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*Give a man a fish: Peasant fishing in late medieval Bosham from a socioeconomic and environmental perspective*

This paper examines peasant fishing practices in late medieval Bosham, a manor situated on the English south coast. Coastal communities of this era are often viewed through a lens of danger, constantly at risk of storm floods. The sea however held a much larger and often more positive position: it offered various opportunities, including fishing. Fishing played a crucial role in the economic system of Bosham in the post-black death period. Although fishing practices became increasingly established and professionalised through the use of fishing weirs, they remained part of an unspecialised trade that co-existed with the manor's dominant arable agriculture. While neighbouring regions transitioned to dairy farming as a means of coping with labour shortages and adverse weather, Bosham maintained relatively unburdened access to the sea as a strategy to incentivise tenants to stay in the manor and enable the continuation of arable farming on its fertile soils. Moving beyond the well-studied offshore commercial fishing ventures of late medieval England, this paper highlights the importance of peasant fishing in the rural economy and its contribution to communities' resilience in the face of adverse conditions.

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*This text is an abstract of the paper to be presented by the author at the Posthumus Conference 2023. Please do not cite without prior permission by the author.*