

'There is a Moment in each Day that Satan cannot find.'

William Blake 1811

At our AGM in April Angela Rimmer stepped down from being Chairman, having done her five years stint. We have been very lucky in having Angela's guiding hand over the past five years, ensuring the Society was well supported with an excellent series of talks and outings, and making sure the Journal was well produced and interesting. Thank you, Angela.

We are pleased to say that David Easthope has agreed to take Angela's place as Chairman and we look forward to the Society continuing for the next five years.

So far, we have produced 75 Journals, and although we have had some varied and interesting articles, we certainly haven't had 75 contributors. This is a call for you, the members, to send in something for the Journal, however small; a memory of when you first moved into Thriplow or Fowlmere, an amusing happening in the village, a fascinating find in your garden or an unusual sighting of a bird or flower. The Society has over 80 family members, yet only a small handful of people contribute to the Journal. Please send us something.

On Friday August 17 there will be an outing to Much Hadham Smithy Museum. Cost £5 which includes tea. A tour of the Village is a further £2. Further details from Shirley Wittering, Shirley.wittering@gmail.com.

On September 1st Thriplow Smithy will be open for cleaning, do come along and have a look at our wonderful collection of agricultural and other by-gones from Thriplow's past.

On Friday November 16, there will be lunch and a guided tour of the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, cost £5, further details from Angela Rimmer, a.rimmer551@gmail.com

2018/19 Committee

Chairman – David Easthope, Vice Chairman – Geoffrey Axe, Minutes Secretary – Kevin Clarke, Treasurer – Peter Yates, Assistant Treasurer – Judy Murch, Refreshments – Jean Tomlinson, Membership Sec, and Archivist – Shirley Wittering, Journal Team – Shirley Wittering, Angela Rimmer, Bernard Meggitt, Pat Easthope

For further details see your programme. If you know anyone who would like to join the Society please put them in touch with either Shirley Wittering shirley.wittering@gmail.com or Judy Murch judy.murch@hotmail.com.

Bernard Meggitt, Angela Rimmer and Shirley Wittering, Journal Team

WALKING IN THE SHADOW OF CHILDHOOD

Part II

Sean Hogan

This article is reprinted from Vol.9/2 2000

In 1976 we had a fierce drought which somehow paralleled the emergence of my illness. My world seemed to turn upside down Thriplow became a dust bowl, I remember the trees looking painfully sick and the elms were beginning to die off rapidly. At the top of the school playground one of those mighty elms stood its girth we would ring and shelter beneath during break times. East Anglia is known for its brilliant light. But that summer was exceptional. Tarmac melted, water which had been in abundance dried up and then became rationed. The streams dried, fields cracked and the omens didn't look good. We were prevented from playing on the school playing field and the world turned a yellow ochre overnight, and so had I. I have many surreal vignettes of those few sweltering months, one such vivid picture is of Mrs Speak, the school playground attendant, composed and calm, knitting beneath a lilac; with the temperature of 80 degrees upwards in the shade!

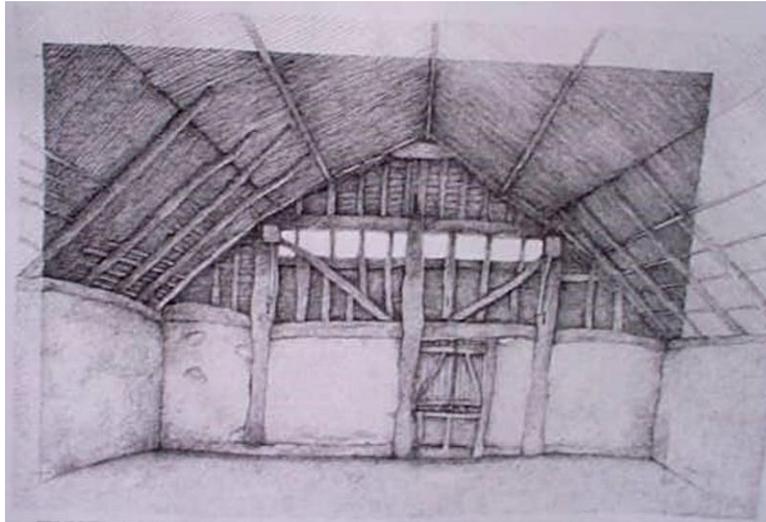
I was part of that Thriplow Primary School generation, ignorant of computers, they didn't figure in our lives, we used our imaginations. Some of us, and I include myself, were born with an innate sense of the countryside, that motif which runs deeper than just an appreciation of the picturesque! Thriplow bulged with vibrancy and vitality. The fields were brought into the classroom and we learnt about the minutiae of our environment. Time fluctuated as a child; school for me was a blend of detentions and daydreams, idle hours watching the golden cockerel on top the church spire circumference the day. In the summer the hands of the clock couldn't revolve fast enough, our juvenescence couldn't be pent up, after all we had legions of cow parsley to fight, dams to build in the wash pit, its crystal cold water leaking into our shoes, a tell-tale sign as to where we had been. It was around June, that the Juniors of the school would be set the task in the form of a competition of producing posters advertising the annual church fete. This I relished – the prize awarded to the best five winners would be a small book token. I recall jam and swallows featured heavily in them. I would like to see the same idea resurrected for the Daffodil Weekend poster. I also feel this would be appropriate seeing as the pupils of today are the next generation.

