

EDITORIAL

A very happy New Year, for 2006, to all members of the Society! We look forward to seeing you all at our meetings, and particularly at the Annual General Meeting on Monday, 24 April. Please note that this meeting will take place in the village school, as we shall show, after the AGM, some videos, using the school's projection facilities, by Paul Heiney of 'A Victorian Summer'. You may have seen his film series, on television, of the East Anglian countryside during the last war. You will enjoy this showing! Do come along and give some thought to standing for election to the Committee. We could do with a few new committee members. Also why not consider offering an article or two for publication in our Journal?

In early December last year we were privileged to be shown the glasshouses and seed germination and pollination that take place at CPB Twyford's crop trials station. We were escorted by Nigel Moore of Church Street, who together with his colleagues gave us a fascinating account of the important work being carried out here in Thriplow. The firm is one of the leading companies in Western Europe for seed experimentation leading to the creation of new varieties of wheat, barley, and oil seed rapes. An article by Nigel is included in this issue of the Journal.

Every-one seems to have enjoyed, once more, the annual illuminated Christmas Tree, provided by the Society just outside the Village Hall. We are grateful to David Easthope, Peter Yates and Geoff Axe for erecting the tree and for dressing it.

There have been many changes this last year in the street scene of Thriplow, new houses, the restoration of old ones, and new additions to existing properties. Most obviously in recent months has been the work carried out last summer and autumn on the entrance to the school. Not everyone has taken to it immediately, the front, certainly, lacks local distinctiveness, but we know that one of the attractive qualities of Thriplow is its diverse architecture, and also its lack of uniformity of building styles, which can become most monotonous. Remember that the original school building dates from 1864 and has been extended and altered internally many times since then, most importantly in the period since 1950.

NB. Our next meeting is on Monday, 30 January when Michael Knight will talk on. 'Milestones, Roads and Turnpikes'. Do come along!

Peter Speak and Shirley Wittering.



Church Street, Thriplow.



Created in 1995 by the merger of two established plant breeding companies – Cambridge Plant Breeders and Twyford Seeds – CPB Twyford Limited soon emerged as a major force in the plant breeding, seed production and wholesale marketing business. Thriplow is situated in the centre of the UK's almost exclusively arable area where the most important crop is wheat (more than 50% of the area) followed by barley, oilseed rape, sugar beet, pulses and potatoes.

In 1996 the company was acquired by a European consortium of plant breeding specialists comprising Lochow-Petkus, a member of the German KWS group and the French organisation SIGMA in association with NPZ-Lembke, also German. In 2005, CPBT became a wholly owned subsidiary of the KWS group. Together, the group has a worldwide seeds turnover of over €420 (£280) million, employs more than 2,300 people and is committed to the future of plant breeding. This financial security enables CPB Twyford to further develop its ambitious plans to meet the changing needs of farmers throughout Europe and the world.

Based at Thriplow, which has a relatively continental climate with cold winters and warm summers. Average rainfall is around 20 inches but occasionally much less and represents a relatively water stressed environment. CPB has annual sales of over £8m and a staff of 50 employees, CPB Twyford is dedicated to providing farmers with crop varieties that deliver higher yields, superior disease and pest resistance, improved quality, performance in adverse conditions and better market opportunities.

The company has achieved considerable success throughout Europe and has produced a continuous flow of market leading varieties in all sectors of the UK arable and forage markets, recognised by their listing on the UK's HGCA (Home Grown Cereals Authority) recommended lists. This success is increasingly matched by CPB Twyford's success in

Western European markets with varieties being specifically bred for their suitability in these regions.

With its Headquarters situated in the heartland of British arable farming, CPB Twyford is able to implement innovative plant breeding programmes in conditions that match those encountered by farmers. The Soils here are very variable including chalks, clays and gravels giving the opportunity for testing the Company's wide range of crops locally. It also has commercial and breeding trials across the UK from Cornwall to Scotland and all major arable areas in between.

Specialising in the rapid creation and evaluation of new cereal lines, CPB Twyford's advanced breeding programmes make it possible for a new variety to reach official trials in five years or less whilst most varieties take approximately 10 years from first crossing to commercial sale. Selection is based on traditional pedigree methods supplemented by single seed descent and other out of season growing systems. The underlying objectives of all cereal programmes are to improve yield, quality and to increase natural resistance to diseases, pests and unfavourable weather, giving growers improved varieties and improved profitability.

