

LIFE IN A LATE
MEDIEVAL CITY

Chester 1275-1520



Jane Laughton

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Chester, 1275-1520 by Jane Laughton

In the late medieval period Chester was the most important place in north-western England, serving as administrative centre of the county palatine and as the regional capital. The city was not large but its status was further enhanced by its role as ecclesiastical capital and garrison town. Chester's location ensured close links with Wales and Ireland. This study of Chester is based on a wide range of sources, written and archaeological, and contains much that is new. It reveals a city with its own distinctive character but one which shared the experiences of towns throughout medieval England.

Particular use is made of the court rolls, records that have the potential to illuminate social relationships at the neighbourhood level. The book therefore makes an important contribution to the study of medieval urban history. The focus is on the ordinary townspeople and they appear throughout: Alice the launder assaulted on the river bank by a millward's son on Whitsunday in 1306; the butcher John Daa, occupant of the property adjoining St Peter's who was arrested in 1407 on suspicion of having purchased herring from the French allies of Glyn Dŵr; the smith John Smith who paid for ale with two horseshoes in 1489. The picture that emerges is of a lively community that responded to social and economic change with enthusiasm and enterprise. 264p, b/w & col illus (Windgather Press, an imprint of Oxbow Books 2008) Paperback £20.00

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