As an illustrator involved on the fringe of children's publishing, Thriplow came to symbolise that idyllic other world, but I don't know if it's due to children maturing at a much earlier age, or if it's me joining the pipe and slipper brigade, but many children today do seem born with a pre-packed luggage of cynicism, a lack of naivety and innocence and a staggering lack of awe! A winter vermilion sun, setting over the Royston hills would be enough to arrest my attention.

In 1977 Thriplow celebrated the Queen's Silver Jubilee along with the rest of the country, and the entire village made a supreme effort. We all fell under a mystique of pageantry, and my world became red, white and blue.

Children and animals are like strawberries and cream and those children's book images were liberally scattered throughout my unpretentious world, summers would clank as the Gillett's goat, which was always bad tempered, would try to get free of its chain tethering on the village green. I can still hear it braying in the moonlight. There were petulant geese in the farm yard and we would have to run the gauntlet to get by them, a calm-eyed, rheumatic jersey cow and

other assorted cows in the ‘buttercup’ field of School Lane, pigs along the Balk, sheep in Rectory Farm and the ‘View’, plus flocks of complacent chickens.



Tithe Barn, by Sean Hogan 2000

Thankfully, as I complete this article on 10th May 2000, I can see from my window the ‘Dellers sheep’ mindlessly roaming and ruminating around the ‘View’. Much of the livestock of those days is still present today, this husbandry in the village is vital, in my view, as a subliminal form of education, because, in a world where foodstuffs, especially meat, is increasingly presented in a homogenised form, and many facets in society prefer to remain blinkered to the realities of food production, it is good to see the creature in the round, and to be physically able to touch them. On a less macabre note, they add an enormous aesthetic character to the place.

Farming has certainly woven itself into my psyche and it is very easy to appreciate why, when one works virtually full time from home, in such an agricultural environment. This identity began with going to primary school with the sons and daughters of those farming; I went to school with Dave Gould’s son. In my later teenage years and now as an adult, I occasionally meet Mark Deller, (Rectory Farm), Dick Arbon and others of Thriplow farms, in the Green Man.

As a boy I remember those few relics left over from a much more agriculturally reliant past in the physical remains of barns. ‘Jobbers’ in Middle Street, where Arthur Humphreys now lives (24 Middle Street), was a derelict, formidable barn, whose façade had fallen away exposing its interior. A lesser range of buildings were ‘the tractor workshops’ where the Pulman family now live at 14 Middle Street. The weather-boarded barn which ran parallel to Long Lane used to be covered with ivy which hung down in great drapes; this would present a very spooky entrance to the footpath for us children.



1998 Programme designed by Sean Hogan

Rectory Farm in Middle street is representative of so many things, on so many levels, too many for me to go into, suffice to say, it is where myself and my sister had first-hand experience of the fluctuations in the fortunes of animal husbandry, that death is as real as life. It was here as a child playing cowboys and Indians with Nicholas English, (the English's lived where the Ayres now live – Middle Street), beneath those mighty willows which used to surround the farm pond. We would watch lazily, the toing and froing of farm life pass by. Then in my hazy teenage years I would come to know, the then bachelor Mark Deller and try to keep pace with him and the other beer drinkers in those formative Green man days, when the pub was owned by Charles Wells and a pint of 'Eagle' cost £1. Now, as an adult and an illustrator/writer, Rectory Farm has come to represent the last bastion of my childhood in Thriplow. It is still wonderfully unkempt and standing in the yard, the sense of history is palpable. From 1994-1997 I drew the complete range of buildings there, and an example of one of those drawings hangs in the Green Man today. When I die I will leave those drawings to the Cambridgeshire Collection.



Mark Deller, Rectory Farm 1992

A final note about those lost relics or ghosts of a previous era that I remember should go to the ‘cattle sheds’ of Goward’s House, which was owned by the Shaws. To me this represents a type of exorcism of all I had known when the Shaws sold the barns and the Terrys decided to convert them into a bungalow. With that came the death of a wild cottage garden and the demise of a Victoria plum tree which had the most succulent fruits that were well worth pilfering and tasted of eternal summer.

