

# HOODED MAN

Volume One: Robin of Loxley

PREVIEW

ANDREW ORTON



## **Hooded Man Volume One**

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# Seven Poor Knights from Acre

written by  
RICHARD CARPENTER

starring MICHAEL PRAED as Robin  
YVES BENEYTON as De Villaret  
and NICKOLAS GRACE as the Sheriff of Nottingham

Transmitted 12<sup>th</sup> May 1984

## Summary

**Which one's this?**

The Knights Templar one.

## **Plot**

The outlaws train two new members, Martin and James, in archery when they are interrupted by a young thief, Siward, running through the forest. He is pursued by seven knights on horseback dressed in mysterious livery: Knights Templar. It seems Siward has stolen their golden crest and they want it back for fear of disgrace from their Order.

The Knights believe Siward is one of Robin's band and attack them, killing James and capturing Much. The Knights later trade words with Gisburne and de Rainault in the village of Bystead; the Sheriff realising that the Knights are intent on killing Robin, something he is happy to let them do.

Siward meanwhile is captured in Nottingham for theft and is brought before de Rainault. The Sheriff finds the crest among his possessions and realises to his amusement that the Templars are intent on killing the outlaws for no reason.

Robin, seeking to exchange Much's life for the crest, realises that Siward stole it. He traces the thief to Leaford Grange where the Sheriff is spending the night. The outlaws break in using Marion's knowledge of her former home and free Siward, stealing the crest as they go.

Robin enters the Templar camp to return the crest; but as he and Much leave for Sherwood the mounted Knights pursue them. However Robin has laid a trap: the outlaws are waiting with ropes to pull the Templars from the horses and they are rounded up and sent on their way. Their crest is melted down for the village tithes.

## In Brief

**Goofs?**

The letterboxed camera masks used to represent the view of the Knights Templar are

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a great idea but they're in completely the wrong aspect ratio for the eyeslit on the helmet exteriors.

Robin's shield changes during his trial by combat with Von Erlichshausen. He uses a shield with a cross pattern embossed on the surface in most of the fight but one close up shows the Templar Knight's flail hitting a studded shield.

### Forest Games

The outlaws shoot arrows at a bag swinging from a tree. Much gets in the way. Marion hits it but Robin hits the string holding it from the tree.

### Fall Guy

Guy roundly makes an idiot of himself when he overdoes his natural bravado in the initial meeting with the Knights Templar. De Rainault thoroughly reprimands him for this.

### Memorable Dialogue

John:           Who are they?  
Marion:        Templars.  
Tuck:           Poor Knights of the Temple of Solomon.  
Will:           Poor? I'd hate to see the good ones.

*Gisburne, on seeing Much.*

Gisburne:     I know that boy! The half-wit! My lord, the half-wit!  
De Rainault:  Which one?  
  
De Rainault:  Come along, Gisburne. It's time we left the brothers to their... devotions.  
Gisburne:     My Lord, I must protest!  
De Rainault:  I'd rather you didn't. Just get back on your horse and stop making an exhibition of yourself.

### Cast Notes

**Simon Rouse** (Siward) made his name with a twenty-year stint in **The Bill** from 1990 onwards, as seasoned DCI (later Superintendent) Jack Meadows, head of the CID. He eventually became the elder statesman of the series, surviving several major character culls, and maintaining a strong sense of leadership in his character. He was the last character seen on screen in the final episode of the series. He'd earlier given what some commentators have described as the greatest performance in the entirety of **Doctor Who** as a man descending into madness in 1982's *Kinda*. In 1981, he'd made an appearance in Richard Carpenter's **Smuggler**.

**Yves Beneyton** (Reynald de Villaret) is a French actor whose English-language work covers **The Professionals**, the BBC's universally-panned historical drama **The Borgias** as Louis XII, **Chariots of Fire**, Granada's defining **Sherlock Holmes** se-

ries (in *The Second Stain*), *The Young Indiana Jones Chronicles*, and the Nick Leeson biopic *Rogue Trader*.

**Duncan Preston**, as Heinrich von Erlichshausen, is one of the most familiar faces on British television due to being part of Victoria Wood's repertory company, appearing in her *As Seen on TV*, *Acorn Antiques*, *Pat and Margaret*, and *dinnerladies*. He also took over the role of the headteacher in Steven Moffat's school sitcom *Chalk*, following his appearance as Billy Homer's Dad in Moffat's *Press Gang*. He's known also for his extensive theatrical work, including the famed 1976 Trevor Nunn version of *Macbeth* with Ian McKellen and Judi Dench. Aside from that, he's done the usual tour of British telly drama: *Secret Army*, *The Professionals*, *Bergerac*, *Casualty*, etc. I'd recommend seeking out his excellent performance as transsexual quiz show host Jeremy / Angela Monkhead in Steve Coogan's anthology series *Coogan's Run* for a taste of how brilliant he can be.

