



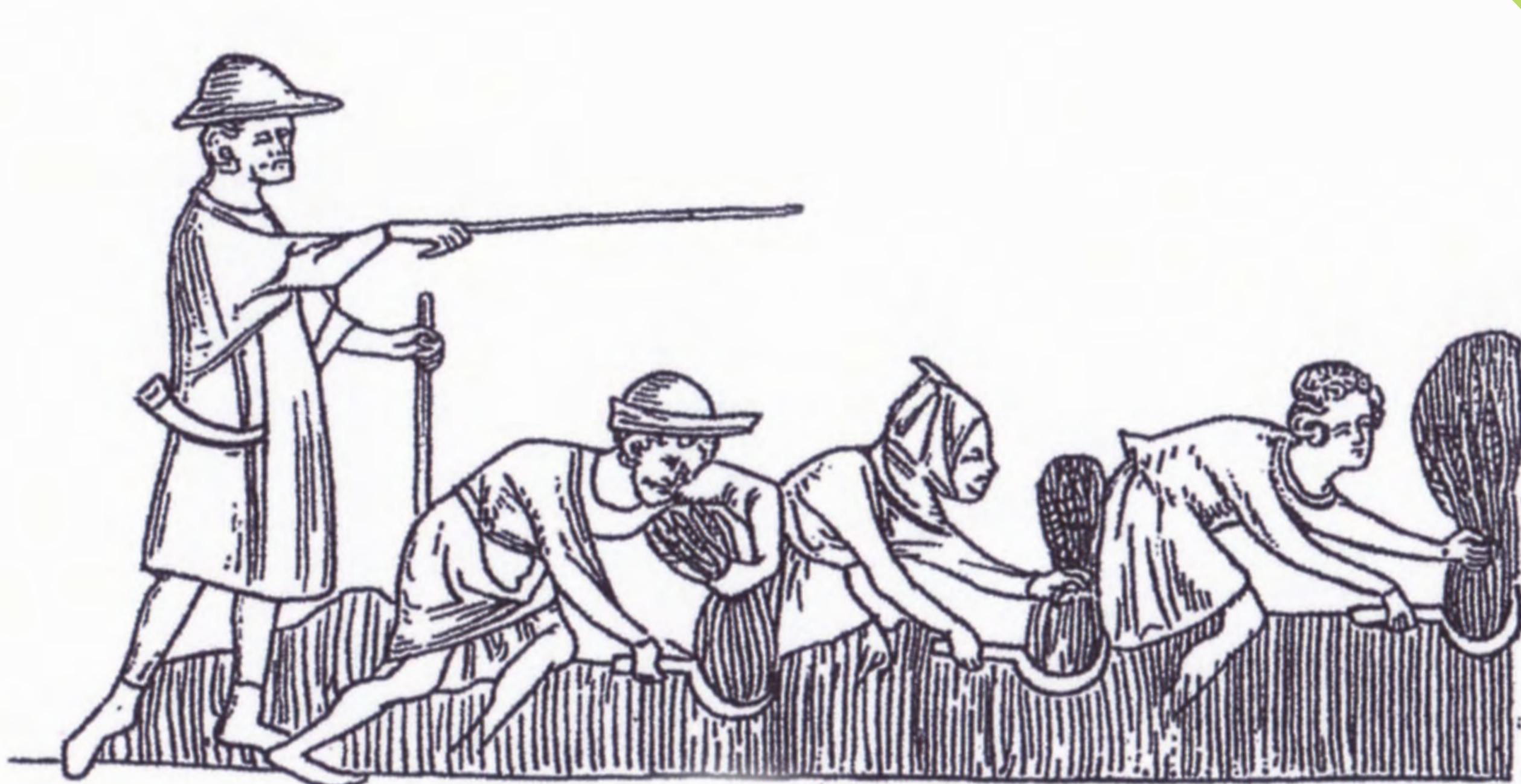
Langdyke Trust



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TWO CHARACTERS FROM TORPEL'S PAST

GEOFFREY WAS THE REEVE OF TORPEL MANOR IN 1300



REEVE SUPERVISING THE VILLEINS AT HARVEST TIME

Villeins were the people who lived in the vill or village. They worked on the lord's land for three days a week and, on the other days, they cultivated their own strips, which they rented from the lord.

Geoffrey was a villein and was responsible for Torpel manor's accounts and making sure that all the labour services were carried out by the all the other villeins. Some might be weeding while others were carting straw and repairing thatch. At harvest time he had to find extra workers.

Geoffrey was unfree and could not leave Torpel manor. He was paid no wages but was allowed firewood from the lord's woods and his pigs could graze there on acorns. This was called pannage.



KNOCKING DOWN ACORNS TO FEED THE PIGS

LUCY CHAT WAS A WIDOW LIVING IN TORPEL VILLAGE

She was also a villein. In 1301 she was the only woman in Torpel village paying tax (9d a year) to the Exchequer. If agreed by the Manor court, it was possible for a widow to take over her husband's strips in the open fields when he died. But a fine had to be paid to the lord.

She made a little money by selling her fruit and vegetables at the Thursday market and by brewing ale to sell to her neighbours.

Her life was not easy, keeping the fire alight, cooking leek pottage, feeding the pig, spinning, weaving, making her clothes...

Sixty years on and her grandsons, William and Simon, were described as villeins and were still living on the manor. There were several references to them in the records of the Manor court guaranteeing repayment of their neighbours' debts. We would perhaps call them payday loans!



LUCY CHAT WITH HER TETHERED HEN