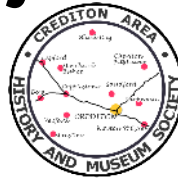


Crediton Area History & Museum Society

www.creditonhistory.org.uk



Members and Friends Newsletter

August 2017

“DOWN ON THE FARM”

The Society's 2017 exhibition - which opened on the 19th April - is entitled "Down on the Farm".

Two of the notable exhibits are the 1938 Chalmers tractor in its original paintwork, loaned by Keith White from West Henstill, Sandford and a 19th Century plough manufactured by John Eddy at Kennford near Exeter and also loaned by Keith White.

Another exhibit is a display of plaques from the West of England Ironworks at the bottom of Rose and Crown Hill, Sandford, operated

by the brothers James and Robert Wright and their descendants in the 19th and into the 20th centuries, where the Meadowside Garage now operates.

Intriguingly, in 1856 the brothers challenged Eddy to a competition to establish the best plough (the Wright plough was "best plough" at Yeovil that year and went on to win other awards). What the outcome was, descendants Richard Wright and his cousin Nick Heard (who runs the highly-regarded Heard Family History website) are endeavouring to discover.

A later fallout between the brothers saw them go their own separate ways, to set up in competition on opposite sides of the road!

Other exhibits include a cake cracker that separated linseed oil from linseed, a 1915 petrol engine that was used for many purposes, butter churn, milk churns, fertiliser and corn sacks, hand implements and many other articles.

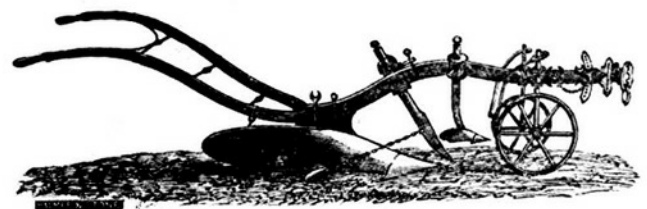
Also on display are 2 computer monitors - one displaying historic photos of bygone farming practices,



the other a video produced by the Sandford Heritage Group of tractors and bygone mechanised farm implements working in the fields at West Henstill, Sandford.

We are very grateful to Keith White, Michael Coleman, and many others for the loan of all the display items, for what is proving to be a very successful exhibition.

WEST OF ENGLAND IRON WORKS,
SANDFORD, CREDITON, DEVON.



The First Prize Plough,
EXHIBITED AT THE BATH AND WEST OF ENGLAND AGRICULTURAL SHOW,
AT CARDIFF, JUNE, 1858.

JAMES & ROBERT WRIGHT

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CAHMS ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

7pm, Monday 12 September.

Members will receive the AGM Calling Papers with this newsletter. You will see that we are short of committee members so anyone interested in giving it a try will be most welcome! You don't have to be a committee member to get involved in the work volunteers carry out so if any of the tasks might be of interest, please speak to John Heal or David Nation.

David Nation writes: "WHAT'S TO BE DONE?" We have a band of about 10 people every week who are examining and sorting our collection at Downes to improve the way it is stored and catalogued. We need more, of course!

CONSERVATION.

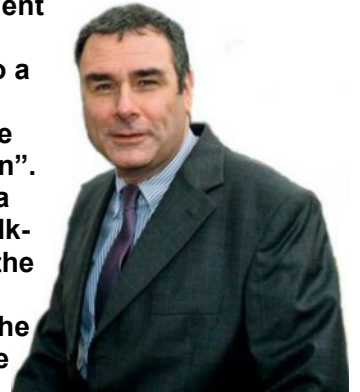
We need someone to oversee our need to conserve and protect the collection. This is a specialism on its own but lots of advice and information is available and it need not take more than a few hours a week. It is satisfying work and if you aren't interested in committee work but fancy something more practical and involving work with historic artefacts, let us know.

MARKETING

One of the ways we can ensure that the museum survives financially is to increase profit we can make from selling our booklets and other items. Is there a member with a retail background, to take charge of that? Again, no need to be on the committee to do that essential work. Please speak to Sandra Cooper or David Nation.

THE DISTINCTIVENESS OF DEVON

Monday 16th May saw Dr. Gray, the current president of the Devonshire Association speaking to a local audience in the Boniface Centre on "The distinctiveness of Devon". The lecture was one of a daily series as Todd walked from Lyme Regis in the East to Hartland in the west, accompanied all the way by Colin Turner the DA treasurer.



