



# The Peasants' Revolt. May – June 1381

In 1381 an outbreak of violence threatened to overthrow Richard II and his regency government. This is known as The **Peasants' Revolt** or '**The Great Rising**' or **Tyler's Rebellion**. In June 1381, 20,000 angry rebels took part in a **protest march** on London, demanding to speak to their king Richard II.

The causes of the revolt had been building up over many years. Although it's called the Peasants' Revolt, and the majority of rebels were peasants' there were also people from other areas of society including landowners, freemen, merchants and priests. All of them had reasons to be unhappy about the way the country was being governed.

## 1. **WHY DID THE PEOPLE REBEL? WHAT WERE THE LONG TERM CAUSES?**

### a: **PEASANTS' LIVING CONDITIONS**

Since the Norman Conquest, peasants had lived under **the Feudal System**. They lived a life not much better than slaves!

The **Black Death** changed social life in England, beginning the gradual break down of the Feudal System. The Black Death had caused inequality.

a) At least 40% of the population had died. In some areas of England there was a now a **shortage of workers**.

b) 3000 villages deserted during the Black Death. Surviving peasants from these villages moved and found Lords willing to pay wages for their services. Lords were now in competition with each other for the available workers.

c) However, some villages were untouched by the Black Death and the living conditions of the peasants remained poor.

d) The Church was a supporter of the Feudal System owning 60% of land in England. Therefore as a peasant you were more than likely to have an abbot or bishop as your Lord. Church Lords were harsh and many refused to pay wages or replace workers.

e) Before the Black Death some **towns** had been **granted charters of freedom**. More towns were granted charters after the Black Death as Lords needed money. This had resulted in a better standard of living and more independence for town dwellers (burgesses).

The changes brought about by the Black Death highlighted that the Feudal System was unfair and wrong. Many now demanded an **end to the Feudal System**.

At the same time some lords, particularly churchmen disliked paying wages and complained to Edward III.

- Edward III tried to restrict wages paid by workers by issuing the Ordinance of Labourers (1349) and **Statute of Labourers**. (1351). These failed as workers realised their importance and would not accept a return to pre Black Death conditions. (So did some landowners)
- However this did not stop rumours spreading that the Government still planned to change the law and abolish wages!

## **b: HUNDRED YEARS WAR**

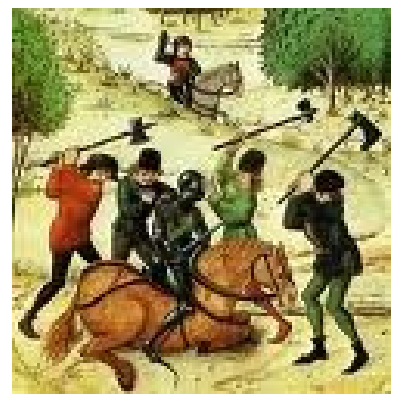
- The Hundred Years War was unpopular with many people. Taxes were being wasted.
- Traders/merchants wanted an end to the war as it was damaging their business.
- Edward III's victory at Crécy 1346 and The Black Prince's at Poitiers 1356 were distant memories. Since 1360 English success had all but disappeared.
- With the death of Edward III, France changed tactics. They invaded the Isle of Wight and attacked ports on the south coast of England. This change of tactics worried many in England.

## **c: PEOPLE'S ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE CHURCH**

- 1) The popularity of the church was declining. 50% of priests and many monks had died of the Black Death. Why if they were God's servants? Had they sinned?
- 2) The Church was desperate to replace the dead priests and offered increased wages. Many men came forward attracted by the money but not interested in doing God's work.
- 3) Many bishops had died. Some bishops did two jobs (pluralism); some bishops were never seen doing their job (absenteeism); some bishops gave jobs to their friends and relatives (nepotism) and some men could buy themselves a job in the Church (simony).
- 4) In the 1370's **John Wycliffe** (a priest) began to criticise the Pope and **the Church**. He said that many clergy (churchmen) failed to live up to the standards expected of them. Wycliffe's followers were known as Lollards. Among them was **John Ball**, a very radical priest who travelled the land preaching sermons on equality and freedom.

