



Moretonhampstead History Society

Newsletter

January 2010

A Happy New Year to you all!

January Meeting:

The Next meeting will be held on 20th January in the **Stable Bar of the Union Inn**. This will be Ian Mortimer's Chairman's Address, and the topic will be:

'Rewriting History'

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

December:

The Annual Dinner took place on Wednesday 16th December. An excellent meal was served at The Ring of Bells, North Bovey in front of a glowing log fire, which added to the atmosphere. However, it was disappointing that only 24 members attended this event. This represented about a quarter of the membership. When I came here 7 years ago and went to my first History Society Dinner there were about 50 members present. This represented over three quarters of the membership at that time, so perhaps we are not now getting this right. I hope we can do better next year. I think the committee would welcome some feedback. For instance; would members prefer a venue actually in Moreton, rather than having to drive or be driven? Would members prefer the Dinner to either be held earlier in December, or even after Christmas, when perhaps their diaries are less congested, with similar events?

Do please let us know what you think we should do when planning this year's Annual Dinner.

Dartmoor- A New Work by Professor Ian Mercer:

Our History Society President Professor Ian Mercer has recently completed a major new work.

It is reviewed here by **James Paxman** who is also a member of the History Society.

*'A treat lies in store with the publication of Ian Mercer's **Dartmoor** in the New Naturalist Library series. The book is a reworking of the 1953 title by Harvey and St Leger Gordon - where Ian Mercer is acknowledged for providing assistance, but is entirely new material. The depth and breadth of knowledge that Ian Mercer brings to this title comes from his long association with Dartmoor for over 50 years. The first National Park Officer, and now chairman of the Dartmoor Commoners' Council, there can be few who can match his experience. Although Ian's business card describes him as "Itinerant Chairman", it is in his role as a geographer that he gives us his appreciation of Dartmoor. And unlike the earlier volume in the New Naturalist series, it is an understanding of the area that sees an insoluble link between the human and the natural aspects of the landscape. So as well as the descriptions of vegetation and fauna we also see the people who have worked the landscape through the ages and the vital role that farming has contributed to the creation of the moorland. This book is a much needed appreciation of Dartmoor as it stands in the first decade of the twenty first century. It will very quickly become a classic work.'*

Dartmoor (Harper Collins New Naturalist Library) by Ian Mercer Can be obtained via the internet from Amazon for £30.39p

It is also available in the Morton Bookshop & Waterstones. If you want to have a look at the book first, there is a copy for you to see in the Moretonhampstead Information Centre.

Subscriptions - Reminder:

Jeanette tells me that she still has a significant number of subscriptions outstanding. Now that Christmas is over, we hope that these will be forthcoming. It's **£10** for a single membership and **£15** for two members living at the same address. Subscriptions can be either cash or a cheque made out to '**Moretonhampstead History Society**'. Jeanette will be available at the next meeting to take these, or subscriptions can be posted or delivered to Jeanette at home.

A Matter of Principle!:

From the Exeter Flying Post dated 5th Dec 1877.

'A meeting of the School Board was held on Saturday. A long discussion took place on the subject of corporal punishment as administered by the Mistresses of the Girls' and Infants' School to their pupils. The two mistresses were Miss M Bailey and Miss L Mare. A resolution passed at the last meeting 'that the cane be abolished in the Girls and Infants Schools, as well as corporal punishment', had resulted in the resignation of both mistresses, Miss Mare commenting that *'I intend most decidedly to have recourse to it when the circumstances of my school demand its exercise - when corporal punishment is used to quell insubordination and disobedience I think it may be given in righteous cause and look upon it as the infliction of a duty; disagreeable as it may be.'*

Footnote: Child Frost(No first name given) had been expelled from two schools, from one of them for kicking her Mistresses' legs!

A further report as a result of these resignations dated 8th May 1878.

The School board met to discuss applications for a vacancy for a mistress in the Girls' school. Only one was received, from a Mary Fulham of Parsons Green, Fulham - a 30 year old nonconformist, requiring a salary of £100 a year; for the last three years she had held a position in Faversham, Kent, and had a brother in Exeter. It was decided to write stating the Board couldn't give a salary higher than £80 a year, inform her of the reasons why corporal punishment had been abolished and give her a few particulars of the town.

Editors Note; I wonder if she accepted the post at the lower Salary that was offered, or perhaps she too wanted the option of corporal punishment?

Let me have your stories:

I'm sure many members must have stories about times gone by in Moreton. Last year I had several stories sent to me which were very well received when published in this newsletter. I would very much welcome more material of this sort. So please give this some thought. I don't mind in what form they come, even a story just on a scrap of paper can soon be typed up for everyone else to enjoy. I think we get so much more information about times past from first hand accounts, and they really are worth recording.

February Meeting:

This will take place on 17th February in the Community Club at 7.30pm. The subject will be:

'Protecting Dartmoor's Past'

By Jane Marchand

Jane is a member of The Dartmoor National Park Archaeology team—Last year she spoke to us about the Dartmoor Leats.

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Anyone can contribute; please send articles to Christopher Pilkington.