As new technologies come along, CPB Twyford are continually evaluating their potential, adapting breeding systems to include those which provide our plant breeders with new tools to make effective and rapid selection. CPB Twyford have dedicated laboratory facilities which investigate the end use potential of all selected lines.

CPB Twyford has enjoyed being the leader in oilseed rape breeding and variety development, and CPB Twyford was the plant breeder that introduced hybrid oilseed rape into the UK. The aim is to increase the yield of oilseed rape far beyond anything previously achieved, whilst providing added benefits in speed of germination of established crops and increased vigour during autumn and spring.

Other lines of research are examining the possibilities for hybridisation to produce special varieties of oilseed rape for specific purposes. For example, oils for industrial applications and rape meal with a low glucosinolate content for animal feed.

The hybrid oilseed rape breeding programme is complemented by an intensive conventional oilseed rape programme. This breeding programme, employing microspore culture, is capable of evaluating a large number of varieties very quickly and developing new lines for testing within twelve months, bringing varieties of value to both growers and the market in a very short time.

With a major share of the UK field bean market, CPB Twyford remains focused on delivering quality and value to the grower. An important crop for arable farmers, pulses remain an ideal entry crop for wheat, as they crop in the Spring and fix Nitrogen in the soil for the grain crop to benefit from. With increasing human consumption of pulses, CPB Twyford is studying a range of options for their use in niche markets. Genetic modification techniques are not used within CPB Twyford.

CPB Twyford is also at the forefront in using new technologies for producing improved crop varieties. Microspore production in oilseed rape has been effectively introduced and utilised by the installation of new controlled environment facilities. In CPB Twyford's chemistry

laboratory, state of the art equipment is used for non-destructive screening to ensure product quality before planting. It is also here that highly detailed analysis of plant composition can be carried out. With over 450 acres of arable land sown with plant breeding trials and crop multiplication, CPB Twyford represent one of the largest and most committed plant breeding companies in the UK.

As well as its internal research, CPB Twyford funds external projects, many of which are long term, that are consistent with the company's research objectives. Every year up to 10% of CPB Twyford's breeding budget is allocated to these external activities, both in the UK and overseas.

The commercial success of a new variety is entirely dependent on the production and the maintenance of pure seed. At CPB Twyford, the supply of multiplication grade seed is timed to coincide with the completion of official trials. The influence of the recommended list is such that new varieties may become popular in the market place in just 2 to 3 years. By having its own seed production plant CPB Twyford can ensure that seed is prepared to the very highest quality standards before entering the commercial multiplication chain. Large scale production is performed by a network of experienced, licensed growers before being processed by CPB Twyford's specialist facility at Thriplow.

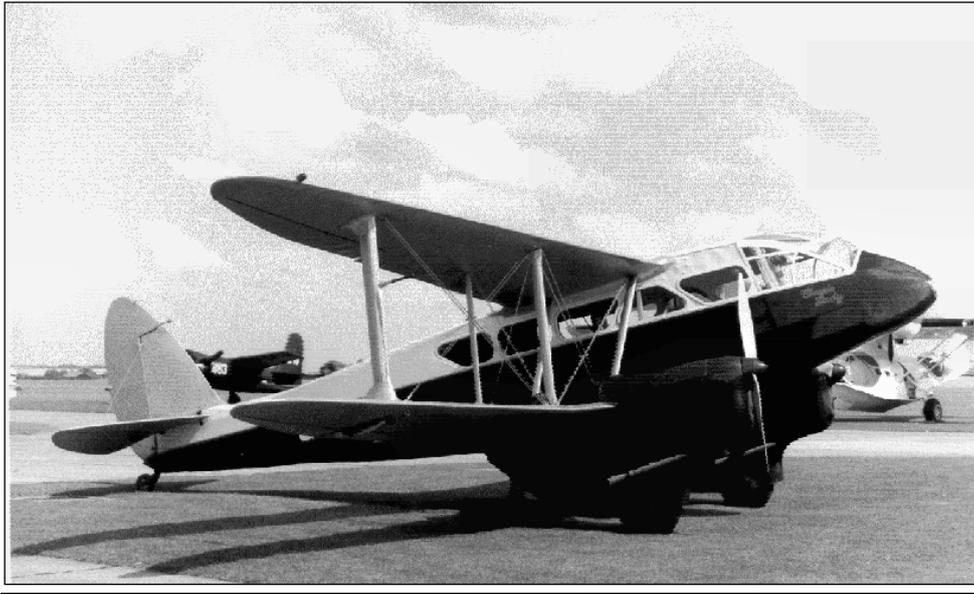
CPB Twyford has always valued its strong links in Europe and elsewhere, in terms of both development and new varieties and marketing of proven varieties. Co-operation with the agents in Denmark, France and Germany have led to rapid identification and commercialisation of useful lines and new species for the company, such as forage maize. Exchanges of information on crop performance assist in pinpointing the best characteristics for each market.

