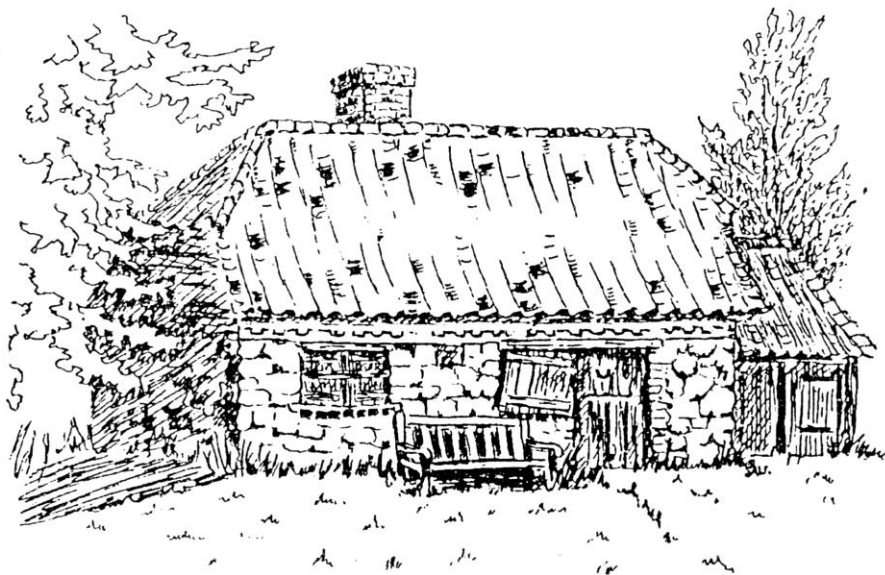


# The Thriplow Journal



Published by The *Thriplow Society*

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## **THE THRIPLow SOCIETY**

President -	Lady L Browne, The Bury (208234)
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Arthur (N.J.) Rowe -	19 Church Street (208323)
William O Wittering -	The Spinney, Middle Street (208269)

### **Joint Editors, The Thriplow Journal:**

Peter Speak and Shirley Wittering

## EDITORIAL

**W**e have planned to publish three journals each year in the Autumn, Winter and Spring and these will be distributed free of charge to all members of the Society. Additional copies will be available (whilst stocks last) at £1.95 per copy. The Journal will contain articles of historic, current and prospective interest on Thriplow and the Thriplow region. All the issues will be illustrated with line-drawings and photographs. We shall not shrink from publishing articles of a controversial nature, should these be important. Each issue will include a Profile of a Thriplow resident, a short article on a flower or plant in season, and Society news. We do not anticipate any shortage of copy, but all members of the Society are invited to contribute material to the editors for possible publication. Articles may be serious or light hearted, but must be about Thriplow or its surrounding environs, and should not be trivial or merely ephemeral. We are looking to record Thriplow for the future and anticipate that each year a set of copies of the Journal will be deposited in the Cambridge Collection. Any author whose copy is accepted will be sent a final edited draft before it is made ready for publication, and all the interviews for the Profile series will be approved by the person concerned. The Profiles will be part of a larger scheme of Oral History which has now been started with the Profile on Miss Parker. We intend to continue this practice and build a Library of tapes recording the reminiscences and views of Thriplow residents. Not all of them will necessarily be published.

The Society has also been asked to advise the Parish Council on the condition of the Smithy. We shall establish a conservation policy for it and report to the Council.

We should also like to make a start to a Thriplow Museum collection. The County Museum's Officer is to advise us in October. In the meantime, if you have anything worth keeping or know of any artefacts - pictures, papers, machinery etc., that should be preserved, please get in touch with any member of the Committee.

Please remember the next meeting and events:

**5 October 1992 -** Mike Petty - The Cambridgeshire Collection  
and Thriplow

**3 December 1992 -** Concert at The Bury

**23 January 1993 -** Society Party

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## The Milk Thistle (*Silybum marianum*)



*Milk Thistle (Silybum marianum)*

**T**he Milk Thistle grows in some Thriplow gardens and is said to have been originally brought from Denny Abbey, where it would have been used by the nuns as a vegetable and spring tonic. It is a striking plant having large, prickly green leaves, profusely veined with white, caused, legend has it, by the milk of the Virgin Mary. It has a single purple flower and can grow up to 5ft in height.