I have decided to end this piece where I began, for in a curious way the Green Man represents a form of dichotomy, because outside of it I am in the domain of my childhood, and inside is an acknowledgement of adulthood, a sort of rite of passage, and yet, on the odd occasions I meet old colleagues, it is not long before something of our childhood infiltrates our conversation. It was here that I cut my teeth in the lessons of life and shared many a pleasant evening. But it was also here, at the age of 18 that I felt Thriplow’s atmosphere noticeably change. In the dying embers of the late 1980s we were in the grasp of a housing boom, Thriplow now came under the scrutiny of the estate agents in an orgy of lavish praise, we obtained the title of ‘most sought after South Cambridgeshire village’ and henceforth Thriplow gained a certain cachet, which to be blunt, I believe is what draws potential buyers to this village over and above aesthetic considerations.

I now find myself in a village that is predominately dedicated to two classes of occupant, the first being the mid to late 30 somethings, professional with young children (preferably at the play group) and the second being the close to retirement or retired executive types. If you are single and believe the pub should become your meeting place, then you are up the ‘proverbial creek’. The village pub should represent an anchor within a village community, a place where one can unwind, but in this ‘unique’ place it quite obviously doesn’t. I have sat nursing a pint in complete bemusement surrounded by genial company which in the majority comes from outside the village. They appreciate a free house that serves sublime beers. But not all is lost; there is a continuity in seeing Eric Fisher, Jonathan Berks and the seven other players from the village cricket team drinking alongside me. It would have given me great pride to have played for Thriplow, especially having grown up here and enviously watched my friends wield the bat, but that too was a casualty of my illness.

On reflection I feel honoured and privileged to have grown up in such an idyllic natural environment. Their childhoods and mine are now consigned to the annals of social history. I will be seven for ever in the Silver Jubilee photos held in the Cambridgeshire Collection, our presence acknowledged. I would like to think the next generation might one day look us up and walk in our shadows.

Sean Hogan.

Health Care in the Past. Part I

As the National Health Service is celebrating its 70th anniversary, I thought it might be a good opportunity to look at how people were cared for in the past, before the founding of the NHS.

Before the dissolution of the Monasteries by Henry VIII, between 1536 and 1541, the religious houses provided food for the poor and care for the sick.

Once the monasteries could no longer provide for the poor, the sick and the poor were left at the mercy of the goodwill of richer men. After the Armada, many of the sailors and soldiers were turned off without work or pensions. Some formed bands which roamed the countryside and there was great fear of riot and rebellion within the country. Elizabeth I realizing that something must be done implemented the 'Act for the Relief of the Poor' in 1601, popularly known as the Elizabethan Poor Law, "43rd Elizabeth" or the Old Poor Law system for England and Wales. It was not a centralised government policy but a law which made individual parishes responsible for Poor Law legislation. This relief was administered by officers (usually two) called Overseers of the Poor and were drawn from the Parish elite who were responsible for raising a rate based on the amount of land owned by the parishioners (Land Tax). The money was used for food, clothing, medicine, fuel. It also provided work for unemployed labourers and provided a decent burial with bread and beer for those laying out the body and carrying it to the churchyard. Some older people received a weekly pension. Orphans were found somewhere to live and older children were found work, often with the farmers and other members of the village elite. (More of this next Journal).

Some of the Churchwardens' and Overseer's income was from wealthy men who would leave money or the income from their property in their wills to provide for the poor in their communities. One well known legacy was from Francis Peck who died in 1633 and who left the income from his field near his house, Peck's Half Acre, for the relief of the poor of Thriplow, this amounted to six shillings a year.

Other charities providing bequests to the poor of Thriplow included Lettice Martin's Charity; she left money to all the parishes she could see from her home in Chishill in 1562; Thriplow's money came to 13s 4d per year; Martin Gray's (1672) Land in Little Thriplow brought in £2.14s.6d per year; Richard Hicks will of 1635 left ten shilling per annum to the poor of Thriplow and Thomas Godfrey's will of 1632 left the rent of eight shillings from Burnt Close in Church Street to the poor. One of the most interesting bequests was that of Nicholas Prime, in his will of 1567 he left '*yearly a barrell of wyght herrynges with the money bought from the Town Herd...the churchwardens shall give the said herrynges to the poor people of Thriplow where most need shall be found.*' *

These amounts didn't change over the years and as the money was not invested but just paid out to the poor, by the nineteenth century it was worth very little. In 1887 the charities were amalgamated. It is a little confused as to how they are distributed now. On the other hand, Whittlesford invested their share of Lettice Martin's money and now have a row of cottages called Lettice Martin's Trust.

