

Editorial

Quote

I have put my sickle into other men's corne, and
have laid my building upon other men's foundations.
John Speed's Atlas of Great Britain, 1612

How long should a building be expected to last? Stonehenge, for instance is 5,000 years old, yet some high-rise flats in London are being pulled down after only about 20 years. A Tudor Cottage is much admired at 500 years yet needs constant repairing and most village churches were built by the Normans but to be still standing today have required constant repairs over the centuries.

Documentary and physical evidence show that the Tithe Barn in Rectory Farm, Middle Street was built under the auspices of the Bishop of Ely around 1300AD. That makes it approximately 700 years old. Imagine The farming year repeated for 700 years. Should we now, just build houses on a farmyard that has flourished for that long? Once these houses are built there will be no going back and 700 years of agricultural occupation will come to an end.

Or should we say 700 years is a good innings, let's forget the past and put up houses as people need somewhere to live (even rich people as these houses will not be cheap) and even if these houses will probably not last more than 60 years.

Shirley wittering and Bernard Meggitt, editorial team

From Victoria County History

Ealdorman Beorhtnoth (d. 991) left *THRIPlOW* to the monks of Ely, and the abbey held the manor in the early 11th century. In 1086 it included 6½ hides. On the creation of the see of Ely in 1109 most of Thriplow was assigned to the bishop, whose successors held it for the next five centuries. A plan to acquire the manor, sometimes called Thriplow Bury, for Gonville Hall, Cambridge, c. 1355 was not fulfilled.

In 1600 bishop Heton alienated it to the Crown. Sold in 1602 to Edward Harvest, it probably passed in 1611 to Henry Lucas, whose father Edward had previously leased it, ([fn. 49](#)) and perhaps in 1612 to William Reynolds (fl. 1645). In 1654 it was held by Abraham Reynolds, probably his son. By 1665 he had been succeeded by Thomas Reynolds, who in 1675 sold Thriplow Bury to Richard Minshull, later master of Sidney Sussex. In 1681 it was bought by Ambrose Benning ([fn. 53](#)) (d. 1720). His son, also Ambrose (d. 1730), was succeeded in turn by his sons the Revd. William Benning (d. 1792) and Ambrose (d. 1819). The latter left the manor to the use of his great-nephew Ambrose Hope Perkins (d. 1843). In 1846 Perkins's nephew, Henry Perkins, then a minor, held c. 1,000 a. in Thriplow.

In 1884 the latter sold the manor and estate to Joseph Ingle Ellis (d. 1890). Ellis was succeeded by his son A. C. Ellis who sold the estate in 1928. [\(fn. 58\)](#) The manor was retained, and in 1937 was held by the latter's wife, Lady Innes Robinson.

¶The manor house, Thriplow Bury or Place, stands at the south-west edge of the village. A house, recorded there in 1279, was ruinous in 1356. The present house includes in its main range part of a 17th-century timber-framed house, probably that with 10 hearths occupied in the 1660s by Anthony Bourne. It was cased in brick and extended westwards by Ambrose Benning c. 1700 and again extended north-westwards in 1713. Further alterations were made in the early 19th century, and c. 1930 when it was restored by H. C. Hughes.

Footnote, a Hyde is roughly 120 acres.

ON THE PARISH

Today when we talk of the 'Parish' we probably think of an area looked after by a minister of religion, yet the Parish has had a long and chequered history. The word Parish comes from the latin *Parochia* = district.

In the 8th century the Venerable Bede wrote his 'History of England' and in it he records that Pope Gregory the Great in the late 6th century gave instructions to his priests not to destroy pagan sites but to build Christian churches over them. Place names indicate where churches were built on these pagan sites, e.g. Harrow on the Hill, Thriplow - *Trippa's Hill*. In the 7th and 8th centuries Christianity was centered in monasteries lived in by monks. The Old English word for monastery is *MYNSTER*, this word covered all places of worship whether monastery (Ely, Crowland), private chapel of King or Thegn or regional church.

By the 10th century the word Minster implied parish church, these differed from the monasteries in that the priests who lived there (up to 20) went out into the surrounding countryside to preach Christianity to the local population. Up till then Christianity had been the prerogative of the upper classes and had had little effect on the working population. They were funded by a tax paid by adult householders, the Church Scot; those that were exempt went 'Scot-free'.

In Saxon England the King held all the land and in return for military service he would give his Thegns property (Thriplow was held by Ealdorman Brythnoth from King Athelstan). These lords would each want to build a church and would vie with each other to do so, (this can account for two churches side by side as at Swaffham Prior). By the time of the Danish invasions of the 10th-11th centuries, most Parish Churches had been built, by the 12th century parish boundaries had been formalised and by the 13th century the parish system was fully developed with a total of 8,000 parishes.

