

## Editorial

‘If it has a name it has a history.’

Nick Wittering

On re-reading ‘*Ask the Fellows who cut the Hay*’ by George Ewart Evans, I was struck by his conclusions. The old pre-machine village community, he wrote, was a tightly knit group, reliant on many people to farm the land. Mutual dependence, close ties among neighbours, was not merely a virtue: it was a necessity. Owing to the nature of the old hand-tool economy, farming could not be carried on except by the aid of a large group of people. Where twenty men formerly spent three weeks with scythes or binders harvesting the corn, today a couple of men with a combine-harvester will do the same work in a few afternoons. A more or less common work bound the people together; and out of this work grew the organism that was the old community.

Now the villagers leave the village to find further education, recreation and work in the surrounding towns; visiting the Doctor entails a journey to a nearby village and a journey to Cambridge to visit the hospital. The villages have lost their self-sufficiency.

A community is not formed by a number of people living together in chance association, yet there is one organisation which can meet the needs of an evolving community; one aptly enough, with a very long history – the parish council, first formed in 1894. But, you might say, the parish council is the smallest and weakest unit of local government, true but this very smallness can also be its strength. The parish council though small is potentially the healthiest member of the trinity of local government because it is most representative and in the closest touch with the people it speaks for. It is within the power of the parish council to supply leadership to a village, a true leadership of ability and interest not one solely of status and wealth. A good parish council can concern itself not only with its statutory powers and permissive duties, but with everything that is likely to promote the welfare of the village it represents. If it has the parish solidly behind it, it can go a long way towards making a village a desirable and healthy place to live in. In so doing it will transform itself and weld the village into something like a true community, with the full consciousness of a closely shared achievement.

Thriplow is indeed fortunate to have all the makings of a true community, a church, a school, a shop, a pub and a parish council. And the desire of its inhabitants to make this community work.

*Angela Rimmer and Shirley Wittering, Joint Editors.*

## CHRISTMAS TRADITIONS

One of the things I like most about Christmas is using the same things from year to year; items carefully stored away and then brought out again. This tradition is certainly evident with the nativity scene set up in the church every year. Originally done so by Mrs Grace Sheldrick, who resided in Church Street. Then for many years by my grandmother, Margery Fuller, and for the last twenty five years by my uncle, Colin Fuller. Grace Sheldrick was a stalwart of the church for many years. She was originally from Wimbledon, but moved to Thriplow when she married well-known village builder Horace 'Hodge' Sheldrick in 1922. She would think nothing of cycling from Wimbledon to Thriplow to visit him.

As far as Colin can remember the present nativity figures were bought by her in the early 1960's, after much searching for exactly the right thing. Each year during Advent the stable and figures would be arranged, baby Jesus being added at Midnight Mass on Christmas Eve. She was very strict about the Three Wise Men not being added until Epiphany, they were placed in one of the windowsills on a sheet of sandpaper to replicate the desert they were travelling across. A new stable was made by Colin Tibbs a few years ago as the old one had woodworm. The angel on the roof has always proved a challenge to fix on; Colin is still using the same piece of string. Unfortunately one of the figures was broken when a past vicar decided it would be a good idea if the school children were allowed to hold them!

Since Mrs Sheldrick handed over the task to my family, the figures have been kept by Colin at his house, the stable remaining stored at the church. My Dad's brother, a carpenter, made a very handsome wooden chest for them to be kept in, this is however very heavy. So if one dark evening in the run-up to Christmas you see a figure struggling up the hill to the church with a large wooden chest on a wheelbarrow, you will know it is a lovely Christmas tradition continuing.

Toni Charter



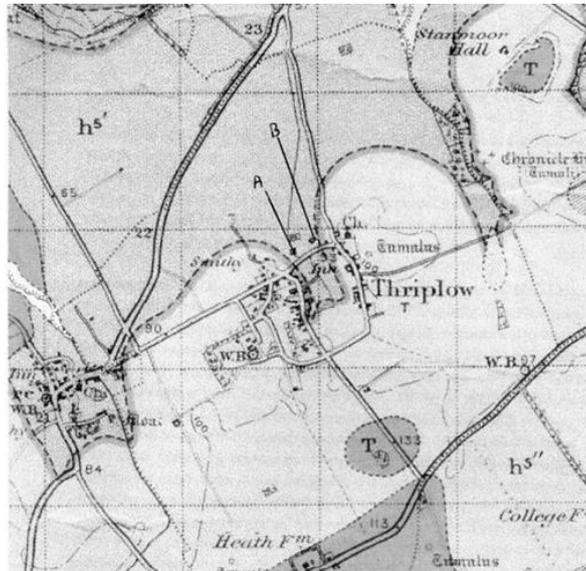
The Thriplow Christmas Crib

## The Medieval Climate of Thriplow and its Effect on the Local Population.

Bruce Milner

The climate has probably played a greater role in the development of Thriplow into the modern village than in many other South Cambridgeshire villages because much of Thriplow lies at the border of the water permeable Melbourn rock (middle chalk) and an impermeable layer of clay. Many springs are found where this border surfaces, giving rise to the “soggy ground” in the geographical centre of Thriplow and the water meadows to the south-west of the church.