The Old Poor Law lasted, with improvements and alterations until the New Poor Law was introduced in 1834. By then attitudes towards the poor and unemployed were changing and hardening, the idea that charity was a religious duty was giving way to the opinion that the poor were lazy and shiftless. Groups of parishes were set up called unions and workhouses were built where the poor and sick were sent. The poor from Thriplow had to go to the workhouse in Royston. Conditions were harsh, husbands and wives were separated and children taken from their parents. Those that could, were set to work breaking stones, or walking miles on a treadmill, anything to discourage anyone to apply for help. Many of Charles Dicken's books describe the cruel conditions in the workhouse, *Oliver Twist* being among the better known.

Thriplow having no Gentry, the overseers were mainly farmers who lived within the village and know the inhabitants well. Their reputation rested on them being thought of as Christian and generous and of course, if the labourers didn't behave then they would be out of a job. In Fowlmere conditions were not so good and women who misbehaved were whipped and sometimes sent to Cambridge Goal.

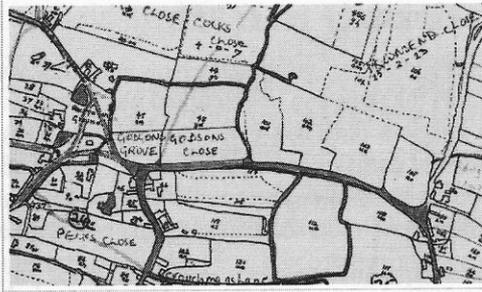
See Thriplow Journals Vol.5/2, 1997, Vol.8/1, 1999, Vol.10/2, 2001.

* White herrings are fresh as opposed to red herrings which are smoked as kippers are. Next Journal we will look at how the Overseers' of the Poor cared for the ill and old.
Shirley Wittering

HISTORY OF 35 SCHOOL LANE (*Squyirrels Grove – Gutter Lane*)

The area behind and beside 35 School Lane is very disturbed and raises many questions as to its history. The old villagers used to tell the tale that the Devil, cross at the church being built so high threw the building blocks down into the ground below, hence the humps and bumps. But the reality is much more interesting. The earliest features go back to the Ice Ages; the two ponds, one in the grounds of No. 35 and one in Townsend Springs are the remains of Pingoos. A Pingo is an Inuit word meaning hill. Like the frozen milk in a milk bottle, the water in these shallow depressions freezes and expands during an Ice Age, as the Ice melts the water forms a pond. Over time the alternate freezing and thawing creates a gravel edge which holds the water. There are many Pingoos in Thriplow.

This area of interest was excavated by Harriett Swinnerton-Dyer a retired archaeologist who lives in Lower Street. She found a Saxon hearth in the area by the road between the house and the School. There was also a civil war musket ball found here. The depression that can be seen running from the Green to the Church is a sunken path that pre-dates and runs parallel to School Lane (previously called Gutter Lane). Around it are ancient House Platforms. The pit behind the school by the bus shelter is an old chalk Pit. Chalk was burnt to make slaked lime for use in building. There is another in Middle Street. Until the Brook was culverted, School Lane would have been very muddy. You can see why it was called Gutter Lane before the School was built.



Detail from 1840 map. No 35 (Squirrels) is 102. 101 is Townsend Springs and 108 is the School.



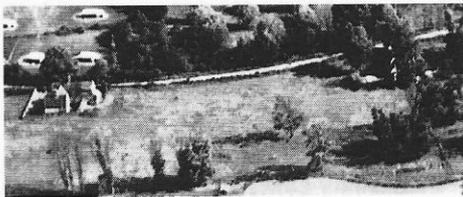
Pingos not shown on this map. 1886 OS map showing Squirrels as Number 50, note how wooded it was. The 1886 6inch OS map is the only one that shows every tree accurately.

Documentary evidence: The piece of land is called Squirrels Grove.

The first documentary mention I have found so far is in the **Hundred Rolls of 1279** – ‘John Scurel, 1 messuage (house) of half acre and 6 acres land. Free tenant of the Bishop of Ely (Bury Manor). Also 2 acres held of Abbess of Chateris, also 1 messuage of 1acre and 39 acres of land.

