



Moretonhampstead History Society

Newsletter

October 2009

October Meeting: AGM

Our October meeting will take place in the Stable Bar of the Union Inn, on Wednesday 21st October, and **not** in the Community Club, our usual venue. This meeting will begin with the **AGM**. Do, please, make every effort to attend this meeting, the formalities of the AGM are soon dealt with and this will be followed by an entertaining evening devised by the Chairman!

Please note that your **annual subscription becomes due** on this date, £10 for a single membership & £15 for two persons at the same address. Please be prompt with this payment for the sake of the Membership Secretary!

Venue— We need your opinion:

At our last committee meeting, the subject of the suitability of the Community Club as a venue for our meetings was raised. The membership of our History Society has grown considerably over the last few years, and we now have close to 100 members. We have used The Community Club for many years but, as many of you know, if we get more than 35 to a meeting it becomes very crowded and stuffy, and is not conducive to social interaction afterwards. Most people just want to get out, and this is further exacerbated by the need to move the chairs and tables, making members, perhaps, feel that they are in the way! It is not easy to predict which subjects are likely to attract a larger attendance, but we often now get 40-50 attending almost every meeting, and that is even then just about half of the total membership, notwithstanding additional guests, there are usually a few of those a well! On occasions, we have used the Linhay & Stable bar of the Union Inn for some meetings, and you will note that it is the venue for the AGM. We are thinking of using the Union Inn on a more regular basis; subject of course to the agreement of Sian Colridge who runs the Union Inn, and who is also a member of the Society. The advantages are clear, there is much more space and there is a bar serving a range of drinks. We would not have the problems of setting up and clearing that we have in the Community Club, and it is somewhat more sociably agreeable.

Before we progress this further, we would very much like to get the views of **all** of the membership. Do you think this proposal is a good idea? Or do you think that we should continue as we are? Or perhaps seek another venue altogether? If you have email please reply via Chris, his email address is at the bottom of the last page of this Newsletter. If you don't have email you can drop a note into the chairman, his address is 43 Ford Street.

Please let us know what you think **before the 18th Oct** so that we can let you know, at the AGM, the consensus regarding this issue.

September Meeting: 46 members attended

In September Robert Hesketh gave us an overview of inn names and signs in Devon, with a brief history of some of them. It is surprising how many inn names reflect their religious origins. In the Middle Ages parish churches brewed their own ale – the 'Church Ales' - partly to provide hospitality to travellers and partly for income. There are more than fifty 'Church House Inns' in Devon, and 'The Lamb and Flag', the 'Star' and the 'Three Crowns' are also favourites. The 'Church House Inn' in Rattery claims to be England's oldest inn, having been founded in 1028, but many members were able to mention other 'oldest inns' which they had come across. The 'Jack Russell' at Swimbridge in north Devon commemorates their perpetual curate, who first registered this breed of dog which was named after him. Locally, 'The Artichoke' at Christow was named after the Jerusalem Artichoke brought back by the Crusaders. 'The Ring o' Bells' at North Bovey was thought to have lodged the masons building the parish church and 'The Bishop Lacey' at Chudleigh was named after the

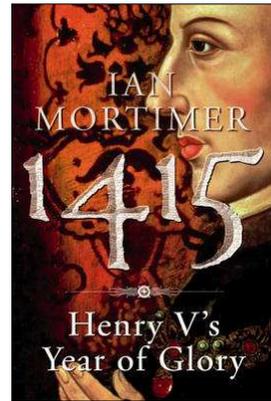
Bishop of Exeter who had his summer palace in the village in the early 15th century. 'The Warren House', originally built in the sixteenth century, is the 3rd highest inn in England. -Wendy Coombes

Ian's latest book:

Our Chairman has written another book entitled:

1415 - Henry V's Year of Glory

Henry V is regarded as the great English hero. Lionised in his own day for his victory at Agincourt, his piety and his rigorous application of justice, he was elevated by Shakespeare into a champion of English nationalism for all future generations. But what was he really like? Does he deserve to be thought of as 'the greatest man who ever ruled England?' In this groundbreaking and ambitious book, Ian Mortimer portrays Henry in the pivotal year of his reign. Recording the dramatic events of 1415 on a day-by-day basis, he offers the fullest, most precise and least romanticised view we have of Henry and what he did. In addition, the king's story is told against the background of other important developments in Europe, in particular the struggle for power within the Catholic Church and official attempts to eradicate any deviant religious beliefs. In so doing the reader encounters unexpected and eye-opening explanations for why Henry tried to unify the kingdoms of England and France – and why he was prepared to burn men alive as heretics. The result is not only a fascinating reappraisal of Henry; it brings to the fore many unpalatable truths which biographers and military historians have largely ignored. While Henry retains the essential qualities of his greatness, his legend is stripped of its Shakespearean rhetoric and compassion. At the centre of the book is the campaign which culminated in the battle of Agincourt: a slaughter ground designed not to advance England's interests directly but to demonstrate God's approval of Henry's royal authority on both sides of the Channel. 1415 was a year of religious persecution, personal suffering and one horrendous battle. This is the story of that year, as seen over the shoulder of its most cold-hearted, most ambitious and most celebrated hero.



The book has now been published and came out on 24th Sept. It is available in hard cover from Amazon Books via the internet at £14 (RRP £20) - Or from any good bookshop.

November Meeting:

This meeting will take place in the Community Club at 7.30 on Wednesday 18th November.

'Dolly Mops and Lady girls: Victorian Prostitutes in Devon'

Dr Todd Gray – who last year debunked the myths surrounding Devon's 'popular' heritage – is back, this time with a talk that throws new light on Devon's social history

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

Local History - Bill Hardiman & Merlin Howse:

What were your house and street like in the past? Where do their names and shape come from? Who lived there before you? What was life like in Moreton before motor vehicles when nearly everyone was born, educated, worked and did all their shopping in the town? How was it affected by outside events like wars? Today we can use IT at home or in the library to connect with people, places and events that have shaped our community. This course will show you how to start on this fascinating journey of discovery - no previous IT knowledge is necessary.

Sun 18th Oct 10am-4.30pm, a 1 day Course in the library. Fee: £22.00 (£19.80/£11.00)