

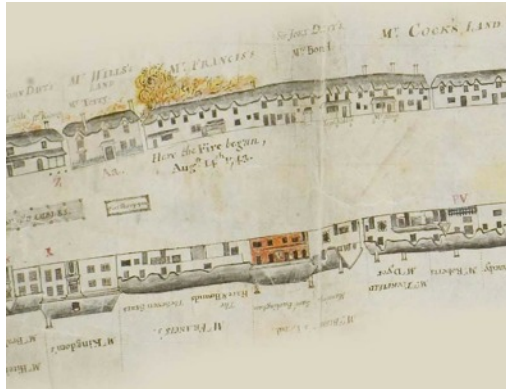
## NEW CABINET FOR TOWN MODEL

Our much appreciated model of the town centre immediately prior to the devastating fire of 1743 now has pride of place in a splendid illuminated cabinet designed and built by local museum craftsman Kevin Jones. Instead of taking up much valuable floor space in our main room, the model is now in an elevated position on the mezzanine floor, leaving more room for other displays. Fortunately we were able to meet the £1,200



cost from our general funds. The model is based on the Strode map of the high street, that was fortuitously prepared only weeks before the fire, for the Lord of the Manor Samuel Strode, a wealthy London merchant, wanting to establish the many encroachments into the high street. The model was created in the 1980's by the late Jack Whitfield from Black Dog and is a great achievement. It was skilfully refurbished by CAHMS member David Dornom before being shut in.

Alongside the model is a new 2 metre long copy and above is a portion of the map showing where the fire started (where Lloyds Bank now stands)



## www.creditonhistory.org.uk

This is the address of the museum website. Do add it to the Favourites on your computer. It contains information about local history, an up to date diary of events and links to other museum web sites.

## Chairman's chatter

August is here and we are preparing for the Annual General Meeting on the 12<sup>th</sup> September, and about to start our winter programme. This year Judy Tucker has again arranged an interesting line-up of talks.



Following the AGM John Heal will talk about the photographs in our archive. In October we have Richard Adams' postponed talk on the City of London and in November Carole Vivian will talk about the Buller family in Cornwall. After Christmas there are talks on the South West Coast Path, Finds from Devon Shipwrecks, St Lawrence Chapel by Isolde Summers and the postponed Moistown archaeology talk by Janet Daynes. We are hoping to have another coffee morning in November probably on the 25<sup>th</sup> – the date will be confirmed later and will be advertised at the museum, on the website and in the Crediton Courier.

Don't forget our Christmas Party. It is a good opportunity to catch up with everyone. Tickets on sale at the November meeting.

Thank you to all the volunteers who have worked so hard over the past year, helping to make the museum and research corner such a success and pushing us into the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

*Sandra Cooper*

Sandra Cooper  
Society Chairman.

## Our Corporate Friends

Please don't forget to support the local firms whose logos appear in our literature - see below. Without them we would not have a museum. Our income is insufficient to cover the expenses.

Crediton Museum & Heritage Centre

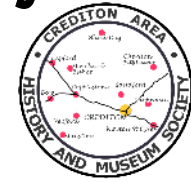


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# Crediton Area History & Museum Society

www.creditonhistory.org.uk



Members and Friends  
Newsletter  
August 2016

## THE KNOWLE HOARD.

Joe Mitchell, (1908-1993) from Knowle near Crediton was a carpenter employed by Devon County Council for 43 years, making and maintaining his own design of distinctive finger posts (signposts) seen all over our area. Some of Joe's finger posts are still standing, like the rare 5-finger example at Forches Cross.

Joe learnt his carpentry from his father, a builder, wheelwright and undertaker with a workshop in Knowle. After his death, the building (now known as Carpenters Cottage) was sold to Joan Tolley and her husband complete with the carpenter's workshop and all its tools and artefacts. Joan is now moving on and wanted us to have them for posterity before she vacates the house.



What a treasure trove it proved to be! There is a selection of wheelwright's equipment, like the templates used to cut the felloes for different wheel diameters, the lathe tool used to turn the ends of the wooden spokes, and a 4 foot diameter iron wheel rim. There are the remains of the endboards from 2 horse or donkey carts, one signwritten 'Avery Knowle' and the other 'Fey Maker Coplestone'. (Note the single "p").

At the moment the collection has been distributed amongst a few CAHMS members for restoration. When it is refurbished and catalogued, it is hoped to create a permanent exhibition.



