

Elstree & Borehamwood Town Council Shield Explanation

The District's Coat of Arms illustrates both the ancient origins of the local community and its recent growth.

The oak tree in the Shield symbolises the wood which once surrounded the hamlet of Borham and the Saxon Crown in the tree points to the origin of the District's name—Tidwulf's Tree—corrupted through time to Elstree '.

Such a tree may well have marked the dwelling of a respected elder of the Witenagemot, the Meeting of Wise Men, who wielded civic authority in Saxon times.

The upper part of the Shield displays the gold cross on blue, the arms which St. Alban's Abbey adopted from the bearings of its founder, Offa, King of Mercia. The manor of Elstree came into the possession of the Abbey in 1188.

On either side of the Abbey arms are shown scallop shells which, with their echo of the Sea of Galilee, are the badge of the pilgrim. For centuries pilgrims rested at Elstree before the final stage of their journey to the Abbey to pay homage at the shrine of the first British Christian martyr, Saint Alban, and the village became an important staging post for travellers along the old Roman road on which it stands.

The ermine background to the tree in the Shield suggests the royal associations with the District, in particular, Charles II, who often visited the home he provided for his mistress, Nell Gwyn, at Salisbury Hall where, it is said, she bore the first Duke of St. Albans.



The modern town of Boreham Wood is symbolised in the spool of film held by the hart in the Crest. This spool refers to the local film industry which has made the name of Elstree a household word around the world and which has contributed so much to the recent growth and prosperity of the District, represented by the golden acorns set in the tree.

The blue and white waves in the Shield also allude to recent urban developments. This heraldic symbol for water is used to represent the River Colne in the Hertfordshire County Council's arms and the River Thames in the arms of the Greater London Council. The presence of this symbol in the Elstree arms refers to the thousands of Londoners who found homes in Hertfordshire in the housing estates built in the District by the Greater London Council.

The hart in the Crest is an allusion to the name of the County and the walled crown around the hart's neck and the closed helm are symbols of local government.

The District Motto, "Do well and fear not", is taken from the wall of an 18th century lock-up in the village of Shenley. Not only do the words themselves convey an admirable injunction; the source of the phrase reminds us of an excellent symbol of the high standards of civic life found in the District—an empty, disused prison!



