



## Newsletter

Nov 2010

### November Meeting:

This meeting will take place in the Stable Bar of the Union Inn at 7.30 on Wednesday 17th November.

#### **Moreton at War in the Twentieth Century**

**Bill Hardiman**

An illustrated talk that looks at how times of war have affected Moretonhampstead and Moretonians from the 'fighting five' Volunteers of the Boer War to the Second World War Home Guard and GIs. A number of examples of the sources available will be shown for anyone who wants to find out about the military experiences of a relative or ancestor. Bill Hardiman, a retired History teacher, and now the new Chairman of the Moretonhampstead History Society, is an enthusiastic tutor and researcher of local and family history.

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

### Annual Christmas Dinner:

The Annual Christmas Dinner will take place on Wednesday 15th December at 7.00 for 7.30pm at The White Horse, Moretonhampstead. Please see the enclosed combined menu and booking form. You will note there are four choices of main course, and three for both starter and sweet. Please forward your completed form to the Programme Secretary at the address given on it by:

**Tuesday 30th November.**

We hope that as many members as possible will attend.

### September Meeting:

In September we had an excellent turn out to hear Martin Watts talk about Devon Water Mills. Martin has been working with water mills and their restoration for thirty years and has researched old mills and former mill sites all over the country. It was interesting to hear that when corn was milled by hand, with small stones called querns, it was deemed women's work, but once the process became mechanised with water and wind power, milling became exclusively the province of men - an early version of Boys' Toys, perhaps? Devon still has more than 120 water mills in existence, but in the early 19th century there were probably around 1800. Many of these were rebuilt in late Victorian times once iron became readily available and could replace the working parts formerly made from wood, which wore out quickly. Water mills were machines which provided power, and were not simply used for grinding corn. In this county they were heavily used in the extraction and mining industries, and in the textile trade for fulling. Cricklepit Mill by the quay in Exeter, a fulling mill, was founded in the 13th century and part of its income was used for maintaining the medieval Exe Bridge. Fullers were known in Devon as Tuckers - hence Tuckers' Hall in Fore Street, Exeter. An old mill at Babeny on the Walla Brook was used by the foresters. Some mills were powered by the tide and could be found at Brixham, Dartmouth and in the lower Tamar Valley. The disadvantage to the miller was that he was forced to work with the high tides, even if they were at night. There is evidence of water mills in the region dating from Roman times, for example at Holcombe and Uplyme. This was a fascinating talk which raised many questions and was thoroughly enjoyed.

**Wendy Coombes, Programme Secretary**

## October Meeting: AGM & Social Evening

The History Society held its AGM at The Union Inn on 20th October, chaired by our President, Professor Ian Mercer. There were several changes to the Committee. The new Chairman is Bill Hardiman who has been instrumental in setting up our new website and undertaking work on the archives. Dr Ian Mortimer remains on the committee as Secretary, and Jeanette Webster stays as Treasurer. Judy Hardiman becomes the new Programme Secretary, with the other committee members being Wendy Coombes, Edward Pike, Chris Pilkington and Liz Prince. Sincere thanks were given to the outgoing officers who have given the History Society enthusiastic support over a number of years, and to Jeanette for staying on! Thanks were also given to Ian Mercer for acting as our President in spite of his many other commitments.

Following the business meeting Gary Cox gave us a quiz - possibly the most successful we have yet had. Gary put together a mix of general questions on Devon, Dartmoor and Moretonhampstead, and everyone stood a chance of answering some of them. Inevitably, the President and his team won. It was good fun and our thanks go to Gary for an excellent evening, and also to Siân and Dave Colridge at The Union for making us so welcome. **Wendy Coombes**

## Picture Puzzle- Answer:

The feature exposed as a result of low water levels at the Fernworthy reservoir is, as most of you will have realised a hut circle dating back several thousand years. There are other hut circles around Fernworthy not covered by the water. Dartmoor was quite a different place back then, and from the number of hut circles found on the moor, (over 5000) quite well populated. Although it would be quite wrong to assume that they were all occupied at the same time, as the time period for hut circles is quite wide.

In earlier years, in times of drought, Fernworthy has fallen to very low levels, and there is a very nice stone bridge that comes into view on such occasions, perhaps some members have seen it!



Photographed nearby at the same time was this rather strange incised granite stone—any ideas?

## New Members:

We extend a warm welcome to **John Eggington**, who joined at the AGM and lives at Howton. I'm sure many members already know John. We also welcome back **John Farrand-Rogers** to the membership.

## TimeTeam visit Tottiford:

In August the 'Time Team' (Channel4 TV Archaeology Programme – which stars Tony Robinson) went to Tottiford Reservoir, which had been drained, presumably to facilitate the visit. I think this visit by 'Time Team' was prompted by the discoveries made there by Moreton's very own amateur Archaeologist Mike Miller. A team of over 60 people were in attendance, a number of trenches were dug, and some significant finds were made, relating to the occupation of the area by man several thousand years ago.

It is understood that the programme they made will be screened sometime in the new series next year. Once the details are known I will put them in the Newsletter.

**Chris Pilkington**