The company's marketing effort is similarly diverse. CPB Twyford markets its products in many parts of the world. Oilseed rapes are a major crop in France and Germany, our winter wheat varieties are strong performers in France, Germany and Denmark, and the company has a growing presence in Sweden, Belgium and Austria – indeed in all parts of the increasing European marketplace.

Nigel Moore
Business Administration Director

For a report on our summer trip to CPB, see Vol 12/1, Summer 2003.

THRIPLow'S OWN AIRLINER



One of the two Dragon Rapides that fly from Duxford Airfield.

Perhaps the aeroplane we see most often over Thriplow is the twin-engined biplane, the de Havilland Dragon Rapide that runs pleasure flights from Duxford Airfield. There are in fact two of them flown by a company called 'Classic Wings'.

The Dragon Rapide was built by de Havillands, in the days of Geoffrey de Havilland, at Hatfield aerodrome and was given the number DH 89. It was designed to carry eight passengers and first flew on 17th April 1934. It was in production for ten years and 728 were built. During World War II, the plane was modified for service in the Royal Air Force where it was known as the Dominie. It has a cruising speed of 132 m.p.h. which gives passengers an excellent opportunity to have a good look at Thriplow.

From Duxford, flights are run around Thriplow (at a price of £32) as well as longer trips to Cambridge and Madingly (25 minutes - £75), Ely and Newmarket (40 Minutes - £110) and London (70 minutes - £179). These flights are available from March to October inclusive and are subject to exactly the same regulations as are flights by any other airline such as British Airways.

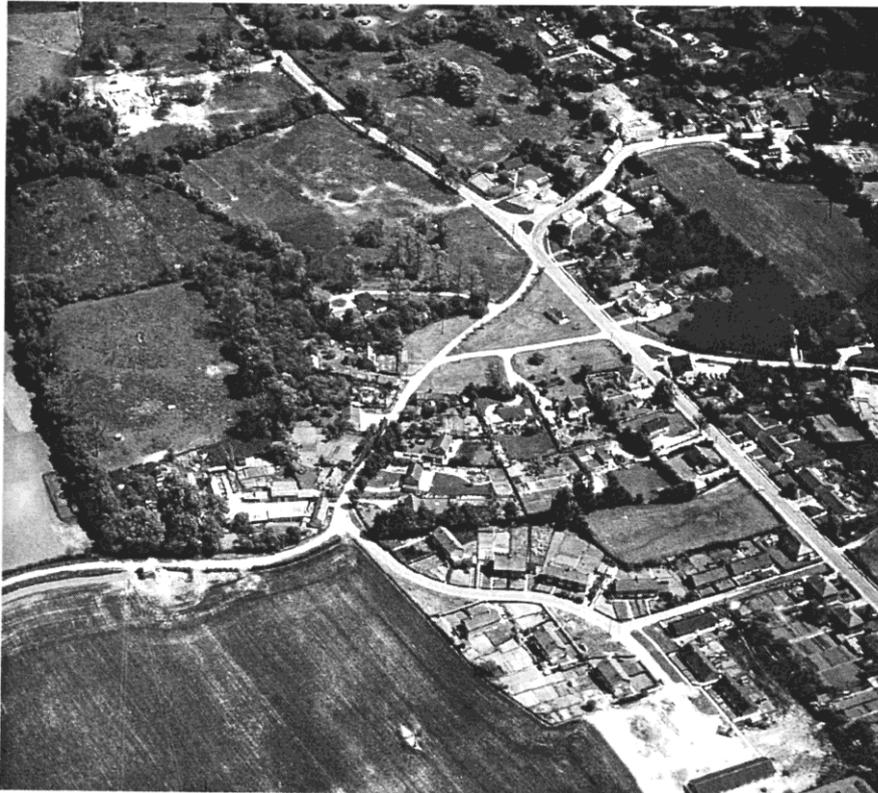
As a schoolboy, I was a member of the Air Training Corps (No. 955 Flight) at Stevenage and we were sometimes taken by our Commanding Officer to Henlow Airfield for a flight in a Dominie. My first flight, a quick trip around the airfield, lasted all of eight minutes. That was on 27th August 1943. A short time later, on 26th September 1943, we had a second flight.