All the above led to the Church becoming more unpopular. The fact that The Simon Sudbury the Archbishop of Canterbury was part of the ruling government didn't help matters!

The nobility ignored these grumblings and murmurs of discontent. Their attitude was: "**They're only peasants. What can they do?**" However, they underestimated the strength of feelings.



## Questions on the long term causes of the Revolt (pages 1 & 2)

1) By what other names is the Peasants' Revolt known?

\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_

2) Who was king at the time of the Peasants' Revolt? \_\_\_\_\_

3) In which year did the Peasants' Revolt take place? \_\_\_\_\_

4) Complete the following by filling in the blank spaces.

The \_\_\_\_\_ changed social life in England, beginning the gradual break down of the \_\_\_\_\_.

At least \_\_\_\_\_ of the population had \_\_\_\_\_. In some areas of England there was a now a \_\_\_\_\_ **of** \_\_\_\_\_.

3000 villages were deserted during the Black Death. Surviving peasants from these villages moved and found Lords willing to pay \_\_\_\_\_ for their services. Lords were now in \_\_\_\_\_ with each other for the available workers.

However, some villages were \_\_\_\_\_ by the Black Death and the living conditions of the peasants remained poor.

The Church was a supporter of the Feudal System owning \_\_\_\_\_ of land in England. Therefore as a peasant you were more than likely to have an abbot or bishop as your Lord. Church Lords were \_\_\_\_\_ and many \_\_\_\_\_ to pay wages or replace workers. Before the Black Death some \_\_\_\_\_ had been granted \_\_\_\_\_ **of** \_\_\_\_\_. More towns were granted charters after the Black Death as Lords needed money. This had resulted in a better standard of living and more \_\_\_\_\_ for town dwellers (burgesses).

5) Why did Edward III pass the Statute of Labourers and in what year?

\_\_\_\_\_  
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6) What war were traders complaining about? \_\_\_\_\_

7) Why were traders unhappy about this war?

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8) How had the war changed since the death of Edward III in 1377?

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9) Match up the word with the correct meaning

Nepotism

Buying oneself into the Church

Pluralism

Always being away from your place of work

Simony

Giving jobs to friends and relatives

Abseteeism

Doing more than one job

10) Which Priests criticised the Pope and Church in the 1370's?

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11) What was the name given to his followers? \_\_\_\_\_

12) Which radical priest was a supporter of his? \_\_\_\_\_

13) What was the main theme of this priests sermons? \_\_\_\_\_

14) What position did Simon Sudbury hold? \_\_\_\_\_

15) Why was he unpopular with many people in England? \_\_\_\_\_

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## **2) Short term Causes of the Revolt (What sparked off the revolt?)**

### **a) The Regency and its bad government**

A regency ruled on behalf of the 14 year old Richard II. The regency included **John of Gaunt** (regent), **Simon Sudbury** (Lord Chancellor and Archbishop of Canterbury, who was the figurehead of what many saw as a corrupt Church) and **Sir Robert Hales** (the Lord Treasurer, responsible for the poll tax). Many saw them as corrupt and incompetent (useless) officials, abusing the youth of the King. This was another reason for the uprising:

### **b) Poll taxes of 1377, 1379 & 1380**

Because the war with France was going badly, Richard II's council led by John of Gaunt decided to put more money towards the war. A series of poll taxes followed

- In 1377 a **poll tax** was raised at 4d per person over fifteen. (To pay for war)
- A **second poll tax** followed this in 1379. (To pay for war)
- In November of 1380, the **third poll tax** in four years, at the price of one shilling (12d) per person over the age of 15. This was a huge amount for a hard-working family. Daily wages were around  $\frac{1}{4}$  -  $\frac{1}{2}$ d a day for villeins.
- The idea of the poll tax was that everyone would pay the same amount, regardless of their personal wealth or lack of it

The 1380 poll tax upset **a) Peasants** couldn't afford it, and if they didn't pay it they could have their tools etc seized. **b) traders** were angry at paying a tax for a war they didn't want because it was already losing them money, **c) those** who were already angry with the Church as Archbishop Sudbury was responsible for the poll tax.

