



Newsletter

January 2011

A Happy New Year To You All

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

Annual Christmas Dinner:

Our Annual Dinner, which took place on Wednesday 15th December at The White Horse, was quite well attended. A total of 36 of us tucked into an excellent three course meal, which more than lived up to expectations. Bill Hardiman, our chairman, gave a short, but often very amusing, account of the, sometimes, chequered history of The White Horse, which was much enjoyed by those present.

Moreton in The Domesday Book:

The first appearance of Moreton in the written historical record is in Domesday Book, compiled in 1086.

Roughly translated, the entry for Moreton reads as follows:

Moreton. A royal manor. At the time of King Edward the Confessor's death it paid tax for three *hides* (units of roughly 80-120 acres). There is land for twenty ploughs. In lordship there are three ploughs and six *serfs* (unfree labourers) cultivating one hide; and sixteen *villeins* (villagers) and six *bordars* (smallholders) with eight ploughs cultivating two hides. There are twenty acres of meadow, sixty acres of pasture; the woodland is one league long and one furlong wide. There are twenty cattle and one hundred and thirty sheep. It pays £12 in tax weighed and assayed, the same as it did when Baldwin acquired it. To the manor of Moreton belongs the third penny of the hundred of Teignbridge. Moreton was not the only Domesday manor which eventually formed part of the parish. A second, smaller manor was that of Wray, just to the south.

The entry for Wray reads as follows:

Wray. Held by Godwin. At the time of King Edward the Confessor's death it was held by Alstan, at which time it paid tax for one *hide*. There are six ploughs there, which is all that there is land for; there are four *serfs*, eleven *villeins* and 3 *bordars*. There are eight acres of meadow and five acres of pasture. There are eight cattle, four pigs and thirty sheep. It was formerly worth 60s; now it is worth 30s. From these few facts, we can say quite a lot about Moreton and Wray twenty years after the Norman conquest. For a start there is the amount of land under cultivation. Today the parish extends to nearly eight thousand acres; but in 1086 much of this would have

been regarded as waste ground between Moreton and its neighbouring manors. No more than 450 acres is accounted for Moreton in Domesday, and no more than about 150 acres for the manor of Wray. Thus, of the several thousand acres of land in the parish, less than ten per cent was actually being farmed, the remainder being moorland, wilderness, steep hillside or overgrown waste.

From the population figures given, Moreton was clearly not a populous manor. Many other royal manors of similar value had more people. Holsworthy, for example, which also rendered £12 to the king yearly in tax, had fifteen serfs, forty villeins and twenty smallholders: a total of seventy-five men compared to Moreton's twenty-eight. Even Alphington and Topsham, which each paid only £6 to the king, had forty-three and thirty-three men respectively. Thus Moreton's comparative value lay probably as much in its administrative role, as its' farming one. With regard to actual population, these figures do not include women and children, but they do allow us to see that Wray, far from being a small annex of Moreton, had more than half the working male population of Moreton. With about forty-five male heads of households, one might guess at the total combined population of the two manors at this time being in the region of 250 people.

Editors note:

This extract is taken from The History Society's own web site, which has recently been considerably updated and improved. If you have not looked at the site recently, then you are in for quite a surprise. It is accessed by people worldwide, many seeking family history information. If you don't have access to a computer then there are computers at the library which can be used. The website can be accessed by going to:

www.moretonhampstead.org.uk

Credit Crunch in 1877!

Taken from the Exeter Flying Post dated 26th September 1877.

'School Board meeting—The clerk announced that the Government grant for the Girls School had been allowed, and that a cheque had been forwarded ... reporting that a very good beginning had been made in elementary attainments, but that very few of the Girls are above the first standard. The Clerk then read a list of articles required by the school. Mr Neck stated that he was determined to curtail the expenses and moved that the articles specified by Miss Bailey, the Schoolmistress, be ordered and that she be directed to spend a sum not exceeding 10s. on cotton, calico, and thimbles. It was also resolved that the mistresses of both schools be ordered to send to the Board at their next meeting "a correct return of irregular attendances of scholars and also the average attendance of the scholars". It was also decided "not to increase the salary of the master at present".'

Articles for the Newsletter:

It would be helpful if this year I could have one or two contributions from the membership in terms of any history related articles that I could put in the Newsletter. Perhaps you have done some locally based family history research, aspects of which others might find of interest, or have some anecdotes from Moreton's past? I am often promised material for the Newsletter, but excuse the pun, it rarely materialises! I am happy to edit, retype, or put together the roughest of notes. Do, please, give this appeal some thought.

February Meeting:

This meeting will take place in the Stable bar of the Union Inn on Wednesday 16th February at 7.30pm.

The Greenway Estate & Agatha Christie

John Risdon will give an illustrated talk on '600 years of the history of the Greenway estate & its association with Agatha Christie'. First mentioned in 1493, the Greenway estate on the River Dart in the South Hams had a number of interesting owners, including Agatha Christie, before it was acquired by the National Trust in 1999. The estate is also known for its large riverside gardens which contain plants from the southern hemisphere and the Barn Gallery which shows work by contemporary local artists. These, and the recently restored house, are open to the public and this talk would be the perfect background for a spring visit.

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Chris Pilkington