
ARCHERY GAMES

By Mark of Plymouth

Barony of Ildhafn, Kingdom of Lochac



Introduction

You Don't Have To Read This Bit, But It May Help

What follows are lists of archery games originally written and played by the UK longbow archery club Companions of the Longbow. That club was based in Swindon, UK and was initiated by a man called Bob Bannister who was/is a re-enactor, GNAS (Grand National Archery Society) instructor and a longbow enthusiast. He researched possible medieval styles of shooting and wanted to teach methods that he believed were used before Horace A. Ford made his style of shooting the most popular a hundred and fifty odd years ago.

Medieval methods he believes include the drawing of the bow to the ear, and the use of instinctive shooting rather than using sighting techniques. Finally, the methods of drawing the

higher poundage bows, ie war bows (bows over 100lb draw weights), one technique which Bob formalised and termed the “V-draw”. He then tried to wrap all that up in archery courses that taught people of all ages and sexes how to shoot as archers might have done around the time of the Battle of Crecy (1346).

The Companions of the Longbow was formed on the back of archery courses Bob taught at Swindon New College and inaugurated in April 2006. The idea was to find a piece of open and wooded land where members of all abilities could shoot target, clout, field and rove safely while having fun.

For a few years, I ran shoots for twenty to thirty archers every Saturday, and this accidentally meant I developed and formed the club’s training criteria, which is why there are three sections to this document. One section covers general-purpose archery games that can be run repeatedly, and without too much explanation other than the rules, the second section covers specific archery challenges that were run maybe once or twice a year and required a more detailed briefing before starting. The last section covers an archery league season and has a **lot** of background information, but has another sixteen games that are unique to the scenario they are designed to match (this makes more sense if you read it). The third section is by far the largest, but may be of interest to those who have an interest in medieval English outlaws or who wish to see how a number of games can be strung together using a common theme.

All of these games have been played and tested and should be enjoyable to a wide range of archers, bow draw weights and experience.

They may need to be adapted to suite the environment of a typical SCA event (with associated space limitations) but I found all games I wrote (about three quarters of the games listed here) needed to be adapted to suite the conditions and archers present on the day anyway.

Games that are marked in red are games that are probably unsuitable for archery at events such as St. Sebastian’s (a regular archery event held in the Barony of Ildhafn) due to the space they require and may be unsuitable for a number of SCA event sites. For these games, you’ll need a field or two that you can shoot across at full draw safely. You can still read them though, and adapt as needed.

Because of my background, these games were originally posted in the www.companionsofthelongbow.co.uk website which I also wrote and ran for three years. It was updated weekly, sometimes in a great hurry, so apologies for the typos and grammar errors – all the mistakes are my own. If you Google “Companions of the Longbow” now you’ll get the .com version which isn’t updated very regularly because they aren’t as gung-ho as I was back then. I’ve tried to strip club references and tidy everything up, but if any remain which cause confusion please let me know and I’ll try to clarify the game.

I made about 90% of these games from scratch, but other people also contributed and some are traditional games reused. If someone wants to know who made up a game, I can usually hunt down the original source (especially if it was me!).

Finally some of the terms are based on GNAS archery safety rules so for example the command

to stop shooting was “Fast!” rather than the SCA “Hold!”. The person in charge of the range was referred to as the “Range Captain” etc I’ve tried to change what I’ve found when I saw it but if you find something weird it’s still hopefully make sense as they’re not a million miles off.

Defining the Skills

I found making up games is hard to do if I didn't have a definitive skills list I wanted archers to develop. Some archers like target archery, some liked speed shooting, some liked team games, some solo games etc. Therefore, I tried to split the skills an archer might need into different areas and then I could mark off on a matrix which sort of games we were playing a lot of.

At this early stage, these skills were called *Accuracy*, *Speed*, *Teamwork*, *Intensity* and *Assurance* (although we're sure there are probably more areas that can be identified). This meant I had a list of games with the core skills ticked off and I could visually see which games might be favoured over the course of a shoot e.g. I might plan three games and looking at my training matrix I could see they were all games based on *Speed* so I might take two out and put one in based on *Teamwork* and one based on *Assurance*.

As I went on, I found that if you had a "story" as a basis, then making a game up became a lot easier, and this eventually led to the themed Retinue League games in the last section. That last section is the largest, so apologies if you're not interested in English medieval outlaws.

So, the skills ...

Accuracy

This is an obvious skill and one that everyone strives to hone whenever they pick up a longbow. There are no games that don't involve this skill.

Speed

Speed isn't just about trying to shoot the minimum number of arrows expected (at least 12 arrows in 1 minute was the baseline for the club), but also ties in the with correct speed to shoot comfortably and accurately. Too quickly and you have no time to aim, too slowly and you muscles tire and aim is lost.

Teamwork

Not all the archers on the field can be cold dead-eyed snipers, and even the most inept archer can get that lucky shot that wins their team the competition. A good target archer may not be a great clout shooter and vice versa, for example, so a good mixed team of abilities makes sure everyone on the field gets a chance to show off their best skills. Team games also keep archers who have to wait off the shooting line interested in what's happening.

Intensity

This covers the more advanced skills of V-draw (the heavy draw technique developed by Bob Bannister, so not a standard term within the archery community) as well as *finesse* shooting. Drawing higher poundage bows take effort to learn. A lot of higher poundage archers tend to focus on distance and armour piercing, but the opposite end of *Finesse* shooting can be picked

up in a matter of minutes. *Finesse* shooting is the skill of not using a full draw, something that a crossbow can't do.

For example, you are hunting with broad arrowheads and want to 'kill' small game, but you don't want to skewer the bird or animal so badly that its innards contaminate the meat or you mangle the kill. The idea is not only to hit a specific area for a kill, but also to hit softly enough to get a 'roaster', a nice bit of meat, rather than a messy 'stew' where you've torn up the animal. A good 'roaster' shot has the arrow just barely sticking in the target. We also devised some targets that hopefully model the damage that can be done to a game bird from a too powerful shot.

Intensity games developed the full draw where power was needed (armour piercing), finesse shooting helped develop skill at shooting less than full draw and more importantly, how to cope when full draw wasn't or couldn't be achieved e.g. space restrictions due to shooting from a castle wall.

Assurance

For want of a better word, we called this skill **Assurance** and the concept can be defined by *cool, confidence, composure and the ability to handle pressure.*

There's a story about a master archer who was challenged to make an easy shot by a Zen monk. He accepted and of course completed the shot with ease. The Zen monk then took him to a fallen tree, which had been placed over a deep chasm, and challenged him to stand in the middle of the log and repeat the shot. The master archer failed the easy shot. Why? Because he was thinking more about the drop than the shot.

Pressure can be good fun. We experience it whenever we play team games; when we are the one who has to shoot the bullseye to win. It doesn't matter that you shot ten bullseyes yesterday in your back garden, the pressure is on you *now* to shoot the gold and as a consequence your **Accuracy** will always be affected.

This is the hardest 'skill' to learn and pretty much like archery itself can only be learned by doing it over and over again. The more archers were exposed to this sort of pressure, the more we got used to it and handled it.

This skill is usually listed in games where they are expected to shoot as a lone archer on the line as part of a team or as part as their lone effort. Unlike other clubs, we actively encouraged friendly banter and verbal insults to put "the other" archers off. This was to put the pressure on and it paid off when the club did display shooting in front of the public. Also, it was really fun for those stood around not doing the shooting, however, this may go against the ethos of fair play & chivalry in the SCA and has caused some friction at one SCA shoot I managed, so you've got to judge your audience!

Section 1 – General Purpose Archery Games

Games to suite anytime. Probably the best source of games for most SCA small venues.

Notes:

- The person in charge of the shoot is called the Target Archery Marshal or Captain of Archers
- Verbal commands for shooting were “Archers, in your own time, X number of arrows, nock, draw, loose!” Shooting must stop on the command of “Hold”. Volley shooting would be called by “Archers, on my command ...” and then the Target Archery Marshal would call each command. Shooting would end with the call “hold”.
- “Coloured target face” means an 80cm FITA target face. Other paper targets could be produced as a substitute.
- All distances are measured in paces. A pace is one stride by the Target Archery Marshal who is the person running the game and no one else i.e. a random lanky archer or midget archer who wants to argue distances to favour themselves or their team.
- Impromptu team games require picking teams. Experience has shown that archers of the same skill level tend to group next to each other for a chat when things are idle, so get everyone to line up on the shooting line. The Target Archery Marshal then walks down the line pointing at each archer and assigning alternatively “1”, “2”, “1”, “2” etc down the line. Team “1” then become “the English” and team “2” become “the Welsh” for example and hey presto, two teams of mixed ability with no fuss or embarrassment. Also calling “1” and “2” at the start makes it easy for the archers to remember which team they are in. Saying “English”, “Welsh”, “English” etc at the start confuses people sometimes (trust me, this happened a lot).
- When playing team games get the teams to nominate a team captain from their ranks to speak for them. It’s much easier to assign tasks and arbitrate between two team captains than try to argue the toss between thirty archers and yourself.
- The Target Archery Marshal’s decision is final.
- Based on experience, archers younger than about twelve (unless they are directly supervised by an adult to a ratio of one to one) don’t take well to games that require them to move on and off the shooting line during a game. If you’ve got a lot of young children, games that keep them fixed on the shooting line work best.

1. Colours

Equipment: At least one target stand, boss, coloured target face.

Skills primarily tested: Accuracy, Teamwork, Assurance

Time taken: around 20 minutes to play

Starting with the white ring each team or player has three arrows to strike their team's current colour. Once the colour has been struck the next archer on their team steps up and aims for the next colour i.e. after white, it's the black ring, after hitting the black ring it's the blue ring. If an archer misses a colour with their three goes the next archer steps up and tries to hit the same colour. The game continues until one of the teams progresses to and strikes gold. "Fast" may be called at any point to collect arrows before resuming.

If so decided, the teams may continue and try to work their way back out to white by first striking gold again.

2. Foxes and Geese

Equipment: At least one target stand, boss, coloured target face.

Skills primarily tested: Accuracy, Teamwork, Assurance

Time Taken: around 40 minutes to play

One team is designated the Geese and the other the Fox. The Geese's first archer then shoots three arrows at the target face. The Fox's team must then shoot the same colours as the Geese. For each colour that's matched by the Fox, the Geese's arrow is removed. Any remaining Geese's arrows are scored normally (1 point for white, 2 for black, 3 for blue, 4 for red and 5 for gold) *e.g. the Geese steps up and score red with his first arrow, white with his second and black with his third. The Fox steps up and shoots white with his first arrow therefore the Geese's white arrow is removed, he shoots black with his second arrow therefore the Geese's black arrow is removed and then he finally shoots blue with his third. The Geese's red score remains and so the Geese score 4 points.*

All the Geese shoot with their scores being 'chased' by the Foxes. At the end the Geese total up their final score and then the roles are reversed. The Foxes become the Geese and the Geese become the Foxes. The game is played through and then the new Geese's final score is compared against the old Geese's final score. The highest score wins.

If no target face available, just count arrows in the target.

3. Wreath Shooting

Equipment: At least one target stand, boss, an arrow to hold the string, a small wreath or circle of card or flowers.

Skills primarily tested: Accuracy, Assurance

Time taken: 30 seconds per arrow per archer

Take an old arrow tie a piece of string to the end, stick it in the top of the boss and then hang the wreath so that it dangles freely in front of where the centre target should be. The wreath should be able to spin freely and that's what makes this game so hard.

Take two teams and place one archer from each team on the shooting line. On the call of "nock, draw, loose" each archer has three arrows to put one clean through the wreath and stop it spinning (if they get the wreath it doesn't count). The first archer to get the wreath wins the point and for both archers their round is over. Arrows are retrieved and the next set of archers step up. The team with the most points at the end wins.

4. Nearest the Bull

Equipment: At least one target stand, boss, coloured target face.

Skills primarily tested: Accuracy, Assurance

Time taken: 30 seconds per arrow per archer

This can be played with either one arrow per archer (hardest for the archer to do), or two or even three. Everyone shoots and the nearest arrow wins for their team, or themselves if it's an individual shoot.

5. Continuous Nearest the Bull

Equipment: At least one target stand, boss, coloured target face.

Skills primarily tested: Accuracy, Assurance

Time taken: Around half an hour depending on the skill of the archers.

Each archer starts with six arrows. Everyone shoots their six arrows at the target. Any arrows that miss the target altogether are "out" and are kept by the Target Archery Marshal and can't be used for the remainder of the game. Take a look at the target and remove the furthest number of arrows from the bullseye that equals the number of archers in the game i.e. if there

are five archers shooting, remove the five arrows furthest from the bullseye. The Target Archery Marshal keeps all the arrows removed from the game and the archers can collect the arrows they have left before another round is shot. If you have no more arrows left in the game, you are out (and consequently the number of arrows furthest from the bulls-eye reduces for the next round). The game is played until there are either two archers left or twenty minute mark has been reached. With their remaining arrows, all archers still in the game shoot again, and the archer who gets one arrow nearest the bullseye in that final round wins.

This game favours archers who shoot accurately and consistently, but you only need to keep one arrow in the game each round to win.

6. Speed Target Shooting

Equipment: At least one target stand, boss, coloured target face.

Skills primarily tested: Accuracy, Speed, Teamwork

Time taken: 5 minutes per game.

Designate the number of arrows allowed per archer i.e. six, and then only allow one archer at a time from each team on the shooting line e.g. two teams means two archers on the line. The Target Archery Marshal calls "nock, draw, loose" and the archers must shoot all six of their arrows. The first archer to shoot their last arrow may call "fast" to prevent the other archer from shooting any more arrows. The next two archers then step up and shoot.

When all archers have shot the scores are then totalled up (normal scoring - 5 for gold, 4 for red etc) and the team with the most points wins.

Teamwork comes in when matching archers speeds against the opposing teams.

7. Edward III's Call for Archers

Equipment: At least one target stand, boss, coloured target face.

Skills primarily tested: Accuracy, Assurance

Time taken: Around 3 minutes per archer

Each archer has six arrows to prove their worth as an archer and join King Edward III and his wars in France. Take six arrows, shoot them all within 30 seconds and make three of them hit red or higher. Archers may start the game with an arrow nocked on their string.

If you can shoot all of your arrows and get three or more in red or higher, you are a first class archer and are off to France for 6d a day, plus war booty.

If you cannot shoot all six arrows, but have managed three or more in the red or you haven't got three or more in the red, but managed to shoot all six arrows, then you are a second class archer and are off for garrison duty in France at 4d a day, plus booty.

If you can't shoot six arrows in 30 seconds and can't get three reds, then you're off to Scotland for 2d a day, plus no booty due the Scots scorched earth policy to invaders.

A simple game, but very stressfull! If a team game the team with highest number of archers going to France wins.

8. Scoring

Equipment: At least one target stand, boss, coloured target face.

Skills primarily tested: Accuracy, Assurance (lots of it)

Time taken: Around 4 minutes per archer.

This exercise can be used to chart an archer's accuracy. Take six arrows, number and score each one. i.e. an archer steps up and his 1st arrow scores 3 points, 2nd arrow scores 4 points, 3rd arrow scores 0 points etc.

These scores can be totalled up, charted and trended to see how an archer is progressing.

If this were to be converted into a team or tournament game, it would purely be the team or person who scored the most points who wins. This is the most 'traditional' (in the sense of modern archery) game.

9. Volley Scoring

Equipment: At least one target stand, boss, coloured target face.

Skills primarily tested: Accuracy, Teamwork

Time Taken: 3 minutes per volley

Each team takes it in turn to do commanded volleys (or rolling volley) at the target face. After each team shoots their volley their arrows and scores are counted up. The team who scores the highest volley score wins.

Optional: A +3 point score addition can be made by the Captain of the Archers for a "good" volley that hits the target at the same time.

This was a great training for when the club was required to do volley shooting in front of the public.

10. The Earl of Warwick's Challenge

Equipment: At least one target stand, boss, coloured target face.

Skills primarily tested: Accuracy, Speed, Teamwork, Assurance

Time Taken: Around five minutes per round, may be played over a number of rounds.

The Earl and his esquire are riding to attack a retinue of 100 Normans. You, as his trusty archers, must dispatch as many of the Normans *before* your Lord joins the melee. Each team gets thirty seconds to shoot as many arrows as possible at the target. Each arrow striking the target (white or higher) will be a 'kill'.

Your team's efforts will be deemed a success if you can get the number of 'kills' equal to the number of archers shooting x four. i.e. 6 archers shooting for 30 seconds must get 24 'kills'.

If played as team vs team event, the team with the highest number of 'kills' wins the round. The round can be replayed with best of three etc. The formula for success can be altered as the archer's skills increase. i.e. by making a 'kill' blue or better, or by changing the number needed from 8 x the number of archers to 9 x the number of archers etc.

11. Earl of Oxford's Challenge

Equipment: At least one target stand, boss, and either;

Some paper, such as newspaper and some sticky tape. OR

At least five balloons and some pins to hold them to the target face.

Skills primarily tested: Accuracy, Teamwork, Assurance

Time Taken: 25 minutes

This challenge has no real basis on any one historic instance other than the accurate shooting that was needed when friend and foe were in close proximity. Take at least four sheets of no bigger than A4 sized newspaper and sticky tape them at compass points around the boss **or** take four balloons and pin them at compass points around the boss. These will be the enemy foot soldiers. Take a fifth sheet of paper or balloon and place that in the middle. This will be the Earl of Oxford bravely fighting in among the horde.

Each team has two minutes and each archer in a team has two arrows each to take out as many of the enemy as possible, **without hitting the Earl of Oxford**. They may take their time and

discuss which archer is shooting at which target to achieve the goal of killing all the foot soldiers. If the Earl of Oxford is hit, that round is lost. If time runs out, the round is over. The team who manages the most kills wins. If both teams kill the Earl of Oxford, that round is a draw.

This task can be varied by increasing the number of enemy soldiers or decreasing the number of arrows to just one per archer.

12. Earl of Northampton's Challenge

Equipment: At least one target stand, boss, a target face and some tape **or** a peg, some twine and a balloon.

Skills primarily tested: Accuracy, Speed

Time Taken: 25 minutes (set up and take down time included)

In 1342, William, Earl of Northampton, was constituted the King's Lieutenant and Captain-General in Brittany, and upon that high service, he defeated the enemy at Morlaix and took the town of Roch-Dirien by assault.

This game is a partial reconstruction of the assault on Roch-Dirien. Here, the archers must take out sentries on the battlements. This can be played two ways, depending on the equipment available;

Target Stand, Boss, Target Face and Tape (if available)

Run the tape across the target face dividing it horizontally in two. The archers get three arrows and 1 minute to strike the red or gold, *but only the top half of the target*. The lower half of the target is considered to be protected by the battlements. An arrow that cuts the tape is a miss as it would have been deflected. The archers must obtain one kill per three archers to win. If played as a team game, keep score of the number of kills and the highest number wins.

A Peg, Some Twine and a Balloon

The twine is attached to the balloon and then looped around the peg. A volunteer then pulls the twine at walking speed so that the balloon will begin moving across the range. Shooting may commence once the balloon is in motion and the Captain calls 'loose'. Once the balloon passes a predetermined point, all shooting must stop. Archers may use as many arrows as they possess. Multiple balloons can be used, as well as restricting the number of arrows just to make this challenge harder. Destroying the balloon(s) is a win. If a team game, the number of kills or the quickest kill(s) in the event of a draw, wins.

13. St. Hubertus' Trial

Equipment: At least one target stand, boss, coloured target face.

Skills primarily tested: Accuracy, Intensity

Time taken: ~15 minutes

St. Hubertus is the patron saint of hunters, mathematicians, opticians and metalworkers, and used to be invoked to cure rabies! However, in this trial he's asking for the hunters to come forward because he's very, very hungry. Your archers are out hunting small game with Jessop H4 hunting heads (London Museum Type 14 and 15). These arrowheads will mangle a game bird so finesse shooting is required.

The concept is simple. Three arrows per archer to strike red or better using *finesse* shooting. An arrow that strikes the target soft enough to be pulled out with finger power alone (zero pull with the arm) is a *roaster* and is worth 3 points. An arrow that strikes the target too hard and has to be pulled out with arm power is a *stew* and is worth 1 point. The arrow must stay in the target for it to count.

In the event of a draw on points *roasters* are better than *stews* so the archer or team with the most *roasters* wins.

This game is judged as always by the Captain of the Archers, however there is a another way of scoring this with some extra bits and pieces to make a 'dummy' bird;

Take two tetrapack waxed cardboard containers (the 1-litre orange juice or milk waxed cardboard containers). Squash one flat and either sellotape it or put an elastic band around them to hold them together. For added effect, sellotape or poke inside the rubber band an inflated balloon. So you've got a cardboard container, crushed cardboard container and then balloon 'bird'. This whole thing can be stood up with the balloon facing away from the archer i.e. the balloon (the birds innards) are protected by the inflated and crushed cardboard containers.

If you shoot with *finesse*, it's possible to puncture the carton without going through the second squashed pack and bursting the balloon. If you pop the balloon, you get a *stew*, if you miss after three arrows you get nothing and of course, if you hit it without bursting the balloon you get a *roaster*. By turning the carton face around this dummy bird can last around twenty clean hits. If you don't have a balloon, you just have to look to see if it's come all the way through.

14. Roving

Equipment: Some coloured pegs or flags

Skills primarily tested: Accuracy

Time taken: Each round takes 30 seconds per archer. Number of rounds played is open and should be agreed before starting.

Place the coloured pegs at random around the field. Decide how many rounds will be played and select the first archer. That archer will pick a peg to shoot at, select one arrow and try to hit it with their selected arrow. Each archer must place at least one foot on a designated shooting point (usually the peg they were shooting at in the last round). After all the archers have finished shooting at the peg the archer whose arrow point is closest to it wins. The winning archer now chooses the next peg and the process is repeated.

If played as team the archer who wins the most wins it for his or her team. In the event of a draw, the archers shoot another round to decide the winner.

15. Poor Man's Clout Shooting

Clout Archery (G.N.A.S. rules in the United Kingdom) Similar to target archery, except that the archer attempts to drop arrows at long range (180 yards / 165 m for the men and 140 yards / 128 m for women; there are shorter distances for juniors depending on age) into a group of concentric circular scoring zones on the ground surrounding a marker flag. The flag is 12 inches (30 cm) square and is fixed to a stick. The flag should be as near to the ground as is practicable. Archers shoot 'ends' of six arrows then, when given the signal to do so, archers proceed to the target area. A Clout round usually consists of 36 arrows. Clout tournaments are usually a 'Double Clout' round (36 arrows shot twice). They can be shot in one direction (one way) or both directions (two way). All bow types may compete (longbows, recurve, barebow and compound).

Scoring: A 'rope' with a loop on the end is placed over the flag stick. This rope is divided into the scoring zones of the target: Gold (5 points), Red (4 points), Blue (3 points), Black (2 points) and White (1 point). The rope is 'walked' around the target area and arrows falling within a particular scoring zone are withdrawn and, on completion of the full circle, are laid out on the rope on the corresponding colours. The designated scorer would then call out the archers' names and the archers would (in turn) call out their scores as they pick up their arrows.

Equipment: Some coloured pegs or flags

Skills primarily tested: Accuracy

Time taken: Each round takes 30 seconds per archer. Number of rounds played is open and should be agreed before starting.

Set up two pegs (or flags) some distance away from each other. Starting at one peg, each archer must take one arrow and shoot into the air towards the opposite peg. The archer whose arrow point drops closest to the peg wins. The archers can then shoot back to the other peg. The idea is to shoot high, for example, to enable the archer to shoot fire arrows over a castle wall.

16. Archery Duelling (with sharp arrows, no armour, but safely)

Equipment: At least one target stand, boss, coloured target face **or** sheets of paper.

Skills primarily tested: Accuracy, Speed, Assurance

Time Taken: approx. 10 minutes pre round

Two teams are selected make two lines queuing up to the shooting line. The archers at the front of the queue should be the ones on the shooting line. On the command of “nock, draw, loose” both archers shoot one arrow at the target.

Results:

If both arrows miss, both archers survive and both archers may go to the back of their team queue.

If both arrows hit, both archers survive and both archers may go to the back of their team queue.

If one arrow hits but the other archer’s arrow misses, that archer is out. The archer whose arrow hit may go to the back of their team’s queue. The archer whose arrow missed must leave the game.

The next two archers step up and repeat. The game is played until fresh arrows need to be collected (after which the game may resume) or all archers from one team are knocked out.

17. Archery Football

Equipment: A light weight ball (somewhere between a beach ball and a soccer ball), two old arrows, rope to make the goal line.

Skills primarily tested: Accuracy, Speed, Teamwork

Time Taken: approx. 5 minutes pre round, as many rounds as you want to play

Take two teams of archers with blunts. Take the first team and get them to line up on the shooting line. About thirty paces away place the rope, which represents the goal line. Midway between the goal line and the shooting line place the ball. Allow each (one at a time or all together) the chance to shoot their blunt(s) at the ball, but place a one-minute time limit on their efforts for the round. The idea is push the ball towards the goal line with the blunts. When the round is over, place an old arrow where the ball currently sits and reset the game for the other team to play. Repeat. If the ball touches the goal line, it’s a goal and the ball is reset in the middle for any remaining arrows to be shot. After each round the ball is placed back where that teams arrow marker was so that they can continue. Play as many rounds as you’re comfortable with, just look out for bounce backs with the blunts on the ball.

18. Quintaine

Equipment: A quintaine (revolving arm holding two suitable targets at either end.)

Skills primarily tested: Accuracy, speed, assurance

Time taken: Each round takes 30 seconds per archer. Number of rounds played is open and should be agreed before starting.

Spin the target and when the person who span the arms is clear, the command “nock, draw, loose” enable everyone to shoot. This, as with all moving target archery should be simple to score. Either an arrow hits or it doesn't. Three arrows per archer at the quintaine and for each hit a point is awarded. The person or team with the most points wins. The Target Archery Marshal must call “fast” when the quintaine has slowed or stopped making the targets too easy to hit.

Archery Quintaines are hard to hard to spin safely when archers are around. Great care must be taken with this game. We tried all sorts of quintaines, but the best was a simple pole, cross pole and two very heavy straw targets. Once spun the weight of the two targets kept the cross arm spinning for some time. We tried a spinner with string on the top and it got tangled fairly often. We tried an electric cordless drill to spin it, but they burn out too often. It then just came down to the discipline of getting someone to spin the quintaine by hand and call “loose” when they were well clear.

19. Rising Target

Equipment: A device that looks like a trebuchet. The target is where the sling would be and a rope is attached to where the counterweight would be. An operator pulls the rope and the target is raised into the air.

Skills primarily tested: Accuracy, speed

Time taken: Each round takes 30 seconds per archer. Number of rounds played is open and should be agreed before starting.

This, as with all moving target archery should be simple to score. Either an arrow hits or it doesn't. Three arrows per archer at the target and for each hit a point is awarded. The person or team with the most points wins.

20. Drag Target

Equipment: A suitable target (e.g. cardboard box), a peg and a long piece of rope.

Skills primarily tested: Accuracy, speed

Time taken: Each round takes 30 seconds per archer. Number of rounds played is open and should be agreed before starting.

This, as with all moving target archery should be simple to score. Either an arrow hits or it doesn't.

The target is dragged between two marked points in the field. Once the target passes the 2nd marker all shooting must stop. Three arrows per archer at the target and for each hit a point is awarded. The person or team with the most points wins.

21. Rout

Equipment: At least one target stand, boss, coloured target face **or** sheets of paper.

Skills primarily tested: Accuracy, Speed, Assurance

Time Taken: approx. 10 minutes pre round

The idea is that 100 men-at-arms have broken and begun to rout in front of your archers. Rather than move the targets away though, the shooting line is moved back.

Each team starts at the 20 pace line. On the command "nock, draw, loose" everyone shoots one arrow. "Fast" is called and then the shooting line is moved back five paces. Another arrow volley is then shot. Repeat until you run out of space or arrows.

The team with the greatest number of kills wins.

22. Shooting From Pegs

Equipment: At least one target stand, boss, coloured target face, some pegs or old arrows to act as pegs.

Skills primarily tested: Accuracy, Speed, Assurance.

Time Taken: 1 minute per archer playing

Set a course of four, five or six pegs at variable distance from the target. Each archer, in turn, must walk to the first peg and placing their foot against it turn to face the target and shoot an arrow. The archer may then move to the second peg and so forth until they have completed all the pegs. Once that archer has finished the second archer may step onto the course. Time allowed for a time to complete the course is the number of archers x 1 minute e.g. 6 archers get six minutes. Both teams shoot, the one with the most points win.

Variation include stipulating the archer kneel at a certain peg, or place a back foot on an upturned bucket, or place a peg behind a natural obstacle like a bush so the archer has to lean out etc

23. Wand Shooting

Equipment: The target is a 2-inch wide strip of wood, projecting 6 feet above the ground

Skills primarily tested: Accuracy

Time taken: Each round takes 30 seconds per archer. Number of rounds played is open and should be agreed before starting.

Hit or split the wand to score. The usual distance is around 100 yards for men and 60 yards for women, but space will dictate how far you place the shooting line. For greater durability of the wand, wrap it in cloth. Hits are audibly as well as visibly apparent.

Can be played as a team game or as an individual game. Care must be taken that only one or two archers shoot at a time, otherwise hits may become too confusing.

24. Arrow Messages

Equipment: At least one target stand, boss, coloured target face, lots of pieces of string, paper and pens.

Skills primarily tested: Accuracy, Teamwork

Time Taken: An hour or more

The idea is to delivery a message via the medium of the arrow. Take two teams and split them in half to form four groups. Each half of a team will be trying to send a message to the other half of their team and visa versa.

Take a handful of everyday sayings and write them on pieces of paper, fold them up and put them in a hat. Get each group to draw the message that they are going to send to the other half of their team. Send the groups to the four corners of the field to prep their arrows. The rules are...

1. Each arrow can only carry **one** word of the message.
2. The word must be written on a piece of paper and tied onto the arrow shaft.
3. The position in the message may indicated by numbering each word i.e. "Too many cooks spoil the broth" can have "1. Too" on one piece of paper, "2. many" on another, "3. cooks" on another etc. This aids in deciphering the message.

4. Multiple arrows can carry the same word e.g. a group might have four arrows with “3. cooks” written on the paper, but remember only one word per arrow.
5. Once all the arrows are ready, the first group stands at least 30 paces away and tries to shoot all their arrows at the target. Any arrows that miss are “lost” and cannot be picked up by the other group in their team.
6. The other group in the team then collects all valid arrows from the target and tries to decipher their message. If they decipher their message and repeat it accurately back to the Target Archery Marshal they get a point (so they might be missing a word, but work it out).
7. Everyone has a chance to shoot and decipher the messages before the game finishes.

The team with the most points wins. If it's a draw, it's a draw. Variations include multiple messages in one go (for added confusion), or not letting the words get numbered so that they have to work out the phrase for real.

25. The Battle of Sluys

Equipment: An archery net or large square cloth, ropes and poles.

Skills primarily tested: Accuracy

Time Taken: 20 minutes

The Battle of Sluys was a naval battle fought in 1340 at the beginning of the Hundred Years War between England and France. Medieval naval warfare wasn't very sophisticated as it mostly involved coming alongside a ship, grappling it, boarding it and then fighting as the armies would do on land.

One tactic to aid grappling a ship would be to render the enemy's sail useless by shooting arrows through it. Practical tests have shown that “forkers” Jessop's H1 or H2, could have been used as, from an angle, these tend to gather and cut larger holes in sail cloth. There is no definitive answer on this though.

For the purpose of the game set a “sail cloth” (archery net or substitute) at a distance of not less than 40 paces from the shooting line. Allow all archers six arrows to shoot into the sail and when finished count up those arrows sitting on the ground below it. The archer or team with the most arrows that hit the sail win.

This game is quite hard because archers tend to need a fixed focal point to aim at. A large billowing target can be deceptively hard for an instinctive archer to shoot at unless they practice.

Section 2 – Challenges

These are individual Challenges that require a lot more explaining to your archers before starting, but can be run as a whole-group shared experience, rather than two or more teams competing against each other. These challenges work well, especially when there aren't really enough archers to make up two teams i.e. those times when just five people turn up to shoot, but I've run them with up to thirty archers with no real major problems. If you've got a lot of competitive archers and you want them to start working together as a team, pitting them against a challenge is a good, fun way of competing against an idea or a myth rather than each other, even if the Challenge says to put them in teams (teams aren't really required, they just spice things up even more). They can also be run annually as an event in itself (as we did) to see if a challenge can be completed each year, i.e. we ran Splitting the Arrow three years running to see if we could do it.

Challenge Number 1—William of Cloudesley Shooting the Apple Accuracy, Assurance

The Story

If you say you're going to split an apple that's sitting on a small boy's head, everyone immediately thinks of William Tell. Unfortunately, in that legend, William Tell used a crossbow. In actual fact, splitting apples with arrows was a fairly staple myth in Scandinavia and Germany, and England had its own version too. Robin Hood isn't the only mythical outlaw from medieval ballads, there was also one fellow called William of Cloudesley ...

"I have a sonne is seven yere olde,

He is to me full deare;

I wyll hym tye to a stake,

All shall se that be here,

"And lay an apple upon hys head,

And go syxe score paces hym fro,

And I my selfe, with a brode arow,

Shall cleve the apple in two."

That comes from a ballad about three forester heroes of Cumberland, Adam Bell, Clim of the Clough, and William of Cloudesley, and here William is shooting to impress the king. Of course he makes the shot, so can you?

The Setup

We'll be setting up a dummy boy in front of an archery butt and placing an apple on the dummy's head. Each archer gets a generous two arrows to shoot the apple from the head. If

either of the arrows actually strikes the boy the challenge is over.

Challenge Number 2—Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring - The Final Battle

Accuracy, Speed, Assurance

The Story

For those who've not read the books or seen the extended editions of the movie, we'll keep this simple and just say that our hero for this challenge is a pointy eared fellow called *Legolas* who's fighting some nasty bad guys called orcs who are after some little people called Hobbits because they've got a magic ring...

For those who have seen the movie, it's during the final battle in the forest before Frodo and Sam decide to split from the group.

Anyway, that's all background stuff. It's quite a spectacular piece of archery even if it is digitally enhanced and choreographed. In a melee during the final battle of the film, *Legolas* manages to shoot six arrows in about ten seconds as the bad guys run around him and, of course, he manages to kill an orc with every shot. It's a fun scene and we think worthy of a challenge.

Don't worry, here's a reality check; we're not expecting you to match the digitally-enhanced speed, just the accuracy.

We're going to give everyone 30 seconds to loose 6 arrows at 6 targets. The trick with this challenge is that each of the targets are less than 20 paces away, some as close as 5 yards. This'll mean not only shooting quickly, but also making adjustments for the archer's paradox. Think you can do it?

The Setup

Each archer gets six arrows and thirty seconds to hit six targets ranged between 5 and 20 paces away.

Challenge Number 3—Robin Hood: Prince of Thieves ...

And His Bandy Shooting

Accuracy, Finesse

The Story

Another movie challenge, this time from the 1991 Kevin Costner film, *Robin Hood: Prince of Thieves*.

In this scene, Robin is faced with two advancing Norman soldiers. He deftly takes two arrows

and rips one fletch from one of the arrows with his teeth. He then nocks them both and shoots the two of them at the same time. The arrow that's now missing the fletch supposedly bends in flight while the untouched arrow flies straight. Result? Both arrows take down the two advancing Normans at the same time.

Likely to work? No. Sadly, unless your name is Arckle the racehorse, ripping the fletching off with your teeth be near to impossible as medieval fletchings were tied on as well as glued. In addition to this the fletchings are there to make the arrow to spin, tampering with them would more likely result in nothing more than the arrow flying in a totally random, uncontrollable and ugly way.

So is this shot possible? Yes. Thankfully, you don't even have to mutilate your arrows. Just nock two at the same time, tilt the bow over so it's horizontal, point the 'top' arrow towards the right target and the 'bottom' arrow straight towards the left target, aim for the left target, draw and release! You will not get full draw doing this shot!

The Setup

Each archer gets four arrows to have two attempts at striking two equidistant targets at the same time. The range will be a very close 20 paces so that full draws won't be necessary.

Challenge Number 4—The Sword of Sherwood Forest

Accuracy, Assurance

The Story

This comes from the 1960 film “The Sword of Sherwood Forest” which was a spin off from the Richard Greene 1950’s television show “The Adventures of Robin Hood”.

The film itself is a real stinker, but it does provide some interesting challenges for an archer as Robin is asked to do various trick shots. One of them was to shoot a target through an arrow slit. Easy, you think. But the challenge lay in the fact that the arrow slit was halfway between the archer and the target.

The Setup

We'll be placing some sort of netting, barrier or even might build a wall (probably not), halfway between the shooting line and the target (a strong piece of cardboard with an arrow loop cut into it works well). In this barrier will be cut an arrow slit, which our archers must shoot through to reach the target. Any archer who successfully hits the target will mean that the challenge will be deemed a success. The distance between archer and target is currently set at 30 paces, therefore the arrow slit will be 15 paces away.

Challenge Number 5—Beating the Shield Man.

Accuracy, Speed

The Story

This challenge involves an archer facing a soldier holding a shield. The idea is that it'd be a simple case for the soldier simply to block each arrow the archer shot at him. Therefore, the only option open would be for the archer to shoot one arrow high to come down on the soldier from above and while the soldier is tracking this first arrow, the archer shoots directly at him from the front with a second arrow. If done correctly, both arrows should arrive at the target at the same time therefore making it impossible to block both of them.

This is going to be the hardest challenge yet as it'll require accurate direct and indirect shooting along with speed and timing.

The Setup

A simple one to set up. A normal boss will be the target and each archer must take turns to try to get two arrows to hit the target with two separately shot arrows.

Arrows must arrive within a second of each other so timing and accuracy is important!