**Pewee Hunt**, as the Fat Merchant, presumably took his stage name from the deceased Dixieland jazz trombonist and bandleader Pee Wee Hunt.

## Discussion

### Where did this come from?

Right, got to try to get through this piece without mentioning *The Da Vinci Code*...

Why the Knights Templar then? What is the fascination with them that would lead to an episode of a 1980s television series being made about a medieval monastic military order which is remembered when other similar orders are forgotten?

In the 1970s the BBC transmitted three documentaries as part of their popular-archeology *Chronicle* strand. *The Lost Treasure of Jerusalem* (1972), *The Priest, the Painter and the Devil* (1974) and *The Shadow of the Templars* (1979) were presented by former television screenwriter Henry Lincoln (he had previously co-created the Brigadier in the BBC's *Doctor Who*). The three documentaries discussed the legacies of the Knights Templar using information found in Latin parchments allegedly discovered in a French church to conclude there was a major Christian treasure located in the Rennes-le-Château area, placed there by the Templars. They're also occasionally unintentionally hilarious ('sometimes when I stand beside this grave I feel the urge to reach down into the earth and shake those mouldering bones back to life!'). Whatever its worth the first documentary created a storm of publicity, ensuring the production of the sequels and bringing the subjects of the Knights Templar and their mystic wisdoms to the fore among the general public.

A book followed, *The Holy Blood and the Holy Grail*, which is distinguished mainly for the interminable dullness with which its major revelations are presented. Essentially the idea was that Jesus fathered a bloodline that eventually married into the Frankish Merovingian royal dynasty while a secret society known as the Priory of Sion, descended from the Knights Templar, watched over this 'Holy Grail'. If all this sounds familiar you've probably read it elsewhere, as it was all appropriated for use in *THAT* book twenty years later. There's a magnificent coda where the authors

of **The Holy Blood and the Holy Grail** sued Dan Brown for nicking their ideas only for the judge to point out that as you can't copyright facts, the only way copyright infringement could be declared would be if the story wasn't true, even though sales of their own book depended on the argument that the story most definitely was true. They lost the case. Didn't think that one through, lads.

Of course the fact that the discovered Latin documents that kicked all this off were transplanted forgeries written in modern French hardly seemed to matter. The only progenitor of a massive conspiracy turned out to be the chap who had created the documents in order to claim some reflected glory for himself as Jesus' last scion. The fad for Templar fiction was on. In the public mind it became a mystery, a puzzle to be unlocked, somehow connected to Jesus or to his wife's secret children or to the bones of God's Uncle Sid or something. Templar fiction became a popular craze in exactly the same way THAT book did two decades on.

The fashion for Templar stories continued into the 1980s and the Knights Templar appeared across the face of fiction wherever dramatic necessity called for mystique, archaic secrets and guardians of a special Christian wisdom. Conspiracy theories were rife, usually drawing in masonic lodges, Illuminati, New World Orders, the Holy Grail, apocalypse prophecies and other trinkets of tedious eschatology. We're in the decade where Troy Kennedy Martin can write his two main opposing antagonists in the BBC's **Edge of Darkness** as modern manifestations of the conflict between Knights Templar and Teutonic Knights and people understand it. Indiana Jones and his dad can go off in search of the Holy Grail and when a mysterious sect of Grail custodians called 'the Knights of the Cruciform Sword' appear, the audience knows exactly what the reference is to. Umberto Eco exploited the public desire for these mythic religious schemes to be genuine, subverting it expertly in his novel **Foucault's Pendulum**. But in essence the fascination isn't with the genuine truth of the order, it's about the mystique and the legend and the stage gear. Knights Templar and their associated mysteries were hot properties.

(And note that the holy water that destroys the creature in the later episode *Cromm Cruac* comes from the Temple of Solomon, with the Templar link being used as an understood shortcut towards the special nature of the water).