### **What happened next?**

- Tax collectors were bribed into **falsifying records**, and many people lied about the number of adults in their household because they could not or would not pay the tax.
- The resulting amount of money collected was, not surprisingly, barely two thirds of what the government expected. Therefore, in the spring of 1381, **Archbishop Sudbury** sent in tax collectors to **collect the outstanding amount**.

### **Questions on short term causes.**

16) Who was the Regent at the beginning of Richard II's reign? \_\_\_\_\_

17) How did many people view the regency? \_\_\_\_\_

18) Why did the regency raise the poll taxes? \_\_\_\_\_

19) How much was the 1380 poll tax? \_\_\_\_\_

20) Why were the peasants' upset by the 1380 poll tax?

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21) Why did the 1380 poll tax not raise as much money as expected?

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### 3. The Revolt Begins

In Fobbing, a village in Essex, three tax collectors were murdered. Trouble spread quickly to Kent, where peasants armed with scythes and old weapons stormed a castle. **Wat Tyler** was chosen as their leader and they marched on to Canterbury where they freed John Ball from prison.



It is clear, however, that while taxes sparked off the rebellion, the real aim behind the outbreak was the **end of the feudal system** under which they lived. Quite simply, the peasants wanted **freedom, equality, and justice**.

The Kent rebels headed to London as those in **Essex (led by Jack Straw)** approached the city from the north. The rebels attacked abbeys and monasteries, opened prisons, burned records. Tax collectors, sheriffs, judges, bishops were targeted and many murdered. In particular they wanted the heads of the three people responsible for the poll tax:

- 1) **Archbishop Simon Sudbury**, (the chancellor);
- 2) **Robert Hales** (Hobbe the Robber), the treasurer
- 3) **John Legge**, the organiser of the poll tax.

**John of Gaunt** was often added to the list as the man most obviously responsible for bad government. Only Richard II was safe from the rebels' anger.

#### **Questions on the start of the revolt?**

22) In which village were three tax collectors killed? \_\_\_\_\_

23) Who was chosen as leader of the Kent rebels? \_\_\_\_\_

24) Who was freed from prison in Canterbury? \_\_\_\_\_

25) Who led the Essex rebels? \_\_\_\_\_

26) The rebels were after the heads of which three individuals?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

27) Who was the only person who the peasants were not angry with?