It is probable, in a relatively warm and not too wet climate, that settlements were created near to these springs. The Thriplow Study Group has found evidence of such settlements, surviving as some humps around a distinct holloway just to the north of School Lane opposite Middle Street (map ref. 437468), and 0.5 Km to the north-east (map ref 440469) the remains of a moat, with the Church being the dominant feature about 200m further East. The positioning of these two sites, relative to the border of the strata, can be seen from the attached map and indicated as A and B. The water impermeable stratum is in the darker shade, to the north. It should be noted that a salient of this strata bisects the present day Thriplow, and is characteristically muddy in wet weather, and even in not so wet conditions. It is perhaps significant that these two sites are on the line of the ancient Ashwell Street which may have been a northern branch of the Icknield Way. Some pottery was recently found at site B and authoritatively dated to be not later than the 13th century. This is significant in view of the following evidence of severe climate changes between 1300- 1325 AD and its effect on the population of Thriplow.



While, unsurprisingly, there is relatively little direct recorded evidence of the climate trends during the period of from 1000 AD to about 1400 AD, there has been quite considerable research into the climate of East Anglia. Much can be deduced from the effect of climate on the growth of crops, as can often be gleaned from the records of Manorial courts as reported by Petty<sup>1</sup>. Newman and Harvey<sup>2</sup> provide evidence that the wheat

harvest at Cuxham in Oxfordshire declined by 25% from 1300 to 1350 AD. This indicates that there was a severe constraint affecting harvests during this time, when an increase might have been expected, or at least a steady state. The authors suggest that this was primarily due to a decline in soil fertility as a result of decreasing levels of phosphorus in the soil, as this was not being replaced naturally by cattle. It is possible that this was caused by over exploitation of the land, which was then insufficiently fertilized by cattle and sheep. This may not necessarily have been as a direct result of climate change, but it is likely that the climate changes described below may have been a contributory factor.

One relevant contemporary written record from the Calendar of Patent Rolls at the Cambridge Record Office, provided by Shirley Wittering, is reproduced below:

*'10th April. Edward III (1336)*

*Commission to Simon de Brunne and Geoffrey Seman Waltham*

*Inquisition- Cambridge Saturday before St Dunstan*

*The growing corn of the men of Fulbourne, Badburgham, Wytlesford, Dokesworth, Pampesworth and Sauston totally perished in a sudden storm of hail and rain on Sunday before St Peter's Chains last, so that they completely lost the corn with the straw and forage, and nothing remained for the maintenance of themselves and their servants except what they could obtain by loan.*

*In Litle Abyton all the corn perished, the men of Babham, Trippelowe and Great Abonton lost half their corn with the straw and forage: the men of Stapilford and Hildresham a third: and the men of Wrattyng, Weston, Great and little Wilburgham, Ikelyton and Hynxston a forth.'*

NB. The feast of St Peter's Chains, *St Peter and Vincula*, is August 1st. In 1335 the Sunday before this fell on July 28th.

There is a curious inconsistency in this record, or is there a distinction between the growing corn which was totally lost in Badburgham, and the corn of Babham of which only half was lost? Can it be assumed that the two places are one and the same, the result of clerical misspelling which was obviously very common? Badburgham is an old English spelling of Babraham, perhaps the more likely explanation is that "Babham" is simply a misspelling of Balsham.

H. Hallam<sup>3</sup> studied local records of harvests of barley, wheat and oats and compared them with contemporary accounts of the weather in E England between 1250 and 1350 and presents a table showing the weather, harvests and agrarian crises in E England during this time. The harvests from 1272 to 1288 were cited as being good to very good although there were numerous summer droughts during this time. From 1289 until 1326 there were numerous harvests described as "poor" to "abysmally poor", with the severest failures occurring between 1315 until 1321, all of which were described as famine years. Hallam does, however, indicate that considerable caution needs to be exercised in interpreting these findings as these reported famines were by no means universal, although it does appear that generally this period was pretty dreadful for most of the rural community. The common factor contributing to these famines was wet autumns which ruined the harvests.

However, Hallam also presents a table showing just the records of barley harvests during this time which appeared to be relatively little affected by the adverse growing conditions between 1315-1321. Since barley was a predominant crop in E England it may be surmised that the famines may not necessarily have been universal, but from the population figures given below, the rural medieval population of Thriplow may have been spared this famine. However, the dramatic pre Black Death population decline of Thriplow may well have been the result of much of the settled land becoming uninhabitable as a result of the heavy rainfalls noted from 1315-1322. A table showing very similar weather patterns between 1234-1405, researched by Margaret Bennet of Cambridge is appended.

Medieval Weather researched by Margaret Bennet of Cambridge.

1234	Famine at Eltersley according to Roger of Wendover
1251	Drought
1252	Crops failure
1257-8	Crops failure (wet weather)
1270-1	Wet year followed by wet spring, crop failure
1272	Drought - famine
1277	Bad harvest - famine
1283	Same
1285-6	Drought - wet autumn - poor
1288	Dry summer <u>epidemics</u>
1289	Drought - broken by disastrous thunderstorms, resulting in crop failure
1292	Bad harvest and famine
1311	Bad harvest and famine
13 15- 17	'Great Famine'
1317-19	Continuing effects of above
1328-9	Summer epidemics
1331-32	Also '32 bad harvest and famine
1342	Deaths due to possible epidemic of some kind
1348	First recorded cases of Black death, in June. Chroniclers differ in their statements as to where first outbreak occurred, but definitely on south.
349-50	Major Black death year in most of England - still tailing off in '51-2 in some areas
1361-2	Major plague recurrence (Children's plague, as disproportionate number died)
1368-9	Plague
1371	Plague - possibly there were outbreaks in villages that went unrecorded
1374-5	Plague
1390	Plague
1405	Plague

