

## MAPPING DOMESDAY

The year 1986 marked the 900th anniversary of the survey of England known as the Domesday Book. It was ordered by William the Conqueror who sent out commissioners to gather information about the country he had taken by force twenty years previously. Some two million words were neatly written on sheepskin using carbon ink and goose quill pens. The survey contained neither pictures nor maps. However, the 900<sup>th</sup> anniversary prompted an experimental recreation of a map of a tiny part of Suffolk. This article describes the task and reports some incidental discoveries.

In point of fact the Domesday Book is not one book, but two. The smaller volume, known as Little Domesday, contains the full data collected for Suffolk, Norfolk and Essex. Probably due to the sheer number of smallholdings in the three counties, these three surveys had not been edited and reduced in length before the death of King William intervened and work halted. It resulted in the survival of fuller information relating to the most prosperous and populated region in all England. The Suffolk portion of Little Domesday fills two volumes in the easily accessible Phillimore Press series. The original (very abbreviated) Latin entries are transcribed with an English translation on the facing pages. (Figure 1)

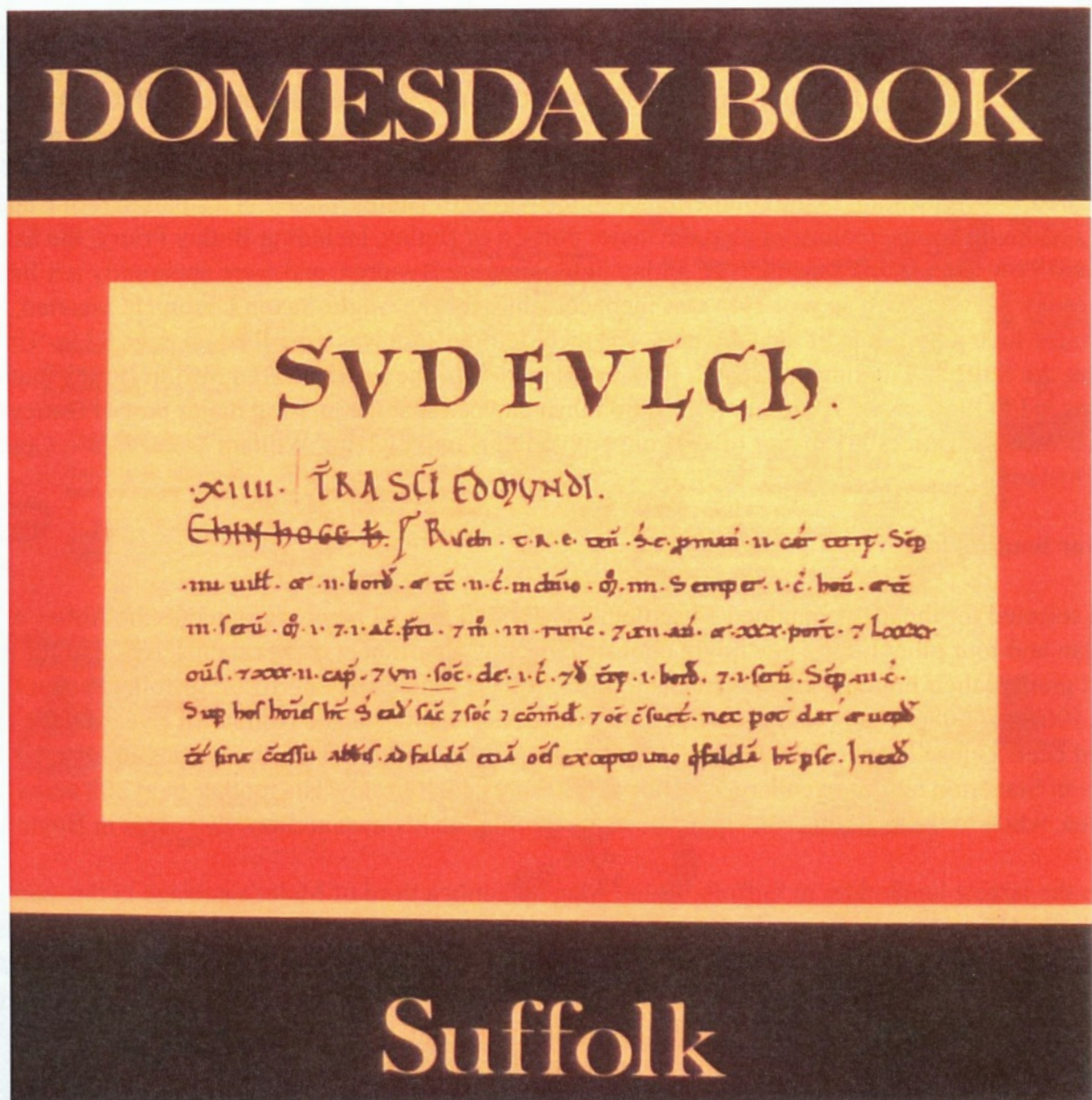


Figure 1. The abbreviated text of the original is reproduced on the dust-jacket of the Phillimore Domesday Book (Author).