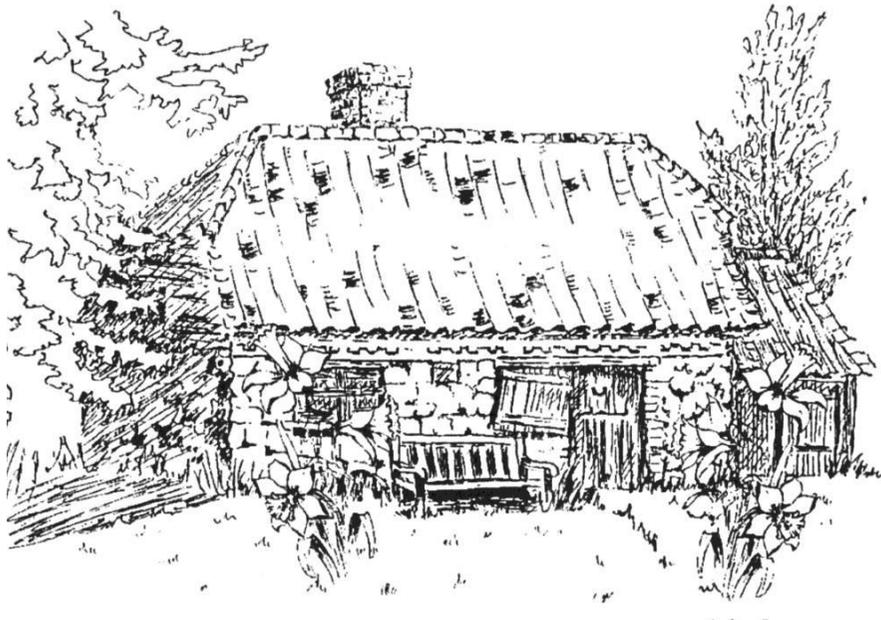


# The Thriplow Journal



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## EDITORIAL

'A gem cannot be polished without friction, nor a man perfected without trials'  
*Seneca , Roman Philosopher AD 60*

Covid has certainly brought trials to all of us although perhaps we are not yet "perfected". However there is, at long last, light at the end of the Covid tunnel. The vaccination programme is progressing well and by the time you read this many of us should have had our second 'jab'. We are really looking forward to being able to resume our meetings and the first one will be our AGM. Annual subscriptions are also now due. Please look out for the information about both the AGM and subscriptions inside the journal.

Observant members who were expecting Volume 29/3 - Spring 2021 may have noticed that this volume is numbered 30/1. The reason for this is to regularize the numbering so that the three issues produced each year will all have the same volume number, so this year the next two issues will be Summer 30/2 and Winter 30/3.

Following the article in the last issue from Angela Lambert we received a lovely message from Colin Child who lives in New Zealand saying how much he enjoys the journal. Colin's connection to Thriplow is through Hale Prime (1785-1857) who married Mary Ann Lambert. The census of 1841 lists Hale Prime and wife Mary Ann living at Bacon's Manor in Church Street. The 1851 census lists Hale, Mary Ann and 3 children at Bacon's Manor.

We love hearing from members and also receiving articles and/or photographs for publication. In this issue we have a super article and photographs from member John Deed. If you have anything that may be of interest please let us know - it doesn't have to be long, a couple of sentences can be enough to spark interest from others.

Pat & Angela  
Journal Editors

On behalf of the Thriplow Society our chairman has sent condolences to the Royal family following the death of His Royal Highness, Prince Philip Duke of Edinburgh.

## Clark's Island

*An article in the last journal about John Clark mentioned that he had an island named after him. Here is a bit more about that island.*

**Clark's Island** is a small island located in Duxbury Bay in Massachusetts, USA. It was named for John Clark, the first mate of the *Mayflower*, the ship that brought the Pilgrims to New England. The island was initially considered for the location of the Pilgrim's settlement, but was rejected in favour of a site to the south, which became known as Plymouth, Massachusetts. Although physically closer to the town of Duxbury, the island is officially part of the town of Plymouth. The island is located north of the Duxbury Pier Light (locally known as "Bug Light") and Saquish Neck, and west of Saquish Head.



*The Duxbury Pier Light with Clark's Island in the distance*

Approximately 17 acres of land on the island are owned by the Duxbury Rural & Historical Society. These holdings include land on the west shore, the eastern shore, Pulpit (Election) Rock, a boat house called Hop House, and the house property known as Cedarfield (built in 1836 and the second-oldest house on the island). The property was donated to the DRHS in 1969 by the Pilgrim Rock Foundation. The property had been part of the estate of Sarah Wingate Taylor (d. 1964).



