

# Apr 2017

## NOTES OF THE MEETING OF MILTON ABBAS LOCAL HISTORY GROUP 1 Mar 2017

Yet another packed meeting with 28 people in the Reading Rooms, and we now have 43 paid up members to keep entertained! However, if you are not yet a member and are interested in the history of this area then please get in touch or come along to our next meeting.

The ongoing transcription of the Overseers of the Poor Book is revealing its secrets gradually - it shows that 356 people in Milton Abbas were inoculated for smallpox in 1776. The doctor charged 5/3d per inoculation, so he received £93. 9s - a very substantial sum. Of these people there were 120 who could not afford the charge and the parish paid £35 for them. Another payment by the Overseers was for "*Coering thee Scuref heads*" i.e. curing three scurvy heads, £1. 7s. One has to admire the spelling in these books, it is clear that the Dorset dialect is embedded with its use of diphthongs, where we now use plain vowels.

James Farnham gave a really interesting presentation on the history of dairy farming in Milton Abbas which included much information from Andy Case and Chris Fookes on the size and location of the many dairies in the parish in the 20th century. Lord Milton was an "improver" and was praised by writers in the late 18th century for his introduction of the latest farming practices.

Pamela Phillips showed how important it was for the parish in the 16th to 19th centuries to control the money spent on the relief of the poor by establishing the father's responsibility for his bastard children. There was a whole set of procedures for making sure that he paid for his children so that they were not a charge on the parish, these are recorded as "Bastardy Papers". There are about 15 to 20 cases in the records for Milton Abbas. An early form of the Child Support Agency.

Bryan Phillips gave a presentation on the impact of the Civil War on Milton Abbas - this area tried its best to remain neutral and minimise the disruption, there are no reported skirmishes or billeting of troops, so it was successful. The Tregonwell family did end up with an enormous fine, however, of £3735 for not acting for Parliament.

All are welcome to our next meeting on Wed 5 Apr, 19:30, Reading Rooms. Look forward to seeing you there.