

# Unit 2: Life Under the Normans

1. Land ownership and government
  2. Law and order
3. The Domesday Book and taxation
  4. Village life
  5. Town life

## How did William ensure he had a reliable supply of Soldiers?

In return for Land each tenant-in-chief (baron or Bishop) provided a certain amount of Knights. The quota varied as the king made individual agreements.



The main part of the Kings army would be made up of knights from the King's own household and the knights. The rest of the army they continue to use the fyrd.

Barons and Bishops then paid troops to be a permanent part of the household. Or Granted land to knights who would provide military service in return.



This is the same as the Anglo-Saxons

This is different. The Anglo-Saxons did not make Knights swear an oath providing military service was a religious duty.

Knights made an oath to their Lord and always had to carry out military service. The Knights had to serve for at least 40 days.

The King could call on the Knights to put down rebellions, carry out military campaigns or to garrison a castle.



### Scotland:

- William tried to invade in 1072, but failed.
- The border was constantly under dispute.
- The Scottish did sign the Treaty of Abernethy in 1072. Malcom III of Scotland swore fealty to William.
- For much of this period the Scottish leaders acted as client Kings to the Normans.
- The Bishop of Durham stopped Scottish threat.

### Wales:

- This was not a united country, it was 5 warrior Kingdoms ruled by Warrior Princes.
- It was Lawless and was a particular problem for William.

# National and Local Government

Before the Conquest, England's national government was quite effective. The King was in charge but the nobility were involved in the process of decision making through the witan ensuring their loyalty. The Norman Kings continued to listen to the advice of their leading subjects through the Great Council.

### What do I need to know:

- How William used the military to control.
- A definition of Patronage.
- What a Writ is.
- The role of the King.

### Key Words:

- Patronage
- Shire reeve
- Sheriff
- Writ



## What changed and what stayed the same?

### Anglo-Saxon

- King Edward the most powerful person in Anglo Saxon country
- The King governed the country, created new laws, controlled the production of money, owned and granted land, had the ability to raise an army and decide taxes
- The Witan was a council that advised the king on issues of government
- The land was divided into earldoms; Northumbria, Mercia, East Anglia, Wessex, Kent. There were lots of ways the land was divided up.
- Burhs were built for the public and maintained by the town for the protection of all, designed to protect Anglo Saxons
- Most of society was made up of peasant farmers, slaves and thegns (local lords)
- People had to obey the law, use the king's coins, pay taxes and complete military service, provide for the army
- The men of the Anglo Saxon army was called the fyrd
- Earls were the highest Anglo Saxon aristocracy, the area controlled by an earl was called an earldom, the earl's power relied on support of the thegns
- Thegns were those who held their land directly from the king and served him
- Ceorls did not own the land where they worked but they leased it from the lord and they were independent farmers.
- Cottars and serfs made up about 80% of the population
- Religion in Anglo Saxon England was an important part of everyday life, as people believed in heaven and hell. The king was seen as an agent of God, and his conduct and rule had to reflect this

### Normans

- King William declared that all land in England now belonged to him when he was crowned and he was free to grant this land to those who served him well
- The King governed the country, William enforced the laws much more strictly, the royal seal had an image of William of it and so did the king's writs (official documents and proclamations) were used to maintain control, oath ceremonies were also held to serve William loyally
- The land was divided into smaller areas that meant that no one person or family had all of the power
- Castles were built to establish control over England, they were private for the lord, small and easy to defend and designed to control the people
- Society was divided under the Norman feudal system, based mainly on landholding, many new laws were brought in Curia Regis, the King's court.
- Barons and Tenants in chief were the large landholders of Norman England who held their land directly from the king, they also had a lot of power
- Knights were called upon when needed, their role was to guard their Lord's property, ride out to combat any threats and provide up to 40 days service directly to the king.
- Villeins were those who actually did the farming and the work, but had little power, feudalism tied everyone closer to be dependent on their lord

### The role of the King!

The king had the power to:

- The king was the only one who could make laws for the whole kingdom.
- He alone could raise taxes on a national level.
- Certain more serious legal cases 'royal pleas.' were only heard by the King or the King's court.

### Patronage!

To encourage loyalty, the king would offer land but could also grant offices such as sheriffdoms.