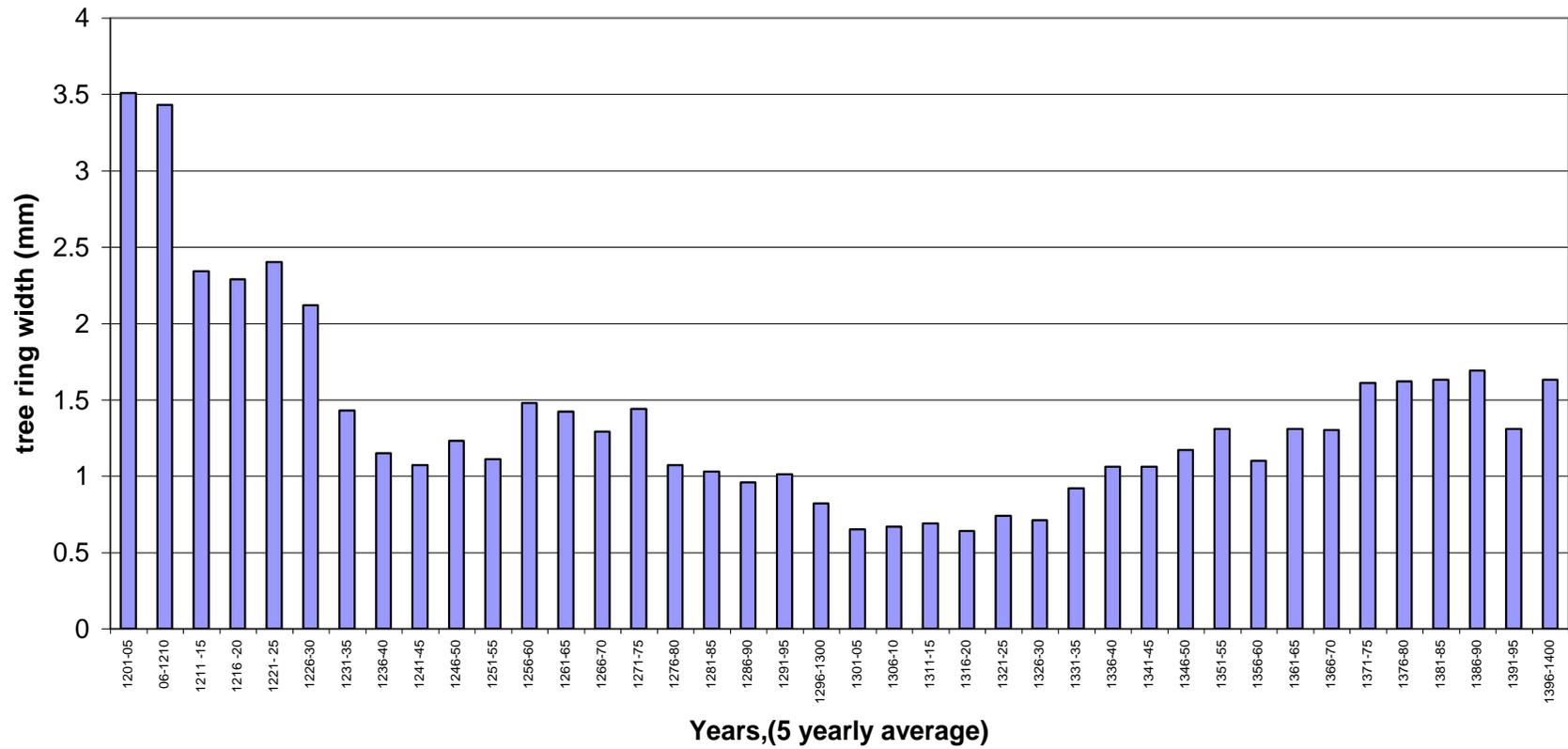
Note. Sporadic outbreaks continued in different parts of the country in the last quarter of the C 14 and during C 15 - still occurring in C 16 and C 17 - most notably in cities, especially London, where in many years the playhouses were closed because of it in the summer. The London 'Great Plague' of 1665 appears to have been its final fling.

The late H.H. Lamb, a leading climatologist who founded the world renowned Climatic Research Unit at the University of East Anglia, in his "*Climatic History and the Modern*

*World*” presents graphical estimates of the temperature changes in central England between 800-1900 AD. This shows that the temperatures reached a maximum at around 1200 AD but then declined very sharply, especially the midsummer temperatures. Significantly the summer rainfall increased dramatically in the 1310s and this, combined with the drop in temperatures made for increasingly cold and wet summers from around 1300 AD onward. Lamb suggests that England experienced mostly warm, dry summers from 1284 until 1311.<sup>4</sup> This was then followed by an “extraordinary run of wet summers and mostly wet springs and autumns with 1315 being the worst year with famine in many parts of Europe... “Great numbers of sheep and cattle died in the epidemics which swept the sodden and often flooded landscape”.

