

The Bandit of Sherwood Forest

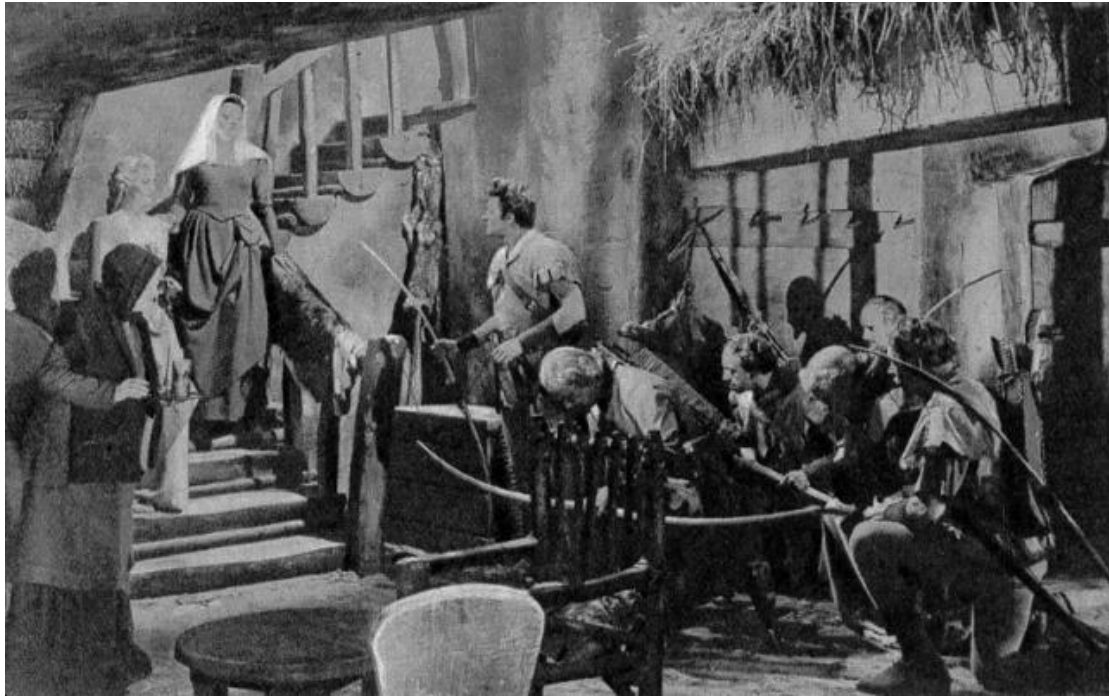
US : 1946 : dir. George Sherman & Henry Levin : Columbia : 87 min
 prod: Leonard S Picker & Clifford Sanforth : scr: Wilfrid H Pettit & Melvin Levy
 dir.ph.: Tony Gaudio, William Snyder & George Meehan

[Maurice Tauzin](#)
 Cornel Wilde; Henry Daniell; Anita Louise; Jill Esmond; Edgar Buchanan; Russell Hicks;
 George Macready; John Abbott; Lloyd Corrigan

Ref:	Pages	Sources	Stills	Words	Ω □ ♀ Z ☼	Copy on VHS	Last Viewed
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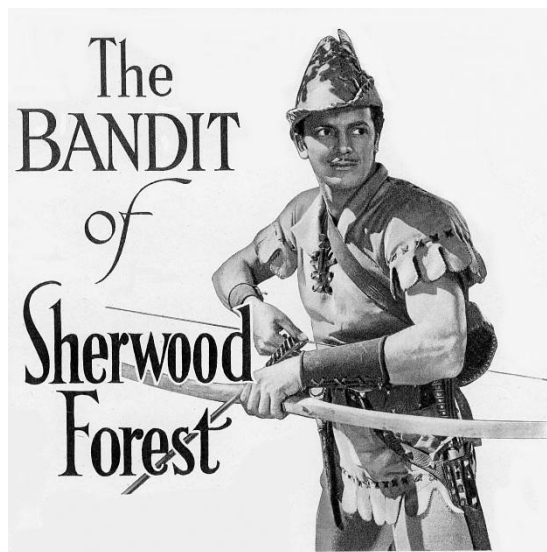
*The apple doesn't fall far from the tree – Robin Hood & son (in Lincoln green and autumn brown)
 All stills & captions below - source: Junior Film Annual 1946-47*



