

COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

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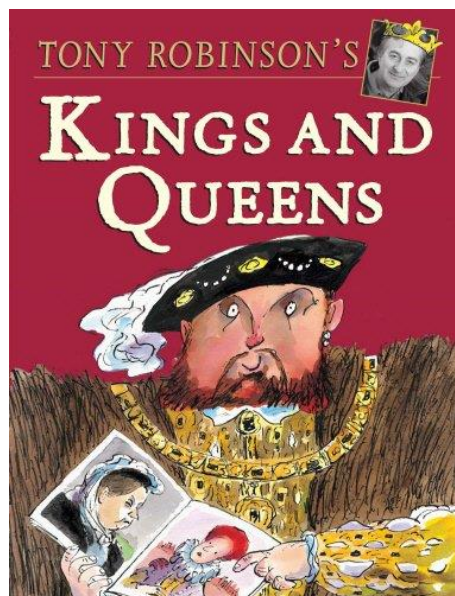
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Robinson, T. (1999). *The Hutchinson book of kings and queens*. London: Hutchinson.



Edward the First

(Called Long-Shanks because of his long legs)

Born 1239 Ruled 1272 – 1307

Henry's son, Edward the First, managed to rule England rather well. He was bossy, had the usual Plantagenet temper tantrums and was cruel and violent – even to his own children. But he kept his promises, was brave and energetic and in order to stop revolts from breaking out, built lots of big castles all over the country, many of which are still standing today. He brought in new, fair laws and punished anyone who broke them. He was definitely good at his job, and might have been even better if he hadn't been so ruthless, but at least he was better than his son, Edward the Second.

Edward's big idea

Edward had a grand plan. Being king of England wasn't enough; he wanted to rule Scotland and Wales as well and decided it was time they were conquered. Surprisingly, he was the first English king to attempt this. (Other kings had seemed more interested in French territory than expanding their kingdoms at home.) So did his plan work?

The Welsh princes

Edward went to war with the little states which made up Wales and beat their best warrior, Prince Llywelyn. The Welsh nobles submitted to Edward but said they wanted a new prince who had been born in Wales and didn't speak English. But Edward had a trick up his sleeve. His baby son had been born in Wales and couldn't talk at all, let alone speak English! So one-year-old Edward was presented as their future Prince of Wales. Ever since, the eldest son of the monarch has been the Prince of Wales.



The Scottish kings

The Scots weren't easy to beat. They had their own kings and didn't want an English monarch telling them what to do. Edward won the first battle, and even managed to steal the Stone of Scone, where the Scottish kings were crowned, and take it to London. But the Scots fought back and they started to win! First they were led by a fierce warrior called William Wallace and then, after Wallace was caught and executed, by Robert Bruce, whom they made their king. Edward never gave up, even to the end. He died setting out to fight yet another battle. His servants had been ordered not to bury him but to carry his bones with the army until Scotland was finally defeated. Understandably no one wanted the grizzly job and his son, Edward the Second, had him buried at Westminster Abbey.

Edward loves Eleanor

Edward adored his wife, Eleanor. When she died, he was so heartbroken he ordered magnificent stone crosses to be built at each place her coffin rested on its way to Westminster Abbey. Three of them are still there today.