

'William' most popular medieval name

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(PhysOrg.com) -- A study of personal names recorded in a major English medieval record source has revealed that 'William' was by far the most common name among the men listed in it.

Beth Hartland, one of the Research Fellows on the AHRC-funded Henry III Fine Rolls Project at King's College London, has compiled lists - available on the [project blog](#) - of the personal names, both male and female, which occur in the Fine Rolls between the dates 1216-1242.

Using the individuals recorded in the Fine Rolls as the sample, these lists reveal something both of the diversity of personal names in use in England in the early thirteenth-century, and the frequency of those names.

Dr. Hartland comments: "Whether William will increase in popularity as a boys' name in the aftermath of the Royal Wedding this month or not,

its popularity in early thirteenth century England is undoubted."

The Fine Rolls reveal that 14.4 per cent of [men](#) mentioned were called 'William'. The second most popular name - at 7.9 per cent - was 'John'. As other studies have shown these names increased in popularity into the fourteenth century.

"Catherine was not as common a name in thirteenth century England as it is now, nor as it is projected to be following the Royal Wedding," adds Dr. Hartland.

"Though fewer women occur in the Fine Rolls, they reveal a greater diversity of names. Compared with 57.8 per cent of the men, only 51.8 per cent of the women had one of the top ten names. And 9.44 per cent of the [women](#) had names that occurred only once, whereas 3.38 per cent of the men had names that occurred only once."

Provided by King's College London

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