



moretonhampstead  
history society

Newsletter February 2021

## NEXT MEETING

**WEDNESDAY MARCH 17TH**

*Æthelred the Unready and the South West*



*Gold mancus coin of Æthelred wearing armour*

*1003–1006*

*British Museum*

Dr Levi Roach of Exeter University is the leading authority on this little known & much misunderstood king.

A ZOOM MEETING. LOG-IN DETAILS E-MAILED IN ADVANCE TO MEMBERS.

JOIN IN FROM 7.15 PM FOR A 7.30 PM  
START

### **DOCCOMBE'S JANE AUSTEN?**

While researching the hamlet of Doccombe, where I grew up, I found a poignant family memoir of Herman Katenkamp who leased the manor there from Canterbury Cathedral from 1755 until 1766. Written by his daughter, Ann, it is a snapshot of 18th century life: children's education, social judgements, parental expectations, temptations, and the unexpected arrival of death.

READ IT FOR YOURSELF AT: <https://www.doccombeparishscapes.co.uk/blog-1>

Judy Hardiman

## Dr. Frederick George Engelbach

The wall brass in St. Andrew's Church recording the death of Dr Engelbach, Moreton's GP, on 13<sup>th</sup> December 1900 in the Boer War shows in the top corner the ancient Christian symbol of a bird plucking at its breast to feed blood to its offspring, recalling Christ's death, giving of his blood to save mankind. There is at the back of the church a granite block carved with this symbol, this from the first church on the site.



J



*Dr Engelbach's plaque in St Andrew's & a sketch of the granite carved bird made by Beatrice Creswell in 1902.*

James Engelbach, great great grandson of the doctor, has in recent years made a pilgrimage to St. Andrew's on 13<sup>th</sup> December, and last year noticed for the first time the bird symbol. This was of some considerable interest to him, because he has, handed down through the family, a seal with the same inscription, and has been told that it was the Engelbach family seal

The Engelbach name goes back several hundred years; James thinks his branch were Huguenots and came to England in the 18th century to avoid persecution. The name is not uncommon in Germany and the USA.

Leslie Miles

## Memorial to George Parker Bidder 1806 to 1878, “The Calculating Boy”

Most Moretonians have vaguely heard of George Bidder and many have an idea he was born here and was an arithmetical prodigy. However, the fact that his marble bust by the illustrious Edward William Wyon with its pair in the National Portrait Gallery, was shuffled around the library entrance floor for so long before arriving on the floor of Greenhill and his darkened portrait in the library reading room was scarcely noticed, tells us that most people had no appreciation of him as a truly interesting and inspirational character.

Born near the centre of Moreton in an artisan granite-worker family in humble circumstances, through genius, hard work and character, he ended in comfortable retirement in Devon, famous nationally and internationally.



Performing as a child mental arithmetic prodigy at fairs and in 1816 even to Queen Charlotte, Sir John Hershel and Cambridge University associates persuaded his father to let him attend school in Camberwell. Since his performances had (in today's money) a £6 entrance fee, unsurprisingly his father terminated this arrangement. However, in 1819 Sir Henry Jardine sponsored him to study mathematics at Edinburgh University graduating aged 17.

There he met his life-long close friend and subsequent business partner Robert Stephenson. One can easily imagine how two outstandingly talented young men from backgrounds so very different from most at university at the time, would have gravitated to each other. In 1834 they joined up professionally in what became in

Stephenson's words, a "*long and satisfactory private as well as professional friendship*".

His mental clarity, grip on detail and costs and of course arithmetical abilities saw him become the must-have advocate at the House of Lords during the railway mania stage. Supposedly on one occasion patrician opposing Counsel objected to his presence "*because nature had endowed him with particular qualities that did not place his opponents on a fair footing.*"

But what isn't mentioned is just how did he transform himself socially in such a divided society? Did he teach himself to "speak posh"? How did he mix with well-connected landowners and infrastructure promoters? Just how difficult was it for an artisan to become accepted in professional circles – in his case even becoming President of the Institution of Civil Engineers.

His professional career spanned canals, railways, docks, sewers and the electric telegraph system, but although an associate of Stephenson and Brunel, unlike them he is scarcely remembered. Maybe his modest background predisposed him to a less flamboyant working style – certainly his schemes were known for ending on time and budget – not a familiar situation particularly for the justifiably famous Brunel!

The recently erected monument near his birthplace at the top of Lime Street is intended to redress the lack of recognition of such an illustrious son of Moretonhampstead.

John Dodds

## Norden's survey of the Dunkeswell Manor

John Norden was a successful Elizabethan surveyor who produced surveys of a number of Devon manors in 1615-1616 for the Crown. In January 2020 a Lottery grant was awarded to FODA (Friends of Devon Archives) and a number of volunteers were tasked with transcribing and translating the survey documents. I was given the survey of Dunkeswell manor.