Challenge Number 6—Swinging Water Skin on a Rope

Accuracy, Speed, Assurance

The Story

Used as a practice target in films and television shows since anyone can remember, this challenge involves shooting at a water skin on a rope. Custom dictates that the skin has to be swinging and someone has to cut the rope with an arrow, but we'll be happy with three strikes on the main water skin target. If you can strike the rope, we doubt our field points would cut it, but we willing to allow a rope strike as another indicator of a successful challenge.

The Setup

We'll be setting up a swinging target. Three hits on the target or one hit on the rope successfully completes the challenge.

Challenge Number 7—Shooting A Boiled Egg Suspended on a Thread

Accuracy, Assurance

The Story

If you spend enough time on YouTube looking for archery trick shots, you'll come across Korean archers shooting kidney beans off pieces of thread. We're not expecting that kind of accuracy from longbows, so instead this Challenge uses a boiled egg.

The Setup

Sticky tape is used to hold and suspend a boiled egg in front of a target. Use two old arrows jammed into the top and bottom of the target boss to suspend the tape. The shooting line is placed 20 paces away and each archer gets two arrows to strike the egg. The challenge is a success if any archer strikes the egg with their first shot.

Challenge Number 8—Splitting the Arrow

Accuracy, Assurance

The Story

This Challenge is an oldie, but goldie, it's Robin Hood splitting an arrow. As a club, we tried this Challenge many times over the years using cardboard tubes in lieu of an actual arrow to split, but the best material to use is ... well let's have a look at the history of the Robin Hood splitting the arrow trick;

The Middle Ages (somewhen); The ballad of Robin Hood attending an archery contest set as a trap by the Sheriff of Nottingham is an old one that originates in the Middle Ages, and it is more likely to be the challenge of splitting a wand (Wand Shooting). However, Robin splitting the arrow at the contest comes a bit later.

- 1819 *Ivanhoe* by Sir Walter Scott; It's Sir Walter Scott's novel about a Saxon noble family set at the time of the Third Crusade (1194'ish) that we're introduced to Robin of Locksley a.k.a Robin Hood who wins the archery contest by splitting his opponent's arrow. Hurrah!
- 1938 *The Adventures of Robin Hood*; This is the Errol Flynn epic which also starred Olivia de Havilland as Maid Marion and Basil Rathbone as Sir Guy of Gisbourne. Here we actually see Robin Hood splitting the arrow as part of a real life trick shot done by legendary archer Howard Hill (who appeared in the film as Owen the Welshman, credited as "Captain of Archers")
- 2002 *Mythbusters* airs for the first time; *MythBusters* is a popular science television. In this show, the presenters focus on popular beliefs and urban legends and test them to see if they are true. Episodes 36 and 51 looked at whether it really is possible to "Robin Hood" an arrow, that is split an arrow from nock to tip. Unfortunately, they found that because of the spin of the arrow doing the splitting and the fact that the target arrow will not have a completely straight grain, it's impossible to "split arrow from nock to tip" as shown in the 1938 *The Adventures of Robin Hood*. They surmised that to do this trick it was necessary for Howard Hill to use bamboo for the target arrow instead (even then the target arrow is split in three!)

The Setup

So if you want to make this challenge hard, use bamboo and if you want to make this challenge easier, use cardboard tubes of increasing diameter and get the archers to put an arrow down

inside the tube. The easiest way to fix a cardboard tube to a target is to get a small box, make a hole in it and push the tube in. Then fix the box onto the target face.

The archers were split into two impromptu teams and set on the shooting line at 20 paces from the targets. The targets were four specially made and numbered 5" roundels (two per team) with bamboo target arrows set in the middle. For the sake of the Challenge, if any archer Robin Hooded a bamboo stick, the Challenge would be a success. For the sake of the game, each archer had 3 arrows per round, set over three rounds, to score as many points as they could. Points on the targets went for 1 on the outer circle right through to 5 points for the inner one and 20 points for actually splitting a bamboo stick.

The challenge would be a success if one of the bamboo "arrows" was actually split.

Challenge Number 9—Shooting Between the Fingers of a Hand Accuracy

The Story

This one is an impossible shot from the 2006 BBC version of Robin Hood (which was rubbish, by the way). In the first episode of the first series, Robin managed to shoot three arrows in between the fingers of a Norman soldier. Each archer will have three arrows to place one arrow between the fingers and thumb of a hand. If any arrow "strikes the hand" itself the challenge will be a failure. Easy peasy!

The Setup

A rubber glove filled with jelly (red of course) is suspended in front of a boss (a cardboard sleeve can be added for extra authenticity). Each archer has three arrows to try to get at least one arrow to land between the fingers of the glove. If an archer hits the hand at all, that archer's attempt is over.

Challenge Number 10—Warning Shot to the Head Accuracy

The Story

We'll be replicating the warning shot shown in numerous movies and television shows. Similar to the arrow between the fingers we'll be asking our archers to shoot at a head (not a real one mind). They'll get three arrows to shoot at a dummy head set before a boss. One archer needs to get at least one arrow so close to that they can flip the nock with their finger and the arrow will vibrate against the dummy head.

Unlike the fingers shot, the head will be three dimensional so it'll offer a different challenge to our archers.

The Setup

A dummy head is set before a target boss (a cabbage on a stick works for this). Each archer is allowed three arrows to land one on the boss close enough to the head so that it can be pulled back (tweaked) and it will smack the head. If an archer hits the head, the attempt is over for the archer.

Challenge Number 11—Howard Hill Mirror Shooting Trick

Accuracy, Assurance

The Story

As part of the special features disc for the 1938 Errol Flynn film “The Adventures of Robin Hood” there’s a short film about Howard Hill. Howard Hill was the archer hired by the film studio to carry out all of the archery shots featured in the movie, and has released several films showing himself conducting trick shots. One of the shots from this special feature involves Howard shooting a bullseye while looking in a mirror.

The Setup

During this attempt a full length mirror was be set up twenty paces from a FITA target. The archers had to sight the target through the mirror and get at least one gold with three arrows to complete the challenge. If a full length mirror is unavailable, a hand held mirror can be used instead (held by another archer).

Challenge Number 12—King Arthur 2004 “Making the Saxons Huddle”

Accuracy, Speed, Teamwork

The Story

This challenge comes from the self-proclaimed historically-suspiciously-wrong-with-the-historical-basics 2004 film “King Arthur”. In this film, it’s the last days of the Roman Empire in Britain, and a Roman officer named Arturus (a.k.a. Arthur – I won’t spoil the ending, but the film’s title should tell you he does quite well for himself) and his Sarmation “knights” have to travel north beyond Hadrian’s Wall to rescue a very important Roman (who has set up his home for reasons best left to himself very deep in enemy territory). Here, they come across an angry Saxon horde who have also, for some other reasons best left to themselves, decided to invade Britain from the Scottish side of Hadrian’s Wall rather than from the south like the history books said they did. Maybe that’s why they are so angry? Anyway, there’s only a handful of “knights” left to stop them. Luckily, they’re on a frozen lake that’s looking a bit iffy in the holding a Saxon horde stakes, so our heroes are trying to shoot at the sides to make the men group together and crash through the ice.

The Setup

Take two targets that represent both the left side and right side of the Saxon horde. The group is given 45 seconds to shoot as many arrows as they can at both sides of the horde. To complete this challenge, at the end of the time there must be a number of arrows equal to or greater than $3 \times$ no. of archers shooting in both targets.

Therefore, if there were seven archers shooting we needed, at the end of 45 seconds, to be able to count at least 21 arrows in the left section and 21 arrows in the right section to class the *Challenge* as a success. If it's a success, the horde would've grouped enough together to crash through the ice.

The trick to this *Challenge* is the fact that you're up against the clock, teamwork and communication is important. It's not about who's arrows are in the targets, but that there is the correct number of arrows in each target. Therefore, if one target becomes saturated the group has to switch to the other side.

Challenge Number 15—Horse Archery Without A Horse

Accuracy, Speed

The Story

This one copies an exercise carried out by horse archers. It basically consists of a course that runs parallel to the target. Originally, the course is marked into three sections for which the horse archery must shoot one arrow in each section. As the horse archer progresses, each shot becomes more difficult as the target starts in front of the archer, then to the side and finally behind. We don't have horses(!) and so this challenge will be conducted at a measured walk.

The Setup

A course is set up with four arrows placed equally along the shooting line. This creates three sections which represents the walking distance allowed for each of the three arrows to be shot. For a target, three playing cards are fixed in place and the three sections marked out at least 15 paces from the target. Each archer must walk at a continuous and sustained pace along the line and shoot one arrow per section. If an archer cannot nock and shoot an arrow by the time they have finished walking a section, they lose that section's shot and must continue to the next section. For the purpose of the Challenge, this will be deemed a success if there is at least one hit on a playing card per four archers taking part.

Challenge Number 14—Shooting Morholt from the 2006 film Tristan + Isolde

Accuracy, Speed, Assurance

The Story

This challenge has its origins in the 2006 film *Tristan & Isolde*. The film is based on the operatic rendition of the plot of Richard Wagner's, *Tristan und Isolde*, which in itself was based on the medieval romantic legend of Tristan and Iseult. Wagner based his opera on the tragic story of the adulterous love between the Cornish knight Tristan (Tristram) and the Irish princess Iseult (Isolde or Yseult). Appearing in the 12th century, the legend predates and probably influenced the Arthurian romance of Lancelot and Guinevere, which is why, if you watch the film, you can't help thinking someone has tried to re-write the King Arthur legend.

The story in the film is that it's the 5th century and, in what's now England, there are little Romano-British mini-kingdoms along with Angle, Saxon and Jute controlled mini-kingdoms all paying tribute to the mighty king of Ireland, who is called Donnchadh. One of the leaders called Mark tries to unite the Romano-British Angle Saxon and Jute factions so they can fight and don't have to pay tribute to Donnchadh. As part of the tribute to Donnchadh, the Romano-British-Angle-Saxon-Jute factions, here after referred to as the good guys, have to supply a cart load of young folk to go off and be slaves. As the good guys have decided they don't want to pay tribute anymore, they ambush the column of bad guys to get their people back. A big battle ensues in which the leader of the bad guys, called Morholt, starts stabbing and killing the cart load of young folk. Up pops a nameless good guy with his bow and arrow, and starts shooting at Morholt, however the good guy has only got a couple of arrows and he can see two bad guys running towards him. Does he save himself and shoot the bad guys or save the young folk and shoot Morholt?

The Setup

In this challenge, each archer plays the part of the good guy trying to shoot Morholt before the bad guys cut him/her down. There will be a 4" diameter target which represents Morholt set at around 20 paces and, in a slight twist to the usual type of challenge the bad guys will be played by another non-shooting archer, here after just known as "the bad guy".

For safety reasons (heart attacks mostly from such strenuous activity) the bad guy won't have to sprint 100 odd yards, but instead will be placed about 30 paces away from the archer. The bad guy must take baby-steps towards the archer who is shooting. Baby steps are where the heel of the foot going forward must be placed so that it touches the toes of the other foot. This way the archer should have around 15-20 seconds of shooting time before the bad guy reaches him/her. The bad guy can shout, cheer, swear or yell anything that they want to put the archer off. As soon as the bad guy is close enough to touch the archer, the Target Archery Marshal will call "fast".

If played as a team, game points can be awarded for Morholts shot versus archers killed.

Challenge Number 15—A Bad Workman Blames His Tools

Accuracy, Assurance

The Story

The proverb “a bad workman blames his tools” literally means it’s not the tools we use which make us good, but rather how we employ them. In this challenge, we took away our archers’ familiar bows and arrows and replaced them with the unfamiliar to see if they could still shoot well.

The Setup

Each archer would give up their usual equipment and shoot with unfamiliar bows and arrows. In this case they’d have to shoot with a fibreglass training bow which had a draw weight of around 25-30lbs. Each archer would have three arrows to shoot which to make things even harder would be tipped with blunts and have large drag-inducing fletches. In short, most archers would be underpowered and their arrows wouldn’t travel far.

The target is suspended not less than 20 yards in the air and the shooting line would be around another 20 yards away (we suspended a 3-litre plastic milk bottle from a pole).

This challenges the archer’s sense of perspective, and the shot is similar, although not strictly the same, as a popinjay shoot. Each archer is allowed to shoot all three of their arrows, and collectively the challenge would be deemed a success if the number of successful shots on target equalled (rounded down) half the number of archers present. Therefore, if six archers took part, there would need to be three successful strikes on the target to complete the challenge.

Challenge Number 16—The Five Gate Challenge

Accuracy, Teamwork

The Story

The Companions of the Longbow field had three gates. Is it possible to shoot up to each of these gates and back again using a limited number of arrows?

The Setup

In the Roundel Field are three gates. Starting at the entrance gate, the *Companions*, as a group effort, must shoot a chain of arrows up to the top of the field gate, then down to the Paintballer’s gate, back up to the top of the field gate and back to the entrance gate. One archer shoots an arrow towards the gate and the next archer must be able to touch that arrow with their foot before shooting the next one. Once an archer is close enough to the gate that they can touch it, the group can start aiming towards the next gate. The twists are that each archer is only allowed to shoot three arrows for the entire game and that any arrows outside the field boundary do not count and a fresh arrow must be shot.

Challenge Number 17—Penny Prykking

Accuracy, Teamwork, Assurance

The Story

In the 1440's, the bishop and dean of Exeter Cathedral complained about "yong persons" who entered their cloister to play at "the toppe, queke, penny prykke and most atte tenys, by the which the walles of the saide cloistre have be defowled and the glas wyndowes all to-brost".

Toppe and Queke should have been a quiet game, as the former was played presumably with a spinning top and latter was played with a chess-board - but the alarm about tenys (or as we now spell it - tennis) and penny-prick is understandable. Penny prykke especially, as apparently it involved the shooting of arrows at a penny target ...

The Setup

Fix three suitably-sized coins on a target, set the shooting line twelve paces away and give the archers, as a collective group, fifteen minutes to "prykk" i.e. shoot and damage all three coins. Each archer shoots three arrows before allowing the next archer to shoot. The clock is stopped to retrieve arrows.

The Challenge is a success if all three coins are prykked within the allotted time.

Challenge Number 18—The Siege of Abergavenny Castle 1182

Accuracy, Teamwork, Intensity

The Story

Abergavenny Castle is a Welsh castle situated at the confluence of the Gavenny and Usk rivers. In 1172/3, the castle was captured from William de Braose by Sitsyllt ap Dwfñwal, a Welsh chieftain. The castle was restored to Broase by Sitsyllt, and the surrounding chieftains were invited to a Christmas feast. Instead of a friendly meeting, Broase had Seisyll ap Dyfnwal and his guests murdered in 1175.

Seven years later, in 1182, the castle was attacked by sons of Seisyll, in revenge for their father's death, and it was during this siege that soldiers ran over a bridge seeking protection from one of the castle towers. The Welsh archers that were shooting behind them reportedly penetrated the oak door, which was recorded as being a hand thick. 'A hand' is about 4 inches, or the space of a palm. It's been estimated that, for an arrow to penetrate to this depth, a bow man would have had to shoot a 70 to 100-pound bow. Supposedly, the arrows were left in the door as a memento of this powerful weapon.

The Setup

Each archer taking part is allowed six arrows to shoot into a target made of compressed paper

(phone books are ideal). An arrow that misses is lost. After each archer has shot, the arrow penetration is marked off and recorded on a 32" long dowel. To complete the Challenge, the group must collectively shoot a combined penetration of longer than 32"

Challenge Number 19 - Downpour

Accuracy, Speed

The Story

Shortly before the Battle of Crécy (1346) started, it was reported that a short rain storm caused the Genoese crossbow men fighting for the opposing French army major problems by soaking their crossbow strings and shortening their effective range. The archers in the English army, on the other hand, were quickly able to unstring their bows and stow their bowstrings under their hats, helmets and in pouches until the rain stopped. Once the rain had passed, they restrung their longbows and, with their dry strings and longer range, were able to shoot down the crossbow men. But how easy is it to unstring, string again and shoot your longbow when the pressure is on?

The Setup

Remember: a badly-strung bow is unsafe and may jeopardise the archer and the bow. Do not draw the bow if you are unhappy with the way it has been strung. It is better to get knocked out of a game than damage your bow or injure yourself.

The archers will be divided into two categories. Those that string their bows with a stringer and those that don't. The two categories have an identical Challenge but the only difference is the time that's allowed.

The two groups take it in turn with the first group consisting of those archers who use stringers going first. The archers start on a shooting line not less than 20 paces from a standard FITA target. All archers must start with their bows strung, ready for action. Archer's who use stringers may have their stringers on the ground ready to go, but it must be removed and clear of the bow immediately after unstringing and stringing.

When called, the archers have 20 seconds for stringers and 5 seconds for non-stringers to unstring their bows. For the purposed of this game, the bows need only be unstrung from the top nock, the bottom loop may be left on. Once an archer has unstrung their bow they must raise it to signal that they have finished. If any archer fails to unstring their bow in the allotted time, they are out of the game.

Next, those archers who are still in the game will be asked to re-string their bows and shoot two arrows into the FITA target in the allotted time. The time given to complete this task will be 40 seconds for stringers and 20 seconds for non-stringers. More than two arrows can be shot if an archer fails to get two arrows into the FITA target to begin with, however if they fail to get two arrows into the target in the allotted time, they are out of the game.

Once an archer has two arrows onto the FITA target, they must step back from the shooting line to signal they have completed the game. At the end of the game, we should have the fastest stringer and non-stringer archer who has completed the Challenge in the allotted time. These two fastest archers will play Nearest the Bull to determine the winner.

An archer from both groups must complete the Challenge for it to be a success.

Challenge Number 20—Hostage

Accuracy, Teamwork

The Story

This *Challenge* is inspired by all those TV and movie moments where a bad guy holds someone hostage and uses them as a human shield. The good guy then has to take a difficult shot to kill the bad guy.

The Setup

Arrange two bosses so that one target is front of the other target. The target at the front is designated the hostage and the target behind is designated the bad guy. The bad guy needs to be almost totally covered by the hostage except for a strip that's about 4" to 5" wide. The shooting line should be set at twenty-five paces, and over a series of three rounds the *Companions* have a number of arrows each (See below) to shoot the bad guy.

After each round, as long as there were more arrows in the bad guy than the hostage, the round is a success. If there were an equal number of arrows in the bad guy and the hostage, then the round will be a failure. If there were more arrows in the hostage than the bad guy then the round will be a failure.

There are three rounds – in the first round each archer has three arrows to shoot. The second round each archer has two arrows and finally the last round each archer will have just the one arrow. As a collective group, the *Companions* have to save the hostage two out of the three rounds for the *Challenge* to be a success.

Challenge Number 21—Purse Shooting

Accuracy, Assurance

The Story

Hang a purse from a string and say that who ever can cut the string with an arrow from 20 paces wins the purse.

The Setup

It's hard to cut string with field points, so using a couple of bulldog clips replace part of the string with a strand of dried spaghetti. You can also use paper masking tape as the string. Set the shooting line at 20 paces and allow each archer three arrows to "cut the string".

Challenge Number 22 — The Death of Hotspur, Harry Percy

Accuracy, Speed, Assurance

The Story

The story is that Sir Henry Percy, also called Harry Hotspur, with his paternal uncle, Thomas Percy, Earl of Worcester, led a separate rebellion against King Henry IV of England in 1403, forming an alliance with the Welsh rebel, Owain Glyndŵr, who was leading his own Welsh rebellion. This conflict had its roots in the way Hotspur dealt with the Welsh rebels, which was contrary to Henry IV's (and parliament's) ideas, as well some broken promises for land and money following Henry IV's overthrow of Richard II in 1399. However, before the English and Welsh rebels could join forces, Hotspur was defeated and killed at the Battle of Shrewsbury (21st July 1403). Hotspur apparently raised his visor to get some air and was immediately hit in the mouth with an arrow. His death was said to be the catalyst, which, after three hours of fighting, led to the rebel army routing. The Battle of Shrewsbury was also where the young sixteen-year-old Prince Henry (the future Henry V of Agincourt fame) was also shot in the face with an arrow. Of course, unlike Harry Hotspur, and thanks to the best possible care, Prince Henry survived. An account of John Bradmore, the surgeon who invented a device for removing the arrowhead from Henry's face, can be found by clicking on the following link.

<http://www.rcpsg.ac.uk/hdrg/2006Nov3.htm>

But how easy is it to anticipate an enemy knight lifting his visor and shoot that one arrow accurately?

The Setup

A picture of a knight's face will be placed on a boss and a shooting line not less than 30 paces away is set up. Ideally, the picture should be of a helmeted head with a raised visor, but you can designate the red and gold rings on a FITA target face if need be.

To simulate the random chance of Harry raising his visor, each archer will draw and memorise a playing card from a standard deck of cards. The archer must remember the number or face card NOT the suit. The suit will not be important. The Target Archery Marshal, once everyone is ready with arrows allowed to be nocked on strings, will then draw a card from this deck and call nock, draw, loose for those archers who held that number or face card. e.g. "nock, draw, lose those who have a seven" or "nock, draw, lose those who have an ace"

The archer, once their number is called, will have 3 seconds to shoot one arrow at the dummy Harry Hotspur. Ten cards are drawn and are totally random (the same archers may get to shoot more than once, some archers may not shoot at all).

If at any point an archer hits the dummy Harry Hotspur head in the face, the game is over and that archer wins the prize. The arrow must strike the unprotected face. Any arrow that is lodged in the helmet will not count (as the arrow would probably have been deflected).

If the line fails to shoot the head, the game is over and the challenge is considered a fail.

Challenge Number 23 — The Fire Arrow Clout Shoot

Accuracy

The Story

Depth perception is great, isn't it? It works by using information gained from the different projection of objects onto each retina. By using these two images of the same scene from slightly different angles, it's possible to triangulate the distance to an object with a high degree of accuracy. But, what about when it's dark?

The Setup

A flaming torch, about three feet in height was set up in a field with a shooting line about 100 paces away. Once it was dark, the torch was lit and archers (who did not know the distance) had to shoot fire arrows roving fashion to land as close to the flaming torch as possible. The rules were that firstly the fire arrow had to remain lit after impact with the ground. Secondly, the challenge would be deemed a success if an archer could get an arrow within seven paces of the flaming torch.

Challenge Number 24 – Captain Jack Churchill's 1940 BEF Shot

Accuracy, Teamwork

The Story

This Challenge is inspired by a man who at the time was Captain Jack "Fighting Jack" Churchill and was the last known person to use a longbow in war. The year was 1940 and Jack Churchill was part of the retreating BEF in France. He and his squad had to kill some German sentries, and as Jack Churchill was (a) what we might now call a character, (b) an archer, (c) an archer who took his longbow and some broadhead arrows to France with him, he ordered his squad only to shoot when his first arrow shaft had struck home.

The Setup

A human-sized target (stacked cardboard boxes will work) is set up with a shooting line, not less than 100 yards away. Each archer is allowed three arrows per round and three rounds to strike the target. Team mates who are not shooting must act as Captain Jack's squad and they must collectively clap their hands once when (or if) the arrow strikes home. If the squad fails to clap within a second of the arrow hitting home, the Challenge is a failure. If no archers can hit the target then the Challenge will be considered a failure.

Challenge Number 25 – Shooting Down A Flying Object

Accuracy, Speed

The Story

This Challenge was inspired by watching trick shots on YouTube of archers throwing things in the air and shooting them down. This Challenge consists of seeing if our archers can actually hit an object that's flying through the air.

The Setup

Three “flying” targets are made (in this case three seat cushions). Each archer gets two attempts to shoot down each of the three targets (that's six arrows at six targets). For safety, the targets are thrown by the Target Archery Marshal who is standing on the shooting line. If three separate archers can each hit one of the targets the Challenge is considered a success.

Challenge Number 26 – Hitting Tennis Balls

Accuracy, Teamwork

The Story

The youthful bowman, being thus initiated into all the preparatory mysteries of his art, may next proceed to exercise himself in shooting at the targets. The first distance should no exceed ten yards at which, after a month's diligent practice, he will be able to strike a tennis ball suspended from a string, many successive times. Let him then remove it to twenty yards and on acquiring a similar degree of dexterity at that distance, his next step will be the extreme point blanc range of his bow.—The Book of Archery by George Agar Hansard 1840

The Setup

At least one tennis ball is suspended from a string or rope and a shooting line set at 10 paces. Each archer gets 6 arrows to strike the tennis ball, after which the shooting line is moved back to 15, then 20, then 25 and finally 30 paces. If during any round, including the final round, an archer fails to strike a tennis ball, the Challenge is a failure.

Challenge Number 27 – Killing Joan of Arc

Accuracy

The Story

This Challenge was inspired by the 1999 Luc Besson film *The Messenger: The Story of Joan of Arc*, with the title character played by then 23-year-old Milla Jovovich. The film got mixed reviews when it was released, particularly from fans of the real St. Joan (Jeanne d'Arc is one of three

patron saints of France). So, if you're patriotically English and find films showing the stereotypical "Hollywood" (although the film isn't Hollywood!) evil English baddies objectionable, (who even have black teeth while the good guys have perfect white ones), take comfort that in this film the heroine doesn't come out of it too well either (one critic described Milla Jovovich's portrayal of Joan of Arc as "a Valley Girl on methamphetamines").

So what's the Challenge? Well, a sizable action part of the film covers the French army's successful siege of the English-held town of Orleans (the siege lasted from the 12th October 1428 to 8th May 1429). This was a major event in The Hundred Years War, as it reversed a previously-cautious French trend to warfare in the wake of so many years of English victories.

At this siege, after previously gaining the stockade at St. Loup, the French, headed by Joan, attack the Tourelles, a small but impressive stronghold commanded by Sir William Glasdale (he's the one in the film with the suspiciously Scottish sounding accent). It's here that historically Joan was shot in the neck with an arrow (where she pulled it free and continued with the battle, indicating it was probably a bodkin arrow for all you arrow fans), but in the film, she's shot in the chest instead. As this event occurs about an hour into the film with some time left to go, it's safe to say that she too pulls the arrow out of her chest (cue a massive blood spurt) before falling asleep and getting up again in the morning to kick some more English arse.

So, it's this bit of the film that this Challenge recreates. Can our archers change history and kill Milla Jovovich's Joan of Arc?

The scene from the film has Joan leading the charge by climbing a siege ladder propped up against a palisade on one side of Les Tourelles. An English archer spots her and simply nocks an arrow, leans out over the side of the parapet and shoots directly down into her chest. The actual screen shot of Milla Jovovich looking up into the camera seconds before she's shot appears on many versions of the film's promotional posters.

So why is this shot a challenge? Well, in contrast to the medieval archers at the time who might well have been well-practiced in shooting down from parapets, our archers have probably never shot down an incline steeper than the odd ditch at a field shoot. The Challenge is, therefore, to accurately lean out and shoot almost directly down, as though onto a target climbing a ladder.

The Setup

So, with an empty field, how do we recreate at fifteen-foot wooden parapet? Truth is, bar getting all our archers up on the hay bale backstop (which would be time consuming and a bit dangerous), we haven't got anywhere high to shoot from. Therefore, this Challenge comes in two parts. The first part involves stepping up onto a hay bale that's only about four feet off the ground (for speed of access and safety) and shooting down onto an extremely small target only 2 inches in diameter. Any arrows that hit the small target can be picked up and carried across to the second part.

The second part consists of a shooting line set at 20 paces from a poster of Joan of Arc (Milla Jovovich) and allowing those archers who have arrows left to shoot normally into the target. Points will be awarded as follows; one point for a wound i.e. neck, shoulders and chest (because

historically and in the film this was the shot she survived) and two points for a kill in the form of a head shot.

From the two impromptu teams, the team that scores the most points wins. For the Challenge, there must be at least three kills i.e. head shots during the second round to warrant the Challenge as a success.

Challenge Number 28 – House of the Flying Daggers

Accuracy, Teamwork

The Story

This one comes from the 2004 Chinese action romance film “House of the Flying Daggers”. The film is in the Wuxia genre, which is to say it’s a martial arts story set in ancient China. The martial arts in Wuxia stories are based on factual Wushu techniques and other Chinese martial arts, however, the mastery of such skills are highly exaggerated in Wuxia stories to fictitious and superhuman levels of achievement and prowess, e.g. one skill is called Qinggong, which literally means "the ability of lightness" where characters can run up walls, across water and over tree tops (this is the most unbelievable skill to most western audiences when they see it in other Wuxia genre films such as “Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon” or “Hero”).

As a consequence, the archery shot from House of the Flying Daggers that inspired this Challenge will be undertaken by four archers, rather than the one archer shown in the film! So what’s the story?

The film is set in 859 AD, where the once-great Tang Dynasty is now in decline. Numerous rebel groups have formed, the largest of which is the House of Flying Daggers, named after their weapon of choice, the yo-yo. No, it’s not! It’s the flying dagger! The Flying Daggers steal from the rich and give to the poor, gaining the support of the locals.

The local deputies have managed to kill the leader of the Flying Daggers, but the rebel group only becomes stronger, due to a mysterious new leader. Jin (played by Takeshi Kaneshiro) and Leo (played by Andy Lau), two police captains, are ordered to kill the new leader within ten days.

In order to accomplish this, they arrest Mei (played by Zhang Ziyi), a blind dancer who is suspected of being the daughter of the old leader. While Mei is incarcerated, Jin and Leo decide to let her go to track the mastermind; Jin will pretend to be a lone warrior called Wind, and break her out of prison. This will gain her trust, and hopefully, Jin will be led to the headquarters of Flying Daggers. During the escape, Mei is surrounded by four armed guards and Jin shoots four rapid arrows in quick succession to “knock out” the four guards (in true Wuxia style although he shoot all four arrows one after the other, the arrows speed up so that all of them hit at the same time). It’s this Jin shot that forms the basis of this week’s Companions Challenge. The following is a trailer from the film where around 50 seconds in, it shows this shot (but not the outcome): <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HN9tXVXOdBQ>

The Setup

The setup is as follows; the archers are divided into the usual two impromptu Welsh and English teams. Two 80cm FITA targets are reversed and drawn on to represent Mei and her four attackers. The design is a circle in the centre, representing Mei, and from this, a vertical line dissects the paper along with a similar horizontal line. Therefore, you should have a target with four quarters and a circle in the middle. The two targets are to be shot at by their respective English/Welsh teams from a shooting line set at not less than 25 paces. The game is divided into rounds where, for each round, each team nominates four archers to step up and shoot one arrow each, on command, into their target. For every arrow that lands in a quadrant, the team gains 1 game point. For every arrow that lands in Mei, the team loses 2 game points. If an arrow clips the edge of a guard (the edge of the paper), a bonus point of 1 will be awarded because in the film, Jin doesn't want to kill his own men and so only pretends to kill them by "skillfully" shooting arrows through the folds of their clothes. If any team hits all four guards in one volley, they gain a 2-point bonus in addition to the 4 points they get for hitting their targets. The game is played over two rounds of ten volleys per round, and it's up to the teams to nominate archers to shoot each round, e.g. a team may wish to have a particularly accurate archer shooting every volley. The game is won by the team with the highest number of game points at the end. The Challenge will be a success if a single volley from either team is shot so that it hits all four targets, i.e. it replicates the shoot seen in House of the Flying Daggers.

Challenge Number 28 – Quiz!

Accuracy, Assurance

The Story

Hurray, we all like quizzes don't we? The twist is it's multiple choice and the archers have to answer A, B or C with their arrows. So let me explain ...

The Setup

The range is set up so that all the archers are on a line set at about 30 paces from three 80cm FITA targets, and the targets are marked A, B and C. Each round consists of 6 questions for which every archer gets to shoot 1 arrow after each question into their A, B or C choice. At the end of the round, the correct answers will be read out and they'll all correspond to the same multiple choice answer, e.g. all the correct answers might be C for round 1, B for round 2 etc. This means that only arrows on the correct target for that round may be scored up and counted, with 5 points for the gold going down to 1 point for a white. So it's a quiz with a bit of archery skill thrown in too.

For the game, the archers are divided into two impromptu teams, and after five rounds, the team with the most points wins! For the Challenge, the scores of both teams must equal or exceed the following formula: number of archers x number of rounds x 5. Therefore, if we had ten archers competing over five rounds their combined scores must add up to (10x5x5) 250

points or more. Simple! The five history rounds are questions based on (1) The Romans (2) The Vikings and Anglo-Saxons, (3) The Medieval, (4) The Tudors and (5) Pot Luck.

Round 1 - Romans

1. The Edict of Milan was signed by emperors Constantine I and Licinius, and proclaimed religious toleration in the Roman Empire. This allowed Christians to worship freely within the Roman Empire and eventually led to Christianity becoming the official religion of Rome. What year was the Edict of Milan signed?
A. 313AD B. 319AD C. 323AD?
2. Rome was a monarchy before becoming a republic and finally an empire. The last “King of the Romans”, was toppled in 509BC. What was his name?
A. Tarquinius Superbus B. Numa Pompilius C. Servius Tullus
3. During Roman chariot races, if a chariot crashed, it was called a what?
A. A shipwreck B. A ruin C. A pandemonium
4. The Romans fixed their arrowheads to the shaft of their arrows via what method?
A. A tanged head B. A socketed head C. A screw head
5. When the Romans came to Britain, which of the following plants did they NOT introduce to the islands?
A. Horse Chestnut trees B. Stinging nettles C. Cabbages
6. Before the age of the Roman Republic and Empire Roman, kings wore what item to signify their kingship?
A. Red boots B. Purple gloves C. A yellow skull cap

Round 1 Answers

The correct answers for the first round were all A! (Yes, the Romans had the same word for chariot wreck and shipwreck – naufragia).

Round 2 - Vikings and Anglo-Saxons

1. The Vikings used to make soap from what?
A. Wood ash and animal fat. B. Seeds of the horse-chestnut tree. C. Fuller’s Earth
2. Viking longboats had seats for the oarsmen that were made from what?
A. The cross ribs of ship. B. Wooden chests C. Purpose fitted benches carved with the names of the oarsmen
3. In Anglo-Saxon houses, the fire pit in the middle of the house was 4 to 5 feet long. Why?

A. To spread the heat of the fire along the house. B. So the fire at one end provided light and the hot ashes could be raked along the fire pit for cooking. C. So that the people could lay along the length of the fire during cold nights

4. The Vikings fixed their arrowheads to the shaft of their arrows via what?

A. A tanged head B. A socketed head C. A screw head?

5. The leader of a Viking longboat would sleep in which position on onboard?

A. At the front of the boat near the look out. B. At the rear of the boat near the steering board C. In the middle of the boat surrounded by his men?

6. Anglo-Saxon house walls were made from wattle and daub and coated with a lime wash. The daub was made from mud, straw and animal dung. Why was the straw and animal dung included?

A. To provide tensile strength to the wall. B. To create a honeycomb of air pockets and keep the warmth in the house. C. To discourage animals and insects from eating the straw?

Round 2 Answers

The answers to all of the round 2 questions was B! (Question 1 confused people a bit after the horse chestnut tree answer in Round 1, but then the Vikings weren't from Britain!) In fact, none of the teams shot an arrow at the B target, so nil points were won this round. How would you have done? Scores were still English with 20 and the Welsh with 5.

Round 3 Medieval

1. Which of the following symbols did not evolve from a Latin abbreviation used throughout the Middle Ages?

A. & - ampersand B. ! – exclamation mark C. ? – question mark

2. What year was the first book printed in English published?

A. 1455 B. 1475 C. 1485

3. According to rumours at the time, Richard II (reigned 1377 to 1399) was born without what?

A. A tongue B. Skin C. Finger nails

4. According the medieval books on table etiquette, which of the following was okay to do?

A. Speak with your mouth full B. Belch C. Spit food over the table

5. What item was said to have been invented by King Richard II?

A. The sock B. The handkerchief C. The codpiece

6. How long did the Hundred Years War last?

A. 100 years B 116 years C 124 years

Round 3 Answers

The answers to all of round 3 was B! Just to expand on some of the questions, question 1 the & symbol (the ampersand) comes from the stylised version "et" which means "and" in Latin. How it got it's name of ampersand is even more interesting. The ? comes from the abbreviation of Qo from the Latin quaestiō (that is, qvaestio), meaning "question". This was abbreviated during the Middle Ages to Qo and written with the Q over the o. The ! symbol as we know it appeared in the 15th century and was at the time called the "note of admiration". The first printed book in English was William Caxton's own translation of 'The Recuyell of the Histories of Troye' in 1475. For question 3 it was apparently rumoured that Richard II had to be wrapped in goat skins (weird) and for question 4, although you could belch you weren't supposed to do it too close to people's faces.

Round 4 Tudor

1. Wales was fully incorporated into England during the Tudor period. Which year did this happen?
A. 1536 B. 1490 C. 1603
2. The Tudor family's rule of England started with Henry VII and ended with Elizabeth I. How many years did this last?
A. 118 years B. 109 years C. 102 years
3. "Toxophilus, The School of Shooting" by Roger Ascham, was written and presented to Henry VIII in which year?
A. 1545 B. 1550 C. 1555
4. In the Tudor period what was an Abram Man?
A. A beggar who pretends to be mad B. A salaried hang man C. A hedge priest (defrocked priest)
5. What was the name of Henry VII's eldest son?
A. Arthur B. Henry C. Edward
6. Henry VIII's flagship, the Mary Rose, sunk off the coast of Portsmouth in which year?
A. 1545 B. 1550 C. 1555

Round 4 Answers

The answers for all of round 4 was A! Clarification for question 1 was that Wales was incorporated into England via The Laws in Wales Acts 1536–1543 (Welsh: Y Deddfau Uno 1536 a 1543).

Round 5 Pot Luck

1. In the 1960s, Peter O'Toole received two Oscar nominations for two unconnected films he starred in where he played the same character. One was A Man For All Seasons (1966), the other was The Lion in Winter.(1968). But which character did he portray?

A. Edward I B. Henry I C. Henry II

2. During the trial of Joan of Arc, she was asked by her judges if she knew if she was in God's grace. This trick question could've condemned her immediately. Why?

