

May 2012

MAY MEETING

PLEASE NOTE THAT THIS HAS CHANGED FROM THE ADVERTISED PROGRAMME

Alan Payne has very kindly agreed to step in at short notice to replace a speaker who has had to cancel. He will give a talk which we had scheduled for next year.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF T E LAWRENCE - also known as Lawrence of Arabia, John Hume Ross, T E Shaw, but who should have been called Thomas Edward Chapman!

Alan Payne will give a brief illustrated biography of this complex person who was one of the earliest victims of Press frenzy and lies. He was also the victim of the duplicity of the British Government when they betrayed promises made to the Arabs during the War. Alan is a member of the T E Lawrence Society and has twice lectured to the Society at their Symposium held in St. John's College Oxford. (He would like to emphasise that his interest in Brough Superior motorcycles has nothing to do with his interest in T E Lawrence - or vice-versa!).



WHO WAS THE REAL LAWRENCE?

Jubilee Exhibition

Preparations are continuing for the Jubilee Exhibition at Greenhill. The exhibition will feature what life was like in Moreton 60 years ago – shops, farms, transport, who lived in your house etc. Carol Harvey, Sally Hocken and Bill and Judy Hardiman have also worked with children at the Primary School to find out what they think Moreton will be like in another 60 years – this will be displayed along with a picture of the Queen by every child at the school.

If you are able to help in any way to set it up and/or have any Moreton photos or objects from 1952-3 or any Coronation memorabilia please come to the library on Monday May 14th at 7-9 pm or contact Bill Hardiman on 441 083 who can arrange collection.

ALL MHS MEMBERS ARE CORDIALLY INVITED TO THE OPENING EVENING AT GREENHILL ON FRIDAY JUNE 1ST 6.30-8.30 PM.

March meeting

Sir Edward Pellewe & the wreck of the Dutton in Plymouth Sound

Martin Reed began by describing the rapid & lucrative growth of the East India Company during the 17th & 18th centuries based on its monopoly of trade between England & Asia. This trade included over two-thirds of the cloth made in Devon & so the 121,00 pieces of serge sent out, for example, in 1789 probably included some made in Moretonhampstead. The Dutton was built in 1781 to carry tea & like most of the Company's boats was only designed to last for 4 or 5 journeys to & from Asia.

It was then rented to the government as a troop ship in the war against Revolutionary France & sailed on its last journey in 1795 as part of a convoy of 57 ships to the West Indies. Never a very good boat in rough seas & designed to carry only cargo, it made for a poor passenger ship for the 600 soldiers, civilians & sailors on board as it battled through 7 weeks of gales in the Atlantic. After losing much of its sail & rigging, the Dutton turned back into Plymouth Sound with only one anchor left in tact.

The attempt to reach Cattewater failed as a marker buoy had been lost in the storms & after the rudder went adrift when it hit the Mount Batten shoal the Dutton drifted towards the rocks of Plymouth Hoe below the Citadel. A bosun's chair was used for the first time to rescue a ship's passengers but the Dutton began to break up & the officers seemed to have lost hope of saving many more. Captain Pellewe was on his way to dinner at Charles Church when he heard of the ship's plight. Still in full dress uniform he had himself hauled on board where he immediately took charge, organising the rigging up of 2 more bosun's chairs & persuading some rowing barges to come alongside to rescue 300 people. All but 2 people were eventually accounted for ashore.

The exploit won him national fame & the King created him Lord Exmouth. For nearly another 50 years he served in the Navy. He quelled a mutiny in Bantry Bay & his campaign against the Dey of Algiers for the abolition of Christian slavery brought the title of Viscount Exmouth. He was raised to Vice-Admiral in 1832 just before his death.

He bought Canonteign House that remained in his family until recently & his tomb is in Christow Church & was recently seen by MHS Historic Churches' group.

April Meeting

Bovey Tracey Pottery 1760-1957

Liz Westwood has found 6 potteries that have operated at some time around Bovey Tracey, exploiting the local clay & lignite. Roman pieces have been found in the area but Lord William Courtenay set up the earliest recorded works in 1750 with the help of migrant workers from Staffordshire. The first major kilns were at Indeo House on the Newton Road between 1766 & 1836 where porcelain was produced using the ideas of William Cookworthy. The process was rather hit & miss & Josiah Wedgwood dismissed it as 'a poor trifling concern conducted in a wretched slovenly manner'. Nevertheless, its distinctive creamware was popular for personal occasions such as weddings & Liz showed some examples made for Moretonians, including a cup for William Tozer of the Dolphin Inn that was damaged in the fire of 1808 that the Napoleonic prisoners helped to put out.