On Monday prior to his evening talk Todd had walked from Silvertown and on Tuesday Todd was walking to Bow via North Tawton. One of the first gems Todd presented to his audience is that Devonians are known as bulldogs, whilst in Plymouth they are "Janners", in North Devon, "Savages" and "Thieves" in the South Hams.

Day 1 was from Lyme Regis to Seaton, where in 1839 the whole limestone cliff face collapsed resulting in the present extraordinary landscape, and the night before Todd's party arrived at Sidmouth a large section of cliff had fallen into the sea!

Todd remarked on the differences that existed in Devon: Exeter and Plymouth; Exmoor and Dartmoor; the north coast and south coast; and Devonport and Budleigh Salterton. Todd informed us that Devon apparently had its own (dirty) type of wrestling in the 16th and 17th century – different to Cornish and everywhere else and which once attracted audiences of thousands.

Todd spoke about authors and artists and lamented the fact that apart from Beryl Cook and her "buttocky" paintings, there was no real Devon distinctiveness as there was in other parts of the country.

Todd talked about food, about the long-standing rivalry between Devon and Cornwall particularly over the pasty, which Todd said was first mentioned in Devon in 1510, 250 years before in Cornwall.

Todd talked about the different building stones used throughout Devon: Posbury stone; Beer stone and more. Devon has more medieval churches than anywhere else in the country – with individual, beautifully carved screens, bench ends and many other (some quirky) features.

Devon was famous for its cloth, and boasted 7 breeds of sheep between north and south Devon.

Todd ended by remarking that shoes made Crediton what it is. He tongue in cheek invited his audience to join him on what he was anticipating being a wet walk to Bow - via North Tawton to make it a longer journey (!), on the following day.

Thanks to Todd for an interesting lecture.

WHAT MIGHT HAVE BEEN.



This extract from the market place plan drawn in 1838, that hangs in the Downes Estate office shows what the Market House as it might have looked like. The Higher Pannier Market (demolished in the 60's) is in the foreground and the Lower Pannier Market in the background on the left.

ST LAWRENCE CHAPEL

The Society's March talk, about St. Lawrence Chapel in Crediton, was given by Crediton resident and member of the Friends of St Lawrence Chapel, Isolde Summers. Isolde began by describing the chapel as Crediton's big secret, tucked away as it is between Threshers and Western Road.

Lawrence who gave his name to the chapel, was born in what is now Spain in about 225 AD and martyred in 258 AD. The chapel is known to have been in existence in 1230 because Henry III granted a charter for a 3-day fair. In 1242 the chapel was endowed as a reclusorium to house an anchorite (hermit) and a Brother Nicholas was the first occupant. The building's use as a hospital is first referred to in May 1249. Hospitals then provided food and shelter for travellers as well as looking after the sick.

In 1332 Bishop Grandisson of Exeter appointed a Trinitarian friar Brother William to be rector and presbyter. the last Trinitarian friar to be appointed died in 1410 and no more priests were appointed.

In 1411 the chapel is referred to as a Chantry Chapel and it was then that thieves robbed the chapel of vestments, oblations (ecclesiastic offerings) and documents. In 1418 the chaplain, one John Wild obtained a special licence to conduct a marriage there. In 1443 Robert de Worcester was the last incumbent to be named and it is thought that the hospital was still working in 1474.

For many years the events of the chapel are unknown, although it is known that in the early part of the 16th century Bishop Vesey (Bishop of Exeter in 1519) exhorted the Church to preserve their establishment and the hospital from extinction. The chapel owned a lot of land including Spencecombe, and in 1523 was giving £9 PA (about £3,500 today) to the church. The chapel is shown on the 1598 Norden Map and the very detailed 1743 Storde Map that just predated the great fire of that year, and on which the chapel is shown as having been converted into dwelling houses.

In 1744 just after the great fire John Wesley visited Crediton. Nothing further is known until the 1841 census which informs us that the chapel was 3 cottages known as Chapel Court, Threshers. In 1889 the Crediton vineyard had appeared next door, and even today there is a small grapevine outside the chapel.

The Reverend Llewelyn, then vicar of Sandford visited the chapel in 1902, when the cottages were "fortunately occupied by townspeople who maintain a reverend respect for the sacred building in which they reside."

