



NEWSLETTER

Issue 1 - Spring 2020

Chairman's Message

This Newsletter is a venture which will keep our group in touch with one another, enable your committee to update you with news of ongoing research into the history of our village, and share with you plans for the future of Milborne Port History & Heritage.

We regret having to cancel our visits, talks and walks for the moment but look forward to the summer when we hope to be busy again.

Our village has flourished from early Saxon times, through Norman invasion, plague, world wars, industrial revolution and will still be thriving long into the future. Therefore we must enjoy our gardens, the glorious countryside surrounding us and be thankful for the strong supportive community in which we live.

Steve Underwood



Coinage from the Milborne Port Mint



Thirteen pennies, struck at Milborne Port, are known to exist. Eight date from the reign of Aethelred II (978-1016) and five from the reign of Cnut (1016- 1035).

One of these coins is in the British Museum, two are in private hands and another is in Shaftesbury Museum.

Two coins are in Copenhagen and seven in Stockholm. The discovery of so many coins in Scandinavia makes it likely that they were part of the Danegeld paid during the reign of Aethelred and the geld raised by Cnut to pay off the ships and men who had aided his invasion, although some may have found their way there in the course of trade.

The coin in the British Museum is one of a hoard of 65 found at Shaftesbury in 1940. These pennies were of silver, the only coins normally struck at that time.

In 2008 a penny from the Milborne Port Mint of Harthacnut was sold from the Timothy Taylor Collection and in 2009 a penny was sold having been found in Hertfordshire and came from the Milborne Port Mint of Edward the Confessor.

Minting at Milborne Port appeared to be irregular because of the absence of coins between about 1003 and 1023.

Museum Update

Since the museum will not be open for the foreseeable future, an update seems appropriate.

During the winter we have rethought the layout to accommodate a corner display unit we acquired from the old Mabers shop in Sherborne. This allows us to store the large collection of deeds and documents that we hold. It also holds the collection of Dyke's sample leather and gloves that we were given. There is a space that will hopefully house a selection of the finds made by Hugh Vincent, our local metal detectorist. These will be on the theme "finds from the riverbank" and "Kingsbury to the Shittle Fields with Swatchford and Paradise in between" inspired by research recently undertaken by Nathalie Hetherington.

A possible origin of the field name 'Shittles'?

On one of Natalie's maps that is being used to research Swatchford there are a set of fields called the shittles. The obvious comes to mind but also the village of Shitterton Dorset gives the explanation of the village name origin as the "farmstead on the stream used as an open sewer". Once we are allowed to open, we will do so. However, we will need to organise a party to help clean the museum prior to opening again, so if you would like to get involved in this or any other aspect of running the museum, please let us know by contacting mphhgroup@gmail.com or Tel: 01963 251549.

Fascinating facts

Dirt Poor

The floor was dirt. Only the wealthy had something other than dirt, leading folks to coin the phrase "dirt poor."

Upper Crust

Bread was divided according to status. Workers got the burnt bottom of the loaf, the family got the middle, and guests got the top, or the "upper crust."

CALLING ALL LIVING MEMBERS OF THOSE OLD MILBORNE PORT FAMILIES!

Imagine it's Milborne Port in 1901. Not ancient history by any means, but it's still history and for some of you reading this it's YOUR history too. And in 1901 there are hundreds of different families here. There's the **Hann** family for example; the **Tizzard** family; the **Hallett** family – and the list goes on. **Luffman, Bugler, Woodley, Blandford, Pullen, Dyke, Gould, Abbott, Coombs, Thorne, Watts and Davis.** And that's just a few.

Some of you already know who we're talking about, because these are names you grew up with. They're the grandfathers and grandmothers you still vaguely remember, or maybe the great grandparents, or the uncles and aunts and probably the in-laws too. Names from the past that link to you, their descendants today.

The History and Heritage Group would like to hear from any living descendants of these earlier families who would like to know more about their ancestors here a century or so ago. Where they lived and worked, where they came from originally, what jobs they did and who they married – all information that is publicly available but which is not always easy to find.

We're calling it the Milborne Port Social History Project, but it has to take its lead from you. We'll only look at those families we're asked to research, and only share the results with the express agreement of those who ask us to do this work. Taking one surname at a time perhaps – and gradually building up a new picture of life here a century or so ago.

So who's going to be first to give us their family surname to work on?

Email the Secretary, Lyn at mphhgroup@gmail.com giving details of your old Milborne Port family name, together with your contact details and we'll start the ball rolling!

Milborne Port is situated in a hill and wood encircled vale, can you find the 8 hills and two woods hidden in the grid below? Words can appear horizontally right to left and left to right, vertically up or down, diagonally up or down. Warning, a letter can appear in more than one word.

G	S	M	N	B	W	T	X	C	V	R	Y	N	C	D
O	W	T	F	J	N	S	R	T	A	E	W	C	A	E
Y	Z	F	H	O	L	A	G	Z	R	V	M	B	J	Z
E	R	D	K	H	C	N	P	K	T	O	N	M	B	F
S	L	P	Z	K	H	O	V	R	E	N	M	L	X	P
L	T	D	M	L	M	C	J	S	N	A	Y	L	J	S
E	F	O	N	Y	T	Y	L	W	H	H	J	G	M	G
B	R	T	U	E	U	K	E	Z	A	N	H	Q	M	L
E	J	A	G	T	R	E	R	O	M	H	G	I	H	X
V	V	O	D	E	A	C	G	O	C	Y	L	G	J	E
M	A	A	Y	A	H	W	N	W	W	N	S	I	B	Q
T	E	H	C	S	U	K	R	X	U	F	Y	M	E	Z
W	J	Z	P	T	C	U	M	W	L	S	O	G	N	Y
A	D	O	Z	R	G	D	L	A	J	C	T	D	S	E
S	J	X	G	B	R	O	A	D	X	X	J	A	P	B

Past Pandemics

Around Christmas 2019, we decided that the two temporary exhibitions in the museum for 2020 would be *From Plague to Prescriptions* and *From School to Restaurant*. This was before the current health crisis stopped us opening the museum. As the first exhibition will not be seen I thought a few points from it might be of interest.

The most recent well remembered pandemic was the Spanish Flu of 1918/19. This actually killed more people world-wide than WW1 had. Milborne Port was lucky, while there were cases here I could find no record of anyone dying from the flu, although one man committed suicide rather than go on suffering.

The earliest documented pandemic was the Black Death of 1348. In early June that year, two ships docked in Melcombe Regis, near Weymouth. Both ships left ashore sailors who had fallen ill on the voyage. The sailors were soon dead, or dying, but the disease did not seem to have infected any of the town people, so nobody worried. Then, on 23 June 1348, the first English victims died. Isolation was not understood, and by October deaths from the plague had occurred in both Sherborne and Shaftesbury, so it is likely that it was in Milborne Port. It was in Wells, Castle Cary and Yeovil by November, so it was certainly in Milborne Port at Christmas 1348.



In the busy, thriving medieval town of Milborne Port it spread quickly. There is no direct evidence for what happened here. In 1791 Collinson, said that tradition claimed there were 1,500 victims in the town, which was probably 75% of the population. The lack of records for what happened in Milborne Port during the Black Death is itself an indication that the town suffered badly. Another indication is that, while it had been eighth in the county tax collection in 1340, the town was not even listed among the eleven Somerset towns assessed in 1377.

So Milborne Port nearly died in the first recorded pandemic. Let us hope that modern medicine and the isolation precautions mean things are better today.

Dr Lesley Wray