

Visit to Ugbrooke House in June:

On a beautiful summers day, on 16th June, 21 members of the Society visited Ugbrooke House near Chudleigh, home of the Clifford family for some 400 years. The current Lord Clifford still lives there, although there have been periods when the family were elsewhere. Our expert guides to the house were Bill & Peter, who were both very knowledgeable and able to provide a great deal of information about the house, grounds



and the Clifford family. The current house, originally an Elizabethan Manor House, was extensively redesigned by Robert Adam in the 17th Century. Another famous name was also involved in the extensive landscaping of the grounds, namely Capability Brown. Many of the trees he planted there can still be seen today. The present Lady Clifford, who is a professional interior designer, has restored many of the rooms, so that they now look as they would have done in Adam's time.

July Visit:

**Kelly Mine**

On the afternoon of the **16th July** we shall be visiting Kelly Mine, which produced Micaceous Haematite used in the production of anti-corrosion paints until 1951. The Kelly Preservation Society was formed in 1984 to restore and preserve this important industrial monument.

The visit will start at 2pm, and will take 1½ to 2 hours. The terrain will be fine for most people but there are slopes and some of the ground is a bit uneven. We will need to car share as there is very limited parking either outside the mine or on the corner by Slade farm. The trip will be limited to a maximum of 20. There will be no charge, but donations will be welcomed. Names for this trip will be collected at the beginning of July. Telephone or email Wendy Coombes, her details can be found on the back of your 2010 History Society programme.

Ways with Words Festival:

This takes place from the 12th to the 19th July at Dartington Hall near Totnes, and our chairman Ian Mortimer

is taking part. He will be chairing for three speakers - historian Dr Juliet Barker, philosopher Dr Nigel Warburton and politician/historian Ben Gummer.

On Sunday 18th July at 5pm, at the same venue, he will be doing his own, as he describes it, 'an off the cuff' talk, 'rewriting history', which is pretty much the same theme as his chairman's address given at our meeting in January of this year. The difference is that at Dartington he will try to answer the question about why ideas about the past change, mainly by looking at his own work, rather than that of other historians.

**August:** No meeting or visit this month.

### **Mariners Way fact or fiction?:**

I'm sure many members of the History Society are Keen walkers like myself, and even if you have not seen signs for the Mariners Way on parts of Dartmoor you may have heard stories about it.

I do wonder if there is any evidence to support the story that has led to the appearance of signs on various parts of the moor, bearing the inscription '**Mariners Way**'.

Is it just a romantic fiction or can we point to any contemporary information that would support the story of the Mariners Way?

Tradition has it that for centuries there has been an ancient trackway which runs from Bideford in North Devon and Dartmouth in South Devon. The purpose of this route was for sailors to travel between the two ports when transferring from one ship to sail on another, hence the name.

Some Dartmoor writers have acknowledged the track and some have apparently even tried to follow its route, but still today there is no firm evidence for the existence of The Mariner's Way. Probably the most detailed study of the 'track' can be found in Eric Hemery's book - ***Walking Dartmoor's Ancient Tracks***, and covered in the first chapter. He concludes by saying: 'the Mariner's Way was never a through track but a linking together of countless old field paths to form a satisfactory route when first the need for one was felt. This old route is thought to have passed down the eastern flank of Dartmoor in a virtually straight line between Bideford and Dartmouth with an odd deviation that avoided crossing the North Moor and the huge dome of Hambledon. After leaving Bideford the route went via; the Torridge valley, Great Torrington, South Zeal, Throwleigh, Gidleigh, Hurston, Jurston, Widecombe, the Dart Valley, Ashburton, Totnes and finally ended up at Dartmouth. It is true that in the 17<sup>th</sup> & 18<sup>th</sup> centuries both Bideford and Barnstable were flourishing ports, as was Dartmouth, and large numbers of sailors would have been needed to man the ships. There would be good reason for sailors seeking a ship to travel between the two places over this period. It is possible, therefore, that over time such a route was established. The distance between these ports overland is about 70 miles, so could not be covered in one day. Any travellers would perhaps, have needed somewhere to stay overnight. Some suggest that the longhouse at West Coombe near North Bovey was such a place (OS grid ref. SX 70930 82518). It is about halfway between the two ports. In the church accounts for Gidleigh Parish there are entries from the mid eighteenth century, referring to the giving of alms to sailors. Were they crossing Devon between Bideford and Dartmouth when they received this help? Did they use a known and marked route?

If there is any actual evidence with regard to this issue, it is yet to be uncovered, be it physical or documentary? If you can shed any further light on this tale please do let me know!

### **New logo:**

I'm sure you noticed the new logo at the top of this Newsletter, at least I hope you did ! My thanks to Bill Hardiman for sending it to me. I hope it meets with your approval.

### **September Meeting:**

Our next meeting will be held on Wednesday 15th September at 7.30pm in the Stable bar of the Union Inn. The Subject will be:

#### **Devon Water Mills**

#### **Speaker - Martin Watts**

Martin Watts is a traditional millwright and corn milling specialist from Cullompton. He has carried out extensive research on historic water mills and their associated buildings and locations. He has many interesting photographs of the County's old mills.