In the midst of this arcane mysterium, what's most interesting about **Robin of Sherwood's** discourse on Templarism is that – in a series renowned for its mystical aspects and religious fascination – the mysteries of the Templars were almost irrelevant beyond the basic allure of their presence. The Templars presented here are startlingly down-to-earth and real, presented in the manner that genuine Templar Knights might have existed. Rather than focusing the mystery of the story on some obscure religious enigma it instead revolves around the comparatively pedestrian theft of a bit of gold. True, Christianity had never been the series' main interest – indeed of the three major forms of religion presented (Christianity, Judaism and paganism) Christianity is largely represented by its darker aspects – but the total disregarding of a potential religious storyline is a marked feature of this episode and it stands out from other fiction using the Templars because of it. This clear intent to fly in the face of populism and use the actual historical truth of the order in a swashbuckling adventure

series concerned with mysticism is a brave move on the part of the writer and works fairly well. It has to be said that there's a slight sense of the dilution of the Templar myth, but the general utilisation of the real Knights is an illuminating one in itself.

The plot of *Seven Poor Knights from Acre* transpires from Siward's theft of the Templars' crest from atop their gonfalon. Gonfalons, or banners suspended from crossbars, were important religious items in medieval times, and the devotional carrying of them was considered to be a holy act which would gain God's favour. The Templars' banner was particularly known as the Beau Seant, referred to several times in the episode. The Templars would display the banner in battle and its significance become hugely important as fear of the Templars spread – the Templars were so keen to ensure the banner was seen by their enemies that the Templar leader would select ten Knights to protect the banner. If the leader fell the Commander of the Knights would assume the banner so it continued to fly.

The crest in the episode is based on a genuine Knights Templar tradition: each provincial master of the Knights Templar would hold a seal depicting the symbol and values of that subset of the order. There was a larger great seal held by the Grand Master of the Templars, which the local seals were regional variations of. Seals were generally made for the obvious purpose of sealing documents with wax. What we see in this episode is more of a banner or totemic item used in the Templar rituals and to announce their presence. The seal is clearly made of gold, which shows how the 'poor knights' (by vow) were incredibly rich in practice: indeed they functioned largely as Europe's bankers for much of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries and have been described as the world's first multi-national corporation. As de Rainault says, 'they've come a long way since then.' The seals generally showed some variation of the Templar headquarters at the Dome of the Rock or the Templar symbol of two knights sharing a horse, symbolising their poverty (though in reality the order was forbidden from sharing horses). Some parochial seals had other designs such as the Lamb of God. The version here has the classic symbol with two knights on one horse – incidentally there is no record of this version being used in England, only in France.

However as far as the narrative plot is concerned the Templar crest is a perfect example of what Alfred Hitchcock called a 'MacGuffin' – a meaningless element in a story which exists purely to drive the plot. It's merely a valuable object that several sets of conflicting characters care about and the viewer doesn't – the Templars for their honour, Siward for its financial value, the Sheriff for bedevilment and lustre and Robin to save his brother's life. The fact that it's a crest bears no real meaning. If the object had been a coin or a ring or a necklace or any other vaguely precious object the episode would have unfolded identically. The object exists to bring the characters into conflict and allow the drama to unfold. The history of popular culture is filled with such items but the famous ones – the meaning of Rosebud, the Maltese Falcon, the briefcase in *Pulp Fiction*, R2-D2 – have become culturally meaningful and remembered in themselves.

A very brief moment to consider the title – there are seven poor knights. Richard Carpenter clearly has a partiality for the number seven as he uses it here, in *Robin Hood and the Sorcerer* to describe Wayland's swords and in *The Swords of Wayland*

## Preview – Seven Poor Knights from Acre

as source material for his seven heroes (which we'll discuss under that episode). The number seven is a magical one in much of western culture, and it just seems appropriate to use it here. It's also a fairly important number in Christian theology – Seven Deadly Sins, Seven Virtues, Seven Sorrows of the Virgin Mary, seven sacraments... One feels that Carpenter intuitively understands the cultural power of the number.

Catholicism affects another aspect of the episode too. When one of the Knights Templar dies following the battle with the outlaws his body is cremated on a funeral pyre by his brother Knights. This is an extremely unusual service for a Catholic religious order to carry out in the twelfth century. For most of history Catholic doctrine has been almost exclusively against the idea of cremation, if largely passively rather than actively; discouraged rather than decreed. The reasons for this are legion but most centre around the suggestion that it indicates a denial of the resurrection of the body. There's an added suggestion that by taking on the sacraments of the church the body itself has become a holy thing and should not be misused. Burial was, and remains, the method of choice for the disposal of bodies for members of the Catholic Church.

In practice cremation was used in medieval Christendom but usually only in cases where there were large numbers of bodies which needed to be disposed of quickly to prevent diseases spreading. The common reason for this would be after a major battle or famine. Burning a human body outside of those circumstances would be considered a denial of usual doctrine and be judged extraordinarily atypical, if not tantamount to an ecclesiastical crime. Indeed four hundred years earlier Holy Roman Emperor Charlemagne had made cremation a crime punishable by death. Given that he ruled most of modern day France and Germany and the two Templars we see speaking here are French and German, it seems likely they would have been aware of the general history of the practice.

