

NEXT MEETING

WEDNESDAY JULY 16TH 1-5 PM

EXETER CATHEDRAL LIBRARY AND RAMM

Guided tour of Exeter Cathedral's Library & Archives. We will be shown some of their 'treasures' including the sole surviving copy of the *Liber Exoniensis* or *Exeter Book*- a fuller version of the Domesday Book of 1086, covering much of Southwest England, including '*Morton*'

The Library is in the **Bishop's Palace** which is behind the Cathedral on the south side. i.e. about 100 yards to the right of the west entrance of the Cathedral.

Meet: **12.45 pm** outside the **Cathedral Library** in front of the **Bishop's Palace**.

The Tour starts there promptly at 1.00 pm.

After this we will walk across to the **Royal Albert Memorial Museum (RAMM)** in **Queen Street** for a special tour of the 'Museum behind the scenes' and to be shown some of their artefacts, including some local to us. Our guide will be Tom Cadbury, the Curator of Antiquities at RAMM

Price: £7 PER PERSON

Please let Judy know if you can come & whether you can offer a lift or would like one
N.B. We will finish at RAMM at about 5 pm and the last bus back from Exeter is at 6.15 pm.

Please drop off or post the money (cheques payable please to Moretonhampstead History Society) to our house: 3, Courtenay Terrace, Station Rd TQ13 8NJ Tel. 441 083

Closing date Saturday 12th July

*The king had a manor called **Morton**. (King) Harold held it. At the time of King Edward the Confessor's death (1066) it paid tax for about 3 hides (about 300 acres)*

Translation of the first part of the Exeter Book's entry for Moretonhampstead courtesy of Dr Ian Mortimer

MARCH MEETING

The Building of Exeter Cathedral

At the Union Inn on 19th March 2014 The History Society heard an extremely interesting talk by the distinguished Cathedral Archaeologist, John Allan, on 'The Building of Exeter Cathedral'. The illustrated talk began with a slide, taken from high above ground level, looking down on groups of carefree holiday-makers and citizens relaxing on the Cathedral Green. This perfectly ordinary picture was followed by a slide showing neatly ordered skeletons instead of people. Somehow the image was both humorous and shocking, allowing John Allan to make the point graphically that the ground in that area was layered with a series of burials dating from long before the building itself existed.

The cathedral was founded in 1133, and was initially Norman in design, later being remodelled in the Gothic style. Using the North and South towers which are part of the original Norman building, John explained that their structure and decoration reflected the developing changes in styles during the years it took to build them. The tower walls are over three metres thick at the base and about a metre thick towards the top. The lower sections of the towers lack the ornamentation which was incorporated higher up as the building work progressed and designs changed. He highlighted the Norman saw tooth friezes that edged the arches in the later designs. He also mentioned that as symmetry was not important in Norman architecture, the appearance of the towers differs, and this would not have been regarded as odd or unusual.

The appointment of Walter Brouncombe in the mid 13th century re-vitalised the bishopric and instigated the remodelling of the cathedral in the new fashionable Gothic style, although many parts of the original Norman building were retained. The work started in the east end, in the Lady Chapel which was the most important religious area of the church and was completed in the early fourteenth century.

Equipment was to our eyes basic but clearly operational, as illustrated by a contemporary painting showing large stones being lifted to great heights by a simple pincers and rope and wheel system.

