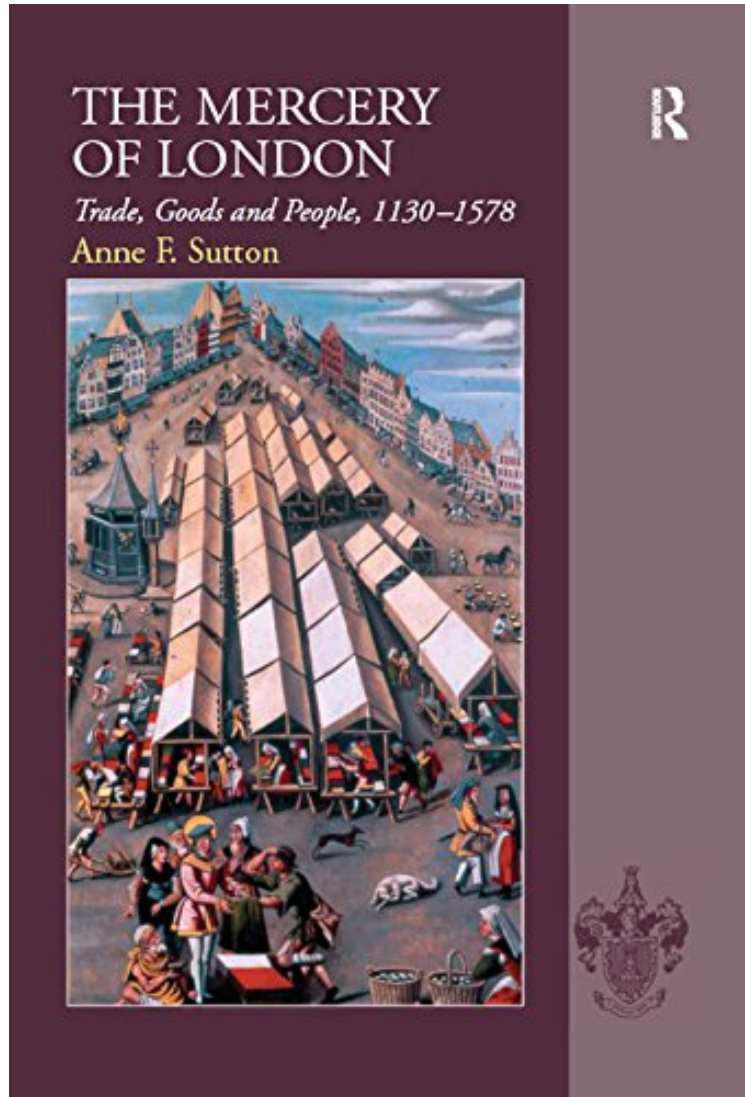


[FREE] The Mercery of London: Trade, Goods and People, 1130ndash;1578

The Mercery of London: Trade, Goods and People, 1130ndash;1578

Anne F. Sutton

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Anne F. Sutton : The Mercery of London: Trade, Goods and People, 1130ndash;1578 before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Mercery of London: Trade, Goods and People, 1130ndash;1578:

Although mercers have long been recognised as one of the most influential trades in medieval London, this is the first book to offer a comprehensive and detailed analysis of the trade from the twelfth to the sixteenth century. The variety of mercery goods (linen, silk, worsted and small manufactured items including what is now called haberdashery) gave the mercers of London an edge over all competitors. The sources and production of all these commodities is traced

throughout the period covered. It was as the major importers and distributors of linen in England that London mercers were able to take control of the Merchant Adventurers and the export of English cloth to the Low Countries. The development of the Adventurers' Company and its domination by London mercers is described from its first privileges of 1296 to after the fall of Antwerp. This book investigates the earliest itinerant mercers and the artisans who made and sold mercery goods (such as the silkwomen of London, so often mercers' wives), and their origins in counties like Norfolk, the source of linen and worsted. These diverse traders were united by the neighbourhood of the London Mercery on Cheapside and by their need for the privileges of the freedom of London. Extensive use of Netherlandish and French sources puts the London Mercery into the context of European Trade, and literary texts add a more personal image of the merchant and his preoccupation with his social status which rose from that of the despised pedlar to the advisor of princes. After a slow start, the Mercers' Company came to include some of the wealthiest and most powerful men of London and administer a wide range of charitable estates such as that of Richard Whittington. The story of how they survived the vicissitudes inflicted by the wars and religious changes of the sixteenth century concludes this fascinating and wide-ranging study.

'Through its sheer richness and thoroughness, this study succeeds in demonstrating how one major medieval and early modern guild had very blurred lines of demarcation and reflected quite heterogeneous interests... Highly recommended.' Choice '... published on a scale rare in modern monographs, whose length reflects both the chronological breadth and interpretative depth of this research.' History 'This massive study throws new light on the history of London, and frequently on regional changes as well.' Northern History 'Anne Sutton's formidable study of the mercers' trade of medieval and sixteenth-century London is a major contribution to the economic and social history of the capital... This is densely argued, meticulously researched, and a thoroughly rewarding book, which deserves to be read widely outside the limited circle of guild aficionados.' Economic History 'Anne Sutton's clear and detailed history of the mercery trade in London succeeds in charting the development of one of the most influential trades of the medieval period. Through an exhaustive study of a wide range of surviving records, the book very effectively analyzes this trade, the mercers' rise to a dominant position, and their ultimate demise in the late sixteenth century... This is Anne Sutton's magnum opus. The book wholly succeeds in its task of clarifying in detail the long and complex history of the medieval mercers and their company and clearly demonstrates Sutton's extensive knowledge of the trade... It will be of interest, and is highly recommended, to all those interested in medieval business, particularly the cloth trade.' Business History 'This is a deeply researched business and guild history to which all students of sixteenth-century English economic history must refer. Sutton has a broad understanding of how the early modern business system worked and has built a platform of knowledge upon which many others can build. She must have realized that her book would become a key reference work, as scholars will find it particularly easy to use by leafing through her seventy-six-page index.' Sixteenth Century Journal '... this volume does much to fill in a large gap in the literature on cloth trade...' Medieval Clothing and Textiles '[Anne Sutton] has now produced a truly magnificent, most thoroughly researched, and beautifully written study, for which the entire scholarly community devoted to English medieval history must be deeply indebted... I doubt that any future generation of historians will ever uncover anything substantially new about the Mercers; and thus [...] her monograph must be considered the absolutely definitive study on this most important subject.' The London Journal 'Sutton has for more than two decades produced a steady stream of academic articles about the mercers. This book is, therefore, the culmination of a sustained and highly ambitious research program; it has the look and feel of a magnum opus. It has five appendixes... It also has a twenty-seven-page bibliography and, perhaps most amazingly, a seventy-five-page index, which in itself will be an invaluable resource for scholars. Specialists in the history of late medieval and early modern London as well as those interested in national and international trade and politics will learn a great deal from Sutton's marvelous book.' Journal of British Studies
About the Author Anne F. Sutton is Historian Emerita to the Mercers' Company of London, UK.