

A Gest of Robin Hood

A “French lunchtime” COIN game



1. Introduction

A Gest of Robin Hood is a board game about the mythical figure of Robin Hood. It adapts the COIN system to depict peasant revolts, feudal tax collection, and outlaw activities in late 12th century Medieval England.

In *A Gest of Robin Hood*, two players take the roles of either: **Robin Hood and the Merry Men**, robbing from the rich to give to the poor; or the **Sheriff of Nottingham**, in charge of maintaining order and collecting taxes for Prince John.

By taking faction specific actions or activating events, players recruit and maneuver forces, influence or control peasants, collect taxes, rob

and achieve their faction's aim. Actions determine turn order and cards provide events. Every 7 turns (a 'Ballad') there is a Royal Inspection followed by a victory check, with the final victory determined after the third Ballad (when King Richard returns from the Crusades).

1.1 Definitions

Shilling: Resources for both factions, spent to take most actions and represented with physical coins. (The coins provided with the game are not meant as a hard limit, so use some other component or real coins if you run out.)

Revealed / Hidden: State of Merry Men (and Robin Hood), symbol up for Revealed, symbol down for Hidden.

Factions: The Sheriff of Nottingham (controlling Henchmen) and Robin Hood (controlling Merry Men).

King Richard's Favour: Red cylinder with yellow lion crest, used to track the relative sympathy of King Richard between Order (Sheriff) and Justice (Robin Hood), which will determine the winner of the game.

2. The Map

The game board shows a map of Nottingham Shire. It is divided into three types of spaces: Parishes, Forests, and Nottingham Castle. Each of the spaces, with the exception of Nottingham Castle, can contain a single Camp for Robin Hood.

2.1 Parishes

The Parishes are large irregular spaces marked with the name of a local town and containing a square box for the Revolting/Submissive token. Each Parish represents a town and its surrounding cultivated area. Parishes can either be Submissive to the Sheriff's authority or Revolting, as represented by the double-sided token in each Parish. Revolting Parishes allow Robin Hood to Recruit Merry Men (7.1), prevents the Sheriff from Confiscating (7.4) and also

make it harder for the Sheriff to Capture Revealed Merry Men (7.3), as the local populace offer active resistance. The number of Revolting Parishes also determines the shift towards Order or Justice during the Royal Inspection Round (8).

2.2 Forests

The Forests are the two irregular green spaces adjacent to Nottingham Castle. They cannot be set to Revolting or Submissive, Confiscated from or targeted with Disperse (7.4). It is also harder for the Sheriff to Reveal Merry Men when Patrolling in Forests (7.3).

2.3 Nottingham Castle

Nottingham Castle is the circular space containing a square Submissive marker (printed onto the map, as it cannot change). The Sheriff's stronghold, where carriages of Wealth and Shillings extorted from the Parishes need to return to. This space is always treated as Submissive when Capturing and Robbing, but it is not a Parish.

2.4 Borders

Spaces can be separated by 2 kinds of border: regular borders (thin black) or rivers (thick blue). Spaces separated by a regular border are adjacent to one another. In the case of a river, the spaces are adjacent only if the border contains a bridge (there are bridges marked on the map between Mansfield/Remston and Tuxford/Newark, and an additional bridge can be added by an event). Ollerton Hill, north of Shire Wood, is impassable.

2.5 Prison

Merry Men (and Robin Hood) are placed in the Prison space when they are Captured. This is not a playable area and Merry Men here cannot take any action or be moved anywhere else unless instructed.

2.6 Roads

Represented by a thick dotted line going from a Parish to another, Roads indicate the path that carriages need to follow to get to Nottingham.

3. Components

3 White and 2 Red pawns: those are used to indicate where you will execute plots (white) and deeds (red) during your turn.

11 Green hexagonal cylinders, embossed on one end: Merry Men, one of which has a special embossed symbol marking it as being Robin Hood. Merry Men can be Revealed (symbol up) or Hidden (symbol down).

Note: Robin Hood counts as a Merry Man for all purposes, unless otherwise noted. The Robin Hood player may secretly check the location of Robin Hood at any time.

