

# 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.

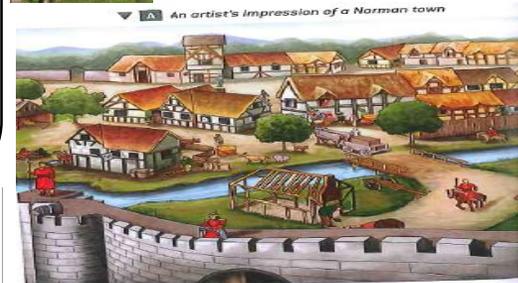
Between 1066 and 11,000 21 new towns were created!

## 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.



## NEW IDEA: GUILDS!

The Normans introduced guilds to England. A guild is a society 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.



## How did trade affect the growth of towns?

Trade played an important role in the growth of towns during the Norman period. Trade links with France were strengthened at the expense of Scandinavians links, however the Normans brought stability in trade and this led to the development of many towns.

### 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.

### 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.

## 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?

