



# Moretonhampstead History Society

## Newsletter

February 2007

### Peter Collier 1928-2007

As most of you know Peter died on 5th January, and his funeral service was held on the 23rd Jan at St Andrews Church and was attended by all his many friends and family. The church was full, as one would expect for this very popular man.

Peter ran his own printing business in Cross Street, which was also his home, with his wife Ruby, before retiring. He had a very long association with the History Society, and was for many years a member of the committee. He spent many hours transcribing information for the Society, much of it by hand from church records and the like, page upon page of births, baptisms, marriages, & deaths. Later when the Society got a computer he spent even more time adding this information to the web site. He was a keen photographer and naturally became custodian of the History Society's 'state of the art' digital camera; and used it to record historical features in and around Moreton. Many of his photos were used in our occasional History Society quiz evenings. He also ran the Newsletter for many years, which I took over from him after he became unwell. He recently gave me two large books of interesting cuttings and 'snippets of history' which he had built up; all fully cross referenced and categorised (of course!) for use in the newsletter. I shall continue to use them.

Peter also had a long association with the *News In Moreton*, one of a loyal band of helpers who copy and staple the hundreds of magazines that are sent out each month. He was also a talented artist, his preferred medium being pen & ink. The quality of his drawings was outstanding. A keen singer, he had a good tenor voice and was a founder member of the *Moortones* singing group. He had great interest in computers, particularly in graphics and photo editing. He was amazed at what could be done at the touch of a button! He often reflected on how much it had changed since his early days in printing when everything was typeset by hand a letter at a time, in mirror image!! How many of us could do that today. Peter was very much 'a jack of all trades', always willing to help others, and very much part & parcel of the life of Moreton. A very likeable and sincere man, a loyal and true friend to many who had known him far longer than me. He will be very much missed.

### History Society Membership:

I am pleased to report that our membership now totals 86. This consists of 32 joint memberships and 22 single memberships, and we now have our first overseas member! Judy Raiford Pantelides lives in Hampton, Virginia, USA and came to Moretonhampstead in the summer of 2005 whilst researching her family history. She met Gary Cox at the Information Centre, and through him Alison Simpkins and me. I arranged for her to visit Wray Barton Manor, as another branch of her family believed that the Raifords may have come from there. Alison helped her with her research, and even took her on a tour of the moor in her car! Judy has fond memories of her time with Alison, and Moreton. She hopes to return to England soon and maybe attend one of our meetings. In the meantime she will keep in contact via this Newsletter. Judy has written an account of her visit, which I have not been able to include in this month's issue due to lack of space.

We welcome Judy to our Society!

### January Meeting:

This meeting was held on the 17th January in the Community Hall, and was attended by over 60 members and guests. Our president Ian Mercer, using a number of excellent slides, pointed out the features of a typical Devon lane, using a particular example he knew very well; 'five mile lane' which runs towards Dartmoor from the village of Slapton in the South Hams. Lanes such as this one, have been used since the Bronze Age, and a consistent feature of them are the earth banks on each side. He also showed many pictures of the flora to be found in the banks through the changing seasons. It was an excellent talk with many interesting and amusing diversions given by Ian as we travelled down the lane with him, towards the sea!

I liked the story of the farmer who had been trained in New Zealand, and eschewed the bank on the lane bordering his farm in favour of fencing, only to find out, too late, that he then needed a wind break!

## February Meeting:

Our next meeting will take place on 21st February in the Community Hall at 7.30pm.

### **'From Here To There and Back Again'**

Edward Pike will give a talk on the internal workings of the Great Western Railway in the first half of the 20th Century.

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

## January's Picture puzzle:

The question was where can this stone be found, when was it erected, and what does the number five indicate? I had few responses, but the answer is as follows:

The above stone can be found in Yarner Wood, beside one of the best preserved sections of the Granite Tramway, and is the 5 mile post, hence the **large 5**. This indicates that, at this point you are 5 miles from the Stover Canal, the place where the tramway terminates. The tramway was built in 1820 by George Templar, and was used to transport granite from Haytor to the Stover Canal where it was offloaded onto barges and taken on to Teignmouth. There are two further milestones along the route, although others were probably erected these have either been removed or buried. The 'rails' are made from lengths of granite, each about 4ft long, with a step cut in them for the wheel guides. To cover the 7 mile route over 18,000 separate 'rails' were individually set down, having first been cut from the solid rock at Haytor! This tramway is a magnificent feat of engineering, and well worth a visit.