*Cedarfield, Clark's Island. Photo c. 1890. Collection of the DRHS, Drew Archival Library.*



*Hop House, Clark's Island, c. 2015*

The Island's European history extends back to the landing of the Pilgrims when, during a blinding storm in December of 1620, a band of Pilgrim explorers rowed into Plymouth Bay. Leaving the *Mayflower* anchored off Cape Cod, this group of 18 had been sent ahead to find a suitable place for settlement. John Clark, the first mate, spotted the shore of what is now known as Clark's Island and was the first of them to set foot there. Historical legend says that, as the next day was the Sabbath, the explorers could not begin repairs on their battered vessel.

Instead, the group, including William Brewster, Myles Standish, and William Bradford, marched to the top of the nearest hill in search of a place to worship. They found an enormous boulder at the crest of the Island, and there elected to hold their first worship service ashore. Today, the boulder is known as Pulpit (Election) Rock and is inscribed with words from William Bradford's journal, "On the Sabbath Day Wee Rested."



A darker episode in the island's history was its use as an internment camp for the local Native population during King Philip's War (1675-1676). Despite little evidence of a threat, Plymouth authorities feared a Native insurrection and they voted to relocate over 1,000 people on the island, "and there to remain and not to depart from there...upon pain of death." With very few resources, starvation was inevitable.

The Town of Plymouth sold Clark's Island to a group of individual families in 1690, many of whom would continue to hold the properties for centuries. From Cedarfield, Sarah Wingate Taylor directed the Pilgrim Rock School for American Studies beginning in 1963, inviting talented students and scholars to engage in discussion and advanced learning. Notable visitors to the island throughout the history of the house, include Henry David Thoreau, Louisa May Alcott, and Truman Capote.

Sarah Wingate Taylor's tradition of education is maintained each year through the Sarah Wingate Taylor lecture series, and the annual picnic and commemorative service at Pulpit Rock.

*Ceremony at Pulpit Rock, Annual Clark's Island Picnic. c.2015.*



*Pat Easthope*

## An hour's walk in Thriplow Orchid Meadows

One of my favourite walks in Thriplow is through the Orchid Meadows off School Lane. If you look closely it's amazing what you can see. What follows are the insects I spotted and photographed in just one hour on August 13th a couple of years ago. We tend to refer to the bigger or more glamorous species on the planet when thinking of conservation, but actually even these little creatures are vital to our eco-system. So, look out for them and appreciate them! My thanks to Solveig Symmons, who runs the excellent Wild Space facility at Thriplow Primary School, with help in identifying these. The descriptions I have lifted from various internet sites so excuse the plagiarism!



7.08 a.m. You've probably spotted the **seven spot ladybird** many times as they are the most common of our 46 species of ladybird. They are found in gardens and parks – or anywhere there are aphids for it to feed on. Adults hibernate in hollow plant stems, sometimes clustering together in a large group. The bright colours of ladybirds warn predators that they taste horrible.

7.11 a.m. The **hawthorn shieldbug** is the shieldbug species that you are most likely to encounter. This handsome invertebrate can be found wherever suitable shrubby food-plants are available - from garden to woodland. Eggs are laid in spring and, over the summer, the nymphs feed on ripening red berries, particularly hawthorn, but also rowan, whitebeam and cotoneaster.



7.23 a.m. The medium-sized **meadow brown butterfly** is one of the commonest grassland butterflies, on the wing in the summer, from June to September. It even flies in dull weather when other butterflies are inactive. Adults can be seen in large numbers, flying low over the grass and flowers. Caterpillars feed on a variety of grasses such as fescues, bents and meadow-grasses.



7.29 a.m. **The Meadow grasshopper** is a resident of mainly damp, unimproved pastures and meadows. Grasshoppers go through a series of moults, from wingless nymphs to winged adults, shedding their exoskeletons as they grow. Nymphs are present from April onwards, turning into adults in June who feed on plants and grass.

7.31 a.m. Until the early 20th century, **Roesel's bush-cricket** was only found on the south-east coast. Recent years have seen a rapid expansion in its range, particularly helped by roadside rough grassland and scrub providing a 'corridor' for it to travel along. It favours damp meadows and grassland, but can be found elsewhere. It is usually wingless, but a rare winged form does exist and fly, and may be more numerous during hot summers.



7.41 a.m. **Moth!**. But what sort? Can you help identify it?

7.52 a.m. **Tree bumblebee**. One of the 7 widespread and abundant species, found in a wide range of habitats across the UK despite only first arriving in the country in 2001. Appears to have a distinct preference for suburbia and woodlands, perhaps partially driven by its habit of nesting in bird boxes and other manmade environments, as well as tree holes.



