



Newsletter

Dec 2010

Annual Christmas Dinner:

In accordance with our normal tradition our December meeting takes the form of the Annual Dinner which will take place on Wednesday 15th December at 7.00 for 7.30pm at The White Horse. It should be a good get together, a most interesting menu! The deadline for obtaining tickets was 30th November.

November Meeting:

This meeting took place in the Stable Bar of the Union Inn at 7.30 on Wednesday 17th November, and was attended by well over sixty members and other guests. The subject of the talk was: Moreton at War in the Twentieth Century given by our new chairman, Bill Hardiman.

Bill started with the Boer War, and spoke of the 5 Volunteers from Moreton, who came from Moreton, and are commemorated on a Brass plaque which is fixed to the wall at the side entrance to the White Hart. Amongst the Volunteers was Dr Frederick G Englebach who practised medicine in Moreton for some ten years before joining the campaign in South Africa. He joined, not as a soldier, but as a civilian Doctor, I'm sure the army were glad to have him. Tragically he was killed by a bullet wound to the head whilst treating the wounded at a place called Noditgedacht. The rest of those from Moreton returned unscathed, and were given a hero's welcome, presents of Silver watches, and a 'slap up' meal in the White Hart!

We then heard about those that took part in the First World War Who, along with those who were killed in the Second World war were so recently remembered in the Service of Remembrance held on the 14th November. In the first World War 36 men from here died in the conflict, the majority around Ypres in Belgium. It seems such a large number for such a small place! I'm sure many of, you like me, have visited some of the vast military cemeteries, across the Channel, a very moving experience.

Bill's talk was interspersed with readings from Gary Cox from the Minutes of the Parish Council meetings at the time. This gave the talk an added, and sometimes, a somewhat amusing, dimension. Such as the following: The record shows, that after the war, the War Office offered the town, 6 German Rifles as trophies. The Parish council was clearly 'miffed' about this and said that considering the great sacrifice made by the men of Moreton, they expected a machine gun at the very least!

As the War Memorial shows, the losses were somewhat less in the Second World War, 12 men from here died in that conflict, but I'm sure no less mourned by their families and friends, and remembered to this day. Despite fewer losses, Moreton was probably much more directly affected by the Second World War than the First. For instance, the Town had evacuees from London, even before the war actually started, Bill tells us! Included are some well known people, such as Bill Field, Sylvia Pike and Pam Bartlett. Many other local people did service in the Home Guard. The Royal Army Medical Corps took over The Manor Hotel (Bovey Castle), and used it as a hospital. Later in the war in the build up to D Day, a large influx of American troops, were camped on Mardon, some 1700 in all, more than the entire population of Moreton! The American Troops were from various support regiments, including the 392nd Engineer & General Services Regiment. They were all non combat troops, who had a vital a vital support role such as bridge building. They practised these skills on Mardon, and the scars of this activity remain until this day. Apart from the Officers, all the troops were black, and unlike today, were segregated, and not allowed to serve in combat Regiments. They were, however, made very welcome in Moreton by the local people, and attended dances and other events. They had their own bands and these could be heard practising on Mardon. Bill produced a mass of other interesting facts relating to these wars, clearly he had done a great deal of detailed research. Because of time constraints, there was no opportunity for questions or input from a number of the community who may have had more stories about Moreton in the Second World War to share with us.

Perhaps Bill would consider revisiting the subject of the Second World War at sometime in the future, perhaps there is more to tell.

However it was a really superb talk, and we look forward to many more like it.

He is writing a booklet on the subject, and this will be sold in aid of the 'Help for Heroes' charity. I will advise on availability, price etc via this Newsletter once details are known.

Programme for 2011:

The new programme of events and meetings for 2011 has been drawn up by our new Programme Secretary, Judy Hardiman, and agreed at our recent Committee Meeting. It is, as always, a full and varied programme, with evening meetings in the winter and spring months, and trips and visits in the summer.

In accordance with our usual tradition, we start this year with the bi-annual Presidential Address. Ian Mercer indicated at the AGM that this would be his last year as president, so this will be his last address to the Society as President. I'm sure there will, as always, be a good turn out for this.

A copy of the 2011 programme will be available to members at the January meeting.

Sober Event!:

Excerpt from the **Exeter Flying Post** dated 3rd August 1870.

'On Saturday evening the Bovey Tracey Brass band favoured Moretonhampstead with a visit and played with much spirit a capital selection of dance music etc. The proceedings were diversified with a game of cricket in the Sentry. This healthiest and prettiest of moorland towns is now filled with visitors from all parts, many of whom listened with much delight to the best open air music that had been heard in Moretonhampstead for many a day. The performers are all teetotallers and proved by demonstration what excellent results may be produced without the aid of intoxicating liquor!'

January Meeting:

Our first meeting of 2011 will take place on Wednesday 19th January, at 7.30 pm in the Stable Bar of the Union Inn.

The Society's President and former head of DNPA, Professor Ian Mercer, will relate:

'The President's Tale - a personal contact with Dartmoor'.

Professor Mercer's recent book 'Dartmoor' in the Collins New Naturalist Library series has been hailed as a 'classic work'. This will undoubtedly be a fascinating and entertaining evening.

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

New Members:

We extend a warm welcome to **Alan Hurdidge** who lives in Lime Street, Moreton and also to **Sue Pitcher** from Wray Barton. We look forward to seeing them at future meetings.

Subscription Reminder:

They remain at: £10 for a single membership & £15 for two persons at the same address. Cheques (made payable to Moretonhampstead History Society) or cash can be sent to Our treasurer Jeanette Webster at 26 Forder Meadow, Moretonhampstead.

Chris Pilkington