1: The Queen Mother of England, with the Lady Catherine (Anita Louise) meets Robin Hood's son Robert (Cornel Wilde)



2: Robert Hood shows the members of the band that he is as good an archer as his father



Leonard Maltin's Movie and Video Guide
2001 review:

"Colourful but standard swashbuckler with Wilde as son of Robin Hood carrying on in faithful tradition with the Merry Men. **½ "

Speelfilm Encyclopedie review - identical to above

Halliwell's Film Guide review

"Robin Hood frustrates the Regent who plans to usurp the throne from the boy King ¹. A lively romp through Sherwood Forest with a capable cast. * "

The Good Film and Video Guide review:

"Or: Son of Robin Hood, since he (the son) is the hero. George Macready and Henry Daniell, usually excellent villains, are off-form on this occasion, together with everyone else involved - though Cornel Wilde, as Hood Junior, is a little less glum than usual."

Movies on TV and Videocassette 1988-89
review:

"The son of Robin Hood comes to the aid of the Queen. Elaborate but uninspired. ** "

¹ Or his son does, if we want to split heirs. And we do.

The Time Out Film Guide review:

"Very creditable swashbucklery with Wilde, a fencer of Olympic standard, looking much more at home as Robin Hood than as Frederic ("You must stop this polonaise jangle") Chopin in "A SONG TO REMEMBER". If the dialogue is imbecilic, the villainy is splendid and Tony Gaudio's Technicolor camerawork very lush."

TV Times Film & Video Guide 1995 review:

"A kind of "TWENTY YEARS AFTER", Sherwood Forest style, and actually based on a novel called "Son of Robin Hood". Following in the footsteps of such distinguished Old Sherwoodians as Douglas Fairbanks and Errol Flynn, Cornel Wilde cuts a dashing figure as Hood's scion in this spectacular adventure film. It was one of the few to take advantage of Wilde's real-life prowess as an international fencer. ** "

Variety Movie Guide 1993 review:

"Technicolor spectacle of high adventure in Sherwood Forest. It's a costume Western, in effect, offering the fictional escapades of the son of Robin Hood, a hard-riding, hard-loving hombre who uses his trusty bow and arrow to right injustice and tyranny back in the days of feudal England.

There is considerable ineptness in writing, production and direction but it still stands up as okay escapist film fare for the not-too-critical.

There is a concentration of chases and "they-went-thataway" flavour about the doings that hints at the Western feature training of producers and directors.

Plot has the son of Robin Hood coming back to Sherwood Forest to save England's Magna Carta and young King from the cruel plotting of a wicked regent. With his long bow, sword and trusty horse, Wilde proves himself more than a match for the villain, saves the young King's life, the Magna Carta and wins true love and knighthood.



3: Robert and Lady Catherine plan to rescue the boy King from Nottingham Castle



4: The Lady Catharine rouses the boy King

Concocting the script, full of dialogue clichés and ten-twenty-three dramatics², were Wilfrid H Pettit and Melvin Levy, working from a story by Paul A Castleton and Pettit, based on the novel "Son of Robin Hood" by Castleton.

Wilde is properly swashbuckling as the hero, and probably had himself a time enacting the dare-and-do."

[no listing in "The Critics' Film Guide", "Rating the Movies (1990)", "The Sunday Times Guide to Movies on Television", "Video Movie Guide 1993" or "The Virgin Film Guide"]

Radio Times review:

"In this swashbuckler, Cornel Wilde stars as Robin Hood's son, who takes on Henry Daniell's wayward Regent in a bid to save Britain³ from constitutional disaster. It's really little more than a Western in medieval costumes and with added peasantry. Not a patch on Errol Flynn's classic "THE ADVENTURES OF ROBIN HOOD", but an enjoyable rump all the same. ** "

"Adventure starring Cornel Wilde and Anita Louise. Robert, son of Robin Hood, frustrates the plans of the evil Regent, who intends to revoke the Magna Carta and murder the boy King, Henry III. ** "

Junior Film Annual 1946-47 synopsis:

"In the year 1216 Henry III, then a young boy, was King of England, but the ruling power was in the hands of the Regent, William of Pembroke, who held the King prisoner along with the Queen Mother, and was scheming to seize the throne for himself.