7.56 a.m. **The scorpion fly** is a strange-looking insect that is found in gardens and hedgerows, and along woodland edges, particularly among Stinging nettles and bramble. It has a long, beak-like projection from its head that it uses to feed on dead insects. The scorpion like tail is used by the male in courtship displays.



7.57 a.m. **Green bottle fly**. A common fly, seen here feasting on blackberries which are found at the edge of the meadows, it has a bright green metallic body.



7.59 a.m. At almost 2cm long, the **hornet mimic hoverfly** is the largest hoverfly species in the UK. As its name suggests, it is an excellent mimic of the hornet, but is harmless to humans. Only a very rare visitor to the country up to the 1940s, it has become more common in Southern England in recent years, and is still spreading northwards, perhaps as a result of climate change. It is particularly prevalent in urban areas. The adults are migratory and the larvae live inside wasps' nests.

8.03 a.m. **The Peacock butterfly's** spectacular pattern of eyespots evolved to startle or confuse predators, make it one of the most easily recognized and best-known species. It is from these wing markings that the butterfly gained its common name. Undersides of the wings are very dark and look like dead leaves. A fairly large butterfly and a strong flyer.



8.04 a.m. The only species in its genus, **hoverfly Myathropa Florea** is a large and distinctive hoverfly found commonly throughout the UK, Europe and Africa. Adults may be seen on flowers from May to September.



So, next time you have an hour to spare or need a change from your lockdown routines why not go out and see what you can find?

*John Deed*

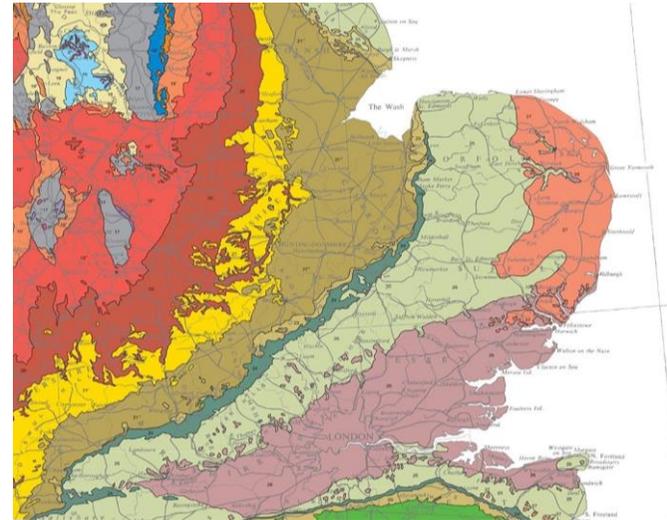
## Landscape 'The Answer Lies in the Soil'

*'Little Boy Blue, come blow up your horn,  
The Sheep's in the meadow, the cow's in the corn,  
Where is the boy who looks after the sheep?  
He's under a haystack fast asleep.'*

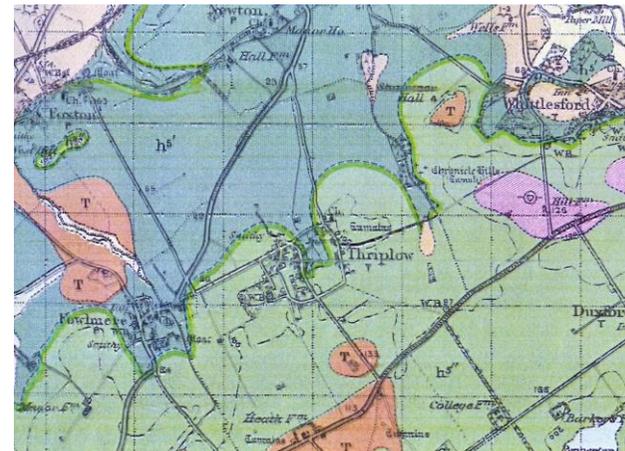
In 1992 I enrolled on a course run by the University of Cambridge Board (now Institute) of Continuing Education. The course on English Local History was run by Dr David Dymond and Dr Mark Bailey; we met once a week and I was soon hooked on the fascinating and varied subjects being taught. In 1995 Mark Bailey moved to a new job and his place was taken by Dr Evelyn Lord in 1996. In 1997 Evelyn organised a series of monthly lectures at Wolfson College with professional and knowledgeable lecturers. In 2001 the lecturer was Dr (now Professor) Tom Williamson head of the Landscape department at the University of East Anglia, Norwich who, despite suffering from a bad cold, gave a fascinating talk on Enclosure and the effect of dividing the large open fields into many smaller privately owned fields by fencing and ditching, thus preventing wildlife passing unhindered across the landscape. The Great Bustard, for instance, needed large open spaces to roam and by removing these spaces and hunting these large beautiful birds their habitat was removed and the birds could no longer flourish in the changed landscape.

