Medieval society around the time of King John

The King

The king was the chief ruler and feudal lord. All land belonged to the king. He kept some royal estates.

Barons

He gave some land to the barons. In return they had to provide the king with services.

The Barons

The barons provided knights for the king’s army. They also paid taxes and duties to the king to help him pay for the running of his estates and armies.

Bishops

He gave some land to the Church. In return the Church provided religious services.

The fields of each manor were divided between the freemen (who were allowed to own land) and the serfs (who were not). The amount of land they received depended on how important they were in the village. In return they provided food and protected the manor from attack.

Freemen

Freemen could move around the town or district and were allowed to own a little land.

Serfs

Serfs were unable to own land or to leave the manor without permission. Serfs had no power and no rights.

Adapted from Threads of Time: Junior World History 400–1750, Coupe, Sheena and Scanlan, Barbara, Pearson Education Australia Pty Ltd www.longman.com.au

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