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*DIALECT WEST ENGLAND *** Produced by Miranda van de Heijning, David Starnes, and the Online Distributed Proofreading Team "Goo little Reed! Afornta vawke, an vor me plead: Thy wild nawtes, mÃ¢-be, thÃ¢ ool hire Zooner than zÃ¢ter vrom a IÃ¢re.*

However, the end was not abrupt and elements of Romanitas lingered on for perhaps a century. Somerset was invaded from the south-east by the Second Legion Augusta, under the future emperor Vespasian. Ham Hill probably had a temporary Roman occupation. A great deal of the attraction of the lead mines may have been the potential for the extraction of silver. The lead and silver mines at Charterhouse in the Mendip Hills were run by the military. The Romans established a defensive boundary along the new military road known the Fosse Way from the Latin fossa meaning ditch. Small towns and trading ports were set up, such as Camerton and Combe. The larger towns decayed in the latter part of the period, though the smaller ones appear to have decayed less. In the latter part of the period, Ilchester seems to have been a "civitas" capital and Bath may also have been one. However, only a few Roman sites have been found to the west of the river. The villas have produced important mosaics and artifacts. Cemeteries have been found outside the Roman towns of Somerset and by Roman temples such as that at Lamyatt. There was salt production on the Somerset Levels near Highbridge and quarrying took place near Bath, where the Roman Baths gave their name to Bath. The finds included a moderately large villa at Chew Park, [28] where wooden writing tablets the first in the UK with ink writing were found. There was then a period of civil war in Britain though it is not known how this affected Somerset. The Western Wansdyke may have been constructed in this period but archaeological data shows that it was probably built during the 5th or 6th century. Various "tyrants" seem to have controlled territories from reoccupied hill forts. There is evidence of an elite at hill forts such as Cadbury Castle and Cadbury Camp ; for example, there is imported pottery. Cemeteries are an important source of evidence for the period and large ones have been found in Somerset, such as that at Cannington , which was used from the Roman to the Saxon period. The towns of Somerset seem to have been little used during that period but there continued to be farming on the villa sites and at the Romano-British villages. There may have been effects from plague and volcanic eruption during this period as well as marine transgression into the Levels. The language spoken during this period is thought to be Southwestern Brythonic , [40] but only one or two inscribed stones survive in Somerset from this period. However, a couple of curse tablets found in the baths at Bath may be in this language. Some place names in Somerset seem to be Celtic in origin and may be from this period or earlier, e. Some river names, such as Parrett, may be Celtic or pre-Celtic. Some church sites in Somerset are thought to date from this period, e. However, according to the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle this was destroyed 12 years later. It is assumed that the Saxons occupied the rest of Somerset about this time. The Saxon rule was consolidated under King Ine , who established a fort at Taunton , demolished by his wife in It is sometimes said that he built palaces at Somerton and South Petherton but this does not seem to be the case. He fought against Geraint in In the diocese of Sherborne was formed, taking in Wessex west of Selwood. Saxon kings granted land in Somerset by charter from the 7th century onward. The way and extent to which the Britons survived under the Saxons is a debatable matter. Somerset originally formed part of Wessex and latter became a separate "shire". Somersetshire seems to have been formed within Wessex during the 8th century though it is not recorded as a name until later. Mints were set up at times in various places in Somerset in the Saxon period, e. From the fort Alfred was able to organize an resistance using the local militias from Somerset, Wiltshire and Hampshire. King Alfred was driven to seek refuge from the Danes at Athelney before defeating them at the Battle of Ethandun in , usually considered to be near Edington, Wiltshire , but possibly the village of Edington in Somerset. Alfred established a series of forts and lookout posts linked by a military road, or Herepath , so his army could cover Viking movements at sea. The Herepath has a characteristic form which is familiar on the Quantocks: Then it went south along the ridge, to Triscombe Stone. Burhs fortified