By the time Tom Williamson gave his talk, I had finished my Masters course and was looking for a subject for my PhD. I had become fascinated by the subject of Enclosure and also being interested in Wildlife, I found Tom's talk just what I was looking for. I asked him if he would take me as his student and become my Supervisor. After the usual interviews I was accepted. The first words Tom said was 'the first thing you must study is the geology of your area as the soils and vegetation depend on the subsoils for their character.'

This I did and found that most of South Cambridgeshire, the area I was studying, was lying on a band of chalk, indeed when we bought our house in the south Cambridgeshire village of Thriplow, we were told that it was lying on 200 feet of chalk. The map below shows this band of chalk (coloured pale green) lying diagonally across the southern half of England to the North Norfolk coast.



Geology map of the east of England (25 miles to one inch), the pale green band stretching from the left of the map to the north Norfolk coast is Chalk.



A more detailed geology map shows the beautiful loops between hard chalk (dark green) and a softer chalk (light green) between which water can be accessed by sinking wells. Note that at the head of each loop lies a village, founded to access water without which life cannot exist.

In this map Dark Green shows Lower Chalk, with band of Melbourn rock horizon between it and Middle chalk, light green. Pink shows Plateau gravel. Light yellow is Alluvium, fawn is valley gravels and brown shows Teale gravels. The most significant rock horizons are those of the Lower and Middle Chalk. Lower chalk or chalk marl has a hard band of rock called the Burwell Rock which is the source of the material of which the local clunch is made. It is one of the few buildings stones of any importance and was used in several medieval church interiors.

At the base of the Middle Chalk horizons, there occurs a band of harder chalk, the Melbourn Rock, and similar outcrops are found at the base of the Lower Chalk as the Totternhoe Stone (Totternhoe is a village in Bedfordshire where this stone has been quarried since Roman times). These are not only very good aquifers supplying pure chalk water, but can be quarried for building stone in an area where other such stone is non-existent. These harder bands of chalk are known locally as 'clunch'

### SOILS:

The soils fall into three main types or associations as defined by the Soil Survey of Great Britain, namely, the Moulton Association, the Swaffham Prior Association and the Burwell Association, these are briefly described below.

Chalky, sandy deposits cover the southern parts which are classified as being within the Moulton Soil Association; soils of this type also occur widely in surrounding areas and are noticeable along either side of stretches of the Icknield Way. They consist of dark brown loam and contain flint and sand as well.

Where the land has been actively cultivated over the years, there is also an amount of chalk, which has worked up to the surface from lower levels. The immediate subsoil is a brown, sandy loam, changing abruptly to a chalkier texture, but still with some sand at 40 to 90 cms. depth. Farmers traditionally described these soils as "redlands", since arable fields have a reddish-brown tinge after rain. The soil is permeable, and thus has good drainage, readily absorbing rainfall.



Redlands at Thriplow

The second Association known as the Swaffham Prior Association comprises a chalky and loamy drift over solid chalk. On cultivated land the plough layer is a friable, dark brown loam, with a well-developed structure. At a depth of about 60 cms. disturbed chalk is encountered, but the depth of this feature is sometimes variable. The soils are porous and thus have free drainage.

The third main type of soil is the Burwell Association which is also very chalky in character and often appears near the line of springs, which rise at the underlying boundary of Melbourn rock. Vancouver calls this 'whitelands'.

Where chalk is never very far away from the surface, soil fertility may well be aided by having a rich base of lime present in the subsoil layer which could help to maintain soil structure. As Michael Aston observes: *'Soil degradation frequently occurs where clearance of tree cover hastens the run-off of nutrients and also quickens the percolation of water, which in turn leaches out nutrients resulting in a more sterile soil, however in chalkland where clearance of natural woodlands occurs there appears to be little soil loss of lime but other nutrients would leach, hence the need of constant renewal of goodness provided by the sheep fold course.'*

During the Devensian glaciation (60,000 to 10,000 BP) this area lay south of the principal ice-sheet and was subject for a considerable time to periglacial conditions; this produced extensive solifluction materials, drifts of sands and gravels and innumerable frost hollows and "hummocky" ground. Today these relict small landscape features often impede drainage and determine land use.