The parish was an economic area large enough to support a priest and its surrounding village, therefore the size of a parish varied widely according to the type and fertility of the soil. Parishes on the fertile soils of South Cambridgeshire are small while those on the poor waterlogged fens and heavy clays are very large; some of the largest parishes in England are on the high inhospitable soils of Yorkshire. The parish of Halifax has 14,081 acres compared with Thriplow's 2,501 acres.

In AD 960 King Edgar decreed that a tenth (tithe) of a parishioner's income should go to support the parish church. This continued until 1936 when they were abolished, though judging by the number of Thriplow wills that mention '*Tithes forgotten*' the priest didn't always get his due.

The Tithe Barn in Thriplow was probably the large barn at Rectory Farm in Middle Street, the home of George and Olive Deller. Dr Leigh Alston, an expert in timber-framed buildings dates it from around 1320; the Rectory (not the present house) dates from a deed dated 1284 when the Bishop of Ely gave the income from the great tithes (grain, hides and timber) to found his college of Peterhouse.

As the clerk in holy orders or parish priest was often the only person in a village who could write and probably one of only a few who could read, it fell to his lot to write wills, deeds, land agreements, Manor court minutes and any other piece of writing needed during the business of running a village. He was also likely to be the village teacher. So that eventually the church became not only responsible for keeping the ecclesiastical records but also for the civil records. Any business transaction or important ceremony such as handing over legacies or the civil part of a marriage would take place in the church porch, in public, to show that all was legal and proper. Later the annual meeting of the *Vestry* when the churchwardens and overseers of the poor presented their accounts would start in the church porch but then adjourn to an Inn for the rest of the meeting!

The existing churchwardens' accounts for Thriplow go back to 1782 with a few for the years 1637-1640. They cover the upkeep and repairs of the fabric and surroundings of the church, the purchasing of bread and wine, beer for the workmen, books and linen, journeys taken and payment to the poor from the charity money left in legacies. They record the moving-on of vagrants, the fostering of bastards, the feeding, clothing, caring and burial of paupers. From 1854 they show the renting of a room in the 'Green Man' at a 1/- a time for the Vestry meetings each Easter when the accounts were passed and the new churchwardens were sworn in. This is about the time that the south porch fell into such bad repair that it was taken down and the stones used to repair the roads! So it can be seen that the parish church was the centre of civil administrative affairs as well as ecclesiastical ones.

By the end of the 18th and the first half of the 19th centuries the Church of England with its monopoly of membership of Parliament and University had become lax and complacent. In

Thriplow despite much patching-up the church was in an appalling state of decay: walls bulging; damp, mouldy floors; windows patched up with wood; the roof of the south transept covered with tarpaulin. The churchwardens, overseers of the poor, surveyors and constables had rotated their jobs annually from among a few select men, and from 1790-1832 a period of 42 years, just two men, Joseph Ellis and his son, also Joseph, filled the post of churchwarden and kept the churchwarden's accounts.

The weakness of the established church and the rise of non-conformity led to demands for reform in government and education. The 1832 Reform Act was the first of many such acts which enlarged the franchise and allowed a more representational parliament, although non-conformists were not to be admitted to University until 1858. The 1834 Poor Law Reform Act took the responsibility of caring for the poor away from the parish and put it into the hands of Poor Law Unions composed of several parishes combining to run a single central Workhouse. And in 1894 civil Parish Councils came into being, the smallest unit of government, elected from its inhabitants by its inhabitants and dealing with all secular matters within the parish; Parochial Church Councils replaced the *Vestry* to deal with purely church affairs.

Thus, was broken the hold the church had on the parish for a thousand years.