Robin Hood, Earl of Huntingdon, was now growing old, but he could not stomach this injustice and the tyrannies of the Regent. Banished for his protests, he took to the greenwood of his old outlaw days and in the

depths of Sherwood Forest settled down to organise the young King's rescue.

He sent for all his old comrades: Friar Tuck, Little John, Alan-a-Dale, Will Scarlett and the rest, and he set over them as leader his son, Robert, who was just such a gallant as Robin himself had been in his young days.

Meanwhile the Queen Mother and her Lady-in-Waiting, Lady Catherine, had escaped from the castle where they had been shut up by William, and they too found their way to Sherwood where Robin's band offered them their help.

They conceived a daring plan to rescue the King. Lady Catherine disguised herself as the Prioress of Buxton, and, accompanied by Robert and some of the band masquerading as monks, went back to the castle, where she said she was ill, and asked for shelter.

Her request was readily granted. As soon as they were inside the castle, they found the King and released him. Then bad luck overtook them. They were lowering him from the battlements to Robin's men waiting below, when the attempted rescue was discovered by Pembroke's men. The King got away safely, but Robert and Catherine were captured.

Furious at the escape of his royal captive and the confusion of all his evil plans, the Regent sentenced Robert to death. But the laws of chivalry holding in these days allowed a noble a "trial by combat" in such circumstances. Otherwise, Pembroke could not execute Robert off-hand, without first meeting him in a duel. This right Robert demanded, and Pembroke was forced to grant it.

He meant to make sure he would win, however. He not only gave orders that Robert should be kept without food or water for three days before the meeting, but also primed his archers to shoot his young opponent should Robert be getting the better of him in the fight.

Lady Catherine neatly foiled the attempt to starve Robert into a weak condition beforehand by getting her own food sent to him, and old Robin outwitted the Regent in his plot to make certain of winning the duel by breaking into the castle at the head of his merry men and overpowering the guards.

² Whatever **they** might be

³ Or England, if we want to be pedantic about it. And we do.

Now, with Robin Hood's men to see fair play in place of Pembroke's, the fight was bound to be a fair one. There was great excitement over the

conflict, and some fear on Lady Catherine's part, for the Regent was a famous swordsman.