When I discovered that the Rapide flew from Duxford, I thought it would be nice to have another flight in the grand old lady and I obtained two tickets so that I could surprise Shirley with a flight. We went to Duxford on the appointed day and started queuing at which point I told Shirley of the surprise I had in store for her. But at almost that moment, the pilot came out to say that the flight had been abandoned because the wings were icing up!

When I was a member of the Parish Council, I represented it on the Duxford Airfield Liaison Committee and on 17th July 1992, members were taken for a trip around Thriplow in the Rapide to get first hand information on the problems of running the place.

But for me, it was the recapturing of memories of my youth – almost 50 years between the two flights in a Rapide!

Bill Wittering



Aerial View of Village 1970

BACON'S FARM

By Sheila Andrews

I imagine I was first introduced to Bacon's when I entered the world on January 3rd 1919. My grandparents Amelia and Joseph Deller lived there. Grandmother first, before she was married, kept house for her father Alfred Smith, then when she married her children were born there; my mother being the eldest girl. The side of Bacon's nearest the road was a priest retreat. The house was built in 1503 and was an old Manor House.

Looking at the old photograph of the house, the door leading in from the farm yard was known as the front door. Just outside was a well and a large mounting stone. This was for anyone mounting the horses.



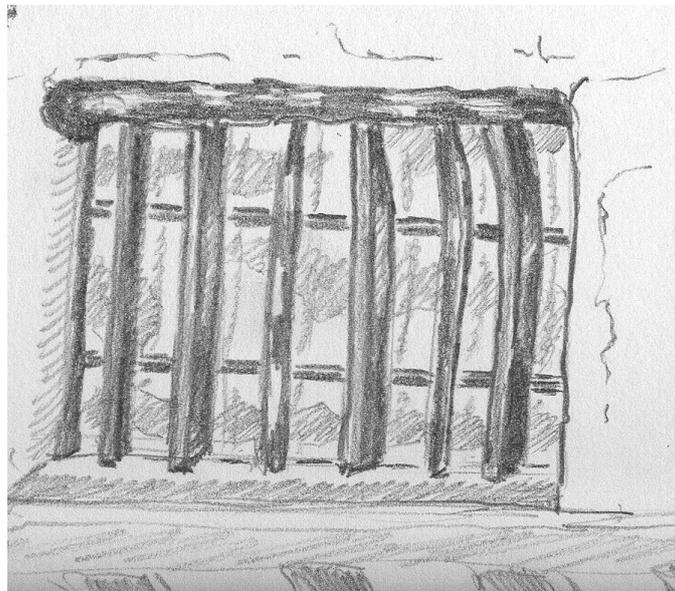
Remains of the old Mounting Block.

On entering the front door was a square room, no windows, leading off this was a staircase and on the left a large cupboard, further along the left was a door leading into the front room. This was a large room with a beautiful inglenook. In the winter we all sat inside with seats around. Leading off this was a small passageway which led into the large kitchen. Entering into this one noticed right away on the opposite side of the square flagged stone floor, there were two long rows of steps leading into 4 doorways. The first room was known as the cellar where Granddad brewed his own beer and also kept all kinds of utensils for taking the honey from the bee hives out in the garden. The second room was known as the wood house, here was kept logs, paraffin and candles. Next came the stairway up into the bedrooms. The last room was known as the parlour. I imagine years ago that is what it was, for there was a huge inglenook and the floorboards have all rotted away owing to storing wool from the sheep. Towards the right hand side there was a huge back door and a bit further along was the pantry with a lovely red brick floor, quite a large room in fact.

