

Local History News

The newsletter of the
South Molton & District Archive
Local History Society

The Constables Room, Town Hall, Broad Street, South Molton EX36 3AB

Charity No. 900293

June 2014

Editor – Shirley Bray

The March slide show once again attracted a large and enthusiastic audience and raised over £170. I had lots of positive feedback, so thank you to those members who donated draw prizes and who worked hard to make the evening such a success.

We held our first village walk on a dry and not too cold evening at the beginning of May. We had a last minute change of plan and decided to visit Kingsnympton instead of Georgenympton as we discovered that the Castle Inn had closed! Chris Ponder who lives at Kingsnympton was kind enough to show us around the church and village, pointing out features and places of interest. Chris - despite our protests - gallantly treated us all to a drink in the Grove, where he had the locals talking when they saw him sitting with so many women! It was a most enjoyable evening.

On Friday June 6th we will be visiting Pilton, we will meet at South Molton car park at 6pm so that we can share transport. Pilton has a connection to South Molton through the Pearce family of the Tannery, and Sue Pearce will be with us to tell us a little about this. Our first port of call will be the church at 6.45pm, and we are hoping to get an "expert on all things Pilton" to guide us around the area. I have a copy of the Pilton Heritage Trail that I will bring along. Apparently Pilton (or Pylton) is a Saxon name and means "farm by the creek".

Some of us have been busy collecting information on local men who served in the First World War. We have provided information, photographs and an exhibit to the Museum who will be commemorating the outbreak of WW1 throughout August and September. We will complement this with display boards in the foyer of the Town Hall. We are also contributing to the Exhibition to be held in the Parish Church.

World War One Exhibition – History and Flowers In South Molton Parish Church

Thursday 24th – Monday 28th July

11am-4pm on Thursday

10am-4pm on Friday, Saturday and Monday;

1-4pm on Sunday

Includes exhibits by the Schools; British Legion and South Molton Archives

AND our own War Horse.

TEAS



WW1 Silk postcard sent by William to "my dear mother and father"

MORMONISM

The following is the copy of a summons served upon a late mormon, and of extracts from his reply as appearance thereto :-

East Street, South Molton 13

May 1855

Dear Brother John Vickery -- Pursuant to an order passed this day by the council of this branch of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, you are hereby summoned to attend one of our testifying meetings between this hour and this day fortnight, and openly before God and his Saints confess the crimes of which you have been guilty. And we would have you understand that if you do not do so, you will at our next council meeting be forthwith excommunicated from this the Church of Christ.

By order of J H Kelson President
John Francis Secretary

REPLY

To Mr John Francis Secretary to the Mormons

East Street South Molton 16

May 1855

Sir, How can I in conscience call you Saints. You know that you are children of the devil, the corrupt church called Antichrist, the false prophet which was to come in the latter days, deceiving of the devil many saints, and, if it were possible deceiving the very elect. You are the children of the wicked, leading captive silly men and women, and weak minds, you have led me captive before now, but I can see your treachery. Last Sunday night Elder Kelson called on me and said "I hear that you visit the public house" Let me tell you, if I visit a public house or even a brothel, I can do no more evil than you do, for ye

do more evil to the cause of religion than the Infidel or Atheist. Your party has dipped me 3 times, the last was about 3 weeks since, when President Lunt of Bristol came down, he said "There is not unity between you, ye must be baptised again", so nine of us went to Parkhouse river and were dipped by him late at night – about eleven o'clock before it was over.

You will remember the last yearly festival, held at your licensed room, that you had comic and other vulgar songs sung, one was "Over the hills and far away" another "You must not buy tripe on Friday" "Weeks Matrimony" "No one would have this charming girl for holes were in her stockings", and after this, concluded with prayer that God may add a blessing upon your labours. Your party dispersed about 5 o'clock next morning.

John Vickery

Contributed by Beryl Vickery – as far as Beryl is aware there is no family connection to this John Vickery

H. TRAWIN,

*Plumber, Glazier, Tin-plate, Zinc, and Wire
Worker; General and Furnishing Ironmonger.*

Begs most respectfully to thank his friends and the public for favours hitherto received, and hopes by prompt attention to business, and supplying the best articles, at the lowest possible prices, to insure a continuance of the same.

East Street, Southmolton, June 13th, 1856.