- 1305 - John Squirrel gave land to Walter son of John Wolward of Thriplow. Manor Court Rolls
- 1312- repeat
- 1392 - Grant of land called Squrrelles to Thomas Clark of Thriplow
- 1541 - Squrrelles is granted by Wm Hawke of Great Shelford to John Chapman. (33 Henry VIII.)
- 1703 - Will of Symeon Roberson left property to his wife Ann
- 1767 - Marriage settlement lease of various properties of Bury Estate from Ambrose Benning to Edward Smith and Thomas Walker, includes ‘Close of pasture and Woodground containing 6 acres called Squirrels.’
- 1840 - Enclosure Schedule- Number 102. Squirrels Grove 2a 0r 25p, Henry Perkins, Lord of Bury Manor.

There were two large estate sales 1886 and 1927. The 1886 sale includes all that piece of land from Brook to Brook Road (By bus shelter). Total 210 acres 0 rods 26 perches, Tenant Thomas Sheldrick, rent £31 per annum, Timber valued at £56.0.0.



The house was built by Lord (Harry) Walston in the late 1920s in the style of a New England House probably on the site of an old cottage as it can be seen in an aerial photo of 1952, and is now lived in by his granddaughter Florence and her husband Alistair Gray; they bought it in 2005/6. It was originally lived in by Dick Porter the Farm Manager.

School on the left and old cottage in the trees on right. Not a very good photo. Background left are chicken houses.

Shirley Wittering

Mayflower Pilot came from Thriplow

On 16 May I had a very interesting phone call from a gentleman called Mr Walter from Devon. In 2020 it will be the 400th anniversary of the sailing of the Mayflower. He told me that the captain of the Mayflower was one John Clarke, born in Thriplow 1575. He gave me further details of his parents etc. so, I looked him up.

Family tree of John Clark Pilot on Mayflower 1620 taken from local registers.

Parents – William Clark born Stevenage Jan 22 1553 (not checked)

Margaret Walker born Fowlmere ? 1553 This seems too pat, Fowlmere register doesn't start until 1561.

They **married** January 22 1569

Their children's baptisms

1570 – April 13 – Matthew

1571 – Feb. 24 – John

1575 – Aug.28 – Agnes

1581 – March 25 - Susan

This last date means that William and Margaret were still living in Thriplow.

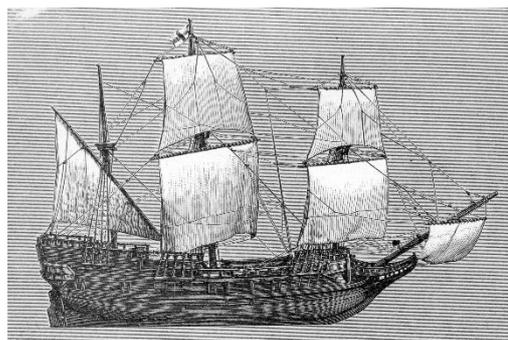
So it would seem that John Clark was born 1571 and moved to Rotherhithe around 1609 when he was 38. The nearness of the river and sea would naturally entice John to seek employment on ships which were exploring the New World at that exciting time. He became pilot of the Mayflower in 1620 when he was 49.

Other records –

There is a record of Walter the Clerk holding land in Thriplow as tenant of the Bishop of Ely in 13th and 14th centuries and a Messuage (house) called Clerks in 1538. A Mr Clark rented Barenton's Manor from 1842 – 1875 and gave evidence to a select committee of Parliament on the state of faming in the 19th century.

Shirley Wittering

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mayflower#Officers_and_crew



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A Peep into the Records

A while ago Thriplow Daffodil Weekend Trust gave the Society a grant to digitise our records. This meant scanning our paper documents and photos onto a computer. As most of these records are kept in my spare bedroom, this was rather a daunting task. (Geoff Axe has a good collection of press cuttings and house sale particulars too).

Faced with such a varied and wide-ranging collection, (dating from Domesday Book 1086 to Electoral Rolls before universal suffrage) I wondered where to begin. After much thought, I realized that I should sort them into types first and then go through each section in turn.

So, as far as I can, here are the various types of record owned by the Thriplow Society. Some records will be mentioned twice as they not only mention numbers of people but also what taxes they paid.

