

NAME: *Henry of Blois (c.1096-1171)*

ALIAS: *Bishop of Winchester*

CAREER: The brother of King Stephen, Henry was such a powerful landowner as well as a churchman that he changed the course of the civil war when he switched from Matilda to Stephen.



He never became Archbishop of Canterbury, but the Pope gave him special powers and he was as important as the Archbishop. He supported Henry in the Thomas Becket controversy; he also sometimes supported Thomas because he believed in the Church's liberty. He was a millionaire who left his money to charity.

NAME: *Edmund of Abingdon (c.1174-1240)*

ALIAS: *Archbishop of Canterbury*

CAREER: Edmund was a proper saint, with a hair shirt. He taught at Oxford University till 1222, when he joined Salisbury Cathedral. Henry III liked him and made him Archbishop of Canterbury in 1234.



Edmund's first task was to make peace between Henry III and his barons, partly by sacking Peter des Roches. He was an honorary canon of Merton and was at Merton to sign the Statute of Merton in 1236, but failed to get bastards' rights secured. He died on his way to a council called by the Pope and was buried in France.

NAME: *Peter of Roches (d.1238)*

ALIAS: *Bishop of Winchester*

CAREER: Peter was a firm supporter of King John, who made him Bishop of Winchester, as well as Chief Justiciar (like Prime Minister) and Sheriff of Hampshire.



In the short civil war after John's death, Peter led a royal army at the Battle of Lincoln (1217). He was guardian to John's son, the new king Henry III, and then a top minister. He was sacked by Henry in 1234 so he went on Crusade as consolation. He died shortly after returning to England.

NAME: *John Maunsel (d.1265)*

ALIAS: *Provost of Beverley*

CAREER: John was the illegitimate son of a clergyman. He joined the king's service, working in revenue and supplies. He worked abroad for King Henry III as a soldier and administrator. Back in England, he became one of Henry's top men. There was no civil service salary back then, so the Church paid him instead by making him vicar at Chichester, Wimborne, Beverley, Axminster, Howden, Hooton, Wigan, Ferring, York, etc. Vicars were supposed to live and work in their parish! Henry gave him lands, too. John was worth over £2 million.



NAME: *Stephen Langton (c.1150-1228)*

ALIAS: *Archbishop of Canterbury*

CAREER: Stephen was a lecturer at the University of Paris. In 1206, the Pope got him elected Archbishop of Canterbury. King John didn't want Stephen: he wanted a man he could control.



Langton identified himself with Thomas Becket and the freedom of the Church. John wouldn't let him into England. The Pope excommunicated John and almost closed down the English church. For years. In 1213, Langton came back to an England that was falling apart. John's barons were beginning to rebel. Langton helped them write Magna Carta and got John to sign it.

NAME: *Gilbert the Norman (d.1125)*

ALIAS: *Sheriff of Surrey*

CAREER: Gilbert wasn't a churchman, but he did found a church - Merton Priory. He was a baron of the Exchequer (one of Henry I's top tax men), and was Sheriff of Huntingdonshire, Cambridgeshire and Surrey. He was good friends with the queen, Edith-Matilda. Gilbert spent his free time helping the canons build Merton, and praying, because religion was even more important than collecting taxes.

