

Robert Hull

I was an experienced seaman in the service of the King. In 1355, I was the master of the King's ship called *La Isabelle* and had 30 sailors under my control. In 1357, I sailed *La Isabelle* to Flanders [in modern-day Belgium] to arrange buying a type of ship called a cog. This was a type of ship that was often made of oak, with a single mast and a square sail, usually used for trading with Europe. We were successful and bought a ship called *La Trinite* back for the King.

I served the King very faithfully for many years and was proud to be rewarded for my service. In 1363, King Edward III gave me a house close to the Tower of London. In 1368, I was given a fishery in Scotland! By 1371, I had more than £40 of goods in London; together with my property, this made me a wealthy man. I continued to serve loyally and fought in France in the Hundred Years' War as part of John of Gaunt's expedition.

While I was very loyal to the King, I was having problems with the Abbey of St Mary Graces. The Abbey took over the mudflats next to where I lived. They used to be empty, but the monks reclaimed the land there and started to build more and more – they were taking over the whole area! I was also accused, along with a long list of other residents, of dumping rubbish and filth on Tower Hill and causing a health hazard in 1372. Ridiculous!

In 1381, it was clear that things were going very poorly. There was no real justice and the war was going very badly – many veterans like myself were horrified by this. On 14 June 1381, rebellion overtook London. While rebels overran the Tower of London and beheaded corrupt men like Simon Sudbury and Robert Hales, my friend Nicholas Witley and myself went with a group of men to punish the Abbey.

We entered the Abbey with the rebels from Essex and Kent, with banners displayed. We destroyed documents that we found and demanded justice! The Abbey was just too powerful and represented everything that was going wrong in the country. We forced the Abbot [head of the Abbey] to agree that one of the monks would give us the properties of the Abbey in London.

After the Revolt, I was pardoned on 20 January 1382. I continued to serve the King and was part of the Earl of Arundel's naval expedition against the combined Flemish, French and Spanish fleets in 1387.