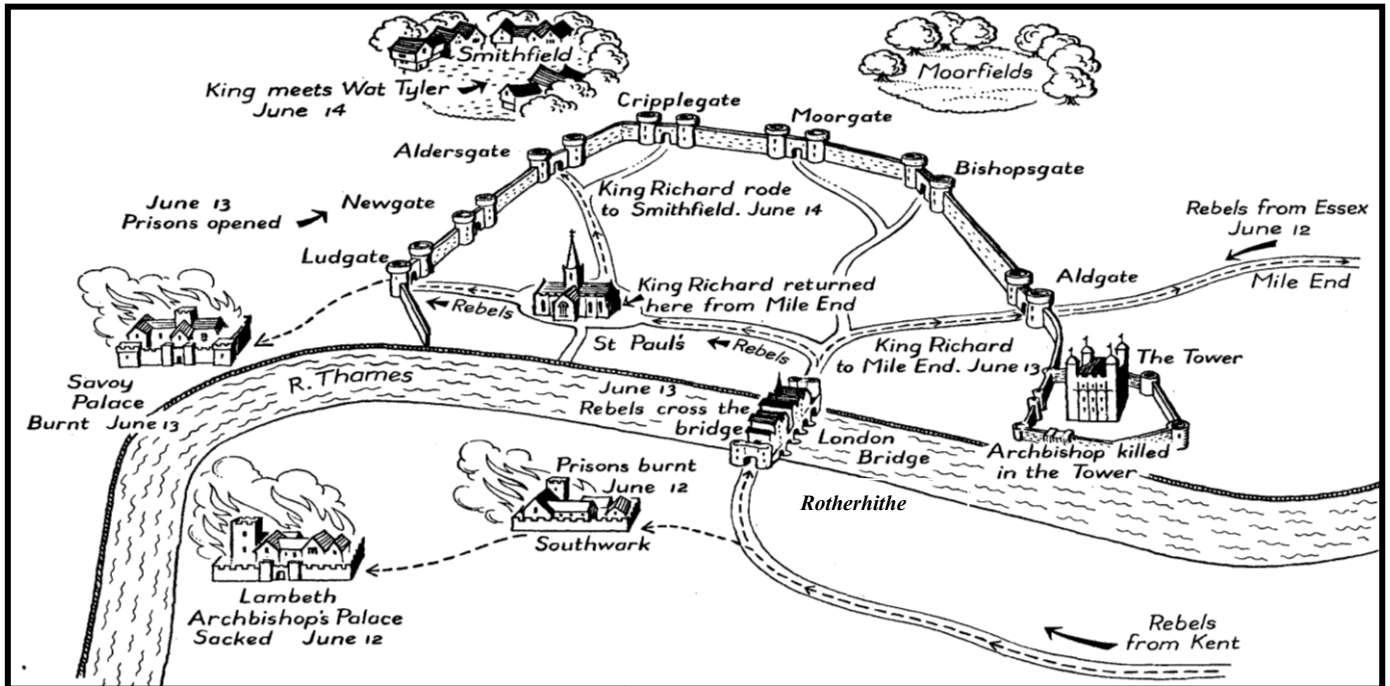
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28) Although upset by the poll tax, what three things were the rebels after?

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#### 4. The Rebels reach London

By the time they reached London, the rebels numbered twenty thousand (20,000).



#### 5) The Meeting at Mile End. 13th June

Fearing for Richard's safety, a meeting at **Rotherhithe** was abandoned. This angered the Kent rebels who then attacked and opened Southwark prison and burnt down Lambeth Palace. (London home of Arch of Cant)

Richard II's advisors now they realised that they were in serious trouble. With **John of Gaunt** was in Scotland and the army setting off for Spain, there was little they could do. The king's bodyguard included only a few hundred soldiers; London couldn't be relied upon to provide an effective force since many of the citizens sympathised with the rebels. Faced with such limited options, the council decided to play for time and negotiate. At Mile End **King Richard**, a lad of 14 years, met the rebels. **Richard of Wallingford** (constable of Wallingford Castle and landowner in St Albans) handed a **petition** to Richard

1. The rebels asked that **the Feudal System be abolished**.
2. Parliament should not fix wages
3. A flat rate of **fourpence (4d)** per acre should be the **lawful charge for rent**.
4. All those who took part in the rebellion should be **pardoned**.
5. **King's advisors** should be **punished**.

Richard was in a difficult position. No army; no commander; but he couldn't let the rebels have what they wanted. It would send a message to anyone that if they wanted something, all they had to do was to march on London and threaten violence. Richard had to defuse the situation, calm the rebels temper and get as many to go home as possible. Having given himself time, he could then deal with the rebels in his own time and with the full force available to him. Richard II said that he would agree to their demands and royal charters would be signed by Richard himself, so long as they went home!

Many rebels did go home. Some rebels remained as they did not trust Richard and wanted to make sure that Sudbury and others were punished as Richard had promised!

**Look at the map on page 7**

29) On what dates did the following events happen?

London Bridge crossed by rebels	
Savoy Palace burnt	
Lambeth Palace burnt down	
Meeting at Smithfields	
Southwark prison burnt	
Meeting at Mile End	

**Look at page 7**

30) Why did the earlier meeting at Rotherhithe not take place?