Type	Thriplow Society Records
Taxes	Domesday Book 1086, Hundred Rolls 1279, Lay Subsidies 1327, 1379, 1523, 1546, 1567, 1640, 1645, 1661 Hearth Tax 1662, 1664, 1666, 1674 Land Tax 1703, 1798, 1800, 1810, 1836, 1818 – 1866, 1868 Inclosure Award 1840 Tithe Award 1842
Demography*	Domesday, 100 Rolls, Hearth Tax, Marriage Distances, Births, Marriages and Burials. Emigrants to Australia 1840-1870, Workhouse Inhabitants 1866-1929
Religion	Church – Ledgerstone survey, Graffiti Survey, Inventory of Church Goods 1552, 1896. Church registers 1920, Registers of BMB, Chapel, Churchwardens' Accounts 1637–1640, 1763-1872, Overseers' Accounts 1764-1789, Bishops Visitations, List of Vicars and Church Officers 1379 – 1827, Presentiments – 1549, 1686, Glebe Terriers 1615, 1639, William Coles description of Church 1742, Churchyard Pales 1763, Report on Condition of Church 1866, Restoration of Church 1875, C L Bell's description of Church 1881, Plan and list of Grave Yard, Religious Census 1851, Civil War Leaflets 1649, Guild of All Saints
Manors	Various Terriers and Surveys of all four Manors. Manor Court Rolls - The Bury, Barentons, Bacons, Crouchmans. Bryhtnoth and Peterhouse. House Histories
Landscape	Enclosure, Farming, Terriers, soils, crops, Saffron,
Legal	Wills and Inventories 1452 – 1857, some printed, most transcribed, Poll Lists 1722 – 1915, List of Women Voters by Geoff Axe, Quarter Sessions
Education	School Log Books, School Registers, Items re British and National schools
Newspapers	Thriplow Chronicle, Cambridge Independent Press, Royston Crow, Cuttings by Geoffrey Axe
Pictures	Photos in albums

*For those not sure Demography is the study of statistics such as births, deaths, income, or the incidence of disease, which illustrate the changing structure of human populations. The composition of a particular human population.

Some of these have been digitised but there is a lot more to do.

Shirley Wittering

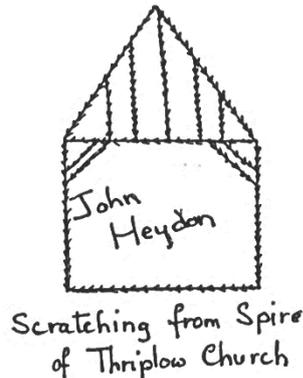
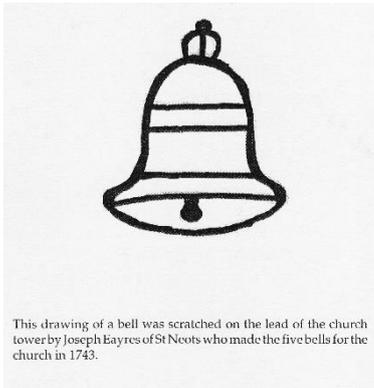
The Scratchings on the Spire.

A nice blank piece of lead or chalk soft enough to scratch one's initials in is an irresistible recipient onto which to make a mark. Even tree trunks are tempting and down the ages men and women have scratched their names for posterity.

The spire of Thriplow Church has attracted marks and these now provide an intriguing clue to the people who climbed the tower to scratch their initials in the lead diamond covering the spire.

I first became aware of these scratchings when the lead diamonds covering the spire needed replacing in 1997 and the then churchwarden Jeremy Murray invited me to look at them and decide which should be kept and which should be melted down and re-used.

As I wrote in the Journal at the time, I was fascinated to discover that all sorts of people had climbed the tower to scratch their names on the leads. * The three who had put up the cockerel on the top of the spire in 1622, the bellmaker who made the new bells in 1743, the Glazier T. Hancock 1783, John Heydon the carpenter and coffin maker in 1821, and several young men who had climbed the spire on the eve of their wedding.



The war was celebrated by Sid Badcock writing 'Victory' in 1945, Mr Vinter, churchwarden, who lived at Barenton's Manor scratched his mark on the spiral stairs leading up to the bell chamber, that he had put up the new weathercock in 1976.

In all there were 61 scratchings, the oldest being W. Colles 1565, and the newest Steve and Peter 1988. Did any women climb those rickety ladders and emerge through the trap door onto the narrow parapet around the spire? Indeed, Mary Berry the Vicar Butler Berry's daughter scratched her name on the leads, in 1806. Imagine her climbing those ladders in her voluminous skirt and petticoats!



The old graffiti stuck onto the new leads of the spire.

This year I joined a Facebook group devoted to Graffiti run by Matthew Champion who is asking for papers for the Journal *'Perigrinations'* <https://digital.kenyon.edu/perejournal/vol6/iss1> and I thought the graffiti of Thriplow might be an interesting subject. So, with John Rimmer and Liz Moore's help, a small group of us climbed the tower to take pictures of the scratchings still there. The climb up the spiral staircase is quite an effort and once we were in the Bell chamber, several people decided to go no further. John's grandson David took Nick's camera and took some really good pictures.



View from the tower.