### Quotes and Translations

There's a fair amount of foreign-language dialogue in this episode with at least five languages spoken by the characters (English, French, German, Latin and Greek, though in reality de Rainault would have spoken Norman-French (or *langues d'oïl*) and de Villaret's native language would have been Occitan (or *langues d'oc*)). I make note of it here for completion. Note that in the same way the English characters speak modern English the Norman characters speak modern French to each other, which further begs the question of why they are speaking English the rest of the time – and they explicitly are, as de Rainault says so in his exchange with de Villaret. Certainly the language of court would have been Norman-French.

The Latin chant that de Villaret intones at the opening of the episode is a section of *Psalm 54*, verses 2 to 4:

2. *Exaudi Deus orationem meam et ne despexeris deprecationem meam*

3. *Intende mihi et exaudi me contristatus sum in exercitatione mea et conturbatus sum*

4. *A voce inimici et a tribulatione peccatoris quoniam declinaverunt*

*in me iniquitatem et in ira molesti erant mihi*  
*Amen*

2. Hear, O God, my prayer, and despise not my supplication:  
3. be attentive to me and hear me. I am grieved in my exercise;  
and am troubled,  
4. at the voice of the enemy, and at the tribulation of the sinner.  
For they have cast iniquities upon me: and in wrath they were  
troublesome to me.  
Amen

There then follows a short benediction to Jesus:

*O Domine Jesu Christe [...] ut vulnera tua sint remedium animae  
meae. Amen.*

O Lord Jesus Christ, thy wounds may be the remedy of my soul.  
Amen.

Which is from a piece entitled **Seven Prayers of St Gregory**, a medieval poem attributed to Pope Gregory the Great (c.540 – 604).

When de Rainault first greets de Villaret in the village, the following conversation takes place:

De Villaret: *Nous sommes des Templiers de retour de la Terre  
Sainte.*

De Rainault: *Veuillez parlex Anglais, chevalier.*

De Villaret: We are Templars returned from the Holy Land.

De Rainault: Please speak English, knight.

And as the knights ride into the village De Villaret and Von Erlichshausen communicate in French, English, and German:

De Villaret *Démontez. Occupez-vous des chevaux.* See to the  
horses!

[...]

De Villaret: *Ce n'est pas lui! Le voleur que nous cherchons n'a  
qu'un oeil. Il était la. Je l'ai vu. Il était avec eux!*

Von Erl.: *Was sollen wir mit diesem Junge tun, komtur? Soll  
ich das kleine Schwein töten?*

De Villaret: *Non, pas encore. Les autres scelerats viendront  
peut-etre le chercher. Il pourrait nous etre utile.*

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Most of which is translated in the script as:

- De Villaret: Dismount. See to the horses. See to the horses!  
[...]
- De Villaret: This is not the one! The thief we seek has only one eye. He was there. I saw him! He was with them!
- Von Erl.: What shall we do with this one, commander? Shall I despatch the little pig?
- De Villaret: No, not yet. Perhaps the other villains will come looking for him. He could be useful then.

During the cremation of the fallen Templar de Villaret says a mass for him. This begins with a French benediction and continues with a section of **Psalm 86**, the Greek **Kyrie** prayer, another section from **Seven Prayers of St Gregory** and **Agnus Dei**, a standard Latin liturgy used in requiem masses since the seventh century. He ends with **Gloria Patri**, a Christian doxology or short hymn to God.

*Nous consignons notre Frere au feu purifiant et assainissant. Il est mort en bataille! Se battant contre les enemis de Jesus Christ! Une morte pleine de gloire, mes Freres!*

*Inclina Domine aurem tuam et exaudi me; quoniam inops et pauper sum ego, custodi animum meum.*

*Kyrie eleison. Christe eleison.*

*Deprecor te ut vulnera tua sint remedium animae meae.*

*Agnue Dei qui tollis peccata mundi dona eis requiem.  
Agnue Dei qui tollis peccata mundi dona eis (requiem) sempiternam.*

*Agnue Dei qui tollis peccata mundi suscipe deprecationem nostram.*

*Agnue Dei qui tollis peccata mundi misere nobis.*

*Agnue Dei qui tollis peccata mundi dona nobis pacem.*

*Gloria Patri Gloria Filio. Gloria et spiritui sancto.*

whose various elements in English are:

We consign our brother to the purifying and cleansing fire. He died in battle! Fighting the enemies of Jesus Christ! A body filled with glory, my brothers!

