

Musbury Heritage – News & More

Discussion Group

We held our first Discussion Group meeting (there must be a better name!) on Saturday, 13 April 2024. The idea was to have an informal get-together to discuss anything relating to Musbury's history.

I am pleased to say that it was well-attended and, from the feedback received, seems to have been enjoyed. It was great to see visitors from outside Musbury, like Pauline (nee Gear) & Stan Spurle and Ann Clayton (nee Madge), plus long-term locals like Kathleen Gay, Janet Albano & Louise Fowler. Perhaps we can encourage a few more established residents to join us next time? Please see the notice elsewhere in this issue.

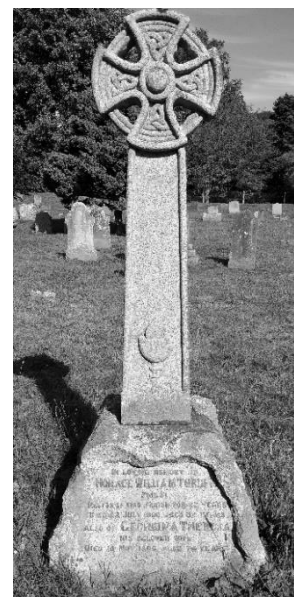


There were displays of some of the new pictures I have received in recent years and these raised some interesting discussions, so I hope to add to these at future meetings. I will also show some of the fascinating information available online but still leave plenty of time to answer questions and hear villagers' views about how we should preserve our history.

St Michael's Churchyard

Our church is undeniably an important part of Musbury's history. I was showing a friend around the inside recently and we followed this up with a stroll around the churchyard. I was reminded of the many names and stories from our history represented on the memorial stones. Like so many churchyards, the condition of these could be so much better.

In 1988 the Council for Christian Care surveyed St Michael's churchyard, producing both a plan and a list of memorials and names. I have digitised this list. Since this survey, no subsequent one has been carried out to my knowledge, but this is about to change. The Church of England has a major, 7-year plan to survey all the burial grounds under its jurisdiction. I believe that the digital mapping of our churchyard may have already taken place, but there will be a great deal more work required before our information is fully available. This is a seriously large project, which is being carried out by a commercial digital mapping company and they also intend to transcribe and link our Parish burial records to the grave information. I think 7 years is an optimistic target to complete all churches and burial grounds.



However well-intentioned this plan is, it will lack local knowledge and the personal touch of villagers. To maintain, improve and correct the data our church will need to subscribe to use the computer system and be restricted by the terms and conditions of a contract. This new survey will also not reflect the information from the 1988 survey or any earlier ones.

It may be feasible for us to produce something similar just for our churchyard, using a team of volunteers. This would, of course, initially require discussions between the church, family members of the deceased and probably a few others. Many skills would be necessary, but it would be an interesting project for those involved.

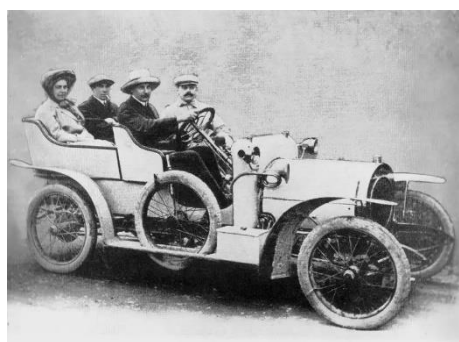
The Musbury to Axminster Road (A358)

Nowadays it is not unusual to read in the local paper or on Facebook about the terrible state of our local roads. We reminisce about how much better they used to be. Perhaps the following letter from 1907 may show that all was not so well in the past!

Prebendary Gaye and the Musberry (sic) Road

To the editor of the Daily Gazette

Sir – Will you allow me to call attention to the extremely thoughtless manner in which the road is being repaired between Axminster and Musberry (sic). Passing in my car on my way to Seaton yesterday morning at 11 a.m. I found that while the steam roller was engaged in rolling one place large patches of metal, of the roughest description I have ever seen for this purpose, were being laid down from a quarter of a mile ahead, right across the road, with no possibility of passing either one side or the other, so that I was obliged to go over them as best I could.



On my return at 5 p.m., I found precisely the same state of things, no apparent effort being made to roll in any of this loose stone since the morning, and the engine drawn to one side as if laid up for the night. As there was, as far as I could learn, no other road to Axminster I had again to drive on over the same loose stones, with the almost inevitable result of two burst tyres, although I turned my passengers out to walk.

Now road-mending must, we know, be done. But what I, in common with other users of the road, would like to know is what is the necessity for laying large quantities of this exceedingly rough stone a whole day in front of the steam-roller; instead of, as is done elsewhere, laying a little and rolling it at once. Having no knowledge of who is responsible for this wanton carelessness, to give it no stronger term, I take this opportunity of drawing the attention of the county authority to the subject, and, at the same time, of incidentally warning all motorists who may be contemplating a tour of South Devon this Easter to keep clear of the road between Axminster and Seaton.

I am, Sir, Yours faithfully, HERBERT L. GAYE, Crewkerne Vicarage, March 26, 1907.

Well at least (I think) we know who to blame these days!.....

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