It is possible that the master masons working on the project were not necessarily local, as such people moved around the country from project to project. It is probable that the same

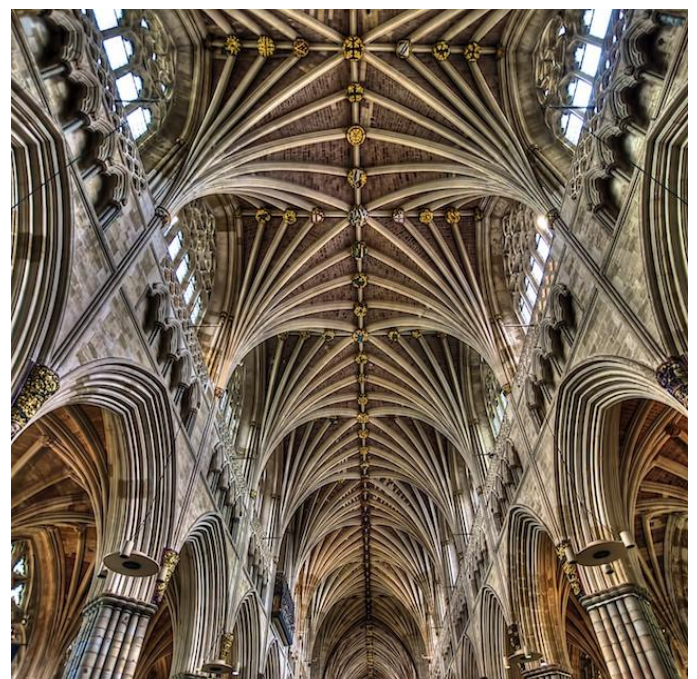
masons who worked on Exeter were also employed on Wells cathedral. Unlike today, master masons were responsible not only for the construction of the cathedral but also for the elaborate designs and drawings that would have been produced for patrons, and the mathematical calculations and organisation involved. This is illustrated by the surviving fabric rolls for the Cathedral that costed both labour and materials, and showed the masons as highly paid, skilled workers.

The thirteenth century design incorporated the new Gothic ideas of high, well lit spaces and used large light windows. As glass was extremely expensive, the effect was achieved by a design which set small areas of glass within a stone network of tracery and mullions. This allowed for wide ornate windows without using large pieces of glass. To appreciate the beauty of the work involved, the two tiers of windows at Exeter are best viewed from outside the cathedral, where the series of delicate designs can be viewed as a whole.

Further examination of the exterior reveals the use of flying buttresses. This was a recognised building solution to counteract the immense outward forces placed on the side walls by the massive weight of the stone vaulted ceilings and roofs. Such building methods made the structure very stable; a bomb dropped next to the building during the Second World War damaged the wall in the immediate area but the remaining fabric of the building remained stable and secure



WEST FRONT



NAVE CEILING

Talking about some of the interesting internal features John highlighted the beautifully symmetrical ribbed vaulting forming the roof of the aisle which allowed the builders to create the feeling of light and space. An effect quite amazing to visitors of that time and since. The ornamental roof bosses are also highly decorative. The larger ones, carved at a cost of five shillings each, are nearly a metre across and are beautifully detailed and painted. Samson has a mass of golden curls tumbling down his back as he wrestles with a lion and kicks it up the bum. A snip at three and four pence, a slightly smaller boss shows a curvaceous mermaid in surprising anatomical detail. A further fascinating boss shows the bust of a pope wearing green gloves. The gloves were originally painted papal white, but research by the famous Victorian English Gothic revival architect Sir George Gilbert Scott proved that medieval popes wore green gloves and the colour was subsequently changed. Sometimes the Victorian restorers did get it right!

At ground level there are the detailed and varied carvings on the misericords on the choir seats, one of which portrays an unlikely but highly accurate carving of an elephant.

The speaker dealt with a very complex subject in a light hearted and accessible manner, and his talk and slides were very much enjoyed by all.