## The Lustleigh Society Quiz:

This took place on 25<sup>th</sup> January, and the History Society entered a team 'The Moreton Relics', namely Ian Mortimer, Gary Cox, Colin Coombes and Chris Pilkington. Twenty-five teams took part in all. We were placed second.

Second you say? Surely Moreton could do better than that? Well, quite. The word 'placed' is apposite. At the end of an enjoyable night, we scored 133 points: exactly the same number of points as the winning team.

Perhaps it should have been declared a draw, with a tie breaker, as is the custom? However, the organisers chose not to put us in the embarrassing position of having to claim first prize in front of more than a hundred Lustleigh parishioners. You could say this was out of sympathy for the weeping multitudes in Lustleigh parish hall, who had just seen their pride laid low. Alternatively you could say it was good old-fashioned cheating on behalf of the local team. However, considering first prize was a brace of pheasants and a candle, we think it was a mark of great respect.

## The demise of Mathew Frost:

I have been asked to reprint the tale that Sian Coleridge recounted at our Christmas Dinner in December, so here it is!

From the Exeter Flying Post 1858

### **DEATH FROM EXCESSIVE DRINKING [at the Union Inn]**

On Thursday, the 17th inst., an Inquisition was taken before T. Gribble, Esq., one of the Coroners of the County, at the White Horse Inn, in the town of Moretonhampstead, on view the body of Matthew Frost, aged 58, whose death occurred under the following circumstances:- It appeared from the evidence, that the deceased was much addicted to drinking spirituous liquors; that on Saturday, the 29th ult., the deceased was at the Union Inn, in Moreton, kept by Mr John Steer; Mr Wm. Clampitt, a farmer of Chagford, Mr John Harvey, maltster, the innkeeper, and others being present. The deceased was boasting of the quantity of liquor he had drunk during the day. He was much intoxicated. Clampitt offered the deceased to pay for a pint of gin if he (the deceased) would drink it within two minutes, to which he acceded, and the pint of gin, being readily supplied by the innkeeper, the deceased very imprudently drank, and soon after fell from off the chair on which he had been sitting, insensible on the floor. This took place about 3 or 4 o'clock in the afternoon. He was then lifted back and seated on the floor by the window bench, where he was permitted to remain for several hours in a perfect state

of stupor. Mr. Bridgman, solicitor, deposed that, in consequence of what he had heard, he was induced to go to the Union Inn, between 10 and 11 o'clock at night, and there he saw the deceased, he was then seated on the window bench, resting his head on his arms leaning on the table. Mr. B., with assistance, lifted the deceased upright, when frothy matter was seen to ooze from his mouth and nostrils, and seeing the deceased to be in precarious condition, urged the innkeeper to send for a medical man. Sometime afterwards the deceased was taken up stairs, and put in bed. His pulse by this time had become almost motionless. Mr Street, the surgeon, being sent for, was promptly in attendance, and employed every means to restore animation; and by the following day (Sunday) the deceased became a little revived, and every attention being paid to him, he on Wednesday morning was enabled to get down stairs, though much exhausted, and after taking some refreshment, which the landlady procured him, he contrived, by the assistance of a couple of walking-sticks, to walk to his own house in the town. On the Friday following, the deceased had a relapse, and Mr Nosworthy, surgeon, was called in, who administered to his wants, and in about two or three days he became better, but still in a desponding state; afterwards, however, the deceased grew worse; medical aid proved of no avail, and he languished until Tuesday morning, the 15th inst. (having survived nearly 17 days) when death terminated his sufferings. Mr. Nosworthy, surgeon, who gave evidence on the inquest, considered that the deceased died of an ulcerated stomach, which, from the evidence before adduced, he was decidedly of opinion was caused by drinking of the gin. The Coroner briefly summed up the evidence, and the jury, after having consulted together, returned a verdict – "That the deceased died of excessive drinking of gin;" and the jury are of opinion that there is great moral blame attached to Mr W. Clampitt, in instigating the deceased to drink the gin, and likewise to Mr Steer, the innkeeper, for not endeavouring to prevent the deceased from so doing, and for suffering him to remain in the room so long after it had happened, before calling in medical aid.

[Note – Matthew Frost was buried on Feb 20 1858 aged 58]

[Taken from our website](#)

I do hope that you have enjoyed this latest edition of the Newsletter.

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