

## **Time Trail 1 (from early times to c.1300)**

This is the first of a series of historical snippets about our village, each focusing on a different century, spanning the 800 years which we celebrated in 2008 at St. Nicolas' Church.

### Early Times

A few Neolithic implements have been found indicating that early humans had been in this area. An important Romano-British bronze statuette was discovered a few years before 1824 and other Roman and medieval remains have also been ploughed out within the parish boundaries.

The name Hail Weston derives from the river forming the northern and eastern parish boundaries (now called the River Kim), which was originally called the Hayle or Hail, and in earlier times the village was called Heilweston (12<sup>th</sup> Century), evolving to Hailweston and Haleweston later.

### 1042-1066

During the reign of Edward the Confessor the manor was held by two men - Saxi and Uluin Chit, who were Earl Harold's Men. However their manor was not part of the great Kimbolton estate which was held by the Earl.

### 1066 - 1300

After the Norman Conquest, Hail Weston was split into four Manors – and there was much contention as to who owned them!

The Norman noble, William de Warenne (1<sup>st</sup> Earl of Surrey, d. 1088), who had fought with William the Conqueror at the Battle of Hastings, had been granted many lands throughout England. One of these was the Kimbolton Estate, and in 1086 William went to court to claim one of the Hail Weston Manors, believing that it formed part of the estate. The jurors ruled against him.

In 1086 two manors were held by Eustace of Boulogne, the Sheriff, but these were also disputed. Countess Judith of Lens, a niece of William the Conqueror, claimed one of the Manors as it had been held by her husband, Waltheof, Earl of Northumbria and

Huntingdon. She was not successful and the land was passed to Eustace's successors the de Lovetots, as part of the manor of Southoe.

Eustace's other Manor was claimed by Robert Fafiton, whose ancestor Saxi Chit had held lands in Hail Weston, however the jurors found against him, as this particular property had not belonged to Saxi! Robert already held one manor in the village, from another relative Wulfwine Chit. This Manor was the one disputed by William de Warenne.

Another of the manors was owned by Algeat Tre and the last was held by an unnamed Englishman.

In the 13<sup>th</sup> Century the Manor of Hail Weston was apparently worth two thirds of a knight's fee and was held by two sub-tenants, but the records are unclear as to their names.

### Church History

Records show that services were taking place in the Church or Chapel of St Nicolas in 1209. The building existed in the 13<sup>th</sup> Century and the lancet window, double piscina and some stones in the south doorway date from this time. The early shape of nave and chancel under one roof is also indicative of the 13<sup>th</sup> century.

Originally it was a chapelry, annexed to Southoe and was in the gift (advowson – the right to appoint a member of clergy) of the de Lovetot family. In 1222 the de Lovetots assigned the Hail Weston chapel to Simon de Eynesbury as vicar. Later Southoe and Hail Weston were bequeathed to the priory of St. Mary in Huntingdon who took it over in 1255 – the earliest Prior mentioned in our parish records was Radulph de London. He was succeeded in 1286 by John de St Leofard and in 1295 Radulf de Cantabrig took over. They were all from the Huntingdon Priory.

EMcC.

(Sources 'Kings and Lords of Conquest England' by Robin Fleming. 2004

Cambridge University Press

and

'A History of the County of Huntingdon: Volume 2' ed. W. Page, G. Proby and S. Inskip Ladds. 1932. Victoria County History)