Advertisement in The Peace Record printed to record the celebrations at the end of the Crimean War

A descendant of Waymond Hammond who was a jeweller and watchmaker with a shop at 4, East Street, recently gave me a scrapbook of newspaper cuttings. This included the following, which was printed in the **South Molton Gazette in 1907**. Apparently the information for the article came from a large number of diaries, papers, etc., collected and kept by the ancestors of Mr. Joseph Kingdon.

“Echoes of the Past “

The change in the weather. Certain it is that agriculturists of the present day have reason to complain of the vagaries of our climate, but it would seem that 80 years ago the weather for the time being – whether it was hot or cold, stormy or calm - was more pronounced than it is today. For instance we still get a good deal of wind, but it is now a rare thing to hear of corn and hay ricks being blown about the fields. In the early part of the last century, however – at South Molton at least, it was quite a common occurrence. Here is one record among many ‘*November 29th 1836, Tuesday morning 9.30 hard wind blow’d down five corn and one hay rick at Mr. W. Coles*’

Thunder and lightening are frequently mentioned, and almost invariably there follows an account of damage done. On one occasion – 1851 July 1st, the residents in South Street are recorded to have had ‘*more than two feet of water on the floors*’ though that part of town is not low lying.

On 5th October 1851, lightening removed a huge stone from the inside of the tower wall and punched a hole in the south gallery of the church.

The heat in summer is frequently spoken of as being intense, and the recorded depths of ice and snow in winter make one shiver....”

In the same scrapbook was an article describing **South Molton in 1818**, which I have edited slightly.

“This is a borough, and corporate town, in the north of Devon. Its situation is healthy and contains between two and three thousand inhabitants, many of whom are ladies and gentlemen of much wealth and respectability. Its trade is considerable; particularly in the woollen industry. It has three markets weekly, six great markets and two fairs annually. The principal market day is on Saturday, which is abundantly supplied with all the necessaries of life.

Here is a capacious Gothic Church, where Divine Service is regularly performed three times every Sunday; a handsome Meeting-house; and a small chapel for the followers of Wesley. But here there are no Catholics or Jews.

The inhabitants of South Molton are, in general, sober and industrious and in a moral sense, as virtuous as their neighbours. Here is a respectable Book-club, for the regular admission of the best periodical publications; a great number of Friendly Societies for the benefit of the sick and infirm; with several schools for the education of youth. In youth the tender idea is taught first to germinate, and unfold in riper years the blossoms either of virtue or vice.

Here is a boarding school for ladies, and another for young gentlemen, where the classics are taught with fidelity and care; a charity school for educating and clothing certain number of the sons and daughters of indigence; and a free school for writing and arithmetic, given and endowed by Hugh Squier, esq.; and other seminaries of education. And latterly Sunday-schools have also been established, which it is most devoutly to be wished, will tend to meliorate the condition and correct the morals of the rising generations.

If South Molton cannot boast of her olive-groves, she can boast, however, of things of greater importance. She can boast of her droves of cattle, and of her fields waving with corn.”

Shirley Bray

Dates for your diary

- June 6th** **South Molton Archive** – Walk around Pilton meet at 6 p.m. at South Molton car park.
- June 17th** **6.45p.m.** North Molton History Society – 7pm visit to Burcombe Farm run by the Smaldon family
- June 25th** 7.30 p.m. Filleigh History Society – tba
- July all month** - **Filleigh History Society Exhibition in South Molton Museum**
- July 4th** **South Molton Archive** - Village Walk (Twitchen) – meet at 6 p.m. at the rear of the Pannier Market
- July 24th-28th** **World War One Exhibition – History and Flowers in South Molton Parish Church**
- July 23d** 7.30 p.m. Filleigh History Society – “The Ice Age as it applied to Devon”, talk by Mr. T. Cadbury
- August all month** – **WW1 Exhibition at South Molton Museum with display In Town Hall Foyer by South Molton Archive**
- Aug 1st** **7.30 p.m. South Molton Archive - Business Meeting** (venue to be decided)
- Sept 5th** **7.30 p.m. South Molton Archive** – Business Meeting – venue to be decided

Please send your contributions to the September issue of the News to Shirley, if possible via email – ndlink@tiscali.co.uk
Deadline – August 25th 2014

South Molton Archive & Local History Society