It was recommended by both Culpepper and the diaryist Evelyn as an excellent vegetable, the stem being peeled and boiled, and as a tonic for the liver. In fact, all thistles were once used as vegetables, especially in the Spring, when the young stems could be peeled, dipped in oil and vinegar and eaten with cold meats.

More recently the medicinal properties of the Milk Thistle have gained importance and are now contained in numerous brands of propriety medicines for the treatment of various liver ailments. It has also proved useful as an antidote to poisoning from the Death Cap fungus.

It is an easy plant to grow, being happy in most soils and tolerant of most conditions.

## *A PROFILE*

### **ELEANOR MAY PARKER**

**I** was born in the village of Barton on the 28th May 1903, but when only six months old my parents brought me together with my two brothers, William and Herbert, and two sisters, Ethel and Nellie, to live in Thriplow. I have lived here ever since that move, almost ninety years ago. I would not have wanted to live anywhere else.

At first we had one of the cottages in Cochrane's Farm, Lower Street, where my father was shepherd for Mr Fordham. There was no shortage of milk in Thriplow in those days with many small dairies - one on The Green where Helen and John Augar now live, one at Barrington's Farm (Thriplow Manor), and one in Pam Jacklin's old house in Middle Street (Erica and Richard Webber's present home). Bread was baked in the village bakery on The Green where Stan and Barbara Gillett live today and delivered daily as far as Chrishall. There were horses everywhere - working on the land, pulling milk and bread carts, and harnessed to traps and little buggies. The village was nearly self-sufficient. Brown's of Cambridge delivered paraffin for the oil-lamps for there was no electricity and special items could be brought from outside by the two carrier's carts operated by Freeman and Neaves two or three times each week. You had to book a ride in advance if you wanted to go to Cambridge or to the railway station at Harston.



*May Parker aged 5*

In my schooldays, there were about eighty children taught by three teachers in two rooms heated by large open coal fires. Miss Walker was the Headmistress and very strict: we had a strong emphasis on the 'Three Rs', but Scripture was taught first thing each day - often by the Vicar - and there were lessons in Nature Study, History and Geography. As the seasons came around we played the usual children's games: marbles,

whips and tops, and bowling our hoops, and in winter sliding on a frozen pond. In the holidays we picked wild flowers and wandered without any restriction across the meadows, into the stables and the dairies, or watched the busy blacksmith, Mr Skillings, at work at the forge.

When the time came to leave school most of the girls went into domestic service and the boys all went onto the farms. All seem to have found work, and even during the Depression of the nineteen-thirties there was no unemployment in Thriplow and no obvious poverty. Everyone was neighbourly. In spite of a limited education many of the children did well in later life: my own brother came back after the First World War, bought up several pieces of land, and founded a profitable chicken and egg farm. At the end of the Second World War he was able to purchase Thriplow House in Farm Lane. I was the youngest in the family so that I helped my mother to keep house when I left school and I never went out anywhere to work. During the last war I was the youngest of the air-raid wardens.

People today would consider that our pleasures were simple ones. We used to cycle to Foxton to attend dances and some of us were in a choir conducted by Geoffrey Vinter. In my twenties I joined the Thriplow Women's Institute. In fact I was President from 1964 to 1970. I am still a member and attend most of the meetings. I recall when we performed 'She Stoops to Conquer' and 'The Rivals' in Bill Deller's barn. We lit the stage from a cable laid across from Thriplow Manor which had its own generator at the time. All the male parts were played by ladies and I was both Bob Acre and Fagg in the 'Rivals'.

When people from the town come at Daffodil Weekend they often say to me: "You don't know how lucky you are living in Thriplow". I always reply: "Oh, yes I do".



