



## Newsletter

October 2011

### October Meeting: AGM & Social Evening

Our October meeting will take place in the Stable Bar of the Union Inn, on Wednesday 19th October at 7.30pm. This meeting will begin as usual with the **AGM**. Do, please, make every effort to attend this meeting, the formalities of the AGM are soon dealt with and this will be followed by the

#### **Annual Quiz on Moreton and Devon History**

Prior to the meeting members will be sent minutes of the previous AGM, and the agenda for this one.

Please note:

**From the date of the AGM your Annual  
Subscription becomes due.**

£10 for a single membership & £15 for two persons at the same address. Please be prompt with this payment, for the sake of the Membership Secretary.

### September Meeting:

Our September meeting covered one of the most fascinating periods of Moreton's history. Barbie Thompson, drawing on both newly released national records and our local archives, looked at the impact of putting hundreds of parole prisoners here and at Ashburton during the Napoleonic wars. They were mainly Officers, some accompanied by their families and servants, who were billeted with local families on their word of honour ('parole') not to go more than a mile from the town centre. Of course some tried to escape and often a blind eye was turned to visits to Exeter. General Rochambeau caused a stir when he insisted on parading down Court St in full uniform on Napoleon's birthday. Generally, however, they were popular with Moretonians, especially when they gave lessons in French and dancing to young ladies. One of their black servants married a local girl and two have their burial stones in the church porch. Some prisoners stayed on after their release, notably the ancestor of the late Harry Rihll who ran the pharmacies here and at Chagford for many years.

Barbie has kindly agreed to write a booklet on the topic which will be available in the new archive centre at Green Hill next year. **Judy Hardiman**

### A New Home For The Railway Model:

Many years ago, Peter Collier built a scale model of the Moretonhampstead Railway station. This model included all the Buildings, engine sheds, station, and of course the track layout. This was, I understand, made for a History Society Exhibition held some time ago. Since that time we have had nowhere to display this model and it has been in storage since then, and few have seen it. Happily, it is now on display at the Bovey Tracy Heritage Centre, in the old guards van, adjacent to the centre.

I understand that Ruby (Collier) has recently been down to see it, and was delighted to do so. If you would like to see Peter's model then why not visit the Heritage Centre? There is a lot else to see there, with many artefacts and information about the branch line that used to run to Moreton from Newton Abbot. The Heritage Centre is next to Jefferies Garden Centre off St Johns Lane. It is open from 10-12 and 2-4 Monday to Friday and 10-12 on Saturdays

## Council Clippings:

LETTER TO THE ROYAL HOUSEHOLD; DOCCOMBE EARLY CLOSING –The year is—1909  
A Royal visit by the Prince of Wales to his Duchy estate on

Dartmoor caused some excitement for Councillors in 1909. At the May meeting the Clerk was instructed to write to the Royal Household to ask “if His Royal Highness would afford the gratification of his humble subjects in Moretonhampstead by stopping here for a few minutes on his way from Princetown to Exeter on the 10<sup>th</sup> June”. Hopes were however dashed a month later when the Duchy of Cornwall sent a reply that “owing to limited time, their Royal Highnesses would not be able to stop whilst passing through the town”. The Council immediately suggested that to show the loyalty of the town the streets should be decorated and gave orders for notices to be printed asking the inhabitants to do this. Also at the June meeting it was agreed with the Postmaster-General that the Doccombe sub-office would be closed from 2pm on Thursdays. In the November meeting, the Council agreed the Council chamber could be used by the following organisations when the Council was not using it: The Debating Society (Thursdays), Arts and Crafts Society (Mondays & Fridays) and the Chess Club (Wednesdays).

NEXT MONTH: FIREMAN DISMISSED; DISCOURTEOUS LIBRARY CARETAKER WARNED AND BOWRING  
KNIGHTED

**Gary Cox**

## The Greenhill Centre:

A group of History Society members and others from Moreton have recently been working on the design and content of the display boards, with a professional designer. These will be on show in the entrance foyer of the centre. There will also be a Moreton history 'time line' above the door, and a large flatscreen interactive display system, which visitors will be able to use to get further information about the history of Moreton. Much of the information that we have on the website will be available to all by this means.

We hope to show how Moreton's past has shaped its unique character and makes it different from anywhere else. This should be ready for a 'grand opening' in December. It's a very exciting project & do let Bill Hardiman know if you would like to join in.

## Cider Making Visit:

A visit to Brimblecomes Farm on Farrants Hill near Dunsford ,has been arranged for History Society members, for a cider making session!

This will take place on **Saturday November 19th at 12.00 am**. Places on this trip will be allocated on a first come first served basis! Contact either Bill or Judy on 01647 4441083 if you want to go.

**Judy Hardiman**

## Church History and Talk:

Bill Hardiman and Ian Mortimer have been working on the production of a new guide to the only grade 1 listed building in Moretonhampstead, i.e. St Andrews Church.

In addition to the above. Ian Mortimer will be giving a talk in St Andrews Church from the Chancel steps on **Friday 14th Oct at 7.30 pm**, entitled:

### **The Church in Moreton**

There will be a collection, by way of donation, in aid of The Friends of St Andrews.  
The Friends of St Andrews raise funds to help preserve the fabric of this wonderful building.  
All are welcome, and refreshments will be provided

## November Meeting:

November meeting will take place in the Stable Bar of the Union Inn, on Wednesday 19th October at 7.30pm.

### **Horses & History**

Bob Pigott, for many years the local vet, reflects on his career in what promises to be a highly entertaining talk.

**Chris Pilkington**