A. It was asked in English, a language she did not speak B. Only the Pope knows if someone is in God's grace C. Only God is supposed to know if they are in God's grace.

3. Which of the following nursery rhymes refers to a Viking attack on London?

A. Ring a Ring o'Roses B. Humpty Dumpty C. London Bridge is Falling Down

4. After the invention of the printing press, old hand written manuscripts on parchment ended up being reused for other functions. Which of the following activities were old manuscripts NOT used for?

A. Flights on crossbow bolts B. Cleaning the barrels of guns C. Wrapping food in

5. In the medieval period, what part of your body would be referred to as a "toucher" or "lick pot"?

A. Your tongue B. Your lips C. Your index finger

6. How many letters are in the Roman alphabet?

A. 26 B. 24 C. 22

Round 5 Answers

Answers for all the questions in round 5 was C! Again in case you're interested, question 2, Joan of Arc was asked the trick question of whether she knew if she was in God's grace. As only God knows if you're in God's grace answering either yes or no would've condemned her as either a heretic (with a yes answer) or as being guilty (with a no answer). She amazed her judges by answering 'If I am not, may God put me there; and if I am, may God so keep me.'

Challenge Number 29 – The Pocket Protector

Accuracy

The Story

This Challenge is inspired by a plot device used in TV, film and books that also occasionally crops up in real life – the protection from harm offered by an everyday object in the pocket. Usually it's against bullets, occasionally it's knives, and rarely it's arrows, and if you're still puzzled by what I'm talking about, it's the moment when the hero in a film seemingly gets fatally shot but then pulls out a dented cigarette case with the bullet lodged safely in it ...

So in this Challenge, we're going to be shooting at various everyday objects to see if they could afford someone protection should they accidentally be shot with arrows. But which objects? After spending a bit of time trying to research real and fictional stories I came across a website that's done all of my work for me. It's called TVTropes and they call this device the *Pocket Protector*: <http://tvtropes.org/pmwiki/pmwiki.php/Main.PocketProtector> .

For those who aren't keen on reading all the examples given in the linked article, fictional examples of the Pocket Protector include the 1999 film *Sleepy Hollow* where the hero, Ichabod, is saved from Lady Van Tassel's shot by Katrina's book in his jacket. Alfred Hitchcock's 1935 film, *The Thirty-Nine Steps*, the Pocket Protector is a hymn-book. The 2007 film, *Hot Fuzz*, this is a knife and a packet of ketchup (after setting it up with Danny pretending to stab himself in the eye with a fork). *Sin City* 2005 plays this straight in the yarn. The *Big Fat Kill*, Dwight is apparently killed by a shot to the heart, and we only realise he's alive when his attackers find the badge he'd lifted from a dead cop earlier with the bullet lodged in it. The *Spaghetti Western*, *One Silver Dollar*, has the protagonist being saved by a bullet because of a silver dollar in his pocket. In the first *Batman* movie with Michael Keaton, the Joker shoots Bruce Wayne in the chest at close range with a small pistol. Luckily, Bruce had hidden a metal tray under his jacket in the scene before, expecting just this. In the novel *From Russia With Love*, James Bond is saved from Red Grant's bullet by his trusty cigarette case. In *Peter Pan*, the arrow the Lost Boys shoot at Wendy doesn't kill her because it hits an acorn badge Wendy was wearing around her neck after Peter gave it to her as a present.

Real-life Pocket Protector stories include the assassination attempt on Theodore Roosevelt on October 14th, 1912. Fortunately, the bullet was prevented from penetrating too deeply by Roosevelt's steel eyeglass case and folded speech in his jacket. He went on to give an 80 minute speech before being taken to hospital. The bullet was never removed! James Doohan a.k.a. Scotty from the original *Star Trek*, was hit by a burst of friendly fire during World War II. One of the bullets took off a finger, another one struck him in the chest, where it was stopped by his silver cigarette case that had been given to him by his brother. Lt. George E. Dixon of the American Civil War submarine, the *Hunley*, carried a gold coin that was given to him as a good luck charm and later deflected a bullet. Unfortunately, it didn't save him from drowning, though.

When it comes to arrows, the Pocket Protector is spoofed in the Terry Pratchett *Discworld* novel *Jingo*. The character of Sergeant Colon recalls how a book of prayers kept an arrow from entering his great-grandfather's chest. Unfortunately, said book didn't stop "the other seventeen arrows". It's also spoofed in the second season of *Blackadder*, where Blackadder practices shooting with bow to a target held by Baldrick. Blackadder slips and accidentally shoots the arrow into Baldrick's groin where he comments how lucky he was that his genitals prevented the arrow from going through him.

The Setup

The archers are split into two impromptu teams. A shooting line is set at 25 paces from a tall three 3D target (stack of cardboard boxes). Each round each archers gets 3 arrows to shoot at

an object fixed to the target. As the rounds progress, the objects get smaller in size, so the scoring goes that, for each arrow that hits the object, the team gets that round in points i.e. one arrow hit in round 2 is worth 2 game points. If an arrow shoots through the object into Warwick, the score is doubled, i.e. one arrow hits the object in round 2 and goes through it into Warwick, therefore scoring double points, 4 points.

For the game, it's the team with the most game points. For the Challenge to be a success, at least one archer has to hit each object for each of the rounds.

Round 1 – The Silver Tray, from the Michael Keaton 1989 Batman movie listed above (it was actually a steel plate on the day because I couldn't find a silver tray.)

Round 2 – The steel eye glasses case and 50 page speech of Theodore Roosevelt also listed above (again steel eye glasses cases are hard to come by so it was an aluminium case on the day).

Round 3 - A man out mowing his lawn in backwoods Missouri was saved from a stray hunting bullet by his phone, so Round 3 was a mobile phone (a real cell phone this time).

Round 4 - Lt. George E. Dixon's gold coin listed above (again, gold coins are hard to come by etc. etc so a New Zealand 20 cent piece stood in instead).

Challenge Number 30 - Richard the Lionheart's march from Acre to Jaffa

Accuracy, Speed, Teamwork

The Story

This Challenge is inspired by Richard the Lionheart's march from Acre to Jaffa during the Third Crusade. The Third Crusade (1189 to 1192) was an attempt by European leaders to recover Jerusalem and the Holy Lands from Muslim-held forces lead by Saladin. By the time we get to the bit that inspired this Challenge, the Crusaders had besieged and captured the city of Acre in July 1191. Disagreements and ill health meant that when the army left Acre to travel to Jaffa, King Richard was the only leader left, and so it was under his leadership that the remains of the Crusader army hoped to capture Jaffa, before moving on to recapture Jerusalem.

So, the scene is that King Richard and his Crusader army are marching south from Acre to Jaffa. Saladin's forces harassed the Crusader army most of the way, using tactics similar to those used prior to the Battle of Hattin in July 1187, which in part led to the loss of Jerusalem in the first place. To counter this, Richard organised his forces in the following way; firstly they marched south with their right flank protected by the coast. Keeping pace with them was the Crusader fleet who carried water, supplies, and also could evacuate the wounded. The land forces were deployed in protective layers; at the centre was the baggage and supplies, protecting this were the knights and men-at-arms, and then came the archers who were to use their crossbow bolts and arrows to deter the many repeated attacks from the Saracen horse archers. The horse archers would try to provoke the army by riding within bow range and inflicting casualties via

massed archery attacks, before riding back to safety. In this way, they hoped the Crusaders would break ranks, pursue them and leave themselves open to a Saracen counter-attack. However, the discipline of the Crusader army under King Richard was such that they got within 30 miles of Jaffa before Saladin abandoned this tactic and launched an all-out attack that would later be called the Battle of Arsuf (September 7th 1191).

So, this Challenge covers the march from Acre to Jaffa before the Battle of Arsuf, and we see if the discipline needed to organise archers to present an effective offensive front can be replicated.

The Setup

The rules, though seemingly complex at first glance, are fairly simple. It was hoped that the normal level of confusion when a new game is played would add to the game and increase the achievement of getting organised into an effective fighting force by the end.

The rules are;

(1) The archers will be divided into two impromptu teams, the Welsh and the English. The team with the highest score at the end wins the game, but their combined scores will determine whether the Challenge is a success or not.

(2) The target is the hay bale backstop and 80cm FITA targets fixed to it. This represents the Saracen forces. Later, when scoring is required, the score for each arrow is as follows:- any arrow on the hay bale = half a point, any arrow on the white section of the FITA target (white scoring and non-scoring) = 1 point, black ring = 2 points, blue ring = 3 points, red ring = 4 points and gold = 5 points.

(3) The game is divided into a number of rounds. Each archer has three arrows per round. Arrows will be scored and collected from the target after each round.

(4) The shooting line will be moved around the field into random positions by the Target Archery Marshal. The shooting line consists of two poles (the English pole and the Welsh pole) which are placed flat on the ground, creating a physical shooting line. Only four archers are allowed on the shooting line at any one time, two Welsh archers on their shooting line, two English archers on theirs.

(5) The Target Archery Marshal will move around the field, and when ready, will count down from five to one. By the count of three, the poles will be in position on the ground and after the final count of one is called, the Target Archery Marshal will call "freeze". When the call of "freeze" is heard, all archers must stop in their positions.

(6) By the time command "freeze" is called, there must be two Welsh and two English archers on the shooting line. i.e. after the Target Archery Marshal has counted down past three, the teams must have two archers ready to move up to the shooting line. If a team does not have the correct number of archers on the shooting line (two per team,) that team will incur a penalty point per missing archer.

- (7) No archer may shoot unless they have a foot on their pole (and are permitted to do so by the Target Archery Marshal as per normal shooting rules).
- (8) The Target Archery Marshal will stipulate how many arrows may be shot, from one to three. This number will be chosen randomly. If an archer has shot all of their arrows, they may not shoot any more and must wait on the shooting line.
- (9) By the time the command “freeze” is called, any archer who is forward of the shooting line will incur a penalty point and will be moved behind the shooting line. This represents the archer straggling behind the main force.
- (10) After the archers have shot, the poles are picked up and the process will start again until the Target Archery Marshal calls the end of the round and scoring can be added up.
- (11) The number of arrows shot and the number of times the shooting line are placed on the ground is random. It is up to the teams to organise themselves to make sure they have archers ready with enough arrows to step up to the shooting line when required. It is better to have an archer with no arrows left on the shooting line than only one or no archers on the shooting line, as an absence of archers will result in a penalty point.
- (12) At any time the Target Archery Marshal may do a spot check to see if bows are carried upright. Any archer caught carrying their bow horizontally will incur their team a penalty point. It is in the team’s best interests to monitor their team mates to make sure their bows are kept upright. The penalty point represents the very real possibility of clouting a fellow Crusader and getting a punch in the head for their transgression!
- (13) For the Challenge to be a success, the scores of both teams must equal or exceed the number of rounds played, multiplied by the number of archers on the field, multiplied by 3 points, i.e. 3 rounds played, 14 archers on field therefore the Challenge target is (3x14x3) 126 points. This means, on average, every archer on the field must score an average of 3 points per round with their three arrows. A successful Challenge represents the team’s ability to fight off Saladin’s forces until the Battle of Arsuf!

Tactics involve the following; making sure you have archers with arrows ready to step up to shoot, having archers with longer range and shorter range ready to shoot when it is appropriate, and organising your forces so that there are no stragglers.

Challenge Number 31 – Shooting a Weapon Out of a Hand

Accuracy, Assurance

The Story

This Challenge was inspired by a shot from an old stalwart, the 1938 film the Adventures of Robin Hood. It’s another Howard Hill trick shot (Howard Hill was the archer who did all the shooting for real in the film for those who don’t yet know) that featured Basil Rathbone as Sir Guy of Gisborne getting ready to bash Much (played by Herbert Mundin) with a mace. Sir Guy and his men had

just caught Much poaching deer, and while his back was turned, Sir Guy raises his mace to do the deed when Robin Hood shoots an arrow that knocks the weapon from Sir Guy's hand. Again, this was no CGI trick, but done for real!

The Challenge this week, therefore, comes from shooting various weapons, of various sizes, out of an enemy's hand, without actually shooting the hand!

The list of weapons in size and increasing difficulty are;

- A buckler
- A mace
- A sword
- A knife

The Setup

The archers were divided into two impromptu teams again, and a shooting line was set at 25 paces from the target. The target consisted of a post, hammered into the ground with two horizontal pieces of wood lashed to that to act as an arm. "Grip" was provided by placing rubber bands around the two pieces of wood, and then pushing the object to be held between them. The game was played over four rounds, with each round consisting of one specific weapon to shoot at. Each archer had three arrows per round to shoot at the target, and every time a weapon was successfully shot out of the hand, points were awarded along the lines of 1 point for the buckler (use an old saucepan lid if worried about using a real buckler), 2 for the mace (an old hammer or piece of wood), 3 for the sword (an old sword was used on the day but a piece of wood can be a substitute) and 4 for the knife (old kitchen knife). Every time the hand or arm was shot, a point was deducted.

For the game, the team with the most points at the end of the last round would be the winner. For the Challenge to be a success, each weapon per round must be shot out of the hand at least once.

Challenge Number 32 – Assault on Tintagel Castle

Accuracy, Teamwork

The Story

This Challenge comes very loosely from the 1981 fantasy film, Excalibur. This film is primarily an adaptation of Malory's *Morte d'Arthur* (first printed in 1485) and covers the main aspects of the Arthurian legends, such as the sword in the stone, the Lady in the Lake, and the quest for the Holy Grail. However, it's the beginning of the film that inspired this week's archery challenge.

The story from the film goes that Uther Pendragon (Gabriel Byrne in his first screen role for all you film fact fans) has broken a truce with the Duke of Cornwall over Uther's desire to have the Duke's wife. Uther has laid siege to the Duke of Cornwall's castle (referred to in an early script, but not in the film, as Tintagel Castle down Cornwall way), and proceeds to batter the walls with siege engines to no avail. King Uther eventually gains access to the castle using trickery and magic, but it was the early siege that inspires this week's Companions Challenge...

Dotted around the siege engines on the beach are archers taking pot shots at the knights on the Tintagel battlements. Obviously, in the film we don't see if any of the archers hit any of the defending knights, but could our archers hit small i.e. head sized targets set high up as if on a battlement?

The Setup

Well, obviously we don't have Tintagel Castle to hand, or some knights to shoot at, but what we do have is a ten foot tall hay bale backstop, a couple of really long poles, some string and lots of balloons!

Twelve balloons (six purple, six white) were suspended on string, in a line, across two poles set on top of the hay bale backstop. While not quite the height of a "massive castle wall", they were a good 30+ feet up in the strong breeze, which also helped make them bob around in a semi-realistic furtive way that you'd expect someone who's peeping over the battlements and doesn't want an arrow in the face.

In keeping with some of the additionally competitive nature of the Challenges so far, the archers were split into two impromptu teams – the Anglo-Saxons and the Britons (because it's supposed to be "The Dark Ages" before there were the English and the Welsh, you see?) The Anglo-Saxon team had to clear their six white balloons (although one was now orange and another green thanks to a couple that weren't up to the job) and the Britons had to clear their purple balloons.

The game itself was to be run over three rounds, with six arrows allowed per archer per round. The shooting line was initially set at 20 paces from the hay bales, but that range was obviously compounded by the height of the targets, as I wanted them shooting high without the usual visual range clues you'd normally get. The Challenge was simple though, could they clear all twelve targets within three rounds? The game was also simple, the first team to clear their six targets was the winner.

Challenge Number 33 – Medieval Football

Accuracy, Teamwork

The Story

This Challenge wasn't so much of a Challenge and more of a game. If you have a look at some of the games that were banned by various legislation over the medieval and Tudor period to enforce the rule that all able-bodied males between the ages of seven and sixty must practice

the longbow, one of them that always seems to be mentioned is football. This challenge (although I'm going to have to stop calling it that) tries to replicate a game of football between two villages using archery, sharp arrows and no football.

Medieval football had few rules, but seemed to involve an unlimited number of players who struggled to drag an inflated pig's bladder to their markers set at either end of the village (or, if neighbouring villages were close, into their opponent's church).

The Setup

Needing something a little more organised, the following was set up; at ten pace intervals seven markers were placed into the ground from the hay bale backstop to the shooting line (which was eighty paces away). At the forty pace marker (the midway), two stands and square bosses were erected and tape was used to divided both square bosses diagonally from one corner to the other.

The rules were that both teams were designated their target boss, and every archer in their team was allowed three arrows per round to shoot into either their target boss or their opponent's target boss. At the end of each round, for every arrow that was above (or cut) the dividing line, whether it be their team arrow or one of the other team's arrows, their team would score one point. For every arrow below the dividing line, their team would score minus one point. The team that scored the most points would win the round.

If a team won the round, their boss and stand would move one marker (ten paces) away from the shooting line towards the stray bales (the goal). The team that had lost the round would have their boss and stand move one marker (ten paces) towards the shooting line. Therefore, as the game progressed a team would score a "goal" by winning enough rounds to move their boss and stand all the way (70 odd paces) away from the shooting line and into the hay bales. But conversely, their opponent's boss and stand would move within ten paces of the shooting line, making their job extremely easy.

To stop the game going on forever, a forty minute time limit was set with the game going to which ever team finished with their boss and stand closest to the hay bale.

Challenge Number 34 – The Sword of Sherwood Forest Version

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Accuracy, Speed

The Story

This Challenge was inspired by the 1960 Richard Greene Robin Hood film, The Sword of Sherwood Forest (<http://us.imdb.com/title/tt0054358/>) again. The film was outstandingly rubbish, all over the place as far as plot is concerned, and Hammer Films who made it stuck to horror films as a consequence of this flop (it's out on DVD this May if you want to watch it ...), but the good news is for us is that part of the plot had Robin Hood (while unrecognised as Robin) is

set a number of archery challenges to see if he's good enough to assassinate the Archbishop of Canterbury. At least one of these challenges from the film we've tried before (the shooting through the arrow loop challenge), so now it's time to try another.

This Challenge is fairly simple. In the film, a single cart wheel is spun and Robin Hood has to time his shot so that his arrow passes through the spokes of the wheel, without being stopped or deflected. Easy!

The Setup

Firstly, cart wheels aren't that easy to come by. Secondly, if you get the shot wrong you'll either end up with a broken arrow or one that's been deflected off to who knows where. So, we needed something a little less "chunky". So, it's now time to introduce the Mark I Cartwheel Simulator.

Made from a cordless drill, a pole, a couple of sticks and a balloon, it works on the same principal as the spinning cart wheel. Rather than trying to get the arrow through the spokes with the Mark I Cartwheel Simulator, the idea is simply to pop the spinning balloon. Put the drill on a pole, chock the stick into the drill with a 90 degree bend in it, and place a balloon at the end. Switch it on and you get a spinning balloon.

So the Challenge was to get at least two of our archers to hit the revolving balloon, but we also had a bit of a competition to go along with it. The teams were divided into two impromptu teams. The teams were set up on a shooting line at 30 paces from the target, and each team was allowed one archer at a time on the shooting line. Each archer had two arrows per round to pop the balloon, and as soon as they had finished shooting their two arrows, they had to make way for the next archer in their team. There was no time limit to the game, but as time progressed the battery in the cordless drill would run down and the spinning balloon would get slower and slower, until the game, and the Challenge, was up.

Challenge Number 35 – Robin of Sherwood – Punching Through The Shield

Accuracy, Intensity

The Story

This Challenge was inspired by a three-second glimpse of an archery shot from the pilot episode of the 1984 TV show Robin of Sherwood. The story is one where ... well, it doesn't really matter what the story is, Robin Hood and the Merry Men are shooting arrows at a bunch of Norman soldiers, some of which are on horseback. One unlucky mounted Norman soldier manages to raise his kite shield only for someone to put an arrow through it and into his leg. (A kite shield for those who don't know is a distinctive kite-shaped shield, hence the name, that was designed to be wielded by a mounted man with the lower tapering half of the shield covering the rider's leg.)

So, is it possible to create a similar Challenge for our archers?

The Setup

Well firstly, we've not got any 12th century kite shields laying around, and I didn't fancy making a replica one all for the chance of getting it shot to bits in ten minutes. So instead, I got hold of some boards and hit them hard with (a) a hammer, (b) a crowbar and (c) a replica sword, to see which ones could conceivably be used to make a half decent shield.

With my shield board selected, we now needed a Norman soldier. Here, stacked boxes can be used again. If an arrow punches through the shield and into the boxes, then it's a hit.

The game was simple enough. Originally, the game was designed to be played over three rounds with each team taking it in turn per round to shoot six arrows per archer at the target. In this case, the idea was to shoot through the shield, therefore points were awarded with one point for an arrow in the shield board, two points for an arrow that went through the shield board and four points for an arrow that went through the shield board and into the target itself. After each round the scores were to be added up and the round awarded to the team with the highest score.

For the purpose of the Challenge the idea was that at least one archer had to get an arrow through the shield board and into the target, just like the shot from Robin of Sherwood.

Challenge Number 36 – Shooting Out A Candle

Accuracy

The Story

This week's Companions Challenge was inspired by what is an old stalwart of the Challenges, the 1938 Errol Flynn film *The Adventures of Robin Hood*.

The scene from *The Adventures of Robin Hood* is part of a montage where the evil Normans are being very mean to a poor serving maid at the local tavern. A Norman guard is wrestling the poor maid into giving him a kiss (and more) when Robin Hood shoots an arrow into a Norman guard's back (presumably it's Robin Hood doing the shooting though because we never see the archer). The shot is quite the trick shot however because before hitting the hapless Norman, the arrow manages to pass through the flame of candle, thus in the wake of arrow's passage through the air the flame is extinguished. So that's the Challenge, remove the Norman and the serving maid, just shoot out a candle flame.

The Setup

But how do you get such a challenge in a field that's might have a force nine gale blowing through it even on a calm day? The answer is the Dummy Candle Target Mark 1. A broom handle is set up with white masking tape wrapped around it to make it look a bit candle like. On top of the post some Plumber's Mate (modelling clay can be used) is splodged to hold the part of

the target that's now named the Dummy Flame. Dummy Flame? Well some miniature Christmas baubles (the yellow'ish ones of course) are then pressed into the Plumber's Mate to create a flame target that's about the size of a thumbnail. So now we've got a Dummy Candle Target Mark 1.

The Challenge is to actually have three attempts, with two arrows per archer per attempt, to shoot out two candle flames at fifteen paces. To spice things up the Challenge was presented as a game between two impromptu teams and each team has two "lit" candles each. During the game, which consists of three rounds, each archer has two arrows to shoot out the flames on their candles.

If a team shot out both candles before the other team they'd win the game and complete the Challenge because the Challenge is to shoot out both candles in a single round. Any variation of candles shot out in a round (one to one team or one to each team for example) would indicate whether the game was a win or a draw, but remember, for the Challenge to be a success both candles must be shot out in a single round.

Section 3 – League Archery Games

The following is a set of League archery games to be played over 16 weeks with set teams scoring on the League table. The background for each game would be published on the club's website so interested archers could read up on the game they just played if they were interested in learning more (hence the length). Typically there'd be enough archers for three teams.

This one was on English medieval outlaws. At nearly 47,00 words it's a bit long but in here are sixteen further games which may provide some inspiration. You can easily scroll down and spot the games if you want to skip the background stuff.

Section 3 - English Medieval Outlaws – A Background to the Companions of the Longbow Fifth Retinue League

Introduction

Robin Hood, Robin Hood, riding through the glen

Robin Hood, Robin Hood, with his band of men

Feared by the bad, loved by the good

Robin Hood! Robin Hood! Robin Hood!

This is of course the words to the title song of the 1950's Richard Greene TV show "The Adventures of Robin Hood", *the* Robin Hood for an entire generation of archers. (I reckon the holy trinity of definitive popular roles for which it's possible to date a person purely on their preference for the actors they grew up with are James Bond, Robin Hood and Doctor Who. Which actors did you grow up with?)

There's probably a law that says if someone mentions that they do archery and the listener knows the Richard Greene Robin Hood title song, they must attempt to sing it. A corollary to this

is that the willingness of the person to sing is proportional to the amount of ale they may have consumed. That same law says that if they *don't* know the song or haven't consumed enough ale yet they must fix the archer with a wry smile and ask if they wear green tights. (Of course the traditional reply is "only at the weekend" ...)

Yes Robin Hood is certainly very popular. If you were to ask one hundred people on the street to name an English medieval outlaw probably about ninety five of the hundred would say "Robin Hood". Four out of the hundred would possibly get smart and name Little John or maybe Friar Tuck, or Will Scarlet, Maid Marion or Much the Miller's son. If you're lucky you'll get one person out of the hundred who'll name one of the following possible answers: Adam Bell, Gamelyn, William of Cloudsley, Hereward the Wake, Robert Stafford, Piers Venables, Adam de Gurdun, Roger Godberd or Jack Cade.

With this Fifth *Companions* Retinue Competition, you good reader, will be that one in a hundred person.

Overview

Of course the burning question (up there with "why do some people always leave a half inch of drink at the bottom of their tea or coffee cup?") is did Robin Hood really exist? The answer to this is of course no, or perhaps maybe, or possibly yes or any other variation. The reply really is all dependant on who you're asking.

Most sources seem to be of the opinion that the stories of Robin Hood are ultimately an amalgamation of the deeds and legends of lots of different medieval outlaws and they've all been attributed to the one allusive fictional person. But let's cut to the chase, if you're looking for an article on Robin Hood, this isn't it. In fact I'm not going to mention him ever again. Okay, maybe once or twice.

As part of the 2008 Fifth *Companions* Retinue game we're going to deviate a bit from the *Hundred Years War* and give our archers team games that were based on exploits of real or legendary medieval outlaws. We're going to define what a medieval outlaw basically was (in case you didn't know) and then over the weeks of the Fifth Retinue competition list some of the outlaws from history & legend. They'll be tagged on to this article for you to read as the game progresses. So each week they'll be the story of at least one outlaw and by the end of the competition if someone were to ask you to name a medieval outlaw you'll be spoilt for choice. Not that anyone would ask you name a medieval outlaw of course, unless you're approached by

a researcher from “Family Fortunes”.

But first, it’s a term that’s been defunct from our legal system for well over one hundred years, so let’s find out what being an outlaw actually meant.

Definition of an Outlaw

Medieval law is a complex subject worthy of all the many books and articles that have been written on it. I should know. I’ve hastily browsed and totally failed to read literally dozens of them. However, for the medieval timescales of this league (which covers the 11th to around the 15th century) the definition of an outlaw was, wait for it ... a person who was outside the law. An out of law, if you will. There is the law, there is the outside, there is the person who is on the outside. An outlaw. Yes, outside the law the person is. I’m starting to sound like Yoda from Star Wars now so I’d best quit.

What do you mean you want a better definition?

Okay, you could be declared an outlaw by being accused of a crime, or an accessory to a crime and then failing to appear before a proper representative of the king’s law. Unless you were a woman in which case you were “waived” which basically meant the same thing (“waived” from the Middle English “weiven”, “to abandon” from the Anglo-Norman “weyver” from “waif”, an ownerless property.)

If you were an outlaw you were basically excluded from all of the benefits and the protection of the law, so you were sort of legally dead. Of course this meant that any property, chattels or contracts the outlaw held was void. It also meant that you could be killed by another person and it wouldn’t be considered murder (although this was tightened up a bit as time went on). The term wolfs-head was a popular at one point for an outlaw because just like the wolf, the outlaw could be killed on sight (and was said to have the same wolf’s head price placed upon it). So being an outlaw was a bad thing, right.

So Why Did People Become Outlaws?

The first answer to the question “why did people become outlaws” is obviously because they committed a crime and they were trying to avoid punishment. In the 1221 Gloucester Assizes

there were three hundred and thirty men listed as accused of committing murder of which the nice round number of one hundred fled (from "The History of the English Law Before the Time of Edward I by F. Pollock and F.W. Maitland, Cambridge 1894). I reckon another fourteen wished they had too as the same source says they were eventually hanged.

For what we now call career criminals the prospect of becoming an outlaw was just another occupational hazard. Later we'll be listing some gentlemen outlaws, the younger sons of noblemen who were trained in the arts of war but were not in line to inherit land or property. For some the only way of keeping themselves in the manner to which they had become accustomed was to engage in activities which would gain them the title of outlaw. The Folville gang in the 14th century are one such example of gentlemen outlaws. Unfortunately, like all real life medieval outlaws, their activities were anything but gentlemanly – murder, rape and theft were all in a day's work.

In fact while we're on the subject it's worth noting that these were violent times with desperate people and perhaps the earlier tales and ballads of the likes of Robin Hood better reflect the gruesome truth. Cutting off your enemy's head, then placing it on the end of your longbow before taking your knife and cutting up the face until its unrecognisable doesn't sound like the actions of a hero. And yet this is what Robin Hood eventually does to Sir Guy of Gisborne in an early version of one of the tales (perhaps answering the question of what would a Robin Hood film would be like if it was made by Wes Craven). In another tale the Merry Men find and kill a monk who had informed on Robin Hood in the past. Questionable? Maybe ... but in the process they also kill the monk's page who is an entirely innocent boy. To our modern sense of what's right and wrong this is plainly wrong, but to the medieval audience it would've been recognised as a desperate necessity. Victory was literally attained through blood, preferably the blood of one's enemies and not your own.

The second answer to the question of why people became outlaws is simply because they had no faith in the legal system or the regime that supported it. This might be thought of as your classic Robin Hood types who purportedly had a cause, but it also might well be someone reacting to their particular situation. Until some of the legal reforms of Henry II in the 12th century (via the Assize of Clarendon in 1166) you may have had to wait years before the court circuit got round to your case. If you couldn't obtain a guarantor and secure a release (what we now refer to as bail) it could mean a long wait rotting away in chains. There are accounts of people losing legs or feet due to being in chains for so long or even dying while waiting in custody.

There was also the prospect for example of the victim of a crime being asked by the perpetrator to under go trial by combat (wager of battle) which arguably led to a justice system which was biased in favour of the physically strong. The other option in an age of superstition and belief in

divine intervention might be trial by ordeal. One perhaps familiar example of trial by ordeal that was later still being employed by witch finders in the 17th century was trial by water. This basically involved being thrown into water and if you sank you were innocent and if you floated the water had rejected you and you were guilty. Another was trial by fire which involved resisting burning or healing quickly following contact with fire or hot irons.

Following the Assize of Clarendon the genesis of the jury system was introduced in England. However trials by ordeal were still listed and guilt & punishment was decided by the judge rather than the jury. So if you didn't fancy your chances then it was perhaps time to make a run for it.

What Were the Options for an Outlaw?

If you were declared an outlaw you had basically three initial options. The first was to give yourself up which wasn't a great option as the usual punishment for outlawry was death. The second was to go on the lam and through necessity, live a life of crime. The third was to seek sanctuary.

Sanctuary could be claimed at nearly any religious building and was apparently a hang over from the Anglo-Saxon period when a cooling off period was thought to be a good idea. The idea of sanctuary for a criminal now of course seems a bit of an odd phenomenon. For example, you've been declared an outlaw (I don't know, maybe you're suspected of killing your neighbour, maybe you're suspected of not paying your bills but either way you wish to evade the authorities) and not really fancying being hanged (for outlawry mind, the original offence is now *almost* a secondary consideration) you hot foot it over to your nearest church. You turn up on the nearest bit of church land and you confess your crime. The crime gets recorded in the church records and then you have 40 days of sanctuary (Terry Jones' Medieval Lives interestingly records that builders were likely to be in debt and butchers more likely to commit murder).

Hurrah, you're safe! After forty days though you have to leave and outside will be someone waiting to take you off to get hanged or cut your head off. That's not good. But wait, you can also state your aim to "abjure the realm". This basically meant you got a nice sack cloth, belt and cross combo outfit and you had to take the quickest route to the get the first ship out of the realm. For each day that you couldn't get a ship you had to wade out into the water up to your knees to signify your intent to leave. If after 40 days there wasn't a ship available, you could claim sanctuary again.

Of course you might ask how the outlaw gets to the coast without moving outside the area of

sanctuary and the answer was to use sanctuary paths. These paths connected churches to the shore and allowed a corridor of safe passage for the person who was abjuring the realm. Some of these old paths still exist and are sometimes sign posted or marked on maps. So next time you're near the coast and see a medieval church, have a look for a track that led down to the beach. You may find it wasn't made just so the priest could go for a bit of a paddle on his day off. Well, maybe some of them were.

There are records of some career criminals abusing the sanctuary system by hiding out in the church only to travel forth and commit crimes when the authorities weren't looking. There's also the fact that a lot of people who had to wear the sack cloth, belt and cross as part of the sanctuary deal, set out to wade up to their knees in the sea as required and when out of sight simply threw away the cross and ran off. I know I would've.

The Literacy Test

There was a fourth option and that was to not be judged by the secular authorities in the first place. Canon or church law existed in conjunction with the secular or common law and was purely for the jurisdiction of those areas that were the responsibility of the church.

Following the legal reforms of the Assize of Clarendon Thomas Becket, Archbishop of Canterbury was murdered in 1170 due to a power struggle with Henry II over the rights and privileges of the Church. As a result of Thomas Becket's murder Henry II was purged of any guilt by agreeing to the Compromise of Avranches. This guaranteed the right of the clergy to be tried by canon law whose methods of trial and the sentences were much more lenient (there was no death penalty for starters). There were some exemptions though, high treason, highway robbery and arson meant being handed back over to be tried by common law. Bad luck Friar Tuck.

The proof that you were clergy and should be tried by canon law evolved from just being able to appear before the court with your head tonsured and wearing ecclesiastical dress into what was considered a more rigorous literacy test. The defendant demonstrated their status by reading Psalm 51 from the Bible (*Miserere mei, deus, secundum misericordiam tuam* - O God, have mercy upon me, according to thine heartfelt mercifulness). Psalm 51 became known as the neck verse because it could literally save one's neck. The astute among the criminal population recognised that there was of course some mileage in memorising this passage if you couldn't read!

[When I started researching the subject of the literacy test I half remembered reading an anecdotal account of an illiterate man being tested in this way and cheating by having to the side of him an accomplice who could read. The accomplice would

read each sentence and whisper the words for the accused to repeat verbatim. It was when the accused “read” out loud the words “move your thumb” from the text that his scam was rumbled. If this story rings any bells with you let me know where it’s from – I can’t remember and it’s driving me mad!]

Ways Out of Outlawry

Outlawry, how do we get out of thee, let us count the ways;

The first way was to die. Or pretend to be dead and take on another identity.

The second way was to take the punishment. Most punishments for outlawry was hanging. Outlawry itself was supposed to be an incentive to put yourself forward and accept justice after all.

The third way was to abjure the realm to start a new life in another country.

The fourth way was to get a pardon. Military service or a regime change *could* get an outlaw a pardon. Again, Terry Jones in his book *Medieval Lives* asserts that medieval England needed their outlaws and the promise of pardon to help supply troops to fight its wars. You might also get a pardon if the regime changed. For example, Eustace Folville was pardoned for the murder of Sir Roger Bellere following the deposing of Edward II in 1327. But that’s jumping ahead a little.

Outlawry and the Longbow

If we were to be talking about outlaws & weapons of the American Old West the subject would naturally revolve around the use of the “six-shooter” (if you pardon the pun). Because of the Robin Hood legend we’d naturally think that medieval outlaws should have a longbow (unless your Robin Hood is played by Jonas Armstrong of course). But would we be right to assume this?

For the majority of the male population practice at the archery butts on Sundays and feast days was stipulated by law in England from the 12th to the 16th centuries. So chances are your outlaw would have access and the training to use a longbow. As mentioned before though some outlaws were of noble birth and so were more likely to be handy with a lance, a spear, a sword or almost any weapon that wasn’t seen as something the peasants used. Fulk FitzWarin is another example of a noble outlaw who’s legend doesn’t mention even one longbow (he’d have been

good friends with Jonas Armstrong's Robin Hood). But that's not to say an outlaw of noble birth couldn't or wouldn't use a bow especially if they'd hunted with one in the past. It's also not to say that all illegal activities that involved archery were carried out exclusively with the longbow either as the popularity of the crossbow would obviously make it a commonly encountered weapon. Again, in Fulk Fitzwarin's legend longbows aren't mentioned but crossbows are.

One of the reasons for choosing the subject of medieval outlaws for the Companions 5th Retinue League was the long running quest to find inspiration for archery games. Sadly the legends, stories and records that I've come across are actually rather light on specific incidents of archery. The sorts of stories like the archery contest for the Silver Arrow in Robin Hood are sadly lacking. Instead most of the medieval accounts I've come across that make reference to crimes using bows and arrows are mainly about poaching game and the associated task of recording of the different types of arrows found (in the days before finger prints an example of the type of arrow a poacher might use was the next best thing).

One paraphrased example taken from "From Hastings to the Mary Rose: The Great Warbow" by Mathew Strickland & Robert Hardy which was sourced from "Select Pleas of the Forest" by G.J.Turner (which itself was edited from the Forest Eyre Rolls) was an incident in 1229. The chief of foresters William of Northampton and Roger of Tingerwick were alerted to the presence in Rockingham Forest of poachers. They lay in ambush and eventually saw five poachers, four armed with longbows and one with a crossbow. The foresters called to them and chased them until the poachers turned and shot back. This wounded one of the forester's party, a man named Mathew, a forester from the park of Brigstock. Mathew was struck with two arrows – one in his chest (to the depth of one hand) and one in his left arm (to the depth of two fingers). These were wounds which the other foresters thought he would not survive and they continued to pursue the poachers until it was too dark to go any further. (And for the record the two arrows recovered were listed as *duabus sagittis waliscis* or "two Welsh arrows".)

In 1285 a piece of legislation relating to the policing of the country was issued by Edward I (it would apparently be until Metropolitan Police Act of 1829, the only one issued for almost nearly six hundred years). This legislation was called the Statutes of Winchester and required among other things that town gates be guarded during the hours of daylight and kept locked at night, the appointment of dedicated constables and the legal requirement to pursue felons if the hue and cry was issued. Also there was the requirement to prevent ambushes by clearing roads between market towns of ditches, under wood or undergrowth within 200 feet either side. Mathew Strickland in "From Hastings to the Mary Rose: The Great Warbow" cites this distance as being chosen because that's the range of a bow. Of course a cynical archer might point out that means approximately 60 odd yards of clear ground between you and the target ...

