

EDITORIAL

We are delighted to record the installation of the Millennium Window in the Church. The artist, Anne Sutheran completed the work on Friday, 29 June, and it reaches all our expectations. The window is a work of considerable beauty, a very fitting memorial to a new millennium and a permanent benefaction that could well last for the next one thousand years. If you have not yet seen it do make a special visit and examine its symbolism: at the top is the Christian dove of peace and below it the two important historical figures associated with the foundation of the Church, Earl Byrthnoth the Saxon landholder who bequeathed his lands (including Thriplow) to the Abbot of Ely, and Bishop Hugh de Balsham who in 1274 apportioned the tithes from the Church to found Peterhouse in Cambridge. Byrthnoth (notice the original Anglo-Saxon spelling in place of the present anglicised Brithnoth) is holding a representation of the early Christian Church forerunner of the present one, and Bishop Balsham is supporting the present Arms of Peterhouse. Around the figures are symbols representing the nature of the village: the flowing chalk streams with springs bubbling forth amongst the marsh orchids and the adopted daffodils. The stained glass is remarkably light in colour and translucent showing bright even in the eastern light of the north transept. The Thriplow Society is proud to have initiated this window and hope that all visitors to the Church will see it as a beautiful addition to the building. The official dedication will take place at the Harvest Festival Service on Sunday, 30 September, 10.30 am.

The Society is most appreciative of all those who kindly contributed to the cost of the window. We have been able to meet all the costs of the designing, artist's work and installation, and architect's fees, from the appeal to members and all residents. Thank you all so much. In the next issue of the Journal we shall publish a list of all contributors and a financial statement. We hope to be able to place a small engraved tablet close to the window recording the gift. This benefaction by the Society is an appropriate commemoration of the tenth anniversary of its foundation and the tenth annual issue of the Journal.

You will read in an article in this issue that the Village Stores, which has been on offer for sale for some months has been successfully re-organised by a local consortium. Let us hope that the Stores will continue to serve this community, and be successful. Similarly the Green Man is now under new ownership; we wish it well.

Peter Speak and Shirley Wittering, Joint Editors.

THRIPLow STORES



One of the earliest photos of the Post Office and Shop taken in the 1920s, with the Red Lion pub, precursor of the Village Hall on the right.

Most people would agree that the most important institutions in any traditional village are the school, the church and the village shop and Post Office. You might almost say they are the head, the heart and the stomach respectively of their community! Thriplow is very fortunate that its head and heart are in excellent shape but its stomach is rather unsettled. Chris Hindley has run it for almost five years now but, sadly, circumstances mean that he is having to leave the village at the end of August this year. He has an exciting new job with the British Antarctic Survey as Ships' Operations and Safety Manager and will be spending three months later this year in the Antarctic. No daffodils there!

Efforts to sell the shop through normal commercial channels have not been successful and a committee was set up earlier this year by Tim Holmes of Middle Street to try and look for other ways of keeping the shop in business. The committee members felt that it was essential to keep the shop open because even a short closure would almost certainly mean the loss of the Post Office as Cosignia is looking for any excuse to save money these days. The Post Office provides vital services for both domestic and commercial customers in the village and, in addition, the shop would not be financially viable without it. However, the shop has a reasonable turnover and together with the salary as postmaster, is an attractive proposition for someone prepared to work long hours.

The committee has now set up a limited company called Thriplow Post Office and Stores and has been lucky enough to persuade Lisa Coates, who has lived in the village all her life, to come in as manageress to run the shop. It is hoped that this will be just a holding measure and that a buyer for the business will be found in the next year. Whether this aim is achieved depends to a large extent on everyone in the village; the higher the turnover the more attractive the shop looks as a business proposition and although the government pays lip service to the importance of maintaining village life in the end it will depend on all of us!

