

Bidford and District History Society

The Domesday Book, with special reference to Bidford and the surrounding area

An audience of more than eighty members and guests attended the first meeting of the society's second year in St Laurence's Church. They enjoyed an entertaining and mind-stretching evening provided by their learned speaker, Mr Ralph Richardson (no relation) whose subject was 'Bidford in the Domesday Book'.

Armed with photocopies of the relevant extract from Domesday – in the original mediaeval Latin – the members performed ably and volubly in their (assisted) translation activities. Mr Richardson – a retired headmaster – treated his 'class' with kindness, tolerance and understanding. 'Firm but fair' a member of the audience was heard to mutter affectionately afterwards. The translations of the group were expanded and elaborated by their teacher: they learned of the population of Bidford in 1086, how many ploughs there were, and something of the social order of a feudal society. The King held the land, and others held the land 'of' him. These tenants had, like the fleas, lesser tenants – villeins and serfs – to work the land for them.

("Great fleas have little fleas upon their backs to bite 'em,
And little fleas have lesser fleas and so ad infinitum.")

A thoroughly enjoyable evening and a fine start to the society's second year!

John Cole, Chairman

For more information on the History Society, please phone Wendy Shaddick on 778769.