This picture appears to be reinforced by the dendrochronological evidence obtained from oaks at Chicksands Priory, obtained by Howard *et al*, from Nottingham University. The appended Tree Ring Width Chart shows the 5 yearly average tree ring widths from 1200 to 1400. This needs to be interpreted with some caution and the late Tony Carter, an historical climatologist at the Cambridge University Godwin Institute, suggested that the first 30 years may be ignored as the early tree-ring growth patterns are rarely representative. We thus see a fairly steady 1.1 - 1.4mm average from 1230 until 1270, reducing to an average of 1mm between 1270 -1295, then sharply down to 0.7mm between 1300 to 1330, followed by a recovery up to 1mm from 1330 until 1350. While it is rather difficult to correlate fully this dendrochronological data with climate, the low tree ring widths from 1300 to 1325 correlates remarkably well with the climate evidence already discussed and also presented by Ogilvie and Farmer <sup>5</sup>. On p. 121 a block diagram shows the 1310s having both severe winters and excessive summer wetness, again reinforcing the impression that this was not the ideal climate to be living on low lying land adjacent to springs. It is perhaps significant that the name of School Lane in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century was Gutter Lane as the Brook flowed down it.

# Tree ring width,1200- 1400



Paul Simons in “Weird Weather”<sup>6</sup> writes : “ from parish and tax records, the population fell to one third between 1300 -1327 ( more than by the Black Death) as a result of long harsh winters, late spring times, poor harvests and ergot poisoning .... Boglands grew in the cold, wet climate and forced many populations out of valley bottoms which were becoming increasingly flooded. Maybe one-half of the population of Britain was wiped out in the appalling climate”. This would seem to imply, after taking the Black Death into consideration, that the immediate post Black Death population was less than one quarter of that in 1300. The following population figures of Thriplow (kindly supplied by Shirley Wittering) would appear to indicate that this assertion may possibly have some credence, certainly as far as Thriplow is concerned.

<b>DATE</b>	<b>SOURCE</b>	<b>ESTIMATED POPULATION</b>
1068	DOMESDAY	180
1279	HUNDRED ROLLS	430
1327	LAY SUBSIDY*	150
1523	LAY SUBSIDY*	260
1662	HEARTH TAX *	205

\*Tax payers only. All figures have been multiplied by 5 as only heads of households were counted.

What this shows is that the low population figure in 1327 occurred after the appalling weather between 1315-23 but before the Black Death in 1349! This poses the intriguing possibility that perhaps the commonly held view that the Black Death was responsible for a 30 to 50% decline in the population in the mid 14th century may be partially as a result of the Black Death fatalities being merged with the population decline in the 1320s. The relative paucity of population data at this time may have tempted some researchers to make assumptions that the documented population differences between the late 13th century and after 1350 were entirely attributable to the Black Death. Many historians believe that the Black Death was a culmination of many years of poor fertility, famine and disease aggravated by the cold and wet weather. However, the dendrochronological and climatic evidence presented here suggests that the weather improved from 1325 onwards allowing for a recovery period of 25 years, or one generation, until the intervention of the Black Death in 1348. This would favour the scenario of two separate 14th century population catastrophes.

There is some evidence, provided by Rowland Parker<sup>7</sup> that the neighbouring village of Foxton, some 3 km to the north-west did not suffer the same drastic depopulation in the 1310s as appeared to happen in Thriplow, suggested by the fourth rebuilding of Foxton Church occurring between 1318-1328 ( page 97, loc cit). Surely this is unlikely to have occurred had Foxton been suffering from the same severe pre Black Death depopulation as it appears was happening in Thriplow during this time. This suggests that this pre Black Death

depopulation was not so severe everywhere, but only experienced in villages sensitive to extremely wet weather such as Thriplow. In other words, it seems that Thriplow experienced what might be called a “double whammy” of two severe population declines in the 14th century.

It is necessary to make the caveat that these population figures may not necessarily be comparable or accurate, but they do indicate a fascinating area for further research where my interpretations may, or may not, be confirmed! We might therefore surmise that the severe population decline in Thriplow between 1279 to 1327 is attributable to much of the previously inhabited parts of Thriplow becoming uninhabitable as a result of the heavy rains in the 1310s, resulting in the above mentioned “soggy ground” syndrome. But however these population figures are interpreted, they show a truly catastrophic population decline in Thriplow from the heady days of the 1280s. It is thus probable that these settlements were abandoned because of the severe wet weather between 1315 –1327, never to be resettled, whilst the people living on the higher, but less fertile ground, by the Church in Church Street were relatively unaffected so did not need to abandon their houses.

### **Acknowledgements**

I would like to thank the late Tony Carter for providing me with the dendrochronological data and for the loan of some books and journals, and generally offering some very helpful advice, and Shirley Wittering for supplying me with the Thriplow population data, Margaret Bennets’s medieval weather research and the contemporary account of “disastrous weather in Cambridge” and for making helpful comments.

### References:

<sup>1</sup> Petty, J.N., *Ag. Hist. Rev.*,**38**,1-19

<sup>2</sup> Newman, E.I. and Harvey, P.D.A., *ibid* ,**45**, 119-136

<sup>3</sup> Hallam, H.E., *ibid* ,**32**, 124-132

<sup>4</sup> Lamb, H.H. *Climatic history in the Modern World*, p 84-85,195, Methuen 1982

<sup>5</sup> Ogilvie, A. and Farmer, G, *Climates of the British Isles*, Ed Hulme and Barrow, Rutledge, London 1997, p.118-133

<sup>6</sup> Simons, P, *Weird Weather*, Little, Brown and Co, London 1996, p275

<sup>7</sup> Parker Rowland, *The Common Stream*, Collins, 1975

## THRILOW SCHOOL PAST AND PRESENT.

*Today's news is tomorrow's history.*

One of the main problems for the local historian is trying to identify the names and dates on old photographs. I'm sure we all have family photos with no names or dates written on the back and no one left alive to identify who the people are, when the photo was taken and the place where it was taken. This problem can only become worse in the future with enormous numbers of pictures left on old phone cards, in digital cameras abandoned for newer models and on computer hard disks with only numbers to identify them. How will our descendants identify, 'granny' or 'granddad' from an unidentified digital photo?