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places had been set up by , such as Lyng. The Alfred Jewel , an object about 2. Monasteries and minster churches were set up all over Somerset, with daughter churches from the minsters in manors. There was a royal palace at Cheddar , which was used at times in the 10th century to host the Witenagemot , [52] and there is likely to have been a "central place" at Somerton , Bath, Glastonbury and Frome since the kings visited them. The towns of Somerset seem to have been in occupation in this period though evidence for this is limited because of subsequent buildings on top of remains from this period. Agriculture flourished in this period, with a re-organisation into centralised villages in the latter part in the east of the county. In the period before the Norman Conquest , Somerset came under the control of Godwin, Earl of Wessex , and his family. There seems to have been some Danish settlement at Thurloxtton and Spaxton , judging from the place-names. After the Norman Conquest, the county was divided into fiefs , and large areas were owned by the crown, [53] with fortifications such as Dunster Castle used for control and defence. Following the defeat of the Saxons by the Normans in , various castles were set up in Somerset by the new lords such as that at Dunster , and the manors was awarded to followers of William the Conqueror such as William de Moyon and Walter of Douai. A good picture of the county in is given by Domesday Book , though there is some difficulty in identifying the various places since the hundreds are not specified. It re-occurred, resulting in a change in feudal practices since the manpower was no longer so available. Reclamation of land from marsh in the Somerset Levels increased, largely under monastic influence. Crafts and industries also flourished, the Somerset woollen industry being one of the largest in England at this time. Newport, but were not successful. Coal mining on the Mendips was an important source of wealth while quarrying also took place, an example is near Bath. The towns grew, again often by monastic instigation, during this period and fairs were started. The church was very powerful at this period, particularly Glastonbury Abbey. After their church burnt down, the monks there "discovered" the tomb of "King Arthur" and were able rebuild their church. There were over 20 monasteries in Somerset at this period including the priory at Hinton Charterhouse which was founded in by Ela, Countess of Salisbury who also founded Lacock Abbey. It was his successor, Henry of Blois , who transformed the manor-house here into a mighty castle in Eventually, with many buildings destroyed in the town, the castle and its valuable contents were surrendered to the Parliamentarians. The castle itself was deliberately destroyed in During the Middle Ages sheep farming for the wool trade came to dominate the economy of Exmoor. The wool was spun into thread on isolated farms and collected by merchants to be woven, fulled, dyed and finished in thriving towns such as Dunster. The land started to be enclosed and from the 17th century onwards larger estates developed, leading to establishment of areas of large regular shaped fields. During this period a Royal Forest and hunting ground was established, administered by the Warden. The Royal Forest was sold off in Montacute House This is the period from around to In the s, the monasteries were dissolved and their lands bought from the king by various important families in Somerset. By , Glastonbury Abbey was the only monastery left, its abbot Richard Whiting was then arrested and executed on the orders of Thomas Cromwell. From the Tudor to the Georgian times, farming specialised and techniques improved, leading to increases in population, although no new towns seem to have been founded. The county was the site of important battles between the Royalists and the Parliamentarians , notably the Battle of Lansdowne in and the Battle of Langport in After the war, in , the keep was demolished and only the base remains. The rebels landed at Lyme Regis and travelled north hoping to capture Bristol and Bath , puritan soldiers damaged the west front of Wells Cathedral , tore lead from the roof to make bullets, broke the windows, smashed the organ and the furnishings, and for a time stabled their horses in the nave. Cyrus started a business in sheepskin rugs, later joined by his brother James, who introduced the production of woollen slippers and, later, boots and shoes. Instead, in , redundant factory buildings were converted to form Clarks Village , the first purpose-built factory outlet in the United Kingdom. However, farming continued to flourish, with the Bath and West of England Agricultural Society being founded in to improve methods. He is commemorated on a nearby hill with a large, spotlit obelisk, known as the Wellington Monument. In north Somerset, mining in the Somerset coalfield was an important industry, and in an effort to reduce the cost of transporting the coal the Somerset Coal Canal was

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built; part of it was later converted into a railway. The usefulness of the canals was short-lived, though they have now been restored for recreation. The railways were nationalised after the Second World War , but continued until , when smaller lines were scrapped; two were transferred back to private ownership as "heritage" lines. In , Somerset County Council was created, replacing the administrative functions of the Quarter Sessions. The population of Somerset has continued to grow since , when it was ,, [25] particularly in the seaside towns such as Weston-super-Mare. Some population decline occurred earlier in the period in the villages, but this has now been reversed, and by the population of Somerset was , Street lights were provided in Acetylene was replaced in by coal gas produced in Bridgwater, as well as by the provision of an electricity supply. Construction work started on Portishead "A" power station in The chemical works produced white phosphorus from phosphate rock imported, through the docks, into the UK. The newer of the two power stations "B" Station was converted to burn oil when the Somerset coalfields closed. The Port of Bristol Authority finally closed the dock in , [91] and it has now been developed into a marina and residential area. During the First World War hundreds of Somerset soldiers were killed, and war memorials were put up in most of the towns and villages; only a few villages escaped casualties. The county was a base for troops preparing for the D-Day landings, and some Somerset hospitals still date partly from that time. Various airfields were built or converted from civilian use including: It was expanded in and in Exmoor was designated as an Environmentally Sensitive Area. Construction of Hinkley Point B started in Tourism is a major source of employment along the coast, and in Bath and Cheddar for example.

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