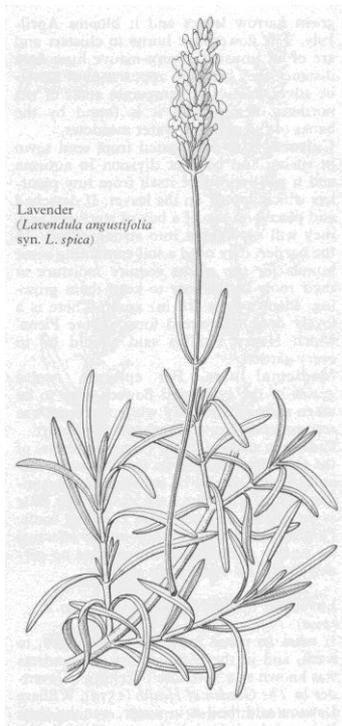
The survival of the shop, and especially the Post Office, is essential for the health of the village. Not everyone has transport to get to Sainsbury's or Tesco's, or to go to another Post Office to collect their pensions, and it is much 'greener' to walk to your own village shop than to drive to Royston or Cambridge. Help the environment, help your neighbours, help save a traditional village institution and make life easier by using YOUR village shop!

Harriet Swinnerton-Dyer.

For a history of the Post Office in Thriplow see the Journal Vols. 7/3 & 8/1 1999

NATURE NOTES

LAVENDER *Lavendula officinalis*



The aromatic Lavender must be one of the most familiar plants in an English garden. Its generic and common name derives from the Latin *lavare* 'to wash'; the Romans used it in their baths, medieval women hung their washing to dry on lavender bushes and strewed it on the floor to deter fleas and sweeten the rather putrid air. Housewives up to recent times dry the flowers and sew them into small lavender bags to put among their linen and their clothes to deter moths and give them a sweet smell. Lavender has a sedative, antispasmodic, tranquillising effect when taken as a mild infusion, so is proscribed for headaches, insomnia, nervous indigestion and nausea. It is said that the girls who harvested the lavender in Norfolk never suffered from headaches. If the essential oil is rubbed on a sting or bite the pain will soon disappear. In fact it was oil of lavender ready for the perfume industry that a surgeon found during the First World War and in desperation used on his badly wounded soldiers that led to the advent of aromatherapy. The oil speeded up the healing process and cut the number of wounds that went septic that he went on to distil other plants for their essential oils, but lavender is one of the most fundamental of useful plants.

It is also useful in cooking, making tasty biscuits and adding a rather peppery piquance to soups. Both the leaves and flowers can be used.

There are many varieties of lavender, pink, white, dark, tall and short; the best place to see them all is at Caley's Mill, the home of Norfolk Lavender, at Heacham. They have an excellent shop where you can buy plants and they also serve delicious teas incorporating lavender in everything from jam to ice-cream!

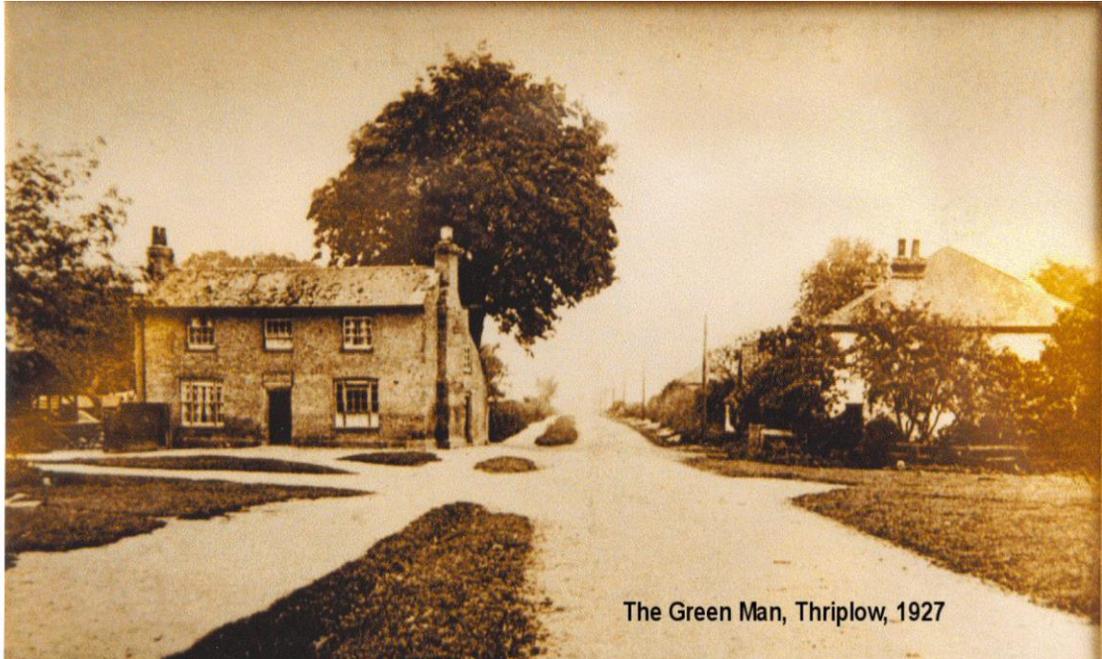
It is an easy plant to grow, as long as you remember that its original home is the Mediterranean, so that a dry warm spot is ideal. It needs cutting soon after flowering and never cut into old wood. It will seed by itself which is probably the best way to get new plants, as they can get old and leggy.

