

Domesday Book, 1086

Everyone has heard of Domesday Book

but not many know anything about it

• what is it?

• who made it?

• where is it?

• what is its value?

Domesday Book, 1086



**the
oldest
and
most
famous
English
public
record**

conducebat. / **A** festiuitate s^ci Michaelis usq; ad
festiuitate s^ci Martini

Domesday Book



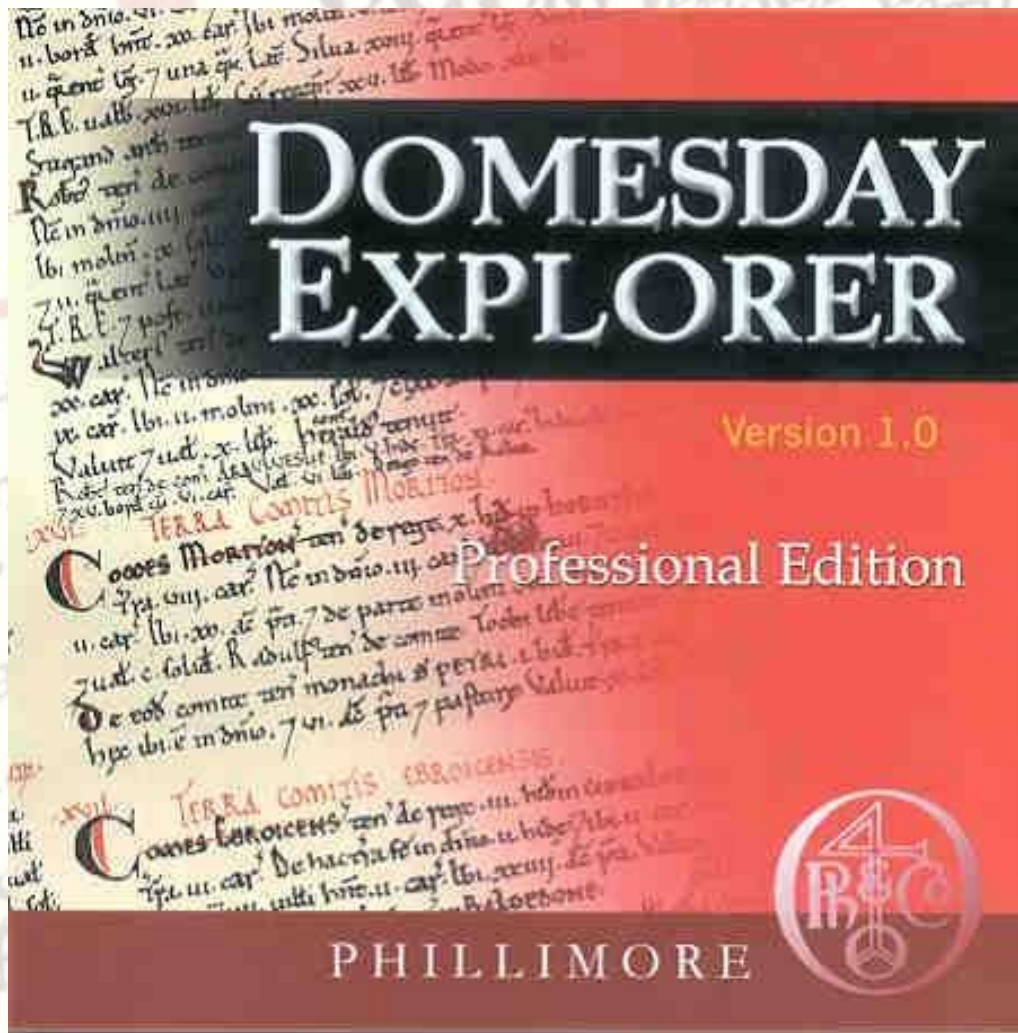
The ancient bindings

Domesday Book



Phillimore : the first modern edition

Domesday Explorer



the first electronic edition

At his Christmas court in 1085, William the Conqueror ordered the Domesday Inquest after

‘very deep conversation with his council about this land, how it was occupied, or with which men ... and how much land each man had ... and how much it was worth’

(Anglo-Saxon Chronicle)





**The
Domesday
Inquest was
begun and
completed
in 1086**

conducebat. **A** festiuitate s^ci Michaelis usq; ad

From the earliest times, Domesday Book was kept in the Royal Treasury with the king's most valuable possessions



