Editorial

Another year for the Thriplow Society has nearly passed since our last AGM. This year it’s being held on Thursday 16th April at 8.00pm. After the AGM our speaker will be Bill Wittering on Countryside Clutter.

Looking back it’s been a busy year for all the committee. A small sub group called Thriplow Archives Group, TAG for short, has managed to place currently up to 8 pages on the CCAN website. There is plenty more work to be done adding photos and peoples’ memories. And we are always looking for a volunteer to help with this on-going project. The website is run by the Cambridgeshire Community Archives Network; there are many villages and places like Robert Sayles who have their own pages. It allows people all over the world who have internet access to search for family history and to see the ever changing village life through the years.

Another sub group of the committee have been busy getting our new programme together for 2009 through to 2010, which we hope you will enjoy. Membership is still only £6 per Family.

We have managed this year to secure a grant from Grass Roots for equipment to help us show the community what we have on digital record. In our new programme we have placed an open day next January which will be open to all members of the public. We hope anybody who has a photo or a memory of Thriplow will come along and let us record it and see the progress we have made of our local heritage.

After the Society’s successful social evening (barn dance) last year the committee agreed that we should arrange another barn dance evening.

Katy Whitaker from English Heritage gave us some samples of digitised Aero Images of Cambridgeshire area. The English Heritage has recently acquired the Aerofilms Collection of more than one million historic air images of Britain which date from 1919 to 2006. Almost every settlement, industry and natural environment is included, however, the collection is un-catalogued which creates difficulties in finding specific places; they are hoping to get a grant to have the negatives converted into photos. They would then send us a selection of images of our area to view with the intention of us keeping a copy.

We have a small Oak sapling which we intend to plant in the open land at Newditch Plantation by kind permission of Lena Browne in memory of Peter Speak our first Chairman.

I am sure that all Society members will wish to join me in congratulating Shirley in obtaining her PhD in Local History from the University of East Anglia, Norwich. She tells me that her desire to pursue this line of study really began in the early days of the Society which had triggered her interest in knowing more about Thriplow's history. But the post-graduate part of her studies has almost fully occupied the last seven years with a journey to Norwich being necessary every month in term time. She has however enjoyed it all mainly because of the course supervisor she had, Professor Tom Williamson, who has written many books on local history and runs his own small farm in his spare time.

Shirley was a founder member of the Society and became its second Secretary taking over from Richard Webber. She became Chairman 2001-2006 and has edited the Journal since it began. She is also our Archivist which occupies quite a bit of time answering letters from as far away from Australia from people researching their family tree, or whose name is Thriplow or Triplow. Well done Shirley!

Don’t forget our AGM, Bill Wittering will be talking to us about ‘Countryside Clutter’, and your subs are due, £6, the same as last year.

Geoffrey Axe, Chairman
In the last edition of the Journal, Anthony Cooper wrote about houses in Thriplow, this prompted Oliver Walston to tell us about the origins of Thriplow Farm.

**THRIPLOW FARM**

Thriplow Farm is now 73 years old. When it was built in 1936 Country Life described it as being a farm “based on rationalised factory methods”. The buildings were designed by my great uncle who was an American architect from Savannah, Georgia. His brief was a simple one: design a set of farm buildings which, on one side of a courtyard would house a herd of pedigree Jersey cattle and on the other side would have stables for the Arab horses and Suffolk Punches. At the far end of the courtyard would be the barn which would not only store the fodder for the animals but would also house the diesel generators to provide the farm with power. Over the archway would be a small flat for my parents, who were then living near Huntingdon, and on either side of the archway would be the dairy and the farm office. In front of the buildings were two cottages to house the groom, Bert Bunton, and the herdsman, Jack Hunneyball (whose wife, Florence many decades later became chairwoman of the Thriplow Parish Council).