Bend thine ear O Lord and hearken unto me because I am helpless and unfortunate, protect my soul.

Lord have mercy. Christ have mercy.

I beseech you that thy wounds may bring redemption to my soul.

Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world, grant them rest.

Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world, grant them eternal rest.

Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world, receive our prayer.

Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world have mercy on us.

Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world, grant us peace.

Glory to the Father. Glory to the Son. Glory to the Holy Spirit.

Note also that this text affects the Templar characters' motivations in the episode – it's clear from this that the Templars see the outlaws as the enemies of Jesus even though Tuck is one of their number, thus further elucidating their dislike of Robin and his band. This isn't particularly made clear in any of the English-language dialogue.

Towards the end of the episode, after Robin frees Much, de Villaret mutters:

De Villaret: *Tu paieras pour ca! Tu paieras cher!*

De Villaret: You will pay for that! You will pay dearly!

When Robin faces de Villaret near the climax he says 'evil to him who thinks evil'. This is an English translation of the French phrase '*boni soit qui mal y pense*', and is the motto of the Order of the Garter. It's noticeably anachronistic for the age, apparently a quote from Edward III (1312 – 1377) from an awkward moment when a woman's garter slipped down around her ankle at court to sniggers from the assembled crowd. The phrase appears commonly as part of the Royal Coat of Arms of the United Kingdom, and you'll know it from the front of your passport (it's the bit that looks like it says 'quim' at the top).

### Analysis

An odd episode, this one. As noted the story takes the Knights Templar, strips them of all mythological resonance, and tells a surprisingly historic and straightforward

tale of thievery with them. What the Templars do have here is a lingering sense that they're significantly more dangerous than a standard Norman soldier and thus their threats on Much's life are given more credence and dramatic weight. This is amplified further by the fact that in one of the early scenes James dies.

Martin and James have always felt like very quick replacements for Dickon and Tom, both of whom were killed for dramatic effect and have now essentially been summarily revived only for one of them to be killed again. The two characters are basically lost and replaced with more or less identical duplicates for the sake of the story. It's a touch cynical on behalf of the production as they're not really true characters, they're available cannon fodder. It's not an unknown move in fiction: these barely-created killable non-characters have generally become known culturally as 'redshirts', following the use of red-clothed security guards in the original *Star Trek* who would join the lead characters on away missions and invariably end up dead, because Captain Kirk couldn't.

In the real world there was mistrust of the Knights Templar because of their mysticism and perceived religious otherness. They were often thought to be involved with maleficium, discussed further under the entry for *The Witch of Elsdon*; this partly contributed to the later spread of witchhunts in Europe. Yet the Templars here are a basic military / religious order and only their desperate pursuit of their crest and their fear of the repercussions of its loss appear unusual.

The wide-reach of the Templars is shown by the use of their multiple-nationalities. De Villaret speaks French and Von Erlichshausen speaks German and they say they have returned to England from the Holy Land. The Templars were indeed an international organisation and their various accents add an exotic air to proceedings. Note in particular the look on Much's face when he's brought in front of de Villaret in the village: he's obviously scared of what the Templars will do to him but simultaneously intrigued by their foreign languages. Much probably does not have a great deal of experience of even Norman speech and the Templars must seem a very exotic, powerful proposition to him.

For the first time Robin explains to Will his reasons for keeping Gisburne alive:

Robin: He's more use to us alive.  
Will: What do you mean?  
Robin: Well, the people hate Gisburne and everything he stands for.  
Will: Yeah well, I know that.  
Robin: Well the more he stirs it up the more they'll turn to us. [...]  
Think of it. Spies in every village. Messengers. And not only the villages. There's already people in Nottingham. I mean, that baker and his wife. The potter we helped. There's places to hide, right under the Sheriff's nose.

It's a sagacious approach to looking at Gisburne's presence and it has the added benefit in story terms of explaining why Gisburne continues to be present in the series. Gisburne's position has the additional consequence that the Merries come to know his methods and the way he operates: they're well aware they can handle him. But it shows also that Robin has thought through their position in a way in which Will hasn't – particularly given the later attempts by Will to wrest leadership from Robin. Will operates largely on his emotions and he shows he'd be wholly unsuited to the position of leader; whereas Robin is constantly planning ahead, forging links with the community and making use of their allies. Robin is a political leader and his fight is on many levels.