When Bill and I used to go to Tea Dances, in the intervals fond grandparents used to fish a handful of photos from their wallets or handbags to show friends – they knew who the children were but a generation or two on who would recognise them without a name and date written on the back? The problem is even greater with digital photos, it is so easy to take hundreds of them, but unless they are printed out and labelled they will be useless in a few years time.

We must label our photos.

This problem came across strongly to me when I decided to put groups of photos showing the same place over time. I started with the School; I had a number of old postcards and photos but in which order did they come? The later ones are easy as I remember when they were taken or could check the occasion such as the opening of the new class room wing, and remember George Fuller telling me how he helped dig the air-raid shelter and pointing out the mark in the school wall where the opening to it was. But the first two, which came first? When was the greenhouse built and when was it removed? The large tree behind the first picture seemed to have gone in the photo of the second picture. Bill and I puzzled over this for some time. He then remembered he had a small album of postcards of Thriplow which he had collected. Sure enough both pictures were there; we took out the first postcard and turned it over – there was a message from someone in Newmarket to a Mrs Bell in Norwich; obviously the sender had been to Thriplow on holiday. But best of all there was the postmark clear and black over the green half-penny stamp of King Edward VII, and the date and time – 11.15 am, 19 January 1906. On the picture side of the card was 'Thriplow 1'. The picture was taken by Robert Clark Real Photographic Series as stated on the back.\*

The second postcard was labelled 'The School Thriplow S 6766 (Softly's Series)'; this was taken by Mr. Softly the village Postmaster who also produced postcards of the village as far as we know in the 1920s and 30s. So this postcard is the second oldest shown here.

So now we know the sequence of the postcards what are the changes that we can see from them? The first thing I noticed was the large glass-house in front of what was then the school house; in 1906 the head mistress of the school was Miss Isabella Walker, she obviously enjoyed gardening, but we know little more about her. The other thing we notice is the large tree just behind the school building; this has gone by the time Fig. 2 was taken. The school house is still being used as a house as we can see curtains in the windows. In fact this part of the building was still being used as accommodation when we arrived in 1977. Both pictures show how well treed the field beside the school was and how small the actual playground was bounded as it was by a wall.

The next picture taken just after the war shows, as mentioned before the filled in gap where the children passed through to the air raid shelter. A metal frame stands in front of the school house,

perhaps the frame for a greenhouse, we don't know. The main difference in Fig. 4 is the rather ugly flat roofed extension over the back of the school which is still there, and the much larger playground. By the time the new school wing was added in 2001 we are in the realm of current memory, but it is still important to date these pictures for those historians who come after us.

\* Robert Clark was a photographer from Royston. See Thriplow Journal Vol.9/1 2000 also Vol.6/3 1998, 7/3 1999.

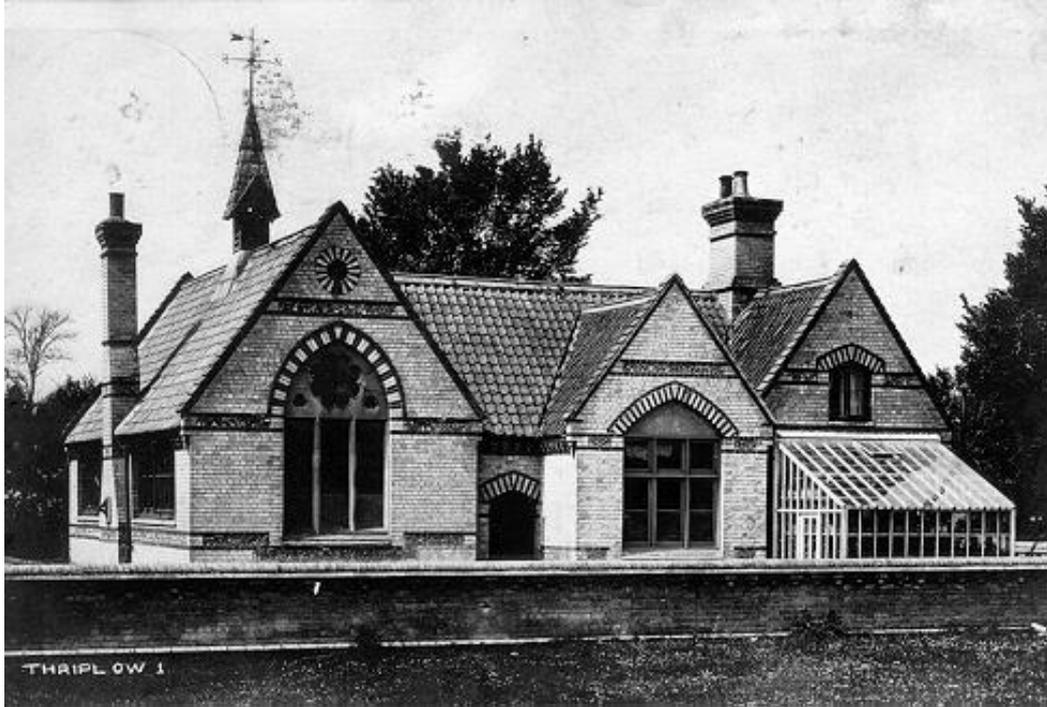


Fig. 1 Thriplow school in 1906, note the green house over back of school house and only two large windows on the left side of the building.