But ultimately the military benefits of any sort of ranged combat weapon meant it would be invaluable during the sort of ambushes that made highway robbery pay off. The benefits of being able to take game while living off the land and the fact that the majority of the population were already trained to use a bow and it's likely that it'd be fairly rare to find an outlaw who couldn't use one. So yes, if you were to pick a medieval outlaw at random and ask if he used a longbow the answer would be a yes.

Conclusion

That's a very, very brief overview of outlawry and there are plenty of books and on-line resources for those who are interested in learning more.

Further reading:

The Outlaws of Medieval Legend by Maurice Keen

Medieval Lives by Terry Jones

From Hastings to the Mary Rose: The Great Warbow by Mathew Strickland & Robert Hardy

[Assize of Clarendon](#)

Outlaw Number 1—Hereward the Wake

Et modicum Herwardus inclinans se, tetendit arcum sagittamque emisit injecto pectore ipsius comitis fortiter. Ast lorica protegente resiliuit, tamen ex animis pene factus ex ictu.

And Hereward, leaning a little forward, stretched his bow and discharged an arrow with great strength upon the breast of the Earl. And though it glided off the corslet that protected him, yet he was almost killed by the blow.

Even for those who proclaim not to know *any* history the year 1066 is one that's universally recognised by generations of British school kids as the date that William the Conqueror invaded England. England was previously ruled by Anglo-Saxons, men with plaited hair, goatees and long woollen tunics (usually dyed blue) and then just like a light switch being thrown, "flick", England was Norman, ruled by men wearing mail, conical helmets with nose guards and carrying

crossbows. Nice and simple. In reality it took William twenty years of fighting to get his conquest under control but at the top of society at least things did change pretty much over night.

So, following the Battle of Hastings (which you guys know was in 1066, right?) the whole top echelon of the Anglo-Saxon hierarchy was removed and replaced with one that dressed differently, obeyed different laws, spoke another language, took what they wanted when they wanted it and free men were made vassals & paid rent on what was formerly their own land. To say some people weren't best happy might be an understatement. The result was fierce uprisings in the north which led to the population there being all but wiped out with whole areas of productive land made barren as a consequence. Over the next twenty years the country was figuratively nailed down with a network of stone castles before William the Conqueror's prize was recorded and itemised in the Domesday Book (so called because you could no more argue with the accuracy of its contents than that of the day of the Last Judgement).

So those who recorded Anglo-Saxon history were now either working for different masters or gone altogether and it might appear that written Anglo-Saxon culture had come to an end. In most ways it did but there was some that continued to survive. There was the Anglo-Saxon Chronicles which was still being updated by the likes of Peterborough Abbey well into the 12th century (more on Peterborough Abbey later funnily enough). However, unlike the previous Roman invasion of Briton a thousand years before, there was no Boadicea type figure who is remembered as *the* rebel against the new regime.

During the aftermath it's highly probable that the names and deeds of the Anglo-Saxons who did revolt would've lived on in the Anglo-Saxon populace via now long forgotten songs and poems. History is written by the victor and if you're Norman who wants to hear about some Anglo-Saxon losers? No siree, 1066, Battle of Hastings, Harold gets the arrow in the eye and "flick", England is Norman.

Happily for us though there was though at least purportedly one contemporary written account of a rebel. The *Gesta Herwardi* written in 1260 by the Benedictine monk Hugh Candidus was supposedly copied from an earlier & badly damaged account written in Old or very early Middle English by a man called Leofric the Deacon. The *Gesta Herwardi* was written in Latin and relied on filling in the damaged gaps with what remained of the oral history. You can imagine Hugh sneaking down the pub and asking some Anglo-Saxon types to tell him a tale or two about this bloke called Hereward.

This resulting work detailed the story of someone we now know as Hereward the Wake (which supposedly meant “the watchful”). So, Hereward is our first 11th century outlaw and resistance leader who’s deeds, or at least his legend, form perhaps the early genesis of the Robin Hood stories. “Robin Hood and the Potter” is the earliest known Robin Hood ballad and it looks like it might have been taken from one of Hereward’s adventures in *Gesta*. So you could argue Hereward is a bit of an early proto-Robin Hood—a bit like the Nicholas Hammond 1970’s TV show “The Amazing Spider-Man” is to the Tobey Maguire Hollywood 2002 blockbuster “Spider-Man”. (Nerdy? Who me?)

As a side note, in addition to the name of Hereward there are a couple of other Anglo-Saxons recorded as resisting the Norman Conquest. Also mentioned in the *Gesta Herwardi* is Eadric the Wild who fought in the marches of Wales between 1067 and 1069. Another was a man named Brumannus (from the Midlands perhaps?) who apparently captured a Norman abbot, put him in a sack and dunked him in the sea. That told him, eh? (Actually it looks like he tied up people in a sack and then dropped the sack over the back of his ship which sounds a bit more menacing).

A full translation of *Gesta Herwardi* is available by clicking here; <http://boar.org.uk/ariwxo3FNQsupTitle.htm>. This account is worth a read if only for some of the footnotes to the main text. Without wishing to reproduce the whole thing here’s the gist of it.

During his lifetime Hereward was known not only as Hereward the Outlaw but also as Hereward the Exile. He got the Exile tag for getting banished from England by William’s predecessor Edward the Confessor, which might indicate Hereward was a little bit dodgy to begin with.

We can suppose that the banishment was meant to bring him down to earth a bit but it seems the very opposite happened. During this period the accounts show most of his deeds as way too fantastical to be believable and like earlier tales and sagas (Beowulf for example) there was the popular element of the magical and the supernatural about them. These magical themes are all the rage in nearly all such stories up until the early 13th century from when a definite shift occurs and the mystical elements are dropped. But back in the 11th & 12th centuries magical and mythical are still the fashion, so in the *Gesta* for example there’s the account of Hereward wrestling a bear that was gifted with human intelligence (and not a lovable 650-pound American black bear called Gentle Ben either).

In the early part of *Gesta* Hereward appears to have had quite the tour by spending his exile in Scotland, Cornwall, Northumberland, Ireland and also in Flanders where he was supposed to have fought a number of campaigns on behalf of Baldwin V, Count of Flanders. He then decides to head back to England to reclaim his lands after the Conquest by William of Normandy. On his

return to England Hereward finds his brother's head fixed over the door of his brother's house and fourteen Normans inside having a good time. The next morning we find Hereward safely asleep in his brother's house but now with fourteen Norman heads over the door instead. This sort of sets the scene for the rest of the *Gesta*. Through disguises, trickery and battles Hereward goes on to defy William and his lieutenants, always managing to get the upper hand. Sound familiar?

Like all good outlaws Hereward gathered together quite a gang, of which some are listed here. Perhaps to avoid that embarrassing moment when you can't remember one of your gang members' names they mostly consisted of men called Leofric or Wulfric (a.k.a. Wluricus). There was Leofric the Mower who when he was disturbed while mowing drove off 20 Normans with his scythe (I'm like that on Sunday mornings with my Flymo), Leofric the Cunning, who was funnily enough considered cunning and Leofric the Deacon who wrote the original account that was Hugh Candidus' basis for *Gesta Herwardi*. There was Wulfric the Heron who rescued four brothers from an unjust death before slaying their captors who had mocked him by calling him a heron (you might think he'd have dropped that nickname), Wulfric the Black who rubbed charcoal on his face before sneaking into a camp full of Normans and slaying 10 of them, Wulfric the White (who was probably named the White to distinguish him from Wulfric the Black) and Wulfric Wet-the-Bed who wishes everyone would take note that it was just the once and people should just let it drop (that last one is made up).

Keeping his family close there was also his wife Turfrida and his two nephews, Siward the White and Siward the Red. There were also few other guys who didn't have any nicknames, guys such as Utlamhe, Hurchill, Grugan and Winter (one of these guys was Hereward's cook which seems there was nickname opportunity missed there, particularly as I can't remember which one – I think maybe it was Utlamhe). There were lots more listed in the *Gesta* which to steal a line directly from the account "*Hi omnes quidem præclarissimi et magnifici milites fuerunt in omni regno, cum cæteris nonnullis, de quibus longum est nominare et recitare per singulos.*" – "All of these were the most renowned and splendid knights in the whole kingdom; and there were several others, whom it would be tedious to enumerate individually".

Hereward and his gang is said to have resisted William I from the Island of Ely which back then was surrounded by the inhospitable Fens which are a large area of marsh land that would be largely drained by later generations of landowners. These wetlands in the east of England made the Island of Ely the sort of out of the way place that early monks found attractive, hence by the time of the conquest the Island of Ely had a well established monastery on it. The monks themselves at Ely weren't apparently too keen on having a Norman appointed as their abbot and so had chosen to become part of the resistance. Recognising a base of operations against the Normans the *Gesta* says that a number of high ranking Saxons had retreated to Ely before Hereward was invited to join them. Historically the evidence for most of the people listed in

Gesta as being present at Ely isn't backed up by other sources. "Hereward and his gang" is the only thing mentioned in the Peterborough Chronicle (also called the Laud Manuscript which forms part of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicles) and this document is seen as corroborating some of the main bits of the story. To put it in context if the *Gesta* had been written after a successful German invasion of Britain during World War II it would have listed Winston Churchill, Charles De Gaulle, Douglas Bader & Noël Coward hiding out on the Island of Ely (perhaps helped by Capt Virgil "The Cooler King" Hiltz played by Steve McQueen too).

Gesta says that after setting up his base on the Island of Ely Hereward travelled forth to raid the abbey at Peterborough and take its treasure for safe protection from the Norman abbot (it's only when St. Peter appeared before him did he decide to return the treasure. St Peter later returns the favour by later guiding Hereward out of trouble by appearing before him in the image of a glowing dog!)

However, history records that perhaps what may have really happened is that Hereward and his gang was bolstered by Danes perhaps supplied by Danish king Swein Estrithson. They then raided Peterborough first (in 1070) before then retreating to the Island of Ely where they made their stand against William's forces (in 1071). The Ely monks apparently were bribed into allowing William's forces in and Hereward and his gang escaped to the Fens to continue to the fight. Of the abbey treasure one source says it disappeared over the horizon with in the Swein Estrithson's Danish ships. This raid on Peterborough Abbey was briefly recorded by the monks there in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicles, so was Hereward really a freedom fighter or just an exile and a brigand who took advantage of the situation?

Game No. 1 – Based on an Event from *Gesta Herwardi*

The Story

Soon after the invasion by William the Conqueror the monks on the island of Ely, which was surrounded and protected by marshland called the Fens, were afraid that they would have a Norman appointed over them in the manner of other such places and so they rebelled. There were soon joined by other noted Saxons namely Earl Morcar, Count Tosti, Earl Edwin, the one time archbishop Stigand and the last surviving member of the Saxon royal household, Edgard Atheling.

They called for Hereward the Outlaw to join them and so he and his gang travelled by boat to the isle. William de Warenne, later to be the 1st Earl of Surrey, brother-in-law to William the

Conqueror, travelled with a force to cut off Hereward's advance. However Hereward was faster and was there before him and on the far side of the river bank. While the future Earl marshalled his forces Hereward took his bow and shot an arrow which struck him and wounded him. The William de Warenne was carried from the river bank and his forces were forced to withdraw.

And Hereward, leaning a little forward, stretched his bow and discharged an arrow with great strength upon the breast of the Earl. And though it glided off the corslet that protected him, yet he was almost killed by the blow.

The Setup

For the start of the Retinue competition we kept things simple. We created a "man sized target" (made from boxes) that were set at no less than 100 yards from the shooting line. In turn each Retinue shot six arrows at the target. For each arrow that strikes the target and remains lodged give them one game point. Each team were allowed to shot three times. The twist for this game was that hung in the centre of the target was a balloon. If the balloon was burst this signified that the shot had killed William de Warenne contrary to the legend. If this happened that Retinue's scores are zeroed.

The Retinue with the most game points at the end won 3 Retinue Points, second place got 2 Retinue points and third place got 1 Retinue point.

A Bit of Background: The Reign of King John 1199 to 1216

The Companions of the Longbow 5th Retinue League takes for inspiration the deeds and legends of medieval outlaws. Out of the outlaws picked four all seem to have been working around the time of King John's reign – not least Robin Hood himself (although to be fair he did start a couple of years early under King Richard I's reign). To understand why there appears to be so many outlaw stories from this period here's an overview of the life and reign of one of the most disastrous king in English history.

Introduction

John is probably best remembered as the "evil Prince John" from the Robin Hood legend and also perhaps as the King who signed the Magna Carta. However there's more to him than that, oh

yes.

During his life he was the King who lost nearly all of Plantagenet lands in France, provoked the First Barons War, lost over half of England to the French Prince Louis, got excommunicated by the Pope and landed an interdict on England for years. An interdict was an ecclesiastical censure by the Pope withdrawing certain sacraments and Christian burial from all persons. In short, John was a bit of a disaster.

The Early Years

Known as John Lackland (in French, *Jean sans Terre*, one of two popular nicknames John had during his lifetime), King John was born in Oxford, England on December 24, 1166. He was the younger brother of the future Richard I a.k.a. Richard the Lionheart, and for most chroniclers John was the very opposite of his dashing older sibling. For starters John "Lackland" & Richard "the Lionheart"? Which nickname would you prefer?

John was apparently Henry's favourite son though, but Henry was not able to bestow on him the lands he had hoped as in addition to the older brother of Richard, John also had as older brothers Henry The Young King and Geoffrey Duke of Brittany. This meant there were a lot of brothers calling shotgun on the best bits of the Angevin Empire and this lack of land is where John got the nickname of "Lackland". Witty or what?

Nevertheless John was given the succession to the Earldom of Gloucester and the Lordship of Ireland. However when in 1185 John popped over to visit Ireland for several months he earned such a reputation for recklessness and irresponsibility that he had to come back.

Richard Becomes King

In June of 1189, Richard rebelled against King Henry II. This was not all together unsurprisingly really as Henry's sons had a pretty long track record of rebellion thanks to the encouragement of their mother Eleanor of Aquitaine (it's safe to say Eleanor and Henry II did not get on. Eleanor was forced to spend 16 years under house arrest).

In fact sixteen years earlier Henry's sons Henry The Young King and Richard had moved against him in an attempt to secure their inheritances. This first rebellion was duly crushed by Henry and

punishments met out but then in 1182, three out of four of Henry II's sons, Henry the Young King, Geoffrey Duke of Brittany and Richard had turned against each other again for their father's possessions on the continent. The next spat was two years later in 1184 and was between Geoffrey, John and Richard for the province of Aquitaine.

This time though for reasons that remain less than clear, John joined Richard's rebellion and a month later Richard became king thanks to Henry II helpfully dropping dead. It was said that Henry II died of a broken heart and who could blame him. Now you'd have thought John's other two elder brothers would've minded that Richard had jumped the queue but in reality Henry The Young King & Geoffrey Duke of Brittany had each died a few years earlier. So now it was just Richard in the top spot with John coming in second.

Richard Goes on Crusade

Following Richard's coronation John was made Count of Mortain, confirmed as Lord of Ireland and he married Isabella, heiress to Gloucester. He apparently got all this in return for promising to stay out of England while Richard was away on Crusade but when Richard later named their nephew Arthur (son of their late brother Geoffrey Duke of Brittany) as his heir in October 1190, John returned to England and attempted to overthrow Richard's designated justiciar William Longchamp, the Bishop of Ely.

Richard Comes Home

So Richard finishes up his Crusade and started heading back to his lands. Unfortunately for Richard on his return trip he was captured by Leopold V of Austria and handed over to Holy Roman Emperor Henry VI. When the word reached him John probably couldn't believe his luck. He joined forces with King Philip II of France and initiated a strategy for taking control of the kingdom by paying money to the Holy Roman Emperor to keep Richard locked up rather than pay the actual ransom. Luckily for Richard though there were people who preferred to see Richard on the throne rather than John (including their mother, Eleanor of Aquitaine) and so the considerable ransom was eventually paid.

Upon Richard's return in 1194, John was banished and all his lands were taken from him, however in May of that year he reconciled with his brother and recovered some of his lands. Finally, after their nephew Arthur fell into Philip King of France's hands in 1196, Richard was forced to recognize John as his heir and John reacquired all his holdings. Lucky him, eh?

Richard Dies & John Becomes King

Following a siege in April 1199 of Chalus-Chabrol Richard was wandering around without his armour and was shot by a crossbow. The wound turned gangrenous and alas, with this sort of wound Richard's time was up and he died. So finally in May 1199, with all of his brothers now dead, John was crowned King of England and all was well. For about five minutes.

His nephew Arthur, who was once Philip's prisoner, now had the King of France's support because it appeared that Arthur was still recognized as Richard's heir in Anjou and Maine. To fix this small problem a year later John signed the *Treaty of Le Goulet* which as a result, and in return for some funds and for ceding some territory to Philip, the French king helped John to be universally recognized as the rightful successor to all Richard's French holdings. Finally all was well. For another five minutes.

John Gets Divorced

In 1199 John had his marriage to Isabella dissolved on the grounds of consanguinity, which means having a common ancestor, i.e. being blood relatives. They were both descendants of King Henry I, which made them second cousins, obviously something easily overlooked when you're preparing for a wedding and it's got nothing to do with a lack of legitimate heirs from the marriage, if anyone should ask. Which they wouldn't if they knew what was good for them.

Then after intervening in the politics of Poitou and attempting to settle a problem between the rival families of Angoulême and Lusignan, he married again. This was another Isabella, the heiress to Angoulême who up to that point had been betrothed to Hugh IX de Lusignan. This on the face of it wasn't a problem because John, as a King, pretty much outranked Hugh so John could do what he wanted, however ...

It's Not What You Know, It's Who You Know

The following year the Lusignans rebelled and made an appeal to the French King, Philip II. King Philip therefore ordered John to appear before him to answer the case.

Now why should King John of England and half of France have to answer to King Philip II whose lands were basically a third the size of John's? Well, technically under feudal law (and ratified under the *Treaty of Le Goulet*) John's lands in France were held from the French King. Therefore when John refused the order to appear before him Philip felt he was now within his right under feudal law to take back those lands. War ensued.

John saw success at Mirebeau and managed to capture back his nephew Arthur which was good. But on the negative side John lost Normandy, Anjou, Maine, and parts of Poitou to the French king, which was obviously very, very bad. This was when he picked up his second nick-name: John Softsword. Yeah, Lackland isn't looking so bad now is it?

So John had lost nearly all of his French holdings and as a result his prestige had dropped immeasurably. Worse than that he now had to stay in rainy England and attempt to make up for all his lost revenue. He therefore cracked down on finances, taxing revenues, taxing the Jews, conducting investigations into the royal forests and feudal tenures, and exploiting his prerogatives. Unfortunately for John, this would later serve as the basis for the charges of tyranny brought against him.

It Gets Worse - John Upsets the Pope Too

When the Archbishop of Canterbury Hubert Walter died in 1205, John saw the chance to promote members of his household to important offices. However Pope Innocent III rejected John's candidate and effected the election of Stephen Langton for the post instead.

John refused to accept Langton, so Innocent decided to apply some pressure by excommunicating him and putting an interdict on England in 1207. An interdict was an ecclesiastical censure by the Roman Catholic Church withdrawing certain sacraments and Christian burial from all persons. Making the situation work to his advantage John managed to accumulate more than £100,000 (around an estimated £50 million in today's money) from the revenues of appropriated or vacant clerical offices. While monetarily to his advantage this split which had lasted five years threatened John's plans to recover his European lands as well as further damaging his prestige at home. After all, there technically hadn't been a Christian burial in England for five years and people had started to notice (in reality Mass was allowed behind closed doors from 1209 and last rites were allowed to the dying from 1212).

Under threat of further action John finally agreed to accept the Pope's terms in November 1212. He also surrendered the kingdom to the Papal Nuncio (the Pope's diplomatic representative) but

he immediately got the kingdom back as a vassal on the condition of an annual tribute of 1,000 marks (700 marks for England, 300 marks for Ireland).

The new Archbishop of Canterbury and the Pope's initial first choice Stephen Langton was now back and he absolved John from excommunication in 1213. Then finally in 1214 the interdict on England was lifted. So, at last, all was well. Except this was John so all would only be well for another five minutes...

John Tries to Get His French Lands Back

With things patched up with the Pope he now had an ally with his conflict against Philip. However his planned invasion of France gave him no decisive victories and following the Battle of Bouvines (1214) John eventually signed a truce that lasted until after his death. So that was worth the extra effort then

The First Barons War

The barons by now had had enough. Not only had John surrendered England and Ireland to the Pope, but he was rubbish as a military leader. Their discontent erupted in 1215 into a civil war that would later be called The First Barons War. John was forced to negotiate after London went over to the rebels and on 15th June 1215 at Runnymede he accepted the terms of the document know as the Articles of the Barons.

After a bit more revision this document was eventually signed and renamed the Great Charter a.k.a. in Latin, the Magna Carta. The Magna Carta required among other things that John renounce certain rights, respect certain legal procedures and accept that his will could be bound by the law.

Now John being John he wasn't just going to roll over and accept this ruling so he immediately appealed against the charter to the Pope. The Pope, recognising the limitations this imposed on one of his vassal took the King's side and the civil war carried on.

Enter King Louis of England

It's at this point that Prince Louis, the son of King Philip of France invaded with an army greater than that of William the Conqueror. With barely a fight Louis was welcomed into London and proclaimed King by the citizens and the barons. That's right, King Louis of England. What do you mean he's not officially listed in the history books?

Back during the period when England was still under an interdict Louis had been chosen to go over the England and take control with the full backing of the Pope. Louis was married to John's niece which gave him some kind of claim but it was now with full baronial backing that he was called to do so. It might seem strange to the modern reader but this was a time when the ruling elite of France and England shared more in common with each other than later centuries. So after being accepted by and having oaths sworn against him by the barons, the City of London and the King of Scotland, Louis was the de facto new King of England.

It Gets Worse - John Loses the Crown Jewels

It was during his flight from Louis that one of the most memorable incidents of John's reign took place. John was taking a safe route around the marshy area of the Wash to avoid the area of East Anglia. His slow baggage train which included the Crown Jewels however took a direct route across and this baggage train was famously lost to the unexpected incoming tide.

According to legend John comforted himself by binging on peaches and beer. This binge was popularly said to be the cause of death in October, 1216. How does that work then by the way? Eat a peach, drink a beer, eat a peach, drink a beer, eat a peach ... hang on, I'm beginning to feel a bit poorly? Anyone got an Alka-Seltzer?

Anyway, the history books say he caught dysentery died and was buried in Worcester Cathedral.

At Last, Peace

John's death naturally helped pave the way for peace. John's son Henry was assured the succession because, although still a boy, under the regency of the seventy five year old William Marshal, 1st Earl of Pembroke, the barons were promised rule by Magna Carta. This obviously suited the barons much better than having to go through the whole routine again with King Louis. So there followed another year and half of war, before Treaty of Lambeth was signed in 1217 and Louis withdrew his forces back to France.

As Louis never really had a proper coronation with an archbishop, a crown and all the trimmings, everyone conveniently forgot about the proclamation and their oaths of allegiance to him. All that was left was for his reign to be quietly omitted from the history books. All hail King Henry III! Later Edward V and Edward VIII would be proclaimed, rather than crowned as kings, but they're still included in the official lists. But then again, history is written by the victor.

Louis perhaps didn't mind too much. After the death of his father in 1223 he became King Louis VIII of France which was probably a better job. And anyway, he had a much better nickname than John ever had; history records him as Louis VIII the Lion.

The Longbow During John's Lifetime

During John's lifetime the longbow of course features in the legends of the most famous of all medieval outlaws, Robin Hood. Whether Robin Hood really was around during this period we'll leave to another time, however it was certainly a period of chaos & lawlessness therefore escape to the greenwood was certainly an option taken by many. On the flip side of this we also have the likes of a man called William of Cassingham a.k.a. Wilkin of the Weald, who led a band of 600 Wealden archers for King John in a guerrilla war against Louis' forces during the First Baron's War (we'll be coming back to William later).

Like his predecessors King John liked to hunt and his continued expansion of Royal Forests was one of the points of contention in the Magna Carta. Royal Forests were also a great source of revenue for the crown and forest rights was fiercely protected by the money desperate King. "The Book of Archery" by George Agar Hansard (published in 1840) recounts the story in the reign of King John where by the monks at the convent of Winchester were suspected of illegally taking venison.

King John ordered the convent searched and a fine imposed for every bow found. Hansard's footnote to this incident says the prior "could not plead the statute commanding every Englishman to be possessed of four shafts, [requiring practice of the bow] because it expressly exempts "all holy men"". Busted, dude!

Expansion of Royal Forests would've almost certainly created a need for more foresters, as well as of course the archers employed during the numerous armed conflicts. John's retinue in Ireland during 1185 is estimated to have consisted of at least 3,000 foot and mounted archers.

Evidence also exists of archers being employed for an abortive sortie into Wales by John in 1212. Conversely John also employed a great deal of Welsh mercenaries who would've been equipped with spear, knife and bow (no doubt advised on the benefits of Welsh archers by Gerald of Wales who acted as chaplain and tutor to John). Unfortunately if you were an archer during this period, particularly during a siege, your lot would not be a happy one if you were on the losing side. Typically for the period when Rochester Castle fell in 1215 during the First Barons War, John spared the whole garrison except the crossbowmen - they were all beheaded.

Conclusion

So by now you're probably of the opinion that John wasn't perhaps the greatest King. On a personal level John is suspected of murdering his nephew Arthur with the help of one William de Braose, the architect of the Abergavenny Massacre. There is no doubt that he starved the William de Braose's wife, Maud de St. Valery, along with her eldest son in a royal prison following a falling out with the de Braoses. This falling out was not helped by Maud's public outcry that yes, John had in fact murdered his nephew.

On the plus side though he did manage to rise to the throne from the rank outside place of fourth eldest son and technically he wasn't usurped as he died still King of England. Okay, so technically he *was* usurped, but unlike his son, Henry III, his great grandson, Edward II and his great, great, great grandson Richard II he managed to evade capture by his enemies.

He also made important advances in the general mechanics of running of the country. Namely the administration of justice as his reign resulted in the first proper set of records (the Pipe Rolls). Plus there was taxation & organisation of the military; the tax of scutage or escuage allowed a knight to "buy out" of the military service, its name is derived from the knightly shield (in Latin: scutum).

He was the first monarch who recognised that to take the fight across the Channel he needed a strong navy. As such in 1203 ordered all shipyards in England to provide at least one ship and made Portsmouth the new home of the fleet (which is still home to the largest dockyard in the country today).

He must also have had some political acumen as some of the barons during the Baron's War fought for him, rather than against him. Then of course we have the Magna Carta, a document that was the most significant early influence on the rule of constitutional law today.

Alright, so the positive bits of his legacy are entirely the result of necessity in the face of one cock up after another. So perhaps, in the end, it's difficult not to draw the same conclusion as that of his historical contemporaries, that King John deserved the long lasting reputation as deceitful, devious, treacherous and unreliable.

Now the big question: why hasn't there ever been a King John II in England?

Further Reading & Sources

[Terry Jones' Medieval Lives by Terry Jones & Alan Ereira](#)

[From Hastings to the Mary Rose: The Great Warbow by Mathew Strickland & Robert Hardy](#)

[The Book of Archery by George Agar Hansard](#)

[The Crooked Stick by Hugh D.H. Soar](#)

[Magna Carta](#)

[British History for Dummies by Sean Lang](#)

Outlaw No. 2 – Fulk FitzWarin – Era: The Reign of King John 1199 to 1216

The story of the outlaw called Fulk FitzWarin, who is also called Fouke le Fitz Waryn, Fouke FitzWaryn, FitzWarren or just plain Fulke is a that story survives in a number of manuscripts from around the 1330's and is recognised as an Anglo-Norman prose romance from earlier sources originating from the second half of the thirteenth century. The story features a chivalric hero who fights corruption and injustice within the historical framework of the somewhat disastrous reign of King John of England. As with earlier legends of this type a popular dose of the magical is included to spice up the danger.

Unlike the yeoman tales of Robin Hood this tale has more in common with Arthurian legends and Fulk is perhaps our most aristocratic and noble outlaw. As such there's speculation that this story was maybe written solely for the benefit and enjoyment of the upper classes although just like Hereward there really was a Fulk FitzWarin who was an outlaw during the reign of King John.

The story is primarily set on the Welsh border and the first part details the fortunes of the real life FitzWarin family from the time of the Conquest through to Fulk's era at the beginning of the 13th century. Featuring historical events with the establishment of the Marcher barons along the border with Wales and England, the tale offers us a glimpse of the intricate and unstable relationships between the king, his Marcher barons and the Welsh. The latter part of tale starts with a childhood quarrel between Fulk and the then Prince John.

As a young boy Fulk was sent to the court of King Henry II and its here that an argument between him and the prince resulted in a chess board getting broken over Fulk's head and John receiving punishment for the resultant fight. Never one to forget, years later the newly crowned King John takes things out on Fulk by favouring a rival Marcher lord, Moris de Powys, and granting lands that had been promised to Fulk during the previous reign of King Richard. Fulk, feeling wronged under feudal law, renounces his allegiance to John and becomes an outlaw. Fulk then takes to wilderness and fights King John and his agents using tricks and stratagems that would be familiar to anyone who knows of Robin Hood.

In parts of the tale he also travels abroad and serves in the courts of foreign lords and its here that like the legend of Hereward the Wake, some of the more magical and fantastical adventures take place. In one adventure he rescues the Duke of Carthage's daughter from a dragon.

In another, Fulk travels to Ireland and overcomes a black giant and takes his hatchet as a trophy. Just like the Hereward story though as soon as he's back in good old Blighty all this magical stuff takes a back seat in the story.

While in England, along with his outlaw band, he continues to fight a guerrilla resistance to John's authority by robbing the kings' servants, knights and merchants. He uses disguises to trick or make fools of his enemies and robs only from those who are in the service of the king. To further bolster his noble cause he comes to the aid of those who are also the enemy of the king or have suffered from tyranny and injustice.

Being noble and representing a higher cause he wishes to be seen as no common brigand or thief and is fiercely protective of his name. One tale involves the rescue of a gentleman and his wife from another band of outlaws who are using Fulk's name as a cover. In the tale, after surprising the gang while they are robbing the manor hall, Fulk ties the each member to a chair and forces their leader to go around the table and chop their heads off. When finished it's the leaders turn to his head cut off thus demonstrating some swift medieval retribution.

While the character of Fulk is similar perhaps to Robin Hood the main difference between the two is that the reader can be in no doubt that Fulk is a Norman lord with the resources that this entails. Fulk fights pitched battles in the field with horse and sword and clashes with the tyranny of one king, rather than the tyranny of the system. Therefore unlike Robin Hood, Fulk is no longer running popular hero among the common folk.

But what of the actual history? Well, the records of the Exchequer say that one Fulk Fitzwarin did indeed become an outlaw in the early years of King John's reign (1200) and it was the favour shown to his marcher rival, Maurice of Powis that led him to defy the king. His usual stomping ground was Shropshire as in 1201 one Simon de Lenz was being paid by the King to hunt down the outlaws there.

The next year Fulk had moved on to Wiltshire for he was besieged by the men of the county of [Stanley Abbey](#) there in 1202. He obviously managed to escape because he was eventually pardoned in 1203 along with his gang of thirty eight other persons. Fulk Fitzwarin later appears again as one of the unruly barons rising in 1215 to ultimately force King John to sign the Magna Carta. It's believed that he goes on to have a long life and dies of old age during the reign of Henry III.

Text of the Fulk Fitzwarin romance "Fouke le Fitz Waryn" edited by Stephen Knight and Thomas H. Ohlgren can be found by clicking on the following link:
<http://www.lib.rochester.edu/camelot/teams/fouke.htm>

Game No. 2 – Based on the Legend of the Outlaw Fulk Fitzwarin

The Story

A hundred knights are dispatched to hunt down and kill Fulk Fitzwarin. It's while Fulk is journeying in the forest of Kent that the hundred knights learn of Fulk's position. From "Fouke le Fitz Waryn" edited by Stephen Knight and Thomas H. Ohlgren;

"The hundred knights immediately sent out a summons through the countryside. They hastily rounded up knights, squires, and foot-soldiers, in sufficient numbers to encircle the whole forest. As if this were an animal hunt, beaters and receivers were placed at strategic points. Others were positioned throughout the countryside with horns to give warning the moment Fouke and his companions came out of the forest. Fouke, however, remained in the forest, unaware of all this

activity. At length he heard a horn sounded by one of the attacking knights. He became suspicious and ordered his brothers to mount their horses. William, Philip, John, and Alan immediately mounted, as did Audulph de Bracy, Baldwin de Hodnet, and John Malveysyn. The three Cosham brothers, Thomas, Pieres, and William, who were good cross-bowmen, and all the rest of Fouke's followers were soon ready for the assault.

“With his companions Fouke came out of the forest and saw, before all the others, the hundred knights who had been hunting him throughout England. In the first rush of battle Fouke's men killed Gilbert de Mountferrant, Jordan de Colchester, and many other knights. They made several passes back and forth through the hundred knights, knocking them down in great numbers. At length, however, many knights, squires, burgesses, foot-soldiers, and people in great numbers joined in the battle. Fouke wisely perceived that he and his men could not continue thus. Finally, after his brother John received a bad head wound, he decided to return into the forest. Fouke and his companions spurred their horses. But before they left, many a good knight, squire, and foot-soldier were slain. People from all over then began to sound the cry, and they were pursued by the populace everywhere they went. At length they entered into a wood and saw a man raising his horn, about to sound the warning. In an instant, one of Fouke's men shot him through the body with a cross-bow bolt. That put a quick end to the warning blast.”

The Setup

The Companions knight target was set up at not less than 30 paces. Each archer took it in turn to shoot the knight (no shield or sword shots counted). A volunteer from an opposing retinue was placed to one side with a hunting horn strung and hanging loosely from their shoulder. The horn was to be touching the horn blower's hip and the horn blower was to start with both hands on their head. No assistance was allowed from any other archer. The archer shooting was allowed to start with one arrow nocked on their bowstring.

From the call of “loose!” the archer shooting was allowed to shoot as many arrows as possible to strike the knight. As long as the opposing retinue member did not or could not blow the horn the archer shooting could continue. As soon as the horn was blown the archer shooting was required to stop shooting. As soon as the archer shot the knight they were deemed to have shot the “man raising his horn, about to sound the warning”. Therefore this game was one of speed between the archer and the member who is trying to “sound the warning”.

For each archer that succeeded in shooting the knight before the horn was blown one game point was given. The retinue with the most game points received 3 Retinue Points, the second placed retinue received 2 Retinue Points and the last placed Retinue gained 1 Retinue Point.

Outlaw No. 3 – Eustace the Monk – Era: The Reign of King John 1199 to 1216

"No man can live long who spends his days doing ill."

- Li Romans de Witasse le Moine

Our third outlaw's story is perhaps the last romance that involves an account of a real person whose life has been embellished to include the magical. The Romance of Eustace the Monk was written in Old French, dates from the 1280's and covers the life of a very real mercenary and outlaw named Eustace Busquet. Eustace the Monk as he was known, although French worked for both King John of England and Philip Augustus of France during a long running conflict between the two Kingdoms (see [The Reign of King John](#) on pages 4 and 5 for more background info). There was more to Eustace than just being an outlaw though, as you might have guessed from his nickname.

The actual romance is split between three distinct parts of Eustace's life and each third is totally different from the one that precedes it. They're so different that in fact that it's easy to see why some historians believe that the whole tale was actually written by three different sources and that the finished story is just the three parts stuck together. The final part is the most historically accurate as this cover's Eustace's career as a sea captain and pirate (arrrrrrr, Jim Lad! etc.). As such his later deeds have been well documented and corroborated and of all our outlaws Eustace probably had the biggest impact on the wider events of his time.

The first part of the tale is the most fantastical. It begins by saying that Eustace was the son of the baron of the Boulonnais and was trained as a knight before, at aged twenty, he entered a monastery in St Samer Abbey near Calais. Somehow even before this though it was said that he also trained in Spain in the arts of black magic and he used his powers to create mischief and discord where ever he went. It was said that he cast spells on landladies who required payment, made horses gallop backwards and enchanted townsfolk into fights. It was also said that he could saw a lady in half and then re-attach her to the amazement and applause of all who witnessed it (not really, made that one up).

When he arrived at the monastery he also used magic to confuse the monks into fasting when they should have been feasting, feasting when they should have been fasting, going barefoot when they should have worn shoes and made them curse under their breath when they should have been praying. One of the weirdest things he supposedly did was to enchant a side of bacon

into making it leap up and change into a little old woman who then proceeded to prance around the kitchen and scare the abbey cook. It seems his magical abilities are lost with the start of the second part of his tale because no mention is made of these strange powers from there on in. (Maybe he got chucked out of the Magic Circle?)

After all the light hearted shenanigans the second part of the tale begins with a murder. Eustace's father Baudain Buskes was murdered by a long standing rival called Hainfrois de Meresinguehans. Eustace was the oldest son and therefore he immediately inherited the family lands and a brand spanking new addition to the long standing family feud. He left the monastery to demand justice from the Count of Boulogne, one Rainald of Dammartin but unfortunately for Eustace, Hainfrois demanded trial by battle. Eustace opted to elect a champion who unfortunately (for both parties) lost the battle. However on the up side right after the judicial duel he got the job of seneschal to the Count, Renaud de Dammartin (a seneschal was an important officer who held similar responsibilities as a steward).