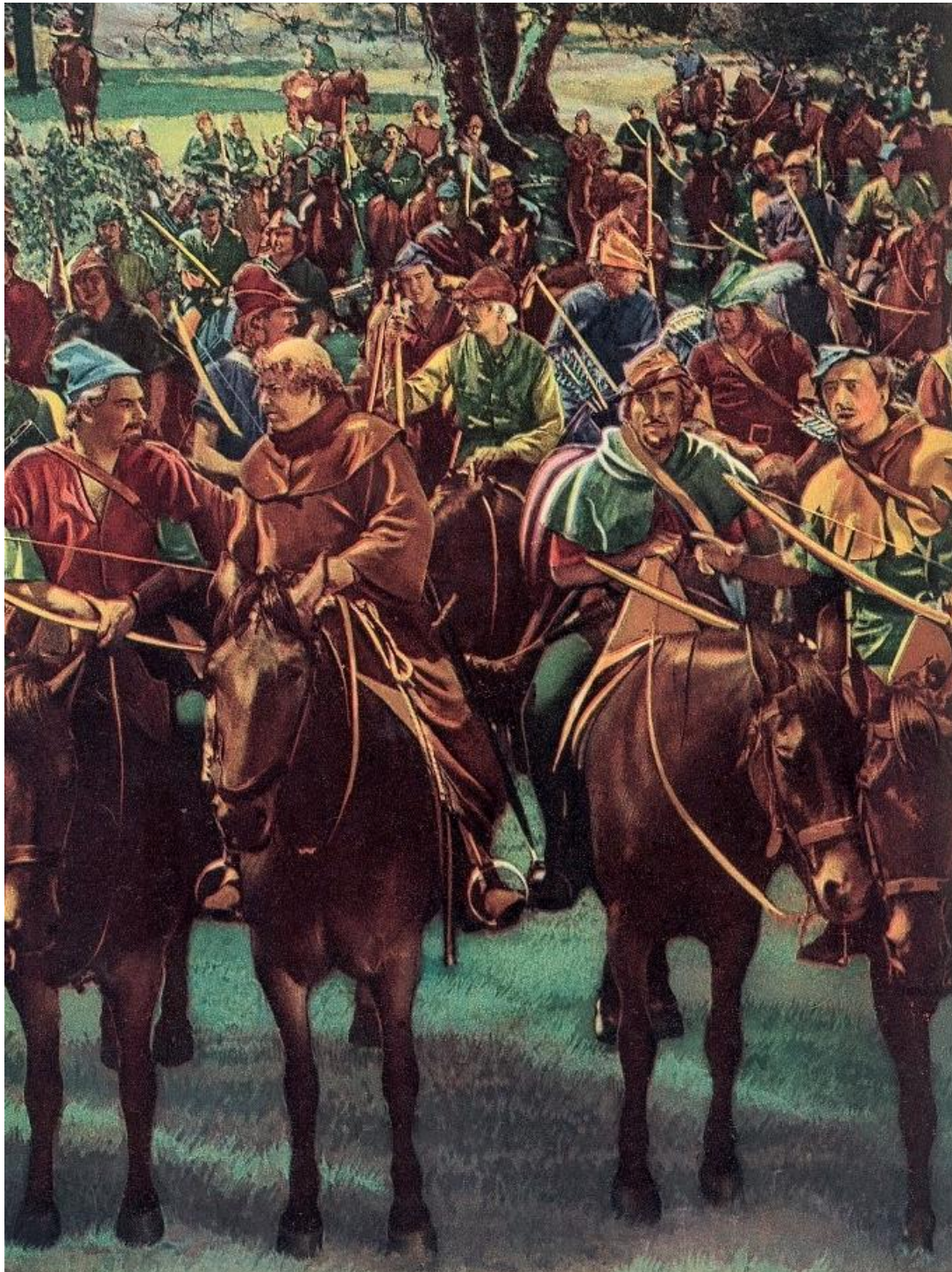
5: One of the Regent's officers gets news of the plot against his master



6: The Regent's men rush back to report to Nottingham Castle

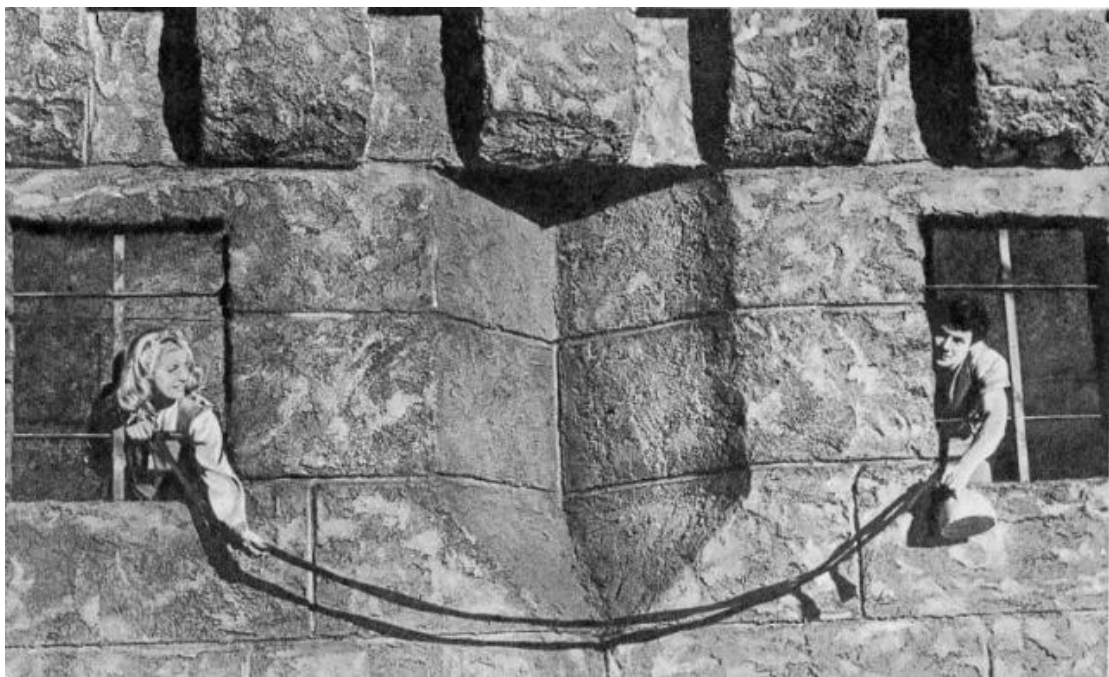
It was a long and terrific struggle, but the skill and strength of Robert triumphed in the end, and the dread Regent was killed.