Fig. 2 Thriplow School 1920s. The glass house has gone; note the trees in the meadow, and there are now three windows in the side. Showing where the school had been extended.



Fig. 3 The school just after the war c.1946 showing the mark in the wall where the way through to the air raid shelter was.



Fig. 4 The school in the 1980s showing the extension over the back door.



Fig. 5 Thriplow School in 2003 showing the new classroom building opened in 2001

Shirley Wittering

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### **A SMALL THRIPLOW LIBRARY OF 1670**

Neville Potter

When Thomas Clements died in Thriplow in 1670, “one small bible and six other small books”, value six shillings, were listed among his effects. Thomas was a shepherd, and although he probably earned more than the £9-£10, an average working man earned in a year in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, he would have little left over for luxuries like books, for it cost £11-£14 to support a rural family for a year.

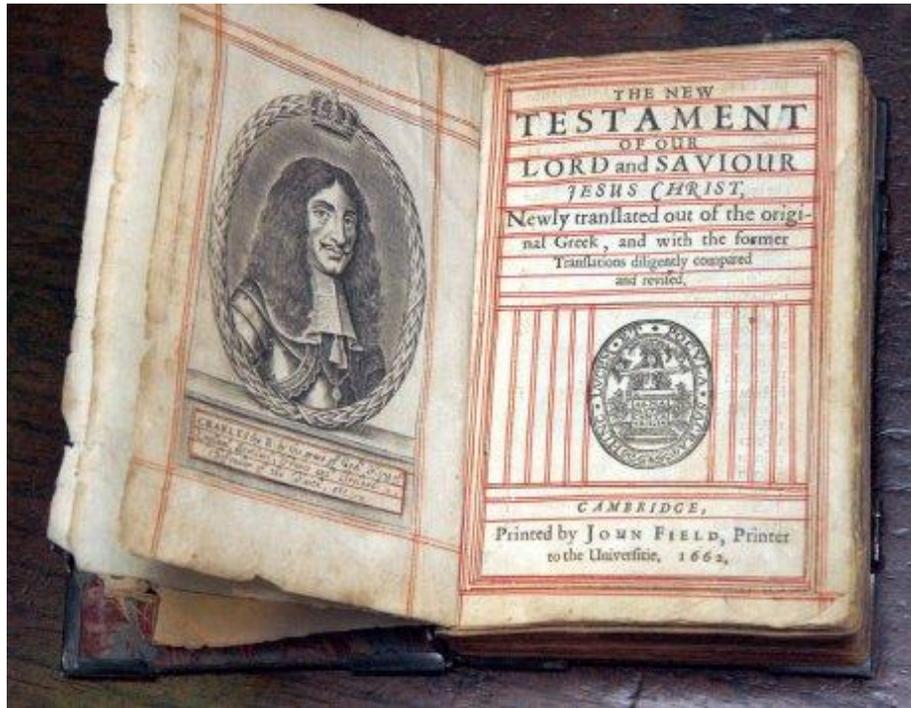
All Thomas’s possessions amounted to £49/9/-, a little less than other Thriplow shepherds accumulated before their death, so Thomas’s little library represented a great sacrifice on his part. His small Bible probably accounted for most of his outlay on books, although his Bible would not have been as elegant as the small 17<sup>th</sup> century Bible pictured.



*Staten Island Advance Photos/Irving Silverstein*

This Bible was printed in Cambridge in 1662, and is bound in leather, with silver etched corner plaques engraved with depictions of Jesus and the saints. Bibles were important possessions, and this Bible would have been kept locked in a special “bible box”. The inventory of Thomas’s goods however does not show he owned such a box. In all likelihood, Thomas purchased a New Testament, which were very popular, like the one pictured below, printed in 1662, with a frontispiece engraving of the restored Charles II. There were also many small Bibles containing both Old and New Testaments.

The “small books” in Thomas’s library were probably chapbooks, pocket-sized books costing only 2 pence each. These were almanacs, bawdy ballads, political and religious tracts, nursery rhymes, poetry, folk tales, and children’s stories. They were sold door-to-door or at fairs by chapmen, who also sold ribbons and gloves. Their name comes from the Old English *céap*, meaning “deal or barter”, but they were also cheap to produce, being made from a single page folded 12 times to produce a 24-page booklet (duodecimo) or eight times for a 16-page book (octavo).



Staten Island Advance Photos/Irving Silverstein

Robert was unusual not only for owning a small library, but also for being able to read, for only about 30% of males in rural 17<sup>th</sup> century England were literate. Margaret Spufford and Tessa Watt have studied the stock lists of publishers and booksellers in Cambridge at the time, identifying the most popular titles. Based on their work, Thomas would most likely have one or two popular ballads, some of which remained in print for over a hundred years from the mid-16<sup>th</sup> century. These were mainly religious tracts which called for social reform, collective responsibility for plague, repentance, apocalyptic warnings of the judgement to come (“Christ’s tears over Jerusalem”), and the saving power of faith.