It seems Eustace continued the feud against Hainfrois and that this caused Hainfrois to poison Renaud's opinion against him. Eustace was accused of mismanaging the Count's finances and Eustace, who feared treachery, refused to appear before his lord. This led to the Count seizing Eustace's lands and burning his garden (Eustace must have really loved his garden). In response to this Eustace burnt two of the Renaud's newly built mills and because Renaud was celebrating his son's wedding Eustace sent him the miller to tell him that he had lit two great candles for the wedding feast. Of course having burnt his bridges with the Count (or is that burnt his mills) his options were now a bit limited, so he disappeared into the forests to become an outlaw.

There's a period of activity that now seems common place in such tales, namely fooling the Count and his representatives via a thousand stratagems and disguises. It's here that it's worth noting two things. Firstly that his deeds are anything but heroic. At one end of the scale they have more of a slapstick comedic feel about them. In one tale Eustace disguises himself as merchant and palms off on the Count some baked pastries containing tow, pitch and wax which caused the Count some embarrassment at the dinner table. In another he disguises himself as a woman, sneaks into the Count's stables, makes improper advances towards one the sergeants and manages to ride off with two of the Count's best horses (the sergeant runs away in a mixture of embarrassment and fear of punishment).

At the other end of the scale they're not quite so hilarious. In one episode Eustace cuts out the tongue of one of the Count's young pages and sends him back unable to tell of the tale. In another he cuts off the feet of four of the Count's sergeants and sends the fifth one, feet still attached (glad enough "to save his trotters") back to his master to explain why the others could proceed no further.

The second thing to note is that there are some similarities between the tales of Hereward, Fulk Fitzwarin and the later tales of Robin Hood. The most notable of these incidents are where Eustace disguises himself as a potter and the other where Eustace captures the Count (and in a separate incident Hainfrois) and on both occasions spares their lives. Now's a good point to insert a link to a translation of the 13th century north French vernacular romance *Li Romans de Witasse le Moine*;

<http://www.lib.rochester.edu/camelot/teams/eustache.htm> because the introduction <http://www.lib.rochester.edu/camelot/teams/eustint.htm> gives a better description of the similarities between Eustace's tale and Robin Hood than I can write.

The third part of the tale covers the most historically accurate part and one which we have the most corroborating evidence for. As you now know Eustace became seneschal to Rainald (in 1203) and entered service to King John of England in 1205, thus giving him anything from one to two years as a forest outlaw. With his service to King John so began an outstanding profession as a sea captain and pirate (shiver me timbers! Pieces of eight! Etc. etc).

The reason given for Eustace joining King John seemed to be that Rainald had allied himself with the King of France and as the King of France was at war with the King of England the old adage "the enemy of my enemy is my friend" seems to have come into affect. Eustace was employed by King John intermittently between 1205 and 1212 with King John apparently giving him command of thirty ships at the start of the assignment to raid the Normandy coast. At some point Eustace (along with his brothers) established a base at Castle Cornet in Guernsey thus enabling him to carry out a raid that involved sailing all the way up the Seine and going as far as Rouen.

As mentioned, he's not quite the popular hero of other legends and Eustace also started raiding English coastal villages. However despite King John briefly outlawing him, Eustace received a quick pardon because of the King's need of his services.

When Renaud de Dammartin allied himself with King John, Eustace switched sides in 1212 and in response English troops seized his Channel Island bases. Starting with his first act for the King of France, raiding Folkestone in Kent there then followed three years worth of piracy and raiding. When civil war broke out in England in 1215 (the First Barons War) Eustace decided to support the rebel barons against King John. So it was that with 800 ships he ferried Prince Louis of France and his soldiers across the Channel in 1216.

As the conflict continued a major turning point was the death of King John. The barons supported swung to John's infant son the now titled Henry III. With this the fortunes of the once popular Louis changed and so in August 1217 while trying to re-supply the French Eustace met an English fleet sailing out of Dover commanded by Hubert de Burgh. The battle (since called the Battle of Dover) is one where one of the first examples of medieval sailing tactics are recorded. De Burgh attacked upwind and assailed the French by shooting first crossbow bolts and then blinding Eustace's fleet with quicklime dust. After this the English were able to close and board resulting in three quarters of Eustace's fleet being destroyed or captured.

Eustace managed to escape but in the aftermath had to fight a second battle called the Battle of Sandwich between him and Philip d'Aubigny's English fleet of Cinque Ports ships (Cinque Ports is Norman French for "five ports" – the five being Hastings, New Romney, Hythe, Dover, and Sandwich.). After being boarded Eustace reportedly offered large sums of money for his life but because he was so feared (English chroniclers termed him "the Archpirate," and the "black monk become a demoniac") he was offered instead the choice of being beheaded on the ship's rail or the side of a trebuchet (which was being carried as deck cargo to England). History did not record which option he took but we do know his head was chopped off.

So ended the life and career of Eustace the Monk, an outlaw and pirate (arrrr, landlubbers! etc) who's name struck terror into the hearts of both English and French sailors and whose death was viewed as a blessing from God.

Game No. 3 – Based on the Battle of Dover/Battle of Sandwich from Eustace the Monk

The Story

From "Eustache the Monk" edited by Stephen Knight and Thomas H. Ohlgren;

"Then the English started hurling big pots of finely ground lime on board, with the result that great clouds of dust covered the decks. That was what caused the most damage, against which Eustache's men could not defend themselves. To their misfortune the wind was against them, which caused further torment, for their eyes became filled with ash. In the confusion the English leaped onto Eustache's ship and mistreated his men badly, taking all the nobles prisoner. As for Eustache the Monk, he was slain, his head cut off. Thus ended the battle."

The illustration of the battle from the Benedictine Monk Matthew Paris shows an archer

shooting a bag of quicklime fixed to his arrow shaft. This game we'll see if our archers can make (simulated) quicklime arrows and shoot them accurately.

The Setup

Cardboard targets were fixed to the hay bail backstop and the shooting line set at not less than 30 paces. Each Retinue were supplied with the same amount of materials to make their simulated quicklime arrows. The materials were; string, thin paper and flour. The teams were given ten minutes to make exactly fifteen arrows. The arrows could be all from one archer or they could all be from fifteen separate archers or combinations there of but the only rule was that each arrow could only be shot by its respective owner (because of spine ratings and draw lengths etc). All teams were given 10 minutes to make their fifteen arrows.

To decide the team shooting order they were asked the following question:

“Archers in England and Wales were required to practice archery on Sundays and religious holidays. According to *Everyday Life in Medieval England* by Christopher Dyer a medieval worker got each year a flexible but definitive number of religious holidays per year (from where we get the word holiday or holy day to begin with of course). So, including Sundays, how many days per year in total would an archer practice the longbow?”

Answer: One day per week which is 52 plus an additional 40 days of religious holidays. So the answer is 92 days of practice per year.

In turn each team shot their arrows at their own separate cardboard target which before the shooting started was wetted slightly to help the quicklime (flour) stick. Each team got 5 minutes of shooting time to loose their fifteen arrows. This time allowed the teams tinkering time once they'd seen how their initial arrows performed. As the other teams could watch there was therefore a great advantage to going last for the team who correctly answered the question. After everyone had shot the cardboard targets were inspected to see which team had got the most quicklime (flour) pasted onto their board. First, second and third place were awarded based on the teams' performances.

Outlaw No. 4 – Robin Hood – Era: The Reign of King John 1199 to 1216

What can I write about Robin Hood that hasn't already been written? Okay from the memory of a zillion books, TV shows and films see if this sounds familiar ...

Robin of Locksley is a yeoman who begins the story by being unjustly persecuted by the Sheriff of Nottingham. The sheriff is allowed free reign to do this because King Richard the Lionheart, the true and good King of England, is off fighting in the Third Crusade. While away Richard's cruel brother Prince John gathers as much tax money as possible to help him seize the throne from Richard. As long as taxes are being raised the Prince doesn't care what the sheriff and the sheriff's evil henchman, Sir Guy of Gisborne, are up to. Robin, on seeing the common people so cruelly taxed & burdened, decides to fight back by robbing from the rich and giving to the poor! Huzzah!

In his fight against the sheriff Robin gathers together a gang in Sherwood Forest called the Merry Men. The Merry Men consist of Robin's second in command John Little (who is a giant of man and so goes by the name of Little John), Will Scarlet (a bit of a dandy), Much the Miller's Son (a youth), Friar Tuck (a fat and jovial friar from Fountains Abbey), Alan-a-Dale (a wandering minstrel) and Robin's love interest, the Maid Marian.

Lately there's been a new addition to the Merry Men in the form of a Saracen. The eighties TV show had Nasir the Assassin, the 1991 film *Robin Hood: Prince of Thieves* had Azeem and the latest BBC version of Robin Hood has Djaq (pronounced Jack) who was not only a Saracen, but initially a woman pretending to be a man. Which one is the best "new" character? In the style of Harry Hill's *TV Burp* there's only one way to find out ... FIGHT!

So, in the absence of a long dissertation on Robin Hood stuff you probably already know, here are some Robin Hood facts ... (which you probably already know):

The original stories of Robin Hood survived through ballads, a form of poem usually set to music (perhaps explaining to the uninitiated the inclusion of the lines "with a hey down, down, and a down" & "fal lal dal de" in some of them). Although many of these ballads are dated to the time they were first written down, most from the 16th and 17th centuries, they have a long oral history which indicate their medieval roots.

The earliest surviving written ballad is "Robin Hood and the Monk" circa 1450. However, the earliest recognised ballad is "Little Gest of Robyn Hode and his Meiny", itself made from four other ballads; the ballad of "Robin Hood and the Knight"; the ballad of "Robin Hood, Little John and the Sheriff"; the ballad of "Robin Hood and the King"; and the ballad of "Robin Hood's Death".

Merry Men apparently aren't merry at all. Here the term merry or merry-man reputedly comes from an archaic word that meant the swearing of an oath to follow someone.

No one knows when the legends of Robin Hood are supposed to have taken place but two popular timescale are from 1180's to 1220's or from the time of the Second Baron's War in the 1260's.

None of the ballads say why Robin Hood became an outlaw.

The alias of Robin Hood appears in court records from the early 13th century onwards and the name (in various forms) is used as shorthand for any outlaw or criminal.

Friar Tuck was actually a much later addition to the Merry Men. A fighting friar is mentioned in the ballad "Robin Hood and the Curtal Friar" but isn't named. Curtal referred to the shortened robe he wore but other theories say that a curtal friar meant he was a gardener or a gate keeper.

In fact the concept of a friar doesn't come about until the early 1200's long after Richard the Lionheart's crusade in the 1190's.

Much the Miller's Son is popularly shown as a young inexperienced man however the early ballads has him as an experienced older fighter.

Maid Marion doesn't become a central character until the publication of the novel "Maid Marian" by Thomas Love Peacock in 1822.

In contrast to the idea of a fighting Marion being a modern idea, in the ballad "Maid Marion and Robin Hood" Marion is shown as fighting "With quiver and bow, sword, buckler, and all,

Thus armed was Marian most bold”.

Little John & Robin’s encounter on the log had only become an accepted part of the story from the 1620’s. Robin isn’t mentioned as actually using a quarter staff until the 18th century ballad “Robin Hood and Little John”.

Merry Men who are in the early ballads but rarely get screen time in the TV and film versions are Arthur a Bland (“Robin Hood and the Tanner”), David of Doncaster (“Robin Hood and the Golden Arrow”), Will Stutely (“Robin Hood and Little John” & “Robin Hood Rescuing Will Stutely”) & Gilbert Whitehand (A Gest of Robyn Hode).

In the original ballads Robin Hood kills Sir Guy of Gisborne, cuts off his head, places it on the end of his longbow and cuts Sir Guy’s face up with an Irish knife until it’s unrecognisable.

In the ballad “Robin Hood and the Golden Arrow” the prize is actually an arrow with a gold head and a silver shaft.

Robin has two popular origins, one as a yeoman and the other as the Earl of Huntingdon. As the ballads became popular and Robin’s deeds evolved to become more noble so did Robin’s origins – hence the Earldom (one source says this was first done in a play written in 1598).

Traditionally Robin Hood operated in the area of Nottingham Forest although some ballads show him as operating in the Barnsdale area of what is now south Yorkshire (some fifty miles north of Sherwood Forest).

The actual name of the Sheriff of Nottingham isn’t mentioned in the original ballads.

Elements of previous outlaw legends worked their way into the Robin Hood ballads. Basics of the outlaw stories that have been re-used seem to come from the stories of Hereward the Wake, Fulk Fitzwaren and Eustace the Monk.

The character of Will Scarlet is typically shown as wearing red. However the term scarlet originally referred to a particular grade of cloth (Latin *scarlata*). The way it was woven

made the cloth elasticised (by twisting the yarn) and although it came in many colours the most common colour was red. This is how the double meaning came about.

Will Scarlet's last name is written variously as Scarlett, Scarlock, Scadlock, Scatheloke and Scathelocke.

Born in 1892, Alan Hale, Sr. holds the record for playing a Merry Man for the longest span (28 years). He played Little John in the 1922 Douglas Fairbanks version of Robin Hood, again in 1938 for the Errol Flynn version and finally for the last time in the 1950 film *Rogues of Sherwood Forest*.

The story goes that when Robin Hood was dieing he shot an arrow from his deathbed and told Little John to bury him where ever the arrow landed. This is why Robin Hood is buried on top of the wardrobe. Not really (an old joke) ... Robin Hood is reputed to be buried in the grounds of Kirklees Priory between Brighouse and Mirfield in West Yorkshire.

The character of Robin from the comic book of Batman and Robin is based on Robin Hood. Holy warped and unrecognisable character Batman!

The term "Robin Hood" in modern archery is used when an arrow is shot with such accuracy that it splits another arrow in two from nock to the tip. Although not mentioned in the original ballads (the splitting the arrow shot itself is believed to be taken from the 1819 novel "Ivanhoe") it's represented in the 1938 Errol Flynn movie "The Adventures of Robin Hood" where Howard Hill actually does this shot for real.

The Discovery Channel TV show *Mythbusters* proved that this shot is actually impossible to do with wooden arrows as the arrow hit will split but will not split all the way down from the nock to the point. Instead the arrow will split only as far as the wooden grain will allow it to go which is usually not all the way down the shaft. To actually do this shot it was estimated that Howard Hill would have have split a shaft which would've been made from bamboo (and then in slow motion the "arrow" is actually shown as being split in three). If you search the internet you'll read plenty of archers who've "Robin Hooded" their arrows, however you'll also find that they're nearly all to an archer shooting carbon fibre shafts which are actually hollow tubes with a plastic nock at one end and the point at the other ... (when this happens with these type of arrows it's called "telescoping" for hopefully obvious reasons). So on the accuracy side of things it's possible to shoot another arrow on the nock (1:3000 chance per shot apparently), just

don't expect it to split all the way down from the nock to the point Robin Hood style.

Friar Tuck was said to have come from Fountains Abbey which was a Cistercian monastery. The Cistercians believed in the strict adherence to the Rule of St. Benedict, a set of strictures put down by St. Benedict for monks living in a community under an Abbot. Unfortunately when it came to the chapter on what to wear St. Benedict forgot to mention underpants, therefore Cistercians followed the rules and didn't wear underpants either. As a consequence it's likely that Friar Tuck would've gone commando too...

Game No. 4 – Based on the Ballad Robin Hood and the Golden Arrow

The Story

*So an arrow with a golden head
And shaft of silver white,
Who won the day should bear away
For his own proper right.*

From the ballad of Robin Hood And The Golden Arrow. Full text of the ballad can be found via <http://www.sacred-texts.com/neu/eng/child/ch152.htm>. The actual details of the archery competition isn't mentioned in the ballad, so just like the movies we're going to make our competition up from scratch ...

The Setup

The competition was split into three rounds. The first round each retinue took it in turn to shoot at a FITA target from no less than 30 paces. For each retinue their entire score was added up and recorded. For the first round 1 Retinue Point was awarded to the retinue who scored the highest out of the three.

The second round leads in from the first. From the first round the top two archers from each retinue went on to this round. The way that the top two archers from each retinue was decided

was that the archer who scored the highest individual score got through along with the archer who got an arrow closest to the bullseye. The two spots were mutually exclusive so that if an archer was the highest scoring and was also the archer who got nearest the bullseye, then the *next* highest scoring archer got through to the second round as well.

The second round saw the two top archers from each retinue, six archers in total, compete against each other. Each archer could pick an archer from a rival retinue to have a six arrow nearest the bullseye knockout round. To decide which archers could pick first the retinues were asked a series of Robin Hood questions. These questions were based on the information about Robin Hood taken from our outlaws article above. The retinue who answered the most questions right got first pick and the retinue who got the most question wrong got to pick last. The three pairs then played their game of nearest the bullseye until there were three remaining archers.

The third and final round started with awarding more points. For each archer that a retinue got into the final round they received a Retinue Point (so potentially a retinue could have got the highest score from the first round and got two archers through to the third round and so started with 3 Retinue Points already). The third round though was another nearest the bullseye competition except it was between the three final archers and only three arrows were allowed. The archer nearest the bullseye was declared the winner and got the last Retinue Point.

Outlaw No. 5 – William of Cassingham – Era: The Reign of King John 1199 to 1216

This is our first character whose label of outlaw might easily be switched with one of patriot and of the three such special outlaws on our list William of Cassingham was the only one who was eventually rewarded for his efforts. That said he is perhaps the least known hero of his time, plus he had to put up with a pretty dorky sounding nickname to boot.

Very little is known about William before the First Barons War (1215 – 1217) and unlike our previous four outlaws there are no ballads or long romantic stories written about him. Before the war William was a squire in Kent, in a place that we now call Kensham but at the time was called Cassingham (hence William of Cassingham). William must have been a pretty loyal person because at a time when the majority of the country had rejected the rule of the disastrous King John in favour of Prince Louis of France, he was actively resisting the French Prince. He'd manage to gather an estimated 600 archers and conduct hit & run raids and acts of sabotage against Louis's forces in the Weald area. This area is why he acquired the nickname of Wilkin of the Weald (I told you it sounded dorky).

So where was The Weald then? The Weald is the name given to an area in south east of England between the parallel chalk escarpments of the North Downs and the South Downs. The area was at the time of the Saxons part of Andredesweald (the forest of Andred the Roman fort at Pevensey) and the name Weald itself is Saxon in origin, referring to woodland country. The Weald of Kent, Surrey and Sussex would eventually encompass the Lancaster Great Park which would be formed during the reign of Edward III in 1372. So it was a pretty large area which offered the guerrilla forces some advantage, but the main strategic advantage was that it was an area where the roads from the Cinque Ports led up to London (Norman French for "five ports" – the five being Hastings, New Romney, Hythe, Dover, and Sandwich.) Louis for the most part was supplied from the south eastern coastal towns with a direct link across the Channel back to France. An ideal situation for someone looking to ambush and destroy supplies.

Okay, so William, or Wilkin as we'll call him from now on, had stuck with the true king, King John, so how could he be an actual outlaw? Well what gives William a place here is that Louis had been accepted as the new King of England and had been operating as a fully functioning monarch.

Louis had oaths sworn against him by the barons, the City of London and the King of Scotland, while poor old King John was moving around the country trying to fight for his crown. This meant that Louis had the support of the majority of England including the area that Wilkin operated in. So to oppose the new ruler meant a sentence of outlawry and if captured, death as a traitor.

Since Louis's invitation by the barons to take the English crown and his subsequent entry into the country in May 1216, Wilkin had been fighting on behalf of pretty much the losing side so far i.e. King John's side. Wilkin was doing his bit but King John's campaign needed a much need boost and this indeed did happen by John doing something no-one would've expected. He died. Realising that they'd have a better chance of rule by Magna Carter if there wan an infant on the throne, in October of 1216 the barons' support shifted from Prince Louis to John's son, the future Henry III.

We now come to the bit where Wilkin of the Weald and his archers make the biggest impact on the First Barons War. At the time of this power shift the supporters of the new King Henry III were mostly situated in the South West and the Midlands of England, so Louis decided to gather reinforcements from France by marching from London to the south coast.

It was during this march that Wilkin's forces inflicted the damage. Wilkin ambushed Louis near Lewes (in the process capturing two nephews of the Count of Nevers) and pursued Louis' army to Winchelsea. On his march Wilkin's men broke down the bridges behind them and forewarned the men of Winchelsea who destroyed their mills and abandoned the settlement. Prince Louis now entered an empty town and because of the sabotaged mills, found that he had great difficulty in feeding his army

"Wheat found they there, in great plenty, but they knew not how to grind it. Long time were they in such a plight that they had to crush by hand the corn of which they made their bread. They could catch no fish. Great store of nuts found they in the town; these were their finest food."

Histoire des ducs de Normandie, etc., p. 183.

Louis was now besieged in Winchelsea and was only saved by a force of knights who rode down from London. Such was Wilkin of Weald's hold on the area that the knights now made their way to Romney through Canterbury rather than risk going through the Weald. A relieving fleet from Boulogne eventually arrived at Winchelsea and on its arrival the English forces withdrew allowing Louis to return to France.

However Louis returned to Dover Castle in May 1217 but found Wilkin of the Weald attacking and burning the French camp there. As a result Louis diverted to Sandwich and had to march across land to begin another siege of the castle (the second such siege of the conflict). This siege diverted so much of Louis's forces that [William Marshal](#) and [Falkes de Breaute](#) were able to win the [Second Battle of Lincoln](#) helping to tip things against the French.

Linking nicely back in with one of our other outlaws [Eustace the Monk](#), Louis suffered two more quick defeats at the [Battle of Dover](#) and the [Battle of Sandwich](#) (the battle where Eustace lost his life). These defeats made it impossible for Louis to continue and so he gave up his claim to the throne and signed the Treaty of Lambeth on 11th September 1217.

But what of Wilkin? Well he went back to being William and was granted a pension from the crown. He was also made warden of the Weald and by 1241 was Sergeant of the Peace for his services. This title over time became Provost Marshal, now head of the Royal Military Police and so William is more probably famous for this fact than the resistance action he took during the First Barons War. I wonder if he minded? Probably not. He'd probably be still wondering about who gave him the dorky nickname.

Game No. 5 – Based on the Story of Wilkin of the Weald

The Story

It's 1217 and Prince Louis of France's forces are laying siege to Dover Castle. Louis has just returned from France but can't land at Dover because a guerrilla force under the command of Wilkin of Weald have attacked the camp. This game simulates that attack.

The Setup

Round 1 covered the ingress, or approach, to the camp. Naturally there'd be sentries on watch waiting for such surprise attacks and so this round dealt with how the teams get past the sentries. Two practice butts with a range of not less than 40 yards were set up and each team got the following choice;

- (1) To carry out a one arrow on command group volley. This round would be passed if after the one arrow volley there are two arrows or more in each target.
- (2) To carry out 30 seconds of shooting at the targets. This round would be considered a pass if the after the 30 seconds there were 4 arrows per archer collectively in both targets i.e. if there were five archers they needed to collectively get (5 x 4) 20 arrows in the targets.

Round 2 consisted of the actual attack on the camp with fire arrows. The shooting line was set at 100 yards from the main backstop hay bales. Each team got six arrows per archer to inflict as much damage as possible. To complete this section the round must have ended with 2 arrows per archer shooting in the main hay bales (i.e. if five archers were shooting they'd need 10 arrows in the hay bails) or one arrow in the small hay bales set far behind the main stack. For comparison the main hay bail backstop was about the size of a bus and the small hay bail, which was 150 yards from the shooting line, was about the size of a large chest of drawers. For the purposed of the game the backstop hay bail represents the main camp tents and the small hay bale represents the really important part of the camp (something like the food and drink supply tent(s) or the main HQ).

Round 3 covered the egress or exit from the camp. Here in turn one retinue was Wilkin of the Weald and another retinue was the enemy archers. Each retinue got a chance at being Wilkin of

the Weald and each retinue got a chance of playing the enemy. This round was a modified version of archery duelling which the Companions have played before. Two targets were set up with the shooting line not less than 30 yards. The rules were;

- (1) Both teams must line up in two single file lines behind the shooting line.
- (2) On the call of nock, draw, loose, the lead archers from both lines may step up and shoot one arrow each.
- (3) If the archer(s) miss they must leave the shooting line and go back to the end of the queue.
- (4) If the archer hits the boss the opposite archer is "killed" and is out of the game. The opposite archer must leave the queue and retire to a safe area.
- (5) The next archer steps up to the line and shoots their arrow etc.
- (6) All surviving archers continue until they have shot six arrows. Once six arrows are shot they must call fast. Once arrows are collected the game continues.
- (7) The game continues until all the archers from one side are knocked out.
- (8) If an archer hits the boss before an opposing archer reaches the line the opposing archer is considered "killed".
- (9) If an archer hits the boss after an opposing archer has shot then next opposing archer due to step up is "killed".

The surviving team was considered the winner with the stress placed on the team playing "Wilkin of the Weald".

Over the three rounds the most successful team gets the maximum amount of Retinue Points and the lesser points go to the less successful teams.

A Bit of Background: The Reign of King Edward I, 1272 to 1307

The Companions of the Longbow 5th Retinue League takes for inspiration the deeds and legends of medieval outlaws. Some of the earlier lot were around during the reign of King John and some of our second batch appeared around the reign of Edward I. Why would that be? Well just like the previous section on King John, here's a brief overview and background on King Edward I of England and what was going on in the country at the time.

Introduction

Edward was known by a number of names both during and after his death. Due to his height he was known as Edward Longshanks, due to his Norman ancestry he was known as King Edward I and because of his actions he was known as Hammer of the Scots (and the Scots probably had other less flattering names for him too).

During his lifetime he was also called Edward of Westminster, King Edward, son of King Henry and it wasn't until Edward III's reign when King Edward, son of King Edward, grandson of King Edward got a bit confusing that they started using numbers and King Edward, son of King Henry became King Edward I. History does not record if anyone called him "Eddie".

England had previously three King Edwards; Edward the Elder, Edward the Martyr and Edward the Confessor, but he was King Edward *The First* rather than being King Edward *The Fourth*. At the time his contemporaries might have called him King Edward Since The Conquest just to acknowledge the previous three Kings, but this Edward was Norman and therefore was considered the first.

Apart from his name the man himself is probably famously remembered for conquering Wales and trying to conquer Scotland too. Maybe thanks to the 1996 film *Braveheart* he's popularly thought of now as being particularly cruel and unloving. But was this the case?

In the Beginning ...

Edward was born at the Palace of Westminster on the 17th June 1239 (around teatime – no really) to Henry III of England & Eleanor of Provence. Westminster was founded by the last Anglo-Saxon King Edward the Confessor who held an almost cult like status under the Plantagenets. So much so that Westminster was deemed symbolic enough to become the permanent seat of English government under Henry III. It's of no surprise then that Edward was so named after Edward the Confessor.

Eldest of the four of Henry III's children his childhood was spent in the care of Hugh Giffard and his wife Sybil until 1346 when Hugh died. Taking over from then was one Bartholomew Pecche who looked after Edward until his majority. He would grow to be tall with black hair and would talk with a pronounced lisp.

On the 1st of November 1254 at the monastery of Las Huelgas, the fifteen year old Edward was married to the daughter of Alfonso X of Castile. As part of the marriage deal Edward received grants of land worth 15,000 marks (a little under £10,000), a knighthood and a 13 year old wife; Eleanor of Castile. He was actually knighted twice (by his father and Alfonso) which in hindsight gives some portent of the martial life he was about to lead..

At a time when not all arranged marriages ran smoothly (just ask his great grandfather Henry II) the marriage between Edward and Eleanor would be a happy one by all accounts.

They went on to have fifteen children and after Eleanor's death in 1290 a devastated Edward erected a cross at each place where the funeral procession stopped. Charing Cross in London is one such place that still survives.

Edward did remarry though. In 1299 the sixty year old Edward married the seventeen year old Marguerite of France. They were married at Canterbury on the 10th September 1299 and she & Edward would go on to produce three more children. But that's jumping ahead so let's go back to 1255.

Edward Falls Out With His Father

The now sixteen year old Edward returned from Castile to England with his new wife in 1255 and promptly fell out with his father over the Gascony. When still a child Edward had been given early grants of land and part of these grants included the troubled province. As Edward was too young to actually run the place, Edward's father Henry had appointed Simon de Montfort, 6th Earl of Leicester as royal lieutenant for the region back in 1248 (Simon was Edward's uncle through marriage). The deal was that Simon ran the place for seven years which if you've done the maths you'll now know that by 1255 Gascony was now Edward's (remember the name Simon de Montfort, he's quite important later on.)

As mentioned, the province had been a difficult one to govern and Montfort had been charged and acquitted of oppression during his tenure. In fact Montfort had fallen out with Henry of the whole Gascony business mainly it seems because Henry favoured compromise. Indeed it was under pressure from the Gascon factions that Henry agreed to charge Montfort with oppression in the first place.

So now it's 1256, Edward has had a bit of time experiencing the problems of running the place and now it's clear that Edward isn't like his father. Feeling it necessary he went behind his father's back and signed a treaty with Gaillard de Soler, the ruler of one of the Bordeaux factions. Edward was single minded and ambitious in his pursuits where as Henry would've been more conciliatory. Such a difference in character would explain why Edward could not see eye to eye with his father on some issues.

The Magna Carta & The Provisions of Oxford

As we know, Edward's father was Henry III and in turn Henry's father was King John. John's poor tenure as king and the consequent desire by the barons for rule by Magna Carta had practically led to the loss of his throne back in 1217 during what would later be called the First Barons War.

On John's death during that conflict Henry was only nine years old and could easily have been swept aside. However the barons thought they could have rule by Magna Carta more easily with a child King than the other option, which was Prince Louis of France (if you remember your history or read the bit about King John). So Prince Louis got booted out of England and Henry was plonked on the throne.

Flash forward forty something years and once again the will of the King was about to clash with the will of the barons. There'd been growing discontent with the King over his favours to his Poitvin relatives and Savoyard in-laws and this, coupled with famine at the time, meant that there was a general air of grievance towards Henry's rule.

It's 1258, Edward is nineteen and there was held a parliament that would later be called the Mad Parliament. It was here that the disaffected magnates led by Simon de Montfort forced the King Henry to accept a new form of government laid out in the Provisions of Oxford. Power was placed in a Council of Fifteen members who supervised appointments, carried out administration and supervised the custody of royal castles. Parliament would meet three times a year to monitor the performance of this council and although the Provisions curtailed the power of the King, oaths of fealty were still sworn to King Henry (and the Council too). As a result of this power shift Edward became more aligned to the barons and initially supported the barons' goals.

The significance of the Provisions of Oxford in comparison to the Magna Carta is that while the Magna Carta was the first to explicitly protected certain rights of subjects (notably the writ of habeas corpus, allowing appeal against unlawful imprisonment something that's been in the

news a bit at the time of writing this), the Provisions of Oxford were the first to recognise the rights and powers of Parliament.

Edward Falls Out With His Father, Again

When Henry popped over to France for negotiations Edward started making favourable appointments for his allies. This was short lived however as Henry got wind of what his son was up to and came straight back to sort things out. It seems things got a bit heated because Henry learned either correctly or incorrectly that Edward was plotting against him. They were reconciled in 1260 though and the only losers were Edward's favourites who had to give up their newly acquired castles.

Henry Revokes the Provisions of Oxford

After only three years in place in 1261 Henry revoked his assent to the Provisions of Oxford. The barons were convinced that Henry was hostile to all reforms and invited Simon de Montfort to lead a rebellion which got under way proper in 1263. The barons aim of restoring the form of government laid down in the Provisions seemed almost to be in sight until Simon agreed to Henry's suggestion of letting Louis IX of France arbitrate. In January 1264 at Amiens the French King ruled that the Provisions were unlawful, which is no surprise really as what King wants to help set a precedent where another king's powers are curtailed? The barons of course didn't accept the ruling and all out war ensued. Welcome to the Second Barons War.

The Battle of Lewes 1264

The Battle of Lewes of what was to be called The Second Barons War occurred on the 14th May 1264. It was a battle that was fought between Simon de Montfort and Henry III and at the end would result in Simon being "the uncrowned King of England".

The royalist forces were nearly twice the size of de Montfort's but a night march enabled Montfort to take the high ground of the Sussex Downs near Lewes.

The twenty five year old Prince Edward commanded the cavalry on the right flank, the King's brother Richard of Cornwall commanded the left and King Henry commanded the centre.

Unfortunately for Edward despite early success he unwisely pursued retreating forces north and this partly allowed Montfort to defeat Cornwall and King Henry. When the battle was over the result was the capture of all three royals. The King was forced to sign the *Mise of Lewes* which forced him to accept the Provisions of Oxford while Edward was now a hostage to the barons.

De Montfort's Parliament

Probably everyone thinks that it wasn't until Oliver Cromwell and the English Civil War of 1642 to 1651 that the first recognisable representative parliament happened. However as you may have guessed by now, they'd be wrong.

Montfort set up a government where by he established a triumvirate (him, the Earl of Gloucester and the Bishop of Chichester) and called for two elected representatives from a select list of boroughs. While not *exactly* the same as our modern parliament (you had to have certain assets to be considered) this system laid the ground work for parliamentary elected representation for the centuries to come.

Disaffection & Edward Escapes!

Rome wasn't built in a day as they say and some barons thought the reforms had gone too far. The Welsh Marcher lords were particularly miffed with the actions of Montfort; the Treaty of Pipton (22nd June 1265) which sealed an alliance between Montfort and Llywelyn ap Gruffydd, Prince of Wales was particularly irksome for them.

The Welsh alliance turned out handy though because Montfort's ally, Thomas de Clare decided to abandon him and take all his troops over to the King's side. Although boosted by Llywelyn ap Gruffydd's troops Montfort's forces were now severely depleted. To add to Montfort's problems, the twenty six year old Prince Edward escaped from captivity, joined up with royalist forces, attacked the forces at Kenilworth defeating & capturing them.

It was time for action. Montfort crossed the River Severn to meet up with his son, Simon and this is when the second major battle of the Second Barons War took place.

The Battle of Evesham 1265

When Montfort initially saw the army he thought it was his son. Unfortunately for him though these were the banners captured by Prince Edward and the army arrayed before him was a royalist one.

The Battle of Evesham took place on the 4th August 1265 and was preceded by a great thunderstorm. It was during this battle that Montfort's army was trapped and defeated by a royalist army that was twice as large as his. Montfort's tactics involved driving his forces into the middle of the opposing mass in the hopes of splitting them in two. Sadly this tactic didn't pay off as Montfort's army was fighting on unfavourable ground and the royalists started beating them back. Before long the larger royalist army enclosed Montfort's and this is when a battle started turning into a massacre.

King Henry III who was held by Simon de Montfort and dressed in the rebel colours barely escaped the massacre himself. No quarter was given and Montfort was cut down and his body mutilated (his hands, feet and testicles were all cut off). While bad news for Montfort this was good news for Henry and Edward. When the battle was over the King, not parliament or Montfort, held power in England.

The Aftermath

The next parliament in September 1265 at Winchester was totally different to the one that preceded it. All those who had taken part in the rebellion was disinherited, but it's one thing disinheriting barons, it's another disarming them. Resistance remained. In Lincolnshire rebels were put down by Christmas 1265 but a garrison at Kenilworth Castle were holding out. A siege was started in the summer of 1266 but by the end of October with no end in sight the royal solution was the Dictum of Kenilworth. This dictum allowed rebels to buy back their land at prices set depending on their involvement. When the conditions at Kenilworth became intolerable the rebels submitted and terms were agreed to by 1267.

So by the age of twenty seven Edward had fought two major battles (actually a rare occurrence in medieval times) and had shown considerable military skill. With this rebellion over the kingdom entered a period of stability that was to last nearly thirty years. That is of course the Kingdom of England we're talking about. But for now this peace allowed Edward a chance to look to horizons further a field.

Edward Goes On Crusade

Edward is now twenty seven and in 1266 a Papal Legate called Cardinal Ottobono arrived in England to drum up support for the Eighth Crusade. Louis IX of France was going and so not wanting to miss out on all the fun both Edward and his brother Edmund decided to get involved too (Edmund actually got a nick name out of this – Crouchback – alluding to the carrying of the cross). Edward had to borrow a bit from the French King and get a subsidy from parliament but he probably thought it was all worth it when the tiny army of 1000 men, his brother and a cousin (plus his wife, Eleanor) set off for the Holy Land.

The target of the Crusade, relieve the stronghold of Acre, was temporarily put on hold when the forces were diverted to Tunis and King Louis of France died of disease. This prompted the majority of French troops to go home but Edward carried on with those that were left. After a stop over in Cyprus he arrived in Acre in 1271 where, with the aid of Hugh III of Cyprus, he raided the town of Oaqun. Unfortunately the Mamluks weren't in much of a mood for a Crusade because they were being pressed by Mongols raiding into Syria. Over Edward's objections a ten year truce was signed which initially while not quite enough to send him home, a near fatal wound from a Muslim assassin finished up any further Crusading action.

The Crusade gave Acre a ten year reprieve but apart from that the only winner out of it was Edward's reputation. Edward was a Crusader, hailed as the next Richard the Lionheart. Only now it was time for Edward to be a King because on the return journey his father Henry III died.

King Edward, proclaimed as King on the 20th November 1272 by prior arrangement should Henry III die (which was what you might call thinking ahead). Because of the long journey back he wasn't actually coronated until the 18th August 1274, but now he was King it was time for the thirty six year old monarch to make his first kingly move - the conquest of Wales.

King Edward & The Conquest of Wales

Anglo-Norman Marcher lords had managed to take control of south Wales during the 12th century, however the west and the powerful Kingdom of Gwynedd in the north east of Wales remained fiercely independent.

Llywelyn ap Gruffydd, Prince of Wales (or Llywelyn Ein Llyw Olaf—meaning Llywelyn, Our Last Leader) had managed to expand Welsh territories under the 1267 Treaty of Montgomery which the English recognised along with his title of Prince of Wales. However part of the deal was that he owed homage to the English monarch as overlord. Llywelyn repeatedly refused to pay this homage to Edward from 1274 to 1276, Edward therefore raised an army and carried out the first campaign into Wales from 1276 to 1277.