Shirley Wittering

HISTORY – FACT OR FICTION

'The Past is another country; they do things differently there.'

L.P.Hartley The Go-Between



The Green Man, Thriplow, 1927

The Green Man pub with the Saracen's Head pub opposite (R)

A short item in the recent issue of Thriplow School's *Thriplow Times* set me thinking about how the past is often perceived by people. You know the sort of thing, King Alfred burning the cakes, Cromwell stabling his horse in Thriplow Church, Queen Elizabeth sleeping in more beds than she had days in her life, the humps and bumps in a meadow being the caused by the devil moving the church over night from there to its present site. Legends and stories make history colourful and memorable but not necessarily true. The truth is more prosaic but nevertheless interesting. The story of Alfred and the cakes was apparently written by a later historian to prove how concerned Alfred was for his people and how noble his mind was. Cromwell was an intensely religious man and would never have taken his horse into a church and besides there is no proof that he ever came to Thriplow. And while Queen Elizabeth did go on royal progresses and slept in many a stately home, the number of beds she is reputed to have slept in vastly outnumbers the number of nights she was away from her home, and archaeologists are now finding that the humps and bumps in a field were probably a deserted street with its houses abandoned after the Black Death of 1348.

Which brings us to our present story. So many of us now own the houses we live in that is easy to assume that this was always the case. But home ownership is a comparatively recent phenomenon. Up to the last war most occupiers were tenants. Go back 150 years and very few people owned their

houses. The Tithe map and its accompanying schedule for Thriplow dated 1842 lists only 18 property owners. Out of these 18 property owners, four owned more than one property with Joseph Ellis II (there were three Joseph Ellis) owning 31 houses, and Henry Perkins the Lord of the Manor (the Bury) owning 11 houses. Peterhouse owned two and St John's College four. Of the other 14 house owners only five lived in their own property the other nine were let to tenants. The Census for 1841 lists 92 houses and 93 families with a total population of 430. The census enumerators counted family units and not whole buildings that caused the apparent discrepancy of house numbers between the Tythe map and the census.

Joseph Ellis II and his son, also Joseph, lived in The Rectory (Rectory Farm in Middle Street), which he rented from Peterhouse. In 1862 Joseph III built himself a large mansion at the top of Middle Street, Thriplow House. By the time he died in 1881 he owned 1,720 acres and employed 57 men. He had acquired all four manors within the village, had built the Independent chapel in Middle Street (later the Jubilee Room) and also the British school in Fowlmere Road (Chapelfield), which later became the Chapel when the one in Middle Street became too small.

As the population grew during the 19th century many large houses such as Bacons, Cochrans and Bassets and even many smaller ones were subdivided to house three or four families where once there had been only one. Bacons changed from housing four families back to one family in 1994, and Bassets once had four families living in it. Cochrans (named after John Corkran, *see illustration*, who owned it in 1762 is now the only property that houses more than one family). There were also five public houses in the parish, The Green Man, the Saracen's Head opposite it, the Red Lion (where the Village Hall is now), the Fox in Church Street, and the Shoulder of Mutton in Little Thriplow (where Flack's garage was). These pubs have all been written about in previous Journals.

This ebb and flow of custom and social habits remind us not to take what we assume to be normal today as necessarily normal at other times in the past. Joseph Ellis certainly could not have lived in every house he owned. To him owning land and the properties upon that land was a way of acquiring wealth. In the middle ages all wealth came from land ownership, land was wealth and the more you owned the wealthier you were. The wealth came as rents from those who were tenants and profits from the sale of crops and animals and the products of those animals, milk, butter, meat, wool and hides, and if you were Joseph Ellis and lived in the Rectory, from the tithes of all the land and property in the village. It is only in recent years that man has taken to 'going out' to work in factories and offices to earn himself enough to buy his house and pay for his food.

