



Moretonhampstead History Society

Newsletter

July 2008

June Meeting:

On the 18th June a group of 20 or so of our members visited Cothele, a beautiful house and garden 6 miles west of Tavistock, in the Tamar valley. This ancient house was in the same family, the Edgcumbes, from 1353 until 1947. It might still have been theirs, were it not for the death of the only son and heir at Dunkirk. It was given to The National Trust in lieu of death duties. This was the first time that the Trust acquired a property in this way. Before lunch, we explored the many features of the estate in small groups, there was much to see, including the Mill, Quayside, and gardens, apart from the house itself, which has long been a favourite of mine. At 2pm, we all met up for a tour of the outside of the house; Ellie, our guide, pointed out some of the many changes the house had undergone over the centuries. Did anyone else notice the unknown grey haired lady, carrying a shopping Bag, who attached herself to our tour? As you may know I took some of photos of our



group, one of which is above. Every time I did this, it was amusing to watch as she quickly retreated out of shot! Our thanks, as always, go to Wendy Coombes for arranging this trip.

July Meeting:

The next meeting will take place on the 16th July at 7.30pm in the Community Club.

‘The Art of Armour’

As you may be aware, our scheduled speaker had to cancel. However, we are very grateful that 'once more unto the breach' steps up our own very knight in shining armour, Michael Thomson, of Castle Drogo fame. Those who attended his previous talks will know that, Michael is an excellent speaker. On this occasion he will be talking to us about medieval armour. As he will point out, the influence of fashion and style on the design and use of medieval armour is easy to over look. The courtly knight had to look his best before he met his doom. The up-and-coming fighting man had to look up-to-date, with the latest military hardware; and the lowly infantryman had to show that he meant business – not only to his opposite number but to everyone he met. Michael will bring some choice examples from his extensive collection to show how colourful medieval conflict could be, and to demonstrate how armour was influenced by the trends of daily clothing as well as the demands of attack and defence.

July- Afternoon Site Visit:

This afternoon trip to Tuckers Maltings in Newton Abbot will take place on the 2nd July. Members were sent details by way of a briefing sheet in early June. A report on this visit will be given in the August Newsletter.

August Meeting:

There is no meeting of the Society during August

Newsletter Now on Our Website!

Copies of the Newsletter, together with all previous editions, can now be found on our Website. Go to, www.moretonhampstead.org.uk. On the History Society Homepage click Historical Information. On the right hand side you will see a link marked 'Newsletters'. Click on that and you can select any previous Newsletter, by clicking on any of those listed.

Picture Puzzle:



Now this should be easy! Do you know where this stone, and another similar stone, can be found? It has a firm link with a previous picture puzzle. Why are these stones so carved and who caused them to be there?

Research into Bilberries:

We have had the following letter, which is self explanatory, if you have any information, please let me know, and I will ensure it is passed on.

'I have only recently become aware of your society but have reviewed your website with interest. I am currently conducting a major project in economic history involving bilberries (vaccinium myrtillus). I have so far conducted research on Brown Knowl and Bickerton in Cheshire, Moel Famau in Wales, Dartmoor and Rivington in Lancs. I was wondering if you knew whether any of your members (especially those over 60) may have picked bilberries (or any other foraged fruits)? I would very much like to hear their stories and it would be an enormous help in my research. I am, of course, very happy to share anything I find with the Society. I will be working on Dartmoor this summer and so would be extremely grateful for any help you can offer me. Very Best Wishes, Jennifer Lane Lee, B.A. Econ (Hons), B.A. Int. Stud (Hons), MPhil, Juris Doctorate, PGCE, Academic Tutor, University of Liverpool.'

Secretary Wanted!:

After serving as Secretary to the Society for the last four years, Alan Payne has decided to step down from this role at the forthcoming AGM, due to his commitment to other projects, most notably the Poltimore House Trust. We are very grateful to Alan for his work over these years; but we now need a new Secretary for the efficient administration of the Society. We are advertising now in the hope that members will have a chance to ponder the matter well in advance of the AGM in October. The post is not an arduous one. Other officers deal with all the incoming and outgoing correspondence. So the role amounts only to the following: Attending four or five committee meetings a year. These are always held in Moreton, normally at the Chairman's house on a weekday evening, starting at about 8pm and continuing for about an hour or so. Liaising with the Chairman prior to each meeting (preferably by email) to draw up an agenda and to circulate the same (again, by email). Taking minutes during the committee meetings, and circulating them among committee members afterwards. Conducting the annual election of officers at the AGM and taking minutes of the AGM and any EGM held. Thus the total time commitment (not including attendance at the AGM and EGM, which all members should attend) is about 20 to 25 hours per year. If you are interested in taking on this role, please would you get in touch with Ian Mortimer before or at the Society's September meeting (17 September). Your name can then be put forward in the notice of the election of officers at the AGM in October.