The construction was entirely of Canadian cedar wood which was not only cheap but, as anyone who has been to North America can attest, is also long-lasting. The entire complex cost six thousand pounds. When, in 1972, it became necessary to re-roof the buildings the cost of the cedar shingles alone was three times this amount, and when we did so again last year, the cost had risen twenty times. In the intervening seventy years cedar shingles had gone from being a cheap roofing material to the most expensive!

In 1940 my parents decided to live at Thriplow and thus converted the barn into a house, using the inevitably flimsy materials which were available during the war. The two floors of the barn and some of the ground floor then became the family home for me and my two siblings (my elder sister and brother had by then been evacuated to their grandmother in the USA).

In early 1941 a German night-time air raid on Duxford mistook the white-painted Thriplow Farm as being part of the airfield and the buildings were surrounded by marker flares which were hurriedly extinguished by Hunneyball and Bunton (no christian names in those days). The following morning a platoon of RAF men arrived and, without asking permission, painted the buildings khaki-coloured so that never again would the farm shine out in a moonlit night.
Soon after the war the last of the Suffolk Punches disappeared, to be replaced by tractors. The Arab horses survived until the early 1960s and the Jersey herd was eventually sold in 1978.

I have lived at Thriplow Farm – with a few intermissions for school and other occupations – all of my life. Which, I suppose, makes me one of the few people in Thriplow who still live in the house in which they were born. I am, however, almost certainly unique in that I actually rode horses down to the blacksmith on the Green to have them shod.

*Harry Walston with Arab foals*
NATURE NOTES

After Bill’s article about Monkey Puzzle trees in the last issue, we have heard from Penny Grant that she has another one in her back garden, so that makes two!

A group of Rooks (what is the name for a group of Rooks?) have moved into trees in Thriplow Meadows, the first for some time. For some their cawing sounds dark, gothic and menacing but to me they remind me of happy days at school, I even rescued a young rook who had fallen out of its nest. It became really tame and used to perch on my shoulder. I fed it with worms, bread and milk and hard boiled eggs until it was old enough to fly on its own.

This has been a wonderful year for Violets, when we first came to the Village in 1977, white violets grew along the hedge bottoms in Long Croft Road, (the road that links Church Street to the crossroads by Thriplow House, Middle Street), but close mowing and excessive tidiness obliterated them. A modicum of natural untidiness is encouraging to wild flowers and this year a few are back. Violets also grow along the other footpaths and a wonderful bank of various coloured violets are growing outside Peggy Arbon’s cottage in Foreman’s road.

Those of you who walk the View/Lower Gentleman’s footpath may have noticed that after a couple of dry years, the springs are rising again at the bottom of the steps. The water comes down from the hills of Heydon and Chishill and rise as springs from the lower chalk. There are also several pingos in the area.

Shirley Wittering
‘WE SHALL REMEMBER THEM’
They shall grow not old as we that are left grow old,
Age shall not weary them nor the years condemn.

Leonard HAGGER

Despite the fact that there have been Haggers in Thriplow since 1608 there are not many records of Leonard in the Registers. He was born on 27th February 1892 and was admitted to Thriplow School on 17th June 1895 at the age of three as was common in those days; his father was named as Walter and they lived in Lower Street. He left school in 1909 aged 14 too early to feature in any school photos.

Leonard FLACK
Private 16690 11th Bn., Suffolk Regiment who died on Saturday, 1st July 1916. Age 24. Son of Mrs. Charlotte Flack, of 13, Church St., Thriplow, Royston, Herts. Commemorated on the THIEPVAL MEMORIAL, Somme, France. Pier and Face 1 C and 2 A

Leonard was enrolled at Thriplow School 15th October 1894, left on 3rd April 1901; his parents were William and Charlotte. A note in the burial register alongside the name of Leonard’s father William, mentioned that ‘he hung himself before breakfast on Thursday September 30th 1892, inquest held the next day.’ This was only a year after Leonard was born. (see report elsewhere in this Journal)