Those who were not loyal officer could expect to have their land taken off them. Lords who wanted to have power or land needed to remain loyal.



### Government by writ!

In Anglo-saxon times the main instrument of government was to issue an order in writing (called a WRIT!) This was a short document which gave orders to be sent around the country. The Normans continued this system but offered far more Writs. William wanted a more centralised government.



# What do we mean by Landholding and Lordship?

We mean who control and owned the land, how William used the Feudal system to distribute land and how he divided it up between his Lords in Lordships.

**For example:**

Although William's distribution of land made lordships more compact the impact of this would have been affected by nobles who then granted out pieces of land to their followers. When there were revolts by nobles William broke up the compact lordships such as with the Earl of Shrewsbury, who controlled most of Shropshire.



How did landholding change?

| Anglo-Saxon  | Normans  |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• They had about 4,000 Thegns.</li> <li>• Edward the Confessor granted very large areas of land to his earls. They got too big and powerful.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Landholding became more concentrated.</li> <li>- By 1086 only 4 English Thegns still had any land.</li> <li>- The King, the Church and 200 Norman Barons and Bishops held the land.</li> <li>- William did not let any one person have too much land.</li> <li>- Apart from the Marcher Lords- who were a special case.</li> <li>- Barons were granted smaller amounts of land- often confined to one county. This made it much harder for them to build a power base from which to challenge the King's position.</li> </ul> |

# Landholding and Lordship!

William and his barons had more power than their predecessors, but the basic framework of Anglo-Saxon state remained the same.

**Lordship!**

It was important that the king gave out land to his followers it was given out in much more compact units rather than the old Anglo-Saxon estates which tend to be more widely scattered. William would lump together the lands of small landholders and give them to a single new Norman Lord. This was important because it would have been a big change.

**What do I need to know:**

- To define the 'Landholding' and 'Lordship'.
- To understand how William used this to gain control
- To know who the Marcher Lords are.
- To understand how landownership changed.

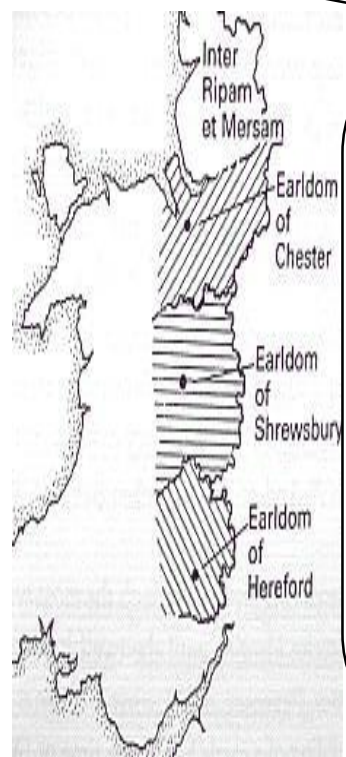
**Key Words:**

- Barons
- Bishops
- Earldoms
- Lords
- Patronage
- Thanes

Wales was not a united country with a single leader but 5 kingdoms each ruled by a warrior prince. William could not conquer it as he had England.



Wales and the Marcher Lords?



On several occasions William attempted to take over north and west Wales using his army, but he failed. The princes did in theory swear loyalty to him in exchange for his protection. However, they were not very co-operative and the border was an area of attack.

The borders between Wales and England needed to be powerful. Where William feared invasion or rebellion he granted large pieces of land to his most trusted followers. He granted land to the Earls of:

- Shrewsbury
- Hereford
- Chester

The border area was known as the Marches and so the barons were known as the Marcher Lords.

**The role of the Marcher Lords!**

The Marcher Lords were almost independent rulers in their areas. They were tasked with preventing any raid by the Welsh. Their extra powers including: Keeping their own armies, building castles without the Kings permission and making laws in their area.