Today it is in the Public Record Office

Domesday Book is superbly organised for the business of government

~~HIC ANNOTAVIT TENENTES TERRAS IN MIDDLESEX.~~

i. Rex Willelms.	xiii. Ricard' filius Gillelmi comit.
ii. Archieps cantuariens.	xiiii. Robertus sequon.
iii. Eps london' & canonici.	xv. Robertus faston.
iiii. Abbacia de Westmonast.	xvi. Robertus filius Rozelini.
v. Abbacia s' kenevise Rotom.	xvii. Robertus blundus.
vi. Abbacia de Berchingsel.	xviii. Rogerius de Ramel.
vii. Comes Rogerius.	xix. Willelmus filius Ansculf.
viii. Comes Mortuoniens.	xx. Edouars' de Sarrlberie.
ix. Gouffrid' de manneville.	xxi. Albertus de ver.
x. Ernulf' de hielding.	xxii. Rannulfus fr' Roger.
xi. Walteri' filius odger.	xxiii. Herman
xii. Walteri' de s' Walario.	xxiiii. Iudica / elemosinay p'ost.

**The major taxpayers of Middlesex,
indexed for quick reference**

Reputation of Domesday Book

There have been some curious notions about its contents. It has been cited as:

- **The Last Judgement**
- **a guarantee of peasant freedom**
- **a record of royal tyranny**
- **evidence of English dominion of the seas**
- **a repertory of colourful tales**

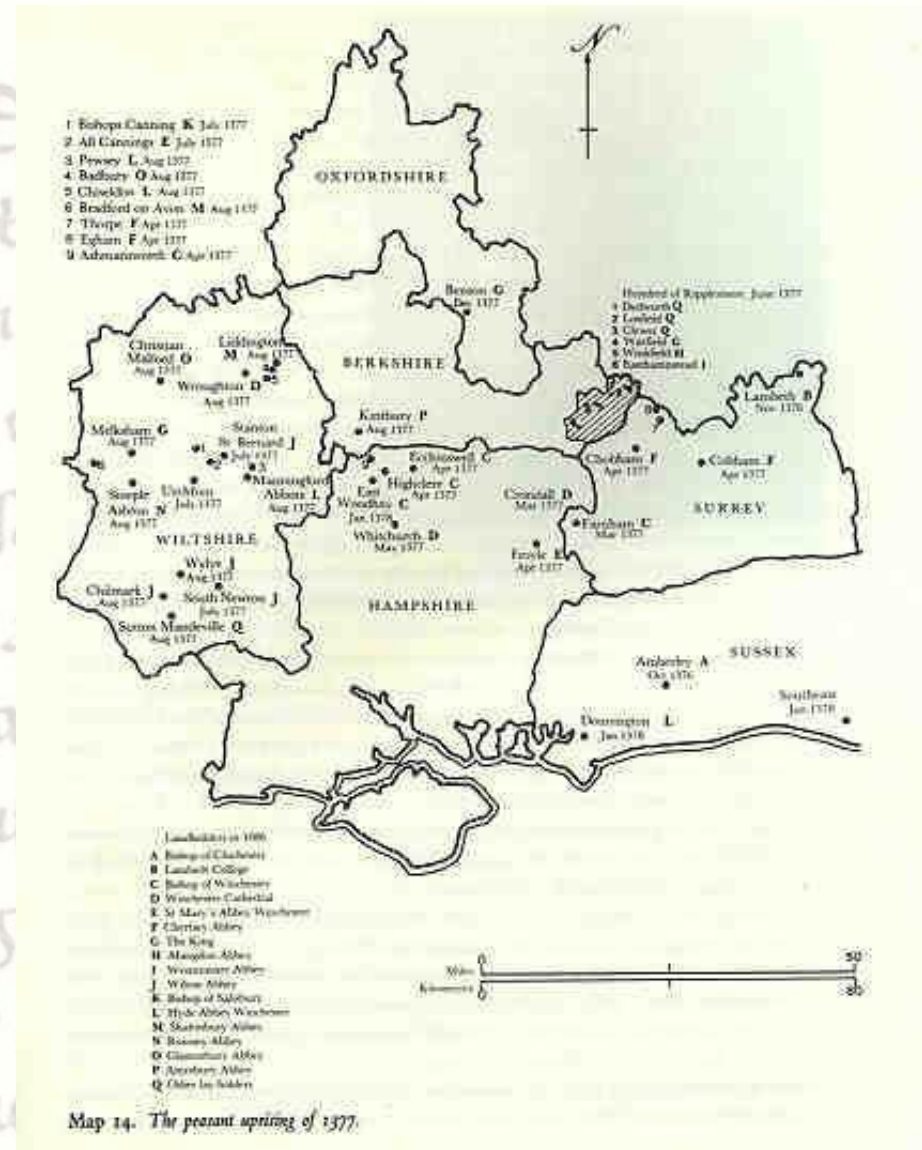
Doomsday - meaning Day of Judgement - was so named