Robin and Will's combined politic can be compared and contrasted with that of de Rainault and Gisburne respectively in their meeting with de Villaret. Throughout the scene the Sheriff constantly attempts to maintain his noble bearing, not give too much away of his activities and generally present himself as a powerful, dangerous opponent. It's rational, image-based politics of the type we have already seen de Rainault is a master at. Yet his efforts are constantly undermined by Gisburne's own entirely emotional responses to the situation: jumping from his horse to wave a sword pathetically at de Villaret when the latter ignores his orders, getting all excited and shouting when he spots Much tied up in the village and ultimately giving away the information that Robin Hood is wholly at large in the area and that one of Robin's followers was previously the Sheriff's chaplain. Thus he implies without realising that de Rainault has failed in his duty as High Sheriff.

In addition, while Gisburne is getting all pent-up at the initial idea of Templars loose in his jurisdiction de Rainault sees that he can use them to his advantage as they want to capture and kill Robin, an outcome de Rainault also seeks. The foolishness of Gisburne is that he genuinely doesn't understand this, he can't begin to consider that this might be a better, reasoned course of action; his immature approach being a direct result of his deference to emotional responses. As even de Villaret comments, 'who's the clown?' It's interesting to note that by Series Three this begins to change...

In the first few episodes Richard Carpenter gradually covers several of the obvious questions that the viewers would ask on viewing: how would the outlaws survive, how would Marion live with a band of men – and this time it's the question of what nationality the nobility are. De Rainault approaches this with his typically open attitude:

De Rainault: It's a very curious country, Gisburne. Seems to absorb people like a sponge. I mean, what do you think we are: English or Norman?

Gisburne: Norman, my Lord.

De Rainault: Yes... that's what I thought you'd say.

Carpenter references the consuming of other cultures and the Norman invasion and turns it into a character moment showing subtly the difference between the open-minded Sheriff and his blindly-patriotic steward. At the time of the series most

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Normans would probably have considered themselves English. We're 130 years from the Conquest here, five generations. There are hints otherwise in the series: Gisburne's comment, 'Show yourself, you English dogs!' in *Robin Hood and the Sorcerer* is noteworthy but not decisive as the insinuation is very definitely that by 'English' he means 'Saxon'. Old racial tensions still abound though.

Marion again proves her worth to the outlaws here. Her knowledge of the geography of Leaford Grange is the key to the outlaws being able to enter and recover the Templar crest. One feels the writer consciously making an effort to find things for her to do and indeed there's little reason apart from Marion's assistance – and maybe general plot variation – that the Sheriff is staying at Leaford rather than Nottingham. One could argue that the episode suggests Leaford is easier to enter than Nottingham Castle but essentially the use of Leaford Grange is to bring Marion to the fore.

We learn here that Marion's father was Sir Richard of Leaford (he's called Sir Richard at the Lea in *Robin Hood and the Sorcerer*) and that the Abbot Hugo took the Grange and its lands when she was made his ward. This runs mildly counter to *Robin Hood and the Sorcerer* in which Abbot Hugo is apparently planning to send her to Kirklees in order to take her four-hundred acres, though one can perhaps assume that as his ward he had *de facto* if not *de jure* control of them and when she became an outlaw he took them anyway. The suggestion from Tod the Potter that Leaford Grange was 'Sir Richard's old place' does suggest that her father's death is common knowledge and confirms the Sheriff's statement in the earlier story that he was 'killed in Palestine'. His death becomes relevant in Series Two. The outlaws seems surprised at this information though it's not entirely clear why: surely she or Tuck has told them some of her history?

If we're talking about the usefulness of characters there's some lovely comic relief from Mark Ryan and Phil Rose as Nasir tries to silently persuade Tuck to disguise himself as a man-at-arms. Nasir points at Tuck's tunic, telling him to take his hood down and put a helmet on, then indicates he should hoist his habit up to reveal his legs. The scene is genuinely funny and it has the added tension that Gisburne then watches them suspiciously from a distance.

There's an interesting sequence in the script which is cut from the finished programme in which the outlaws place a flower at a shrine to Herne. Later Robin and Marion ponder their future when they hear a nightingale sing.

Marion:       What does he sing about, d'you think?  
Robin:        Nothing. He just sings.  
Marion:       Maybe he's in love.  
Robin:        Maybe he's a she.  
Marion:       Are you in love?  
Robin:        Should I be?

*Robin kisses her. The nightingale stops.*

Marion:       He's stopped.

*After a moment Marion looks away.*

Robin: Marion?  
 Marion: I wonder what will happen to us?  
 Robin: All of us?

*She looks up at him.*

Marion: You and me.  
 Robin: We'll live to be a hundred.  
 Marion: Would you want to?