Edward managed to win this first conflict by taking control of Anglesey which contained the year's grain harvest. Deprived of food for his men, Llywelyn was forced to seek terms. Defeated, stripped of nearly all of his territory and forced to pay homage he was allowed to retain the title of Prince of Wales. He was also allowed to marry Eleanor de Montfort, the daughter to the late Simon de Montfort, which was nice.

Many of the lesser princess who supported Edward became disillusioned with the terms of their royal offices and by 1282 Llywelyn's brother Dafydd started another rebellion.

A war of national liberation ensued with Llywelyn and many other Welshmen besieging, capturing and burning English held castles. Edward's character was one of intransigent single mindedness and he vowed to remove the problem at the root.

Llywelyn was killed in a skirmish with the English in December 1282. One account says he was cut down by a knight who did not know who he was, another says that he tricked and murdered. His head was cut off and sent to Edward at Rhuddlan and from there to London. In London the head was crowned with ivy, put on a lance and paraded through the streets thus fulfilling a Welsh prophecy that Llywelyn would ride, crowned, through the streets of London.

Welsh resistance all but collapsed and in the Spring of 1282 Dafydd ap Gruffudd was captured, taken to Shrewsbury, tried for treason and executed. A string of massive castles that still stand today were contrasted to consolidate Edward's hold on Wales, the most important at Rhuddlan, Flint, Conway, Harlech, Beaumaris and Caernarvon.

The Statute of Rhuddlan in 1284 incorporated Wales into England and twenty seven years later the title of Prince of Wales was invested on Edward's oldest son, Edward of Caernarfon the future Edward II. As you may know all the eldest sons of the monarchy have held the title ever since (except Edward III for some reason).

The Scottish Wars

You've all seen Braveheart, right? Edward just invaded because he wanted Scotland right? Well, while not entirely wrong the situation in Scotland was evolving into one more complex than shown in Mel Gibson's film. King Alexander III of Scotland had died in 1286 leaving no male heirs (his two sons Alexander and David had died a few years before him). The disputed crown then fell to his grand daughter Margaret, the Maid of Norway (disputed because there was no precedent in Scotland for the situation). There were some wheeling and dealing between Edward I (who was Margaret's uncle) and Eirik II of Norway (who was Margaret's father) to secure the Scottish crown and marry Margaret to Edward's eldest son the future Edward II. This came to nothing when Margaret died in the Orkney Islands on her way to Scotland in 1290.

One Vacancy, Throne of Scotland

So now Scotland had no clear successor. There were actually fourteen claimants (including Edward I through his family connections, although very weak) but four genuine claimants and only two with realistic grounds to claim the throne. One was Robert de Brus, 5th Lord of Annandale a.k.a. Robert the Bruce who had the closest proximity by blood. The other was John Balliol who claimed primogeniture, common law right of the firstborn son to inherit the entire estate. The other two, John Hastings and Floris V, Count of Holland both needed a lot of legal wrangling to make their claims work and so it really was only a two-horse race – John vs Robert.

There was a very real chance of civil war over the succession so the Guardians of Scotland (appointed to govern Scotland during Margaret's minority) asked Edward I to intervene. In hindsight this probably wasn't a good idea.

The English kings had a long presumption of overlordship of Scotland, and Scotland had, on questionable grounds, even been a fully blown vassal state of England between 1174 and 1189 (book ended between the Treaty of Falaise 1174, and the Quitclaim of Canterbury 1189). Alexander III, like many of the Scottish elite, held lands in both England *and* Scotland and so had to give homage to Edward for these English lands. However Alexander had always carefully chosen his words to exclude the Kingdom of Scotland, because you can't be too careful around those shifty English ...

Edward now demanded that his claim of overlordship be recognised and said that the Scots must prove that his claim was not valid. The reply was that they didn't have a King and so couldn't really answer now could they? This answer annoyed Edward quite a bit.

A compromise was reached whereby some of the Guardians acknowledged Edward as overlord (but not all) and Edward was to have control of all Scottish castles which would be released two months after a king had been chosen (even though the Guardians couldn't legally promise the castles in the first place). So if there was an overlordship, it was supposed to be temporary.

Having got these concessions the arbitration could begin at Berwick upon Tweed. In November 1292 Edward ruled in favour of John Balliol and John was enthroned at Scone on the 30th November 1292. Ironically although Robert the Bruce lost out, a Robert the Bruce, his grandson, would eventually be King from 1306 until his death in 1329. Here's how:-

Edward Plays Dirty & the Beginning of the Auld Alliance

Edward now played dirty by used the agreed temporary overlordship to force Balliol to seal documents freeing Edward from the earlier promises. What was temporary was now considered permanent and the Scottish king was routinely being overruled by Westminster, being summoned as a vassal and even ordinary Scots were being demanded to do military service on behalf of the English against the French.

War was on the way so the Scots signed a treaty in 1295 with France which was called the Auld Alliance (it would actually be a series of treaties that lasted two hundred and sixty five years, aimed specifically against England). With this in place in March 1296 the Scots crossed the border and tried to unsuccessfully take Carlisle.

Edward's massive army which was already marching north struck Berwick and then fought and won the Battle of Dunbar (27th April 1296) against the Scots. Edward marched further north, took Edinburgh and went as far as Elgin (the furthest any English king had gone so far). On the way back south he confiscated the Stone of Destiny and took it back to Westminster Abbey. The Stone of Destiny a.k.a. Stone of Scone was for centuries used in the coronation of the monarchs of Scotland and would later be used for coronation of the monarchs of England and, from the Act of Union in 1707, all subsequent British monarchs. The British Government would later decide that the Stone should be kept in Scotland when not in use at coronations, and on 3 July 1996 the Stone was returned to Scotland after seven hundred years away.

Balliol was ceremoniously stripped of the vestments of royalty by the Bishop of Durham, Antony Bek. John had the red and gold arms of Scotland ripped from his surcoat, thus gaining the

nickname (because the medieval people loved nicknames) of Toom Tabard (empty coat). After three years of imprisonment in the Tower of London and, after pressure on Edward from the Pope, John would later return to his estates in Picardy, France. But what of Scotland?

The Start of the Wars of Scottish Independence

It's 1296 and the fifty seven year old Edward was now the ruler of a united mainland Britain. Scotland was now considered a province of England and all freeholders were required to swear an oath of homage to Edward. However not everyone was happy.

What would later be termed the Wars of Scottish Independence (1296 to 1357) kicked off under Edward I's reign and the First War (1296–1328) would end under his son's tenure as King Edward II with the Treaty of Edinburgh-Northampton in 1328.

The Second War (1332–1357) began with an English supported invasion of Edward Balliol (grandson of John "Toom Tabard" Balliol) and the "Disinherited" in 1332. This would end in 1357 with the signing of the Treaty of Berwick and the retention of Scotland as an independent nation.

But back to early 1297, opposition kicked off with revolts led by Scottish nobles such as William Wallace and Andrew de Moray. The first Scottish victory occurred at the Battle of Stirling Bridge in September where Wallace and de Moray defeated the combined English forces of John de Warenne, 7th Earl of Surrey and Hugh de Cressingham near Stirling, on the River Forth. Following this there were Scottish raids into England and the appointment of Wallace as Guardian of Scotland (March 1298). Edward marched north again in July 1298 and defeated the Scots at the Battle of Falkirk. Wallace is one character we'll be looking at in more detail later but for now following the battle the Scots adopted a scorched earth policy that denied Edward the chance to subdue Scotland completely.

Robert the Bruce, Son of Robert the Bruce, Grandson of Robert the Bruce

Meanwhile John Comyn and Robert Bruce (the grandson of Robert de Brus from the 1292 succession) succeeded Wallace as Guardians of Scotland. The two didn't really get along and a third Guardian William de Lamberton, Bishop of St. Andrews was appointed to act as referee.

There followed further campaigns and truces between England and Scotland over the next six

years but the closest Edward came to subduing the country was in 1304 & 1305 when most of the Scottish nobles had paid homage to him and William Wallace had been captured and executed.

A turning point came in 1306 when Comyn and Bruce had one too many arguments and Comyn was murdered (Bruce was excommunicated for this crime, which eventually led to the excommunication the entire country). Bruce now took the initiative, rallied the Scots and had himself crowned King at Scone in March 1306.

Following the Battle of Methven in June 1306 and his flight to Rathlin Island off the northern coast of Ireland. It here that it's said that Bruce, while hiding in a cave, watched the labours of a spider as it tried to make a web. The spider would not give up and this apparently motivated Bruce to do likewise. Whether this is true or not he got a big boost by the death of Edward I on the 7th July 1307 at Burgh-by-Sands, Cumberland. Edward's death led to his ineffectual son, Edward II gaining the crown and Bruce eventually winning Scotland's freedom at the Battle of Bannockburn in 1314.

Tradition says that Edward asked for his corpse to be boiled and his bones carried on future military campaigns against Scotland. However this rumour came from Jean Froissart who was writing nearly a hundred years after his death. More than likely the request that his heart was sent to the Holy Land along with eighty knights was a more realistic one. What may or may not have remained of Edward was buried at Westminster where his bones lay undisturbed until the 2nd of January 1774 when the Society of Antiquaries opened the coffin and discovered that his body was measured to be 6 feet 2 inches – thus confirming the reasons behind the nickname of Longshanks.

The Longbow During Edward's Lifetime

The last Assize of Arms issued when Edward I came to the throne was during his father's reign. The Assize of Arms of 1242 said that men holding between 40-100 shillings worth of land or up to 9 marks worth of chattels were to serve "with sword, bow, arrows and a knife". The power of the longbows used are open to debate, although this would be a hundred years after Gerald of Wales reported the penetration of 4 inches of oak by Welsh archers at the Siege of Abergavenny (estimated 70 to 100-pound draw weight). Armour at the time was predominantly mail which explains why finds from period show the most popular type of arrow head used in war was the bodkin point.

Some people believed that the longbow was introduced into the arsenal of English warfare due to Edward's conquest of Wales. Although questionable there's no doubt that Edward employed Welsh longbowmen in his wars against Scotland. Indeed the Battle of Falkirk in which William Wallace was defeated it was noted that the force Edward had gathered consisted of 2,000 horses, 12,000 infantry and many Welshmen armed with the longbow.

But it's also worth noting that when these archers were deployed they were against the Scottish schiltrons (pikes or spearmen arranged in a "porcupine" formation to ward off cavalry attacks). This was in accordance with a tactic used by William de Beauchamp, 9th Earl of Warwick at the battle of Maes Moydog in 1295 three years previously. The battle to subdue a Welsh uprising by Madog ap Llywelyn (or Prince Madoc), was lost by the Welsh because their schiltrons were cut down by sustained shooting from longbows but mainly crossbows.

When Edward I fought against the French during 1294 to 1297 he is recorded as having assembled 25,000 infantry, many which were bowmen. These numbers are clearly much larger than the armies deployed by his grandson Edward III at the beginning of the Hundred Years War and yet their inclusion didn't offer the same level of tactical advantage that Edward III would have. Why?

In fact the tactics of massed archery shooting although used during this period was only really used to "soften up" enemy forces before the traditional cavalry charge (both Maes Moydog and Falkirk ended with traditional cavalry charges for example). It would be hard for the military elite to let go of the cavalry charge tactic because for the knight charging on horseback was a key component of what actually being a knight was.

It took the Scots early failures in pitched battles with the English to learn that they had no real hope of winning against such overwhelming odds. Their salvation lay in the very un-knightly idea of fading away in the face of the English enemy. Edward I and soon Edward II soon learnt that the long supply chains, low prospects of booty and the scorched earth tactics of the Scots soon made warfare and subjugation of Scotland unattainable.

The ideals knighthood were universal across Europe and it's easy to see why the Scottish elite were initially unhappy with their new tactic of warfare (Prince Edward, John Comyn the elder and Robert the Bruce the elder all fought together against Montfort at the Battle of Lewes in 1264). However as a tool of battle in the face of more practical considerations where Scottish knights abandoned cavalry charges English knights would follow suite during the Hundred Years war with France (1337 – 1456). Their tactic of men-at-arms on foot protecting large numbers of archers was used to great effect during this conflict and indeed the French, in the face of the longbow,

would abandon the mass cavalry charge soon after.

So the longbow archer at the time was important, but only as an auxiliary.

Conclusion & Edward's Legacy

The negatives from Edward's reign all depend on whether you're Welsh, Scottish or Jewish. Maybe even Muslim if you count the Eighth Crusade.

Welsh and Scottish are obvious I hope but the Jewish because in 1275 Edward issued the Statute of Jewry which imposed restrictions on the Jews in England (for example the practice of usury – the charging of interest on loans was banned) and more notably the requirement for Jews over the age of seven to wear a yellow badge.

Eventually in 1290 he would issue the Edict of Expulsion which formally expelled all Jews (estimated to be around 3,000) from England. This edict wouldn't be overturned until 1656. The reasons for this seemed to be financial (as the crown received all property from those that were expelled) although the expulsion proved popular and met with little resistance.

On the positive side Edward he introduced the Statutes of Westminster in 1275 which corrected malpractices and problems identified in the 1274 Hundred Rolls. He also appeared to have learned some lessons from Simon de Montfort and held regular parliaments. He also instigated major reforms to the parliamentary system which began to eliminate the political effects of the feudal system. This is perhaps one reason why the portrait of a seven hundred year old English King is hanging in the United States House of Representatives chamber.

So overall he was a warrior, a reformer, a conqueror and a crusader and while not "a nice man" by modern standards was perhaps a little different to the Mel Gibson 1996 Braveheart version.

Further Reading & Sources

[From Hastings to the Mary Rose: The Great Warbow by Mathew Strickland & Robert Hardy](#)

[The Death of Kings by Michael Evans](#)

[The Knight in Medieval England, 1000-1400 by Peter Coss](#)

[The Crooked Stick by Hugh D.H. Soar](#)

[Medieval Warfare: A History, Edited by Maurice Keen](#)

[British History for Dummies by Sean Lang](#)

Outlaw No. 6 – Sir Adam de Gurdun – Era: 1266 to 1267

Political upheaval, civil war, unrest, dissent and demobilisation of professional soldiers following a war all helped produce outlaws over the medieval period. The period surrounding the de Montfort rebellion was one such period that created quite a few outlaws.

To recap, Simon de Montfort fought against Henry III and his son Prince Edward (the future King Edward I of England) over parliamentary reforms in the 1260s. After his victory at the Battle of Lewes in 1264 de Montfort and his supporters through parliament ruled England for about a year. Of course if you were on King Henry's losing side it was more than likely that you were now an outlaw after the battle.

However, Simon de Montfort's tenure was not a happy one and a lot of his support fell away during the year. We therefore have the likes of Sir John Giffard of Brimpsfield, who fell out with de Montfort and fled to the Forest of Dean with a small band shortly after the Battle of Lewes. He made an alliance with Welsh princes and robbed those in land upon the border and was later joined by Robert, Earl of Gloucester as more of de Montfort's support dwindled away.

Things came to a head when Prince Edward escaped from de Montfort's captivity and with the dissenting barons fought and killed de Montfort at the Battle of Evesham in 1265. Following the victory those de Montfort supporters and those who supported King Henry received treatment based on which side they were on. For the likes of Sir John and Robert they'd receive pardons.

For those who still fought on for de Montfort they were now outlaws. Men's names who carried on fighting are remembered as Robert de Ferrers, David of Uffington and Sir John Deyville (Sir John held out at Hereward the Wake's old fortress at Ely). Normally the men would either have been hunted down, banished or would have had to agree terms with the King separately, however this time the outlaws were in for a bit of luck because they had the Dictum of Kenilworth to fall back on.

The Dictum of Kenilworth was a solution to the problem of rebels holding out at Kenilworth Castle. With a long siege looking less than desirable the Dictum of Kenilworth allowed the ex-followers of Simon de Montfort the chance to buy favour with Henry based on a sliding scale of how badly they were perceived to have wronged him. The most common “fine” was the forfeiture of seven years profits from any lands the rebel held and apparently the courts were held up for years trying to process claims and counter claims about who owed what to who and how much something should’ve been worth.

But now we move on to this week’s outlaw, one Adam Gurdun, a.k.a. Sir Adam de Gurdun. All that I could find out about Sir Adam before the de Montfort episode was that on the 24th June 1262 Sir Adam Gurdun and his wife Constance were granted permission to construct an oratory in their manor house at Selborne by Prior Richard.

After this he was an unwavering supporter of Simon de Montfort because following the Battle of Evesham he was roving with a band of outlaws in the forest of Alton. It was said that he raided all over Berkshire and over the borders in to Wiltshire and Hampshire during 1266 and 1267.

Such was the strength of his band that it took a major military force to hunt him down until a curious incident between two individuals that appears not to be recorded in the more famous of the two’s biographies. It was said that Sir Adam was eventually cornered and bested in single combat against Prince Edward of Westminster, son of King Henry III (the future King Edward I). Why this doesn’t appear as a major incident in King Edward’s life we can only guess at, but whatever the situation if the duel did take place neither of them came to any lasting harm. Edward died in 1307 and Sir Adam died in 1305. I suspect that in reality Sir Adam took the opportunity to take advantage of the Dictum of Kenilworth and bought his way out of his outlawry...

Game No. 6 – Based on the Winter of 1265 to 1266

The Story

Sir Adam de Gurdun and his outlaw band are hiding out in Aston Forest during the winter of 1265/66. Can they survive with the increasing lack of food?

The Setup

The game is divided into a number of rounds which represents months of the year. A 3D deer target is set up and this represents the available game each month. Each month the gang must kill enough game to feed the number of archers that are in that gang. A shortfall of food in any given month results in the loss of corresponding number of archers for the rest of the game (they are considered dead, or given themselves up or just gone home). The gang with the most members at the end of winter wins the game.

The rules are that each round each surviving archer gets two arrows to shoot at the deer. Each hit inside the lungs and heart area of the deer is a "kill". Each hit on the deer outside this area is a "wound". Collectively two "wounds" equal a "kill", and it's the number of "kills" which determines the amount of food available. There are no half kills because of a wound, e.g. three wounds equals one kill only as the third wound leaves the game still able to run away.

Each kill gives the gang enough food for two archers to eat for one month. If there's a surplus of food in any given month that meat can be preserved and used if there is a shortfall in any following months e.g. in the first month a gang consisting of four archers collectively get three kills. They only need two kills to feed themselves for the first month so the third kill is preserved and saved for the next. In the second month therefore the gang needs only one new kill to feed itself as they can live off the extra meat from the first month.

The shooting line is set each round at increasingly further distances from the deer. This represents the passage of time further into winter and the corresponding difficulty into finding game. Obviously in the earlier months (rounds) it's easier to get game and preserve it for later when things get increasingly difficult.

The team with the most surviving archers at the end wins.

Outlaw No. 7 – Roger Godberd – Era: 1265 to 1271

This is our second and final outlaw created from the Second Barons War and is also winner of the Most Likely To Be The Real Robin Hood Award. At least that's what some historians believe as some of his historical story actually fit parts of the legends. For starters he operated in Sherwood Forest and as a result would have had a bit of a run in with the Sheriff of Nottingham. Erm, actually that appears to be it. He was never referred to as Robin Hood during his lifetime and we don't even know if he was any good with a bow. However if you're going to pin the

Robin Hood tag on someone real, than this is probably the guy you want (although there are probably loads of people who'd disagree).

Roger Godberd was originally from the village of Swannington in Leicestershire which is south and west of Nottingham. However Roger is first recorded as a member of the garrison of Nottingham castle in 1264. At the time one Reginald de Grey was Sheriff, but only for one year because he, Roger Godberd and other members of the garrison were in trouble for poaching in Sherwood Forest! By the next year Roger was on Simon de Montfort's side during the Second Baron's War, which was unfortunately for him the losing side when de Montfort lost the Battle of Lewes.

Roger was offered terms under the Dictum of Kenilworth with two others (Roger de Remes and Nicholas de la Mus) but had to wait nearly a month longer than his colleagues before he heard of the terms (along with his brother). He felt either the price was too steep (he was only offered back some of his land) or his cause too strong because by 1267 and for the next four years, he is recorded as living as an outlaw in Sherwood Forest. Just like Robin Hood it was said that Roger's gang could approach nearly one hundred men and that his lieutenant, his Little John figure, was a man called Walter Devyas. So now all we need to hear is that the Sheriff of Nottingham after him although it's not going to be his old pal Reginald de Grey after that poaching incident back in '64 was it?

Well it's recorded that by 1270 Roger de Leyburn lieutenant to the King's Constable at Nottingham castle had fought two large scale engagements with the gang, one in the Nottingham Forest itself. Roger de Leyburn lost horses to the tune of £63 during these two fights (vaguely estimated at about £20,000 worth in today's money). So although the Sheriff had heard of him, Roger wasn't actually battling him directly. The incident which may have prompted these engagements may have been Roger robbing the monks of Stanley Abbey in that same year of 1270.

By now however Roger and his followers had "infested" Nottinghamshire, Derbyshire and Leicestershire. This is when the "new" Sheriff of Nottingham (actually the fourth since Reginald de Grey's tenure) was tasked directly with hunting him down for Timothy Reuter in "Medieval Politics and Modern Mentalities" and Maurice Keen in "The Outlaws of Medieval Legend" both record that;

"Through outlaws, robbers, thieves and malefactors, mounted and on foot, wandering by day and night, so many and great homicides and robberies were done that no one with a small company could pass through those parts without being taken and killed or spoiled of his goods, and no

religious or other person could pass without being taken and spoiled of his goods.”

The Sheriff at the time was Walter Giffard, Archbishop of York, and he was ordered to levy 100 marks from the three counties for the capture of Roger Godberd. For most of Walter's tenure as sheriff he left the day to day running to an under Sheriff Hugo de Babinton and even then the 100 marks was paid to the Constable at Nottingham castle, one Reginald de Grey. Yes that's Reginald de Grey, Roger's old friend and ex-sheriff from 1264!

What ever their past history Reginald de Grey was professional and was successful in capturing Roger Godberd. He caught him along with Walter Devyas and four of their men at a place called 'the north grange' in Nottingham Forest sometime between March 1270 and June 1271. Walter Devyas and his followers were instantly beheaded but Roger was kept alive for a trial. Maurice Keen says he was detained until further notice and this is where his story runs cold.

However other sources say Roger was moved between three different prisons over the years while awaiting trial which eventually took place in 1276. Roger claimed amnesty during his trial because his crimes were committed 'during time of war' (perhaps aided by his brother Geoffrey who chose this moment to attack a band of Reginald de Grey's servants in Leicester, killing one and seriously wounding another). Roger's plea was apparently successful, as he was pardoned and released. His final mention in the history books was when his lands were passed down to his son in 1293.

So if Roger really was Robin Hood we can say that not only did he get a pardon and die of old age, he was actually at one point friends with the Sheriff of Nottingham!

Game No. 7 – Based on the Story of Roger Godberd

The Story

Roger Godberd is considered by some to be the closest historical match for the real Robin Hood. Operating in Sherwood Forest following the Second Baron's War Roger and his gang terrorised the area around Sherwood for over four years before the Sheriff was granted extra funds to capture him.

The Setup

The game consists of a number of rounds where targets are set up on our hay bale backstop wall and points are awarded for shooting them down. A healthy dose of imagination will be required because the targets are 2 litre plastic bottles coloured coded to represent different point values. The shooting line will be set up at 30 yards and each team will be allowed a certain number of arrows to hit the targets and gain points.

The first round consists of eight targets and the teams are allowed 6 arrows to hit as many of them as possible. The targets this time are blue and represent sheriff's guards. Only arrows that remained in a target will count and any glancing shots will be discounted. For each guard killed the team will get one point.

The second round consists of six blue targets (sheriff's guards) plus two red targets. The red targets represents higher ranking Nottingham dignitaries and so are worth 3 points. The blue targets are still worth 1 point. In a change the teams are allowed to shoot as many arrows as possible in 30 seconds.

The third round consists of four blue targets (sheriff's guards) and one red target. This time the red target represents the Sheriff of Nottingham himself and is worth 5 points. However the sheriff has a hostage in the form of a yellow target and this will be positioned in front of the red target. Striking the yellow target will mean a penalty of 5 points so extra care will be needed! In this round the archers are allowed 6 arrows in their own time to pick out their targets.

The team with the most points at the end will be the winner.

Outlaw No. 8 – William Wallace – Era: 1296 to 1305

Perhaps like most people outside Scotland, before the release of Mel Gibson's Braveheart in 1995 I hadn't heard of the Scottish patriot who led resistance during the Wars of Scottish Independence. What I did learn of Wallace from the film was that he was poor but well educated, had long hair, wore a kilt and that he loved "freedom".

The film won 5 Oscars for Best Picture, Best Cinematography, Best Makeup, Best Sound Editing and Best Director for Mel Gibson, and very popular film it was too. However if there was such a category as Best Historically Accurate Film it wouldn't have even been nominated (mind you,

nearly all historical films are historically wrong ... which means more fun for people like me who like to shout at the TV.)

Most of what is historically known about the real William Wallace could be written on the back of a postage stamp; indeed there's virtually nothing known about him prior to 1297. Therefore Randall Wallace, the writer of *Braveheart* (who was nominated for Best Original Screenplay but lost out to Christopher McQuarrie for *The Usual Suspects*) took inspiration from the poem "The Acts and Deeds of Sir William Wallace, Knight of Elderslie" by the 15th-century minstrel called Blind Harry.

To say that Blind Harry's version of events were even more historically inaccurate than *Braveheart* might initially be hard to swallow but it's safe to say that following the Battle of Stirling Bridge William Wallace became an instant folk hero.

He was subsequently attributed with winning battles that never happened, fighting enemies that he never met and visiting places that he'd never been. But before we see what the history books do tell us of William Wallace let's answer the question of why he's in our outlaw list.

Edward I claimed overlordship over Scotland (see the section on [Edward I](#) and his claim) and by opposing him William Wallace was declared a traitor and an outlaw. After losing the Battle of Falkirk William's political support among the Scottish nobles, which was always a bit iffy, all but disappeared and he fought on the run for the next seven years much like the traditional outlaws you've read about so far. At his show trial William himself declared that he was loyal to the disposed king John Balliol and therefore "I could not be a traitor to Edward, for I was never his subject", but he was executed as a traitor and because of his status as an outlaw was not allowed to defend himself. He has also been referred to as the Scottish Robin Hood; indeed he was crowned at his execution with a garland of oak leaves and proclaimed king of the outlaws. So there is the reasons, now on with the history ... or what we know of it.

William Wallace was born into a family of minor land owners sometime between 1272 and 1276. His birthplace is disputed but the hot favourite is Elderslie near Johnstone in Renfrewshire. His last name of Wallace hints at Welsh ancestry, he had a couple of brothers (John, and Simon Fraser) and a two uncles who were priests (who supposedly taught him Latin).

Other than that we know that William was born in long period of peace and stability for Scotland where Alexander III reigned up until his accidental death in 1286 (England and Scotland had not fought against each other for three generations). Four years after Alexander's death his selected

heir, Margaret “the Maid of Norway” died on the way to Scotland which resulted in the sequence of events that would see Edward I claim overlordship of Scotland in return for his invited arbitration of Scotland’s succession. Edward’s political manoeuvring on this subject has been covered in the previous section on Edward I (click [here](#) to read it) so I’ll not repeat it here. However, eventually in November 1292 at Berwick-upon-Tweed, Edward made judgment in favour of John Balliol at the cost of the other claimant Robert the Bruce.

Due to Edward’s continued claims of overlordship and the requirements there of (including military service by Scots in English armies) by March 1296 John Balliol had concluded a treaty with France (the Auld Alliance), renounced his homage to Edward I and declared war. Edward’s army marched north and sacked the then Scottish town of Berwick-upon-Tweed before fighting and winning a pitched battle at the Battle of Dunbar (1296). By July 1296 John Balliol was forced to abdicate and Edward’s officers were receiving formal homage from the remaining Scottish nobles. Scotland & her nobility was broken and defeated...

The Ayrshire legend goes that William was staying with his uncle in Riccarton and had been out enjoying a spot of fishing. A group of English soldiers came along and demanded William’s entire catch where by William offered half. This fair compromise was refused and William was threatened with death if he didn’t hand them all over. So after flooring the first English soldier with his fishing rod William took up a fallen sword and defeated the soldiers, killing two of them in the resultant brawl (Blind Harry says five soldiers were killed). The authorities issued a warrant for his arrest shortly after and this incident kicked off William’s war of independence. However ...

Another story goes that William Wallace killed the son of the English governor of Dundee after he got into the habit of bullying William and his family. This second version appears to have more weight to it as William spent time growing up in the nearby village of Kilspindie.

Blind Harry’s version meanwhile says that William was under the protection of his Uncle Ronald Crawford who was Sheriff of Ayrshire. There were unconfirmed reports of an early career as a petty criminal where between 1296 and 1297 he was mixed up in a series of run ins with the English (which Blind Harry says William always won).

Whatever else happened all accounts say he is alleged to have slain William Heselrig, who was the English Sheriff of Lanark, to avenge the death of Marion Baidfute of Lamington. According to Blind Harry William had courted and married Marion, although other sources say that she was killed by the English for harbouring her outlawed lover. So they may have been married, they may not have been.

Either way it was the killing of Sheriff of Lanark which seems to have ignited the spark of rebellion in William and he soon achieved victory at small skirmishes at Ayr and at Loudoun Hill. He hooked up at Scone with Sir William Douglas the Hardy (the former governor of Berwick) and routed William Ormesby the English justiciar. Meanwhile a man called Andrew Moray (or Andrew de Moray) was busy freeing Aberdeen, Perth, Glasgow, Scone and Dundee.

Unfortunately Scottish nobles came to terms with the English in July 1296 and so disillusioned Scots, like Wallace, left Selkirk Forest and joined up with Andrew Moray at Sterling.

In Blind Harry's poem "Barns of Ayr" described an incident where three hundred and sixty Scottish nobles led by Ronald Crawford (William's uncle) were summoned by the English to a conference in Spring of 1297. As each noble passed through the narrow door a rope was dropped down over their heads and they were hanged. There are question marks hanging over this incident as some believe Blind Harry misread a line from an earlier poem about Robert the Bruce, which tells how certain Scottish nobles were hanged "in ar" which is a legal term meaning "by a circuit court". As usual with the William Wallace story, maybe no one will know the truth.

Meanwhile John de Warenne, 7th Earl of Surrey, was leading a large English force towards Stirling and it's at Stirling where the Scots got a much needed victory. On the 11th September 1297 the English fought and lost the Battle of Stirling Bridge against Andrew Moray and William Wallace's army. The tactics of the Scottish army were on the face of it simple. They waited until enough of the English army had crossed the Stirling Bridge before attacking. Confined in such a way the much smaller Scottish army was able to cut down and route the English, with many of the English and Welsh receiving a watery death while trying to swim across the river. It is believed that during the battle the weight on the bridge due to the retreating army was so great that it collapsed. Blind Harry adds a bit more spice to the account by saying that the bridge was rigged to collapse with a man set underneath to trigger it. I don't know about you but I wouldn't have volunteered to be that man.

The victory was a major boost for Scottish cause and it's said that Hugh Cressingham (Edward's treasurer in Scotland) after being killed in the battle was such a large man that his corpse was skinned and the hide was cut up and kept as gruesome keepsakes. It's also said that William took a strip from the head to the heel and made a baldric for his sword. Nice!

Following the battle William was knighted (possibly by Robert the Bruce) and named "Guardian of Scotland and Leader of its armies". So what of Andrew Moray? Well Andrew Moray died of

his wounds suffered on the battlefield sometime in the winter of 1297.

The English were on the back foot, so for the next six months Sir William took his forces and raided across the border. The defeat at Stirling and the raiding into the north of England stirred Edward into action. Edward raised an army and personally marched north invading Roxburgh and plundering Lothian. Sir William knew he could not defeat the larger army in a pitched battle and so had ordered a scorched earth policy in an effort to starve Edward's army into going home. Although Edward's army were low on food and low on moral they eventually came to meet Sir William at the Battle of Falkirk.

The Battle of Falkirk took place on the 22nd July 1298 where Sir William's Scottish army of 6,000 was defeated by Edward I's army of an estimated 28,000. The accepted military strategy for a medieval army at that time rested on its ability to create a massed cavalry charge of knights. At Stirling Bridge there was no room for the knights to charge, but now at Falkirk there was. So this time Sir William arranged his spearmen into bristling hedgehog formations, called schiltrons, to counteract an English cavalry charge. Despite early indiscipline among his knights (who dashed themselves against the schiltrons), Edward rallied the army and prepared to employ the tactics that the Earl of Warwick had used three years previously to defeat the Welsh spearmen at the Battle of Maes Madog (1295). The English cavalry first removed the Scottish archers and then the English archers and slingers (the archers were probably Welsh) shot repeatedly into the schiltrons. They eventually started creating enough holes in the formations so that the Scots could be charged and ridden down by the English knights. And so they were, the Scots lost the battle.

Sir William escaped but his defeat meant by September 1298 he had resigned as Guardian of Scotland in favour of Robert the Bruce and John Comyn. From now on Sir William was always on the run fighting a guerrilla war against the English, especially after 1302 when Robert the Bruce came to terms with Edward.

Blind Harry says that in 1298 Sir William went to the court of Philip le Bel, King of France to plead for assistance. It's during the journey that Sir William captured a pirate called Richard Longoville, the Red Reiver (because his ship had red sails) and took him to Paris where he convinced Philip to grant him amnesty in return for the Red Reiver's promise to prey on English ships. Harry also says that Sir William fought a battle against Edward I at Biggar. Neither of these incidents have any historical backing and it's just one of many reasons why Blind Harry's accounts are taken as fiction.

Sir John de Menteith, loyal to Edward, was the Scottish knight who turned Sir William over to

English soldiers at Robroyston near Glasgow on the 5th August 1305. He was taken to London where he was tried and found guilty of treason. On the 23rd August 1305 Sir William was taken from Westminster, stripped naked and dragged through the city by horse to his place of execution – the spot is now St. Bartholomew's Hospital in Smithfield. He was hanged until partially dead, emasculated, eviscerated and his bowels burnt before him. Finally he was beheaded before his corpse was cut into quarters and sent to Berwick, Stirling, Newcastle and Aberdeen. His preserved head was put on a pike and displayed on London Bridge.

So ended the life of the Scottish patriot Sir William Wallace.

Game No. 8 – Based on the Story of William Wallace and The Battle of Stirling Bridge 1297

The Story

It's the 11th of September 1297 the English army under John de Warenne, 7th Earl of Surrey, have been ambushed by a Scottish army under Andrew Moray and William Wallace while crossing the bridge at Stirling. The teams play as Welsh archers in the English army and must shoot as they try to get back across the bridge.

The Setup

The target will consist of the centre stack of the hay bale (worth one game point for any arrow in this area) and a standard FITA target (worth 3 game points for any arrow on the paper). Six shooting lines will be set up with the first line at not less than 40 paces from the target and the last line set and no further than 60 paces from the shooting line. The remaining four shooting lines will be set between the first and sixth but may not be equidistant.

A set of poles will be placed perpendicular to the shooting lines from the second shooting line back all the way to the last and sixth shooting line. These poles represent Stirling Bridge and will be set so that they are widest apart at the second shooting line (able to accommodate six archers comfortably) and narrow all the way down to the sixth shooting line where they will be closest together (able to accommodate two archers at a squeeze). This represents the narrow confines of the bridge and provides a progressively harder challenge for the teams as they move towards the end of the bridge.

The aim of the game will be firstly to get all of the archers back across the bridge. The second aim of the game is to strike the target and score points as they go.

The sequence of events go like this; At the first shooting line the archers must start with their arrows in their quivers (or in the ground or in their belts). On the call of nock, draw, loose the archers get six seconds to nock and shoot an arrow at the target. If any archer cannot loose an arrow in this time they have lost their chance to shoot. Once the time is up on the call of "relocate" the archers have six seconds to safely move to the next shooting line. As the second shooting line represents the bridge any archer who steps off the bridge is lost and may take no further part in the game. Any archer who is not behind the second shooting line by the end of the six seconds is lost and may take no further part in the game. Any archer who is behind, but is not on the second shooting line and has not left the bridge may not shoot but is still in the game and can still move back to the third shooting line once the command of "relocate" for the second time has been given.

At the second shooting line those archers who are eligible (safely on the line) once again have on the call of nock, draw, loose six seconds to nock and shoot an arrow at the target. The archers then have another six seconds from the call of "relocate" to move to the third shooting line where the process is repeated.

The game continues until after the team has shot from the sixth and final shooting line (which has space for only two archers). Any archers remaining after the sixth shot are considered to have crossed over the bridge and will gain one game point per archer who does so.

All three teams will shoot and the team with the most game points at the end wins.

Outlaw No. 9 – Eustace de Folville – Era: 1326 - 1346

By modern standards Eustace de Folville and the Folville gang was a pretty disreputable bunch. The Folville gang carried out two of the most infamous crimes of the fourteenth century as well as being indicted for at least three robberies, four murders and a rape. And yet despite this during their lifetimes the Folvilles were viewed by the common folk as the unofficial law, fighting against the cruel injustices of the ruling elite. Writing some thirty years later 'Folvyles lawes' was listed by one chronicler [William Langland](#) in such terms;

"Therefore," said Grace, "before I go, I will give you treasure and weaponry to fight with when Antichrist attacks you...some men to ride and to recover that which was unjustly taken'.

In Langland's eyes and many others, the Folvilles were agents against an unjust law. So what was going on at the time then?

Edward II was King of England from 1307 to 1327 and his reign was not a happy one, particularly for his wife Queen Isabella. On the foreign policy front Edward's continuing war against Scotland had gone very badly and on the home front he was prone to having very unpopular favourites. One such favourite Piers Gaveston had been murdered by disaffected Earls in 1312. By the 1320's Edward's new favourites, the Despensers, were even more unpopular, particularly with the Queen whose lands and revenues were being lost to them. By 1325 she had had enough and by 1327 Queen Isabella with her lover Roger Mortimer had raised an army in France and conducted the first successful invasion of England since the Conquest. Her army was small but won the kingdom thanks to the fact that the Despensers, and Edward's regime, were so unpopular that she met little resistance.