Now we come to another large inglenook fire place with hooks from the chimney and looking up one could see the sky. How I loved these old rooms and I have spent such lovely childhood hours with my mother's family.

Now let's go up the stairway leading from the kitchen. On the right was a large room with a lovely old fireplace. Facing the road were the priest windows and here abouts should be a priest's hole. Across the landing was another bedroom, Uncle Harry's room as it was known; walking straight through we came into the long room and along the wall on the right hand side is another priest's hole. A lovely fireplace was here, leading off this on the left hand side was a small room, this was used for guests, anyone who was ill and for the expectant mothers. Near the fireplace by the long room were 4 steps and on the right hand side another priest hole in the wall. This was quite a wide passage way which led into the large master bedroom. On the left hand side was the fireplace with the date 1503 carved into it, then there was a door leading into the loft, next was a small room, too small for a bedroom, next a cupboard, then the stairway leading down to the front hall. The window looked into the farmyard.

Sheila Andrews died on March 22nd 2005. For more about Sheila Andrews see Vol 14/1, 2005.



Medieval window

From Punch

By R.H.Charles

In the Dark and Middle ages,
If we trust to History's pages,
You might search the landscape round,
Not a hedge was to be found.
Instead of little tidy squares,
Mine and his, and yours, and theirs,
My field, his field, your field, their field,
All formed one enormous bare field.
How they knew without a hedge
 How far any land extended,
Which was middle, which was edge,
 Where the whole caboodle ended,
History, that tells so much
About the French wars and the Dutch,
Never says a work to show.
I would also like to know in a land of hedge divested,
Where on earth the hedge-sparrow nested
 And what did hedgehogs do about it?
Hedge for them means home and name;
 What was their life like without it?
Were they simply – what a shame!-
Hogs, until their hedges came?
History that talks so much
 Of wars and dates and lists of kings,
 And stuffy constitutional things,
Growth of Parliament, and such,
Always somehow seems to miss
Interesting points like this.

Found in 'the Open Fields' by C.S.Owen and C.S.Owen, OUP 1967

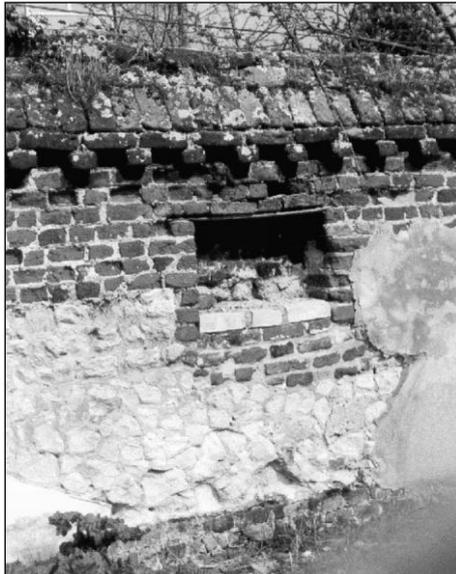


MORE MEMORIES OF BACON'S MANOR

In the last Journal we printed some of Sheila Andrew's memories and items from her family; here are some more.

Another mystery from Sheila Andrew's papers, the envelope says, "Gran's Paper, to Mum from A. Mills. It is memories of Thriplow and in particular Bacons where the Deller family lived. Some of it is a bit confused and the historical bits are not necessarily accurate, but were part of the folk-lore of the village. It is probably dated about 1936.

"Thriplow is a very pretty little village about 7 miles from Cambridge, and there have been many changes in the last 55 years. There are some very old Farm Houses in the place. They were built before Oliver Cromwell's time. The window tax at one time that accounted for the wooden slatted windows which have now been removed. The fire Places where I live were most of them on the Hearth, (straight on to *the flat fireplace, not in a basket*) – 56 years ago – when I first lived there and the stone chimney pieces were all marked round with X or XIII. There have been little square cupboards and doors in the walls which are now fastened up and papered over but the fact they are still there. – I was told by a very old lady that lived here before me, that the whole garden that now is, was a Court Yard and it may be, as there are now places in the wall where windows seem to have been.



The garden wall of Bacon's, was this a window?

