



Moretonhampstead History Society

Newsletter

August 2009

July Field Trip:

The evening visit to Brixham for a sailing trip on Vigilance, a 1920's sailing trawler, one of Brixham's Heritage Fleet scheduled for 16th July was cancelled because of the poor weather forecast for the evening of the trip. This trip has now been rearranged for Wednesday 19th August, and is fully booked for the new date. I will let you know how the trip went in the September newsletter!

Moreton's Scouting Past:

Edward Hobson, a History Society committee member and scout leader made a chance discovery which disclosed significant involvement of Moreton Scouts in the very early days of the Scouting movement. Edward writes as follows:

The 1st Moretonhampstead Scout Group was reformed in March 2008 and now has a membership of 48 in the three sections Beavers, Cubs and Scouts. The previous troop had been disbanded in 1965 with colours being retained by the Scout Association, who returned them when we started up.

An earlier colour (a union flag with 'Be prepared' sewn thereon) had been laid up in St Andrews Church. I recently took this flag down for cleaning and restoration. On unscrewing the flagpole I found a piece of paper screwed into a tight ball. After some difficulty I managed to flatten this out, and on it I found the following inscription.

Queens Colour Dedication 1924

*Chosen by lord Baden Powell as UK flag at Imperial
Jamboree Wembley 1924. Carried by T L Morgan and laid up in July 1962
Carried by Senior Scout T England.
Signed Roy W Yeoman
Group Scoutmaster
21st July 1962*

Further details are emerging whereby we understand the laid up colour had been flown outside the Chief Scout's tent at the 1924 Jamboree and that the Moreton troop led the parade with the flag into the arena at that event. We are still researching the early history of the troop but Scouting was certainly well supported as early as 1911 in Moreton when they had a drum, fife and bugle band. The troop could well have been one of the earliest founded in the UK following the inaugural Scout camp on Brownsea Island in 1908. hopefully further revelations to follow.

Editors note:

The Imperial Jamboree of 1924 was not a World Scout Jamboree. There was a World Jamboree that year, held in Denmark. The Imperial Jamboree was held at Wembley, and was part of the 1924 Wembley Exhibition, which lasted through the summer, although the official Scout Jamboree lasted just one week. Some 12,500 Scouts took part and came from all over what was then called the British Empire.

August Meeting:

No meeting this month—but there will, hopefully, be the trip on the Vigilance.

September Meeting:

This meeting will take place at 7.30pm on Wednesday 16th September, as usual in the Community Club

Devon Inns and their Signs

Speaker - Robert Hesketh

Robert Hesketh is a local historian and has published a number of books on pub walks in Devon, as well as other topics of local interest.

Non members of the Society are very welcome to join us for a donation of £2 payable at the door.

Parole Prisoners in Moretonhampstead:

I have written about this subject in the past, but recently I extracted all references to parole prisoners from Trevealans Diary. Most of his references are just one liners, but they do give an indication of how they integrated into the small community here. The first parole prisoner arrived early in 1807 and Trevealan recorded the event as follows:

1807 -Jan. 23rd. A French Officer came here on parole. The first prisoner ever known on parole here. Mr. John Ponsford Surgeon appointed Commisary.

Many more were to follow, not just French nationals, but Dutch, Danish and Spanish as well.

From the Exeter Flying Post:

12th March 1789. – Runaway!

'On Monday last, John Tozer, an apprentice to Mr John Soper, Farmer, of Moretonhampstead. He is 18years old, fair complexion, light hair, set grown, wore away a light colour'd Coat and waistcoat, leather Breeches, round hat, and has a scar on his left leg. Whoever harbours or employs the said apprentice after this public notice, will be prosecuted according to the law'.

Editors note:

Tozer is a very common name over many Centuries in Moretonhampstead. I consulted the Parish records to see if I could find out whether John Tozer did perhaps return to Moretonhampstead. I could find a John Tozer born 19th March 1780 this could well be him. There are 28 records of baptisms of John Tozers going back to 1619. Marriage records show that a John Tozer married a Betty Wotten on 3rd August 1805, again this could be him. As for burials, 27 listed with the name John Tozer from 1642, but none of these matched the runaway. Maybe he was never caught and never came back!

The following extract is from the Treleaven Diaries dated **Tuesday May 14th 1799.**

'Married Wm Tozer, Shoemaker to Mrs Tozer Widow of the late Mr. Wm. Tozer of Howten in this parish. It is rather remarkable that a Woman should have two husbands following of the same name '.

This shows how common the name Tozer was in this area.

I wrote about William Tozer the shoemaker some time ago. It was he who walked to Exeter and back in his 88th year in 1827. This means he married Mrs Tozer (first name Betty) when he was 59. This William Tozer finally died in 1836 aged 95, and is buried in St Andrews churchyard.

Farewell:

Alas two more Tozers have recently left Moreton! Although not on the run! We bid farewell to Keith & June Tozer, who have moved away recently. I know that they were most interested in the Tozer connection they found on moving here. We thank June for her help in dispensing the wine and nibbles at our monthly meetings. Both were also active in the wider community, they will be missed. We wish them well.