Brian Spittles

HISTORIC CHURCHES' VISIT

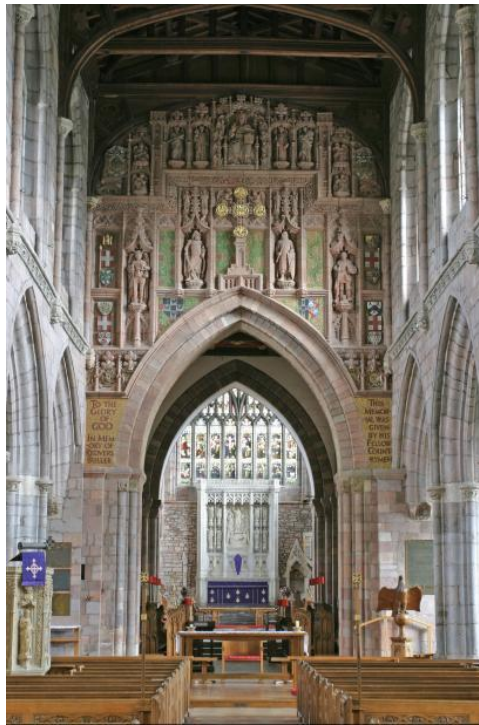
On 22nd March 2014 25 members of the group visited three churches.

The first was the largest and, historically, richest: Church of the Holy Cross **Crediton**. A guided tour took us from the Nave Memorial to General Sir Redvers Buller VC, through to the bell tower, learning in the process that although Redvers Buller, who lived locally, had been awarded the VC during the Zulu War of 1879 he had left the Boer War with something of a blemished reputation. This, however, did not adversely affect his high standing in Devon. The memorial itself is a complex and impressive construction.

A monastery existed on the site in 739 and was superseded by a 10th century reformation structure. Crediton was at that time the Seat of the Diocese until in 1050 that was moved to Exeter. A striking feature of the church are the four arches and tower dating from the early 12th century. The Lady Chapel dates from the following century, and Perpendicular influences became dominant in the 15th. A bench runs along the walls, which in the past

allowed frail and infirm worshippers, unable to stand through a whole service, the 'comfort' of a seat, thus giving rise to the description of someone who 'went to the wall'.

**BULLER MEMORIAL
CREDITON CHURCH**



The Victorian period saw such amendments as raising the high altar and moving it into the nave, and repositioning the pulpit. Working the hard crystalline stone caused a recurrent payment for the sharpening of tools. The group was allowed special access to the middle floor, with its strikingly broad Tudor floor boards, and other memorials to the past, including a number of items from the Civil War when Crediton and Moreton were the two main centres of parliamentary (and Puritan) support in mid Devon. The room is used for meetings of the Governors who are responsible still for maintaining the building and fabric of the building which still feels like a small cathedral but is today just a parish church. Back at ground floor traces of original colour could be seen on some statues. Perhaps the most surprising artefact was the effigy of Sir John de Sully showing that he experienced an unusual amount of the middle ages for an individual life - from 1281 to 1387.

An extremely enjoyable lunch at, the Cadeleigh Arms, bought recently by a trust group of the villagers to keep it open, was followed by a visit to St. Bartholomew's Church **Cadeleigh**. Here again we were treated to an informative introduction to the church. The first mention of a church, in the register of Bishop Branscombe, is 1258, but a scratching on one of the walls indicates that the site was occupied before 1150. The tower dates from the 15th century and

the North aisle was added during the next hundred years. The fine set of box pews were installed in 1766.

But the main feature in the church is the seventeenth-century Leach Monument. John Leach was a master blacksmith who purchased a quantity of 'iron' bars from an Armada wreck, and was lucky enough to discover they were solid gold. These set the family up in fine style, and befitting a practical craftsman he used the wealth wisely. His son became a wealthy lawyer and was knighted in 1625. Sir Simon Leach is depicted on the tomb in his armour, and his wife, Lady Katherine, in a ruff, with their nine children in attendance. A cartouche reads, in Latin, 'Bowed down by the fate of my wife, I am going to her tomb. Her partner in life, in death I will be her comrade.' There are faint suggestions of pre-Reformation colour, especially red and yellow, but insufficient for restoration. Bill opined that Stuart Moretonians had help to pay for this splendid tomb as the Courtenays 'subcontracted' the manor of Moreton to Sir Simon Leach in return for a hefty loan and he in turn kept the manorial rents, market tolls and court fines paid by our forebears as interest.