Memory is selective, extracting the exciting bits and half remembering the rest. We judge the past by our experience of the present. It is the constant challenge to the local historian to extract the truth from

the sources that survive, an often long slow slog, but like unravelling a code, the result is often unexpected, frequently fascinating and always rewarding.

Shirley Wittering



Outside the Old Saracen's Head Pub,
two feet, four feet and two wheels

West Field

	A	R	H
Dean of Ely —————	1		
Lewis Cochran —————	3		
+ Trin: Hall —————	1	2	
In the same furlong counting still from Foulmire Ab: south on the causeway			
Lewis Cochran —————	1		
Jos. Ellis pit & land —————	1		
Lewis Cochran —————	1	3	
Fra. Bush —————	1		1
Jn. Cowling —————	1		1
Ja. Hewse & Geo. Coleman —————	1		1
Parsonage —————		3	
Laying in the wash beginning with the headland to the Bank shot			
Rich. Clements headland —————	1		1
W. Cock —————	1		1
Dean of Ely —————	2	1	
Lewis Cochran —————	2		
W. Cock —————	2		
M. Masters —————	2		
Ja. Hewse & Geo. Coleman —————	1		1
Jn. Cowling —————	1		1
W. Benning —————	1		1
Causeway: Ab: south west on the Dean of Ely's headland the causeway on the north west.			

Thriplow : One Thousand Years Ago



As we enter the Third Millennium of the Christian era we may speculate on the life lived here one thousand years ago. Unfortunately there is hardly any documentary evidence from this period and little that the archaeologist has so far discovered that is reliably dated to the year 1000AD. We can only deduce from fragments found elsewhere in the country what our ancestors were like and how they managed these lands of South Cambridgeshire. The best written records are those of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* which gives detailed accounts of the tenth century, and *Domesday Book* of 1086 which itemises the state of the country shortly after the invasion of the Normans.

Certainly we should recognise the essential features of Thriplow and its surroundings were we transported back to these times. There has been little change in the geology of the area and the basic geography is little altered. The village was created along with so many others in England during the long period of Anglo-Saxon times, and its name (however spelt) has an unmistakable Anglo-Saxon origin, *low* signifying a mound or small hill. This could have been the ancient *tumulus* not far from the Church, which overlooked the village site, or simply the rising escarpment to the east and south. There seems to have been no influence here of Viking invasion as was so common further north and east, although it is conceivable that Thriplow was obliged to contribute its tax quota to the Danegeld, as we know happened in Cambridge.

At the start of the second millennium there were probably about one million people in England. Villages were numerous but numbers in each would be small; just a handful of households in Thriplow and families living close together for protection and companionship in the twin sites as today, i.e. around the Green and around the Church. Although our present Church of St. George and All Saints dates reliably from before 1279 it seems very likely that an earlier Christian foundation existed, possibly from the tenth century. This would be constructed of wood and roofed with thatch. It may have been pulled down to make way for the new stone building we know today.

The villagers resembled today's inhabitants in physique, the women slightly taller on average, and the men about the same height as now. Judging by skull sizes excavated from these days the first millennial people were as potentially intelligent as those who live here today, but their knowledge and technological skills were very different. Their houses, none of which survive were timber-framed, fastened with wooden pegs, and built mainly of oak, elm or beech, with infilling panels of hazel, and willow, plastered with a mixture of puddled chalk, clay and dung. There would have been an open hearth central to the house with smoke escaping by a hole in the thatch of the roof. Windows would be small openings in the walls with wattle shutters for closing at night and in the winter. The houses would have clustered around the Green which stretched from the edge of the water meadows in the north to the area now known as Peck's Close and probably across the whole of the wet centre of the village as far as the present Manor House. Crossing this Green was a major trackway, one of the many lines of the Icknield Way, later called Ashwell Street and leading to Whittlesford and Duxford where it crossed the upper course of the river Cam.

