



# Newsletter

# April 2011

## April Meeting:

This meeting will take place on Wednesday 13th April (**second Wednesday in the month, not the third one**) at 7.30pm in the **Parish Hall**

### **Archive Films of the South West & Moretonhampstead**

South West Film & Television Archive will show archive film covering a variety of West Country subjects, with about the last 20 minutes dedicated to Moretonhampstead.

We anticipate that this will be a popular event so please arrive in good time.

*Non members of the Society are very welcome to join us for a donation of **£4** payable at the door*

## March Meeting:

One of our members, Brian Spittles, gave a fascinating illustrated talk on Thomas Hardy: Wessex Man. Brian challenged a number of popularly held notions about Hardy: his origins & upbringing were far from humble; his love of rural Dorset did not stop him spending quite a lot of time in London & Continental cities; his 'difficult wife' had also to put up with him being lionised by aristocratic ladies. Brian's declaration of his favourite Hardy novels to be 'Tess of the D'Urbervilles' & 'Jude the Obscure' provoked some interesting debate with the audience; just as, a 100 years ago, the attempts to censor them caused Hardy to cease writing novels & to concentrate on poetry.

**Bill Hardiman**

## Fatal Accident

Further to the report on the death of Nicholas Holman in the February Newsletter:

Nicholas Holman's fatal accident took place when he was just 13 years old! He was the son of John & Mary Holman, and baptised on the 22<sup>nd</sup> Jan 1815 at St Andrews, Moreton. His full name was Nicholas Battin Holman, a rather unusual middle name. I have searched all our virtual archive records, but can find no other trace of the name Battin, either as a Christian or surname. I think the latter most likely, as it is not uncommon for the spouses' surname to be passed on in this way. The burial records show his death as being on 22<sup>nd</sup> June 1828, and this, ties in with the Newspaper report I featured in February on this. There is no recorded headstone for him, but this is not so surprising as few people at this time could afford such an expensive outlay. The census of 1841 shows a John Holman living in Ford St (East) aged 70 years with occupation given as agricultural labourer. Curiously, there is also a Mary Holman in the Census, also 70 years old, but recorded separately, also living in Ford street, but in Ford St (South) not East. Possibly one or both of these are the parents of the deceased, but we cannot be certain. It is likely that Nicholas would have been in full time employment at this time, hence his being in charge of the cart, which led to his untimely end. From the coroners report it seems that the cartwheel that killed him was fined 1shilling! I wonder if this was paid by the cart's owner to the unfortunate parents. I'm sure today '*lawyers for you*' would have got perhaps a little more for them today!

Fatal accidents involving children were certainly not uncommon at this time, notwithstanding infant mortality

and death from disease, as the newspaper reports and burial records show.

**Editors note:** From Websters-‘a **deodand**’ (*Old Eng. Law*) ‘A personal chattel which had caused the death of a person, and for that reason was given to God, that is, forfeited to the crown, to be applied to pious uses, and distributed in alms by the high almoner. Thus, if a cart ran over a man and killed him, it was forfeited as a ‘deodand’. This of, course, was exactly what happened to Nicholas Holman.

### [New Members:](#)

We welcome **John & Penny Laflin** who joined last month and live on the Exeter Road in Moreton, and are, I am sure, well known to everyone. We look forward to seeing them at future meetings.

### [Heritage Lottery Fund Award —The Details:](#)

The award of £47,600 will be used to set up a Heritage Centre within the old Primary School building.

#### **The aims of the project**

The Moretonhampstead Community Heritage Project is about involving our local communities in the conservation and development of local archives and heritage. Throughout the project we will be working in close partnership with the Moretonhampstead Development Trust (a ‘not for profit ‘charitable company set up in 1995 to promote the economic and social regeneration of Moretonhampstead) to create the new *Sparrowhawk Arts and Heritage Centre* in the redundant Victorian primary school which is being redeveloped into a new community centre between January and October 2011. The building is leased on a peppercorn rent from DCC to be used for offices for the Trust and the Parish Council, artists’ studios, a youth centre and a heritage centre.

#### **The key features of project**

The foyer of the new centre will house a permanent heritage exhibition that will be created by a professional designer working in conjunction with local volunteers in such a way that we can easily update and refresh the display. Visitors will then move onto another new gallery area in the centre of the ground floor that will host temporary and visiting exhibitions of local interest, while a mobile display unit will support education and outreach activities in the community. The first exhibition will feature photos of the redundant school taken by a local photographer, before the builders moved in. Alongside them will be displays, photos artefacts and oral histories from former pupils of the school, including the last cohort to attend it. MED – a local theatre group - will be involved in training for recording oral histories based on their experience of working with Plymouth University. The History Society archives, currently stored somewhat haphazardly in about 12 boxes in the homes of Moretonhampstead History Society’s President and Chairman, will be re-located to the centre for conservation, cataloguing, display and development. A resources room will be available in the centre for visitors to access the archives. A paid temporary post will be funded by the HLF grant to set up the archive centre with the help of volunteers who will take it over fully after about 18 months. Existing archives will be used to support education activities for schools and adult learning, community outreach and oral history workshops, largely run by volunteers. Such work will, in turn, help to support the development and growth of the archive and create a programme of heritage exhibitions, permanent and temporary, static and touring exhibitions, events and courses. Short publications written by local volunteers such as a Heritage Town Trail will also help local inhabitants, including the many newcomers to the town, and visitors to explore and experience for themselves the rich physical heritage of our town and its surrounding landscapes. The overall project will be overseen by members of the Development Trust board, the architect and the Trust’s part-time manager. The Arts and Heritage Centre project will be overseen by a Steering Group from the key stakeholders.

**Bill Hardiman**

### [The Cross Tree:](#)

Thank you to all who responded about the Cross Tree. The Chairman of the Parish Council says they have been delighted by the considerable local interest shown regarding this issue. More on this later, no doubt!

**Chris Pilkington.**