5 Green Discs: Robin Hood's Camps (you may place them on the Deer side in Forests to remind you that they grant 1 shilling in Royal Inspection)

18 Blue cubes: Sheriff's Henchmen

6 Carriages: Marked on one side with either 5 Shillings, Wealth and 2 Shillings, or a Trap and 2 Shillings (two of each kind, see below). The other side is identical across all 6 Carriages to keep their contents secret. The Sheriff player may secretly check the contents of each face-down Carriage at any time.

Custom Rob dice: there are 2 custom dice in the game to resolve Rob actions, one (green) for Forests and Revolting Parishes, one (white) for Submissive spaces (including Nottingham Castle).

Red and cylinder with yellow lion crest: serves to track VPs and represents King Richards's favour.

Green and Blue Cylinder with faction symbols: faction cylinders, they serve to mark players' action choices on the initiative track.

Deck of Ballad cards:

- 24 Event cards
- 5 Automatic Event cards (hourglass)
- 3 Royal Inspections cards

Deck of Travelers cards:

- 2 Rich Merchants
- 2 Noble Knights
- 3 Monks
- 3 unique characters: Richard at the Lea, The Potter, Much the Miller's Son
- 2 unique characters added via events: Guy of Gisborne, Bishop of Hereford

Note: The Travelers' deck and discard is always reshuffled during each Royal Inspection. If at any time during a Ballad the deck is empty, reshuffle the discard and form a new deck.

Event token:

- Bridge, placed by event

Faction Mats (1 per faction):

Mats to place Available pieces and reminding players of their respective Plots & Deeds ([see 7.0](#)).

Carriage effects (2 of each kind):

Place Carriages into the 'Used Carriages' box if successfully Robbed or once they reach Nottingham Castle. Each time a Carriage enters Nottingham, shift the VP marker one step towards Order and carry out the additional effect noted below.

Note: multiple carriages can be in the same space. When robbed, Robin Hood must chose one carriage to target.



- **Trap:** has 2 Strength. If a Rob attempt fails, all Merry Men involved go to Prison. If successful, Robin Hood gains 2 Shillings from the bank. If the Carriage gets into Nottingham, the Sheriff gains 2 Shillings from the bank.



- **Wealth:** has 0 Strength. If a Rob attempt succeeds, shift one step towards Justice and Robin Hood gains 2 Shillings from the bank. If the Carriage gets into Nottingham, shift one additional step towards Order (two total) and the Sheriff gains 2 Shillings from the bank.



- **Shillings:** has 0 strength. If a Rob attempt is successful, Robin Hood gets 5 Shillings from the bank. If the Carriage gets into Nottingham, the Sheriff gets 5 Shillings from the bank.

4. The Justice/Order Track

The red cylinder on the Justice/Order Track indicates which player has more influence over the Shire and will get King Richard's favour when he returns from the Crusades.

Each time the rules indicate that a player should shift the track towards Justice or Order, move it the indicated number of spaces in that direction (green Justice for Robin Hood, blue Order for the Sheriff).

5. Setup

Sheriff: 2 Henchmen in Nottingham, 1 in Blythe, 1 in Mansfield, and 1 in Bingham. 13 Henchman and 6 Carriage tokens in Available on the Faction Mat. Take 9 Shillings from the bank.

Robin Hood: 1 Camp in Shire Wood, 3 Merry Men and Robin Hood placed Hidden in any of the following spaces: Shire Wood, Southwell Wood, Remston. 7 Merry Men and 4 Camps in Available on the Faction Mat. Take 5 Shillings from the bank.

Parishes: Remston is Revolting, all others Submissive, marked with a

Revolting/Submissive token on the correct side in each Parish.

Justice/Order Track: +1 Justice, marked with the red Favour cylinder on the track.

Construct the Ballad Deck:

- Shuffle the 24 regular Events and deal out (facedown) three piles of 4 Events each.
- Add 1 random facedown Automatic Event to each pile, then shuffle each pile
- Place another 2 random regular Events facedown on top of each pile (but do not shuffle).
- Place one pile on top of the King Richard Returns card, then place a Royal Inspection on top of that pile, then place a second pile and the second Royal Inspection, then finally the third pile. The completed Ballad deck should now consist of 24 cards total.
- Place the remaining cards back in the box. (what did you expect?)