Free at last from the power of Pembroke, the young King restored Robin to all his old possessions and privileges, and Robert was rewarded with new titles and the hand of the Lady Catherine.”





7: Pembroke has taken Robert prisoner. He comes to his cell and challenges him to a duel, but says he will starve him first.



8: Catherine shares her meagre rations with Robert. She is determined he shall be strong for the duel



9: Robin and his band force their way into the castle and overpower some of the Regent's men



10: The fight is on



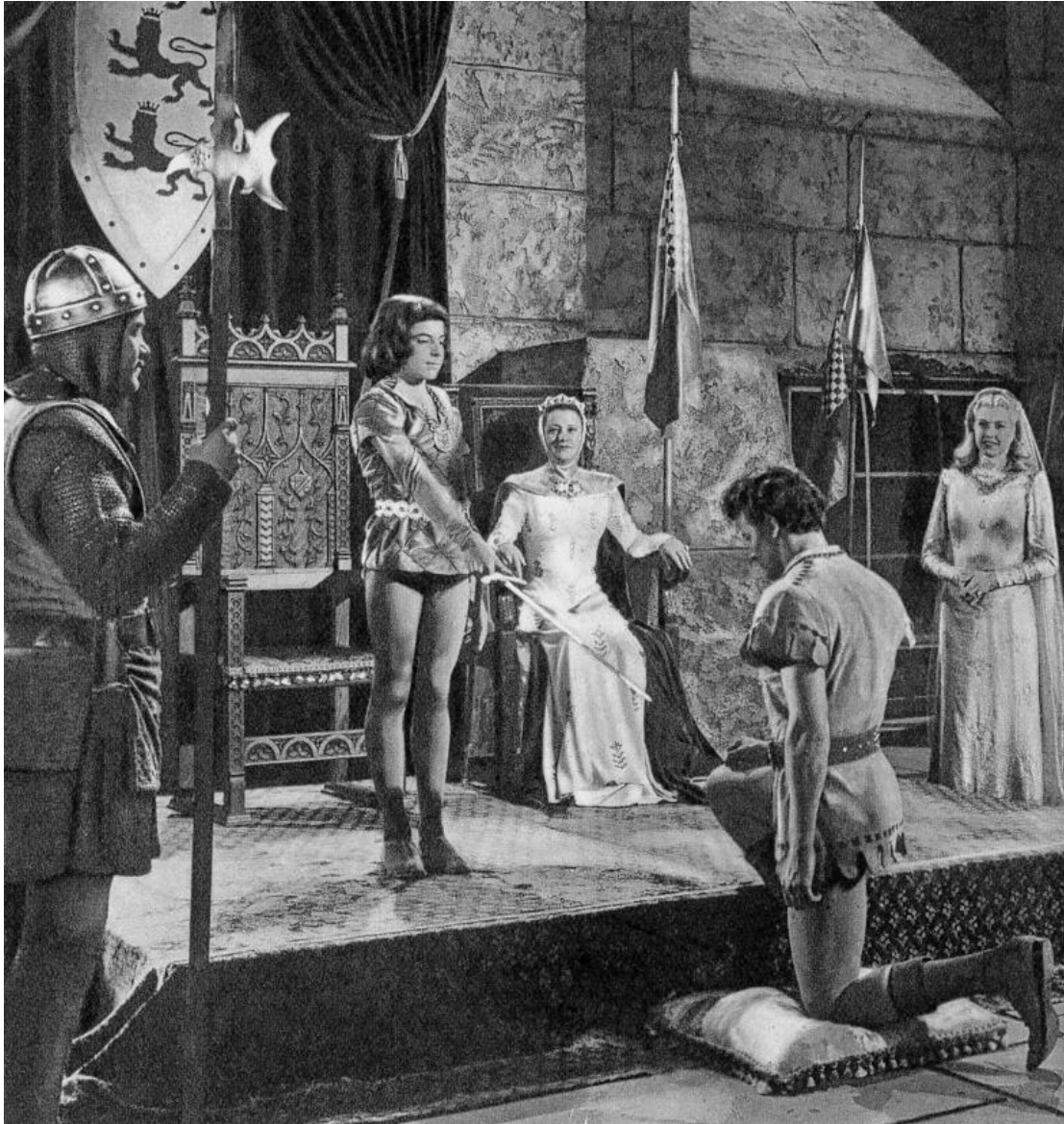
11: At last Pembroke is cornered and killed