**THE LEACH TOMB
CADELEIGH -
FINANCED BY
MORETON?**



A simulated white marble Grecian altar marks a memorial to Lady Bridget Higgons, another of the Leach family, who died in 1691: 'A splendid example of high birth and distinguished character.' Another rewarding visit to an apparently modest building containing its own collection of treasures.

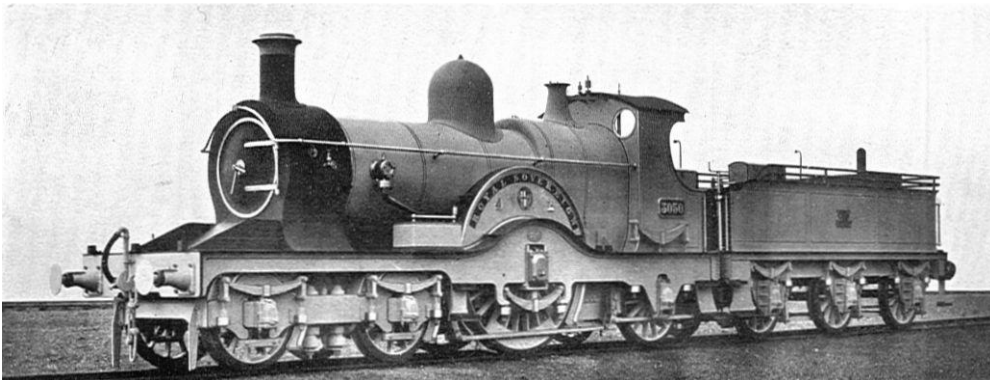
The final leg of the day took us to St. Michael and All Angels **Cadbury**. Unfortunately there was no local guide available although we were entertained by the pleasant sound of the bells being retuned, and the chance to explore on our own. Our thanks to Bill and Judy for organising another interesting day out.

Your perambulatory scribe

APRIL MEETING

A virtual steam train ride around Dartmoor

On 16th April Devon railway enthusiast, Peter Gray, treated members of the History Society, and a considerable number of guests, to a showing of his evocative slide-photos of the last days of steam rail on and around Dartmoor. He began with a brief railway history, including a rare photo of Brunel's Atmospheric Railway Compulsion pipes at Starcross. This system was not compatible with the demands of the terrain, and it never operated beyond Newton Abbot. The large 22 inch diameter pipes ending up used for drainage. By 1861 Great Western engines were supplying the power, and twenty years later a new generation of engines were operating from Newton Abbot on broad gauge tracks. In 1892 the broad gauge was replaced by the narrow or standard gauge track and the days of the innovative so-called 'single wheeler' engines (see below) which ran between 1890- 1915 were numbered.



On the Teign Valley Railway the original terminus at Aston opened in 1882 and took more Acts of Parliament to achieve than there were miles of track. Sadly it was a narrow gauge line

so could not connect with anything else. The line boasted a 'flood platform' because the train could still function even when the line was flooded, which often happened. Today with electric transmission, that is not possible, as we all well know!

Peter's photograph of the interior of Newton Abbott station in 1861 showed there was only a single, broad gauge track between the platforms, and how gloomy the interior was. The building was replaced by the current station in 1927, with the three track layout that remains today, but Moretonians complained that they still had to go outside the main station to Platform 9 on their way home. In the 1930s another initiative was attempted with streamlined locomotives. These looked very cumbersome on the slides shown, with a bulbous and somewhat 'bomb' like nose, and it was hardly surprising that the experiment lasted only two months.

In August 1940 seven German bombs were dropped on Newton Abbot Station. One was a direct hit on the complicated 'scissor crossing' a section of line that allowed trains to pass from one track to another and Peter Gray's slides graphically showed the considerable damage and disruption. The Second World War brought in another change too, with engines coming over from the USA which were used for pulling freight before being withdrawn and going over to France in 1944.