'because its decisions, like those of the Last Judgement, are unalterable'

(Dialogue of the Exchequer, 1177)

**In the
fourteenth
century, many
peasants
claimed their
freedom on
the basis of
Domesday
Book**



appeals to Domesday Book from villages in 6 southern counties

The villagers of Benson claimed their freedom as privileged tenants on royal land

Terra Regis is the land of the king in Oxfordshire

TERRA REGIS.
Rex tenet ~~BENSON~~ ~~TOME~~. Ibi fe. xii. hide. una v. q. p.
min. T. R. E. exant ibi. l. car. No in dno. viij. car.
7 v. serui. 7 xxxii. villi cu. xxix. bord. hnt. xxiiij. car.
Ibi. ii. molini de. xl. solid. Ito pra 7 pascua. 7 piscarias
7 silual. exeunt. xxiii. lib. 7 xv. sol. 7 v. den. p annu.
De Curte. xi. sol. De annona unu anni. xxx. lib.
Soca de. iiii. hnt 7 dimid. pan ad hoc an.
Ito too. redd p annu qd. xx. lib 7 c. solid.
~~De xxx. car. hnt. Ibi. fe. x. hide.~~

In the seventeenth century, Domesday Book was seen as evidence of the Norman Yoke, the root of royal absolutism and tyranny



Samuel Pepys sought evidence of English 'dominion of the sea' in Domesday Book



habebant ca
Burgenses d
dies. & in u
faciebant
Quando m
caballo tra
estate. Burg
aliu adu
conducebat.

festiuitate s Michaelis usq; ad



**The reputation of
Domesday Book
reached even the
rural backwaters
of the Mississippi
valley where, 800
years later, Huck
Finn told the tale
of Henry VIII and
his many wives
recorded there**



According to Huck, Henry VIII:

**‘used to marry a new wife every day,
and chop of her head next morning.**

**And he made every one of them tell him
a tale every night; and he kept that up
until he had hogged 1001 tales that way;
and then he put them all in a book’**

**‘and called it Domesday Book,
which was a good name’**

The truth was more mundane.

The Conqueror wanted

Domesday Book to record:

**‘how much land every landowner
had and ... how much money it was**

worth ... omitting

**not one ox,
nor one**

nor one

pig’

(Anglo-Saxon Chronicle)

Every ox and every cow and every pig is an understatement. In one entry Domesday Book recorded:

'there is half an ox'

Not 'a monstrous birth



This is simply how Domesday Book indicates shared ownership: half cows, half pigs, half mills, - even half peasants - are recorded

Fame, and 'a good name', have attracted many imitators

- William Rufus
- Oliver Cromwell
- Lloyd George
- BBC
- Gordon Brown

**King William Rufus,
instigated by an 'evil advisor', produced
a new Domesday**

**'with the king's consent he measured all the
ploughlands, which in English are called hides, with
a rope, and made a record of them; ... he reduced
their size and cut back the fields of the peasants to
increase the royal taxes. So ... he brutally oppressed
the king's helpless and faithful subjects,
impoverished them by confiscations, and reduced
them from comfortable prosperity to the verge of
starvation'**

(Ordericus Vitalis)

On the basis of this story William Rufus - rather than his father, William the Conqueror - has been credited with the making of Great Domesday by some historians





Sources on the
Crown lands of
Charles I have
been called a
**‘Domesday of
Crown Lands’,**
or
**‘Oliver Cromwell's
surveys’**

