

# The Manor Court



## Match Crimes and Excuses

Simon Locke found a bees' nest in a tree in the forest. He pulled it down and broke it open. He was caught carrying honeycomb back to his house.

## Trivial or Serious Crimes?

## How Fair was the Manor Court?

"I was walking through the woods looking for wild berries. Suddenly a swarm of bees attacked me. That made me so angry, I decided to take their honey for the lord."

# The Manor Court

This activity was first developed in 1981 by Susan Hart and Stuart Scott at Thomas Tallis School in Greenwich.

The webaddress for this activity is:

<<http://collaborativelearning.org/manorcourt.pdf>>

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## COLLABORATIVE LEARNING PROJECT

Project Director: Stuart Scott

Supporting a cooperative network of teaching professionals throughout the European Union to develop and disseminate accessible teaching materials in all subject areas and for all ages.

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## BRIEF SUMMARY OF BASIC PRINCIPLES BEHIND OUR TEACHING ACTIVITIES:

The project is a teacher network, and a non-profit making educational trust. Our main aim is to develop and disseminate classroom tested examples of effective group strategies across all phases and subjects. We hope they will inspire you to use similar strategies in other topics and curriculum areas. We run teacher workshops, swapshops and conferences throughout the European Union. The project publishes a catalogue of activities plus lists in selected subject areas, and a newsletter available by post or internet: "PAPERCLIP".

\*These activities were influenced by current thinking about the role of language in learning. They are designed to help children learn through talk and active learning in small groups. They work best in mixed classes where children in need of language or learning support are integrated. They are well suited for the development of speaking and listening. They provide teachers opportunities for assessment of speaking and listening and other formative assessment.

\*They support differentiation by placing a high value on what children can offer to each other on a particular topic, and also give children the chance to respect each other's views and formulate shared opinions which they can disseminate to peers. By helping them to take ideas and abstract concepts, discuss, paraphrase and move them about physically, they help to develop thinking skills.

\*They give children the opportunity to participate in their own words and language in their own time without pressure. Many activities can be tried out in mother tongue and afterwards in English. A growing number of activities are available in more than one language, not translated, but mixed, so that you may need more than one language to complete the activity.

\*They encourage study skills in context, and should therefore be used with a range of appropriate information books which are preferably within reach in the classroom.

\*They are generally adaptable over a wide age range because children can bring their own knowledge to an activity and refer to books at an appropriate level. The activities work like catalysts.

\*All project activities were planned and developed by teachers working together, and the main reason they are disseminated is to encourage teachers to work effectively with each other inside and outside the classroom. They have made it possible for mainstream and language and learning support teachers to share an equal role in curriculum delivery. They should be adapted to local conditions. In order to help us keep pace with curriculum changes, please send any new or revised activities back to the project, so that we can add them to our lists of materials.

# The Manor Court



The Manor Court was the lord of the manor's own court. Sometimes the lord or his lady sat in judgment, but more often the steward or bailiff acted as judge. The court was the way in which the lord could keep the village in order. It also granted villagers permissions to do various activities such as marry their children or cut wood to build or repair houses. It did not deal with serious crimes such as murder or robbery. These crimes went to the church or sheriff's courts. If you got into trouble or wanted a favour, you usually had to pay the Lord money or goods.

## Find a Good Excuse!

You have some cards with different village crimes on them. You have the same number of cards with excuses on them.

Pair the crimes and excuses so that they fit best together. You can use the cards to play pairs if you want to.

## Put the Crimes in Order.

Which crime do you think is most serious. Which crime is most trivial? Arrange the cards in order of seriousness like this:

Most serious-----Least serious

Do the other groups agree with you?

Would the lord agree with you?



## Manor Court Crimes and Excuses Instructions

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Hugh Oke dug clay out of the road at night to cover the holes in the wattle on the walls of his home.

"The reeve told me that my house was in a poor condition and that I had to repair it at once. I was going to fill the holes in the road with stones."



Simon Locke found a bees' nest in a tree in the forest. He pulled it down and broke it open. He was caught carrying honeycomb back to his house.

"I was walking through the woods looking for wild berries. Suddenly a swarm of bees attacked me. That made me so angry, I decided to take their honey for the lord."





Jack Slug is always late for the lord's work, and when he does arrive he shirks, and never works as hard as the others.

"My family is sick so I have to look after them all night and feel tired when I come to work. I have to fetch water, prepare the fire and cook a meal every morning."



Margery Oke wants to marry a villein from another village and go there to live.

"My daughter is often sick so she does not do very much work for the manor and won't be missed."



Wulf Thin has been caught moving boundary stones in the East Field so that his strips are made bigger while his neighbours lose land.

"Last year a neighbour took some land from me and nobody caught him. I was only moving the stones back"



# Manor Court Excuses Cards



The Lord wants Nell Tovey and Kit Strong to marry. They both refuse.

"I've promised to marry Nell Beer and I can make ale better than I can plough."



"I don't want to marry. I can look after my land alone or give money to someone to help me"



Old John Seed has cut live wood from the forest and from the hedge around the Far Field.



"I am old and my eyes are bad. In the middle of winter I can't always tell the difference between live and dead"



Ralph Pigge's son went to sleep in the forest. Unfortunately the pigs he was supposed to be looking after came back to the village, and wandered all over the barley in the the East Field.

"My son spent all night helping to brew ale for the lord's feast. He was so tired that he could not keep his eyes open. Please do not be hard on him"



## **Put the Crimes in Order.**

Which crime do you think is most serious. Which crime is most trivial? Arrange the cards in order of seriousness like this:

Most serious-----Least serious

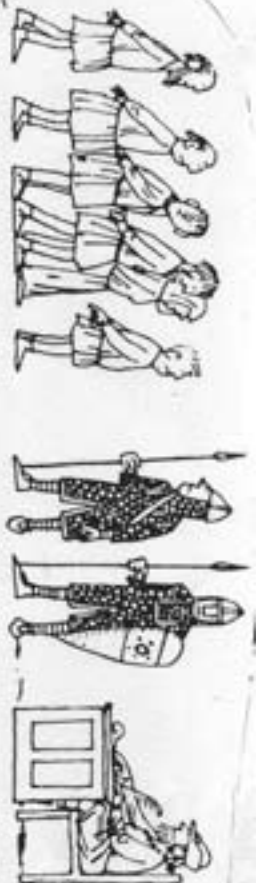
Do the other groups agree with you?

Would the lord agree with you?

# EXCUSES, EXCUSES..



Here are some more reasons for ending up in front of the lord or the bailiff at the Manor Court.



Think up some good excuses for these villagers. Write a dialogue between lord and villager in your books.

Write a dialogue between lord and villager in



1. William's strips are full of weeds. He drinks too much ale and sleeps when he should be working.



3. Tom took his ox to market in the town and sold it without the lord's permission.



6. The bailiff found Robin in the forest with a hawk and 24 dead blackbirds.



4. Little Agnes went to collect firewood on a Sunday.



7. During the summer milk shortage, Meg and Henry drank the milk the lord wanted.



2. Nell persuaded other villagers to dance on a Sunday.



5. Margery was found with four rabbits caught in the woods.



8. Arnulf didn't put his animals in the lord's pound to manure the soil. He went to the forest.