## MORCHARD BISHOP WALK

Our visit to Morchard Bishop in May brought to life the story we learned from Graham Lewis some years ago about two Halifax bombers that collided in mid air over Crookstock Farm nearby in November 1944. Both crashed and only one crew member survived. Sadder still to learn that that survivor was lost soon after, and so near the end of hostilities too. In the centre of the village, next to the war memorial, is a memorial to those 13 airmen.



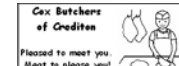
Graham had researched the incident after he began to find pieces of the aircraft on his walks in the area. He displayed these on a board (shown below) and donated it to our collection.

Touring a village like Morchard with someone with local knowledge makes you

aware of just how much has gone on in such small communities over the centuries. Of course, one of the most attractive features in Morchard Bishop is the longest terraced row of thatched cottages in Devon, possibly the country.



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## TRANSPORT -THE WAY WE GOT AROUND.



This year's exhibition entitled "Transport – the way we got around" opened on 13<sup>th</sup> April. It illustrates not only the various means of transport but also ideas such as the proposed canal between Exeter and Crediton, which – although some preparatory work was carried out near Cowley Bridge – never came to pass. And the saga of the Exeter to Crediton railway which didn't open for several years after it was



finished because of a dispute over whether broad gauge or standard gauge would be used! Eventually a compromise was reached, and for a while both gauges were used side by side. The photo shows equipment from an altogether slower pace of life as well as an early petrol pump and a route display from the front of a bus.

The display includes many other items of course and is well worth a visit.

The museum is open 10 till 4 Wednesday to Friday and 10 till 1 on Saturday, and the exhibition runs until 8<sup>th</sup> October.

## VOLUNTEERS WANTED!

We have an effective and growing team running CAHMS, including the museum. It is not always necessary to be on the committee and valuable work is done by other helpers, such as Judy Tucker, Jon Kelsey and Keith Parsons. Please think carefully about getting more involved and if you have any time to spare, speak to Sandra Cooper, David Nation or John Heal. In particular, some tasks currently handled by David need to be distributed amongst others.

## THE MYSTERY OF THE SILVER KEY.

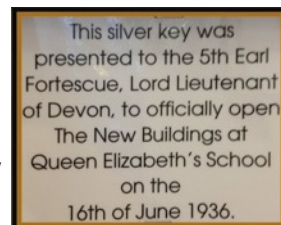
We were approached in February by a Queen Elizabeth's School pupil enquiring about a silver key recently presented to the school by the Countess of Arran. The key was hallmarked Birmingham 1935, was five inches long and embossed with the QE School coat of arms. The Countess had recently moved out of Castle Hill, Filleigh near South Molton which necessitated a major clear out that turned up the key. Did we know anything about it?



We set to work, looking through our collection of "Kyrtonians", and the 1936 edition plus a report in *The Western Times* for Friday 12 June 1936 provided the answer. The Countess' ancestor the fifth Earl had opened new school buildings on the 6 June, in his capacity as Lord Lieutenant, using the said ceremonial key. Due to heavy rain (nothing changes!) a few minutes before the event all the proceedings took place inside.

Those buildings now constitute the East Wing and were built with the novelty of central heating and the class rooms were wired to receive BBC radio broadcasts. £15,400 paid for an assembly hall, lecture room, art room, laboratory, gymnasium and other buildings!

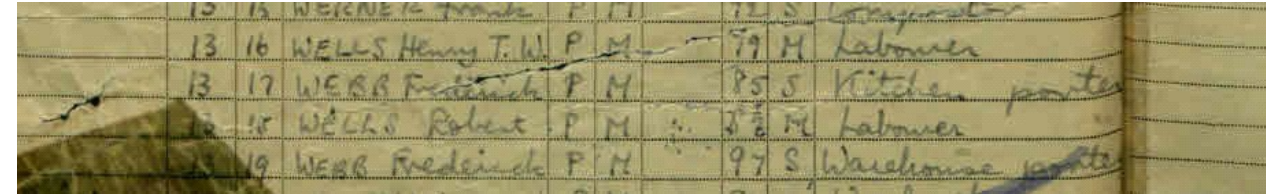
Thanks are due to Lady Arran for kindly reuniting the key with the School, which is now on display at the Upper School reception, dressed in the School colours of black and yellow.