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31) Give three reasons why Richard II and his advisors were worried when the rebels arrive in London.

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32) At Mile End who handed the petition to Richard II? \_\_\_\_\_

33) What demands were made in the Mile End petition?

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34) How did Richard II react to these demands and why?

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35) How did the rebels react to Richard's promises?

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## 6) Riot in London 13th June 1381



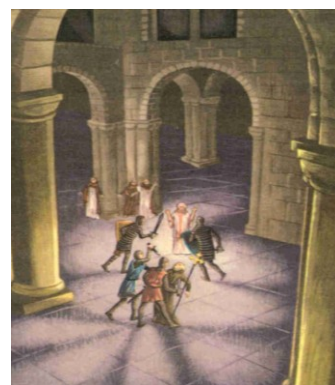
While Richard was handing out empty promises, William Tonge, an alderman had opened a city gate to Wat Tyler and his rebels. Their first stop was the Tower of London, where they found and killed, among others, three of their targets: **Archbishop Sudbury, John Legge and Robert Hales.**

Archbishop Sudbury had his mitre (hat) nailed to his head! John Starling his executioner walked around with the axe dangling around his neck.

John of Gaunt's palace, the Savoy was destroyed. On Wat Tyler's instructions, rebels were not to loot the building of its contents. **Savoy Palace** was burnt to the ground; some peasants being trapped and burned alive as they enjoyed its wine cellars!

They then started burning houses and murdering lawyers and foreigners. This destruction and murder turned **the tide of public opinion** against Tyler and his followers. It was one thing to stand up against injustice; it was quite another to burn London and risk the lives of thousands of innocent people.

In the meantime, Sir Robert Knollys had managed to assemble a small army of trained, experienced soldiers to deal with the crisis. The rebels were forced to leave London. Suddenly, the fortunes of the rebels had taken a **drastic turn for the worse.**



Rebels seize Sudbury

### Questions on the riot in London

36) On what date did the riots start? \_\_\_\_\_

37) Who opened the gate for the rebels? \_\_\_\_\_

38) Where was their first port of call? \_\_\_\_\_

39) Who were they looking for? \_\_\_\_\_

40) What happened when they found who they were looking for?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

41) What happened to some rebels whilst in the cellars of The Savoy Palace?  
\_\_\_\_\_

42) What effect did the outbreak of violence have on the people of London?  
\_\_\_\_\_

## **7) Meeting of Richard II and Wat Tyler at Smithfield. 14th June**

Tyler suspected that Richard's promises were false. He knew that for him there was no turning back. He would be granted no pardon, no charter of rights, and no freedom whatsoever after the trouble in London. He was a desperate man. His only hope was to seize power for himself and this appears to be his intention when he arranged a meeting with Richard II the following day.

Once again Richard II met with the rebels. This time the demands put forward by Wat Tyler were more extreme.

- 1) Everybody under the King was to be **equal**.
- 2) The Church hierarchy was also to be abolished, leaving **only one bishop** in England.
- 3) **Church lands** were to be divided up among the people.
- 4) He wanted to be **commander of the army**.

These unreasonable demands were undoubtedly **designed to provoke Richard** into a refusal and give Tyler an excuse for seizing the king. But the plan was foiled when Richard again agreed to everything. What happened next is likely to remain always unclear; accounts are highly coloured by the opinions of those who recorded the event.

Still hoping to provoke trouble, Tyler may have behaved with extreme vulgarity, spitting in front of the king and swilling a beer before climbing back on his horse. At this point he was either loudly insulted by one of the king's retinue or picked the quarrel himself. Tyler drew his dagger to attack one of Richard's servants, and might have succeeded were it not for the intervention of William Walworth, Mayor of London.

Walworth (possibly by command of the king) seized and arrested Tyler, who tried to stab him in the stomach but met instead with the mayor's armour. In return, Walworth drew his cutlass and dealt Tyler a pair of nasty head wounds. A member of the king's followers then ran the rebel leader through with his sword; Tyler rode several yards away, screaming for vengeance, before falling from his horse to the ground. The death of Wat Tyler was at hand; whether he died immediately or was taken from the battlefield is also a matter of which chronicler tells the tale.