Few records were kept but working conditions must have been tough with cases of poisoning from raw lead glazes & pictures of heavy loads of pottery or saggars carried on the heads of the men who loaded & unloaded 1600 of them into a kiln.

The Stover Canal brought good coal to the area from 1843 & the Bovey Tracey Pottery Co. (1843-95) used it to produce better pots than had the local lignite. Further expansion came with the help of the South Devon railway from Newton Abbot to Moreton (1866), a narrow gauge railway in the pottery & the construction of a leat from Becky Falls. They developed a wide range of products, including navy mess ware & clotted cream & ointment jars with exports sent all around the world.

Finally, the Bovey Pottery Co. Ltd (1895-1957) employed 350 workers & was the first to use electricity. Among its vast range of products Liz has found ashtrays with a swastika insignia made for Nazi Germany, a wartime series of figures of all the WW2 political leaders & mugs made originally for the coronation of Edward VIII that were turned into souvenirs of his abdication! Purchase of the rights to Plichta & Wemyss wares could not halt a post-war decline, however, & closure came in the wake of rising costs following the Clean Air Act (1956) & a crippling strike.

Most of the kilns were demolished but 3 remain along with a museum of Bovey Pottery & Glass at the House of Marbles at Pottery Road in Bovey Tracey.

Judy Hardiman

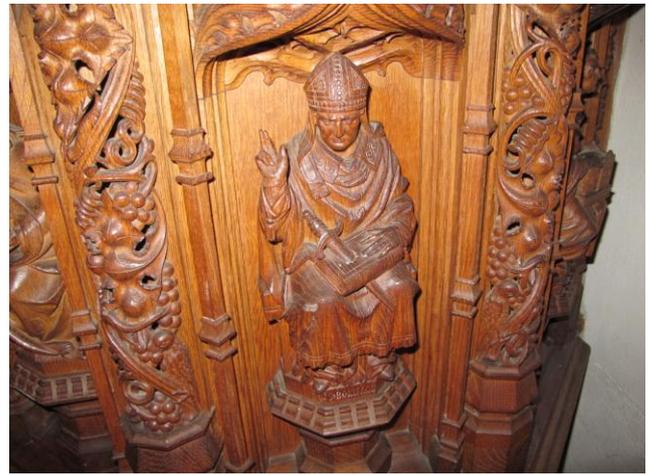
Historic churches' visit to Holcombe Burnell, Doddiscombsleigh & Dunchideock.

We have all passed frequently through Longdown but few have visited its parish church of Holcombe Burnell Set in an isolated position on top of a ridge, overlooking green valleys, the church & its neighbouring Barton look unchanged for centuries. Sandra Bond showed us around this delightful C15th church. It has a rare Easter Sepulchre close to the altar with mermaids & a merman carvings. Although the church was renovated in Victorian times, it still has a medieval feel with a Norman arch in the porch with 3 carved heads & the remains of a rood screen has 8 painted original panels of saints. The Barton, next to it was built in the C16th for Sir Thomas Dennis, the chancellor for Anne of Cleves.

At Doddiscombleigh Sandra showed us around again, explaining the famous C15th stained glass windows & their depictions. It is thought that Cromwell's troops were unable to find the church, today still tucked away down a little lane. Hence the famous windows & the medieval carved pew ends survived. The pillar tops are decorated with delicately entwined leaves. The most eastern pillar leaves has the head of a green man with the leaves extending from his mouth & at the most western pillar is another head, it is suggested, of the devil as it has a hare lip which was called 'the devil's bite' & the leaves surrounding it could be the devil's bit scabious. Outside Sandra showed us where where the original Anglo Saxon church had ended & the 2 Grade 11 listed gate pillars decorated with a large ball on top - the gates & railings were melted down in WW2.



