



Langdyke
Trust



Supported by the
Heritage Lottery Fund

SOCIETY AT TORPEL MANOR IN 1300

THE FEUDAL SYSTEM DETERMINES EVERYBODY'S POSITION IN SOCIETY

King Edward I owns all the
land in the country

Peterborough Abbey is tenant in chief
and rents the manor from the king.
Bailiff, Robert Fayrfox, visits Torpel several
times a year.

**The common people, who do the work, are the
base of the pyramid**

Freemen, who can hold, inherit and buy and sell land. On this manor
they pay rent but do not have to work on the lord's land.

Villeins or Bondmen, are unfree and cannot leave the manor. They have
to work for the lord for 2-3 days a week. They also have vegetable plots
and their own strips in the open fields for which they pay rent.

They have to pay taxes, such as when:

- inheriting a holding or taking over the holding of a tenant who died
 - a daughter marries and leaves the manor
 - they opt out of military service
- they die. Sometimes the lord claims their best beast.

They also give the lord eggs and poultry.

The **Reeve** in 1300, whose name was Geoffrey, is always a villein. He is responsible
for the day to day running of the manor. He is not paid any wages but is allowed
to collect firewood and graze his pigs in the wood.

Cottars are unfree, have small plots, do occasional work for the lord and pay rents.

Famuli and paid servants make pottage, help to winnow corn, roof buildings
and such tasks.