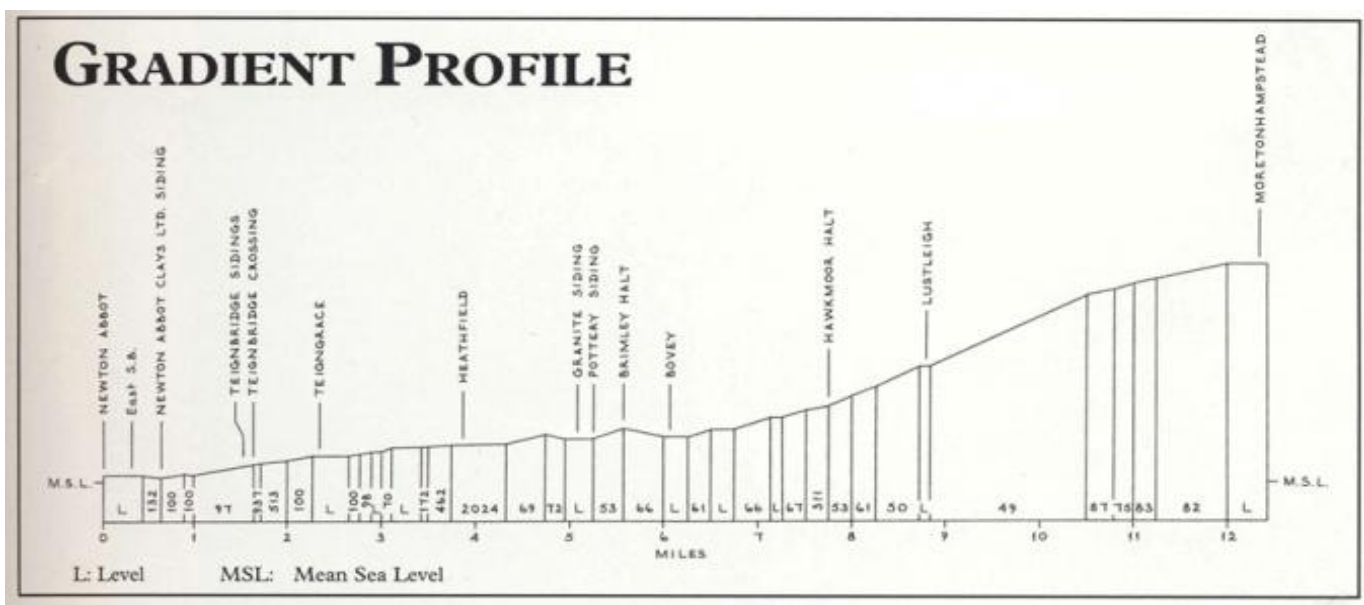
In the late 1940s a short stubby engine of a class appropriately known as "The Bulldog" was used as carriage shunter. These added or subtracted carriages to each train during its journey, as the trains not only carried passengers but also letter and parcels vans. The vans travelled around the country and so needed to be uncoupled and reattached to various trains in the course of their journey.

The 1950s saw the start of the British Rail standard locomotives, the first being the Britannia Class. Rail travel increased and became more and more hectic, with extra trains added into an already busy schedule in an attempt to cope with demand. This resulted in long delays for passengers. Train times were calculated on a point to point basis as the train moved slowly down the line, and on a busy summer Saturday in 1957 the London to Newton Abbot train would be over two hours late!

We learned that the old Newton Abbot signal box has been reconstructed and is now sited permanently in Crewe. It was also interesting to learn that such places as Long Down,

Dunsford (i.e. Dunsford Halt at Culver) Christow and Teignrace were also on or near (or in Dunsford Village's case not so near!) the rail network, either as stations or Halts, until well into the 1950s. Indeed, freight lines were operating into the following decade. Occasional passenger services also survived for such purposes as commemorative days. A photograph of the 1960 Heart of Devon Rambler evocatively made the point.