In the chaos that followed, many rebels drew their bows and some arrows were even let fly. The mayor rode with all haste back to the city to summon the armed force raised by Robert Knollys. In an act of supreme bravery, King Richard rode forward alone, ordering no one to follow him, and faced the rebels. "Sirs, what aileth you?" he is reported to have said. "Ye shall have no captain but me: I am your king: be all in rest and peace."

As Richard was speaking to the confused and frightened rebels, Knollys and his force arrived and surrounded them, weapons displayed. Tyler's severed head was raised up on a lance and brought to the king; and at the grisly sight of their leader's head, the rebel force wilted. Again Richard II promised the rebels that their complaints would be dealt with; and as intended the rebels were fooled by these empty vows. They followed Richard to a field in Clerkenwell, where they found themselves surrounded by soldiers. The rebels dropped their weapons and went home.

**Questions on the meeting at Smithfields**

43) On what date did the Smithfield's meeting take place? \_\_\_\_\_

44) Who was the meeting between? \_\_\_\_\_

45) What demands were made to Richard II?

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46) What was Tyler's intention behind these demands?

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47) How did Richard II react? \_\_\_\_\_

48) Why was Tyler arrested? \_\_\_\_\_

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49) What happened after Tyler was arrested? \_\_\_\_\_

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50) How did the meeting at Smithfield's end? \_\_\_\_\_

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## 8) The Events at Smithfield

*An account based on the writings of nobles and churchmen who supported Richard II.*

London was saved yesterday (15th June) by the quick thinking of our young noble King Richard II. As he had promised, the King went with a group of his advisors to meet the rebels at Smithfield. This followed the meeting at Mile End at which King Richard promised the rebels freedom from their lords and an end to work service.

In the dusty heat of the dying day the rebel leader, Wat Tyler, rode up to the King on a small pony. Dismounting, he half bowed, then dared to shake the king by the hand, not even taking off his cap! The King took no offence at this and asked Tyler what the rebels wanted. Tyler replied that as well as the charters of freedom that were being written for them, they wanted the king's word that land would be taken from the lords and the Church and divided among the people. He threatened that the lords of England would regret it if these things were not settled.

The King tried to calm Tyler down and said that he would agree to his demands. But the rebel continued to act rudely and called for a flask of water to rinse his mouth. He then spat it out in a disgusting fashion, typical of an ignorant peasant, and then demanded ale which he drank down in huge gulps.

A quarrel broke out between Tyler and a squire - one of the King's men - The squire shouted that Tyler was the greatest thief and robber in Kent. Tyler then lashed out at the squire with his dagger. The Mayor of London, William Walworth, tried to stop the fight and would have been badly wounded by Tyler had he not been wearing armour. In the scuffle that followed, Tyler was dragged from his horse and stabbed to death. Seeing their leader fall, the rebels drew their bows with shouts of 'Kill them all.'

Bravely the King rode out in front of them. 'Gentlemen,' he said, 'What do you want? I am your leader. Follow me!' With this, he led the mob out of the city. Thanks to the actions of our young King, the revolt appears to be over. Pardons have been granted to all the rebels, who are returning to their homes with all haste. However, such a wicked uprising by people who do not know their place can surely not go unpunished!



**Murder of Wat Tyler at Smithfields**

## 9) Sir John Froissart's Account of the Events at Smithfield.

Wat Tyler spurred his horse and came close to the King. Then he said, 'Do you think, King, that these people will go away from you without having your signed guarantees?'

'No,' said the King, 'you shall have them. They are ordered for you and shall be given to everyone. So, good fellows, go back to your people and get them to leave London.'

Wat Tyler cast his eyes on a squire who was there carrying the King's sword. Wat Tyler hated the squire because he had annoyed him before. 'Give me that sword,' said Tyler.