In 1914 a Mrs. Emma Drake from Winswood



ROBIN LANGHORNE WITH ISOLDE SUMMERS

in Park Street bought the cottages for £300. She engaged architect Sir Charles Nicholson to restore the cottages back to being a chapel again. After the restoration in 1921 Mrs. Drake handed the chapel over to the church governors who promptly handed it over to Queen Elizabeth School who still own it today.

On Oct 8 1941 holy communion was celebrated in the chapel for the first time in over 400 years (!) The Rev Patrick Ferguson-Davie from Creedy Manor is reputed to have placed a stone from a church that had been consecrated, under the altar, although the stone has never been found!

In 1951 the chapel became a Grade II listed building, when the style of architecture was described as "Early English". It is built of local volcanic stone with fine Ashlar cut stonework. At the east end of the chapel above the altar is a triple lancet window. The north side (which has a disused doorway) is said to have more original 13th century stonework.

During the school's ownership the chapel has been used by the girls and boys school for morning assemblies, and the boarders have held services there. Isolde told her audience that she had received several letters from girls who were christened in the chapel prior to their confirmation in Holy Cross. The chapel has also been used for a wedding and a christening, and by Landscore School when it was nearby, but the present Queen Elizabeth School does not use the chapel. In 1982 regular services restarted, although this is now much reduced.

About three years ago the Friends of St. Lawrence was formed and there are about 20 paid up members who have revived the St Lawrence Fair. This takes place on a Saturday afternoon close to Saints Day, August 10. This year it is on August 12.

Thanks are due to Isolde for a most interesting talk about Crediton's little known, hidden gem.

THE MOISTOWN PROJECT



The CAHMS April talk was given by Janet Daynes of the ACE Archaeological Club of Eggesford, that was formed in 1997. Janet talked about the Moistown (near Broadwoodkelly) archaeological project that began in 2008, to discover the history of the site. One of the current landowners Sylvia Warren is a historian and her research established that the Moise family were first recorded there in 1301 and had a substantial land holding.

By the 19th century the estate had been divided and parcels of land sold off. The 1841 tythe map shows a courtyarded farmstead but the first edition (1888) of the OS maps showed that one of the barns and a wing of the house had gone. 16 years later another part of the house had gone and the census of 1901 records no one was living there. The 1944 OS map and 1946 RAF aerial photos showed 2 buildings still standing, but they were demolished in the 1970's.

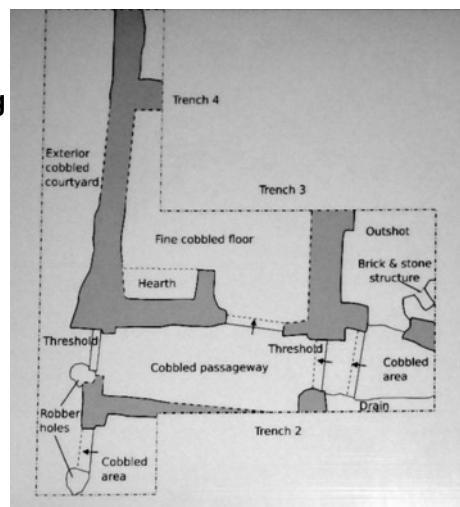
In 2008 ACE was invited to Moistown by the Warren family to train the Broadwoodkelly History Group in surveying, and this started with clearing a good deal of vegetation! With only limited time available the earthwork survey work didn't finish until 2012, and a drawing showing the many buildings that once existed was produced. A large pit was also discovered whose purpose is thus far unknown but it was postulated that it may have been a root cellar.

ACE then tried the archaeologically contentious exercise of dowsing which Janet has been interested in since the age of 10. They set up a dowsing grid across the earthworks site with Devon Dowsing, looking for buried walls. Generally the discovered walls didn't tally with any of the maps, although one wall did appear on all of them.

ACE then met up with Dr. Jenny Cunningham then of Exeter University who offered to carry out a geophysics survey similar to what was recently carried out in Holy Cross Church, Crediton. The survey showed up some barn walls but little correlation with the other surveys and plans.

To resolve all these issues, excavation had to be contemplated and because Moistown is registered, permission had to be obtained from Devon County Council archaeologist Bill Horner. The aims were to record the site in its current condition, assess the damage caused by farm vehicles, verify the buildings shown on the tythe and O.S. maps and inform the future management of the site; also to evaluate the dowsing and geophysics results. The Warren family were also keen for some of the site to be left open.