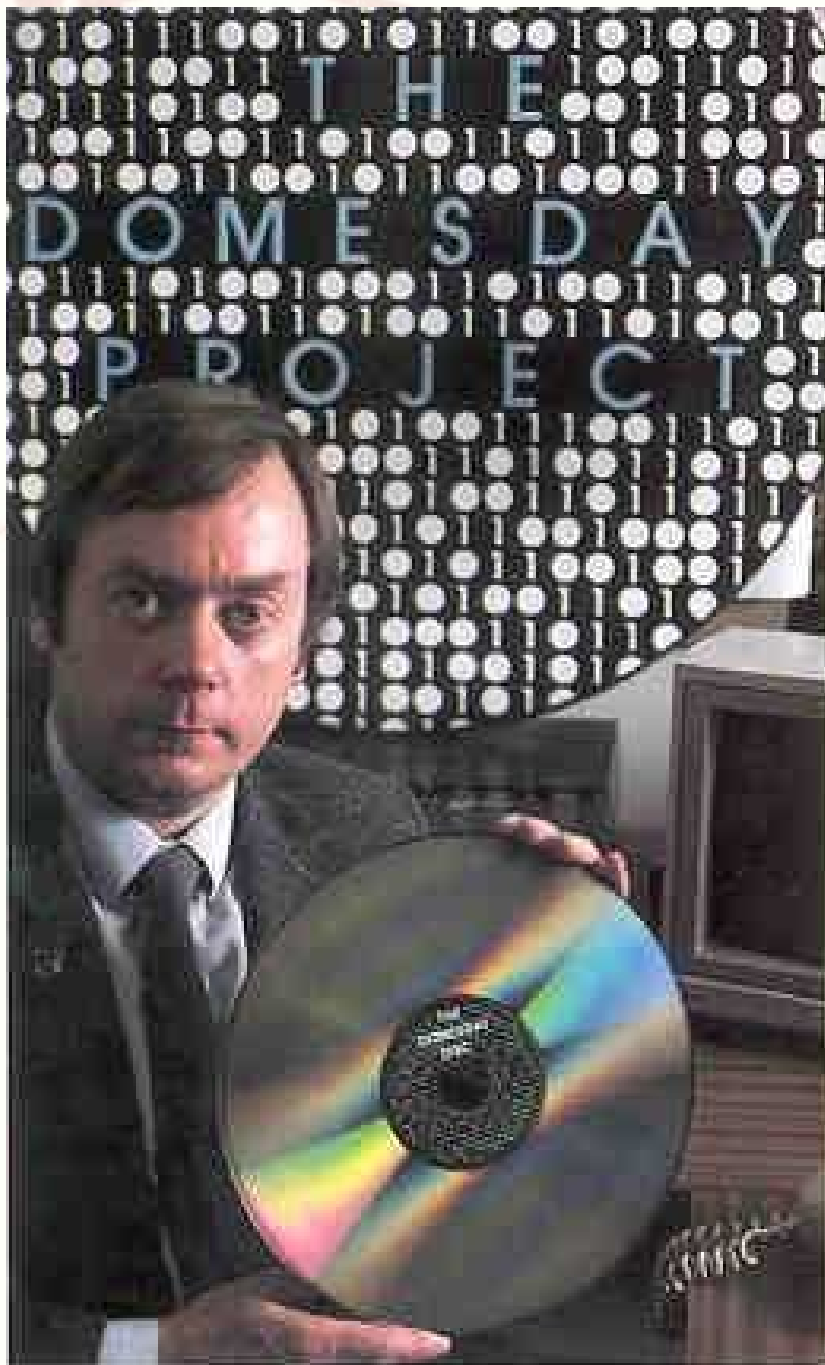
In 1910, Chancellor Lloyd George ordered a **New Domesday survey**



Budget - "Did you say that you wouldn't swallow me without masticating?"
LORD LYNSTON - "No sir - please, sir - I never said masticating, I might have said masticating."

2. From The Westminster Gazette, 1909

But he was compelled to abandon the effort by opposition from the landed interest. No new Domesday Book was compiled, and many of the records of the survey have since been dispersed and lost



**In 1986, on the
900th
anniversary of
the Domesday
Inquest, the
BBC undertook
a new
Domesday
survey**

In 1997 Chancellor Gordon Brown ordered a Register of National Assets, dubbed **Domesday Book II' by the press.**

LARRY ELLIOTT reports on the Chancellor's Domesday reprise



Judgment day . . . For Chevening (left), the state-owned house for ministers' use, the Faubourg St Honore embassy, and bandages for first world war soldiers, kept in case of another such conflict. An engraving (above) shows the probably fictitious moment at which William the Conqueror received the Domesday Book; he died before the survey was collated

MAIN PHOTOGRAPHY ANDY HALL



There was resistance from other branches of government.

After more than four years, no publication has occurred.



Thank

you

for

watching

...e p...
...i. libras. de quibus
...at p...
...tertia. Contra hoc
...o meditate aliam.
...vice in ...
...hoes. ...
...uerat saccam & socam.
...ant
...rios in hieme. 7 in
...stremannu 7 unu
...aliu aduatore. & si plus opus eet: de pecunia ei
conducebat. **A** festiuitate s. Michaelis usq; ad