The other settlements were along Church Street and around the Church and were possibly older in their foundation. The two areas were linked by tracks and footpaths to allow the cottagers to drive their livestock to the Common Fields and to cultivate their linear strips. Some of these footpaths survive today, but most were removed by Act of Enclosure in the 1840s. So School Lane or Gutter Lane, Upper Gentleman's Footpath, Narrow Lane, Ball's Lane and others have a long lineage. The Baulk, or Crouchman's Lane reminds us of the narrow lengths of land between the cultivated strips where access was possible.

Apart from little children and the very elderly, everyone worked the land, growing crops of wheat, barley and oats, peas and beans, and hay, and tending cattle and sheep. The amount of woodland was greater than today (though not appreciably so, as the clearance of forest begun in the iron age had largely been cleared from the land by early Saxon times), and trees were treated as a crop, timber being important for house building, the making of farm implements and household utensils. The weather was very important, a good season making the difference between comfortable survival and near starvation. July was the most difficult of the months for provisions and known as 'The Hungry Gap' because the corn and hay from the previous season was nearly finished, the barns were empty, and the new crops not yet harvested. Fortunately the year 1000 was beneficent in its weather and the periodic shift in the climate had not started to deteriorate. Vines were grown as far north as Ely and possibly in Thriplow. The main drink for the cottagers was weak beer, though wine might have been made and stored in barrels as glass bottles and stoppers were not then available. In addition mead was made from honey and much appreciated. The woodlands also provided occasional food in the shape of wild boar and sheep, deer, pigeons and rabbits, whilst acorns, hazel nuts and berries were gathered for animal feed and human consumption. Some domesticated fruits such as apples, plums, and damsons were grown. The good quality water from

Thriplow's springs was used mainly for washing and for animals; the villagers drank a mild home-produced ale.

Thriplow had been part of the Earldom of Saxon Byrhtnoth but he had been killed at the Battle of Maldon fighting against the Vikings in 991, and had bequeathed all his lands to the Abbot of Ely. Thus Thriplow would be required to send one tenth of its produce to the Bishop and the corn would be stored, until transported, in the village's Tithe Barn, probably on the site of the present large fourteenth century barn at Rectory Farm, Middle Street, Thriplow's oldest secular building.

The village was largely self-contained and self-supporting. Those who did not work directly on the land were providing the services of blacksmith, shoemaker, and carpenter. But there was no communal baker, nor doctor, nor grocer. Oxen were used for ploughing and pulling carts. Horses were at a premium and would occasionally carry a villager to a neighbouring settlement, and bring in a visitor, but it is likely that most of the cottagers never went as far as Cambridge.

By the year 1,000 the institutions of Shires and Hundreds, the Manor House and its Lord were already in position. The building of a stone Church with dedicated Vicar and Rector, and all the technical changes in agricultural methods, transport and housing would soon follow. What is remarkable to the local historian is the legacy of one thousand years still decipherable in today's, landscape.

References :

The Year One Thousand : What Life Was Like at The Turn Of The First Millennium.
Robert Lacey and Danny Danziger. Abacus Books. 2000. £5.99.

The Anglo-Saxon Chronicles: The authentic voices of England, from the time of Julius Caesar to the coronation of Henry II. Translated and Collated by Anne Savage. Book Club Associates. 1983.

Peter Speak.

Was there Life before Radio and TV?



Do you remember when we used to entertain ourselves? In my childhood, many households had a piano if not some sort of organ. In villages and towns, concerts would be organised by the Vicar or some other public-spirited individual or by the Co-op or other local body.

A glimpse at the *St. George's (Thriplow) Magazines* for 1883 shows that Thriplow had such concerts. The Church ran one in the School Room on Thursday May 10th with reserved seats costing 2/-, second seats 1/- and back seats 3d.

The announcement of the event read: "The Rev. H T and Mrs Wood, W. Macdonald Esq. and L. Mitchell Esq. of Cambridge have promised to perform and we expect further foreign assistance."