# How was land controlled by the Anglo-Saxons?

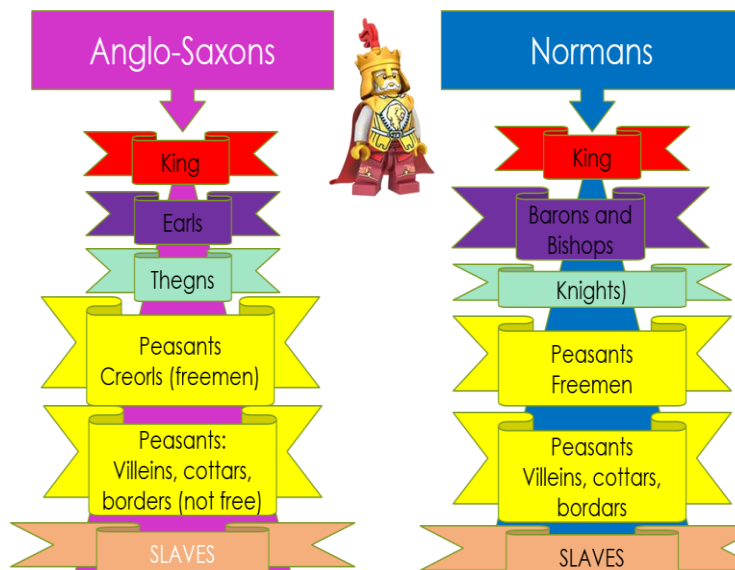
Before the Normans arrived in 1066, the English were ruled by the King Edward the Confessor and the Anglo-Saxon-aristocracy- the earls. England was divided into earldoms (areas of land). The King could make anyone an earl, and given them an earldom, but he could also take land away. He could request troops from earls during times of war and service of their Housecarls and Fyrd if they were to keep the King happy!

## What happened to English Landowners?

- William wanted to reward mercenaries loyal service with land as well as money.
- By 1076 the last English Earl Waltheof had been beheaded.
- There were only 2 Englishmen who held land directly from the King: Thurkill of Arden and Colswein of Lincoln.
- By 1096 all of the Senoir positions in the Church were held by Normans.
- Anglo-Saxons lack of loyalty meant that they were replaced by Normans.
- William instead used the Feudal system to favour those who had helped him conquer his new Kingdom.

# Landholding and Lordship!

The Feudal System was how William used land to ensure loyalty.



**What do I need to know:**

- To define the 'Feudal System'
- To explain why William tried to retain leading Anglo-Saxons and failed.
- To know the roles, rights and responsibilities of government.

### King:

- William directly owned 20% of the land.
- 25% was owned by the Church.
- The rest was shared out amongst William's supported.
- 200 Bishops and Barons.



### Barons and Bishops:

- They were granted land (they did not own it- they held it in tenure)
- In return they swore fealty and paid homage to William.
- They also promised money and service.



### Knights:

- Under-tenants
- They promised to be loyal to their baron or bishop.
- A knight also be called a LORD OF THE MANOR.
- They served as knights in the army.
- They granted some of their land to the peasant.



### Peasants

- They had to obey the Lord their manor in return for their land.
- They also gave the lord some of their crops and worked a certain number of days on his lands without pay.
- Most could not leave the Lord's land without permission- therefore most were not freemen.

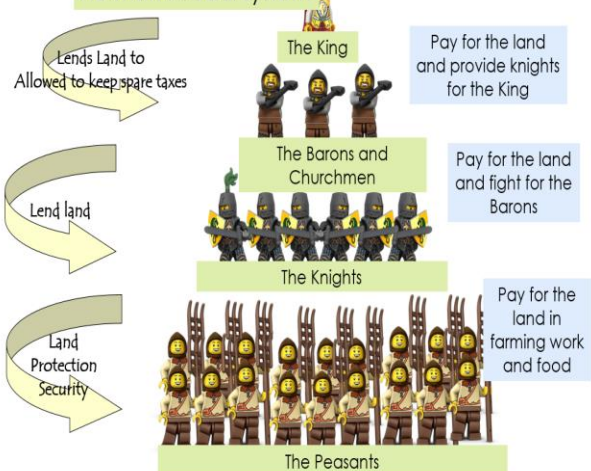


### Slaves

- They made up 10% of the population in 1086
- Rapidly declined as they were expensive to keep and the Church disapproved.

It was the organisation of society whereby the higher layers of society gave land to the lower in return for an oath (a promise).

## Norman Feudal system



The feudal system provided William with an army and made sure the population was kept under control. Loyalty to the King was the first obligation of all noblemen and knights.