2 trenches were proposed, each 10 metres long and 2 metres wide. Digging started in August 2013, and once the turf was off only trowels, buckets and shovels were used to remove material. All finds were recorded



3 dimensionally. It rained a lot and Trench One was abandoned for 2013. Trench Two was subdivided and because a good deal of demolition material was uncovered a "sondage" (archaeological term for a small pit!) was dug, and went down onto what were postulated to be exterior cobbles.

August 2014 had lots more rain! More exterior cobbles were uncovered, also a door threshold and finer interior cobbles. To record this, photogrammetry was used as a much quicker and more accurate process than recording every cobble.

3 digs each a week long (Janet explained the excavation work had to be split up because most ACE members were too advanced in years to cope with 3 weeks straight off!) were undertaken in 2015 – in May, August and September. In May backfill was excavated and preparing for the Warren family's "Step back in Time" festival which includes a display of vintage vehicles and ACE gave guided tours and hands-on experience.

Over 2000 finds have been uncovered since the project began, with the earliest being mesolithic and saxo/norman pottery,

ACE clearly has a great deal more excavation to carry out before they are anywhere near completing their task and thanks are due to Janet for a most interesting talk.

SHIPWRECKS IN DEVON

The well-attended February meeting in the Boniface Centre heard archaeologist Charlotte Cole talk about shipwrecks in Devon. Charlotte told the audience that Devon's oldest shipwreck was a Bronze age ship that sank around 900BC in the Bay of Salcombe, but the majority of Devon's shipwrecks date from the 15th century through to the 19th century.



LEATHER SALVAGED FROM THE METTA CATHARINA

The first wreck Charlotte discussed sank in December 1786 when the *Metta Catharina* – an 18 metre cargo ship built in 1782 - on route from Saint Petersburg to Genoa in Italy, sought shelter in Plymouth Sound where she was unfortunately hit by a south westerly gale and sank on Drakes Island rocks. She was discovered by accident in 1973 when divers found a bronze ship's bell with the name of the ship. Lengthy exploration that ended in 2006 followed, and these produced a wealth of

artefacts including a large number of rolls of high quality leather (some of which has since been made into shoes, cases, bags and belts), wine bottles, shoe buckles and buttons.

Charlotte then went on to talk about human remains found at Croyde Bay in 1996 and 1998, and which it is postulated came from an unknown shipwreck. A skeleton had been discovered nearby in 1903 but never properly investigated. Five skeletons were discovered during the two excavations. A study of the remains showed the five bodies were all white European males between 25-45 years old and in generally good health. Charlotte postulated that the men weren't sailors but considered they may have been travellers or even ship owners, but certainly a higher status. As well as the human remains that were recovered, a large quantity of metal buttons suggesting they may have been clothed when they were buried.

The Croyde Bay victims and many others buried without ceremony resulted in the enactment of the Burial of Drowned Persons Act 1808, which required shipwreck victims to be buried in consecrated ground. Before that victims were frequently buried wherever it was convenient and for the least cost, and in 1997 a mass grave containing many bodies was discovered at Rapparee Cove, North Devon when a storm eroded the cliff; they were from the transport ship the *London* that sank in a storm in 1796 with 170 prisoners of war on board .

Charlotte's rather gruesome subject was quite an eye-opener!

WAS TOM COBLEY A KIRTONIAN?



It is fairly well known that the Tom Cobley, of Widdecombe Fair fame, is said to be buried in Spreyton Churchyard. However, as far as I am aware, no Devon Parish has laid claim to his birthplace.

Back in the 1920s a Mr Attwood suggested that he may have been born in Crediton. This prompted the Rev. Smith-Dorrien the then vicar of Crediton to investigate the Crediton Parish Registers, and his

findings were published in "Devon and Cornwall Notes and Queries. Vol XI, 1920/21. p164." He found an entry of baptism dated 29th August 1682 for a "Thomas Cobley, son of Thomas Cobley". Also there was another baptismal entry for August 29th, 1680, for a Thomasin Cobley, daughter of John Cobley. She was buried in Spreyton in 1698.

Smith-Dorrien's search proved doubly interesting however, as there were entries in the Register under the names for Pearse, Stuer, Davy and Hawkes. The author of the article suggested that, based on the above evidence,

"Crediton was the original home , not only of Uncle Tom, but also the band of friends who accompanied him on his famous expedition."

I leave the reader to decide on the strength of the claim.