There was a coat of arms over one of the bedroom windows looking South but they have now gone rotten with age. Over the North window there is a shape of a Heart – I found when they repaired the threshold of one of the places that the underneath part was carved out. The old House is all beams and also the worms are in it. It does not affect the heart of the wood for you cannot knock a nail in far.

Well then there was the old Fox Inn which got burnt out about 16 years ago-(1920 *ed.*) an old thatched building with a hill each side to get up to it. Then lower down Church Street there were four or five cottages burnt to the ground.¹ Then in Middle Street three more

¹ See Journal Vol 6/2, 1998 for story of this fire.

cottages opposite Scratchman's Lane (*Narrow Lane*) the house next to the road having a front door like a stable door opening top and bottom parting across the door. That is where I was always told the witch lived.² And for no wonder for the house was dreadfully dark and uncanny, these houses are all down now and a garden made in the front of the two which faced Peck's Close.

Then Thriplow Heath is noted for the battle fought there on Crowley Hill and Sandy Martin's Hole. There it was said Cromwell fought his battle.

The village school was blown over by a whirlwind and another new one built in its place. Many alterations have taken place during the last 55 years. Numbers of trees have been taken down, some have blown down and Gutter Lane (*School Lane*) used to be so dark with the foliage that you couldn't see the sky through on a dark night. And the Baulk meadows (*Bacon's Meadows*) used to be covered with large daisies called Marguerites. It used to be such a pretty sight. But so many things have been done away with; old Customs, children used to go and sing,

Good morning Valentine,
Curl your locks as I do mine,
One before and one behind,
So good morning, Valentine.

They used to receive what they called a 'Tupenny Loaf,' for each child – some places gave a penny or apple.

The village is getting much more up to date now, having sixteen new Houses in it and the Telephone service etc.



The Deller family at Bacon's, Amelia is 5th from the left.

² See Journal Vol 2/2, 1993

THE WEATHER IN 2005

2005 was an average year for temperature but we had only 79% of the average rainfall and once again the springs are not flowing at the end of the year. Every month except August, September and October produced below average rainfall.

2005 – Temperature and Rainfall

	2005		Mean 1980-2005	
	°F	°C	°F	°C
Daytime temperature	61.3	16.3	58.1	14.5
Night time temperature	46.3	7.9	48.0	8.9
Average day/night	53.8	12.1	53.0	11.7
	2005		Record 1980-2005	
Hottest day	94 (6 Aug)	31.1	97 (3.8.90)	36.1
Coldest night	21 (12 Jan)	-6.1	10 (31.1.87 & 12.12.91)	-12.2
	2005		Mean 1982-2005	
	Inches	Mm	Inches	Mm
Rainfall	19.3	490.2	22.6	497.0

Precipitation

Rain fell on 93 days but only on four days in December making it the driest month of the year with only half an inch of rain. It was the driest December since 1991,

Our driest month in the last 24 years was May 1990 when we had only a fifth of an inch of rain. In those 24 years, we have never had a completely rainless month.

Snow fell on 25th and 27th February, 1st, 2nd and 4th March, and 27th, 28th and 30th December.

The last frost of Spring was as late as 15th May and the first of Winter was on 14th November.

The weather on Guy Fawkes Night was disappointing as it was dull and showery.

Daffodil Weekend (19th and 20th March)

Snow in early March must have worried the organisers but things brightened up by the Saturday when we had a sunny afternoon with a temperature of 65 degrees (F). The Sunday was dull and cold with only 59 degrees (F).

Crops

Whatever the weather, something unusual always seems to happen in the garden. I had to replant my parsnips twice resulting in five enormous specimens and about a hundred little ones!

Thanks

I am very grateful to my wife Shirley for keeping the weather records for the four weeks that I was in hospital.

Bill Wittering

THE MONARCH OAK

This is a ghost story from over the border in Whittlesford that I came across recently written up in Nathan Maynard's notebooks which are kept in the County Record Office in Shire Hall. The story dates from around 1866. The story is told by the Monarch Oak which stood in Ball's Close near the paper mill.