## THE VILLAGE PUB

**T**he village pub is essentially an English social institution. Go to a Scottish village and if you are lucky enough to discover the entrance to the pub you will find inside an array of bottles of whisky rather than the familiar draught beers of the English public house. In



a Welsh village, if there is a pub at all, you may be greeted with a round of 'Land of my Fathers', and nothing in sight that you recognise. But in an English village the public house forms a natural social centre for conversation and debate, for the planning of village activities and for occasional lively entertainment. Here a light meal can be taken with your drink and a message left for your friends. It is a place for the traditional English pastimes of throwing darts or for the shuffling of cards or the clinking of dominoes: and not for the playing of billiards or snooker.

Since the closure of our *Green Man* over a year ago, this evocation of the public house has been lost in temporary nostalgia, but we now hear that it will re-open at the end of August. Lawrie Childs from the *Bees in the Wall* at Whittlesford has taken over a new licence, and promises us all that is best of the English pub. It will be a Free House with real ales and guest beers, light bar snacks at lunch time and simple evening meals and all that it will require then is your patronage and good company.

The public house, alehouse, inn or tavern, has its origins in the earliest communities in this country following the discovery and widespread cultivation of malting barley. Some of the inns came to offer accommodation, but there is no evidence that Thriplow ever had a Coaching Inn, as can still be found in our neighbouring villages of Fowlmere and Whittlesford. *The Chequers* in Fowlmere, dating from the sixteenth century, was on the old road from London to Cambridge. Samuel Pepys stayed there on his way to Magdalene College. The *Red*



*Lion* at Whittlesford, reputedly dating from the thirteenth century, was a stopping place for the coaches plying between Newmarket and Baldock. But in Thriplow the pub was typically the 'local'.

Within living memory there were three such 'locals' in the village, The *Fox* along Church Street, the *Red Lion* at the bottom of Middle Street, and the surviving *Green Man* at the junction of Lower Street and Fowlmere Road. Their positions emphasise the basic tripartite structure of Thriplow with its High (Church), Middle and Lower Streets. In the nineteenth century and earlier the innkeeper would brew his own beer and dispense it in jugs, but gradually the regional brewing companies took over, particularly after the Licensing Act of 1830 and this century the Thriplow pubs were owned by Phillips of Ashwell (The *Fox*), Wells and Winch of Biggleswade (the *Red Lion*), and Charles Wells of Bedford (the *Green Man*).

Fire destroyed two of the pubs: in 1919 the *Fox* which stood on the present site of 39 Church Street was burnt down and in 1941 the *Red Lion*, a jettied timber-framed building was also consumed by fire. The brewery carried on for a time in a temporary hut removed from Parker's Egg Farm and erected on the same site until that was abandoned as licensed premises and became the present Village Hall in 1958. There are inadequate records to say with conviction when the first pub was open in Thriplow, but it seems likely that it was towards the end of the seventeenth century. However, we do know that in 1840 the *Green Man* and the *Fox* were extant, and that in 1847 William Coleman, William Gambie (*Green Man*), John Sheldrick and Charles Young were either 'victualers', or 'beer retailers'. By 1933 Mrs Anne Clara Purkiss was the licensee of the *Red Lion* and William Robinson was the landlord of the *Green Man*. In more recent years a notable landlady was Mrs Katherine Buckerfield who died last year at the age of 101, and had served the village at the *Green Man* for 17 years including throughout the Second World War.





## THRIPlOW IN THE FIRST WORLD WAR

**K**elly's Directories are a mine of information and especially the volume for 1916 in the middle of the war. The scene, as it was in Thriplow is first described before listing the people who lived and worked here. The population at the 1911 Census was 426 and the area 2501 acres, giving a rateable value of £2080. The crops that were chiefly grown were wheat, barley and oats. (No mention is made then of oilseed rape!)

The church is described as having been repaired in 1876-7 at a cost of £2100 (rather more than the rateable value of the whole village!) and the organ in 1908 for £250. The church was said to seat 300 worshippers. The vicar, the Rev. Arthur Robbs MA, commanded a salary of £138 plus the vicarage.