"Boys are frail. They often do not live to manhood" hints William of Pembroke darkly. He has one particular boy in mind, of course, but the name escapes him. Indeed, so little is seen of the King in this film that *no-one* – his mother included – can quite remember the name. He is referred to throughout as "my son the King", "the young King" or "his majesty". We have to refer to write-ups of the film to learn this is Henry III, King John having gone the way of his illustrious brother. Maurice Tauzin is the only reason this title appears in the archive, but in truth his American accent rings so clear that it's probably just as well he's tucked out of the way until the final reel prizegiving ceremony.

The film opens with Robin of Loxley (Russell Hicks) addressing a muster of his former outlaws about the wickedness of the new Regent (Henry Daniell). Times are bad then, but not so bad that the merry men of yore cannot rally on horseback to Sherwood Forest in Western posse fashion. Robin is past his prime, you understand, maid Marian only a distant memory, but he sets his face against the Regent's decision to abolish Magna Carta in the interests of firm government. The Americans equated Magna Carta with their Declaration of Independence, when in reality it was a feudal dictate guaranteeing the powers and privileges of the barons, certainly no charter of rights for the peasantry. But for that matter, Richard Lionheart was never the wise and just King he is painted in the Robin Hood legend.

Cornel Wilde now hoves into view, skirmishing with agents of the Regent on his way to Sherwood. It's interesting to note that he was an international class fencer (so was Basil Rathbone, incidentally) because there is no indication of such prowess on screen. The fights and action sequences in "**THE BANDIT OF SHERWOOD FOREST**" are handled without



