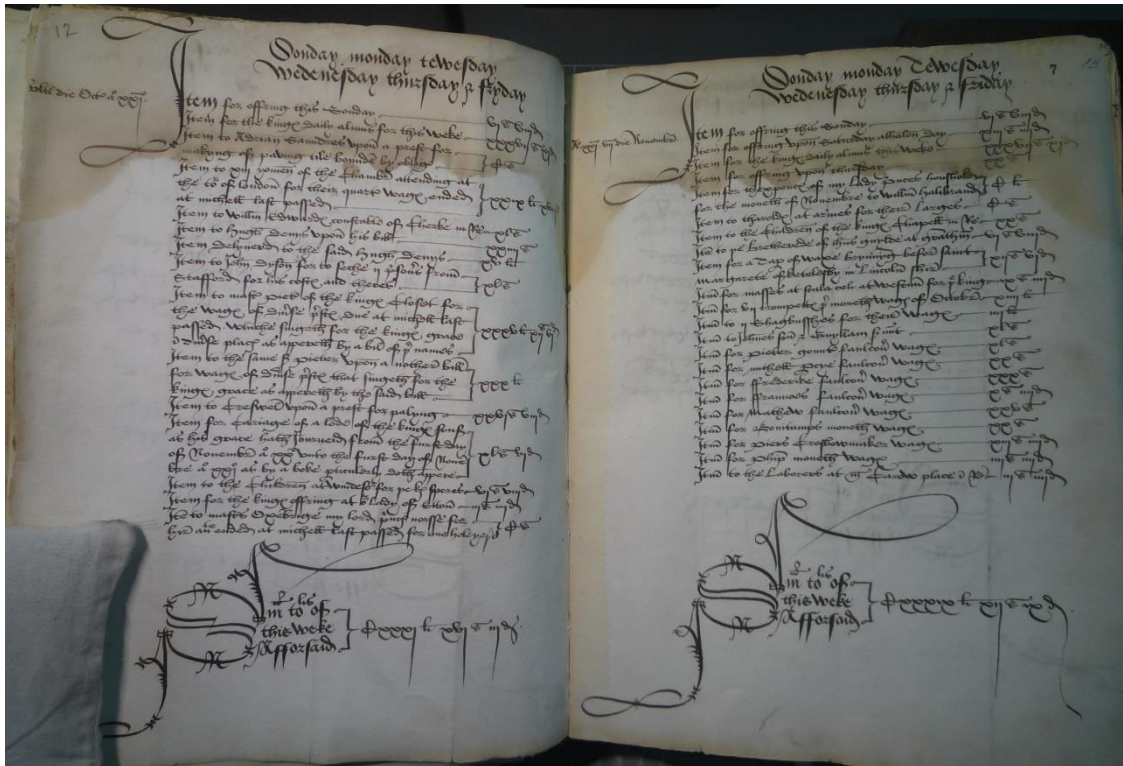


3. Palaeography – Reading old handwriting

Before computers and printing, all documents were handwritten. Therefore reading handwriting from the Tudor period is important to be able to understand the lives of people who lived at the time by reading the documents they left behind. Reading handwriting is known as 'Palaeography'. The Chamber Books of the Tudor kings are mainly written in English (with some Latin in places). The language spoken at this time is known as 'middle English' – we can understand it, but the spellings are often different and the meanings of some words have changed over the centuries. There are even a few words that we no longer use.

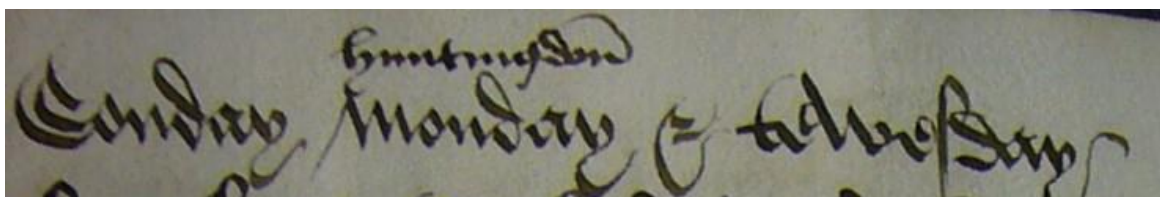
The Chamber Books were the king's personal account books in which he recorded all of his private expenses – a bit like a bank account. In the book are details about the king's interests and activities, as well as matters of state.



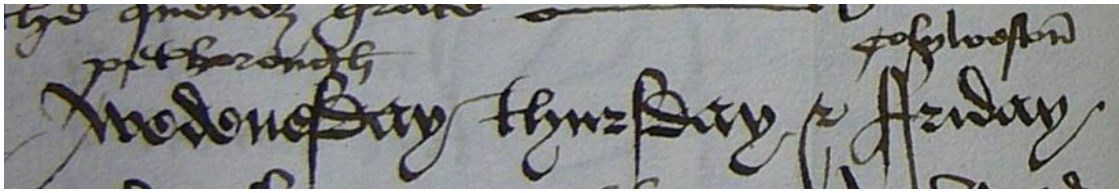
Each page starts listing the days of the week, and sometimes it includes details about where the king, and his court (those who surround the king) are as they travel around the country. The total for the amount spent that week is put at the bottom of the page.

Task: Can you write out the words you see below with the original spelling?

This is known as 'transcribing', or copying a document. How many words are spelt differently in modern English? Note the sign used for 'and' – a bit like our '&'.

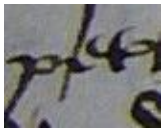


Task 2: Can you transcribe the headings for the rest of the week? (For help, see the 'Abbreviations' below.)



Abbreviations:

It was hard work to write with quills, made from feathers, and ink. Scribes often tried to save themselves time by using abbreviations. Most of the abbreviations they used are standard, so certain shapes were always used in place of some letters.



- the loop on the cross stroke on the 't' indicates letters missed out – here 'er'. Here are the letters 'Pet' and 'er' is missing. When transcribing we tend to put the missing letters in square brackets – 'Pet[er]...'

Task 3: Can you trace on a modern map the route the king was taking as he moved south through the east Midlands? Use a [mileage calculator](#) to work out the longest of the two journeys.

Progresses

Both Henry VII and Henry VIII moved about their kingdoms on what were known as 'progresses'. It allowed the people to see them, and gave the king the chance to meet his people. Henry VII tended to move further than Henry VIII who usually stayed in the south east.



Lady Margaret Beaufort

The third place mentioned was the favourite residence of the King's mother, Lady Margaret Beaufort, in Northamptonshire. Both Henry VII and Henry VIII visited this palace on a number of occasions. Nothing now survives of her palace there as it was dismantled sometime in the 18th century.