*Robin shakes his head.*

Robin: The older you get the colder the wind blows.

In the context of the series as a complete piece it's a shame the scene was lost as it contains elements which seem appropriate given Robin's later death in *The Greatest Enemy*. Robin's acute knowledge of his situation extends to the awareness that his life in the forest can't be maintained forever and his crusade is one likely to end in failure. It seems impossible that he could actually topple a corrupt government and therefore it is the fight itself that counts. Robin's statement that he wouldn't want to live to a hundred isn't a comment that he would not enjoy being an old man, it's a clear indication that he believes it will not happen and his youth and struggle for his beliefs is what is important. Nevertheless he attempts to comfort Marion by saying they will be together forever. This understanding of his place in history, of the inevitability of his death, may be the reason he cannot tell Marion he loves her.

The strangest aspect of this cut scene is that it is later referred to in *The Power of Albion* in a sequence left in the programme. When Robert visits Marion at Leaford and she tries to persuade him to take Albion she asks how her friends are enjoying Sherwood again. Then a bird sings at the window and Robert says, 'He must be in love.' Marion smiles, the moment harking back to a conversation she had with Robin years earlier, and forming a link to a conversation we never saw. The scene is present in the novelisation of *Seven Poor Knights from Acre*.

There's some fine direction from Ian Sharp with letterboxed cameras used to represent the helmeted points of view of the Knights Templar. The locations continue to be a hugely impressive visual aspect of the series with the forest looking magnificent and forbidding in Siward's desperate escape through it. Leaford Grange is remarkable – shot in genuine period buildings, seeing Robin and the outlaws sneaking down its narrow steps and constricted corridors is very impressive. More impressive still is the Sheriff's bedchamber which is dressed with plenty of sheets and furs for warmth and looks entirely convincing and accurate when Siward sneaks in during the night. That sequence has a tension all of its own and Siward's plight is very cleverly turned

## Preview – Seven Poor Knights from Acre

into an edge-of-the-seat moment for the viewer by judicious use of lighting and close camera angles. The defining image of the episode though is in the pre-titles sequence: seven white knights slowly trotting through the dark forest as Siward watches on.

The episode overall is an exciting adventure story, if fairly straightforward and without any deep meaning or subtext. Much acts as a damsel in distress, a role which suits him, and the search for the MacGuffin leads to several interesting runarounds and fight sequences. The entourage of Templars is very well-realised and their exoticness courses through the programme. It has to be said that once again Nickolas Grace steals the show with his scheming and cruel antics which are nevertheless great fun to watch.

### Observations

- James is killed by a Templar lance.
- The Templars are returning to the preceptory in Lincoln having recently returned from the Holy Land. As Tuck comments, they indiscriminately killed Saracens and Jews there in defence of Christ.
- Robin has known Much since Much was born implying he hadn't been when the early scenes of *Robin Hood and the Sorcerer* are set. This more or less tallies with their respective ages: Robin as 22 and Much as 17 would mean they were five years apart, the age Robin was when he was left at the mill by Ailric.
- Marion was born and grew up in Leaford Grange, the home of her father, Sir Richard.

### Names will live forever

**Acre** (usually pronounced Akko or Akka) is a sea-port city currently in Israel. At the time of the series it had recently (in 1191) been recaptured by Richard I and his Crusader allies from Saladin, who conquered it in 1187. After the Crusaders recovered it, it became the capital of the Kingdom of Jerusalem. As a significantly wealthy trading port it was a valuable asset to both Christian and Muslim combatants. Following the fall of Jerusalem to the Muslims in 1187 the Templar Knights retreated to Antioch and eventually to Acre. They settled there for a century until the Siege of Acre in 1291 and the ultimate destruction of the city; a few short years before the Crusaders were entirely ejected from the Levant.

One can have great fun running around killing Templars in a contemporary version of the city in the computer game **Assassin's Creed** if one is so inclined.

**Siward** is a Norse-derived name. He's probably named after Siward, Earl of Northumbria and overlord of most of Northern England in the mid-eleventh century. He came to England with King Cnut and gradually spread his influence across the country. By the 1050s he was encroaching into Scottish territory, facing off against Scottish ruler Mac Bethad mac Findlaích, in the process buying himself a place in Shakespeare's adaptation of that king's story, **Macbeth**, some five hundred years later.

