

## **Travelling**

*by Thomas Godi*

If you had to travel, the first problem was to decide which route to take. There were very few maps of the country and those which existed were not to scale and they were not intended to help travelers. The best map, the so-called Gough Map, included roads and towns. People also used other techniques as the position of the stars and of the sun.

### Roads

There were the great highways that included Roman roads built before the end of the second century. These have remained in use throughout the Saxon and Norman centuries. The highways had to be kept in good repair for the king's travels. Other roads weren't so well maintained.

### Bridges

The first stone bridges were built during the reign of King John. In these years it was built London's most important bridge. The other bridges date from 13<sup>th</sup> century. The increasing wealth of the merchant classes influenced the building of bridges. Their good shape depended upon the local bishop.

### Tolls

There was one non-religious way of keeping bridges in good repair: levy a toll on those who cross them. People imposed prices to everything. If you were a stranger, the tolls would be heavier. These tolls vary from place to place and if you didn't pay them you wouldn't have a significant advantage.

### Road transport

The travelers had to pay attention to attacks. Before leaving you needed to buy a horse. The "destriers" were the most expensive horses. In bad weather you needed some protective clothes or waxed over-mantle. The more you took with you, the slower your progress was. Only female members of the royal family could travel by coach. When aristocrats and women were unable to ride, they could travel by litter.

## Water transport

The danger of being lost at sea diminished rapidly with the improvement of mathematical tables and astrolabes. They could be used for measuring the angles of stars in order to navigate.

## Ships

At the end of the century the main kind of ships that you could see in English waters were hulks and cogs. They were different in the way they were made. When Genoese large vessels started to appear in the British waters, English ships were built larger for long voyages.

## Bibliography

Mortimer I., *The Time-traveller's Guide to Medieval England: A Handbook for Visitors to the Fourteenth Century*. *The Bodley Head Ltd*. 2008