Our journey ended, appropriately, with the route from Lustleigh to Moretonhampstead, with a wish that at least a cycle/riding/walking link will one day allow a non-motorised connection again, still benefitting from the skill of the railway engineers (see below) in coping with the steep natural gradients from Bovey at nearly sea level to Moreton at 700ft.



Peter Gray demonstrated a remarkable, and enviable, grasp of the subject matter. Clearly his fame, knowledge and unique collection of photos had preceded him, as the Parish Hall was full to capacity, and the audience very appreciative of the illustrated talk.

Your scribe [Brianus de Morasaeva](#)

Moor Than Meets The Eye



HLF have approved this scheme. MHS will take part in 2 parts of it.

A collaborate study with Bovey Heritage Centre and Lustleigh Society of the Victorians in the Wray Valley to run from 2015-2017.

More immediately we have been chosen to take part in the first tranche of a project called Parishscapes. This will finance us to revise, extend and republish George Friend's pioneering book 'Memories of Moretonhampstead'. We will start work on this in the autumn with a view to publication a year later. If you would like to join in this exciting project Bill will send around further details to everyone in September.

MAY & JUNE MEETINGS

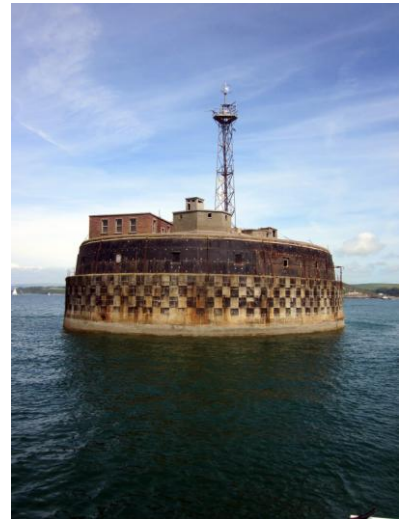
On 21st May 2014 the History Society's presentation of the month was 'The History of Plymouth Breakwater' by Nigel Overton, Curator of Plymouth City Museum (Maritime Heritage). The speaker began by quoting a contemporary slogan - 'Great National Undertaking' - which Nigel likened to the more recent construction of the Channel Tunnel. Financed by the government, huge amounts of stone were sunk into the breakwater to make a safe haven for shipping, and a defence against sea-borne attack.

A slide of William Gardner's 1784 map, a forerunner to the Ordnance Survey's work, revealed that an area of 3-4,000 acres of water in Plymouth Sound had to be taken into account, and a breakwater would provide safe anchorage for up to sixty vessels. Sheltering them from the strong South Westerly or Easterly winds was seen as urgent after the wreck of the Dutton on the Hoe rocks in 1796. With such a huge area there were many factors creating uncertainty such as the silting up of the Plym, and the possible ramifications of that. The number, and extent, of 18th century wars also gave an impetus to solving problems.

Because Torbay was too far from Plymouth for practical, re-victualing purposes by the 1820s, work to establish Plymouth docks as safe anchorage was advancing. By 1824 Devonport had become an important element in the complex. Although the main purpose for the activity was Naval this increased investment also meant that commercial trading interests expanded. Ships serving assisted immigration passengers, for example, also used the facilities as a port of call.

In 1806 Rennie and Whidbey proposed the breakwater scheme that, in the face of numerous different proposals, was adopted. Although, as the speaker explained, French belligerence was not a feature after Waterloo; nature remained a factor with very destructive storms hastening the need for progress. The government granted the money for the project in 1811. Although a similar undertaking was in progress at Cherbourg, there was no actual template for the design. A slide illustrating the transverse section of the breakwater showed that, like an iceberg, it was considerable larger under the surface than above it. It was initially designed with a one in three slope on the seaward side and a more gentle one in five slope on the landward one. However the continual battering of the sea repeatedly changed this outline, reversing it, so a gentle slope of one in five

PLYMOUTH SOUND BOAT TRIP JUNE 11TH 2014



developed on the seaward side with the steeper one in two slope on the landward side. The engineers decided to retain this configuration with the addition of a flat beach area on the landward side about four metres above the low water mark.