*See Journal Vol Summer 6/1 1997

Shirley Wittering

Thursday 15 February 2018 - **Farming today by David Walston**

On a cold wet winter evening, 45 Members gathered in the Village Hall with anticipation to hear the local farmer, David Walston of Thriplow Farms, talk about his family farming and put science and economics to his fields around Thriplow. The fields we have been watching over the seasons with their changing crops, growth, harvesting and grazing, without knowing what was really happening. David started with a brief farming family history: his great grandfather, a Cambridge University Archaeologist, bought Newton House with 3,000 acres of tenanted farms, his politician grandfather took back the land as vacated and his father, the first real farmer, took over in the mid-1970's. The family now farm 3,000 acres around Newton and Thriplow, a further 1,000 acres across the A505 and some in Barrington. David a Thriplow lad, after university and a brief career in photography, returned to the family farm 2010 and enjoyed the agricultural challenge after working a two-year hands-on period at every job on the farm. He 'got into cows' after honeymooning in Japan and introduced Raggu (Japanese for cows) to Thriplow. On researching their best feeding methods, he found a stimulating Canadian book, 'Grass Fed Cattle' covering life on grass and how to manage and improve pastures. This started his deep interest in soil; more so after finding his Neaves field yielded 20% more harvests than the others on past average yields review. He wanted to know why and how to improve all the fields.

In 2014, David was awarded one of 20 agricultural Nuffield Scholarships for 18 months to travel the world studying 'Soil Health' and to produce a report to be passed on. He defined soil health: measured by how good a crop can be grown with no soil inputs (*Frédéric Thomas*). The Kansas farmers with extensive soil testing, found significant increase yields in field areas mapped by GPS with decreased phosphates and increased organic matter (OM). In a Uruguay experiment, continuous cropping the same fields decreased OM and yield whereas 50% rotation with grass and clover cattle pastures increased OM and production. In Brazil, he reported the farmers growing two crops a year, soya beans and then maize with grass – harvesting the maize and leaving the grass as cover crop and for cattle grazing and manuring, but they do have a hot moist climate.

On return to Thriplow, David reviewed their wheat yield over the past 20 years finding a doubling of costs per hectare by 2014 with traditional ploughing, fertilizing, sowing, herbicide spraying, harvesting and resting. He then questioned the whole productivity of the farm and planned to decrease costs by increasing the soil health and changing main crop to oil seed rape (OSR). In summary his plan:

1. *No ploughing* that opens the soil OM to oxidation loss, more erosion and less water retention.
2. *Cover crops* with 2 million sunflowers in the fields after August harvest and other fields of Vetch cover with added N-fixing fertilising roots.
3. *Companion Planting* with at same time as OSR, the Vetch, Buckwheat and Linseed with rapid growth and weed suppression (little herbicides needed) that all die off by late spring leaving the OSR for later harvest. Also, 'Bi-Companion' crops, wheat and peas or oats and peas, harvested together for animal feed.
4. *Proper Improvement* with the older grass pastures and animals took 4-5years to up-grade the soil. Now rapid growing mixed grasses, clover and peas with regular electric fence animal moving, has shown significant soil organic matter improvements in just 3 years, 2014-16, from 3% to 4.5%. The question is whether this innovative new farming practice will be matched by significant reduction in costs and increase in food production? Watch this space, said David.

After answering a number of challenging questions from the very interested audience, David was thanked by the Chairman, Angela Rimmer, for his illuminating talk that has given us more appreciation now, of what is happening in his fields.

Bernard Meggitt

May 17 2018 **An Edwardian Family in Clavering by Jane Laing**

Unfortunately, due to holidays and illnesses, there were not many of us at our meeting in May. Those who did attend were entertained by Jane Laing from the Clavering Land History Society, ably assisted by her husband David.

Postcards were introduced by the post office towards the end of the 19th century and were originally blank on both sides and imprinted with a halfpenny stamp. The address was written on one side and the message on the reverse. However, it was not long before the format changed allowing a picture and a message on one side and the address on the other. Soon afterwards a further change allowed the whole of one side to be taken up with a picture and the other side to contain the address and message. When cards with pictures were introduced they became very collectible items. Also at this time general imprinting of stamps on the cards ceased and ordinary halfpenny stamps were used. Postcards were the general method of communication in the early 1900's – they were cheap to send, there were several postal collections each day and they got delivered quickly. It was sometimes possible to send a postcard and get a reply, by postcard, later the same day. Postcards that Jane showed us were originally collected by Grace Smith from Clavering, between 1905 and 1930. Grace's daughter, Margaret, inherited them and after her death they passed to the Clavering Land History Society.

