

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

website: www.southmoltonmuseum.org

September 2015

Editor – Shirley Bray

Our AGM will take place on October 16th when members will have the opportunity to elect new Officers. We will draw up a programme for the forthcoming year, so please bring along your suggestions.

Officers at present are:

Chairman	Carole Ryall
Vice Chairman	Sheila Farrant
Secretary	Angela Manning
Treasurer	Pam Eastman
LHN Editor	Shirley Bray

Annual subscriptions are due on 1st October; at present these are £10 per family or £7.50 per individual

Several of us went to Narracott recently by kind invitation of the daughter of the late Mrs. Helen Mackintosh. We were given a tour of the house and the chance to look into the roof to see the 14th century beams. It was a fascinating visit to this one time Devon Hall house. The house was for over 200 years the home of the Huxtable family and was visited

by Michael Faraday during the second decade of the 19th century - see the copy of the letter written by him to John Huxtable.

Waterloo 200

From Pat Shallcross 18 June 2015

200 years have passed since the Battle of Waterloo. A survivor of that battle is buried in Chittlehampton Church Yard. His name was Peter Facey, my great, great, great uncle.



Peter left a diary of his time (1803-1819) as a sergeant in the 28th North Gloucester Regiment of Foot. This diary has been with my family ever since. In 1997 David Ryall transcribed the hand written diary into print and subsequently it was published by historian Garth

Glover (The Diary of Veteran of the Peninsula and Napoleonic Wars)

Here is an account of his experience at Waterloo

"Accordingly on the 18th June about 11 o'clock in the morning the enemy commenced an attack with our out-line piquets. Immediately the army at large stood to their arms and a general action commenced which lasted till 7 o'clock in the evening, but about 5 o'clock in the afternoon the enemy cavalry consisting of men dressed in steel jacket and helmets charged the 28th Regiment which immediately formed a square and totally repulsed the enemy with great loss. At this time the action became most obstinate, but about half past six in the evening the Prussian Army arrived commanded by Prince Blucher. As soon as the enemy saw the approach of the Prussian Army they immediately commenced a retreat, closely pursued by the Prussian Cavalry and Infantry"

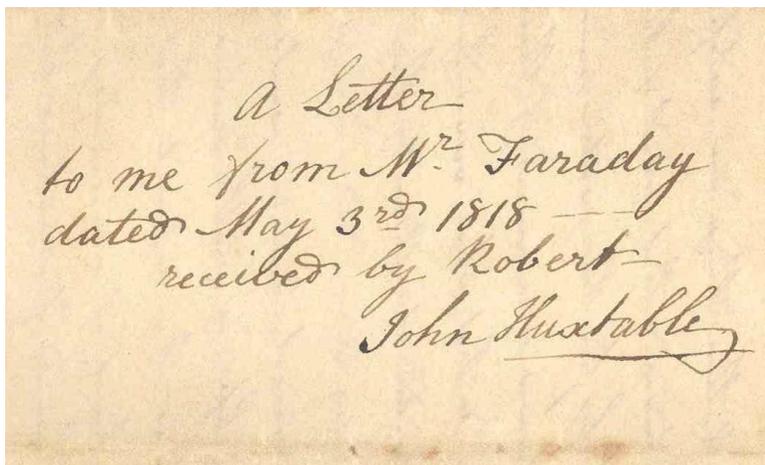
The Garth Glover research noted that the unit that fought the above battle started the day with 567 men and suffered 252 casualties.

As a descendant of Peter Facey I was invited to attend two events to commemorate The Battle of Waterloo, a concert at the Royal Albert Hall and a National Service of Commemoration at St Pauls Cathedral. Both events honoured the suffering and commitment of these brave soldiers which brought peace to Europe for many years.

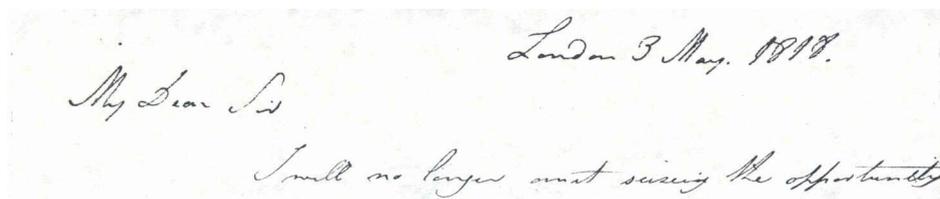
Peter Facey was born at Landkey, he survived the wars and returned to Chittlehampton, married the village school teacher and farmed at Gagham. The farm has now gone but was located opposite Brimley.

I often wonder how he settled after those eventful years with his regiment.

Carole Ryall sent me this article about Peter Facey written by his great, great, great niece, who has given us permission to print it.