## WHATEVER HAPPENED TO FRED?

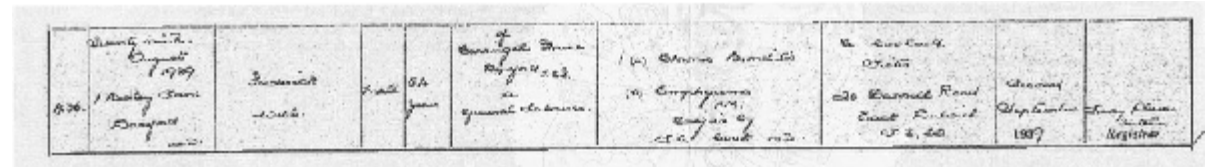
When Mick Munday's father discovered that his surname was not what he had always thought it was, he asked his mother for an explanation. She told him that his father had set fire to some cottages and been sent to prison, so she left him and reverted to her maiden name, although the couple had never been legally married.

Mick set out on a 30 year quest to learn more about his grandfather. A comparatively common surname – Webb – and very common first names – Frederick George – together with conflicting information about when he was born, didn't help. In addition, nothing was known about where he had been born and when and where he might have died. Mick's grandmother and Fred did not meet until 1919 (their son, Mick's father, was born later that year) so the couple would not have appeared together in the most recent census return available, 1911.



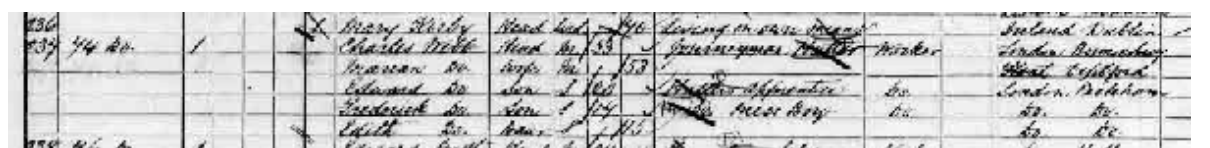
Extract from the 1939 Register in which Fred was found in a Psychiatric Hospital

Extensive searches were made of official records but there were dozens of men with these names and it was impossible to identify which was the right man. Then in 2016 the 1939 Civil Register created at the outbreak of the Second World War became available to the public. It was known that Fred had been released in 1936 and there was no record of a likely candidate having died between then and when the 1939 Register was compiled. Therefore, Fred had to be in the Register.



The Death Certificate showing that Fred had died in the hospital in 1939

Similarly, there was no record of him having married in the brief period between release and the production of the Register, so we were looking for a man of that name, probably living alone and certainly not with a spouse and/or children, at least aged more than a year or two. This limited the field enormously. There was only one possibility. We found him in a psychiatric hospital where he actually died in 1939. Information on the death certificate told us that he had been living in a London hostel before being admitted to the psychiatric hospital and gave us his sister's name which in turn enabled us to identify her and the rest of Fred's family, using census returns.



Happier times; the 1901 census shows Fred at home with his parents, dad a Hatter and Fred a Hatters' Mess Boy.

So, the mystery was unexpectedly solved by persistent and painstaking scrutiny of all available records and the elimination of all but one of hundreds of possibilities. This opened up the opportunity to learn much more of Fred's family and ancestors, most of whom, thankfully, lived more conventional and predictable lives!

## FORTHCOMING EVENTS

All commencing at 7.30pm at the Boniface Centre. Unless otherwise shown. To keep right up to date visit "Whats On" on our website.

13th April to 8th October.

"Transport - The way we got Around."

10th Sept. Early Victorian Schools. Devon

History Society. (Contact DHS for details of venue etc.)

10th Sept. Crediton Parish Church Heritage Open Day

at Holy Cross Church. Contact Bill Jerman on 772865

12th Sept. CAHMS AGM followed by a John Heal giving a presentation "Crediton in the 20th Century."

21st Sept. "Exeter Airport in the War Years" (Newton St Cyres History Group in the village hall)

26th Sept. Local History Sources in the Devon Heritage Centre - Brian Carpenter (Bow History Group)

8th Oct. Devon History Society AGM and Conference on the theme Farming in Devon. (Contact DHS).

10th Oct. "The City of London" by Richard Adams. (Provisional).

18th Oct. Putting your Ancestors in their Place." Seminars and workshop by the Devon History Society. (Contact DHS).

CAHMS entry 50p members, £3.50 non members NSCHG entry £2.00 BHG entry £3.00 non-members