'No,' said the squire. 'It is the King's sword. You are not fit to have it, for you are only a knave.'

'By my faith,' said Tyler, 'I shall never eat meat until I have your head.'

At that moment the Mayor of London arrived with twelve well-armed knights and broke through the crowd. He said to Tyler 'Ha! Would you dare to speak like that in front of the King? The King began to get angry. 'Set hands on him,' said the King. Tyler said to the Mayor 'What have I said to annoy you?' 'You lying, Stinking, crook,' said the Mayor, 'would you speak like that in front of the King? By my life, you'll pay dearly for it.' And the Mayor drew out his sword and struck Tyler such a blow on the head that he fell down at the feet of his horse. The knights clustered around him so that he could not be seen by the rebels. Then a squire called John Standish drew out his sword and put it into Tyler's belly and so he died.

Seeing their leader killed, the people began to murmur and said, 'Let us go and kill them all.' And they got ready for battle.

The King rode alone to these people and said, 'Sirs, what is the matter? You have no leader except me. I am your King. Be peaceful.' Most of the people were ashamed and began to leave.

## 10) Another Version of the Events at Smithfield

In front of the King, with the lords and knights on one side and the angry mob on the other, Sir William Walworth bravely rushed upon Walter Tyler while he was arguing with the King and his nobles. He first wounded him in the neck with his sword, then threw him from his horse, fatally wounding him in the chest.

Then he rode on with the King. Meanwhile the whole of the angry mob was getting ready against the King and refusing to make peace unless they first had the head of the Mayor. The Mayor went into the City at the request of the King. In half an hour, he led a great force of Londoners to help the King. The whole crowd of madmen was surrounded. Not one of them would have escaped, if the King had not advised them to go away. So the King returned to the City with the greatest of glory, all the wicked crowd fled at once to hide. The King himself knighted the Mayor for what he had done.

***Account from the City Record Book.***

## 11) Results of The Peasants' Revolt. Was it a Success or Failure?

### a) Positives for the rebels

1. This was the first ever protest march of such numbers.
2. There is no doubt that the **rebellion shook Richard** and his advisors. It had been a very close call and they didn't want a repeat.
3. It did succeed in showing the nobles that the peasants were dissatisfied and that they were capable of wreaking havoc.
4. The **Poll tax was withdrawn** and not raised again.
5. First time since 1066 that London had been taken.

### b) Negatives for the rebels

1. Rebels did not achieve their immediate aims. Feudal System remained, (inequality) 100 yrs war continued, Church remained unchanged.
2. Most rebels were allowed to go home. However **bloody assizes** were set up and outspoken leaders such as Straw and Ball were quickly hanged. (15th July)
3. An example had to be set. The king then set about **punishing the rebels**. Lord Chief Tressilian had so many hanged that there was a shortage of gibbets, and nine or ten men were hanged simultaneously from the same beam. Although, a general pardon was finally declared in November 1381, overall it was estimated that over 7,000 common people were executed.
4. On 2nd July, Parliament decreed that the promises the king had given were made under duress and without consent of the government; the **charters of freedom were cancelled**. (revoked). When someone from Essex reminded the young king that he had promised to abolish villeinage, his curt response was, "Villeins ye are, and villeins ye shall remain."
5. In 1388, a **new Statute of Labourers** was approved in Parliament. Fearful of a new rebellion, they had resorted to the tools of repression.

**Not much changed** for those peasants at this time and many were disheartened at the failure of the revolt. However, although they didn't know it, things were improving for peasants throughout England. Their freedom would come.

1. There was a chronic shortage of labour. Landowners were still in competition.
2. Gradually over the next few years more workers were given greater freedom and rented land and earned a wage. They could work for whomever they liked and wherever they liked.
- 3: By 1430 work service (bondage) had ended. There were no peasants left in England.
  - In time, Parliament gave up trying to hold down labourer's wages.
  - The Church resisted reform even more, and corruption flourished.
  - In terms of personal loss, the Peasants' Revolt had been a tragedy.
  - Violent protest, as it often seems to so, did more harm than good to the cause of freedom.



