



Chertsey

What was Chertsey like in the middle ages?

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Introduction

Chertsey is an old medieval town that is mentioned in the Domesday Book. It owes its existence to the Abbey which dominated the village in the Middle Ages. These maps provide us with a way of finding out about Chertsey.

Study the maps of Chertsey. What can they tell us about Chertsey in the Middle Ages?

Tasks

Look at Source 1

1. This is a medieval map of Chertsey.
 - a) Find the following buildings on the medieval map (use the transcript if you need to). Briefly say what activity took place there.
 - Oxlake Mill
 - Monastery of Chertsey
 - bridge
 - the village of Laleham
 - Burghwey Barn
 - Redewynd Causeway
 - track leading to mill
 - b) What is the largest building on the map?
 - c) What does the size of the Abbey tell you about religion in the Middle Ages?
 - d) How accurate do you think this map is?

Look at Source 2

2. Look at this map of Chertsey drawn in the 20th century. Compare it to your map of medieval Chertsey.
 - a) Which parts of medieval Chertsey are still standing today?
 - b) List all the differences you can see.
 - c) What buildings do you think are the most important ones in Chertsey today?
 - d) How accurate do you think this map is?

Background

Present day Chertsey sits on the river Thames. In the 15th century several streams also ran through it. The lands and the buildings shown on the map belonged to the Benedictine Abbey which created Chertsey. The block of houses at the top represent to village of Laleham.

Medieval picture maps like this one are rare. This one shows most of the major buildings expected in a medieval village; church, barn, mill, wooden bridge as well as a road and track. The medieval map was used to settle a dispute between the abbey and three people who rented lands from the abbey. This explains the labels on the fields which give the name of the tenant, the field's size and what the field was used for.

Map drawing in the Middle Ages was rather primitive. There were no agreed symbols for buildings as there are today. The cartographers who drew these maps drew little pictures of the key buildings. Distances were estimated and scales were not used. Nonetheless, the maps still indicated where things were in relation to each other. What is important for historians is that this map shows the buildings that existed at the time. From the buildings we can begin to make conclusions about what went on in the village and how the people in Chertsey lived.

Teachers Notes

This lesson provides pupils with a glimpse of a medieval village. By using a printout of the outline above, pupils can identify the major buildings and make inferences about medieval village life.

Medieval picture maps are not accurate but they do give pictorial representations. The writing on fields gives details about their size and their use. There is commonland, meadow and land belonging to the abbey. Pupils could research the nature of holding land in feudal times. A further task may be to ask the pupils to draw a modern day map of medieval Chertsey using standard symbols.

Finally, pupils are encouraged to make a comparison between medieval and modern village life.

They can see areas of continuity as well as change.

Sources

Medieval Map : E 146/25 f.222

Modern Map : Ordnance Survey

Schemes of Work

What was it like to live here in the past?

Key Stage 1-2 Unit 18

How hard was life for medieval people in town and country?

Key Stage 3 Unit 3

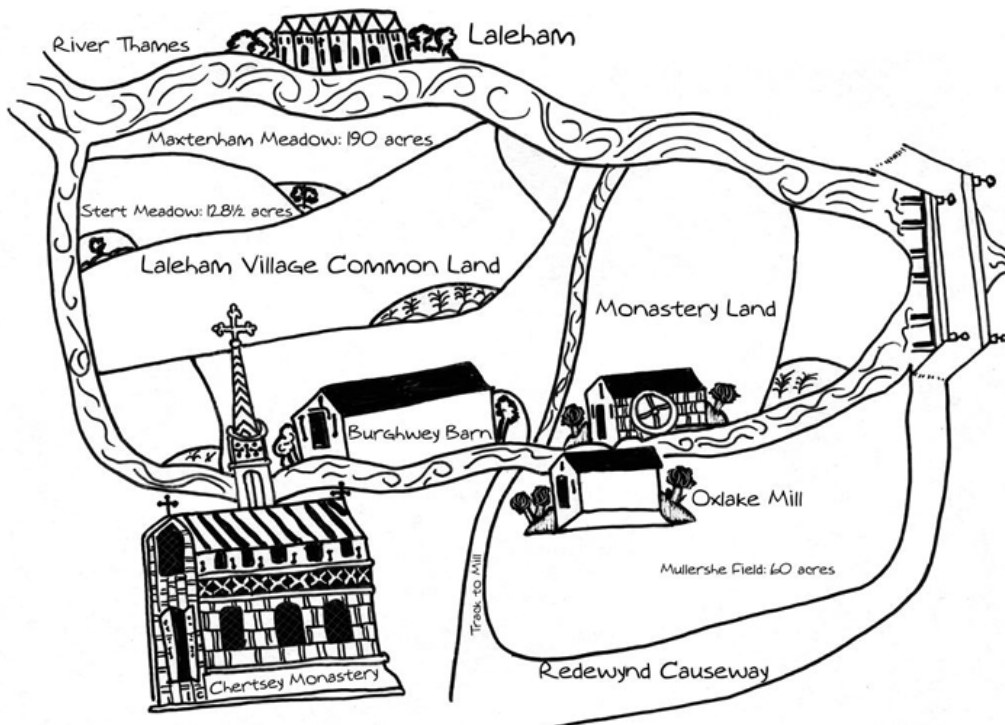
How did the medieval church affect people's lives?

Key Stage 3 Unit 4

Source 1 : Medieval map of Chertsey (E 164/25 f.222)



Source 1 : Transcript of medieval map of Chertsey (E 164/25 f.222)



Source 2 : 20th Century map of Chertsey