Scripture stories were less popular, unless they dealt with adulterous love or beautiful young women. An evergreen such as “David and Bathsheba” must have been the 17<sup>th</sup> century equivalent of “Big Brother”, with its lurid account of how David

*...went forth to take the ayre  
All in the pleasant moneth of May,  
from whence he spide a lady faire...  
She stood within a pleasant Bower, all naked, for to wash her there;  
Her body, like the Lily Flowere,  
was covered with her golden haire...*

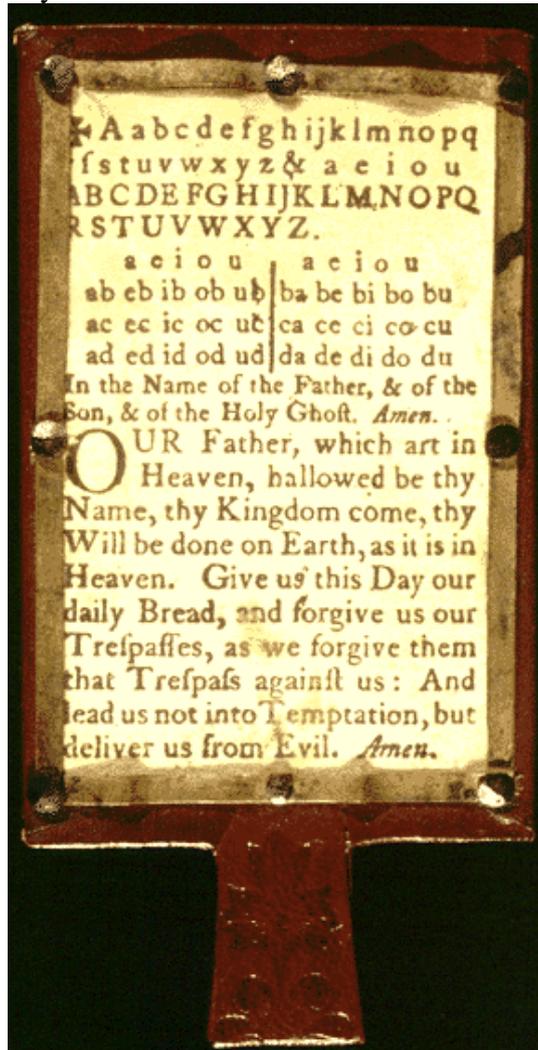
Deathbed scenes were also steady sellers, since the fear of death dominated 17<sup>th</sup> century religion. One hardy favourite, in spite of its unwieldy title, was “The earnest petition of the faithful Christian, being clerk of Bodnam, made upon his deathbed at the instant of transmutation”. This ballad lugubriously imitated for the 17<sup>th</sup> century reader the tolling of the passing-bell:

*Now my painful eyes lye rowling, and my passing bell is towling,  
Towling sweetly, I lye dying, and my life is from me flying”.*

Such ballads were thoroughly Protestant, and usually began with a confession of

unworthiness and repentance of sins, prayers for grace, expression of faith, and ended with hope for reception in heaven. The Reformation did not sweep away all vestiges of the old religion though, and many chapbooks and broad sheets contained traditional images of death and salvation, such as “St. Bernard’s Vision”, which contained a graphic woodcut of demons prodding a naked body with pitchforks. This was the kind of image which previously adorned the walls of the parish church and was now transferred to the chapbook or cottage wall.\*

Also popular, if less sensational, ballads told the story of the prodigal son and the story of Christ’s life and death and his miracles. There was still some demand for the parables, but the religious political ballads so prevalent in the 16<sup>th</sup> century were out of favour. Only a handful of these virulently anti-Catholic ballads remained, and these were about Protestant martyrs, three of whom were female. One such was “The Duchess of Suffolk”, exiled during Queen Mary’s reign and forced to flee with her husband and baby to Flanders, disguised as “people poor”. Such little books would fit in Thomas’s pocket and he could read them – probably with some difficulty – when he was in the fields with his sheep.



*Hornbook (Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis)*

Educational books were also popular, and Thomas may have had at least one for his children. Many homes owned a hornbook, to help children learn their “Christ cross row” – the alphabet in both capital and small letters, followed by samples of syllable sounds, the invocation to the

Trinity, and then the Lord's Prayer. The name is more familiar to us as "crisscross", although the word has lost all connection to the mark of the cross that was written before the alphabet in the hornbooks. This mark stood for the phrase "Christ-cross me speed" (May Christ's cross give me success), and was said before reciting the alphabet. Hornbooks were so called because the text was printed on paper or parchment mounted on a board with a small wooden handle, and covered with a protective sheet of transparent animal horn.

Thomas's will is among a number being studied by the Thriplow Paleography Group, all amateurs who are transcribing all the wills and inventories made in Thriplow between the 17<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries and conserved in the Cambridgeshire Archives. The information garnered will reveal not only the material condition of the former residents of Thriplow, but also the fortunes of their families over time, the nature of the village's social relations and the type of house they lived in. Wills were only drawn up when a person's possessions were worth more than £5, but other sources provide information on less well-off villagers. The group's aim is an exciting one, for they hope to "repopulate" Thriplow with the residents of former times. If you are interested in joining the work of the group – and the only "qualification" required is an interest in the past – please contact Shirley Wittering (208269).

