



## Medieval Rural Life in the Luttrell Psalter

Janet Backhouse

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The Luttrell Psalter is one of the best-known English manuscripts. Written and illuminated in the early 14th century for Sir Geoffey Luttrell, it is celebrated for its long series of attractive marginal illustrations showing scenes of life in medieval England. The most celebrated sequence of pictures represents the annual cycle of growing crops including plouging, sowing, weeding, harvesting, threshing, and the delivery of the grain. Animal illustrations include domestic boars, geese, pigs, cattle, ferrets, rabbits, birds, cats and mice. Sports, pastimes, entertainers and musicians are all represented, showing the reader that rural life did have a lighter side beyond the routine of work. Janet Backhouse's entertaining study reminds us that although The Luttrell Psalter was created to provide a reflection of the status of the Luttrell family, its preservation has given us a supremely emotive pictorial source for the daily life of rural England.



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