



Newsletter

July 2011

Visit to Vitifer & Golden Dagger Tin Mines :

This trip will take place on **Wednesday 20th July**.

We shall **meet at Bennett's Cross at 2pm**. Local expert, Dr Tom Greaves will lead the tour and it will last about 3 hours. These mines are approximately half a mile away from our meeting place, and not over level ground and therefore stout shoes or walking boots are the recommended footwear. Please contact Judy Hardiman if you intend to go, so that she knows how many are attending. Non members are welcome, as well, at a cost of £2 per person. For those wishing to go who do not have their own transport please contact Judy Hardiman who will endeavour to arrange a lift for you. There are books in the Library on this subject.

August: No meeting or visit this month.

School Memories Afternoon:

This took place on **Saturday 25th June** in the Parish Hall, and was a great success. A large number of former pupils, and other visitors, attended throughout the afternoon, and all the volunteers, many from the History Society, were kept very busy helping them. There was considerable interest in the numerous displays of old photographs available. Many of the visitors also brought along photos from their own collections. These were scanned and will be added to our archives. One of the earliest I saw, was a school photo of George Friend taken in 1926 when he was about 8 years old, brought in by his wife Vera. George was the Author of the book '*Memories of Moretonhampstead*'. In addition to the archive material, many interviews were conducted with former pupils, again this will add to our knowledge of the history of the School.



'Where am I?,and who is that?'

Plymouth Naval Base Trip

This took place on 29th June, another excellent trip efficiently organised by Judy. We were met at the gate by two very nautical looking types in their smart blue blazers with gold buttons. They gave us a very comprehensive tour of the whole complex with further help from another volunteer. Construction of the yard

began in 1692. The first dock was built in the following year and is still there. Almost all of the 2 old sites are grade1 listed. It is the largest dockyard in the Western world over 3 miles long and spread over 970 acres. We began at the roperies which, the surviving example of which was built over 200 years ago. Stone built, fireproof, and three stories high and at 1221ft long a very impressive structure! It was where the ropes were made for the Navy in the days of sail. The length of the building was determined by the maximum length of rope the Navy required. We went through the various stages of development of the docks to the present day facilities, built to service the nuclear submarines.. Considerable damage was done to the docks during the bombing raids of the second world war, and many 'treasures' were lost forever. On a lighter note we accidentally drove through a parade practice taking place on one of the quays in front of HMS Cornwall, even worse, we had to drive back through when Bill noticed a large column of men marching up behind us, filling the entire road. Luckily no-one was arrested!-photo next month!

Northmoor Service Reservoir :

Northmoor Service Reservoir is situated in the valley between Comb Farm and Hill Farm, just north of Moretonhampstead. It was completed in 1893 by Hawkins & Best, and designed by a Samuel Segar. It has been disused for some time. It was recently sold by auction to a local man, Adam Ward, who knows the Dartmoor area well, and lives in Exeter. The reservoir was visited by him, out of curiosity, and he was taken by its Victorian construction and location, and when he saw it was for sale, he decided to buy it.

Adam says, *'This purchase was partly due to my childhood love of the area (I lived in Exeter for most of my life, so constantly visited Dartmoor at weekends), partly with a hope to making some discrete use of the interior in the future, partly out of concern at its continuing demise at the hands of nature, and partly out of fascination with the construction and historical aspects. I've made some efforts towards stopping the trees and ivy from destroying the walls, but am also concerned to understand the story of the site'*.

He has searched various local archives, but with little success to date. There is a plaque on the reservoir, which has provided some of the aforementioned information, but he has been told that a second plaque, in stone, was also present at the site which gave the names of the local residents that contributed to its construction. He has also heard that a retired water engineer once lived in one of the Hill Farm cottages. Do any of our readers have any knowledge or information regarding this reservoir? In particular knowledge of the missing stone plaque, or indeed information about the retired water engineer?

Do please let me know if you do, I will pass anything sent to me to Adam Ward whom I'm sure will be delighted to receive any information you have.

Council Clippings :

1896 – THE MOON AND THE STREET LIGHTS

The year 1896 was only the second year of Parish Councils and in Moreton public rights of way came under scrutiny in January and February, as the District Council wrote to say owners of properties would be contacted in the area of Under the Bow and Ivy Cottages concerning their duty to keep the way open. An obstruction had been placed across the right of way between Fore Street and Lime Street. In April, the Clerk was empowered to find out for what purpose the old Almshouses had been used and why they had ceased to be used. Moreton now had its own fire engine which the Parish Council was responsible for and at the June meeting it was decided that the appliance should not be allowed to attend fires outside Moreton unless insurance companies agreed to pay expenses. In August it was time to think about the dark winter nights and the Council decided that 'The incandescent gas lamps for the purpose of street lighting shall be lit each night from 25 August to 25 April EXCEPT for the night of the full moon and the four nights preceding it' !!! (No-one asked what happened on cloudy nights!!).

NEXT MONTH: THE LIBRARY OPENS- UNTIL 10.30 PM !!

Gary Cox

September Meeting:

This meeting will take place on **Wednesday 21st September**, as usual in the Stable bar of the Union Inn starting at 7.30pm. The subject will be:

Parole Prisoners in Ashburton & Moretonhampstead

There has always been a lot of anecdotal evidence about this fascinating topic. This illustrated talk by Barbie Thompson draws upon our Society's archive materials as well as newly available documents in the National Archives to explore who the prisoners were and what impact they had on the towns they stayed in.

Chris Pilkington