

MANOR AND BOROUGH OF HATHERLEIGH

Deborah Laing-Trengove, Lord of the Manor

COURT LEET AND COURT BARON 24TH MARCH 2007



ORDER OF PROCEEDINGS

Introduction and welcome *by the Steward*

Court Proceedings:

- **Register**
- **Swearing of the Jury**
- **Reports of the Officers**
- **Plaints and Presentments***
- **Retiring of the Jury**

Interval while the Jury considers

- **Presentments of the Jury**
- **Swearing of the Officers**

Statement by the Lord of the Manor

Dismissal

*'Plaints and Presentments' gives everyone attending the opportunity to bring to the Court any matter which is of interest to the Borough and Manor and which might require discussion and a decision from the Jury. Plaints will be taken in order as pleaded. The number of Plaints heard and the extent of consideration shall be limited by the time available to the Court.



The Manorial system was established throughout the country by the time of the Domesday Survey (1086). The manor signified a territorial unit held by a landlord - the Lord of the Manor, who was himself a tenant of the Crown. Throughout the medieval period, from the 10th century until the Dissolution of the Monasteries by Henry VIII in 1539, the Abbots of Tavistock held the Manor of Hatherleigh. Tenants of the Lord were either Villeins or Freeman. Freemen paid a fixed rent, they could dispose of the land as they chose and were not tied rigidly by obligation to the Lord. Villeins occupied their land in return for rendering fixed services to the lord. But this system of labour services broke down after the Black Death (1349), being replaced first by copyhold tenure and finally leasehold, weakening the servile ties and bonds of obligation between Lord and customary tenant. In practice though, individuals may have held land from the Lord by both copyhold and free tenure.

The Court Baron, which was normally held every three weeks, was the manorial court that dealt with the transfer of Villein land, determined the customs of the Manor and enforced payment of services due to the Lord. The Court Leet, which usually met every six months, dealt with petty law and order and the administration of communal agriculture. It had, by the end of the middle ages, become synonymous with the term 'Frankpledge' - a system of mutual responsibility for bringing criminals to justice, in which groups of householders (tithings) were responsible for the good behaviour of one another and for bringing members of the manorial Court Leet to face charges. The Court Leet had powers to deal with offences such as 'common nuisances, affrays and the breaking of the assize of bread and ale' and was empowered to fine or imprison offenders. Some local officers, including the Constable, were appointed by the court. In time it became common practice for both courts to be held together. The business of the medieval Borough may also have been regulated and administered through a separate court. But the Borough of Hatherleigh was never formally incorporated, and would have belonged to the manorial lords, the Abbots of Tavistock until 1539, thus Borough and Manor business may have taken place at a single court up to this date. After 1539 the Manor of Hatherleigh passed into secular hands and the Borough was retained by the Crown, the two institutions being reunited under single ownership in the 17th century when the Arscott family, already Lords of the Manor, were granted the rights to the Borough.

The present Lord of the Manor inherited the title on the death of her father in 1989. Her family has held the title and the manorial court since 1791 when her ancestor, Joseph Oldham, purchased the estate from the heirs of the Arscott family. The Court meets annually on or around Ladyday, the 25th March.

