

better understanding of these terms, an etymology has been given to many of them: the unfamiliar becomes clearer if one can see something of its origin. However, no claim to originality is being made by including etymologies. All have been checked against those offered in *The Oxford English Dictionary* and Onions's *The Oxford Dictionary of English Etymology*. They have been placed at the end of each definition, so as not to obtrude.

So far as possible, persons have been kept out of definitions. Bede (c.673–735), Geoffrey of Monmouth (c.1100–54) and the great chronicler and court historian, Jean Froissart (c.1333–1400/01), are mentioned, as is John Wyclif (c.1330–84). Fortunately, historical terms do not rely upon individuals. However, the time of their use is important and therefore monarchs are named without hesitation. (For those who are a little uncertain about the regnal dates of the Henrys and Edwards, and others, a list has been appended.) To include less familiar names without an entry and details of their life would be unhelpful; information on those few which are included should be readily available.

acknowledgements

Thanks are due to David Ferris, Curator of Rare Books and Manuscripts at Harvard Law Library, for permission to quote from their on-line edition of Bracton's *De Legibus et Consuetudinibus Angliæ*. This site gives both the Latin text and an English translation. The URL of the home page is: <http://hls15.law.harvard.edu/bracton/index.htm>, where there can be found details about both text and translation.

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