The programme was as follows:

Piano Solo.....	Miss Lily Perkins
Glee.....	"The Belfry Tower"
Song.....	"The Powder Monkey"..... Rev. H T Wood
Violin and Piano Duet....	"Serenade"Mr H & Mrs Hurrell
Song.....	"Stirrup Cup".....Mr L Mitchell
Violin and Piano Duet."Dream Faces"....	Mr H & Mrs Hurrell
Banjo.....	Mr L Mitchell
Song.....	"The Little Hero".....Rev H T Wood
Glee.....	"O by Rivers"
Song.....	"The Yeoman's Wedding".....Mr L Mitchell
Violin & Piano Duet...Minuette in E....	Mr H and Mrs Hurrell
Song.....	Mr L Mitchell
Song.....	"The Tug of War".....Rev H T Wood
Banjo.....	Mr L Mitchell
Song.....	"Betsy Waring".....Mr H Hurrell
Banjo.....	Mr L Mitchell

God Save the Queen

Proceeds amounted to £3 15s. 0½d and were given to "the debt upon the Church Restoration Fund." The report after the concert said that it was pronounced by "those best competent to form an opinion as the most successful that has as yet been held in the Parish. The several performances were exceedingly good and quite beyond our powers of criticism; we therefore offer no remarks upon them, but merely subjoin." [after which the programme was listed.]

It seems that these concerts were an annual event for another was held the following year. This time the proceeds of £2. 10s. 3d. were given to the Organ Fund.

There were other forms of entertainment of course but more about them another time.

Bill Wittering

The Society possesses a bound copy of St George's (Thriplow) Magazine for 1883 and 1884 but no others. Can you help?

GLEANINGS

In Memoriam. We are very sorry to report the death on Friday, June 22nd of Robert Henry (Bob) Shearing of Stukely Meadows near Huntingdon. Many members of the Society will remember Margaret and Bob who lived for many years at 17 Church Street, Thriplow. Bob was treasurer of the PCC for some time and in the 1960s and 70s was the first of the organising secretaries of Daffodil Weekend. He was a first class gardener and his long garden in Church Street was always open at Daffodil Weekend. He retained his connection with the village after moving away and was currently the president of the Fowlmere and Thriplow Gardening Club. We extend our sympathy to Margaret and their two children.

Thanks to Alex Wilson, for the gift of a variety of old and interesting farming tools from Anno Domini, they have been catalogued and a group has been formed to restore and preserve them before being displayed in the Smithy for members to see.

The Tool Restoration Group consists of Geoffrey Axe, David Easthope, John Lord, Michael Moule, Arthur Rowe, Peter Speak and Lewis Stone. If any member is interested in helping us please get in touch with one of the above, we should be only too happy to have you. We meet on various Sunday mornings. We are very grateful to Duxford Museum Exhibition and Restoration Dept. for their advice. **Thanks** also to Eva Hall for the gift of two lovely Victorian umbrellas made of black silk with green Malacca cane handles.

Thanks to Jonathan Berks for a collection of items dug up in the garden of 4 Lower Street.

Thanks to Bill Wittering for varnishing the village sign and the painted board at the Village Hall. And **also** to Ken and Valerie Joysey, John Lord, Michael Moule and Peter Speak for repainting the plough outside the seed development building and to Arthur Rowe for providing the paint. For a history of the plough see Journal Vol. 4/2 1995 p.16.

We are sorry to hear that Jack Howe is in hospital we wish him well and hope he will soon be back with us.

Congratulations to Eric and Doris French of 31 Church Street, on achieving their Diamond Wedding anniversary. We wish them many more contented years.

The Green Man is under new management we wish Ian Parr and David Papworth and their team at the Green Man success in their venture. A working party has tested the facilities on the Thriplow Society's behalf and can vouch for the quality of the food! Together with the shop, church and school the pub is an integral part of a village community, we wish it well.

The **Thriplow Landscape Research Group** who have been researching the origins of the village for four years now, have received a grant from the Local Heritage Initiative, which is made up of the Countryside Agency, the Heritage Lottery Fund and the Nationwide Building Society. The money will go towards the purchase of geophysical equipment such as Resistivity meters and the necessary soft ware that goes with them, and the training to be able to use them. The Group will also produce a booklet together with a CD Rom recounting their findings. Those of you who came to the March and April meetings this year will have heard about some of the Group's work.

As many of you will have nine years of Journals by now, there is an index available from Shirley Wittering if you would like one.

Thriplow Society's Web Site

Have a look at our new web site, we hope to update it regularly and add to it in the future.

www.thriplowsociety.org

Next meeting

Sharon Hearle talking about
'Cambridgeshire Linear Sites'

Puzzled? Come along and find out what
its all about!

Friday September 14th. 8.0pm.
Thriplow Village Hall