



NEWSLETTER

Issue 2 - Autumn 2020

Secretary's Message

What a summer! Sadly we have, so far, had to cancel all of our evening meetings, along with walks and opening the Museum.

The Covid-19 restrictions that are in place at Church House will restrict our attendees at evening meetings to 16 for the time being but hopefully this will be relaxed at some point.

However, there is an opportunity to visit the Museum if you wish! By contacting us, mphhgroup@gmail.com or by telephoning Lesley Wray on 01963 250910, we will open it for you, at a time and date to suit you. Just get in touch. There is a new display for you to see!

We are now planning our 2021 programme and already have several exciting speakers lined up. Howard Pell will be talking about the Social History Project that he has been conducting for us, some fascinating stories having emerged, and Rosie Lear, a local author, will be talking about her series of three books that are set in and around Sherborne and Milborne Port.

Lyn Harrison



England is old and small and the local folks started running out of places to bury people. So they would dig up coffins and would take the bones to a bone-house and reuse the grave. When reopening these coffins, 1 out of 25 coffins were found to have scratch marks on the inside and they realized they had been burying people alive. So they would tie a string on the wrist of the corpse, lead it through the coffin and up through the ground and tie it to a bell. Someone would have to sit out in the graveyard all night (the graveyard shift) to listen for the bell; thus, someone could be saved by the bell or was considered a dead ringer.

The Post Office In Milborne Port

In 1841 the Post Mistress for Milborne Port was Sarah Best and the Post Office was on Lemon Street. However, by 1843, the Post Office was in the care of Maria King, when a letter to The Times in 1843, claimed the post was not always reliable. A letter that had been posted in Milborne Port at 4pm was not put onto the direct mail coach. Instead it was sent via Wincanton, taking two days to arrive, instead of reaching its destination that evening, as it should.



By November 1863, with the spread of the railways, the post should have been better, but complaints were still made because, although there was a direct rail link to London, the Post Office authorities still sent the mail to Dorchester by train, from where it was forwarded to Sherborne and Milborne Port in a cart. (Even today, the postcodes begin DT, based on the sorting office at Dorchester)

In 1871 Milborne Port Post Office, now in the High Street, was destroyed by fire, and had to relocate to other premises, eventually settling on the corner of North Street and London Road.

In May 1885, Ann Blandford was appointed post mistress, following the death of her father, who had been postmaster for the previous fifteen years. As the post grew in importance, particularly during WW1, Milborne Port needed a larger post office. When Dr Empson left the village in the 1920's his home, Knock-na-crae on the High Street, became the Post Office, complete with a sorting office, postmen and women and telegraph boys. The Post Office remained here, gradually being reduced until it was just one sub-postmaster, Philip Robshaw, who retired in 2016 at which time the Post Office moved into Crackmore Garage.

Museum Accreditation

As some of you are aware, we are in the process of seeking accreditation for our museum from the Arts Council England. Our museum has been declared eligible for accreditation, which was our first hurdle.



We now embark on the substantive application process. The standards and criteria are relatively complex. A period of three years is envisioned for the process. The standards are complex because accreditation is available for museums of a wide variety of size and character (e.g. accreditation has been awarded to the Victoria and Albert Museum, the Gillingham Museum, the Totnes Elizabethan House Museum, the Royal Navy Submarine Museum).

The standards do take into account the differences, and the requirements for small local museums are some-what simplified. The standards are set out in a document that is ninety pages long and we are embarking on working through it!

ROMAN BRITAIN, AD 43 to 410

We've all heard the saying "all roads lead to Rome" but here's a thought for you. Did Roman roads lead to Milborne Port?