If anyone is looking for a research project ...

John Heal

THE RED CROSS MYSTERY



The ageing sign shown in the photograph can be seen on the south wall of Ashton's Coffee House in Market Street.

The 1888 edition of the Ordnance Survey map for the market area shows a blind passageway behind the Lower Pannier Market leading to a building at the north end of the long-gone terrace known as Eaton Place, but according to census records this was a dwelling in 1881 and 1891, although it was empty in 1901.

We know that the Red Cross was once at the top of Searle Street and then in the hall that was once by the station but where was their HQ in the 19th century and why was the sign on the Lower Pannier Market wall?

Answers on a postcard please.

THE ROYAL CLARENCE HOTEL



The devastating fire that destroyed the Royal Clarence hotel last year felt to many of us just like a bereavement. It could have been worse, and advice from local historian Todd Gray informed the fire brigade as to how best to deploy their resources. As a result the much more important Laura Ashley and Costa buildings, although damaged, survived more or less intact.

The dead hand of bureaucracy has now descended on the owners, who have had to obtain retrospective Listed Building Consent from the council to demolish the unsafe parts of the building!

Planning applications for important buildings like this do contain lots of interesting information that otherwise might be hard to find. In the case of this application the 41-page Heritage Statement and the 18-page Design and Access Statement make an interesting read. There are also a number of large scale floor plans and copies of all these documents are in the museum on Computer No. 3. Take a memory stick and (by prior arrangement) a volunteer will copy them across. Or email me for a link.

keithmortimer@eclipse.co.uk

MUSEUM NEW RECEPTION DESK



CAHMS member and retired boat builder Adrian Noyes from Woodland Head, standing behind the new reception desk that he has recently made. Thankyou Adrian.

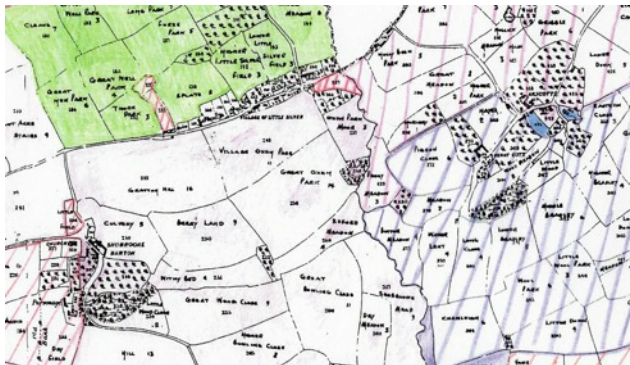
WINNERS OF THE CAHMS QUIZ



Adele Cox presents CAHMS member Gill Ware and Bow resident Alison Lawrence with their prizes in the quiz prepared by committee member Helena Sykes

SHOBROOKE TYTHE MAP PROJECT

Dawn Mayo, a member of Shobrooke History Group has recently concluded a project on land holdings around Shobrooke, using information gleaned from the tythe map and elsewhere. Dawn was originally interested in identifying land belonging to West Efford, but as often happens the project expanded. The result is an interesting schedule of field names that identify what the land was once used for and were necessary before the age of mobile phones. and a copy of the tythe map coloured up with land holdings where known.



The extract above is of Shobrooke Barton and Shobrooke village. The land coloured green was in the ownership of Great Gutton and the land hatched blue was in the ownership of Pennycott.

Sometimes the shape of a field - which would be fixed by the presence of immovable boulders and unfellable trees - can tell you a lot about its age and origin, and often resulted in the odd-shaped boundaries that we see today.

What the map shows is that Shobrooke Parish has been farmed from a very early date.

CAHMS VISIT TO COLDRIDGE



CAHMS visit on Monday May 8th was to Michael Thorne's astonishing tractor museum at Lower Park, Coldridge.

The exhibition comprises more than 40 tractors, mostly Ferguson or Massey Ferguson and the oldest dating from 1936; many being in showroom condition.



Also on display are a wide range of farm implements including ploughs, stationary engines, bygone equipment and much else. There are cut-away models demonstrating how equipment works, a model of a live steam engine and many other items. Big boys toys have got nothing on Michael's collection!

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

All commence at 7.30pm at the Boniface Centre. Unless otherwise shown. For more details and to keep up to date, visit "Whats On" on our website.