The Dunkeswell survey is stored in the online London Metropolitan archives. The first job was to create a document of the survey pages so that work could be done offline. Now my experience of transcribing medieval Latin and English documents is limited to put it mildly. So when I peered at the words in the document my heart initially sank. They seemed a complete jumble. But luckily an online translation of the Norden survey of Bovey Tracey came my way and this gave me a good idea of the structure and layout of Norden's surveys. The next problem was dealing with the florid capital letters – they don't much resemble modern capitals. I e-mailed Penny Martin – one of the authors – and she kindly sent me a few pages of the transcription that they had made. After a few hours of practice drawing out the 26 capitals the letters began to make sense. From then on progress began and after a week's work 80% of the survey had been transcribed. The surprise to me was that a lot of the translation was happening while transcribing. But 20% was still somewhat obscure so I decided to return to it in the New Year with a fresh eye.

This is a challenging but very enjoyable experience. There's a lot to learn from the exercise. And I certainly look at Dunkeswell in a new light.

Richard Knights – Dec 2020



Exeter castle in John Norden's Survey of Various Manors in the County of Devon  
(London Metropolitan Archives, Royal Contract Estates Collection, CLA/144/05/041)

## My years as a retained fireman 1961 – 1998 by Mike Jeffery:

### Part 1 The Pound St years

I joined the retained service in September 1961 having always been interested in the fire service and serving the community. The station situated on Pound St was C14 in Devon County Fire Service - I still have a cap badge and some buttons. I could not ride on the pump right away as I had to go through some training at Torquay fire station and the courses were not running until March the following year but I had a lot of training on the station. Some training nights were cold and wet so brass cleaning was the order of those nights;



a lot of the equipment was brass and sometimes the same was cleaned week after week. If an officer came on station you had to look busy otherwise questions were asked. Boots had to be cleaned and the appliance polished. All the men on station were ex-military men except Bob Austin and me and so we were put on a bit.

As time progressed and training under my belt, life became more interesting, there was a change of officer in charge, Len Coleridge retired and George Cleave took over with still quite a bit of banter on station, other men joined so I was not the new boy anymore. The siren was still in use on the library until 1977, so when there was a shout people would clear a way through for you like stopping the traffic crossing the halt sign, although many men had bicycles in those days. It was amusing sometimes if you had a night shout as some would turn up in their pyjamas, no one else about in the middle of the night but if the incident went on a bit some had to cycle home mid-day in their pyjamas.

We averaged about 50 – 60 shouts a year to start but as time progressed the service was no longer under the county council, we became Devon Fire Brigade and this took in Exeter City and Plymouth City who were up to now under the control of the city councils. We increased our number of shouts then as we were allowed to go into the city on standby if they had a larger job on, also then we became a fire and rescue service where we attended road traffic accidents.

Some shouts were a bit daunting, if you had a traffic accident where the parents were in the front of the car and badly injured or sometimes killed; getting the children out was often difficult as a lot of cars in those days had only 2 doors. Our appliance carried spreader gear, but Chagford and Bovey Tracey did not so we were often called to accidents on their ground. All appliances carried breathing apparatus but this was to be used only as a last resort as it meant Torquay had to send a man out with spare cylinders to change the sets, they did not like coming any further than Newton Abbot.

Some shouts were quite amusing, like one I remember well. We had a chimney fire at Clifford Barton, it was very cold weather and the county council were on strike so no gritting had been, I was driving and when we got to the top of Clifford Hill I saw the state of the road and said to the officer in charge “I am not driving down there”. He said “I will” but once in the cab he changed his mind, by this time we had asked for another

pump to attend the incident. An officer arrived and said he would drive it down but soon abandoned that idea and so we were stuck as we could not go back either. One of our crew got out of the cab and went up on his backside and slid half-way down the hill before he could steer himself into the hedge, then he had the task of getting back up the hill again. In the meantime two of the council workers who lived in Moreton and were nearing retirement anyway broke the strike by coming out and gritting the hill and all the way back to Moreton.

1976 saw our busiest year being a very dry summer fires were springing up everywhere, one week I had 12 hours at home, we were being sent from shout to shout, once going into Cornwall we had to buy a map to find where we were going. Another time we had a shout at Manaton Rocks where we stayed for 7 days in total. There was a large job on the Blackdown Hills and there were a lot of pumps there - I think most of Devon and Somerset attended that at some time, but I remember coming home after being out all day just got into bed and called out aging at 3am go to Topsham for a shop on fire, we were the nearest pump, when we got there the fire had spread to house and 4 shops, appliances were pulled off the Blackdown hills to help us out that night.

When we were busy on heath and grass fires you got complacent. At one time, however, we were stationed at the old Devon General garage as Pound street was being dug up for a new water main, and had been out on several heath fires but an early hours road accident on the moor where 2 men were killed soon jerked us back to reality.

