



The Time Traveler's Guide to Medieval England: A Handbook for Visitors to the Fourteenth Century

By Ian Mortimer

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The Time Traveler's Guide to Medieval England: A Handbook for Visitors to the Fourteenth Century By Ian Mortimer

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Through the use of daily chronicles, letters, household accounts, and poems of the day, Mortimer transports you back in time, providing answers to questions typically ignored by traditional historians. You will learn how to greet people on the street, what to use as toilet paper, why a physician might want to taste your blood, and how to know whether you are coming down with leprosy.

The result is the most astonishing social history book you're ever likely to read: revolutionary in its concept, informative and entertaining in its detail, and startling for its portrayal of humanity in an age of violence, exuberance, and fear.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

In this compelling volume, Medieval history expert Mortimer (The Fears of Henry IV) transports readers to jolly, squalid old England for a thorough survey of everyday 14th century life. Going beyond the "nasty, brutish and short" of it, Mortimer's immersive visitor's-guide approach to popular history gives readers a seamless sense of being there. The population is young—"Half of the population is aged twenty-one or less"—but incredibly diverse. The idea that social classes were distinct and few-fighters, prayers, and farmers-gets exploded in Mortimer's examination society and the Medieval character, including everything from humor and juggling to mariners to doctors. Mortimer even argues, convincingly, over relative standards of hygiene ("to regard a medieval kitchen as 'dirty' because it has not been wiped down with modern detergent is to apply our own standards inappropriately"). He also looks at the role of period's four greatest writers of the time, and reveals the horrors of contemporary medicine (with terrifying descriptions of the plague) and law (the outskirts of every town were decorated with the hanged corpses of minor criminals). Mortimer's tongue-in-cheek visitor's guide is an impressive accomplishment, turning 600 years of history transparent to give 21st century audiences a clear view on Medieval life.

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Review

"In this compelling volume, Mortimer transports his readers. . . . Gives readers a seamless sense of being there. . . . An impressive accomplishment, turning 600 years of history transparent to give 21st-century readers a clear view of medieval life." —*Publishers Weekly*

"Mortimer addresses every aspect of medieval life, from the mundane to the bizarre. . . . Travel guides are designed to deliver helpful information about faraway places, but this one gets to the heart of a different time zone." —*The Washington Post*

"Chock-full of surprises, this is exceptional social history, compellingly told; there should be 'travel books' like this for every century. Start reading, and you won't want to stop." —*Library Journal*

"The endlessly inventive Ian Mortimer is the most remarkable medieval historian of our time." —*The Times* (UK)

About the Author

Ian Mortimer is a Fellow of the Royal Historical Society and was awarded the Alexander Prize in 2004 for his work on the social history of medicine. He holds a Ph.D. in history and a higher doctorate from the University of Exeter. He has penned five other medieval books, most recently the revolutionary study *Medieval Intrigue: Decoding Royal Conspiracies*. He has also worked for several archive and historical research organizations in the UK, where he lives with his wife and children. Visit Ian at IanMortimer.com.

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