Construct the Traveller Deck:

- Gather together the 3 Monks, 2 Rich Merchants, 2 Noble Knights, 1 Miller's Son, 1 Potter, and 1 Richard-at-the-Lea cards, and shuffle them together to form the initial Traveller Deck.
- Place Guy of Gisbourne and Bishop of Hereford to one side. They may enter the Traveller Deck if certain event options are chosen during play.

During play, Traveller cards will be drawn and resolved when the Robin Hood player performs the Rob Plot. Each card has two options, and depending on which option is selected and the outcome of the Rob attempt, the card will either be placed in a Traveller discard pile or in the Victims Pile. The Traveller discard pile will be shuffled back into the deck at the end of each Ballad, while cards in the Victims Pile are never shuffled back in (but the number of cards in this pile will be checked if the Queen Eleanor ~#23~ Automatic Event is drawn).

Set Robin Hood to First Eligible and the Sheriff to Second Eligible.



6. Sequence of Play

Begin play by revealing the top card of the Ballad Deck and placing it onto a played cards pile.

Carriage Moves:

Each Event card has a value on its top right corner indicating the number of carriages that the Sheriff **must** move (if possible) to an adjacent space closer to Nottingham along the roads (dotted lines) **before** any player makes an action. A Henchman may move with each Carriage as an escort. As soon as a Carriage enters Nottingham, shift the VP marker one step towards Order and reveal it to gain the bonus ([see 3.0 Components](#)), then the Carriage is placed in 'Used Carriages' until the Royal Inspection. The Sheriff decides which Carriages to move, but must move as many as possible up to the value on the event card.

Event Cards and Automatic Events:

When playing an Event card, first check if it is an Automatic Event (marked with an hourglass symbol). If it is, carry out the event instructions and then draw a new card (neither Faction takes any actions beyond those specified by the Automatic Event).

If it is not an Automatic Event, the two Factions will take a turn each, choosing either to execute a Plot (plus possibly a Deed), the Event (grey events for the Sheriff, white for Robin Hood), or

Pass. At all times one player will be First Eligible, and the other will be Second Eligible. In each Event card round, the First Eligible player is first to choose what they will do, followed by the Second Eligible—whose choices are limited by what the First Eligible player did.

Note: Robin Hood is always the 1st eligible player at game start and at the beginning of every Ballad.

The First Eligible player may play a Single Plot, the Event, conduct a Plot & a Deed, or Pass. The player selects their desired box and places their faction cylinder in the appropriate box on the Initiative Track.

Once the First Eligible player has completed the actions, the Second Eligible player may then choose one of the boxes not containing the First Eligible player's cylinder and conduct the action in the box selected.

Note: Use the provided white and red pawns to indicate all the map spaces where you will execute your plots and deeds.

A player who Passes will take no action after placing their faction cylinder. Instead, they place their cylinder in any available box, and receive 1 Shillings if Robin Hood or the number of Shillings on the selected box if Sheriff.

After the players have completed all of their Plots, Deeds, and Events (or after both players have Passed), adjust cylinders on the Initiative Track with the cylinder in the furthest left box becoming First Eligible.

Note: this initiative track is directly "borrowed" from Stephen Rangazas' brilliant COIN prototype *The British Way*.



Royal Inspection: If playing a Royal Inspection card, no actions are taken and players execute a Royal Inspection Round ([see 8.0 Royal Inspection](#)). When the Royal Inspection is complete, Robin Hood becomes First Eligible and play continues.

7. Plots & Deeds

Each faction has 3 normal actions (Plots) and 3 special actions (Deeds) to choose from when performing Single Plot or Plots & Deeds. If Single Plot is selected, they may perform one Plot in a single space only. If Plots & Deeds is selected, they may perform one Plot in up to 3 spaces, and then perform a Deed. The full details of each Plot and Deed type are described below and on the Faction mats.

Merry Men, Henchmen, and Camps are always placed from Available, and Merry Men are always Hidden when first placed. If there are none of the relevant pieces available to be placed then this Plot may not be taken. If a piece would be replaced but no replacement piece is available, the piece to be replaced may just be removed instead.

Either by Plot or Event, shift one step towards Justice whenever a Camp is placed, and shift one step towards Order whenever a Camp is removed or Robin Hood is **sent to Prison**. Italicised reminder text to this effect is included in each Plot and Deed below, but it should be

considered a general rule unless otherwise noted.