Shirley Wittering

Note from Anthony Cooper -
The 1st July 1916 was the first day of the Battle of the Somme, when the British Army lost 60,000 men killed, wounded or taken prisoner of whom about 20,000 were killed. The 11th Battalion of the Suffolk Regiment was in the thick of the fighting. I quote from Farrar-Hockley's book “The Somme” (London, Pan, 1964)
"The Suffolks and Lincolns had started late because of the mine explosion. In their journey of 500 yards up Sausage Valley, they were shot at in enfilade from Heligoland Redoubt half right and directly from the Bloater Trench ahead. The Suffolks were shelled with shrapnel as they left their lines. Some 80 men reached the Heligoland and tried to storm it but the first wave was burned to death by flamethrowers as they stepped up on to the sandbagged upper works"

(p 143)

An infantry battalion in 1916 consisted of about 1,000 men of whom about 200 would have been deliberately left out of battle. So of the 800 or so men who went "over the top" only 80 reached the other side of No Man's Land. It seems that very few of those 80 survived. Leonard Flack would have been one of the men who perished in that attack. Leonard Hagger died before the attack went in.

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**From the Royston Weekly News: Friday October 7th. 1892**

**Extraordinary Suicide of a Lunatic at Thriplow**

The dead body of a labourer named William Flack, aged 63 years, and residing at Thriplow, was found suspended by a leather strap to a branch of a fallen tree near the Baulk, Thriplow, by a labourer named John Wombwell. It appears that deceased had been subject to fits of depression, which had brought on lunacy, in consequence of which he had been an inmate of Fulbourn Asylum. Previous to being taken to the Asylum, deceased had twice attempted to commit suicide. He was liberated from the Asylum on the 7th. April last. Some time ago he again became greatly depressed, and seemed to exhibit signs of mental disease. On Thursday morning deceased left home between five o'clock and six o'clock, and was not seen alive again.

An inquest was held at the Fox Hotel, Thriplow, on Friday before Mr. A.J.Lyon (acting as County Coroner) to inquire into the cause of the death of the deceased.

John Wombwell deposed to discovering deceased, hanging by a leather strap from the bough of a fallen tree near the footpath of "The Baulk". He appeared to be quite dead. Deceased was hanging in such a position that he could, had he relented of the rash act at the last moment, have placed his feet upon another branch, and so saved himself. Deceased had climbed the roots of the fallen tree, stepped on to one of the branches, taken off his leather belt, and fastened it to another branch which was level with his neck. When the strap was securely fastened deceased had slipped off the branch, and so hanged himself.

Dr. Bindloss said he had attended deceased professionally for about six months. The last two months deceased had suffered from rheumatism, and was subject to depression. Witness saw the body about 10 o'clock on Thursday morning, he having probably been dead four hours. Death resulted from asphyxia from hanging. The neck of the deceased was not broken.

The jury returned a verdict that deceased had committed suicide whilst "Temporarily Insane".
Temperatures logged across the centuries.

This article is taken from the Daily Telegraph and written by Phillip Eden.¹

‘The longest continuous temperature record in the world is the Central England Temperature series, usually known as the CET, and it is a benchmark against which to compare abnormally warm or cold months.

The CET is not quite what it sounds. It is not a long record of temperature readings made at a scientific institution somewhere in the English Midlands. Rather, it is a series of monthly averages devised from a variety of different temperature records of varying degrees of accuracy. The original work, stretching from 1659 to 1973, was compiled by the late Prof Gordon Manley in a work of immense scholarship which took over 30 years to complete. He painstakingly examined all available historical weather diaries and journals, as well as early thermometer readings which were taken variously in gardens, unheated north-facing rooms, and on shaded walls, and he integrated all these into a homogeneous record.

Manley was an academic geographer who had unrivalled knowledge of the British climate. He was the sort of climatologist, who loved collecting facts and figures, was better than anyone else at describing our climate in all its variability, and more than anything enjoyed experiencing the weather in the flesh – he was a keen hill walker.