## Oath of Fealty:

The Oath of Fealty was an oath of loyalty. IT was a promise to serve the Lord and be faithful. IT was a religious act

### Key Words:

- Administration
- Aristocracy
- Earldoms
- Feudalism
- Lords
- Patronage
- Social hierarchy
- Thanes
- Villein



William developed the system to his advantage:

1. Norman Lords replaced Anglo-Saxons.
2. The King had far more power.
3. The peasants were more exploited.

The Norman Feudal system was more formal than the Anglo-Saxon system.

For example the Anglo-Saxon kings had raised armies for their tenants as they were needed.

This continued but was more formal with knights guaranteeing a certain number of days service.

## How were suspects tried? Trial by...



Water!

A suspected person was strapped to a chair and thrown into a lake. If they sank they were innocent; if they floated they were guilty, and then they were executed. The accused died in any case, by drowning or execution.



Fire!

This involved a person putting their arm into a cauldron of boiling water or holding a red hot iron bar and walking 3 paces. The wound was bandaged and if it started to heal after 3 days the person was innocent; if it did not they were guilty.



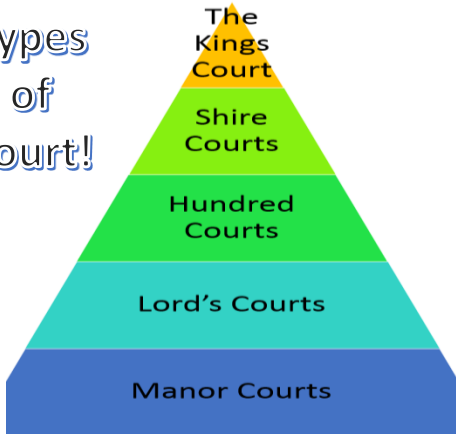
Combat!

This was introduced by the Normans! NEW! If a nobleman was accused of a crime he would fight his accuser and whoever won the fight was thought to be right. The loser was wrong and was also usually dead by the end of the fight.

### The Murdrum Fine!

The Normans also introduced a special system to protect themselves from Anglo-Saxon hostility, the MURDRUM FINE! If a Norman was killed and their murderer had not been found within 5 days, the hundred (all the local community) would be fined. These fines helped to reduce violent acts against the Normans but when attacks did occur, the fines provided valuable income for the King.

## Types of Court!



### Key Words:

- Manorial Court
- Hue and Cry
- Constables
- Tithing
- Oaths
- Watchmen
- Trial by ordeal



# Law and Order

## Oaths!

- A high value continued to be placed on people's words or promises.
- People who knew the accused were called to give account- not necessarily giving evidence, more likely called to comment on the character of the accused.
- To ensure they told the truth they first had to swear an oath on a holy book or relic.
- Oaths were a continuation of the Anglo-Saxon system but their use declined in more serious cases.
- People were persuaded to make an oath of allegiance known as a common oath which meant they promised not to be involved in any major crime.
- If anyone was involved in a crime their whole family was punished. Punishments were decided in the courts.

### What do I need to know:

- The Law courts
- Punishments
- Trial by ordeal
- Law enforcement.

## How was the law enforced?

- This was the system for catching criminals after an offence occurred.
- This meant that everyone had a duty to raise the alarm if they saw a crime taking place and everyone who heard the alarm had to help to catch the suspect. If anyone ignored the hue and cry, they would be fined.

- This was a group of 10-12 freemen.
- They promised to prevent each other from committing a crime.
- If one of them did, they had to reveal the guilty one or risk the whole group being punished, usually by a fine.
- However, many guilty men escaped.
- Some sought sanctuary in the church.

- Most towns had a watchman who tried to make sure that people kept to the CURFEW. They were there to prevent crime and catch criminals.
- They were either volunteers or were given the job as a duty.
- Many did not take their job seriously and regarded their duty as a chance to drink with friends.

- Some places had constables to keep an eye on things, but these men only had the job for a year.
- They had the power to arrest people, break up fights and prevent fires.
- They held the key to the Stocks.
- They were not paid much and often had other work to supplement their income.

Tithing! Hue and Cry!