The Despensers were executed and Edward forced to abdicate in favour his young son, Edward III. Edward II was imprisoned and was said to have been murdered at Berkeley Castle (a popular account said that he had a red hot poker shoved up his anus in punishment for being a sodomite).

Rule under Queen Isabella and Roger Mortimer apparently turned out no better. As regents they forced the fourteen year old Edward III to conclude peace with Scotland which ended the First War of Scottish Independence in 1328 (The Treaty of Edinburgh-Northampton – a very unpopular treaty with the English nobles which would be overturned by Edward III only five years later). The nobles found that they had swapped the Despensers for Mortimer, and the governance of the kingdom appeared no better under the new regime.

A now near eighteen year old Edward III had learnt the lessons of his father and, with the help of friends, took control by seizing Isabella and Roger in Nottingham Castle in November 1330. Roger Mortimer was hanged at Tyburn in the same month while Isabella was forced into a comfortable retirement at Castle Rising in Norfolk.

So prior to 1327 we have one unpopular regime followed by three years of another unpopular regime followed by Edward III's renewed war with Scotland. It's under these conditions that the Folville gang flourished ...

The Folville family were originally from the Folleville in the Picardy region in France, but what started under the reign of King Stephen in the 1130's by the 1320's they were considered major land owners, with the family seat was based in Ashby Folville in Leicestershire. Sir John Folville was the patriarchal head of the family who had served Edward I in in the Scottish wars and attended six parliaments. On Sir John's death in 1310 all of the estates were passed on to the oldest Folville son, also called John. Under feudal law the other six remaining Folville brothers did not receive any of the land and therefore had to make their own fortunes. As a result it's clear perhaps to see why John is the only Folville not to be implicated in any of the subsequent crimes as he simply did not need to turn to a life of crime where as his younger brothers obviously felt they did.

After John Eustace was the second oldest Folville brother and he kicked off a twenty year criminal career in style by leading an ambush on the 19th January 1326 which ended in the murder of Sir Roger Bellere in a small valley near Rearsby in Leicestershire. The attack was carried out with fifty men including his brothers Roger and Walter as well as some other local landowners such as Robert Halewell and Roger la Zouche. La Zouche apparently inflicted the death-blow but Eustace Folville as leader, was charged with the murder.

So why did they do it? Well Sir Roger Bellere was a local nobleman who was the founder of the chantry at Kirby and also owned nine manors, so he was rich and powerful. He was also baron of the exchequer and its chief treasurer. But what probably sealed his fate was that he was closely tied to Hugh Despenser the younger (he was appointed attorney to him in 1322). The grudge or feud the la Zouche's, Halewell and Folville's had with him was probably political or revolved around confiscated revenues from lands he received while acting in the name of the hated Despensers. As has been mentioned, the Despensers weren't the most popular and this went in the Folville's favour when Edward II was disposed the following year. Meanwhile though the gang were summoned to stand trial shortly after the murder but they fled and so were declared outlaws in their absence.

This status as an outlaw didn't seem to have much impact on the Folvilles. Even though they were pardoned twice for the murder (1327 and again in 1329), Eustace was accused or mentioned in relation to additional robberies and murders carried out by the Folville brothers between 1327 and 1330. Our next outlaw on the list James Cotterel and the Cotterel gang allied themselves with the Folville gang and offered shelter to them in their territory of the Peak District in Derbyshire. Additionally not only was the Folville gang carrying robberies and thefts, but they were also acting as mercenaries to legitimate parties. During their period as outlaws they were hired by members of Sempringham Priory and Haverholm Abbey in Lincolnshire as well as Sir Robert Tuchet, a lord of Cheshire and Derbyshire. Apparently during the tenure for

either the priory or the abbey they were tasked with the burning of mills in the area—perfect work for outlaws in need of cash.

By 1332 Eustance's younger brother Richard (the fourth oldest Folville brother) had devised a plan for carrying out the second crime for which the Folvilles became famous for. Richard Folville was the created rector to the small country parish of Teigh in 1321, about 12 km east of Melton Mowbray (where the pork pies are made!) Being a Folville this job didn't stop him from adding outlaw, kidnapper and extortionist to his Curriculum Vitae. In January 1332 the Folvilles attacked another agent of the crown, Sir Richard Willoughby. Sir Richard (who would later become Chief Justice of the King's Bench) was attacked and kidnapped on the road to Grantham and forced to pay a 1300 mark (£900) ransom for his release. Again the motive for this crime seemed to be either political but equally could also have been opportunism.

However, for his crimes Eustace would again receive a full pardon in return for serving in the armies of Edward III against the Scottish. The battle of Halidon Hill occurred a year after the kidnap and it's probable that Eustace fought in that battle.

Richard did not fair so well being officially the Folville to receive punishment for any of the Folville crimes. Nine years later in 1341 the Keeper of the King's peace Sir Robert Coalville cornered Richard in the church at Teigh. There was a fight in which Richard shot arrows from the church resulting in at least one fatality. When Sir Robert managed to draw Richard from the building he was captured and beheaded in the churchyard by Sir Robert (as was legally allowed). Richard was a priest though, so on the advice of Pope Clement VI, Sir Robert and his men were absolved of the killing after the penance of being whipped at each of the main churches in the area.

Eustace meanwhile died peacefully in 1346, never once standing trial for any of his crimes. He is buried at St Mary's church, Ashby Folville where his badly damaged monument still stands. Eustace stands as an example of how someone, by using change in the political regimes and pardons in return for military service could have quite a successful criminal career.

Game No. 9 – Based on the Murder of Sir Roger Bellere

The Story

It's the 19th January 1326 at a small valley near Rearsby in Leicestershire and as part of the

Folville gang you must murder Sir Roger Bellere

The Setup

A man sized target, Sir Roger Bellere must be set up with a shooting line set at not less than 30 paces. One pace in front of the target will be hung a shield. The shield must be hung from the top left hand corner and the top right hand corner so that any arrow strikes on the shield can make it twist. Sir Roger should be covered completely by the shield, except with the ground clearance needed for the shield to twist, only his feet may be showing.

The game will be set over two rounds, each team having three arrows per archer to kill Sir Roger. Ideally the teams should be able to volley shoot the side of the shield to make it twist, thus allowing an archer a clear shot while the shield twists backwards

Outlaw No. 10 – James Cotterel – Era: 1328 to 1333

James Cotterel (or Coterel or Cotterell) was the leader of the successful Cotterel gang who operated in Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire in the late 1320's and early 1330's. The first reference to the Cotterel gang is in August 1328 however it was not until they failed to appear at court in March 1331 that they were officially outlawed; so technically James Cotterel is one of the shortest career outlaws in this article. James Cotterel was always identified as the leader of the gang, for example the jurors of the High Peak hundred named him and twenty of his recruits as they wandered through the Peak District and through Sherwood Forest. However this number of twenty would later seem rather modest as by the 26th November 1332 the sheriff of Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire was ordered to exact from county court to county court no fewer than two hundred men who were associated with James and his gang.

But James was by no means the only Cotterel family member involved, as at least four other named family members are mentioned. Along with James there was a John and Nicholas Cotterel who, just like James, would never be brought to justice. Nicholas Cotterel eventually became Queen Philippa's bailiff for the High Peak and led an army of archers into Scotland

By the end of his criminal career James himself seemed to have changed sides and switched over to the law (as by November 1336 as it is recorded that he was commissioned to arrest a Leicestershire parson). The fourth Cotterel was Laurence Cotterel and was perhaps James' uncle. He was killed by Roger de Wennesley in March 1330:-

Thomas Ifel of Stafford struck Laurence Coterele on the head with his sword. Roger Wennesley then struck Coterele with a knife, per medium gutteris [mid throat], from which he died: Assize Roll 166 m.21 - The Coterele Gang: an Anatomy of a Band of Fourteenth-century Criminals by J. G. Bellamy

Now most people would think that Wennesley would've been rewarded by the authorities and hunted down by the Cotterels but they'd be wrong. Instead Roger de Wennesley, lord of Mappleton no less, went on to join the Cotterel gang in December 1330.

So why would a lord of Mappleton want to join a rag tag outlaw gang? Well the Cotterells weren't exactly short of a few bob, or a bit of land either. They held lands in Tadington, Priestcliffe, Chelmorton, Flagh, Toustedes, Cromford and Matlock and continued to receive their rents while on the lam.

James was even given the wardship of the lands of Elizabeth Meverel, widow of Thomas Meverel by Queen Philippa in May 1332 while still an outlaw. How could they have achieved this if they were supposed to be outside the law? The answer perhaps lay in the gang's modus operandi ...

The Cotterel gang spent their short career robbing from the rich for which examples of there are many (plus there's no point robbing from the poor as they've got nothing of value). They also made a point of being as non-violent as possible which may explain their level of support among the nobility, the peasantry and the crown. A list of crimes from a jury in Derby records that the Cotterel gang;

Took one hundred shillings from Ralph Murimouth at Bakewell

Demanded £20 from William Amyas the major of Nottingham

Demanded £40 from Sir Geoffrey Luttrell (the man who commissioned the Luttrell Psalter)

Demanded £20 from William de Birchover

John de Staniclyf was held by the gang and released on a bond of £20.

The Cotterels were also implicated in the kidnap of Sir Richard Willoughby in January 1332, the crime which you may remember from the last page of this article was carried out by the Folvilles. Eustace Folville would associate himself with the Cotterels during his enforced absences

Leicestershire and so it's perhaps of no surprise that Cotterels would've been involved in at least one Folville venture. Richard Folville was apparently the mastermind behind the kidnap of Sir Richard Willoughby and he was eventually cornered and beheaded in his church at Teigh nine years later. The Cotterels on the other hand seem to have got off scot-free. Most sources call the kidnap a definite Folville venture but James Cotterel was apparently part of the group that forced Sir Richard to pay a 1300 mark ransom. It's believed that when the money was shared out in Markeaton Park in Derby the Cotterels received a 340 mark share for their help.

So the Cotterels earned money via extortion and kidnap, received land rents and later would retain the patronage of the Queen. They also received some support from the clergy. Direct support came from the likes of Robert Bernard who had been a clerk of Chancery, a teacher at Oxford University, a vicar of Edith Weston in Rutland and Registrar of Lichfield cathedral before joining the gang sometime around 1328. Perhaps not the most honest of characters to begin with it was at Lichfield cathedral that he failed four times to pay relief to the poor. By 1326 he'd just been released from Oxford gaol, but the next year in 1327 he was back in the arms of the church acting as the vicar of Bakewell. Maybe old habits die hard because he was caught stealing church funds and was removed by the bishop of Lichfield via papal mandate in June 1238. Two months later he's associated with the Cotterels when he managed to persuade the gang to assail his successor, Walter Can, the new vicar of Bakewell in August 1328. It's recorded that Robert Bernard and another clerical member of the Cotterel gang would later claim benefit of the church and purge themselves by oath.

In addition to the odd wayward cleric the Cotterels appear to also have had direct Church support during their activities as the gang ranged all the way from Yorkshire down to Leicestershire. Their main church support came in Bakewell, Derbyshire from the seven canons of Lichfield cathedral dean and chapter, although other prominent supporters included;

Sir William Aune from Gringley, Nottinghamshire.

Sir Robert and Edmund Tuchet from Mackwork and Markeaton.

No fewer than four bailiffs and William de Chetulton and Sir John de Legh from the High Peak.

By the spring of 1332, four counties of Nottinghamshire, Derbyshire, Leicestershire and Rutland were visited by William de Herle, the Chief Justice of Common Pleas. Along with Chief Justice of the Common pleas came the Chief Justice of the King's Bench, Geoffrey le Scrope. The activities of the Cotterel Gang seemed to have inspired their visit but the Cotterel gang had no trouble avoiding arrest thanks to their network of friends. It seems that the prior of Lenton told James Cotterel of the arrival of the leading keeper, a man named Richard Grey. Also John Cotterel received a letter from Sir Robert Ingram with a similar warning.

In the end though James, John and Nicholas Cotterel (& the gang's lieutenant, Roger le Sauvage) were ever brought to justice and neither were any of their named helpers (including the Lichfield chapter). It seems they provided a proficient service to both church and gentry and as a result enjoyed support from the highest echelons of society. No fewer than seven men who sat in parliament had connections with the Cotterels and as a result of the gang's methods and their friend's influence it seems that in many quarters the gang was not only respected but reluctantly admired.

Eventually the Cotterel gang came to an end in 1333 not because of any activity of the Crown to bring the gang to book, but because James Cotterel, at the point where his criminal career reached its peak wisely made his peace with the authorities. And so the Cotterels, because of their non-violent and short lived career, win the prize as one of the most successful but perhaps least known outlaw gangs you'll read in the article.

Game No. 10 – Based on the Kidnap of Sir Richard Willoughby

The Story

It's January 1332 and James Cotterel along with the Folvilles are about to ambush, kidnap and demand 900 marks from Sir Richard Willoughby. In this game Sir Richard is accompanied by seven retainers who must be killed or wounded before Sir Richard can be captured.

The Setup

This game uses the quintaine which has two square targets hung on either arm. The two targets have four faces (they both have a front face each and back face each). Divide each face diagonally from corner to corner and we end up with eight triangular targets, four of which will be facing the archers at any one time. Finally one of the targets is to be marked to represent Sir Richard and also has a balloon attached to it.

Each team are allowed to set up on a shooting line that is set at not less than 15 paces. The game is divided into three rounds in which the archers are allowed to shoot 3 arrows in the first round, 4 arrows in the second round and 6 arrows in the third and final round. The round starts with a spin of the quintaine and ends when all of the arrows have been shot or the archers

declare that they have finished shooting.

At the end of each round the scores are marked with one game point per target face hit with the maximum score initially being seven (one point per retainer hit). Multiple hits on the same target will still score only one point as each target represents a retainer and there's no advantage in shooting a "corpse". If the Sir Richard target face is hit a penalty of minus five points are given as the retinue is deemed to have wounded him thus jeopardising their chances of getting a ransom. If a retinue pop the balloon they've shot and killed Sir Richard thus being unable to get ransom their scores are zeroed for that round. If all seven retainers are hit the team receive a plus five point bonus.

If the quintaine stops spinning and arrows are left the archers can shoot the target hard enough to revolve the quintaine to a position that allows remaining targets to be shot. The teams may decide to shoot all of their arrows while the quintaine is spinning or may wait until the quintaine has stopped. If an arrow hits the side of the target the position will be judged by the Target Archery Marshal to decide which target face was struck.

After each round the arrows are scored up and removed with the winner for that round calculated. After each round the scores are zeroed, the retainers & Sir Richard spring back to life and the game begins again. The team that gains the most game points and wins the most rounds gains the Retinue Points.

Outlaw No. 11 – Adam the Leper – Era: 1347

Adam the Leper was, like Eustace Folville and James Cotterel, the leader of a robber band operating in the 1330's and 1340s. Was his nickname "leper" just that, a nickname, or did he really have leprosy?

Leprosy is a disease which comes from the Greek *lipid*, meaning scales on a fish and is caused by the bacterium *Mycobacterium leprae* (the modern name for it is Hansen's disease). The disease causes permanent damage to the nerves, skin, limbs and eyes with skin lesions being the primary external symptom. The idea that fingers and limbs rot away although popular is incorrect, although if a victim has nerve damage and gets a cut for example, that cut can remain undetected and untreated leading to further problems.

Leprosy in the Middle Ages is a large subject that has many an article and book written on it including its classification by the church and how lepers were treated so I'm not going to go into it here. Another reason not to go into the subject is that it's doubtful that Adam was indeed a leper mainly because the disease was greatly feared and it's unsure that he would've been able to attract & lead a gang if he were considered infectious. In reality the classification "leper" was given to many social deviants in the medieval period and in this case Adam the Leper certainly deserves the label as a social misfit ... Adam the Leper and his gang concentrated their activities to urban areas where they mainly practised theft and kidnap.

Their modus operandi seemed to consist of entering a town while a fair or other social gathering was in progress and while in the town they would rob and abduct people before setting houses alight to cover their retreat. The hostages would invariably be mutilated whether their ransoms were paid or not and this is probably what earned Adam the nickname of leper (which seems a bit unfair to real lepers).

The fourteenth century seems to have its fair share of audacious crimes; in 1303 Richard of Pudlicott burgled King Edward I's Wardrobe treasury at Westminster Abbey, in 1326 the Folville gang murdered the baron of the exchequer and its chief treasurer Sir Roger Bellere, then in 1332 the Folville gang (along with James Cotterel) ransomed Sir Richard Willoughby for 300 marks (£900). These crimes pale a bit in comparison to Adam the Lepers's most daring crime when in 1347 when he and his gang seized the port of Bristol. Yes, that's right, the whole port of Bristol. So was Bristol important then?

The town had begun life as a village called Brigg stow which means "meeting place at the bridge" in late Saxon/Old English, indicating that the village grew up around a bridge crossing the river Avon. By the 11th century Bristol had a mint and a weekly market trading with Dublin, Somerset and North Devon. By 1155 Bristol was given a charter which confirmed certain rights held by the townspeople and in 1171, after the Anglo-Normans conquered Ireland, Dublin was given to Bristol as a colony. Along with woad (used for dying), wine was Bristol's biggest import with ships arriving from the south west of France, Spain and Portugal. In turn Bristol exported wool, rope, leather and sailcloth. In 1118 an order of fighting monks called the Knights Templar was founded to defend pilgrims to the Holy Land. The Knights Templar owned a great deal of land in England including Temple Meads (meadows) at Bristol (which is now the site of Bristol's major railway station Bristol Temple Meads). The Priory of St James was built in Bristol in 1129 followed by an Augustinian Abbey in 1142. All this made Bristol by the 14th century, England's third-largest town after London and York with perhaps 15,000 to 20,000 inhabitants.

Adam and his gang seized the town in 1347 and he set himself up as a self proclaimed robber king. Like some sort of modern day mafia boss Adam issued proclamations and commandeered

ships while his gang's looting and murdering remained unchecked by the authorities. So how was it possible to seize a town of such importance?

One possible theory is that King Edward III and the majority of his nobles had been preoccupied with the war in France; the expedition resulting in the Battle of Crécy had taken place the previous year in 1346. Those nobles that had remained had also been busy in the north for under the terms of the Auld Alliance King David II of Scotland had invaded England. King David was defeated and taken prisoner by John Coupeland at the Battle of Neville's Cross also in the latter half of the previous year.

So with England fighting on two fronts it's possible that Adam had sat down and formulated a plan to take the town. But equally he could've decided do a bit of robbing and ransoming in a largely undefended port and got lucky ... Either way because some of the ships that were ransacked were Royal commissions his crimes came into direct conflict with King Edward III's plans. It's also believed that one of the ships ransacked was carrying jewellery owned by Queen Philippa. King Edward sent out Lord Thomas de Berkeley with a force to restore order.

Thomas "The Rich" de Berkeley was fifty four years old in 1347 and had twenty years earlier in 1327 been made joint custodian of the deposed King Edward II at Berkeley Castle. He was commanded to deliver the ex-King to his fellow custodians, Lord Maltravers and Sir Thomas Gournay and left Berkeley Castle to go to Bradley "with heavy cheere perceiving what violence was intended." As he was an accessory to the murder of the deposed king, he was tried by a jury of 12 knights in 1331 but was honourably acquitted. And so with the King's favour Thomas engaged the gang at Bristol and after an extended battle Adam was eventually captured.

Adam the Leper was tried at Winchester court but owing to the continued intimidation by surviving members of Adam's gang the matter was eventually dropped and he eventually went free. Adam appears to have died nearly fifteen years later in the early 1360's making him our third outlaw in a row to remain unpunished for his crimes.

Game No. 11 – Based on the Retaking of Bristol 1347

The Story

The year is 1347 and Adam the Leper's gang has seized control of the port of Bristol. A force under Lord Thomas Berkeley has been dispatched to remove Adam the Leper and his gang from the town and restore order.

The Setup

The hay bale backstop is used as the target and the shooting line set at around 20 paces. Each archer is given an A4 sized piece of card and asked to write their name on it and then they were given 1 minute to fix their piece of card on to the hay bale backstop with a spare arrow.

The rules for placing the card were clearly laid out; no two cards could overlap, the cards must be placed on the front portion of the hay bale backstop and must be visible from the shooting line, any card which is not fixed robustly enough and falls out during shooting will be out of the game. In addition to the archers' cards there will be a card with a ship drawn onto it. Hanging from this card was a yellow marker representing Queen Philippa's jewels.

The aim of the game is to shoot well enough to "kill" the other archers while retaining ownership of the Queen's jewellery. The first part of the game revolves around the fact that in each round three arrows are shot per archer. If an archer receives collectively three or more arrow holes in their card (excluding the arrow used to initially fix it to the hay bale!) over the course of the game, that archer will be "killed" and their card and arrow is removed from the hay bale backstop.

A killed archer can continue to shoot as a Lord Berkeley archer in subsequent rounds but only has one arrow to shoot per round and has no card on the hay bale backstop. Two game points are to be awarded to the retinue for each archer who survives to the very end of the game (set at twenty rounds maximum). If no archers survive to the very end of the game, the single retinue which survives the longest will win three game points.

The second part of the game revolves around the theft of Queen Philippa's jewels. If the ship card is shot by an archer, that archer for the next round receives the yellow jewel marker. If two or more archers shoot the ship card, the archer whose arrow is more central to the card will win the jewels. If an archer is "killed" during a round where he or she had won or had ownership of the Queen's jewels and there are no surviving archers available to take ownership, the yellow marker returns to the ship card. For each round that an archer retains ownership of the Queen's jewels their retinue receives one game point. If the full twenty rounds are played the archer who has ownership of the Queen's jewels will receive a bonus of 5 game points for their team. At the

end of each round the archer holding the Queen's jewels can transfer it to another surviving archer (so they aren't target No.1 for the rest of the game).

At the end of every fifth round the surviving archers have the option of one minute to move their card to a new part of the hay bale. Any archer who has not fixed their card to the hay bale within the one minute is out of the game. This is so that people can tactically reposition their cards once other archers had been removed from the game.

At the end of the twenty rounds or if there is only one or no surviving archers the game points are totalled up and the winner announced.

Outlaw No. 12– William Beckwith – Era: 1389-95

From the time of the Norman Conquest of England in 1066 through to the year 1349 the population of England and Wales had been growing from an estimated 2 million to the 4 million level similar to Britain under the Romans. To give you an idea how this compared to other populations, in France the population was estimated to be around 22 million, in Scotland around 500,000 and in Ireland 1 million.

While these figures seem tiny compared to modern population levels (Britain currently has a population of 65 million) the feudal system (the giving of land and arms in return for military service) and more importantly the manorial system (rights and obligations that the serfs gave to work the lord's land) benefited from the scarcity of farmland and what was considered the high number of available workers.

With the arrival and spread of the Black Death in Europe in 1348 the first wave of the disease is estimated to have killed up to a third of the population. As a consequence land prices dropped, wages became dearer and the old customs and obligations under the manorial system began to break down. The increase in labour costs led to inflation throughout the economy and the lords and great land owners mourned the sudden shift in economic power. In an attempt to control labour costs and price levels in England, Edward III issued the Ordinance of Labourers in 1349 which tried to enforce price controls. Two years later in 1351 parliament attempted to reinforce the Ordinance with the Statute of Labourers. This statute further tried to set wages at pre-1349 levels which surprise, surprise, wasn't that popular with the peasants.

By 1377, after a number of defeats in France, a poll tax was introduced: four pence per head on

everyone over fourteen years of age. In 1379 a second poll tax was introduced on top of a double subsidy. Then in 1381 a third poll tax was introduced on top of a subsidy and a half. The accumulation of tax levies, the Statute of Labourers, and the other burdens and irritants resulted in the Peasant Revolt of 1381. The rising, although unsuccessful for those who actually revolted, was significant because it marked the first calls for the reform of feudalism and the beginning of the end of the manorial system in medieval England.

But while the Peasants Revolt is a nice book mark for the beginning of the end of feudalism and the manorial system in England, it wasn't a quick process. In some places it took over two hundred years before some of the old practices and customs were forgotten or abolished.

So what has the Peasants Revolt and the manorial system got to do with William Beckwith? Well it's under this post revolt atmosphere that William became an outlaw and divided opinion in the county of Yorkshire. All for not getting a job of a bailiff. So a bailiff comes round and reposes your television right? Well in the medieval period a bailiff was slightly different...

Under the manorial system a bailiff was in charge of superintending the cultivation of the manor. Along with this one there were a number of other long standing traditional jobs and responsibilities that could be appointed in the days before Equal Opportunities. For the purposes of simplicity were going to look at a very simple model of a lord's land, which was called a demesne (pronounced "demean" – the "s" in there denotes a long sounding "e" under an old, now disused grammatical rule).

The feudal and manorial system actually evolved from a post Roman time period when there wasn't a lot of coins in circulation. In place of cash, barter and service in kind was used, but as time moved on & more money was minted certain obligations would and could be transferred into more convenient cash sums.

As a basic example the king would give a piece of land to a knight or the church, (henceforth the recipient of the land will be called the lord) in return for a number of days military service. If it was church they still had to provide military service – this is feudalism after all. This military service could by the 12th century be transferred into the option of a cash payment (called scutagium, scuagium, escuagium or scutage – which literally meant shield tax).

The norm would be that the lord would divide his demesne up and give it to other men to actually work on. In return for the land that would provide for the peasants and their families

(subsistence farming), the men would work a number of days on the lord's fields and provide him the resultant produce.

The men who worked the land operated under the system of serfdom of which there were four levels; freemen – rent paying freemen who owed little or no service to the lord, villeins – the most common sort of serf who could own land but owed service to the lord and paid rents in goods and money, cottagers who did not own land and worked the lord's lands usually exclusively (although not always) and finally there were slaves who owned no land or goods and practically became defunct under the feudal system. It was not the serfs rank in this system that made him rich in comparison to his peers, it was the amount of land he had bought or inherited.

Although not exclusive across the whole of England, the men & their families would generally be grouped together in a practical collection of buildings which were originally a unit of administration called a vill (vill is where the word village would eventually come from). The vills were also defined as a parish, a manor or tithing and would be served by a priest in a church for which they would take one tenth (a tithe) of the produce in payment. The lord's presence would be represented by having servants and an administrative building in the village called the manor house. From here the village would operate under an evolving & complex system of laws, customs and practices that would be called the manorial system.

The lord would rarely visit the village and in his place the lord's interests would be represented by the steward. The lord's steward would travel around the lord's demesnes in his role as the chief administrator and if the lord had a lot of demesne's spread over a large area (which was possible as land was inherited or sold off (called alienation)) a large amount of the steward's time could be spent on the road. The lord's permanent representative in the village would be the bailiff who would receive board and lodging at the manor house as well as a wage. The villagers would be allowed their own representatives in the form of a voted "head villager" called the reeve and to help him would be a deputy, a "half reeve" post called variously a hayward, beadle or greve. The posts of reeve and beadle would offer the holder corresponding rights and the relaxation of certain obligations to the lord in turn for this service. However being a reeve wasn't always popular.

The manorial system's sole purpose was gaining the lord every available penny from his land. So in addition to high justice, which was the king's justice covering such things as murder, rape, highway robbery and treason, there was low justice in the form of the manorial court. And just as the king pocketed the fines and confiscation of property under the king's justice, the lord would pocket the same from the manor court.

The manor court, called the hallmote (from the Anglo-Saxon) took place in the manor house and occurred at least twice a year. Headed by the steward who acted as the judge, all the villages business and low justice would be enacted at the hallmote and the bailiff to follow up and collect on should fines be levied. For those who felt like dodging this court business the village operated a neighbourhood watch system called the frankpledge, which was an Anglo-Saxon system of grouping households into tens to monitor each other's conduct. If for example one member of the frankpledge was fined, the remainder were liable unless the original member paid up

To list all the fines and infringements is worth an article on it's own, but there were such examples as leirwite (fine for pre-marital sex), heriot (an inheritance tax on the death of a serf and the transition of chattels—usually the dead man's best animal, the church would take the second best and for the cost of burial they'd also take the dead man's best shirt), merchet (a tax on the dowry of goods following a marriage) as well as fines for animals escaping, fences not being mended, theft of goods below 12 pence, incorrect brewer's measures, failure to work on the lord's land and enforcement of "bans" or monopolies like not using the lord's mills to grind flour for bread (the miller wasn't very popular – one joke goes "What is the boldest thing in the world? The miller's shirt for it has a thief by the throat every day.") and on and on and on. There were literally hundreds of ways a peasant could be fined if they stepped out of line.

The term bailiff also perhaps confusingly applied to in England to the king's officers, such as sheriffs, & mayors, however in the case of William Beckwith it's clear that it's the position of a village bailiff that the dispute occurs over.

The gist of William Beckwith's grudge started when he failed to succeed an office once held by family members who were all bailiffs in Knaresborough under the Duchy of Lancaster. Although not a hereditary position there was obviously some bad feeling felt especially when the position was given over to a man called Robert Doufbygging, a man from Lancashire i.e. outside the county. As a result of this Beckwith carried out a campaign of violence against the new bailiff Robert, and the local steward and constable of Knaresborough Castle, Sir Robert Rokeley.

Details of William's specific exploits during this period are lacking, however by the time one of his followers received a pardon in 1395, one of the complaints listed centred on William calling a parliament called a "Dodelowe" where "they ordained amongst themselves to force alliances and secure unlawful appointment in subversion of the law, oppression of the people, disinherison of the duke of Lancaster and the loss of his ministers". So, William was an outlaw who liked proper and orderly meetings and although we don't know if he really was badly done by, perhaps he wouldn't have made a half decent administrator?

Game No. 12 – Based on William Beckwith

The Story

The year is 1390 and Sir Robert Rokeley has made a trip to the city of York. William Beckwith has learned of his plans and decides to lie in wait ready to attack him outside each of the business establishments he knows he'll be visiting.

The Setup

This game is basically a quiz where the questions are answered by shooting an arrow into the correct answer. So not only will the players need to know the answer, they'll also have to be good enough to hit the right answer card.

Fourteen questions are set that follow the formula of Sir Robert visiting a business within the city of York. The answers to each question are printed on cards and fixed to the hay bale backstop. The twist is that rather than have the answers in English, the answers are in Middle English.

The cards are; Myteyne Suller Souteress, Taillour, Lare-fadir, Barbour, Wafrestre, Bocher, Smybbe, Ostelere, Ropere, Wafreere, Tapeceer, Webbare, Pardoner, Up-holdere, Stede Marchaunt.

The questions are;

1. Sir Robert is in need of a new pair of shoes. He's heard of a woman shoe seller who might supply him a good pair. Where has he gone?
2. Sir Robert is in need a cloak adjusting. Who might he visit?
3. Sir Robert has tooth ache. Who will he visit to have his tooth pulled?
4. Sir Robert is after the services of a butcher. Who should he visit?
5. Sir Robert's horse is in need of re-shoeing. Where should he go?
6. It is late and now Sir Robert is in need of a room and a meal. Who should he visit?
7. Sir Robert needs new gloves. Where can he buy a pair?

8. Sir Robert is in need of some rope. Who should he go to?
9. The castle is a bit drafty. Time to commission a couple of new tapestries. Who should he talk to?
10. Sir Robert is in need of some wafer cakes. He has heard of a woman who can supply some at a competitive price. Who should he talk to?
11. Sir Robert is after some bolts of woollen cloth. Who best to get some?
12. Sir Robert's sins are many. A seller of pardons is next on the list. Who should he visit?
13. Sir Robert is doing a bit of penny pinching and is looking to buy some second hand items to use as gifts. Where should he go?
14. Finally, Sir Robert is now after a new horse. Where best to go?

For the first seven questions the archers have two arrows each to hit their answer. For the final seven questions the archers have only the one arrow to hit their answer.

After each question the arrows in the correct answer card are counted up and score one game point each. The team with the most game points at the end wins.

Oh yes, the answers...

1. Sir Robert is in need of a new pair of shoes. He's heard of a woman shoe seller who might supply him a good pair. Where has he gone? Answer: Souteress – a woman seller of shoes
2. Sir Robert is in need a cloak adjusting. Who might he visit? Answer: Taillour – a tailor
- 3, Sir Robert has tooth ache. Who will he visit to have his tooth pulled? Barbour – the barber.
4. Sir Robert is after the services of a butcher. Who should he visit? Answer: Bocher – a butcher
5. Sir Robert's horse is in need of re-shoeing. Where should he go? Answer: Smypppe – the smith
6. It is late and now Sir Robert is in need of a room and a meal. Who should he visit? Ostelere – an innkeeper.
7. Sir Robert needs new gloves. Where can he buy a pair? Answer: Myteyne Suller – the glove seller.

8. Sir Robert is in need of some rope. Who should he go to? Answer: Ropere – the rope maker.
9. The castle is a bit drafty. Time to commission a couple of new tapestries. Who should he talk to? Answer: Tapeceer – a maker of tapestry
10. Sir Robert is in need of some wafer cakes. He has heard of a woman who can supply some at a competitive price. Who should he talk to? Answer: Wafrestre – a female maker of wafer cakes. Wafrere is a (male) maker of wafer cakes
11. Sir Robert is after some bolts of woollen cloth. Who best to get some? Answer: Webbare – a maker of woollen cloth.
12. Sir Robert's sins are many. A seller of pardons is next on the list. Who should he visit? Answer: Pardoner
13. Sir Robert is doing a bit of penny pinching and is looking to buy some second hand items to use as gifts. Where should he go? Answer: Up-holdere - a seller of second-hand things
14. Finally, Sir Robert is now after a new horse. Where best to go? Answer: Stede Marchaunt – a horse merchant.

Outlaw No. 13 – Owain Glyndŵr – Era: 1400-1415

There was a certain Welsh gentleman, named OWEN GLENDOWER, who had been a student in one of the Inns of Court, and had afterwards been in the service of the late King, whose Welsh property was taken from him by a powerful lord related to the present King, who was his neighbour. Appealing for redress, and getting none, he took up arms, was made an outlaw, and declared himself sovereign of Wales.

- A Child's History of England by Charles Dickens

The anglicised version of his name, originally done by Shakespeare in his play "Henry IV Part 1" is Owen Glendower, but Owain Glyndŵr was the correct version and is pronounced Owain Glin-dwr. Owain was the last native Welshman to hold the title of Prince of Wales and was crowned as Owain IV of Wales. So as our last "patriotic" outlaw (having covered William Wallace as our Scottish patriot and William of Cashingham as our English patriot) Owain rose the highest and, perhaps in terms of his aims & wishes for his country, fell the furthest.

Born in either 1354 or 1359 he and his family were prosperous Anglo-Welsh land owners in the Welsh Marches in the northeast of Wales. Their position was known as "uchelwyr" which meant

they were nobles descended from the preconquest Welsh Royal dynasties (plus a little bit of anglo-norman blood with a definite small “a” and “n”). Indeed, Owain was descended from the Prince of Powys.

Because of this mixed heritage the family were able to move easily between both the Welsh and Anglo-Norman societies so when Owain was 16 and his father, Gruffydd Fychan II, Lord of Glyndyfrdwy and Hereditary Tywysog of Powys Fadog died, Owain ap Gruffydd as he was known (Owain son of Gruffydd) was sent to David Hanmer, a lawyer who would later rise to become a Justice of the Kings Bench (which was a big deal in 14th century lawyering circles).

It’s probably through David Hanmer’s influence that Owain was then sent to study law at the Inns of Court in London where he spent the next seven years. By 1383 he returned home from London (having probably witnessed the Peasants Revolt of 1381) where he married David Hanmer’s daughter, Margaret. Once settled he would take the role as the Squire of Sycharth and Glyndyfrdwy and start a very large family (eventually having 15 children).

Starting in 1384 Owain then began a concentrated military career that was to be very eventful but last only three short years;

1. In 1384 he entered the English king’s military service when he undertook garrison duty under Sir Gregory Sais (or Degory Sais) on the English-Scottish border at Berwick on Tweed.
2. In 1385 he saw action with Richard II in his wars in France while acting as his shield bearer (scutifer).
3. Later in 1385 he would serve in Scotland again under the command of John of Gaunt.
4. In 1386 he was called to give evidence in the Scrope v. Grosvenor trial at Chester. This was the earliest heraldic law case brought in England which centred around two different families using the same undifferenced coat of arms. Sir Robert Grosvenor from Cheshire claimed his family had borne the Azure a Bend Or since coming over from Normandy with William the Conqueror. However Sir Richard Scrope from Bolton eventually won the case and, after further ruling by King Richard II, was then the only knight allowed to bear the arms Azure a Bend Or (until he later lost the right to a Cornish knight who claimed his forefathers and borne the arms since King Arthur's time!)
5. In 1387 he was serving under Richard Fitzalan, 11th Earl of Arundel in the Channel in time for the of a combined French, Spanish and Flemish fleet defeat just off the

coast of Kent.

6. In 1387, following the death of his father-in-law the now knighted Sir David Hanmer, and a spell back in Wales acting as the executor of his estate, he served as squire to Henry Bolingbroke at the Battle of Radcot Bridge (Dec. 1387) (Henry Bolingbroke was son of John of Gaunt, cousin to Richard II and upon the usurpation of Richard II in 1399 would next be King of England, King Henry IV).

In the 1390's Richard would be caught up in a growing conflict with disaffected "Lords Appallent" that would mean the sidelining of Richard Fitzalan. Also with the death of Sir Gregory Sais this meant that Owain could return to his estates in Wales where he lived out his forties in relative peace and quiet.

Richard II would not have any peace and quiet however as by 1399 he was overthrown by his cousin Henry Bolingbroke. Here is not the place to go into the fall of Richard II but it is worth noting that Richard had tried to set up a second powerbase away from London in the area around Chester. It's perhaps therefore of no surprise that it's from this region, including Owain's neck of the woods, that the new King Henry IV would face the greatest resistance to this regime change.

