

Richard the Lion Heart



A Crusader Shield

There have been many kings of England, but Richard the Lionheart is one of the most famous of them. The name 'Lionheart' was given to him because he was strong and brave and he loved to have adventures. In those days, people thought a lot of kings who fought battles instead of staying at home looking after the people in their country. They wanted a king who would make their country famous, by winning battles.

He is also known as Richard I. He was made king in 1189 - many, many years ago, in what we call the Medieval days.

Although the English people were very fond of Richard, he didn't really live in England for very long. As a boy he had lived in France, and he only came to England for a short while to get some money to pay for the crusades that he wanted to take part in. Wars cost a lot of money.

So Richard left England and went away to fight in the Crusades with many men.

Sadly, things did not go well in England while he was away.

People began to break the rules. Richard had taken lots of money from the people to pay for the crusades and now they were poor. Some people were even starving. Some of the people were unable to find work and so they turned into robbers, stealing from the people.



One of these robbers became famous. His name was Robin hood. He lived in a big forest in the middle of the country, called Sherwood Forest. Robin only robbed the rich lords or bishops and was kind to the common people. They liked him and sang merry songs about him and his three friends, Friar tuck, Little John and Allan-a-Dale.

Soon things in England were very bad and King Richard the Lion-heart decided to come home. He tried to take a short way home, but on the 21st September 1192 he was captured by Leopold, Duke of Austria with whom he had quarrelled at the crusades. He was taken prisoner and shut up in a castle. Then he was taken by the Emperor who locked him in a strong tower. No one knew what had happened to him!

While Richard was locked away, he wrote poems and sang songs as he was mostly a cheerful soul, though he was sad sometimes.

The English people were determined to find their king. When they had done so, they begged the Emperor to let them have Richard back. The Emperor however said he wanted a lot of money before he would set him free. The people so loved Richard, that poor as they were they gave all they could.

At last he came home - but not for long. He was soon off to France to punish the King of France for disturbing the peace in England. There, he was shot by an arrow and died after only having been king for ten years.

Sources:

Little Arthur's History by Maria Callcott, 1835

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Our Island Story: H.E. Marshall,



King Richard I. made Prisoner by the Duke of Austria.