



# Moretonhampstead History Society

## Newsletter

December 2007

### January Meeting:

#### Chairman's Address

This meeting will be held, appropriately, in St Andrews Church, at 7.30pm on Wednesday 16th January. The title of Ian Mortimer's address is:

#### **A Time Traveller's Guide to Medieval Moretonhampstead: What Wear, Eat and Do**

Ian's talks are always very well supported, for good reason, hence the change in venue. This is a 'not to be missed' event!

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

### December Meeting:

There is no meeting this month, but we have our **Annual Christmas Dinner**, which is being held at The White Hart on Wednesday 12th December, 7 for 7.30pm. If you want to go, but have not yet booked, please contact Wendy Coombes straight away on 277580, I'm sure she will be able to fit you in. Tickets are £15 per person.

### November Meeting:

On 21st of November 32 Members and guests attended a talk given by John Risdon, on the **Moorland Dart**. This was a very well presented talk which concentrated on the West Dart and its environs, prior to its confluence with the East Dart at Dartmeet. We learned a great deal about the formation of the moor some 290 million years ago, and why it looks as it does today. The frequent signs of occupation of the moor by man from way back in Neolithic times, were pointed out, by John, using his many excellent photos. The early attempts to cultivate the land were also explained. It was fascinating, also, to hear of the meeting of the Stannary Parliament at Crocken Tor, and about the ancient Wistmans Wood, which he described as 'one of the great wonders of Dartmoor'. When talking about Dartmoor Prison, John pointed out that 9,600 French & American were housed there, after it opened in 1808, It now holds about 600! He clearly has a great love of the Moor, which he was able communicate very effectively to us all. I'm sure we all look forward to his promised return to talk about the East Dart.

### Moretonhampstead 1928:

I have been looking through a 'Guide to Moretonhampstead' published in 1928, which gives a snapshot of life here at that time, almost 80 years ago. Once again the guide features advertisements for many shops and premises trading at that time. **C.Withecombe, Grocer & Provision Dealer** in Station Road, was one of them, and promises: 'Quality Goods' 'Lowest Prices' 'Prompt Attention' and 'Quick Service'. The advert boasts a wide variety of provisions, near the bottom of which is, 'Jam Sandwiches'. Now can you get those at the Co-op I wonder? In addition, at the very bottom, 'Tourists

*Supplied with Meat Sandwiches at short notice*. What about the locals? could they have meat sandwiches, instead of Jam? Clearly tourism was just as important to local businesses then, as it is now. C. Withecombe was one of **six** shops selling groceries, in Moreton, there were also 3 butchers! Who knows, there may have been more that were not featured in the Guide of that year!

**Picture Puzzle:**



This should be an easy one for many of our members who, unlike me, have lived in this area for some time. Where can this unusual clock face be found, what does it say, and why this unique inscription?

**New Members:**

I'm sure you would all want to join me in extending a very warm welcome to two new members to our Society. Roger & Cheryl Mayne, who have recently moved here and now live in Exeter Road.

**Membership Subscriptions:**

Please note that the Annual Subscriptions are now due, and are the same as last year, £15 for joint or family membership, and £10 for a single membership. Jeanette Webster, our treasurer, will be available at the next meeting to take these. It can be either cash or a Cheque made payable to, ***The Moretonhampstead History Society***. If you are not able to be at the next meeting, then subscriptions can be posted to Jeanette Webster.

**November Picture Puzzle Answer:**

Did anyone know the answer to this one?

The picture is that of a dog kennel at the front of Jordan Manor! The unique fact is that this is a Grade II listed dog kennel. It is, I understand, the only such listed dog kennel in the country! Jordan Manor is at Widecombe-on-the-moor, and is believed to be a former longhouse. If you want to read more on this, go to the English Heritage website which gives a full description of the listing. The website can be visited via:

[www.imagesofengland.org.uk](http://www.imagesofengland.org.uk)

My thanks again to Paul Dodd who sent me the photo of the kennel.

**May I wish all our members a very Happy Christmas**

Anyone can contribute; please send articles to: [christopher.pilkington@tesco.net](mailto:christopher.pilkington@tesco.net)