- 14th Aug** "Pathways to the Past" at the Devon Heritage Centre. Contact Esther Hoyle Tel: 01823 278805; email: somersetarchives@wheritage.org.uk
- 3rd Sept** Event at Dowrich Mill. A Sandford Heritage Group and St Swithun's Church event.
- 9th Sept** "The Wyndhams - A West Country Dynasty". A Silverton local history event.
- 11th Sept** Annual General Meeting at 7pm followed by "In the footsteps of lacemakers - celebrating 200 years of Heathcoat's Factory in Tiverton." by Sandy Haughton.
- 25 Sept** "Tavistock - 1000 years of history." Talk by Andrew Thompson. Bow Village Hall 7.30pm A Bow History Group event.
- 30 Sept** Friends of Devon Archives AGM. North Devon Record Office, Banstaple 10.30am lasting all day; Includes a guided tour of the town.

- 9th Oct** "The extraordinary discoveries from the prehistoric burial at Whitehorse Hill, Dartmoor." by Jane Marchand
- 10th Oct** "Everyone has a story." Preserving your family documents by Deborah Phillips. 2-5pm at the North Devon Record Office. £5 per person. Tel 01271 318795 to book.
- 23rd Oct** A "Mystery" talk by Todd Gray. Bow Village Hall 7.30pm. A Bow History Group Event.
- 13th Nov** "The fire at the Royal Clarence Hotel" by Richard Parker
- 27th Nov** Bow History Group AGM and social evening, includes talk "How we used to live in 1851" by Janet Few. 7pm Bow Village Hall.
- 11th Dec** Christmas Party
- 2018**
- 8th Jan** "Mining and miners at Newton St. Cyres" by Brian Please.

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

Feeding Devon in World War I

A symposium entitled "Oats, Sprats and Barley Bread" was held at Exeter University on 13th May, to discuss changes in farming between 1815 and the end of WW1.

Between 1815-1840s Devon agriculture was reckoned to be backward and undercapitalised; during the 1840s-1870 it was expanding and technically progressive; during the 1870s-1914 it was responding to increasing imports and domestic transport improvements by reducing arable production and increasing animal production particularly as commodities like fresh milk could be sent rapidly to London and other large urban areas by train so expanding market potential.

By 1914 the country was heavily dependent on imported food and German agriculture was also assessed as being far more efficient than our own. Nevertheless for the first couple of years of the war, food was not a major problem. By the end of 1916, however, after a bad harvest and with the increasing U-boat blockade, food prices were increasing sharply and shortages were occurring.

By 1917, government action was essential and the Ministry of Food was established, the Corn Production Act was passed and Agricultural Wages Boards were established. The War Agricultural Executive Committees promoted wheat and potato production particularly. Wheat, barley, oats and potato acreages in Devon all increased but it was concluded that, in fact, rationing was the thing that had the greatest impact: a lesson well learned for WWII.

The nation's fisherman also played their part and from the outset of WW1 fishermen and their boats (some armed) were engaged in various activities such as mine-sweeping, U-boat patrols, U-boat defences and even, on occasion, convoy protection as well as trying to keep up the supply of fish to feed the nation. This they tried to achieve despite constant pressure from the regular services for both vessels and man-power and severe restrictions to their normal fishing grounds.

All in all, the symposium provided a wide-ranging and very satisfactory day.

Judy Tucker

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 websites.

You can also find us on Facebook where we also have up to date information.

Chairman's chatter

August is here and the CAHMS AGM is fast approaching. My three years as Chairman comes to an end in September and it will be someone else providing



the chatter in the next newsletter.

I'm very pleased that in the last couple of years we have had new members on the committee who are very hard working and have lots of new ideas. There is always room for more volunteers however, and if you've got time to spare we can find a job for you!

We have an interesting programme of talks again for the coming year. Following the AGM we will hear about the lace makers at Heathcoat's in Tiverton over the last 200 years. Then there will be talks about the extraordinary discoveries from a prehistoric burial on Dartmoor, the fire at the Royal Clarence and mining in Newton St Cyres. For more details see our website.

I hope to see you at the meetings and do join us at the Christmas party on 11 December. It's a good chance to get to know other members over a drink and buffet supper.

Sandra Cooper

Sandra Cooper
Society Chairman.

PHOTOGRAPHIC ARCHIVE

The Society has an archive of more than 1000 photos kept in the museum. Copies of many are available for purchase and contact can be made through our website.

creditonhistory.org.uk.

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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