### Grimston, Nottinghamshire

The place Siward says he is from. Now a deserted medieval village, Grimston was a village under the auspices of Rufford Abbey. The village became obsolete thanks to land clearances by the Cistercians. There is another Grimston in Leicestershire about thirteen miles from Nottingham; it is the site of a thirteenth century church. There's also a Grimston near King's Lynn in Norfolk, which may be relevant as Richard Carpenter was born in Norfolk. The fictional Grimston Abbey appears in *The Time of the Wolf*, assuming they're the same place: the novelisations spell the *Seven Poor Knights from Acre* version 'Grimston' and *The Time of the Wolf* version 'Grimstone', but the scripts for both use 'Grimston'.

### Bystead Village

The village where the Templars set up their tents is named in the script and novelisation as Bystead ('little more than a few huts in a forest clearing').

### De Villaret

Rather surprisingly, de Villaret is named not after a genuine Knight Templar but after a family associated heavily with an alternative Christian military order – and the sometime rivals of the Knights Templar – the Knights Hospitaller. The 24th Grand Master of the Knights Hospitaller was Guillaume de Villaret and his nephew Foulques succeeded him, serving in late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries respectively. Brousses-et-Villaret is a commune in Languedoc-Roussillon region in the south of France to this day, where the family originates from. Due to its position in the south of modern-day France the character of Reynald de Villaret's first language would have been Occitan.

### Von Erlichshausen

In comparison Heinrich Von Erlichshausen is named after two Grand Masters of a different Christian military order. In the fifteenth century Konrad von Erlichshausen and his nephew Ludwig von Erlichshausen were the 30th and 31st Grand Masters of the Teutonic Knights (and indeed that order was being formed at almost exactly this point in history, following Templar and Hospitaller ventures in Acre). The family came originally from Ellrichshausen, an area now in south-western Germany.

## Credits

### Foreign Titles

Germany:

*Die Kreuzritter (The Crusaders)*

Czechoslovakia:

*Sedm Chudých Rytířů (Seven Poor Knights)*

## Preview – Seven Poor Knights from Acre

Poland:

*Siedmiu ubogich rycerzy (Seven Poor Knights)*

### Cast in order of appearance:

Siward (Simon Rouse), Reynald De Villaret (Yves Beneyton), Will Scarlet (Ray Winstone), Nasir (Mark Ryan), Robin Hood (Michael Praed), Marion (Judi Trott), Little John (Clive Mantle), Tuck (Phil Rose), Much (Peter Llewellyn Williams), James (Steven Osborne), Martin (Martin West), Heinrich Von Erlichshausen (Duncan Preston), Sheriff of Nottingham (Nickolas Grace), Guy of Gisburne (Robert Addie), Potter (Colin Rix), Fat Merchant (Pewee Hunt)

Series created by Richard Carpenter in Association with Gatetarn Productions

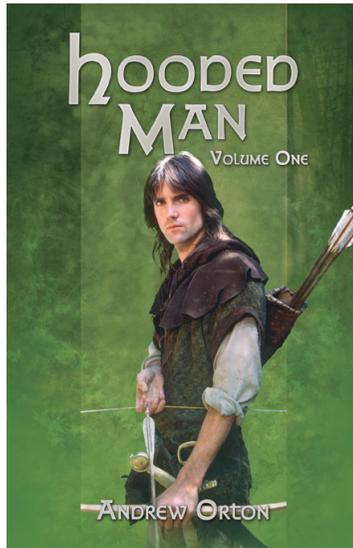
Camera Operator (Roger Pearce), Sound Mixer (Mike Davey), Boom Operator (Gus Lloyd), Assistant Editor (David Holloway), Sound Editors (Jim Roddan, Jonathan Hays), Assistant Sound Editor (Pat Boxshall), Dubbing Mixer (Hugh Strain), Costume Designer (Lynnette Cummin), Make-up Supervisor (Cherry West), Production Manager (Keith Webber), Location Manager (Chris Dando), 1st Assistant Director (Michael Murray), 2nd Assistant Director (John Parris), Continuity (Elaine Matthews), Production Accountant (Dave Aubrey), Production Secretary (Moira Brenard), Producer's Assistant (Julie Baines), Prop Buyer (Peter Smith), Construction Manager (Gordon Brewer), Carpenter (Alan Burnham), Gaffer (Des Coles), Assistant Designer (Derek Nice), Casting Director (Esta Charkham), Casting Assistant (Laura Cairns), Stunt Co-ordinator (Terry Walsh), Horsemaster (Stephen Dent), Titles (Brian Terry Prods.)

Editor (Andrew Findlay), Lighting Cameraman (Bob Edwards), Designed by (John Biggs), Executive Producer (Patrick Dromgoole), Music by (Clannad), Produced by (Paul Knight), Directed by (Ian Sharp)

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