For the greater part of Manley’s series, the CET was calculated by averaging mean monthly temperature for Oxford where the Radcliffe Observatory has been recording daily temperatures since 1815, and the Lancashire Plain, where several temperature records started up in the late 18th century.’

The late Tony Carter from Whittlesford gave me a copy of the online CET and the average groundwater levels from 1766 which shows that it was exceedingly wet in the run up to 1840 when Thriplow was enclosed.

Shirley Wittering

¹ Phillip Eden, The Daily Telegraph, Saturday November 22nd 2008, p 40
On a rather dull day in June 1999, 234 people of all ages assembled on The Green in front of the smithy and the village sign for a group photograph. Andrew Stewart, a professional photographer who lived in Middle Street, clambered up a scaffolding tower erected by the war memorial and David Easthope, with stentorian tones, appealed to people to position themselves in an orderly manner. After the picture was taken and copies sold to members of the village, Pat Easthope, with great patience, traced the outlines of the people in the picture and put names to them. I have not been able to discover whose idea it was to have this group photograph taken. It was probably part of the celebrations of the new millennium, soon to start. I had been told that it was Lewis Stone who first suggested it but he only claims that it was he who coined the phrase “The Big Picture”.

Now, after nearly ten years, what has happened to the people in the photograph? I have attempted a rather unscientific survey but the results are interesting, at least to me.

Eight of the people in the photograph were non residents but connected with the village. They included Steve Binge, described by Pat Easthope as the “Village Postman”, and Chris Hindley (from Foxton) who was running the shop.

Eighteen of the people have since died (8%). Forty two are known to me as having left the village (18.6%) and I cannot account for another thirteen (5.7%). Thus about 32% of the assembled company, just under a third, are no longer with us.

As there were 364 registered electors in the village last year the people who appeared in the picture could not have represented all the people living here in 1999, especially as the picture included a large number of children. I can only think of forty five people who were not in the picture, of whom eight have since died and nine have left the village. All the same the rate of turnover of the inhabitants of the village is quite impressive.

Anthony Cooper
The 'H' in Thriplow

It is generally accepted that Thriplow gets its name from a bronze age chieftain called Trippa. The 'low' or 'law' was the grave in which he is said to have been buried. The mound is as good as ploughed out now but it can be made out from an aerial photograph of the eastern side of the village. Also, it is still marked on the modern Ordnance Survey 'Explorer' series map sheet number 209 at grid reference 444467. This mound was the subject of an archaeological dig in 1953 carried out by David Trump.

In its early days, Thriplow had no H. The earliest reference to the spelling with an H is in the Cambridge Assize Roll of 1285. Since then, the spelling has varied sometimes having an H, sometimes without. Officially it should be spelt with an H but pronounced without one! It is this anomaly that distinguishes those who know the rules from those who don't. Many of our Daffodil Weekend visitors have to be told about this intrusive H. Once they realise that Thriplow is not the only place name with this unnecessary letter (cf River Thames, Thame in Oxon and surnames such as Thom, Thomson and Thompson), they soon accept it the way it is.

A strange phenomenon for me of coming to live in South Cambridgeshire was the almost universal misspelling of my surname. An H is introduced, making it Whittering; this in spite of the fact that the village of Wittering is in Cambridgeshire. Discussing this with a colleague at work once, I said that I didn't know where they got all these aitches from. He said that he knew where they came from; they kept dropping them from his surname, Hewitt, pronouncing it 'ewitt! Leaving out the two T's in both names was another local variation!

It does seem silly having the H in Thriplow in these modern times. Perhaps we should try to persuade the powers that be to change the spelling and call our village Triplow for all time. What do you think?

Drop us a line and tell us.

Notes

For a full explanation of Thriplow's name, see Brian Bridgland's article in Thriplow Landscape Research Group's Interim Report 1998-2001 pages 9-11.