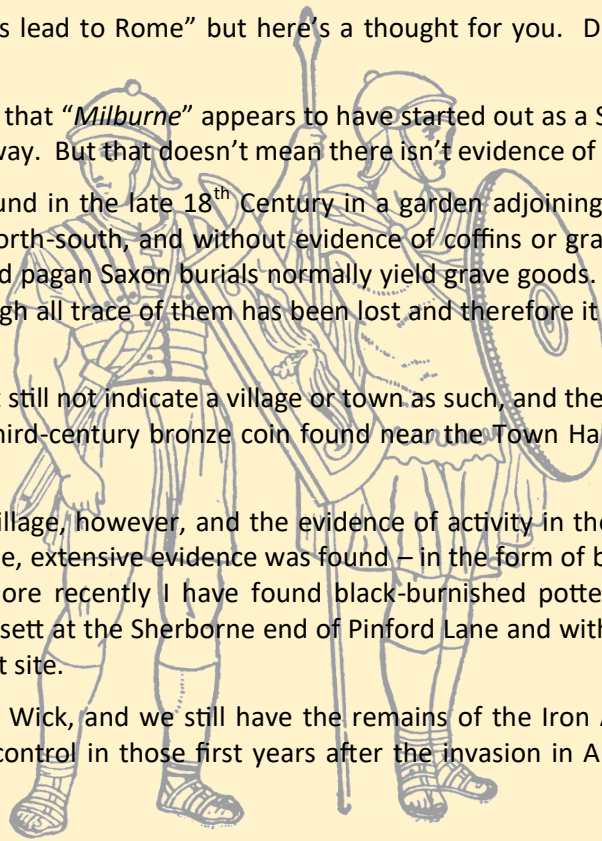
The jury's out on that one, but given that "*Milburne*" appears to have started out as a Saxon settlement, the chances are that we weren't on any Roman highway. But that doesn't mean there isn't evidence of activity here in Roman times.

Take, for example, the skeletons found in the late 18th Century in a garden adjoining St John's churchyard. Nearly 60 burials were discovered, all facing north-south, and without evidence of coffins or grave-goods. Given their alignment, these burials cannot be Christian, and pagan Saxon burials normally yield grave goods. One very plausible explanation is that these were Roman burials, though all trace of them has been lost and therefore it cannot be proven one way or the other.

If these were Roman burials, it might still not indicate a village or town as such, and they could be burials associated with a farm estate. Perhaps the single third-century bronze coin found near the Town Hall a few years ago was associated with those working and living there.

Stray just a mile or so outside our village, however, and the evidence of activity in the Roman period takes a quantum leap. Along Pinford Lane, for example, extensive evidence was found – in the form of brick, tile and pottery - when a gas pipe-line was laid in the 1950s. More recently I have found black-burnished pottery (made in Roman times in the Ringwood area) dug out of a badger sett at the Sherborne end of Pinford Lane and with it oyster shells as well – another good indicator of a proper settlement site.

And head to the north, to Milborne Wick, and we still have the remains of the Iron Age hillfort. A prime site for the advancing Roman Army to seek to control in those first years after the invasion in AD43, but as yet, hard evidence is there none!



Howard Pell

Can you find the 24 hidden words relating to glove making in the grid below?

Words can appear horizontally right to left or left to right, vertically up or down, diagonally up or down. Warning, an individual letter can appear in more than one word.

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

CALFSKIN, CUFF, CUTTERS, DRAWS, FINGERS, FOURCHETTES, GAUNTLET, GLOVER, GLOVERESS, GRAIN, HIDE, HOGSKIN, INSEAM, OUTSEAM, OUTWORKER, PALM, PATTERN, QUIRKS, SKINS, SLEEVE, TANNING, THREAD, WELT, WHIPSTITCH

Voting in Milborne Port

Before the Reform Act of 1832 Milborne Port was one of seven towns in Somerset who sent representatives to Parliament. There was no agreed system on how representatives were selected across the whole country, let alone Somerset and in Milborne Port, it was the town officers and other inhabitants who paid 'Scot and Lot' who had the right to vote. Scot and Lot is a phrase common in the records of English medieval boroughs, referring to local rights and obligations. The term scot comes from the Old English word sceat, an ordinary coin in Anglo-Saxon times, equivalent to the later penny. The levy itself gradually became to be called sceat. In Norman times, under the influence of the word escot, in Old French, the vowel changed, and the term became scot. Lot means portion/share, hence lottery, and allotment. The phrase scot and lot thus meant the local levies someone paid, and the share they received of local provisions; more generally, it meant rights and obligations, in respect of local government.

Scot, though, gradually became a general term for local levies; a person who was not liable for the levy, but received its' benefits, got off 'scot free'.

How Observant Are You?

Where will you find a boar's head in Milborne Port?

Answers to: mphhgroup@gmail.com we will send out a general email with the answer in a week's time!