

## NOTES OF THE MILTON ABBAS LOCAL HISTORY GROUP

Although we have not had a meeting in January there has been plenty of research going on. Thanks to our contact in Lytham St Annes who is transcribing the Overseers of the Poor Book from 1771 onwards we are getting some new information on who was paying in and who was receiving payments from the Overseers - including payments for someone in gaol and also to the Pauper's House. There were clearly many more people receiving aid than there were paying rates. This was typical of a rural Dorset village at the time.

All we need now is a volunteer to do the same with the Dorset Quarter Sessions records! Study of the social history of the 18th century shows that the income of landowners was rising rapidly after 1750, whereas the labourers remained in poverty throughout. Due to the "agricultural revolution" large estates were netting up to £50 000 a year by the end of the century, and of course, these landowners were also buying their way into Parliament, either by bribing the electorate or by paying the College of Arms to grant them titles (as may have been the case with Joseph Damer in 1753). They were also Justices of the Peace and so held power over enclosures, moving the roads, sending people to gaol etc.

We have gained more information on the maps and plans of Jacob Bancks which is still for sale for £15 000. It is clear that there are individual maps of each of the farms - Delcombe, Luccombe, Bagber, Liscombe, Hewish, Chescombe and Keat's. These are dated 1656 and follow closely the copy of Byles' 1652 map which is available at the Dorset History Centre, although some interesting new details can still be seen despite the low resolution of the images - for example, the "Towne Field" of 100 acres seems to be divided into strips, which probably means that this field was available to the townsfolk..How this was managed will never be known because all Manorial documents are lost or destroyed. Also the cartography shows the houses in plan view, unlike the Byles' map which shows them laid out, so it is possible to see the position of the buildings and walls better.

Our next meeting will be on 1st February at 7:30pm in the Reading Rooms. We look forward to seeing you there.