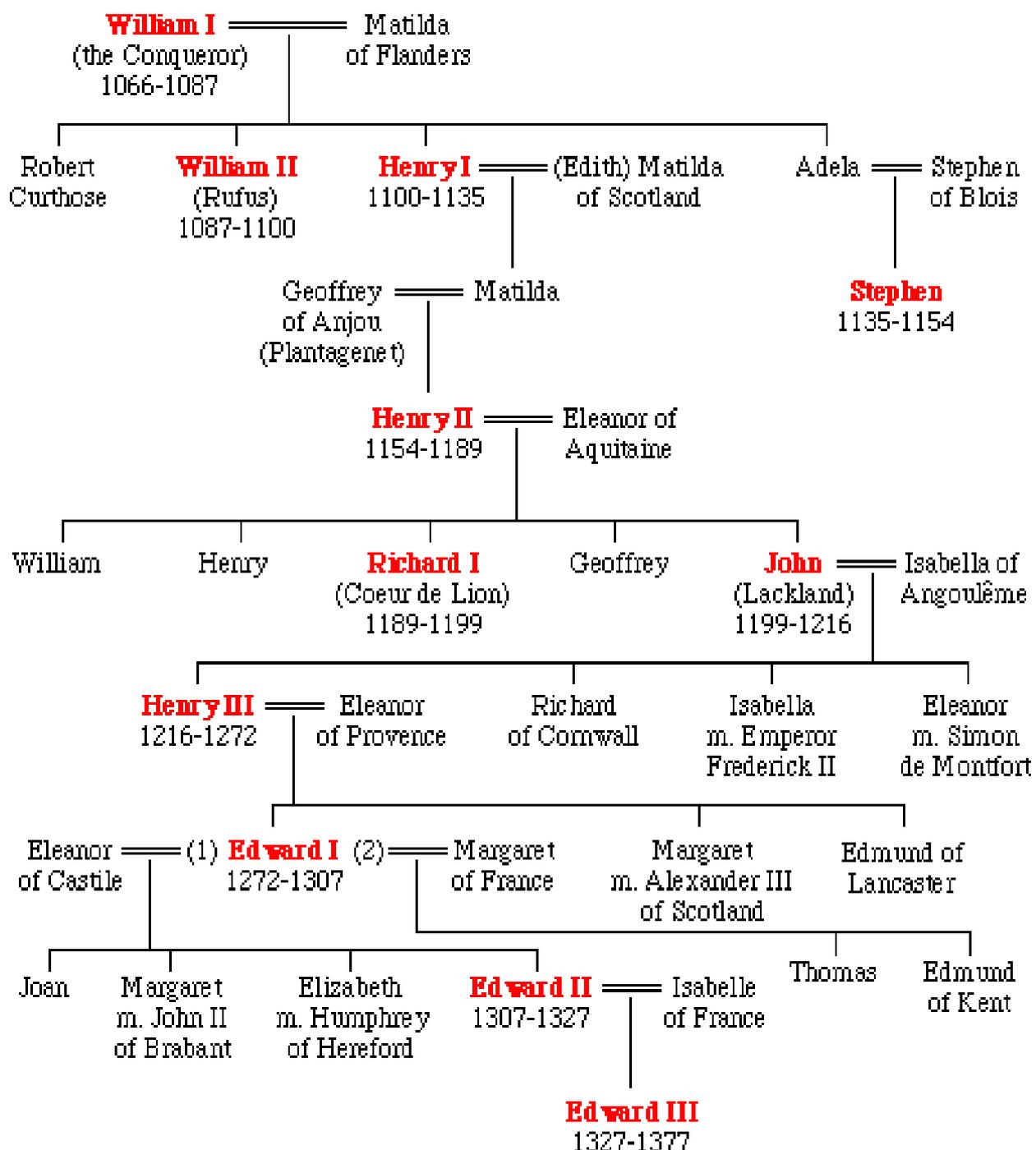
John also succeeded in falling out with the pope in 1207. John quarrelled with the pope over who should be Archbishop of Canterbury. The pope excommunicated John and put England under Churchlaw that stated that no christening or marriage would be legal until the time the pope said that they would be. Church law said that only christened people could get to Heaven while children born out of marriage were doomed to Hell. This placed people in England under a terrible strain and they blamed one person for this - John.

In 1213, John had to give in and surrender the spiritual well-being of the whole country to the pope. However, the pope never fully trusted John and in 1214, the pope proclaimed that anybody who tried to overthrow John would be legally entitled to do so. In the same year, John lost another battle to the French at Bouvines. This defeat resulted in England losing all her possessions in France. This was too much for the powerful Barons in England. In 1214, they rebelled.

John was forced to sign the Magna Carta at Runnymede in 1215. This guaranteed the people of England rights that the king could not go back on. In 1216, John tried to go back on the Magna Carta but this only provoked the barons into declaring war on him. By 1216, John was ill. During the war, he suffered from dysentery. He also lost all of his treasure when he tried to take a shortcut across a stretch of water in the Wash, Lincolnshire. As the tide rose faster than he expected, his baggage train was engulfed. Just a few days later, John died and was succeeded by Henry III.

England: The Norman and Plantagenet Kings

by Ed Stephan



Robin Hood Games.

Tagged by Sheriff Of Nottingham-

Stand Robin Hood and his men (all the children) against a wall or area, except for one who is chosen to be the Sheriff. A signal is given and players must change ends, with the Sheriff trying to tag as many as possible. Those tagged become a soldier working for the Sheriff and as such may help the Sheriff with his hunting - but only the Sheriff can do the tagging. The soldiers can catch and hang on to Robin & his men until the Sheriff can tag them. Only one soldier is allowed to hold one man at a time.

Steal the Taxes:

You will need small bags of collected taxes. (these can be nothing or filled with goodies for each child).

Blindfold one child. They become the sleeping Sheriff of Nottingham and sits on a chair in the middle of the room with "taxes" which he is defending, at his feet. The other children, Robin and his men, line up at one end of the room. On signal, "GO", they must stalk in an attempt to pick up the taxes without being caught. The sleeping Sheriff catches those who have made noise by pointing at them. A child pointed to must retire and start from beginning. Each child is allowed two tries. Only one sack of taxes can be captured at a time.

Variations: Form teams...the team with the most taxes collected wins.

Tax Collecting:

There are two teams - The Sheriff's soldiers is one and the other is Robin Hood and his men.

The teacher hides lots of 'gold coins' (these can be chocolate coins or something else that can resemble taxes).

The teacher then asks everyone to find the taxes, but it is for Robin and his men to find them before the Sheriff's guards do. The team with the most collected taxes at the end wins.