The Congregational Chapel (which stood in Fowlmere Road where the Axe family now live) was founded in 1780 and restored 100 years later for £146.

Thriplow Heath is mentioned as having been the scene of "a grand assembly" (the conspiracy of agitators), of the Parliamentary army under Fairfax and Cromwell on 10 June 1647. (Should we perhaps be thinking of a grand "reassembly" on 10 June 1997, the 350th anniversary?)

The Directory has one major failing in that it lists the 'gentry' and the tradespeople but not the 'workers'. Arthur Cole Ellis JP of Thriplow Place (now Thriplow House, the home of Michael and Lila Walton) is shown as Lord of the Manors of Thriplow, Bacon and Barrington (Manor Farm, not the village). St Peter's College owned land as did J O Vinter, JP (who farmed Manor Farm) and Sir Charles Waldstein (later Walston) who lived at Newton Hall.

The Parish Clerk was Edward Flack (did he live at Little Thriplow?) and the Postmaster, John Softly, who, running the village stores, was actually responsible for publishing some of the village postcards. Then as now, mail came through Royston; the final collection - seven days a week - was at 7.05pm! Thriplow was an important Post Office; as a sign on it till a

few years ago stated, it was a Telegraph Office and people from Fowlmere who wanted to send (or receive) telegrams, did so through Thriplow.

The school, built in 1863 and with places for 100 children, was in the charge of Miss Gertrude Hayward.

Apart from those already mentioned, the only other "private" residents listed are Miss Woodcock of "Gowards" in Middle Street (now the home of John and Margaret Shaw) and Captain Croft Montague of the Cottage which I believe is now called The Dower House and is the home of Sir Peter and Lady Harriet Swinnerton-Dyer.

Looking now at the people who kept the village running: there were three public houses, The Green Man (William Robinson), The Fox (Frederick Perrin) and a third, unnamed beerhouse which I believe was called The Red Lion with Alfred Purkiss as landlord.

The smithy was appropriately in the charge of Ernest Smith; George Lloyd Brown was the fishmonger and there were bakers called Arnold's. Richard Anthony Sheldrick plied his trade as bricklayer and another Sheldrick, James, was a chimney sweep.

The rest of the villagers seemed to work on the farms and big estates. Joseph Fordham was a farmer with George Moule as his bailiff; William Ison was a bailiff to J O Vinter, Herbert Kingsley was a bailiff to A C Ellis and George Wilmot Lawrence his gamekeeper. Lastly, James and Thomas Edward Freeman are shown as market gardeners.

This is only an outline of life in the village some 76 years ago. There are many gaps and I am sure there are people living in Thriplow now who can fill them in and add more information. What were the pubs like in those days? Where did the fishmonger live? Where did Mr Fordham farm?

What was life really like in Thriplow in the first world war?

*William O Wittering*

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## **SOURCES OF INFORMATION ABOUT THRIPLow AND THE THRIPLow REGION**

### **Archival Collections**

The two principal sources of information which should be consulted before any others are:

#### **The Cambridgeshire Collection**

Top floor of the Central Library, Lion Yard, Cambridge. Simply go along and ask to see the card files on Thriplow and consult the general works on the shelves.

#### **The County Record Office**

Shire Hall, Castle Hill, Cambridge. Turn left on entering through the main doors. These are the County Archives and you will be required to apply for a reader's ticket when you arrive. Examine the card indexes and particularly the Vinter catalogue.

Both of these collections contain written records, photographs and maps. You will not be permitted to borrow from the collections. Go with plenty of time to spare.

#### **The Enclosure Award, 1846**

One copy of the Award can be seen in the County Record Office and a second is held by Thriplow Church. You may be able to consult this on application to the vicar, the Rev. Jim Mynors. The Award gives a detailed account of Thriplow before and after the Enclosure of the fields. It is essential reading for understanding the structure of the village today. (Please handle the pages and map with great care, preferably using thin cotton gloves.)

