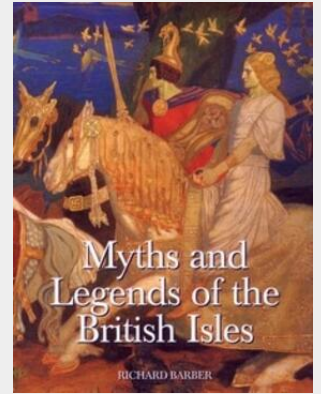


Barber

Myths & Legends of the British Isles

Tales from the dawn of Christianity to the age of the Plantagenets reveal a mythology in its time as potent as that of the classical world. The British Isles have a long tradition of tales of gods, heroes and marvels, hinting at a mythology once as relevant to the races which settled the islands as the Greek and Roman gods were to the classical world. The tales drawn together in this book, from a wide range of medieval sources, span the centuries from the dawn of Christianity to the age of the Plantagenets. The Norse gods which peopled the Anglo-Saxon past survive in Beowulf; Cuchulainn, Taliesin and the magician Merlin take shape from Celtic mythology; and saints include Helena who brought a piece of the True Cross to Britain, and Joseph of Arimathea whose staff grew into the Glastonbury thorn. Tales of the British Arthur are followed by legends of later heroes, including Harold, Hereward and Godiva. These figures and many others were part of a familiar national mythology on which Shakespeare drew for Lear, Macbeth and Hamlet, creating the famous versions that are known today. Here the original stories are presented. RICHARD BARBER's other books include *The Knight and Chivalry*.



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