7.1 Robin Hood - Plots

Recruit:

- **Cost:** 1 Shilling per Space
- **Where:** Up to 3 Forests or Revolting Parishes
- **What:** Place one Merry Man, or remove one Merry Man (not Robin Hood) and place a Camp (if none is already present). If there is already a Camp, place 2 Merry Men or Hide all Revealed Merry Men. *(Shift one step towards Justice each time you place a Camp.)*

Sneak:

- **Cost:** 1 Shilling per origin space
- **Where:** Up to 3 origin spaces with Merry Men
- **What:** Move Merry Men from each origin space to any adjacent spaces. If Merry Men enter a Submissive space and Merry Men moving into that space + Henchmen > 3, Reveal them. Otherwise, Hide all moved Merry Men.

Rob:

- **Cost:** 0
- **Where:** Up to 3 spaces with Hidden Merry Men or Robin Hood
- **What:** In each space Reveal any number of Merry Men and choose to target either a Traveller, any one Carriage in that space, or the Sheriff's Treasury if in Nottingham Castle.
If you target a Traveller draw one from the Travellers' Deck. On the bottom right corner you will find a Strength value. If there are two choices on the card, choose one now.
If you target a Carriage flip one in that space. It will have either 0 Strength or 2 Strength (if a Trap).
If you target the Sheriff's Treasury it has 0 Strength.

Then roll the Green Rob Die if in a Revolting Parish or Forest, or the White Rob Die in a Submissive space. The Rob attempt is a success if the number of Merry Men just Revealed + the result of Rob Die roll is greater than the Strength of the target + the number of Henchmen in the space.

EXCEPTION: Always count Robin Hood for Rob attempts, even if already revealed.

If the Rob attempt is a success, resolve the selected Traveller event or revealed Carriage ([see 3.0 Components](#)), or if targeting the Sheriff's Treasury take 2 Shillings from the Sheriff and shift one step towards Justice. Depending on which option was selected, the Traveller card will be placed either in the discard pile or the Victim's Pile.

If the Rob attempt fails, execute the failed Rob text on the Traveller card, or send all Robbing Merry Men to Prison if the target was a Trap Carriage. If any other Carriage or Nottingham was the target, nothing happens. In any case, leave all Revealed Merry Men and Carriages Revealed.

7.2 Robin Hood - Heroic Deeds

Turncoat:

- **Cost:** 1
- **Where:** One Revolting Parish with a Merry Man and a Henchman.
- **What:** Replace one Henchman there with a Merry Man.

Donate:

- **Cost:** 2 Shillings per Parish.
- **Where:** Up to 2 Parishes with at least as many Merry Men as Henchmen.
- **What:** Set each Parish to Revolting.

Swashbuckle:

- **Cost:** 0
- **Where:** One space containing Robin Hood.
- **What (choose one):**
Inspire: Reveal Robin Hood to set the Parish to Revolting, or shift once towards Justice if it is already Revolting.
Escape: Move Robin Hood and up to one other Merry Man to any adjacent spaces, then flip both to Hidden.

7.3 Sheriff - Plots**Hire:**

- **Cost:** 2 Shillings per space.
- **Where:** Up to 3 Parishes or Nottingham.
- **What:**
In Submissive spaces: place 2 Henchmen.
In Nottingham: place 4 Henchmen.
In Revolting Parishes with more Henchmen than Merry Men: set to Submissive.

DESIGN NOTE: Hiring in Revolting Parishes should be considered to involve the recruitment of local militia to restore order (set to Submissive).

Patrol:

- **Cost:** 2 Shillings per destination space.
- **Where:** Up to 3 destination spaces.
- **What:** May move any number of Henchmen from adjacent spaces into destination spaces, then Reveal 1 Merry Man per Henchmen in each space, or 1 Merry Man per 2 Henchmen in Forests. Sheriff's choice which are Revealed.