“An old Whittlesford herdsman whose name was Jonathan Andrews, and who lived about 70 years ago, whose ghost some 35 years ago he (the oak) saw in the moonlight approaching him, and who having climbed his branches relates how on the death of the late Squire Hollick, old Plato gave him a holiday to visit his old haunts. As Charon was rowing him across the Styx the herdsman offered Charon some tobacco and got into conversation and Charon recommended to him the prophetess Cassandra. She gave him a message to the Old Oak – being a prophetess of the events which have since taken place in the parish. Andrews describes how, when he arrived at his grave in the churchyard, he

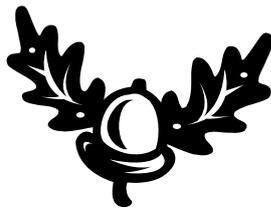
“Found his old bones in pretty good plight,
Though now thirty years odd years since they'd seen the light,
And he managed to gather enough of his dust
To cover his ghost with a thin early crust.”

And then he went round the village after his cows, but got lost in his efforts to find the old common moors, and ultimately crept into his grave again, and slept there till the next night, when he went and climbed the old oak to deliver his message.”

Under a painting of the Monarch Oak – 26 April 1868 are the words –
‘The above represents the Monarch Oak which (1866) stands in Ball's Meadow, not far from the pathway to the paper mills. It is the finest oak in Whittlesford, and has lived in time when the open fields were divided into small strips of land separated from each other by narrow green baulks, with its common moors surrounding the village. Upon these moors the parish cows come, driven every morning to graze, by the herdsman, who as he went round the village to collect them blew his horn to testify his approach to their respective owners. This old oak then delivered a long speech in verse having waited for the opportunity since the death of the last Squire Hollick who died in 1828.’ The prophecy is in the poem but is very long; perhaps I shall put some of it in the next Journal.

The oak was felled a few years later.

