

Beginning of the Session.

Discussion about the dialect web task.

- Visual/audio experience of dialect, Standard English & Received Pronunciation by using film archive with a commentary using Received Pronunciation and audio tapes/CDs of local dialect.
- Discussion of attitudes towards dialect, Standard English & Received Pronunciation.

Additional information about dialect

Dialect

During the fifth century Angles, Saxon and Jute tribes from Europe invaded England and either destroyed Celtic communities or pushed them to Wales, Cornwall, Cumbria and the Scottish borders. Anglo Saxon 'Old English' was not influenced by the Celtic language of Roman Britain and very few Celtic words and place names have survived. Latin was influential but did not take root in Britain. The various dialects of Old English relate to the areas where the invaders settled.

The majority of surviving Old English texts from the 10th century are written in the West Saxon dialect. The West Saxon area was a large part of South East and South West England. Winchester was the royal base and the surrounding area was of great cultural and political importance.

There was no standardisation of spelling and scribes tended to spell words as they sounded. However everyone used the same Latin based alphabetic system and so there was an underlying consistency that makes it possible to identify dialect characteristics.

The four main dialects of Old English were established in the kingdoms of Northumbria, Mercia, Wessex and Kent.

- Northumbria, above a line running between the Humber & Mersey Rivers.
- Mercia, The Midlands, between the River Thames and River Humber.
- Wessex, South of the River Thames and west as far as Cornwall. This kingdom was the leading cultural and political force when King Alfred ruled at the end of the 9th century.
- Kent, present day Kent and the Isle of White

Monastic copyists travelled between important centres and it is common to identify mixed dialect features in many manuscripts.

Modern Standard English is derived from Mercian – the dialect spoken around London when the city became powerful in the Middle Ages.