In 1977 pumps were being replaced with much larger multi-purpose appliances that could not fit into our station in Pound Street (*see below*) so we raised the roof to accommodate the new appliances but it proved to be only a short-term fix.



## Moreton's lords of the manor 1199-1310: Part 2

William FitzGeoffrey de Mandeville, lord of Moreton (1216-1227) was born about 1186, the 2nd son of Geoffrey FitzPiers, 1st Earl of Essex of the 2nd creation and Beatrice de Say. He became the 3rd Earl of Essex upon the death of his brother, Geoffrey FitzGeoffrey de Mandeville, and inherited his lands in 1216.

Like his brother, he married a daughter of Robert FitzWalter, the leader of the baronial rebellion against John, and also espoused that cause. After the death of King John in October 1216, William supported Prince Louis of France's unsuccessful attempt to claim the throne as a maternal grandson of Henry II. Already excommunicated with his brother Geoffrey by Pope Innocent III, his lands, including Moreton, were confiscated.

Like his forebears, however, William proved to be a political survivor and having returned to fealty with the new boy King, Henry III, and his guardian, William Marshall, he was restored to his lands. The royal decree, summarized and modernized below, suggests that 'the men of Moreton' have also been defiant at the local level; the Teignbridge Hundred was the unit of local government and taxation between manor and shire:

*'The King greets the Sheriff of Devon. It was recognised by the sworn statement of the jury of our Teignbridge Hundred that the men of Moreton manor should owe service to our aforesaid Hundred but they did not and withdrew it. And therefore we ordered for it to be before our aforesaid Justices certified that statement under oath of the jury of the aforesaid Hundred be made before them about the aforesaid service. Meanwhile therefore William Earl of Essex is permitted to have his manor of Mor[e]ton in peace*

We assume that William helped to smooth things over between the truculent Moretonians and the Hundred. He does have the first recorded action by a lord on behalf of Moreton manor. In order to protect his own market here, William de Mandeville challenged the right of Hugh, manorial lord of Chagford, to hold a market in that neighbouring village.

*'Hugh of Chagford was summoned to show by what authority he had set up a market at Chagford to the detriment of Earl William de Mandeville's market in Moreton, without the licence of the lord king. And Hugh came and pleaded that he had not set up a market as had been said, because his market had been set up a hundred years ago whereas the earl's market was started five years ago. And both were on Sundays until, out of respect for the faith, they were moved to Saturdays.*

*And Earl William declared through his attorney that the same Hugh never had a market at Chagford, although a few people sometimes met on Sundays and bread, and meat, and the like were sold. Subsequently the earl's father, Geoffrey Fitz Piers, came and spoke with John the lord king, so that the lord king gave him a market in Moreton where previously there used to be an assembly like the one at Chagford. And then the lord king prohibited the assembly and market at Chagford so that at the beginning of the (civil) war there was no assembly or market at Chagford, but only during and on account of the (civil) war.*

*And Hugh said that his market had been established many years before the earl's market, and he pleaded that he had never received a prohibition such as had been described.*

*Then he declared on oath that he had taken toll and stallage in the market as appropriate, and he always had done so. And the earl pleaded that Hugh had never taken tolls except after the (civil) war. And the earl threw himself on the jury, and Hugh did the same.*

*Then the sheriff ordered an inquiry to be made by free and lawful men of Chagford and Moreton as to whether:*

*There had been in Chagford a market receiving tolls, stallage, and other customs pertinent to a market before John the lord king granted a market in Moreton to Geoffrey Fitz Piers, earl of Essex.*

*And whether Hugh of Chagford had received the aforesaid dues of the aforesaid market of Chagford before the (civil) war etc..*

*And the inquiry should be held on the Sunday before Ascension Day by letters under his (the sheriff's) seal and the coroner's seal; etc..*

*And Hugh nominated Gervase Fitz Henry as his attorney.'*

(Curia Regis Roll 72, Hilary Term, 4 Henry III, 1219)

We do not know the outcome of the inquiry; perhaps the two sides were to never agree again! Moreton continued to hold its market until 1939 but perhaps Chagford had the last word as their one lasted another 50 years. William served Henry III loyally for the rest of his life, including an engagement against Llewellyn in Wales and a spell as Ambassador to France. He died on Christmas Day 1227, and, as he left no issue, the Earldom of Essex devolved upon his sister, Mary (Maud), Countess of Hereford, while the lands which he inherited passed to his half-brother, John FitzPiers. His heart was buried in Walden Abbey, Saffron Walden (his birthplace), Essex while his body was buried alongside his parents at Shouldham Priory, Downham, Norfolk that his father had founded.



*One of the last markets at Moreton after 730 years. Martin Perryman's mother (centre) & Dan Pollard with their prize calves at a YFC sale.*