A Letter
to me from Mr. Faraday
dated May 3rd 1818
received by Robert
John Huxtable



My Dear Sir
London 3 May 1818.
I will no longer omit seizing the opportunity

London 3 May 1818

My Dear Sir:

I will no longer omit seizing the opportunity of doing what ought to have been done before but which I have neglected - Mr. R. Huxtable is here and I am determined he shall convey to you from me a long letter - I do not know that I am justified in writing to you at this distance of time for as I have neglected the privilege so long I ought to forfeit it for my folly. Every thing made it necessary that I should thank you for your kindness to me an utter and insignificant stranger and again I was called upon imperiously to return you my acknowledgements for the handsome present

I received at your hands. These duties I neglected and I have no right to expect that you will allow a letter now that it contains nothing but apologies and excuses. I am emboldened however to do so by the remembrance of your good nature and kindness and I hope it will extend pardon to a repenting transgressor.

I never hear of South Molton or rather Narracott or still more correctly both but I am again entertained and delighted by the pleasures I enjoyed there. I never hear from them but with some further addition to the obligations I owe there and the presence of Mr. R. H. here has again shown me in full force the hearty and hospitable spirit which received me amongst you. Now these circumstances place me in an awkward situation. I am flattered and gratified by the civilities and kindness I receive but am pained by the reflection that I have no means of repaying them but however a truce with apologies the more I think of them the more necessary I find them and the farther off am I from putting an end to them.

I was endeavouring a short time ago to trace over in my mind the way to and from Narracott and I think I have it so accurately I could draw out a map of the roads to South Molton, George Nympton. I remember the fir plantation, the field on the hill the name of which I forgot, the Merry Miller, and I have not yet lost sight of the shearing feasts the revels, the fairs and other merry makings of those times which I passed amongst you. I understood you were revelling last Sunday week at Narracott and on that day I dined with Mr. John, Robert and Thomas Huxtable and Miss Huxtable in John Street we did not forget you at 1 o'clock we supposed you were at dinner at 5 o'clock at tea and so on and in our hearts we kept company with you all the day.

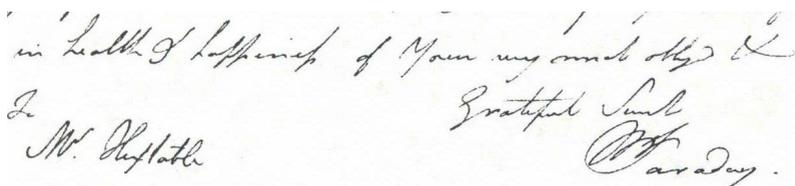
Here changes on taking place every day but I suppose every thing remains the same with you except such periodical alterations as the seasons produce. I do not suppose that there are any new streets added to the town or any alterations in the hospitable character of the people. The changes will consist only in those natural variations from one part of husbandry to another from a fine day to a rainy one.

I think I should be somewhat puzzled if I were seriously offered my choice of a town or country life. My election at first would be in favour of the town because the diversity of pleasures which it produces and their particular natures are such as by habit have become agreeable to me. The sort of bustle, of business, of importance in which each one appears tends to increase our opinion of the ranks around us and then the rapidity of communication the ever changing scene the novelty of the next moment all have attractions for those who have been brought up amongst them. In consideration however it appears that all these things are artificial I may almost say unnatural that most of them are unnecessary. That by far the greater number owe their origin to depraved manners and their continuation to a depraved taste so that when viewed by a liberal uninfluenced eye their value disappears and they seem just so many follies.

Whether a correct decision would be in favour of a country or a town life or whether such a decision is possible I don't know. It is sufficient that man has within himself the power of accommodating his views to the sphere around him and of making his own happiness wherever he is placed.

It is now time that I close this long letter and I cannot do it better than by recommending myself to my friends. Give my grateful respects to Mrs. Huxtable for all favours received. They are very abundant and therefore spare not. Do not forget to remember me to George and James and to Miss Mary. And to those friends in town who would be pleased to hear I am well make my respectful compliments. You see I do not scruple to give you trouble though you have already had so much of me but I trust in your kindness nothing fearing. Lastly accept my dear and respected Sir as the only return I can make for favours the earnest hopes and wishes for your welfare both in health and happiness of your most obligated and

Grateful servant
M. Faraday



in Health & Happiness of Yours very much obliged &
I
Grateful Servant
M^r. Huxtable
M^r. Faraday.

The letter was written to John Huxtable (1760-1838) and given to his son Robert to deliver to him. John Huxtable was married to Elizabeth Beedle Huxtable (1756-1851) and the couple had at least 9 children. The connection to Michael Faraday was through their son John who was a druggist and chemist at Clerkenwell, London.