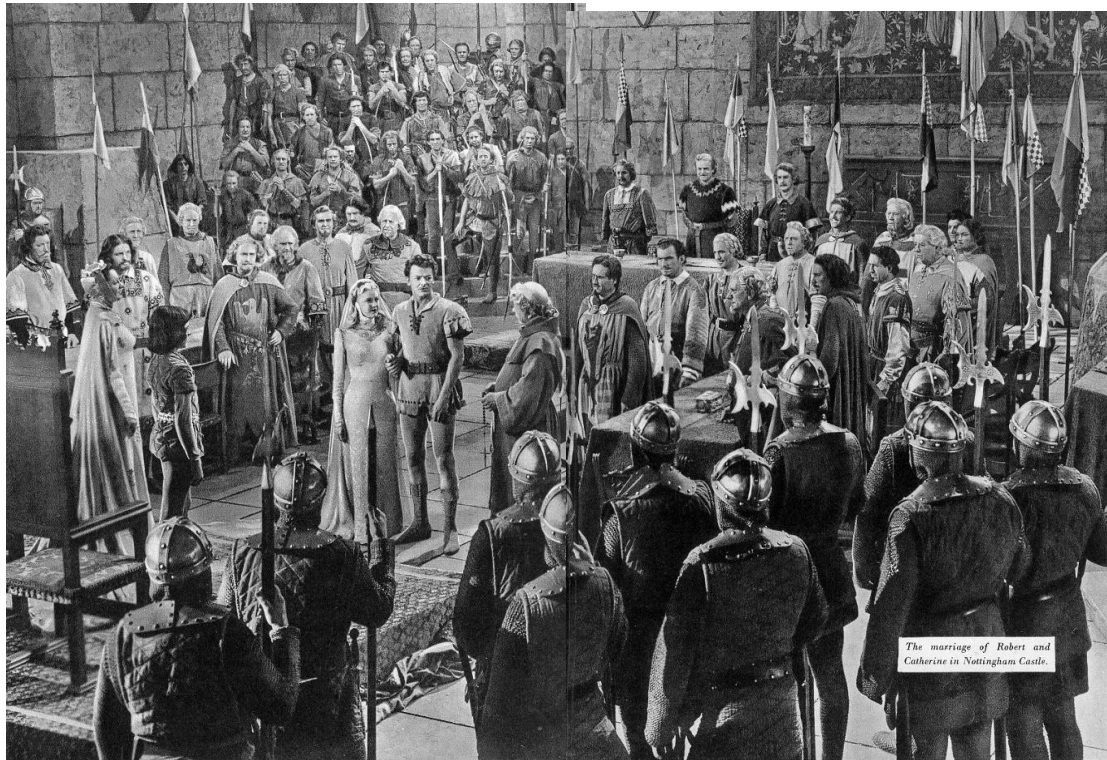


12: Robert is knighted by the King



verve or panache – rather a contra-indicator from a swashbuckler – and Wilde acquits himself only adequately. He is neither as gung-ho as Fairbanks, as dashing as Flynn, as reassuringly decent as Richard Greene in “**The Adventures of Robin Hood**”, nor as athletic as Burt Lancaster in “**THE FLAME AND THE ARROW**”. The best to be said of him is that he does not look half so out of place as Kevin Costner in “**ROBIN HOOD: PRINCE OF THIEVES**” – a modest accomplishment, admittedly.

The critics above seem quite evenly divided whether this is a roistering good romp or a wooden, plodding costume piece without a new idea in its head. There’s no question which way I’d cast *my* vote. Long before the nameless King can be rescued from Nottingham castle (where he’s scheduled to take an impromptu bungee jump without the benefit of elastic) one tires of all the rushing about and plotting and wooing business. As several reviews indicated, even the grim-moustached villains are off-form. Two producers, two writers, and three



13: The marriage of Robert and Catharine in Nottingham Castle

cameramen notwithstanding, this is as mundane and arthritic as any low-budget matinee costume piece. The *Junior Film Annual* was evidently promoting it to child audiences of the day, and perhaps they would have enjoyed it in 1946, but it is strictly a museum piece now. Even the richness of Technicolor does not redeem it much.

Of only marginal interest to the archive then. Maurice Tauzin made his first appearance as the French refugee who joins Monty Woolley's band of stragglers in **"THE PIED PIPER"** (42), a non-speaking part since his character is struck dumb by witnessing the death of both parents. He was also seen in **"A SONG TO REMEMBER"** (44), **"THE FIGHTING GUARDSMAN"** (45) and **"TARZAN AND THE HUNTRESS"** (47). Nothing else is known of him. He'd be about 14 here, and though the costume looks well on him he is simply miscast.

See **ROBIN HOOD – GENERAL NOTE** for a survey of the multiplicitous variants on the jolly Robin theme (including **"ROBIN HOOD JUNIOR"** from the Children's Film Foundation), and subject index under **ARISTOCRACY / ROYALTY, HISTORY** and **SWASHBUCKLERS**.