



# Moretonhampstead History Society

## Newsletter

## June 2009

### June Meeting:

On Wednesday 17th June, there will be an early evening tour of the restorations at Poltimore house, north of Exeter, followed by a barbecue in the grounds. Full details of this visit were given in the May Newsletter, together with a proforma for those wishing to attend to complete. A report on this visit will be given in the July Newsletter.

### July Field Trip:

This will be an evening visit to Brixham for a sailing trip on *Vigilance*. *Vigilance* is a 1920's sailing trawler, one of Brixham's Heritage Fleet. She is owned by a trust who have fully restored her. We are grateful to Edward Hobson and The friends of the *Vigilance* for facilitating this visit. This trip will take place on Thursday 16th July, and *Vigilance* will set sail at 6pm returning at about 9pm, sailing is of course subject to the prevailing weather conditions. We shall need to leave Moreton at about 4.45pm. Full details of travel arrangements will be provided later. The cost will be £15 each, and is strictly limited to **12** persons.

**Places will be allocated only to fully paid up members** of the History Society on a **'money with booking'** first come first served basis. If you want to go on this trip send your details (name, address & telephone number) and your £15 **without delay** to **Wendy Coombes**

We anticipate that this trip will be very popular and hence, in the interests of fairness, we have decided to allocate places in this way. If this trip is very over subscribed then we will endeavour to arrange a second visit to the *Vigilance*, although at this stage we cannot say when this would take place.

### May Meeting:

On Wednesday 20th May about 40 of us met in the Community Club, to hear Derek Gore, a Teaching fellow in the Archaeology Department of Exeter University speak about the Romans in Devon. It is a popular belief that the Romans ventured no further into the West country than Exeter. Derek was quick to quash this myth. It was not the Roman way to leave a peninsular such as Cornwall uncovered.

It all began in AD43 when the Romans successfully invaded Briton landing in large numbers on the coast of Kent. The move west was led by Vespasian (later to become Emperor of Rome) with a force of some 5000 troops. Forts were constructed in many locations throughout Devon & Cornwall, some of which have been known of for some time, yet more are being discovered using aerial photography. Two such forts have been found within the last 2 years! Apart from the fort constructed in Exeter, others are at Bolham near Tiverton, Bury Barton near Crediton, and Pomeroy Wood, which was discovered when the A30 was widened. There are many more yet to be excavated. Of all the Roman forts in Devon Exeter was made into a more permanent structure, and later when the garrison departed a Roman settlement, much of the Roman wall still exists.

Roman soldiers were well paid and equipped. They were also well fed, and expected to be supplied with fine wine, olive oil and fish sauce, an essential cooking ingredient. All this would have been imported, in the case of Exeter, probably through Topsham, which was believed to be a military port. Other supplies were purchased locally, and contracts made with local Britons. As a result of this trade, many of these locals

became very rich and they built Roman style villas in this area. There are remains of one such villa near Crediton. This is just a very brief précis of Derek's fascinating talk, and I have had to leave out much interesting information.

One final anecdote which amused us all. Derek showed an excavated stretch of Roman Road near Axminster when the bypass was being built. He pointed out that the Roman road was actually wider than the new bypass! Derek Gore has agreed to visit us again, if you missed this talk, look out for the name on next years programme.

### [Lustleigh Archives:](#)

The Lustleigh Community Archives consist of parish records, census records, maps (including the 1837 tythe map), a complete set of Parish Magazines dating from 1889, minutes of village organisations; over 1000 postcards and photographs: paintings, books and other documents of historic interest. The Archives are housed in one room of the Old Vestry, next to the Church, which has been refurbished with financial support from various sources including the Heritage Lottery Fund and the Dartmoor National Park Authority.

If members want to visit these Archives the opening hours are Mondays from 2-4pm and Thursdays from 10-12am. If you want to visit outside these hours then it can be done by prior appointment with one of the two Archivists, Margaret Bowen or Bill Beaumont.

### [Moretonhampstead's involvement in the Boer War](#)

Exeter Flying Post January 20th 1900.

*"Four Moretonhampstead Volunteers were entertained on Wednesday at the White Hart by Captain J. Stevens-Neck. They were each given a pipe, pouch, tobacco and other useful articles subscribed to by the townsfolk. On Thursday the volunteers paraded at 10.15 am and then marched from The Square to the railway station headed by the school drum and fife band."*

A plaque on the wall of the entrance to the Courtyard of the White Hart Hotel commemorates the volunteers. The White Hart Hotel keeper, at the time, George Brook, was a strong supporter of the war and helped to give the men a good send-off. Dr Frederick George Engelbach had been the town doctor for 10 years before returning to his home town of London. He served as a civilian surgeon, although he had been a 'Captain' in the Devonshire Regiment 5th (Haytor) Volunteer Brigade (similar to being in the TA today) during his time at Moreton. He was mentioned in despatches by Field Marshal Earl Roberts for his services on September 10th 1901. He was killed whilst attending the wounded at the battle of Nooitgedacht where the Boers had trapped a British force against a mountain wall on December 13th 1901. There is a chair at the back of St Andrews Church with a plaque in memory of Dr Engelbach. My thanks go to Bill Hardiman for sending me this. If you want to know more about this then do consult the website, where Bill has provided even more information.

### [Farewell!](#)

At our meeting in May, Edward Hobson informed the assembled meeting, that long time members of this Society, and regular attenders at our meetings, Ken & Barbara Parsons were leaving the area. Ken had also been a committee member for some years. We shall miss them. A spontaneous round of applause followed! We hope that their move goes well and wish them every happiness in their new home.

### [New Members:](#)

We warmly welcome to the Society **John & Marie Randall** who live here in Moreton. They joined at our May meeting.

This now brings our total membership to 98! Without doubt, the largest such group for many a mile!