This article draws on the work of Margaret Spufford and Tess Watt in Spufford's book *The World of Rural Dissenters, 1520-1725*, and on George Way's website ([http://www.silive.com/homegarden/antiques/index.ssf/2009/05/17thcentury\\_bible\\_represents\\_a.html](http://www.silive.com/homegarden/antiques/index.ssf/2009/05/17thcentury_bible_represents_a.html))

*\* Eds note – To see such wall paintings, go and visit the redundant church at Duxford.*

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## DR KEN JOYSEY



Committee 2008 - From L – Back row: Peter Yates, David Easthope, Ken Joysey.  
Front row: Angela Rimmer, Anthony Cooper, Geoff Axe, Shirley Wittering

Ken Joysey, who died on 25th November 2012, spent most of his scientific career in the Museum of Zoology. Ken came to Cambridge from research training at University College London, initially to the Department of Earth Sciences. Subsequently he crossed Downing Street to the Museum, which he entered as Assistant Curator in 1955. In 1970, the distinguished vertebrate palaeontologist Rex Parrington retired and Ken took over as Director.

Ken was Director of the Museum for 25 years (he retired in 1995) but even before he took up this role he had been part of a small group of members of the Department who collaborated with Arup Associates in the design of the Arup Building. This was a very time-consuming occupation, especially because Ken was responsible for masterminding the move of the Museum contents out of the old building and back into the new.

At UCL, Ken had worked on rates of evolution in fossil echinoderms, and an interest in quantifying evolutionary change underpinned all his subsequent work. At Cambridge he took a special interest in Ice Age mammals, and did extensive field work and collecting in the surrounding areas. Many of his colleagues knew him mostly in connection with this work. From 1970, however, Ken became actively involved in the study of molecular evolution. He had the advantage that his wife, Valerie, was working as an immunologist in the area of transplant immunology, and so conversations about proteins were a normal part of domestic life. Ken was already exploring this new area when a collaboration developed with Hermann Lehmann and Alex Romero-Herrera in Biochemistry. This collaboration ran very productively for 6 years, and Ken maintained involvement in the area for many years after. In 1974/75 Ken was a member of the Zaire River Expedition, led by John Blashford-Snell. Ken had done National Service (and had subsequently been seconded to the Ministry of Defence) so he was eminently suited to this military and scientific expedition which provided valuable material for research and for the Museum.

Ken had equal facility in zoology and geology, and he was an inspiring teacher of undergraduates, having taught for all the time of his presence in the Department. Many people currently working in the fields in which he lectured were inspired by his genuine and conspicuous enthusiasm, and remember him with affection and gratitude.

Ray Symonds, the Senior Assistant in the Museum under Ken, writes  
“Ken played a massively important part in the design and development of the present Museum building. The previous building had been a typical Victorian Museum and I'm sure that it was largely Ken's vision, museum expertise, technical know how and attention to detail that ensured we got a Museum whose design and facilities were quite remarkable for their day and are still worthy even by modern standards.  
Of enormous importance to me when I first started in the Museum was Ken's encyclopaedic knowledge of the collections, the collectors, the archives, the Museum's curatorial procedures and technical details of collections management. This was ALL the collections, not just those for which he had curatorial responsibility or had a research or teaching interest - there cannot be many people in the history of the Museum who have acquired such an in depth, detailed knowledge. His willingness to share this was vital to my career development. Whenever I asked Ken a question about the collections or the Museum's procedures I would invariably receive a comprehensive tutorial that not only answered my immediate question but provided me with all the background and related information. These sessions would frequently go on into the early evening but were invaluable and extremely enjoyable!

His passion for the collections and the animal kingdom, coupled with a passion for passing on knowledge and teaching was not just reserved for members of staff or students. I frequently witnessed him doing the same for members of the public, of all ages, visiting the galleries. I am not sure if that is how Museum Directors should spend their time but it is a measure of the generous nature of the man that all you had to do to be a recipient of his wisdom and enthusiasm was to show an interest!”

Adrian Friday and Ray Symonds  
November 2012

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## GLEANNINGS

**In Memoriam** - It is with great sadness that we have to report the deaths of several Thriplow people over the last few months. Eva Hall, Hilda Sheldrick, Mary Cooper, John Lord and Robin Smith. We send our condolences to their families.

**We are very sorry** to report the death of Dr Ken Joysey on Sunday November 25<sup>th</sup>; he was a founder member of the Thriplow Society and its vice-chairman for some years. His knowledge of Zoology and Natural History as well as the fact that he lived in Thriplow for many years made him an invaluable member of our community. His stories of family holidays in Norfolk digging up Hippos and other prehistoric creatures in the cliffs were always entertaining. He was highly regarded in academic circles in Cambridge and was awarded the high honour of Doctor of Science by the University of Cambridge. We send out condolences to Valerie and her family.

**Thank you to Sean Hogan** for several photos for our growing collection, some of which have a name and date on. The Thriplow Society is always grateful for old photographs which we can scan and return.

**Thank you to Daffodil Weekend Trust** for funding the binding of the first 20 years of the Thriplow Society Journal. They were bound by Barry Brignell of Cambridge in Cambridge Blue in three volumes, each volume with an index. They will join the other books rebound by the generosity of Daffodil Weekend. All we need now is a Museum Room in which we can display our growing collection of archival items so that members can see and enjoy them.



Can anyone put names and dates to this photo? It is school children at Harvest Festival time, probably in the late 1960s or 70s. If you can help please get in touch with Shirley Wittering 01763208269 or [Shirley.wittering@thriplow.org.uk](mailto:Shirley.wittering@thriplow.org.uk) we would love to know who they are.

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Back Cover



*Gargoyle in Thriplow Church, a 14<sup>th</sup> century inhabitant perhaps?*