The pictures could be amusing cartoons or could contain a political message. One that was shown campaigned for Votes for Women, something that didn't happen until about ten years after the postcard was sent. Others had pictures of celebrities, actors, variety performers or local scenes.

Grace was the 6th child in the family – another 7 came after her! We saw postcards to and from her siblings and one that Grace sent to her mother saying "I hope you are well. Please could you send me some mushroom ketchup if you have any to spare." At that time Grace was in service in one of the big houses in the area.

Surprisingly only one card made any reference to the First World War. One wonders why this large family, comprising sons who became farm workers and daughters who went into service, and presumably married other locals, did not seem affected by a war which decimated so many of the young men at that time.

Grace married a local man, Charlie Whyman, and postcards they sent to each other are also in the collection. Sometimes secret messages of love were written underneath the postage stamps!

Although there was not time to show all the postcards in the collection Jane had mounted them in an album which was passed around for us to look at. In all there were approximately 200 postcards, all of which were slightly dog-eared, obviously having been well looked at over the years.

Pat Easthope

June 21, 2018 -, My Childhood in Wartime London by John Kershaw

John Kershaw's talk was an amusing take on a very serious subject. John was a child living in north London during the war. Now he and friend both in their 80s give talks to children at Duxford Museum. His memories were of wearing Gasmasks, specially made for children, with wobbly red rubber noses which were meant to look like Micky Mouse. When they were blown through, they made a rude noise. His baby sister was provided with a baby's gas mask, but this never used as the air had to be pumped into it continually or the baby would suffocate.



Thriplow Society's collection of Gas masks

School meals consisted of dark lumpy stuff called meat, mashed potato and semolina with a blob of jam. The children's health was improved with Cod Liver Oil and 'Radio Malt' which was very tasty and lovely orange juice from the clinic. The main meat being rabbit and sometimes chicken. They were also kept healthy as they had to walk everywhere. John's parents had two air raid shelters, one indoors, a Morrison Shelter made of metal and one outside called an Anderson Shelter which was dug into the ground and the roof covered with soil, on which crops could be grown. In it they put a wind-up gramophone, blankets and pillows. When they were not in the shelter they would listen to the radio with programmes such as 'ITMA' and 'In Town Tonight' announced by Alvar Liddell.

The school children collected newspapers for salvage, for which they received a book or a badge. They also collected shrapnel which had fallen from the air and which they swapped with their friends. In June 1944 Britain was attacked by Rockets called 'Doodle Bugs' which flew at 300 mph. between 7,000 and 11,000 landed. By September the Germans were sending V2 Rockets which had a speed of 2,000mph, faster than the speed of sound. John and his friends would explore the bombed-out houses without any fear as children do.

John and his family then moved to Stapleford, where he has lived ever since. John's talk was light-hearted and amusing as it was aimed originally at school children, very well recommended.

Shirley Wittering

GLEANINGS



A Great Big Thank you to all who helped tidy the Smithy, put up the Gazebo, stewarded over Daffodil Weekend and helped put everything away afterwards - Geoff Axe, Michael Braithwaite, David Easthope, Kit Jackson, Bernard and Brenda Meggitt, Judy Murch, John and Angela Rimmer, Jean Tomlinson, Nick Wittering and Shirley Wittering. Plus, the two blacksmiths

During Daffodil Weekend we kept a record from where people had come, the furthest away was Grange Over Sands, 256 miles. Despite the freezing weather, a spirit of cheerfulness pervaded the weekend and the Daffodil Committee deserve a medal for all their hard work.

We are sorry to report the death of Laurence (Lal) Marshall of Church Street on 17th April 2018. Lal and his wife Pauline had lived in the village many years and were well liked. We send our condolences to his son.

Mike Petty has sent this message to all Local History Groups –

Cambridge 1888-1988: a Chronicle of an English University City is a record of (nearly) all aspects of life in Cambridge now freely available to read, download, correct and use on any desktop, laptop, tablet or smartphone.

It's a long document of more than 4,000 pages. that's taken me 30 years to compile. But there's no need for you to wait quite so long to call it up on your screen. - Try this new, quicker, link to my Internet Archive site,

<https://archive.org/.../Cambridge18881988AChronicle.28June201...>

A big thank you to John Rimmer and Liz Moore, our two Churchwardens who enabled a small group of us to climb the church tower on 19th June to record the scratchings (graffiti) on the leads of the spire. See report in the Journal.

We are very grateful to Margaret Moule for giving the Society **Michael Moules collection of papers and photos**. Also the **ARP Bell**, which the Fire warden would ring as he cycled round the village if there was danger of an air-raid.

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Photo by David Brereton

Thriplow Church Spire