Watchmen

Constables

|                       |  |
|-----------------------|--|
| <b>Kings Court</b>    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The King was the most important person in the justice system this was the same as under the Anglo-Saxons.</li> <li>• His decisions were binding.</li> <li>• The King's court dealt with royal pleas.</li> <li>• Crimes: The most serious offences, robbery, rape, arson, treason, murder.</li> <li>• The King could also hear appeals from lower courts.</li> </ul> |
| <b>Shire Courts</b>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Anglo Saxon.</li> <li>• Not much change</li> <li>• They now met regularly and were supervised by a sheriff.</li> <li>• The judges were landowners or sheriffs.</li> <li>• Crimes: They heard disputes over land or theft or violence.</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Hundred Courts</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NEW NORMAN IDEA.</li> <li>• Also known as the HONOURIAL COURTS.</li> <li>• They were for the Lord to deal with his tenants.</li> <li>• They supervised property transactions or announced new laws from the King.</li> <li>• The tenants gave the Lord advice.</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Manor Courts:</b>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Manor Court was the area of land controlled by the Lord of the Manor.</li> <li>• Minor court</li> <li>• Dealt with day to life e.g. bad ploughing or labour not being supplied.</li> </ul>  |

## How difference was inheritance Law?

The traditions of inheritance changed under the Normans so that the king had more direct control.



| Anglo-Saxon   | Normans  |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Under the Anglo-Saxons, property and land was divided between all the sons.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Normans changed this and property was passed on intact to the eldest son.</li> <li>This is known as <b>Primogeniture</b>.</li> <li>This meant that the Normans were able to keep large estates of land and maintain power effectively.</li> <li>Primogeniture meant that younger brothers and sisters could be left with nothing after their father's death.</li> <li>The Lord could then keep the land, grant it away as a gift or sell it off.</li> <li>If a tenant died before their heir was of age, the Lord could take the land temporarily!</li> <li>These laws were known as FEUDAL INCIDENTS and gave a new source of money and power for the king and the elite. It meant the lords had continuing control of how much their tenants descended from one generation to another.</li> </ul> |



William II abused this system, causing a lot of complaints. Therefore, the coronation charter of Henry I promised that he would act in a just and lawful manner.

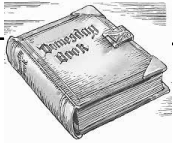
## The Domesday Survey and Tax!

Domesday Survey- how and why William survey the country to keep the money flowing in.

What do I need to know:

- Why William ordered the survey
- Compare life in England in 1066 and 1086
- Evaluate the impact of the Normans on landholding.
- Understand inheritance laws.

## The Domesday Survey!



- In 1085 William asked officials to conduct a survey of all property and resources in England.
- It was a massive undertaking which was completed in less than a year.
- The resulting document is one of the best sources we have about Norman England.
- The Norman Conquest had completely changed the ownership of land in England. Since 1066 people had died or land had been sold and land disputes were common.
- They took up court time and caused unrest. A thorough survey would reveal exactly who owned what and how that had changed since 1066.
- Even more importantly it would allow William to change rents and tax people more efficiently.
- When it was presented to the King at Salisbury on 1<sup>st</sup> August 1086, the most important tenants were made to swear loyalty to the King. The final survey as we have it today was completed by William's son, William Rufus.

### When did the survey become a book?

In 1085, William faced the threat of invasion from Danish Vikings and the Count of Flanders, so he called a Council of War in Gloucester. He needed to enforce a geld (tax) to pay for his army. He ordered an inventory to be drawn up in order to help him raise the tax.

### What does Domesday mean?

The survey became known as Domesday which means 'day of judgement'. The term was only used in the 12<sup>th</sup> century because by then the legal authority of the Survey was seen as being equal to that of God's on judgement day.

### What does the survey tell us about William?

William and his family owned 20% of the land in England. The Church owned 25% and about 10 members of the Norman aristocracy held a further 25% of land. The remaining 30% was held by 170 people.

### What does it tell us about England?

It tells us who owned the land but also sheds light on England's population and how much wealth that population did or did not have.

### What does it tell us about the population?

There were about 2,000 knights and 10,000 Norman settlers. The total population was between 1.5 and 2 million people.

### What did the survey miss out?

Some places were left out including London and Winchester, perhaps because the survey was left unfinished.

### What can we learn from the Domesday about differences between Anglo-Saxon and Norman England?

About 250 people controlled the land, this was SIMILAR to the time of Edward the Confessor. However, the main DIFFERENCE was that under King Edward the land belonged mostly to Anglo-Saxons, under William it was mainly owned by foreigners.