The original estimate of 2,000,000 ton of stone, a mix of limestone and granite, doubled to over 4,000,000. The visible section of the breakwater is approximately one mile in length and over forty five foot wide, with the two end sections set at an angle of 23° with a lighthouse at the western end built in 1844. The top was capped with keystone granite blocks.

Breakwater Fort, part of the Palmerstone fortifications was built on Shovel Rock on the landward side of the breakwater. It is oval in shape walls ranging from 14 - 20 feet thick and the checkered paintwork, which can still be seen today, was used to camouflage the number of gun ports.

The initial construction of big single blocks created a series of air pockets. Suction from the sea utilised these to cause considerable movement, so smaller pieces rubble were also added as infilling. The stone from Plymouth proved poor quality so twenty five acres of land was purchased and the Breakwater Quarry created. In March 1813 the first part of the breakwater appeared above water level to 'the fair astonishment of the natives!'

In the 1820s with work proceeding apace many workers of stone were recruited from Scotland, which over the years had an interesting sociological outcome, since many of them settled with their families in Devon, and not only in the south of the county. In Moretonhampstead itself are currently descendants of that migration. From 1891 the engineers experimented with concrete 'wave breakers' and huge 100 ton oblong blocks, looking like Foxes Glacier mints were added to the defences between 1927 to 1968 450 were added to the breakwater. Another unexpected outcome is that the wave breakers have become popular with marine biologists as useful areas for research.

Nigel Overton's presentation was enthusiastically received, and served as an introduction to his guided tour to Plymouth Sound and Breakwater on June 11th. On the first glorious afternoon of the summer 96 members of Chagford Local History Society, Lustleigh Society and MHS were treated to hear Nigel's brilliant and unscripted description of the Sound and surrounding waters that informed and impressed not just us but also the boat crew who sail on them every day.

MEMBERS' INTERESTS

My connection with the Plymouth Breakwater is through my great great grandfather JOHN REID*. He was born in 1790 in Scotland. The census returns state that his birthplace was Scotland which doesn't help us much with him having such a common name, but legend has it that he was born in Ayrshire. He was a stonemason and came to work in the Breakwater quarry at Oreston in Plymouth. He met and married Sarah Symons and had several children. One son, Charles, worked on the boats that took the stone out to the Breakwater and was known to have suffered various injuries during this time and the visits to the hospital are duly recorded in the Naval Hospital Files. As well as not knowing his birthplace, we also had a problem with his marriage to Sarah as the Parish Records show that whoever recorded the marriage copied the name of the previous bride as Mrs John Reid, but she was in fact Elizabeth Simmons! We had to prove who 'our' Mrs Reid was and there is a note in the card index in the Devon Family History Society's files to show the correct name.

John Reid lived in Oreston and as far as I know stayed in the job at the Quarry. He did not deliver the stone to the Breakwater but cut the stone ready for others to take it to the site. I was very lucky in living in the Plymouth area and could easily discover documents and papers relating to the Breakwater. Long before this I had actually visited it and this was due to a relation working on the Breakwater Fort and inviting his son and me each summer school holiday to visit him there. On those occasions, and if the weather and tide was right, he would row us across to the Breakwater and we would walk down to the lighthouse, which in those days was manned, and have a cuppa with the keeper. Two experiences stay with me at that time: the first was one of the keepers learning to play the trumpet and the noise was so bad he was banned to the lantern: and the second was when we had another cousin with us and she was 'encouraged' to stand beside the bell on the balcony which my uncle rang with gusto, she almost fell into the sea with fright!