## GENERAL BOOKS WHICH INCLUDE IMPORTANT REFERENCES TO THRIPLow

**The Victoria County Histories**, volume on Cambridgeshire. A very detailed account of the Archaeology, History and general Economic Conditions of the County. See the Thriplow Hundred.

**Kellys Street Directories**, various dates, but not complete chronologically, nor complete in any year for the Thriplow entry.

**The Common Stream**, Rowland Parker, London, 1975. The Story of Foxton.

**Thriplow**, G.O. Vinter, 1951. Obtainable in the Church.

### **Specialist Literature with some references to Thriplow**

Cambridge Antiquarian Society, vol. XLIX (1956), p.1-12. Account of the excavation of the 'Tumulus'.

**A History of Cambridgeshire**, Rev. E. Conybeare, London, 1897. The standard detailed work.

**Handbook To The Natural History Of Cambridgeshire**, J.E. Marr and A.E. Shipley, Cambridge, 1904. Geology, Fauna and Flora.

**Handbook To The Geology Of Cambridgeshire**, F. Cowper Reed, Cambridge, 1897.

**The Cambridge Region 1965**, J.A. Steers (ed.), Cambridge, 1965. The British Association Handbook.

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## *EPILOGUE*

### **Thriplow Society**

The Society would be very pleased to receive any photographs, documents, newspaper cuttings or anything relating to the history of Thriplow. Please send the originals to the Editors who will take great care of them, make copies, and return them to the owners.

### **Thriplow News**

The recently refurbished village sign has been recarved and repainted by David Carter of Whittlesford, the grandson of Harry Carter of Swaffham the original maker of the sign.

### **Letter to the Editors:**

"I understand that there were osier beds in Thriplow within living memory. Does anyone know exactly where they were? What happened to the willows? Were they made into baskets or hurdles or what?"

*William O Wittering*

## CONSTITUTION

### **AIMS of the Society:**

To promote interest in the local history, the local environment and the conservation of the Thriplow region, and to promote the formation of a Thriplow collection.

### **FUNCTIONS of the Society:**

To hold a minimum of three open evenings each year.

To produce and circulate the Thriplow Journal to all members of the Society.

To encourage the collection of any materials of interest to the Society.

### **MEMBERSHIP of the Society:**

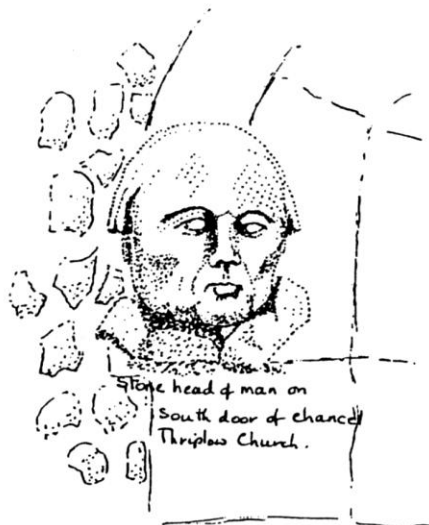
All households in the parish of Thriplow, and former residents, and other interested persons shall be eligible for membership.

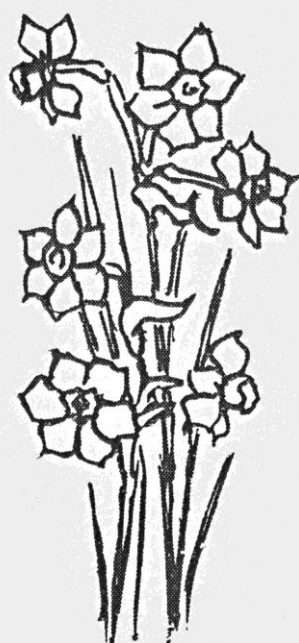
### **SUBSCRIPTION to the Society:**

£3 per household per annum pro tem.

The officers of the Society shall be:

Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Treasurer, Secretary and Editors of the Journal who shall be elected in rotation at the Annual Meeting for a term not exceeding two years. Four other members of the Committee shall be elected annually.





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