#### Key Words:

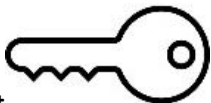
- Patronage
- Primogeniture
- Feudal incidents
- Write



# Village Life!

## Key Words:

- Manor House
- Fallow
- Mill pond
- Manorial Court
- Lord of the Manor
- Open field system.



90% of people lived in the countryside during this period. There were small clusters of houses with between 100 and several 100 people. They were controlled by the lord of the manor, who lived in the manor house.

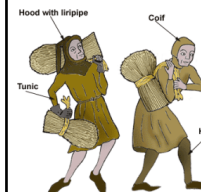
## Roles and responsibilities

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>R<br/>e<br/>e<br/>v<br/>e</b>             | Senior officials who worked on behalf of the Crown in local areas, for example, as a chief magistrate. After the Conquest, the reeve's job was reduced to the day-to-day management of the manor and its peasants, an essential role to ensure the everyone did their jobs. The reeve was a peasant chosen by the Lord or through a vote by the peasants. |
| <b>B<br/>a<br/>i<br/>l<br/>i<br/>f<br/>f</b> | In charge of collecting taxes for the crown and ensuring that crops were gathered and debts repaid.   |
| <b>P<br/>r<br/>i<br/>e<br/>s<br/>t</b>       | Ran the local church, he was responsible for ensuring marriages were legal.   |
| <b>M<br/>i<br/>l<br/>l<br/>e<br/>r</b>       | Produced grain to make bread for the area. Bread had to be baked in the ovens of the lord of the manor and the lord decided how much money the miller paid for this.  |

## What do I need to know:

- To understand the key features of a village.
- To know how much changed in a village.
- To know the key roles in the village.

## Classes of Peasants!



97% of the population were peasants.

Freemen

- Were free peasants who paid rent to the lord for their land.
- Sometimes they had to carry out BOON WORK (extra days of unpaid work for the lord)
- The number of free peasants fell significantly between 1066 and 1086 and many became villeins.

Villeins

- Worked on the Lord's land for no pay.
- They had no freedom and could not leave the village without permission.
- They were granted some land to farm for themselves.

Bordars and Cottars

- Poorer villeins and they were given less land by the Lord.

Slaves

- Made up about 10% of the population of 1066.
- They had no freedom and no land.
- Slavery rapidly declined after the Norman Conquest partly due to a change in attitude but also because it was probably easier to give land in return for labour than it was to support slaves.

|                          | Change   | Continuity   |
|--------------------------|--|--|
| <b>Taxes</b>             | The Normans increased the rent and taxes and much money raised was spent in Normandy.  |  |
| <b>Freedom</b>           | The Domesday Survey shows the number of freemen declined dramatically as a result of the Conquest. Freemen who could not afford the increased rents had to revert to being villeins-working for the Lord with limited freedom.   |  |
| <b>Forest Laws</b>       | The Normans created game reserves such as the New Forest in Hampshire and rove 500 families from the land. The Forest were Royal and Forest Law banned Anglo-Saxons from hunting in the forests. If they did they faced serious punishment such as being blinded. The rich hated it as they lost out of sport, the poor lots out on a source of food and their crops were damaged. |  |
| <b>Law and Order</b>     |  | There was no new manorial system imposed on England after the conquest the traditions and organisation stayed the same. Danelaw custom survived in the North and East of England.  |
| <b>Lord of the Manor</b> |  | the relationship of the villein to his land as well as working for the Lord, he could not leave his land and he paid a fine – the 'merchet' when his daughter married and 'heriot' when he took over the land from his father. The villein could be taxed by his Lord.   |
| <b>Work</b>              |  | Ordinary peasants the structure of their village remain the same, they would see the same people doing their jobs around the village – the bailiff, the reeve, the miller, the parish priest. If they were villeins then there may be some free tenants who paid money for their property, and below them would be cottars who had smallholdings of about 2 hectares who worked on the Lord's land one day a week and provided hired labour. |

# Town Life!

## Key Words:

- Burgesses
- Domesday
- Franchise
- Guilds
- Trade



There had been very few towns in Anglo-Saxon England. But they were very important trading centres. Anglo-Saxon England had a strong trade with mainland Europe and Scandinavia, mainly exporting wool and cloth. Under the Norman control trade increased and the number of towns and size of towns gradually increased. Trade increased because the Norman Lords had greater link with mainland Europe. After the Norman Conquest some existing towns grew in military, religious and administrative centres.