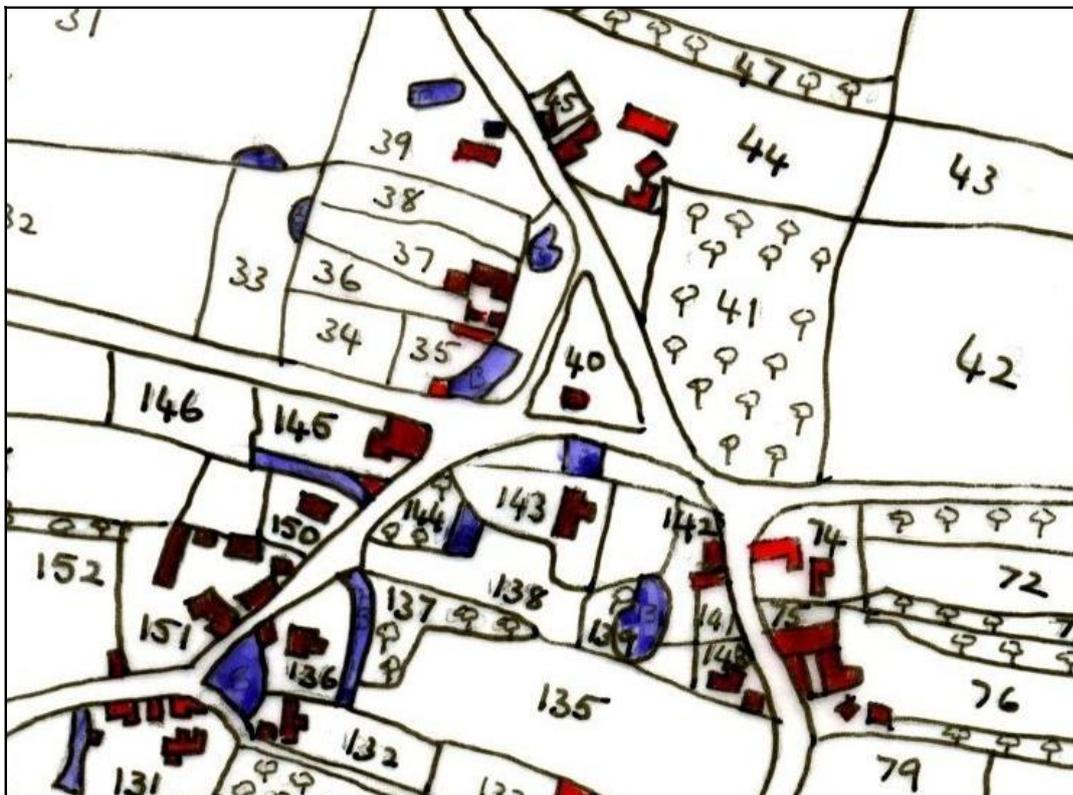
Shirley Wittering



How Thriplow nearly lost its Recreation Ground

1973 1st January – From the Cambridge Evening News – ‘Thriplow’s three-quarters of an acre recreation ground is up for sale – by order of the village. At the weekend a village referendum came out, by 5 votes to 40, in favour of the sale. Now all that is needed is the approval of the Department of Education and Science who have indicated that if two-thirds of the sale price – expected to be £15,000 – is used for building a new village hall, the rest can be used for establishing a new recreation ground. At present a First World War hut is all that the village has in way of a community hall.’

As we all know, the above project did not materialize, but it raises the question of where the new recreation ground would have been. The current ground was provided for the recreation of the village by the Parliamentary Enclosure Award in 1840, being 2 rods 32 perches or three quarters of an acre. Also provided for the villager’s recreation and sport was the Village Green being 2 acres 1rod 8 poles, the two pieces of land coming to 3 acres. These are now registered ‘Commons’.



Thriplow Tithe Map 1842. Number 33 is the Recreation Ground; Number 40 is the Village Green. The blue areas are ponds or wet areas. Buildings are marked in red.

Shirley Wittering.

GLEANINGS

Once again the Thriplow Society has provided the Village Christmas Tree outside the Village Hall, we are grateful to Geoffrey Axe, David Easthope and Peter Yates for putting up the tree.

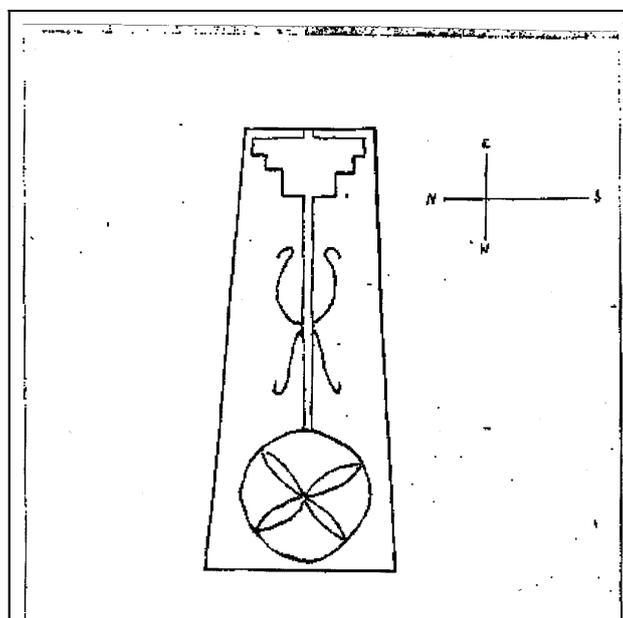
Recommended web site, <http://www.phenology.org.uk>, the web site of the Phenology Trust and the Woodland Trust. It has downloadable identification sheets for children of autumn fruits, tree leaves and spring flowers. Also posters and wallpapers which change four times a year according to the seasons. Well worth a look.

From the Thriplow Parish magazine September 1883 – ‘On the first of August a Post office was established in the Village with Mr John Softley as Postmaster. This is a very great boon, because not only can Stamps and Registered Envelopes be obtained there, but also the Money and Postal Orders. Postal Orders are very convenient for sending Money by post, they must, however, be presented for payment within 3 months of the date of issue. Perhaps the greatest benefit of all derived from the establishment of a Post Office, is the privilege of having a second delivery of letters, reaching us at about 2 pm.

The PARCEL POST came into operation on August 1st.at the following moderate rates – from 3 pence for parcels up to 1lb, to 1 shilling for parcels exceeding 5 lbs but not exceeding 7 lbs.’



Putting up the Society’s first Christmas Tree, at the old Village Hall, 18th December 1993. The tree was given by Cliff and Betty Parker. Pictured are Bill Wittering, Peter Speak and Cliff Parker. This must have been the largest tree we had.



Lid of early thirteenth century stone coffin lying exposed beneath the floorboards of the south side of the nave of Thriplow Church. There is another on the North side of it with no lid.