



# Newsletter

May 2011

## April Meeting:

At the Parish Hall on the 13th of April there was a packed audience for a presentation by the South West Film & Television Archives. The films shown included some 1930s home made film of Dartmoor, Clive Gunnell of Westward T.V. , clips & some local film of Moreton featuring events such as carnivals, a swimming gala & the 1967 hold up of the Post Office! Local personalities appearing, included, among many were Christine Walton, Arthur Harvey, Harry White & Peter Morgan

There are DVDs available of this presentation & other local topics for £10 – contact tel;. 01752 202650 or email [jennie@swfta.org.uk](mailto:jennie@swfta.org.uk)

## May Meeting:

This meeting will be held on Wednesday 18th May at 7.30pm in the Stable Bar of The Union Inn.

### **Alfred The Great**

An illustrated talk by **Derek Gore**, lecturer at Exeter University, who takes a balanced view of this notorious ruler. The written and archaeological sources for his reign are fuller than for any other Anglo-Saxon king. He was ruler of Wessex, a kingdom south of the Thames, which included parts of the south-west. His achievements in war, administration, art and Christianity were considerable, but may be magnified because we lack information about other rulers of the period.

For this talk & future meetings Jackie Paxman is drawing up recommended reading lists (attached to the newsletter e-mail) & is liaising with Moreton library to have a selection of the titles available there in the weeks before & after each meeting. Do e-mail her if you have any suggestions - [jackie.paxman@btinternet.com](mailto:jackie.paxman@btinternet.com)

*Non members of the Society are very welcome to join us for a donation of £2, payable at the door*

## Domestic buildings of Moretonhampstead :

### **Ponsford House, 6 Cross St.**

Ponsford House was built in 1740 by Dr Ponsford who then lived in Drewsteignton. Ponsfords still lived in it a century later. From Cross St the front (north) elevation appears at first glance to be symmetrical but the front doorway and porch are not central. There is a greater distance (16') from it to the eastern edge of the building than to the west (14'). The frontage has the classic early eighteenth century stringer along its full length between the ground and first floors and quoins up either edge. The three upper windows have equally classic drip stones above them. The porch has twin Doric pillars and a flat roof. Iron railings set in a granite kerb sit in front of the front wall offset about eighteen inches from it. The footprint of the C18 house is of a reversed L shape, but the L is not quite a right angle, its stem is skewed to the east ever so slightly. A large cellar lies under that 'rear wing'. The Victorians built a two storey outshot in the angle of the L which accommodates stairs, a passage alongside them with a landing over it, and a bathroom over a scullery. Before that, the two bedrooms in the rear wing were smaller than now because a passage ran within the space they occupy and their present doorways were windows in the then outer wall. The easternmost front bedroom is totally different from its two companions. It has a ceiling 18 inches above the level of theirs, and is a stud-and-plaster 'box' within the outer granite walls on three sides. Over these three rooms is a large attic divided by a stud partition

into unequal rooms, one fitting exactly over that eastern bedroom. The larger room has a fireplace. Did the servants live up here, or was it a nursery? A massive chimney stack (6' by 6') sits in the wall separating the front rooms from the rear wing. It may well be older than the C18 house (such things often survived rebuildings). It had fireplaces back to back on the ground floor, one bedroom fireplace (four of the five have them) and probably a flue from brick ovens in what is now the cellar. There is evidence of doorways/windows in the cellar itself, so ground level at the back may not always have been as it is. BUT, solid granite is exposed either side of the present cellar steps and clearly underlies the front rooms of the house. So, where were the stairs before the Victorians added theirs?. Was there a stair tower in the angle of the original 'L'? There is a door in the ground floor passage through there still. The western front room is connected to the rear wing by a short passage alongside the chimney stack, so a stair tower at the end of the original passage would not have impeded access to the kitchen. Indeed the rear rooms on the ground floor have the same evidence of a through passage as the bedrooms above them. Their current doorways are set at an angle to each other and share a sort of lobby with a double door to the outside, had the Victorians not made it redundant. They were probably draught proofed by heavy curtains whose hanging pegs are still in place. **Ian Mercer**

#### **Editors note:**

I'm sure there are other members living in old houses in and around Moreton. Why not write a few lines about the history of your house and send it to me, please?

#### **Farlieus, Houseboote, Ploughboote, and Yeatboote:**

In response to my request for definitions of the above in the March issue, Ian Mercer responded as follows: 'boote', 'bote' even 'bot' are 'right' in anglo-saxon - so house, plough etc are simple. 'Yeat' is a gate and on a cartogram of Dartmoor commons dated 1541 the four 'gates' from in-bye to common are so named - as lyp yeats (often elided as lypiate for instance i.e gates which deer could leap!. so yeatboote might be a right of access, or a right to keep a gate.

I had most difficulty with 'farleiu', but it is confined to mediaeval Devon geographically as a legal term - and its meaning slowly merged with heriot. Before the merging heriot was the best beast and farlieu the best 'good'. Both were dues payable on the death of a tenant or at the change of a tenancy acknowledging the landowner's interest and status. (Interestingly, furlough is a military equivalent, implying the acknowledgement of absenting oneself from 'duty' - farlieu was payable if a tenant withdrew from his tenancy).

#### **New Members :**

We welcome Jackie Brooks and her sister Pauline Payne to the Society. We now have a total of **83** members!

#### **The Old Schools in Moreton:**

##### **Oral History volunteers**

Would you be interested in learning how to take oral histories? We are looking to recruit volunteers to help us record the memories of local people. Initially this will be around memories of the old school.

We will be running three, 2 hour training sessions, between 7 & 9pm on the 2<sup>nd</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup> & 23<sup>rd</sup> of June. Volunteers will need to attend all 3 sessions to get the most out of the training. Volunteers will help us with the public event on Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> June & to conduct follow up interviews. This is not an ongoing commitment, but we would like to cover other aspects of local life in the future.

Please contact Julia on 01647 440855 to register your interest, email [manager@moretonhampstead.com](mailto:manager@moretonhampstead.com) or drop a note into the Trust at the Bowring Library, 2 Fore Street.

#### **Plymouth Naval Base Trip on June 29th :**

Our first trip of the year is to the Plymouth Naval Base. The visit will include a tour of the base by bus. We shall also see the ropery galleries, and visit the museum and the model ship galleries. I'm sure it will be a fascinating day. Numbers are limited, so if you want to go please fill in the booking form you will find with this Newsletter, and return it as soon as possible to Judy Hardiman **before June 8th**. All the relevant details are on the booking form.

#### **Chris Pilkington**