



## Robin Hood

Between the time that Richard was captured in Austria and returned to England, Robin Hood usually puts in an appearance. First you get all those jolly scenes with Little John and Will Scarlet tricking the Sheriff's men, and Friar Tuck stuffing his face; then it's Robin entering archery contests in disguise and taking First Prize ("Who are you, sirrah, that hath shot so well?") before rescuing whichever poor girl the Sheriff or Sir Guy of Gisborne is due to marry; until at the end you get the Sheriff of Nottingham in cahoots with Prince John, and King Richard coming back in disguise and finding his most

loyal subjects all living in the middle of Sherwood Forest and wearing bad tights. Great stories, and people did tell them in the Middle Ages, but sadly not until a lot later.

There are people with names that might be the basis for "Robin Hood", but none of them seems to have lived as an outlaw robbing innocent travellers in Sherwood Forest, Barnsdale Forest, or any of the other forests that claim to have had Robin Hood in them. Sorry, but you didn't really expect anything else, did you?

## Score: 1-nil to the Pope

John got into an even greater mess with the Church than his father had with Becket (refer to the section "Murder in the Cathedral", earlier in this chapter). The lesson John learned from the Becket business was to make very sure you got the right Archbishop, and as far as he was concerned, that meant not having one foisted on him by the Pope. So when the Pope tried to choose a new Archbishop, John refused to accept him, even though the man the Pope had chosen was actually very good. "All right", said the Pope. "In that case I'm putting England under Interdict". An Interdict is an order barring people from the sacraments of the Church. Think of it as a complete strike by the English Church. No masses, no confessions, no burials, no baptisms, no sins forgiven, no people going to heaven, nothing. For a deeply God-fearing age, this was terrifying. John had to give way and accept the Archbishop.

## Er, I seem to have lost my Empire

Next, it was France. Philip Augustus was scared of Richard, but he wasn't scared of John. The French started attacking John's Angevin and Norman lands, and even the Holy Roman Emperor couldn't help him. Philip beat the Emperor in a huge battle at a place called Bouvines, and the upshot was that

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