## What do I need to know:

- Explain how towns changed under the Normans.
- To know the key trades in the towns.
- Compare Norman towns and villages.

## What evidence is there for the growth of towns?

- The evidence can be seen from the Domesday survey of 1086.
- London: 10,000 inhabitants.
- Winchester: 6,000 inhabitants.
- Norwich, York and Lincoln: 4,000-5,000 people.

Between 1066 and 11,000 21 new towns were created!

## Burgesses:

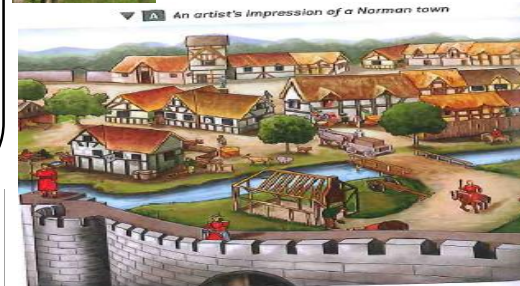
- A Burgess was a town dweller from the upper ranks of townspeople. They owed services and taxes to the Lord and could buy and sell property.
- Lincoln had 970 burgesses.
- Burgesses had legal and administrative responsibilities but the amount of power they had did vary from town to town.

By 1086 only 5% of the population lived in towns.

Many developed as new religious centres with new Cathedrals in Durham, Ely, Salisbury, Winchester and Lincoln.



An artist's impression of a Norman town



The Salt Trade

- Salt was very important product as it was used for cooking and to preserve food. The town of Droitwich, for example, grew rapidly due to the production and sale of salt.
- The Domesday Book shows that there were 13 salt houses in Droitwich and that three salt worker paid their tax to the King in Salt.

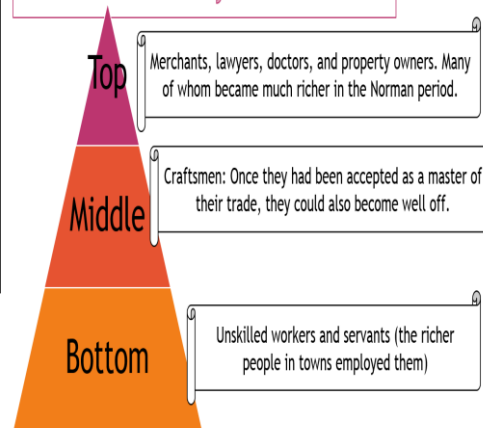
## By how much did life really change?

- The Normans did change life in England.
- The change was different according to social status.
- For those at the very top of the hierarchy when the Normans arrived, the Norman impact was very significant.
- For the peasants life changed very little.

## Markets and Fairs!

- Markets and Fairs could only be held if a Franchise (authorisation for a group of towns people to carry out business activity) was given in the form of a grant.
- After the Norman Conquest 2800 grants were given.
- Whilst markets gave traders a place to buy and sell, fair marked religious events and were an occasion to celebrate.

## What was the hierarchy in Norman Towns?



## NEW IDEA: GUILDS!

The Normans introduced guilds to England. A guild is a society of merchants which controlled who was allowed to carry out business there. To practice as a merchant you had to be part of the guild. Craft guilds were introduced in the later Middle Ages and were used to monitor the quality of goods at set prices, wages and conditions for work.



Metalwork

- The production of iron and lead was very important in Norman England for building houses and making weapons. Towns that specialised in metalworking were often situated near woodland, because wood was used in the furnaces needed to melt and shape metal.

The Wool Trade

- Wool was in great demand in England and neighbouring counties for making clothes.
- It was produced in the countryside, but was brought, along major rivers to market in towns such as York and Lincoln.
- Wool was often exported abroad to towns such as Flanders in Belgium.
- Some English coastal towns grew as centres of international trade, including Boston, London and Southampton.
- Towns like Bristol grew as a result of trade in wine from Gascony.