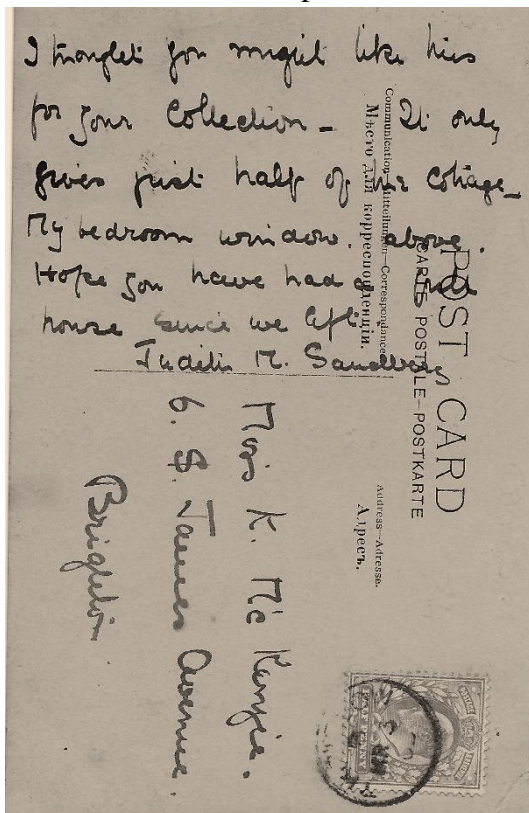
Shirley Wittering

PICTORIAL CONUNDRUMS: The Rev Francis Sandberg



I bought this postcard from e-bay as it was advertised as coming from Thriplow. It shows three ladies, two in black and rather elderly and one in white with a black arm band. There is also a man dressed rather like a servant. The ladies are playing croquet.

Here is the back of the postcard –



It says "I thought you might like this for your collection – it only gives just half of the cottage. My bedroom window above. Hope you have had a full house since we left.
Judith M. Sandberg.

The postmark is Thriplow, March 3, 190? And the card is addressed to Miss K. Mc'Kenzie, 6 St James Avenue, Brighton.

The house looked vaguely familiar, so I asked Tony Charter and Harriet Swinnerton-Dyer and they both agreed it was the back of Harriet's house, *the Dower House* or as it was known then as *The Cottage*, in Lower Street.

The name Sandberg rang a bell and I found that the Rev Francis Brearley Sandberg was vicar of Thriplow from 1906 – 1908. So the picture showed the Rev Sandberg's daughter Judith (with

the black armband) and the postmark was probably 1909. The Rev Sandberg died on 3 September 1908 aged 52.

He had had an interesting life being vicar of Bedford in 1879, and moving to Karachi, Sindh in 1882 where he served as chaplain for four years. He moved to various places in India for a total of twenty years. In 1906 he eventually moved back to England where he was presented to the living of Thriplow.

At the inquest it was stated that the Vicar suffered from breathlessness and had used some chloroform to ease some irritation on the back of his head. The cause of death was stated as heart failure.

Although the Rev Sandberg was vicar at Thriplow for only 2 years he was active in continuing the New Organ Fund which had been started in 1886 and he was responsible for the installation of the new Organ in May 1908 *

I haven't been able to find out who the two ladies and the man are as the census is not very clear on where people lived as there are no house names or numbers for Lower Street.

*Michael Moule's grandfather remembered seeing it arrive by horse and cart from Millers in Cambridge.

Shirley Wittering

Q/SO 7

QUARTER SESSION ORDER BOOKS

15.1.1768-2.5.1776

Orders made at the Sessions of the Peace for
CAMBRIDGESHIRE
Beginning 15th January 1765
Ending 2nd May 1776

15.1.1768 House of James Miles sanctioned as Meeting House in Foulmire.

12.1.1776 ORDER FOR GENERAL SEARCH

Order for the Clerk of peace to prepare warrants to be signed by two of his Majesties Justices of the Peace to the High Constables of their respective Hundreds within the County directing them to make a general search on the night of 1st February 1776 for finding and apprehending of Rogues, Vagabonds and other Idle and Disorderly persons and such as they shall find to detain in Custody and by Eleven O'clock next morning bring them before such of his majesty's Justices of the peace Acting in and for this County as shall then be assembled at the Shire Hall in Cambridge and that several Chief Constables do then and there personally attend to show what they have done in pursuit of the warrants to them to be directed as aforesaid.

2.2.1776 All parishes except Papworth, Radfield, Staploe and **Thriploe** Hundreds brought in vagrants.

GLEANNINGS

We are very sorry to report the death of Bryan Howe of Sawston and sometime member of the Thriplow Society. Bryan who died aged 84 could trace his ancestors back to Sir Robert Howe, Governor of Khartoum, who lived in Thriplow. Bryan was due to come to the Thriplow Society to tell about Sir Robert Howe next year.

We are also sorry to report the death of Professor Peter Spufford, FSA, FBA, Professor Emeritus of European History, on Sunday 19 November. Peter lived in the Guildhall, Whittlesford, with his wife Margaret until her death. He gave the Thriplow Society a fascinating talk on the History of Coins in 2004. Margaret was responsible for leading a team transcribing and publishing the Heath Tax (1662 – 1674) for England.

We have a large number of Thriplow Journal spares, £1 per Volume, (3 issues). There is an index to the Journals on the Thriplow Society web site. Please contact Shirley Wittering 01763 2028269 or shirley.wittering@thriplow.org.uk.

Back Cover:



Gargoyle in Thriplow Church, a 14th century inhabitant perhaps?