My daughter, Lucy, has fond memories of her dad dropping her off on the Breakwater to walk to the end and, while she was so doing, he rowed around and encouraged her to 'keep it up'. When I lived at Turnchapel in Plymouth, it was a common sight to see the special boat taking a load of huge boulders out to the Breakwater to be put into place compensating what the force of the sea had done. I often wonder how John Reid finished up working with John Rennie in Oreston Quarry. Was he working elsewhere when Rennie came looking for men, was he perhaps working on the navigations or he might even had known Rennie back in Scotland? The one question I would most like to have the answer to is where exactly was he born in Scotland.

*John Reid born Scotland 1790, married Sarah Symons 6th April 1821 Plymstock, died 3rd May 1844 Oreston, Plymstock, Plymouth.

Histor-Ian's corner

As we all know, there are several handsome neo-Jacobean buildings dotted in and around the area. Most famous, perhaps is the Manor House (now Bovey Castle Hotel) in the parish of North Bovey, designed by Detmar Blow for W.F.D. Smith, later Viscount Hambledon, in 1907. Elements of Castle Drogo in Drewsteignton parish, designed by Sir Edwin Lutyens for Julius Drewe in 1911, also hark back to the Jacobean period. In Moretonhampstead itself we have at least four more modest examples. One is 19 Station Road, by an unknown architect. We do know the names of the architects of the other three, however. Walter E. Mills of Banbury designed the Rectory (now Mardon House), for W.F.D. Smith in 1901. And Silvanus Trevail of Luxulyan designed the Library and the Lucy Wills Nursing Home. Perhaps the names of Mills and Trevail are unfamiliar to you – I knew little about either until recently – but the latter certainly was someone we should celebrate.

According to the *Directory of British Architects 1834-1914*, **Walter Mills** was articled to Henry Edward Cooper of Bloomsbury in about 1868. He became an architectural clerk for Clifden Estates and was elected an Associate of the Royal Institute of British Architects in 1882. In 1887-8 he was given the job of extending Holdenby House, the remains of one of the greatest of houses in Elizabethan England. Holdenby had originally been built by Sir Christopher Hatton to entertain Queen Elizabeth I – hence its vast size of 78,000 square feet – but had mostly been demolished in the seventeenth century. Perhaps this is where Mills got his taste for the architecture of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth century from: most of the houses he built later, after he set up his own practice in Banbury, were neo-Jacobean in style. Among his other works are the extensions to Braziers Park for Valentine Fleming, the father of Ian Fleming of James Bond fame and Peter Fleming. He also worked on a number of church restorations, including the chancel, vestry and screen of our own church in 1904. Mills died in 1910.

Silvanus Trevail was an architect of national importance, and regularly described as the most famous architect that Cornwall has ever produced. He was born on a farm in Luxulyan in October 1851 and rose to be Mayor of Truro and President of the Society of Architects. After the passing of Forster's Education Act in 1870, he designed more than fifty schools. Some of Cornwall's most prominent hotels were his work, including those at Tintagel (now Camelot Castle Hotel), St. Ives (Carbis Bay Hotel), The Lizard (Housel Bay Hotel) and Newquay (The Atlantic Hotel). On top of these he designed many libraries in the south west, including those in Newton Abbot, Liskeard, Truro and Bodmin, as well as our own. He undertook drainage reforms in Truro for the county council and tried to expand the harbours of North Cornwall. He not only helped the restoration of many Cornish churches, he often helped with the fundraising by parishioners to accomplish the task. His Moretonhampstead designs include the Bowring Library for Sir Thomas B. Bowring (1900-1), and the Lucy Wills Nurses' Home for George Wills (1903) in memory of his late wife who died in 1898 (hence that date is engraved above the door). These works were undertaken at the end of a passionate and successful life; sadly it was also a troubled one. He committed suicide – he shot himself on a train – near Bodmin in November 1903. Until this year there existed a Silvanus Trevail Society in his honour; unfortunately due to the lack of impetus, it decided to fold at this year's AGM. Nevertheless, Moreton should be proud that it can boast two mature works by an architect of such standing.

Ian Mortimer