John's brothers William and Thomas also lived and worked in London and in 1818 their brother Robert, and sister Elizabeth travelled from South Molton to London on a visit. Elizabeth kept a diary in which she writes about having tea with her brother John and his friend Michael Faraday on the second day of the visit.

Michael Faraday (1791-1867)

Faraday was a British chemist and physicist who contributed significantly to the study of electromagnetism and electrochemistry.

Michael Faraday was born on 22 September 1791 in south London. When he was 14, he was apprenticed to a local bookbinder and during the next seven years, educated himself by reading books on a wide range of scientific subjects. In 1812, he attended four lectures given by the chemist Humphrey Davy at the Royal Institution. Faraday subsequently wrote to Davy asking for a job as his assistant. Davy turned him down but in 1813 Faraday was appointed chemical assistant at the Royal Institution.

A year later, he was invited to accompany Davy and his wife on an 18 month European tour, where he met many influential scientists. On their return in 1815, Faraday continued to work at the Royal Institution, helping with experiments for Davy and other scientists. In 1821 he published his work on electromagnetic rotation (the principle behind the electric motor). In 1826, he founded the Royal

Institution's Friday Evening Discourses and in the same year the Christmas Lectures, both of which continue to this day. He himself gave many lectures, establishing his reputation as the outstanding scientific lecturer of his time.

Source = BBC History Website



Michael Faraday in 1829

I retired to rest, slept very well and got up the next morning quite recovered from the fatigue of the journey which I had experienced in the afternoon. John came and conducted me to his house where I drank tea with Mr. Faraday¹⁰⁸, and after viewing everything worth noticing there he returned with me again to King Street.

The first place of amusement that I was at was Sadler's Wells Theatre, I went with John and Robert to see "The Gathering of the Clans" which is a Scotch play; it was a very amusing thing and that well known Clown Grimaldi's performance astonished me very much, he at times would so distort his countenance that really I thought it impossible for him to recover the real form of it again. He sang a very droll song his grimaces in singing were laughable, indeed he was an object of mirth for every spectator.

The scenery was very beautiful, likewise the music, in the course of the evening there were several good songs introduced. They have the advantage of bringing the water, which runs near the Theatre across under the stage if required this privilege cannot be obtained at any other theatre.

I had not been long in town when I received an invitation Mr. Clark's at Poplar. I very readily accepted it, and went the following Sunday, Thomas escorted me there, he returned the same evening but I continued my visit until Thursday when John came for me according to his promise.

On the Monday which was the day after I went there, Mr. & Mrs Clark, their daughter and myself went to Greenwich Fair, we crossed the water in a boat, I was a little intimidated at the idea of going on water as it was the first time, but the river was calm, therefore I soon became reconciled. We landed safely at Greenwich, the first thing we saw there was the Painted hall, there was a person there describing the paintings, but the place being so much crowded prevented our hearing distinctly what the person was relating. We saw the car, which Lord Nelson was drawn in to be interred in St. Pauls.



Joseph Grimaldi

¹⁰⁸ Based on a reference to this same event in Michael Faraday's letter (page 104), the date would have been 19 April 1818. Using this date, Elizabeth left South Molton on Monday 14 April and arrived in London on Saturday of that week. It took her sister Mary only 32 hours to make the same journey in 1820.

An extract from Elizabeth Huxtable's diary courtesy of Keith Stait-Gardner who sent me all the information on the Huxtable family of Narracott.

Dates for your diary

South Molton Museum Exhibitions

- Sept** Oil Paintings by local artist Carol Rhodes
- 5th Oct /28th Nov** - Collection of previously unseen images from the Beaford Archive
- Sept 4th** **7.15 p.m. South Molton Archive** – Meeting at Sainsburys
Sept 15th 7.30 p.m. North Molton History Society AGM @ Old School Hall
- Sept 23rd** 7.30 p.m. Filleigh History Society – Maggie Ware – talk on trip with the Jubilee Sailing Trust
- Oct 16th** **7.30 p.m. South Molton Archive** – AGM at the Parish Church Hall, Duke Street
- Oct 28th** 7.30 p.m. Filleigh History Society – Clovelly Dyke or West Yeo Farm – talk by Terry Green and Derry Bryant of ND Archaeology Society
- Nov 6th** 7.30 p.m. South Molton Archive Meeting – venue to be decided
- Nov 25th** 7.30 p.m. Filleigh History Society – AGM at FVH
- Dec 9th** 7.30 p.m. Filleigh History Society – Bishops Nympton – talk by Sally Cotton

Please send your contributions to the December issue of the LHN to Shirley, **if possible via email**, although any contribution will be gratefully received – ndlink@tiscali.co.uk
Deadline – November 20th 2015

The Local History News can now be found on the Archive's section of the South Molton Museum website, www.southmoltonmuseum.org