For more detail about the 1953 dig of the burial mound, see David Trump's contribution: The Bronze Age Barrow and Iron Age Settlement at Thriplow in the Proceedings of the Cambridge Antiquarian Society, Vol. 49 1956, pages 1-12.

Bill Wittering
It wasn’t until just before the Second World War that Britain had an efficient fire service. Then the 1500 or so small municipal fire brigades began to be amalgamated until today there are some 63 brigades.

Prior to that, up until the Great Fire of London (1666), buildings that caught fire would simply burn down most likely taking a great number of other properties with them. The Great Fire saw the beginning of fire insurance and, in order to reduce claims, the insurance companies formed their own fire brigades. Policy holders were given a ‘mark’ to put on their property which showed the name and identification mark of the company and the policy number. If a house caught fire, it would most likely only be dealt with by the brigade belonging to the insurance company whose mark was displayed on the house!

Summoning the brigade was not a means of getting the fire extinguished quickly because of the paraphernalia involved. The brigade most likely consisted of volunteers who had to be found. In the early days, they would have a wooden ‘engine’ which they would pull to the fire by horses. By the mid 1850’s, steam power became reliable and more reliant appliances became available. However, the ‘engine’ needed a fire lighting to raise the necessary steam pressure and the horse to pull it was most
likely in a nearby field and had to be rounded up. The property on fire most likely had a thatched roof which would be well and truly ablaze before the brigade got there. In an attempt to help save thatched properties, some places positioned long poles with hooks on them under the eaves to pull off the thatch from the roof if it caught light. Two thatched houses have burnt down in my time in the village; these were Myrtle Cottage, Middle Street, which had just been bought by Richard Taylor, and No 1 The Green, owned by Mr Larmuth. The fire at the former house was most likely due to stubble burning.

The only firemark I have found in Thriplow is that on the Lodge in Lodge Road. Does anyone know of any more?

Garage of 24 Middle Street showing bricked up door of war-time fire engine house. This picture was taken in 2002; the door cannot be seen now as bushes have been planted in front it.

*Bill Wittering.*
**GLEANINGS**

**In Memoriam** - We are very sorry to have to report that Derek Murray died on Thursday 12th February 2009. We shall miss his many memories of the village and his cheerful smile and send Shirley and her family our deepest sympathy.

**Thank you** to Sean Hogan who has sent the Society a collection of photographs mainly of Rectory Farm barns, which he took when he was living here.

**Thank you too** to William Coates who has sent us some lovely memories of his grandfather, William Cato, who was blacksmith in Thriplow in 1922 and then moved to Fowlmere.

**Thanks also** to Robin Cooper who moved here with his family during the war as his father worked at Duxford. He has written a wonderfully evocative story about his childhood in the village and we hope for more from him, so that there will be enough to produce another book like that of Sheila Andrew’s.

I should like to **thank**, Geoff Axe, Michael Moule, Kevin Clarke and John Rimmer for putting up and taking down of the Gazebo for Daffodil Weekend and for Geoff, Bill, Michael, Angela Rimmer, Linda Neeves and Peter Yates for stewarding in the Smithy and Gazebo during the weekend. The exhibition – Thriplow at War – created much interest; we owe Geoff many thanks for all the time he spent compiling and laminating the photos and Michael Moule for providing some fascinating exhibits. Perhaps we shall be able to show the exhibition to more villagers during the summer when we have the Smithy open as we did last year.

The next meeting is our AGM on Thursday 16th April, when Bill Wittering will be telling us about ‘Countryside Clutter’, such as telephone boxes, stiles and windmills.

Your subs will also be due, still £6 per annum.

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From L Back row: Ken Joysey, Kevin Clarke, Anthony Cooper, Geoff Axe, David Easthope and Peter Yates,
Front: Shirley Wittering and Angela Rimmer
First of the season