Rood screen Dunchideock *Margaret Spittles*



St Boniface Dunchideock pulpit *Geoff Cole*

After an excellent lunch at The Manor House Ashton, Rev. Christopher Pidsley kindly showed us around Dunchideock church situated in a quiet lush valley & made of local sandstone. We learned to say 'Dunchid(e)ock' correctly - one of the few Devon names of Celtic origin. Beautiful stone corbel heads are carved over the external windows but the joy of this church is the amazing wood carving, much restored by the famous & prolific wood carver, Herbert Read & his grandson. The high full length roodscreen is extremely intricate & is 6 foot wide at the top being used originally for religious scenes & plays. It is still accessible through a tiny steep stairway. The roof bosses also are quite extraordinary with ladies in whimples, Turks with thick moustaches & another green man. The memorials were interesting with a very large one for General Stringer Lawrence of Haldon Belvedere & East India Company fame & some smaller older ones, including for the Pitman family who owned land up to Holcombe Burnell in the C18th! A very welcome cup of tea was provided by one of the parishioners, Jenny, at the end but it was too wet too to explore the graveyard. However, Geoff Cole found this very interesting link on the Genuki website about some of the fascinating graveyard inscriptions there.

<http://genuki.cs.ncl.ac.uk/DEV/Dunchideock/Memories.html#CHURCHYARD>

Geoff also researched why the figure of St. Boniface on the pulpit has a sword through his bible (see photo above). On a mission to Friesland (Holland) he was savagely set upon. He lifted a bible toward his attackers & was killed by a thrust through it with a sword.

Judy Hardiman

Histor-Ian's corner

In April I happened to attend a postgraduate conference at St Mary's, University of London. Among the medieval history papers I heard that day was one about assessing the evidence of medieval coin hoards. A pair of maps was shown side by side: one indicating the relative populations of the counties of England at Domesday and the other showing the finds of coins and coin hoards dated 924-1135. It was amazing: Devon and Cornwall were almost entirely empty of coins. Apart from one hoard near Plymouth, and one other isolated coin find in each county, there was nothing. The rest of the country was peppered with finds.

The relative paucity of coins in Devon and Cornwall set me thinking. It suggests a different relationship between people and money here. If Devon people used money as regularly as the rest of the country, you would expect to see a similar proportion of finds in relation to population. But that was not the case. Yet there were four mints in Devon in the eleventh century (Lydford, Exeter, Totnes and Barnstaple); Domesday book regularly refers to the amount of tax that was paid and had to be paid by each manor. That implies money. Surely people here were no strangers to cash?



Silver penny of Ethelred II, Anglo-Saxon, late 10th or early 11th century. Crux type with sceptre with trefoil head. This was the last among the English coins found in Scandinavian hoards. From the British Museum, London

Looking at that map I started to think again. Yes, there were four mints in Devon but that was because there were four boroughs, and boroughs have markets and markets require coin. The numbers of coins they produced were probably small. And there were huge distances between them. In later centuries Devon and Cornwall had a greater density of market towns than any other part of the country principally because the ground was so hilly, wet and difficult to traverse. However, in the eleventh century there were only the four markets. Tithes and other local obligations were paid in kind. Rents too could be paid in kind. Why, then, would anybody living in these upland boggy places need money? Only to pay taxes.

I could be wrong, but I suspect that many eleventh century Devonians did not regard silver pennies (the only coin available) as their main currency. Rather than buying things like animals, honey and wool with money, they 'bought' silver pennies with their home-grown commodities – and only did so in order to pay their taxes. Other transactions would have been based on exchange of services and goods, charitable donations (tithes), rewards and manorial dues.

Ian Mortimer

Ian Mortimer to launch ChagWord

THURSDAY 31-May-12 : 7:30 pm

Endecott House, Chagford.

Tickets £6.50 (available soon)

The Launch Event for ChagWord, & the first event in the programme of run-up events, is a talk by Ian Mortimer on his latest book, the best-selling *The Time Traveller's Guide To Elizabethan England*. Copies will be available to buy. Wine will also be available at what promises to be a convivial launch to ChagWord.

ADVANCE TICKETS

The event may sell out, so advance booking is advised.

PURCHASE IN PERSON

In Chagford you can buy tickets from Sally's Newsagents paying by cash, or by cheque made out to ChagWord.

ORDER BY POST (for collection on the door)

Send your ticket request to the ChagWord Treasurer enclosing a cheque made out to ChagWord & supply an e-mail address or telephone number.

Tickets can be collected on the door with phone or e-mail confirmation of your booking.

Apply to:

Peter Shields, ChagWord Treasurer
80 TheSquare, Chagford, NEWTON ABBOT,
Devon TQ13 8AE

Website: <http://www.chagword.com>