



Hartford Civic Society Newsletter

"Cherish the Past - Protect the Future"

Hartford Civic Society is a registered charity in England and Wales No 1099390 and is registered with The Civic Trust

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Society Membership

Membership Renewal

The Society's membership year runs from the 1st April each year and so renewal time is almost upon us once again.

This year you will have received, along with this newsletter, an individual letter that shows your method of payment.

If you pay by Standing Order there will be no need for you to take any action. If not, please consider changing to this method as it saves the Society a considerable amount of time in processing the renewals. However, if this is not for you then please return your renewal as usual.

Thank you for your continued support of the Society. Our membership continues to grow and we now have the largest number of members since the Society was founded.

Committee Members

Could you spare some time to help with the running of the Society? We are looking for people to join the executive committee and bring their new ideas and enthusiasm to our planning and activities. It may be that you have specific skills to offer or are simply interested in working for the good of the village in which you live - either way you would be most welcome. The committee meets about ten times a year so the commitment is not excessive. Please consider joining us as without your help we are limited in the amount of projects we can accomplish. If committees are not for you but you would be willing to assist with specific projects we would also like to hear from you.

If you would like to discuss your involvement please call John Swaffield on 01606 79879

Lottery

Thank you to the many members who are already taking part in the village lottery and congratulations to those who have already won.

We now have 98 regular players but would like to increase the numbers. The cost is just £12 per year which covers 12 draws. Half the income goes to a good cause – Hartford Civic Society - looking after your village - so why not take part and have the fun of checking to see whether you've won each month (or just wait for that surprise phone call to tell you that you are the winner - wouldn't that brighten up your day?)

Can't we convince you to take part? If you would like to please ring Hilary Clegg on 01606 76400

The draw is also open to non-members if you know of somebody who might be interested.

What Are We Working On?

Street Furniture and Flowers

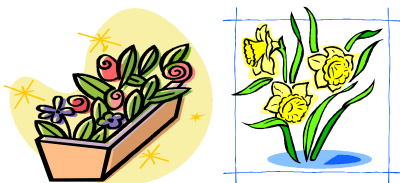
Last year the Society applied to Vale Royal Borough Council for a grant to place some planters in the centre of the village but unfortunately this was unsuccessful.

However, the Society felt that this was an important project and therefore decided to fund the provision of planters itself.

Accordingly two large planters were ordered and installed outside the shops in the village centre. The Society did all the work and the plants were generously donated by Weaver Vale Garden Centre. Local shopkeepers water and look after the plants making this a true community project.

The Society has also purchased a stand to accommodate hanging baskets and this will be installed opposite the old Co-op shop at the end of the church glebe land. This will be erected this year and will tie in with the installation of a mosaic around it's base depicting the history of Hartford. The mosaic is being designed by local schools as part of a project by the Parish Council

The presence of flowers is universally appreciated and these initiatives go hand in hand with our planting of spring bulbs in the verges at the entrances to the village. Remember, when you see them, that you had a hand in them being there!



Monitoring

From last year the Society has been monitoring the Listed Buildings in the Hartford area on behalf of Vale Royal Borough Council and is taking part in consultations on "The Historic Built Environment".

Local Walks

The Society has produced a set of four walks in and around the Hartford area.

Although there are numerous books about walking in Cheshire the area around the village is not very well covered. The walks cover all abilities and the information sheets combine the instructions for the walks with a little local history.

We hope that this will prove popular and not only provide an incentive for a little exercise but also an opportunity to explore the village and learn a little about its buildings and past.

Where possible they start or end near a local hostelry and so there is a chance to support local businesses as well!

They are currently only available on the Society's website.





Hartford in Norman Times

As many members have said how much they enjoyed the previous articles on Hartford and it's history we are continuing the series and have gone further back for this edition's topic.

What do we know about Hartford in Norman times?