The *Glyndŵr Rising*, *The Welsh Revolt* and *The Last War of Independence* are all names that cover a series of events that started in the late 1390s and led Owain towards the critical role of being proclaimed the Prince of Wales on September 16th 1400 by a small band of followers which included his eldest son, his brothers-in-law, and the Dean of St. Asaph.

The conflict actually started quite small. Owain had been in a long running dispute with a neighbour Baron Reginald Grey de Ruthyn of Dyffryn Clwyd. Owain had actually won an appeal under King Richard II in 1399 but this was overturned by Reginald de Grey under the new king, Henry IV. Owain's second appeal was never heard and de Grey then made things worse by withholding a Royal Summons for Owain to join the new King's Scottish campaign. By not answering the summons Owain was judged to be a traitor and his estates were forfeit which of course was what de Grey was after. Henry IV did urge de Grey to deal with Owain but de Grey's intent was to use force and push Owain further into open revolt.

After being proclaimed Prince of Wales by September 1400 Owain's forces had attacked de Grey's stronghold of Ruthin Castle and raided the town of Oswestry. In response Henry IV, who was on his way to invade Scotland, turned his army around and led it into North Wales. Henry and his army was back in Shrewsbury Castle by October however having been harassed the

Welsh using guerrilla tactics. Henry was also not helped by the bad weather.

By 1401 the revolt spread with the whole of central and northern Wales with many going over to Owain. In the south bandit groups calling themselves *Plant Owain* – “the Children of Owain” began to roam the country adding to the multiple attacks on English owned castles, towns and manors in the north.

Henry’s response was to appoint another Henry to do the job. Henry Percy, whose nickname was “Hotspur”. He was appointed to restore order using any means necessary. Perhaps realising that direct conflict would be costly and difficult, in March 1401 Hotspur issued an amnesty to the rebels that covered all except Owain and his cousins, Rhys and Gwilym, sons of Tudor ap Gronw of Penmynydd.

The sons of Tudor needed something valuable to do a swap & save their necks so they decided to capture Conwy Castle (as you do). The mighty fortress of Conwy had a garrison of just fifteen men-at-arms and sixty archers at the time, more than enough to hold the well designed castle.

However the Tudor brothers had even fewer men with just forty in their band. Trickery was what was needed and so they waited until the 1st of April (1401) because this was a Good Friday and a Good Friday meant that all but five of the garrison would be in church. According to Adam of Usk’s *Chronicon* they sent one man as a carpenter to the gate to ask entry to continue his work. Once inside the carpenter attacked the two guards, opened the gates and allowed the rebels in. By the time Hotspur arrived with his one hundred and twenty men-at-arms and three hundred archers he had to grant the cousins their pardon in return for the castle back. Victory!

With neither a pardon nor a desire to give up, Owain would have to wait until June 1401 before *his* first victory which was at Mynydd Hyddgen on Pumlumon (Mynydd means “mountain” in Welsh). While camped at the bottom of the Hyddgen Valley Owain’s four hundred men (although some chronicles claim just one hundred and twenty) were charged down by fifteen hundred English and Flemish settlers and mercenaries from Pembrokeshire. Owain managed to fight back and killed two hundred of them before making prisoners of those that remained.

In response Henry IV’s forces drove from Shrewsbury and Hereford Castle to set up a military camp at the Cistercian Monastery of Strata Florida Abbey. Henry’s forces suspected the monks of pro-Owain loyalties and after being harassed by *Plant Owain* on their journey the army partially destroyed the monastery and executed some of the monks.

Plant Owain forces refused to fight in open battle and after harassing the supply chain the campaign resulted in the English forces retreating back to Hereford Castle (Henry IV was nearly drowned on the way back as the weather turned bad and he was nearly washed away in floods).

In 1402, against Hotspur's advice for continued negotiation, the English parliament issued Penal Laws against Wales. This anti-Welsh legislation was designed to enforce English rule but had the opposite effect as many disaffected Welshmen joined the rebellion. Also in 1402 Owain captured his arch-enemy de Grey and in ransoming him back he managed to ruin the de Grey family forever.

In June 1402 Owain's forces encountered an army which was led by Sir Edmund Mortimer who was the uncle of the Earl of March. The battle at Bryn Glas in central Wales resulted in the capture of Mortimer and Mortimer's army being badly defeated. In contrast to de Grey (who Henry IV originally paid off his ransom before demanding it paid back from de Grey), the ransom requested by Owain was not paid. Mortimer had no wish to languish as a "guest" of Owain (or worse) and so his response was to negotiate an alliance with Owain and marry one of his daughters. This event brought to Owain a considerable ally which could be added to if the Bretons and the French could also come to Wales' aid.

By 1403 the revolt spread to the whole of Wales with many villages also rising to join him. There were reports of Welsh students leaving Oxford University along with many Welsh labourers working in England returning to Wales. One by one English power bases were attacked; Carmarthen, Glamorgan, Gwent, Abergavenny Castle, Usk, Cardiff Castle and Newport Castle. By 1403 (with some French support) Owain's followers launched an attack on Caernarfon Castle which nearly succeeded in capturing the stronghold. The English response came from the then sixteen year old Henry of Monmouth, son of Henry IV and the future King Henry V. Prince Henry attacked and burned Owain's homes at Sycharth and Clydyfrdwy, while in Cheshire Hotspur defected to Owain and challenged his cousin Henry IV for the throne.

Hotspur and Prince Henry met at the Battle of Shrewsbury on the 21st July 1403. It was in this battle that both Prince Henry and Hotspur received arrow shots to the face; while Hotspur did not survive, thanks to piece of medical equipment designed by [John Bradmore](#), a London surgeon to remove the arrow head, Prince Henry did (those who attended the Second Companions Anniversary Banquet will remember seeing the replica arrow head removal tool made by Hector Cole). As a result of his army's defeat and his death, the Hostpur part of the rebellion was over.

In 1404, after capturing the great castles of Harlech and Aberystwyth, Owain held a Cynulliad ("gathering") which was his first Parliament of all Wales. It was held at Machynlleth and it was here that he was crowned Owain IV of Wales. His declarations involved outlining a new Welsh state run on the traditional law of Hywel Dda, a parliament, a separate Welsh church and two new Welsh universities. As a result Owain gained further support both nationally and internationally.

Nationally he was said to have negotiated a "Tripartite Indenture" with the Earl of Northumberland and Edmund Mortimer which would divide England and Wales among the three of them (although some historians disagree whether this tripartite actually happened). More Welsh were flocking to Owain's banner, some English communities that bordered Wales were making their own treaties with the Welsh and old supporters of Richard II were rumoured to be sending money.

Internationally the new Welsh chancellor, Gryffydd Young (and Owain's brother-in-law John Hanmer) went to France and negotiated a treaty that promised more French aid to the Welsh. Immediately a Welsh and Franco-Breton force attacked Kidwelly Castle which added further pressure to the English who were now facing Scottish, Breton and French privateers in and around Wales. In this year the French were also raiding the English coast with Welsh troops on board. In one raid they set fire to Dartmouth and marauded up and down the coast of Devon.

In 1405 with the French now firmly on side the Welsh took the war to the English. At Milford Haven in west Wales the French landed a force of nearly three thousand knights and men-at-arms. Led by Jean de Rieux (Marshal of France) the French (after a setback due to lack of water and the loss of many war horses) met up with Owain's troops and marched on to lay siege to Haverfordwest. Although they failed to take that castle they did go on to retake retook Carmarthen and lay siege to Tenby before marching right across South Wales and invading England. The Franco-Welsh army eventually met Henry IV's army west of Great Witley, ten miles from Worcester. Owain's army was arrayed on the Iron Age hill fort of Woodbury Hill with Henry's army on Abberley Hill. Henry's tactic of maintaining the stand off in order to weaken the Franco-Welsh was to last eight days before both armies withdrew without initiating battle. Many historians consider this to be the high point of French involvement.

By 1406 Charles VI King of France would no longer support Owain as the mood between England and France had shifted to one of peace; therefore by the end of the year most French forces had withdrawn leaving the Welsh forces on their own. Unfortunately for Owain there had been further setbacks when his armies suffered defeats at Usk (the Battle of Pwll Melyn) and Grosmont. As a result of the defeat at Usk, Owain's brother Tudur was now dead and it was said that after the Battle of Pwll Melyn three hundred prisoners were beheaded in front of Usk Castle.

These may have been the lucky ones however for Owain's eldest son Gruffudd was also captured at this battle & would spend six years in the Tower of London before eventually dying there.

Welsh resistance in Anglesey formally ended by the end of the year after English forces from Ireland landing there. Now Prince Henry (Henry of Monmouth) adopted the strategy of economic blockade using the remaining castles still held by the English previously built for the very purpose of blockade by his great-great-grandfather, Edward I.

The following year in 1407 the stranglehold on trade and supply of weapons resulted in thousands of Welshmen being forced to pay communal fines for their part in the revolt. By the end of the Autumn 1407 Owain's castle at Aberystwyth had surrendered and by 1409 Harlech Castle had also surrendered. Also by 1409 Edmund Mortimer had died in battle, Owain's wife, two of their daughters & three of the Mortimer granddaughters were imprisoned in the Tower of London. Like his son Gruffudd all were to die in the tower before the end of 1415.

By 1410 the revolt was nearly all but over. Owain continued to fight on as a guerrilla leader taking his troops and his main supporters for one last deep raid into Shropshire. The raid was a total disaster and many of the main commanders were captured. Rhys Ddu ("Black Rhys") of Cardigan was "...laid on a hurdle and so drawn forth to Tyburn through the City and was there hanged and let down again. His head was smitten off and his body quartered and sent to four towns and his head set on London Bridge." Rhys ap Tudor, along with other rebels, had their heads displayed at the border towns of Shrewsbury and Chester.

But Owain was not down and out just yet. In 1412 he captured Dafydd Gam who was also known as "Crooked David", perhaps because he was a Welsh supporter of King Henry IV. Dafydd Gam was later ransomed but this was the last time that Owain was seen alive. Things had changed though; King Henry IV died in 1413 and his son, Prince Henry, was now King.

Henry V's attitude was a peace-making one and Royal Pardons were offered to all the main leaders. Owain was offered a pardon in 1415 but through negotiations with his son Maredudd but Owain was unwilling to accept it. Indeed, although previously offered one himself in 1416 Maredudd would not accept a Royal Pardon until 1421 which some see as evidence that this was the year of Owain's death.

Although many were pardoned there were long last economic consequences for Wales. Normal trade had all but ceased during the rebellion and in addition many prominent Welsh families were ruined. For example by 1411 Owain's brother-in-law John Hanmer would plead poverty to

escape the fines imposed on him. The Tudor family (who were once powerful in Anglesey and the north east of Wales during the previous century) were also ruined. The third Tudor brother, Maredudd ap Tudor ended up leaving Wales to re-establish the family in London. Maredudd's son Owen would Anglicise himself by taking his grandfather's name as his last name, thus becoming Owen Tudor. It's Owen, by secretly marrying Catherine of Valois, widow of King Henry V of England, who would eventually end up being the paternal grandfather of King Henry VII of England, the great-grandfather of King Henry VIII and the great-great-grandfather of Elizabeth I.

So although never captured or betrayed, nor gaining the future he wanted for his countrymen and his ancestors, Owain Glyndŵr and his rebellion did help plant the seeds of the Tudor dynasty and a whole new chapter in later British history ...

Game No. 13 – Based on the Battle at Mynydd Hyddgen in 1401

The Story

It is June 1401 and while camped at the bottom of the Hyddgen Valley, Owain's four hundred men are charged down by fifteen hundred English & Flemish settlers and mercenaries from Pembrokeshire.

The Setup

A two foot by four foot target is set on a pole that is five feet from the ground. Shooting lines are marked at 40 paces, 30 paces and 20 paces from the target. The initial rules of the game are simple. The game represents a series of charges and retreats by the Pembrokeshire force. With each charge and retreat all archers get six arrows to get just one arrow in the target. Failure to get an arrow in the target in a charge or a retreat means that archer is out of the game.

The game starts with all archers on the 40 pace line. All archers are allowed 2 arrows to shoot at the target. When all archers have shot they are all moved forward to the 30 pace line and are allowed another 2 arrows. Finally all archers are moved to the 20 pace line and allowed their last 2 arrows. The target is inspected and any archer who failed to get at least one arrow in the target is considered "killed" and is out of the game.

After collecting arrows the forces are retreating and so the game then starts from the 20 pace

line. The archers are allowed to shoot their first 2 arrows. Then the archers are moved to the 30 pace line and allowed another 2 arrows before finally moving to the 40 pace line for the last 2 arrows. Again any archer who does not get at least one arrow in the target is out of the game. The whole process is then repeated.

In addition a balloon is pinned to the hay bale backstop some way from the original target. At any point if this balloon is popped by an arrow then this represents the immediate rout of that wave of the attack. All archers remaining in the game, whether they have hit the target or not in that round are allowed to collect their arrows and return to the 40 pace line to begin the round again with an initial charge from the Pembrokeshire forces.

The game continues until there are only two archers left. The final two archers will then shoot one arrow each in turn from the 30 pace line at the target until one archer misses. The winning archer's retinue wins the maximum number of points.

Outlaw No. 14 – Robert Stafford – Era: 1416 - 1429

*Beholde wele frere Tuke
Howe he dothe his bowe pluke.
Yeld yow, syrs to the sheriff,
Or ells shall your bows clyffe,
Nowe we be bownden alle in same,
Frere Tucke this in no game.*

The first surviving *literary* account of Friar Tuck first appeared in an early play called "Robyn Hod and the Shryff off Notyngham" and is dated to 1475 (written on some household accounts dated May to August 1475). Prior to that the Robin Hood ballads hadn't mentioned Friar Tuck by name at all with his only appearance in a very late ballad called "Robin Hood and the Curtal Friar". In this ballad the Friar's name isn't mentioned at all, although quite obviously it's an early version of the familiar Tuck. The Friar Tuck we're familiar with today is typically a fat tonsured monk from Fountains Abbey, cheerful, jolly & fun-loving with a great love of food and ale (although Fountain Dale near Blidworth, Nottinghamshire also claims to have been Friar Tuck's home).

So what has Friar Tuck and Robert Stafford (or sometimes called Richard Stafford) got in

common? Well, Robert Stafford was an outlaw who went by the alias of Friar Tuck as early as 1416. So was Stafford using the alias Friar Tuck in the same way that other outlaws had used the alias Robin Hood? The evidence seems to say “no”.

Records show that a commission was issued to Thomas Conoys, Thomas Popynges and John Pelham to arrest a man using the alias “Frere Tuck” and “other evil doers of his retinue who have committed divers murders, homicides, and depredations etc. ...in the counties of Surrey and Sussex and bring them before the King and Council.” Perhaps more importantly there’s a later commission given to William Lasynghley and Robert Hull “To enquire into the report that a certain person assuming the unusual name of Frere Tuck and other evil doers, have entered parks, warrens and chases of divers lieges of the king in the counties of Surrey and Sussex and divers times; hunted therein and carried off deer, hares, rabbits, pheasants and partridges, burned the houses and lodges for the keeping of the parks and threatened the keepers.”

The important part here is that unlike the alias of Robin Hood (and it’s various spellings), used as a short hand for many an outlaw since the 13th century, by the early 15th century the name “Frere Tuck” was deemed “unusual”. As the record predates the first ballad many historians have come to the conclusion that the *character* of Friar Tuck was partly based on the real life outlaw Robert Stafford’s alias of Friar Tuck.

So what happened to him and was he like the fat jolly friar we know so well? Sadly, beyond the few records little is actually known. It does appear that he and his gang were never caught and remained at large for twelve long years. A pardon was issued in November 1429 for current misdeeds and those committed under the reign of Henry V, but what ever happened to him after that no-one knows. Perhaps it’s best not to know about the real Robert Stafford as he may not have been as jolly and fat as the character he purportedly helped create. All that we do know is that by the end of the 15th century the exploits of “Frere Tuck” had started to become a stable part of the Robin Hood legends.

Game No. 14 – Based on the Character of Friar Tuck

The Story

The meeting between Robin Hood and Friar Tuck as depicted in the earliest ballad of “Robin Hood and the Curtal Friar”. The ballad went along the lines of Robin saying that there was no match to Little John within a hundred miles. To this Will Scadlock (Scarlet) tells him that there’s a friar from Fountains Abbey who is a match for John. Robin decided to find him and so sets out.

He eventually finds a monk by a riverside and forces him to carry him over. Half way across though the friar throws him in the river and a battle ensues. They fight on until Robin asks a favour; to let him blow on his horn. The friar agrees and so after sounding the horn all the Merry Men appear. The friar also asks a favour which Robin grants; to let him whistle. When Robin agrees, many fierce dogs appear who are loyal to the friar. Robin good humouredly then refuses further combat and invites the friar to join his band.

This week's game is taken from the fifty year old children's book "Robin Hood and His Merry Foresters" by S.C. Johnson (printed by Foulsham's Boy and Girl Fiction Library & produced in complete conformity with the authorised Book Production War Economy Standard!) The story further expands the meeting between Robin Hood and Friar Tuck;

"In a few minutes, the two had crossed [the river] and, having borrowed a bow and some arrows from one of the men in green, Friar Tuck proceeded to perform some marvellous shots. With the tip of an arrow he could smash a bird's egg when thrown into the air, even though he was nearly a hundred yards away, and he had trained one of his dogs to stand still, with a stone poised on its head, while he shot the stone away, much as William Tell is reputed to have dealt with an apple."

The Setup

The coyote target is set up as our substitute dog and a shooting line is set 20 paces from the target. On the dog's head is placed a "rock". The aim of the game is to see how many times the rock can be shot off the dogs head. Each retinue is allowed three arrows per archer to shoot at the dog.

The retinue lines up in a row and the first archer in the queue is allowed to shoot one arrow. If the archer hits the rock the hit is noted and the rock placed back on the dog. Whether the archer hits or misses he/she must then leave the line and go to the back of the queue to allow the next archer to shoot.

When everyone has shot all three of their arrows the next retinue has their turn.

Arrows shot into the dog will also be noted along with the number of rocks knocked off. In the event of tie between the number of rocks knocked off the dog's head, the number of dogs shot dead will be taken into account.

The team with the most number of rocks and least number of dog's deaths are the winner!

Outlaw No. 15 – Jack Cade – Era: 1450

"For our enemies shall fall before us, inspired with the spirit of putting down kings and princes."

Jack Cade,

act IV scene ii from William Shakespeare's Henry VI, Part 2

"The first thing we do, let's kill all the lawyers." - Dick the butcher,

act IV scene ii from William Shakespeare's Henry VI, Part 2

Jack Cade was the name of the leader of a 1450 revolt that occurred during the reign of Henry VI. The revolt, which started in Kent, ended in London after Jack Cade's followers trashed and looted parts of the city much to the chagrin of the once supportive citizens. So who was Jack Cade?

Jack was a common nickname for John and some believe his real name was either John Aylmer or John Mortimer. There's some reference made to the possibility he was related to Richard, Duke of York and others that say there's the possibility the he was an Irishman who settled in Kent after fighting in France. But the name Jack was so common it actually became slang for "man" (found in phrases such as Jack-of-all-trades) and Cade could quite possibly just have been his real name with some believing that the connections to the Duke of York just helped spice up the story. Who the man really was is open to debate but either way the name of Jack Cade would eventually be immortalised in the Kent rebellion named after him "Jack Cade's Rebellion" and of course in William Shakespeare's play "Henry VI".

The uprising's roots lay firmly in the policies of Henry VI. The wars with France as part of the Hundred Years War (named long after the conflict ended by the way) resulted in heavy taxation, corruption and what was perceived as poor leadership from the King. The rebels requests were simple; they wanted the removal of certain councillors, the return of royal estates and an improved method of taxation; therefore to this end they first issued a manifesto of their grievances called The Complaint of the Poor Commons of Kent (spring 1450). The rebel's members mostly consisted of land owning commoners however there were more notable landowners who were also part of the uprising. These included the clerks of Dallington and Wartling, the Prior of St, Pancras in Lewes and the rector of Mayfield among others. So, although

on the face of it this looked like a repeat of the Peasants Revolt of 1381, it wasn't.

The government's response to the rebels was to send troops to disperse the Kentish protesters under the command of Sir Humphrey Stafford. He and his troops met the protesters at Sevenoaks on the 18th June 1450 and a battle ensued which resulted in the rebel's victory. Bolstered by their success (some sources say it was after this battle that Jack Cade became the undisputed leader) Cade's rebels moved on towards London where King Henry VI, deciding that discretion was the better part of valour, retired to Kenilworth leaving a number of men to defend the tower.

Cade's rebels advanced to the borough of Southwark on the south side of the river Thames and looked north across London Bridge towards the heart of the city. The London citizens were in sympathy with the rebel's demands and so the gateway across London Bridge was opened and Cade's men were allowed to enter the city. The rebels then spent the day attacking, but significantly failing, to take the Tower of London before crossing back over London Bridge to Southwark to camp for the night.

Possibly due to lack of siege engines and so with the Tower now off limits the second day the rebels turned their attention to the people they saw as the main culprits in instigating the current situation. Lord Say, the treasurer and Cromer, the sheriff of Kent among others were brought to the Guildhall for what has been described as a sham trial. Afterwards they and several other of the King's favourites were beheaded at Cheapside and their heads set on poles facing each other as if kissing.

With some of the main culprits now gone and their aims partly complete it was from this point on, contrary to Cade's promises, that the rebels including Cade himself started to plunder and loot London. Obviously not best pleased with having their homes and businesses robbed the citizens of London had a change of heart and joined forces with Lord Scales to resist their next re-entry to London over London Bridge.

London Bridge and what the rebels faced in the summer of 1450 is now perhaps worth a mention. There'd been a bridge across the Thames during Roman times but during the Anglo-Saxon period the river was a natural border between the kingdoms of Wessex and Mercier and so the old Roman bridge had fallen into disuse and had been washed away. But with the evolving importance of London again a new wooden Saxon bridge was erected in the 10th century. In the summer of 1450 the current bridge was one that had been rebuilt in stone from 1176 to 1209, just in time for the then king of England, King John who was always in need of cash, to license the building of houses on it.

Although the bridge itself was about 26 feet (8 m) wide, the buildings on the bridge took up about 7 feet (2 m) on each side of the street with some of these buildings towering up to seven stories high and some projecting another seven feet out over the river (it was said to take up to an hour to cross the bridge during busy times). On the south end, the Southwark end, the bridge and therefore London were protected by a gate house and drawbridge called the Stone Gateway. And over this gate, dipped in tar to preserve them from the weather, in a practice that is said to have started with the head of William Wallace in 1305 there would have been set on poles the severed heads of traitors.

With the citizens of London refusing entry back across London Bridge this resulted in a battle on London Bridge itself which lasted from ten in the evening until eight the next morning and led to the destruction of some of the houses. However the fight resulted in heavy casualties for the rebels and was a turning point for the rebellion.

With the casualties came stalemate and it was then that Archbishop John Kemp the Lord Chancellor managed to persuade Jack Cade to call off the rebels in return for official pardons and promises to fulfil the demands of their manifesto. Many of the rebels took this chance to slip away, however neither the King nor parliament had agreed to the pardons and so none of them were legally binding. King Henry VI demanded Cade's arrest and about a week after the events in London the new Sheriff of Kent, Alexander Iden, pursued Cade until he was caught on the 12th July 1450 at a little hamlet near Heathfield in Sussex. Here Jack Cade was mortally injured and he died on his way back to London. Although dead, justice had to be done and so Cade's corpse was hung, drawn, and quartered, and his head placed on a pole on London Bridge over the very gate he and his men had fought to get through some weeks before.

Although some of the other rebels were executed as traitors it was probably due to King Henry VI's unstable grip on power that led to a lot of the ringleaders escaping unpunished. The list of those eventually pardoned shows the presence of one knight, two MPs and eighteen squires, which if you're in need of winning friends rather than making enemies, as Henry VI needed to do, also goes some way as to explain why a policy of clemency was used.

In real terms the rebellion failed to achieve any of its aims and instead the real or alleged burdens, abuses of power & unfair taxes would continue long after the reign of Henry VI and long after Jack Cade's rotting head had been taken down, or fallen down, from Stone Gateway.

Game Number 15 – Based on the Jack Cade Rebellion of 1450 and the Battle on London Bridge

The Story

It's the summer of 1450 and after looting parts of London Jack Cade's rebels have been barred access from Southwark back across London Bridge into the city. A battle ensues on the bridge which lasts from 10pm to 8am the next morning. This replicates an attack on Stone Gateway, the bridge gate on the Southwark side of the river Thames.

The Setup

In this game the hay bale backstops will act as the Stone Gateway with a number of zones marked out that gain the teams either positive or negative game points. The teams must clout shoot their way to victory. The set up will be as per the following diagram;

In front of the hay bales (here after the hay bales will be called Stone Gateway) is Jack Cade and the rebels. Shots into this area incur -1 game point penalty per arrow. Shots into the FITA target (which will be laid flat) incurs a -10 penalty as this target represent Jack Cade himself.

Any arrows that land on top of Stone Gateway gain +4 game points as this is where the main defenders would be stationed (plus the zone is harder to hit). The next closest zone behind Stone Gateway gains +2 game points and the next after that +1 game points. Any arrows that land wide of these areas have landed in the Thames and do not score. Any hits on the flat FITA targets gain +5 game points as these represent the captains of the bridge defenders.

The game is played over three rounds with each archer getting 6 arrows per round to drop & score as many points as possible. The team with the highest number of points wins.

Outlaw No. 16 - Piers Venables – Era: 1439

Piers Venables gets our final spot on the medieval outlaw list due to the fact that although little is known about him or his outlaw career he was perhaps one of the first to be compared to the Robin Hood of the ballads heard by his historical contemporaries. The alias of Robin Hood had

long been a popular short hand for any outlaw, usually if their name was unknown (a sort of “John Doe” for wrongdoers), but it’s Piers’ *actions* that gained him this comparison.

As mentioned, nothing if anything is known about Piers beyond what the very brief records show of him. We know that he was from Aston, Derbyshire and we know that he had been a fugitive ever since he had taken part in the rescue of a prisoner who was being taken to Tutbury Castle.

Tutbury Castle was originally a Norman castle built in 1071, destroyed by Henry II in 1174, rebuilt, damaged by the then Prince Edward (future Edward I) in 1263 (The Second Barons War) before being given to the future Earls and Dukes of Lancaster. The castle would later in the 16th century become a prison for Mary Queen of Scots at a time when the place would be recorded as being in a poor state of repair.

Holding a person prisoner in during the medieval period wasn’t considered a punishment in itself. It was merely that the person was held until justice was decided and the real punishment could be administered. Although a concern for some it did not matter if it took days, months or years for a person’s case to be heard.

What the conditions were like for a prisoner in Tutbury Castle in 1439 we can only guess at, but no doubt the person Piers rescued was suitably indebted, especially if the eventual punishment was to be death. The rescue itself was not recorded and we can only speculate at the details. It’s been suggested that this particular rescue and the idea of rescue itself has been incorporated into more than one subsequent ballad. [Robin Hood and the Monk](#) circa 1450 one of the earliest recorded Robin Hood ballads, features a rescue of Robin Hood by Little John. Here John uses trickery rather than force per se, in a way not totally dissimilar from other ballads featuring other fictional outlaws such as Adam Bell, Clym of the Cloughe and Wyllyam of Cloudelee. But most likely in Piers case an ambush was sprung on the guards travelling the road to Tutbury Castle.

The petition against Piers Venables went as follows:

“And after that tyme, [the rescue] the same Piers Venables, having no liflode ne sufficeaunte goodes, gadered and assembled unto him many misdoers, beyng of his clothinge, and in manere of insurrection, wente into the wodes in that country, lit it hadde be Robyn Hode and his maynee”.

The phrase “beyng of his clothing” could suggest that the men came from the same social scale. Equally though it could mean they dressed similarly in the manner of a uniform or “gang colours”.

Robin Hood of course traditionally wore Lincoln Green, itself a cloth made in Lincoln which came in various grades of which three types. Scarlet (which did not mean it was the colour scarlet), greyne (which may have been linguistically warped from “greyne/grain” to “green” – although the cloth may or may not have been dyed green later in the process) and gray (which does not mean it was the colour gray, but was again was the grade of cloth).

Piers was perhaps the first in a long line of future outlaws the likes of which include Ned Kelly and Billy the Kid, to have this comparison with the folkloric medieval outlaw. Although definition fluctuates to when the medieval period begins and where it ends, Piers was perhaps also the last medieval “Robin Hood” too. By the 16th century outlawry no longer had the same populist support that it once did and the forests and green woods would be soon be enclosed and deforested for the benefit of raising of sheep. It’s the highwayman, the mounted robber, the “knights of the road” who would later replace the romantic ideas and sense of justice in the later populace that was once reserved for the medieval outlaw.

So although little or nothing is known about Piers Venables he’s our last medieval outlaw because, at least for the purpose of this article, he’s our last medieval outlaw.

Game Number 16—Outlaws and Posses 1439

The Story

Piers Venables has escaped into the green wood. The sheriff enacted a [Posse Comitatus](#) (which first appeared in English common law in 1411) or sheriff’s posse, the common-law authority of the county sheriff to conscript any able-bodied male to assist him pursuing and arresting a felon. The posse and the outlaws have met within effective bow range, a battle ensues.

The Setup

The available archers are divided into two teams; the outlaws and the posse. The posse will consist of two teams who will work together while the remaining team will act as the outlaws.

How this is decided can be worked out on the day, however if the posse win, the available Retinue Points will be divided equally between the two teams. If the outlaws win they gain all of the points. Therefore the posse may well have a numerical advantage but will gain less of a reward.

Both game teams, the posse and the outlaws will have the following;

A pole with a flag.

A rope that's not more than ten paces long.

A target stand.

A practice boss.

The game starts by placing each team pole at opposite end of the field. Each teams stand and boss will also be set up in front of their poles. Each round of the game consists of a movement phase where both teams get to move their flagpoles and a shooting phase where each team gets to either clout shoot or directly shoot at their opponent.

The game starts with the nominated captains simultaneously picking up their flag pole and walking or pacing in any direction up to, but not more than twenty five paces. The captains have 1 minute to complete the movement phase which, if the move has not been completed in time means the pole must be planted where ever they are standing when the time runs out. The ropes, which are attached to the flag poles, are laid out facing the opposite team. This rope initially acts as the shooting line. Starting with the outlaws, the posse must all move behind the outlaws shooting line and the outlaws then have six arrows per archer to clout shoot or shoot directly at the posse's targets. When the shooting is complete all archers move over to the posse's shooting line and the posse shoot back at the outlaws target(s). Once the shooting phase is over both teams score up.

For each arrow that hits the boss the outlaws score one point. For each arrow that's within the zone created by sweeping the rope around the flag pole the team scores one point. Once the scoring is complete the movement phase is repeated. As the outlaws shot first in the last round the posse shoot first in this round. Again the arrows are scored and then the outlaws get their chance to shoot.

Additional rules;

Teams must not place their targets in a position whereby archers are considered likely to shoot outside the field i.e. right up against a hedge. If they do this the Target Archery Marshal will move the targets further into the middle of the field.

Teams are free to place their targets near hay bales.

If an arrow is lodged in a hay bale and the rope that's attached to a flag pole can touch it that arrow has scored.

Arrows cannot be counted twice i.e. one point for being in the boss, another point for being within the clout shooting zone.

For each 40 points scored on a team they lose one of their 6 arrows e.g. if the outlaws have collectively scored 84 points against the posse the posse have only 4 arrows to shoot per round (84 divided by 40 = 2).

The game continues for up to 60 minutes. The team that reduces their opponent to 0 arrows (240 points) or, if the time limit runs out, the team with the highest score wins. The winning team either receives all the Retinue Points (if they are the outlaws) or divides the Retinue Points up (if they are the posse).

Conclusion

So, on our journey we've covered sixteen medieval outlaws over a four hundred year period of which only one can be said is totally lost in myth, and that's our most famous outlaw "Robin Hood".

Three were real but had whopping great mythical elements added to their stories; that's Hereward the Wake, Fulk Fitzwarin and Eustace the Monk. The remaining dozen outlaw's exploits were mainly recorded in the perhaps slightly more reliable court records.

It's perhaps worth noting that out of the sixteen only three outlaws were executed or killed. In this small group we have Eustace the Monk, William Wallace and Jack Cade who all met an early death. But even then William Wallace and Eustace the Monk might better be described as casualties of war rather than as outlaws executed solely because of their "criminal" activities. Also technically Jack Cade had died before he got anywhere near the executioner, thanks to (if that's the right phrase to use) the handiwork of the Sheriff of Kent, Alexander Iden.

The rest of our outlaws managed to either totally evade justice, were pardoned, were set free after their trail or just disappeared so the conclusion might well have been that medieval actually crime paid. But that conclusion would of course fail to account for the number of “lesser” medieval outlaws who were caught, tried and executed without leaving a trace beyond their names in the court rolls.

Nearly all of the outlaws featured in this article would not have got on quite so well if it not for one common element; popular sympathy. Adam the Leper is perhaps the most notable exception but for many of our outlaws popular sympathy seems to have been a major factor in keeping them free from the law. Of course there are also the “patriotic outlaws” of Owain Glyndŵr, William Wallace and to much lesser degree William of Cassingham who take the idea of popular sympathy to a higher level when faced with a perceived national threat. But what of the others?

The rich and the powerful might have been (and might always continue to be) resented but it was very often during the medieval period those who “owned” the law rather than land per se that would raise the hackles of your average medieval dweller. Therefore even your noble outlaw might gain respect and support from the whole spectrum of society, rich & poor, landed and landless, if they were seen as fighting against the corrupt or unjust. Perhaps no one outlaw epitomises this more (other than Robin Hood of course) than Eustace Folville, who’s support when viewed out of context of the 14th century political atmosphere seems rather puzzling to our modern eyes.

And then of course if you could intimidate or bribe those who didn't have sympathy with your activities...

The foresters state that in the forest there is a lawless band of men which varies in number from 15 to 100. They have put themselves under the leadership of Geoffrey of the Park, a nd a runaway priest or friar whose name is not known, Their stronghold stands at the Ganmow in Inkberrow. They have plundered and burned the neighbouring villages, robbing rich and poor alike. They kill the king’s deer and the villagers’ cattle. At Fepston they burned down a house to create a distraction, while they looted the other houses of the villagers who were putting out the fire. No man is safe from the them. They have murdered the king’s foresters and terrified the local courts and officials. They have bought and bribed, with stolen money, all the people whom they have not frightened and intimidated.

-Court roll, Feckenham, 1280 (From Medieval Times (In Their Own Words) by Robert Hull)

Now as we’re a longbow club I’ve got ask the question about use of the longbow and these

outlaws. Robin Hood is famed for the use of the longbow but who out of the others could be said to have the same martial affinity?

Hereward the Wake was perhaps one such outlaw as recorded when he took a shot at William de Warenne (although the story may be just that, "a story"), and William of Cassingham was almost certainly a bowman having led nearly 500 archers against Prince Louis of France. On the other hand Fulk Fitzwaren was a nobleman who had a lot written about him and even in his myths was never recorded as using a longbow. Equally neither was Eustace the Monk. In fact the majority on our list aren't actually recorded as specifically using a longbow at anytime at all! So much for the longbow, eh?

Fear not though for the bow was such a useful weapon for war and for hunting (which if you're on the run becomes quite useful) and as it's practice was stipulated by law for certain members on our list (of course prior to their outlaw careers) it's harder to imagine them **not** using a longbow. These archer outlaws were namely Adam the Leper, William Beckwith, Robert Stafford, Jack Cade and Piers Venables, all of the right period and social strata to have trained with a bow. We must also remember Roger Godberd is our winner of the *Most Likely To Be The Real Robin Hood* despite not being recorded as using a longbow.

Those that didn't explicitly use a bow themselves would not implausibly have had followers who did. Certainly Owain Glyndŵr with the majority of Wales at his back would have had archers and even Eustace the Monk probably would've too.

So in conclusion it's highly likely the longbow would've been involved in most of our outlaws' careers, even if they weren't particularly famed themselves for using the weapon. And probably it's the tendency for many an outlaw to use a longbow that in the end is another reason why in the myths the embodiment of the medieval outlaw, Robin Hood, always used one. Now... that's definitely the last time I'm mentioning Robin Hood.

Further Reading

The following lists are books which were used when writing this article. I normally don't produce footnoted sources because I'm incredibly lazy and I like to make stuff up (only joking... well not about being lazy...) If there's a direct quote I do try to put the source straight in, however if there's something you're specifically interested in or want to know the source of e-mail me at marktustian@hotmail.com and after a couple of weeks of trying to remember where I originally read it I'll point you in the direction of the source.

[The Outlaws of Medieval Legend by Keen, Maurice](#)

[Terry Jones' Medieval Lives by Terry Jones and Alan Ereira](#)

[Life in a Medieval Castle by Gies, Joseph](#)

[Life in a Medieval Village by Gies, Frances; Gies, Joseph](#)

[A Dictionary of Medieval Terms and Phrases by Christopher Coredon](#)

[The Death of Kings: Royal Deaths in Medieval England by Michael Evans](#)

[The Crooked Stick: A History of the Longbow by Hugh David Hewitt Soar](#)

[British History for Dummies \(For Dummies\) by Sean Lang](#)

[Medieval Times \(In Their Own Words\) by Robert Hull](#)

[Medieval Warfare: A History by Keen, Maurice](#)

[The Great Warbow by Robert Hardy and Matthew Strickland](#)

[Castles: England, Scotland, Ireland, Wales by Plantagenet Somerset Fry](#)

[Britain in the Middle Ages: An Archaeological History \(P.S.\) by Francis Pryor](#)

[The Robin Hood Handbook: The Outlaw in History, Myth and Legend by Mike Dixon-Kennedy](#)

[Robin Hood and his Merry Foresters by S.C. Johnson](#)