**12) Why did the revolt fail?**

1. **Poor leadership** by Tyler and Straw and little control over their followers.
2. Rebels **lacked an orchestrated plan** of action once they arrived in London.
3. **Lawlessness** of some of the rebels lost support of both Londoners and some rebels.  
This support was vital if the revolt was going to succeed.
- 4: Rebels had a **naïve trust** put in Richard II. Richard knew they trusted him and used this to his advantage. He made promises he had no intention of keeping! (Henry VIII – Pilgrimage of Grace). The rebels’ misplaced trust allowed Richard to play for time.
- 5: Rebels unaware of their strong position at beginning of revolt. – (John of G and army not available)
6. **Extreme demands** made by Tyler could never be agreed to otherwise this would lead to anarchy.
7. Rebel mob was no match for a **king’s army**.
8. Richard could not afford to give it to rebels’ demands. Would lead to anarchy!

**Look at page 14**

51) Why might some rebels see the revolt as a success?

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52) Why would people say the revolt failed?

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#### Source D

"All men are created equal. Work service had been started by evil men and must be ended. It is against the will of God. Good people, things are not going well in England, nor will they until everything is shared and there are no nobles and no peasants. How ill they treat us! For what reason do they keep us in slavery? Are we not all descended from the same ancestors, Adam and Eve? And how can they show that they should be greater masters than ourselves. They are dressed in velvet and other rich cloths, decorated with ermine and other furs, while we are forced to wear rags. They have wines, spices and fine bread, while we have only black bread and the scraps from the straw. When we drink it must be water. They have handsome houses and estates, while we must brave the wind and rain to labour in the fields. It is by our labour that they have their goods to keep up their pomp. We are called slaves, and if we do not perform our service, we are beaten. We have no one we can complain to or who is willing to listen to us. Let us go to the King and argue with him. He is young and may help. If not we must put things right ourselves." **A sermon by John Ball**

#### Source E **John Ball**

The rebels have been stirred up and encouraged in their lunatic ideas by a mad priest called John Ball. He had often been in prison for what he preached in the villages after mass on Sundays. John Ball's ideas were well known to many of the ordinary people of London who were jealous of the wealthy noblemen. They were saying that England was being robbed of its silver and gold by those who called themselves noble.

**Jean Froissart, c.1381**

#### Source F **Wat Tyler's speech**

"We are men formed in Christ's likeness, but we are kept like beasts. No lord should have lordship: it should be divided among all men, except for the King's own lordship."

**Wat Tyler at Blackheath, 13th June, 1381.**

#### Source G

"When Adam delved and Eve span, who was then the gentleman? Are we not all descended from the same parents, Adam and Eve? and what can they show, or what reasons give, why they should be more the masters than ourselves? except, perhaps, in making us labour and work, for them to spend."

**John Ball, 13th June, 1381**

#### Source H **John Ball's sermon**

"England has been ruled by weeds and now harvest time has come. It is our duty to uproot them and do away with them all - evil lords, unjust judges, every man who is dangerous to the common good. Then we will have peace for the present and security for the future. When the great ones have been cut down, all men will have equal freedom; all will have the same nobility, rank and power.

**John Ball, 1381.**

#### Source I **The mob attack London**

The crazed mob made its way towards the Tower of London, entering which by force, they dragged out Sir Simon (of Sudbury) Archbishop of Canterbury and Chancellor of our Lord the King, and his brother Robert Hales, the King's treasurer.... whom they beheaded at the place called Tower Hill, outside the Tower, and then carried their heads through the city upon lances. Then they set them up on London Bridge. The same day there was no little slaughter in the city of natives as well as foreigners. Many were beheaded in Cheapside. In Vintry there was one heap of about forty headless bodies that had been dragged from churches and houses. Hardly was there a street in which bodies were not lying. Many houses were pulled down or burnt.

**A Londoner, 14th June 1381**