Capture:

- **Cost:** 0
- **Where:** Up to 3 Spaces with Henchmen.
- **What:** Remove one Revealed piece to Prison (Merry Men) or Available (Camps) per Henchman, or one per two Henchmen in Revolting Parishes. Remove Robin Hood only after other

Revealed Merry Men, and Camps only after all Merry Men (a Camp cannot be removed if any Hidden Merry Men remain in the space). *(Shift once towards Order if Robin Hood is captured and for each Camp removed to Available.)*

7.4 Sheriff - Villainous Deeds**Ride:**

- **Cost:** 0
- **Where:** Nottingham and one destination Parish.
- **What:** Move up to 4 Henchmen from Nottingham to any one Parish (doesn't need to be adjacent).

Confiscate:

- **Cost:** 0
- **Where:** Up to 2 Submissive Parishes with Henchmen.
- **What:** Place one face-down Carriage in each Parish (Sheriff's choice which, from Available). Then, set each Parish to Revolting.

Disperse:

- **Cost:** 3
- **Where:** One Parish with Henchmen.
- **What:** Remove two pieces to Available, even if Hidden, then set the Parish to Revolting. A Camp may only be removed once no Merry Men remain in the space. *(Shift once towards Order if a Camp is removed.)*

8. Royal Inspection

First conduct a Royal Inspection phase by following the sequence below:

- 1 - Move one Carriage one space if possible.
 - 2 - Count the number of Submissive Parishes and shift the victory tracker accordingly:
- 5 to 7 Submissive:** +1 towards Order

3 to 4 Submissive: +1 towards Justice

1 to 2 Submissive +2 towards Justice

0 Submissive: +3 towards Justice

3 - If the victory tracker has now reached the +5 threshold on either side, the game ends, and that player wins. If it is the end of the last Ballad, the player with the victory tracker on their side (+1 or higher) wins the game immediately.

Then if no player has yet won, conduct the Robin Hood, Sheriff, Redeploy, and Reset phases below.

Robin Hood Phase:

4 - Poach: gain one Shilling for each Camp in a Forest (including Ollerton Hill).

5 - May execute a Single Rob Plot, then shuffle the Travellers' deck and the discard pile together to form a new deck.

6 - May Donate in up to two Parishes with at least as many Merry Men as Henchmen, paying 2 Shillings in each to set to Revolting.

7 - If only Robin Hood was in Prison, release him, otherwise, return half (rounded down) of the Merry Men in Prison to Available (Robin Hood chooses which are released).

Sheriff Phase:

8 - Gain a Shilling from each Submissive space.

9 - Remove half Henchmen (rounded down) from Revolting Parishes to Available.

10 - Flip Revolting Parishes with more Henchmen than Merry Men to Submissive.

Redeploy:

11 - Sheriff player must place all Henchmen on the map in Submissive spaces, then return all used Carriages to Available.

12 - Robin Hood player must place all Merry Men on the map in either Parishes with Camps or Forests. Flip all Merry Men to Hidden. If Robin Hood is Available, secretly place him in a Parish with a Camp or a Forest while redeploying.

Reset Phase

Set Robin Hood to first eligible and Sheriff to second. Draw the next Event Card and continue play.

9. Victory

During each Royal Inspection Round, and at the end of the game, there is a victory check phase. The victory conditions are:

First two Royal Inspections: reaching +5 or higher towards Order (Sheriff) or Justice (Robin Hood).

Final Royal Inspection: reaching +1 or higher towards Order (Sheriff) or Justice (Robin Hood).

No ties are possible during the final Royal Inspection. King Richard has returned, and will decide whether to govern Nottinghamshire justly, or whether to restore order.

Bibliography

Hobsbawn, *Bandits*

Neil Smith, *Robin Hood 'Myths & Legends'*

Howard Pyle, *The Merry Adventures of Robin Hood*

Rodney Hilton, *Origins of Robin Hood*

Richard Almond, *The yeomanry of Robin hood*

David Crook, *Robin Hood - Legend and Reality*

Credits

Design: Fred Serval

Development: Joe Dewhurst

Lead Playtester: Chaune

Playtesters: the amazing COIN Discord Server community

Ye ende.

I shall suggest that what matters is that one of England's most popular literary heroes is a man whose most endearing activities to his public were the robbery and killing of landowners, in particular church landowners, and the maintenance of guerilla warfare against established authority represented by the sheriff. A man who would now, of course, be described as a terrorist.