The only real record we have is the Domesday Book of 1086 which records for "Herford"

"IN ROELAU HUNDRED

The same Gilbert holds HERFORD. Doda held it (as two manors in the margin) as a freeman. There are 2 hides that pay geld. The land is for 2 ploughs. There are 4 villeins and 2 bordars and a smith having 1 plough. In Wich (Northwich) 1 salthouse renders 2s. and another salthouse waste. There 1 acre of meadow. Of this a knight holds ½ hide and has there 1 plough and 2 oxmen and 3 bordars. TRE it was worth 20s, now 10s."

geld = tax (from 'tax geldum' – a periodic tax)

hide = an area of land between 120 and 240 acres (usually 120)

waste = in this case most likely means destroyed in the invasion

villains and bordars = part of a hierarchy of men with greater or lesser degrees of freedom - freemen, sokemen, villeins, bordars and serfs

TRE = Tempore Regis Edwardi - 'In the time of King Edward' (Edward the Confessor) i.e. before 1066

Gilbert is Gilbert de Venables.

We know that Cheshire resisted the Norman invasion and that resulted in large areas being laid to waste by William the Conqueror. This was one his standard tactics in the face of resistance – he destroyed communities, dispossessed the people and laid waste to the countryside so that there was no support for the people fighting against him. That must have been a time of hardship and devastating change as the battle was lost and a new hierarchy of lords took over the land. Principal among these would have been Hugh Lupus (the wolf), a nephew of William's, who was made Earl of Chester.

Following the subjugation of Cheshire the great hunting Forest of Mara and Mondrum was created. It encompassed 60 square miles of the county and reached up to the River Weaver. Since we know how these great Royal Forests were administered we can guess a little about the lifestyle of the people who lived within their boundaries.

The term "forest" did not have its modern meaning. It was derived from the Latin "foris" which meant "everything outdoors", and was used throughout the Middle Ages to describe a legally defined area of land in which the "beasts of the chase" were reserved for hunting by the King or, at his pleasure, nobles and high churchmen. In the case of Mara and Mondrum both the Earls of Chester and the King used it. The forest of these times could be half grassland and heath and not the unbroken canopy of trees we would imagine today.

William the Conqueror introduced afforestation after the invasion of 1066 and reserved for his sole enjoyment the right to hunt Deer (Red, Roe and Fallow) and Wild Boar – the beasts of the chase, collectively known as the "venison".

To protect these rights the areas were subject to Forest Law as opposed to Common Law. This law protected not only the animals themselves but also anything that they ate or provided shelter for them, collectively known as the "vert" (from the Latin for green).

A person attempting to kill or even disturbing a beast of the chase was guilty of "trespassing against the venison". A person felling a tree, grazing livestock without permission, gathering firewood or protecting crops by fencing was guilty of "trespassing against the vert". It was illegal to carry a weapon in the forest. Travellers were allowed a weapon for self-protection but had to stick to the highways running through the forest.

It should be borne in mind that before the introduction of Forest Law these things would have been taken for granted as a way of making, or supplementing, a living by exploiting the surrounding land.

The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle records the following about William:

"He made great protection for the game

And imposed laws for the same,

So that who so slew hart or hind

Should be made blind.

He preserved the harts and boars

And loved stags as much

As if he were their father.

Moreover, for the hares did he decree that they should go free.

Powerful men complained of it and poor men lamented it,

But so fierce was he that he cared not for the rancour of them all".

The punishments for breaking the Forest Law were harsh and included blinding, castration and death. Later the need to raise taxes led to a replacement of some of the physical punishments by a system of fines. The forests were expanded to encompass more and more of England until at one time nearly a third of the country was under Forest Law. Each expansion brought more people under Forest Law and the resultant fines became a steady income stream for the crown.

Very little of this Great Forest survives. Delamere (French for 'of the lake') is an example, if now extensively replanted with fir trees. However, Marshall's Arm is Ancient Woodland due to the land being too steep to clear for agriculture or housing and may even reach back to the days of the Great Forest.