Notable examples and a distinctive feature of this area of south Cambridgeshire are 'fossil' or 'relict pingos', the result of a body of ice pushing up beneath the ground surface to form a mound which sometimes could be 10 metres or more in height and as much as 30 metres across. Over time, continual freezing and thawing added to these distinctive features of the landscape. Some are inhabited by the 'Fairy Shrimp', (*Chirocephalus diaphanous*) whose eggs dry out and become dormant in the soil in dry years, only hatching out when the area becomes water-logged again.

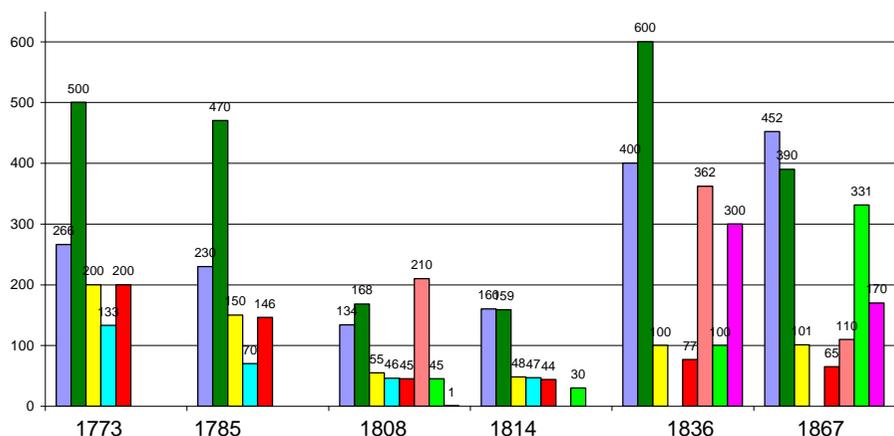


Fossil Pingo in Thriplow, home of the Fairy Shrimp

In Melbourn these pits were called 'Blind Wells'. Parts of this area are now Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) as wet meadow reserves. Whether these were considered a drawback, or an advantage, by farmers is unclear. Those that occurred on waste or moorland would have been a useful source of water for cattle pastured there. Later when the wastes were enclosed and ploughed, probably as now, in wet years, farmers ploughed round them and accepted fewer crops, and in drier years they were ploughed and grew crops with the rest of the field.

As men began to settle and cultivate the land, one of the most important determinants would be a supply of water for domestic use and farming. Water was available at the junction of Lower and Middle chalk where there was a spring line, here many of the villages were located. On the higher ground to the south east, on the escarpment proper, surface water was absent, here there is still a tract of heathland, albeit much reduced, where sands and gravels can be found. Before enclosure these heaths were extensive and contributed to the sheep corn husbandry practised in south Cambridgeshire, the sheep grazed the heaths and commons and provided the dung to fertilize the soil to grow the crops.

Also the soils being light are easily cultivated and have been since the Bronze Age. Below is a chart showing the acreage of crops grown in the Thriplow area from 1773 to 1867.



■ wheat ■ barley ■ oats ■ rye ■ peas/beans ■ fallow ■ grass ■ turnips

Note that barley was the most grown, this was used to make Beer. Many of the South Cambridgeshire villages had Maltings where the grain was malted ready to be transported to King's Lynn and London ready for brewing.

A few years ago, I was watching a programme where a Yorkshire artist explained that the subsoil influences the colour of the plants. In his county there are two distinct types of rock, Millstone Grit which is dark and Limestone which is light, and he showed how the vegetation in the landscape was influenced by the rocks and soil below.

In the chalk lands of East Anglia the landscape is pale and the plants correspondingly pale, a feature which attracted painters such as John Constable and the Norwich school.

Of course, the weather plays a vital part in the growing of crops, East Anglia is the driest part of England, with Cambridge having a yearly average of only 568mm (22 inches). This lack of rain not only suits the growing of grain, but means that meadows where grass is grown for cattle is at a premium and thus had a higher value. Hence the nursery rhyme at the head of this article, the sheep should be in the pasture not the meadow and the cattle should be in the wetter meadows. Little boy blue is asleep and neglecting his work and the stock are running amok.

Before enclosure in the nineteenth century, cattle were allowed onto the fallow field and other charity lands first as they used their long tongues to grab the grasses, the sheep were allowed on after the cattle as they nibbled the grass close to the ground with their teeth. Thus the sheep would take all the grass leaving nothing for the cattle if they were allowed on the land first.

I hope this short discourse on the landscape of south Cambridgeshire will make us look with different eyes on our rather restricted walks around our villages.

*Shirley Wittering*

## Subscription Reminder

Thriplow Society annual subscriptions of £10 per household are now due. It is a tremendous help to our treasurer when subscriptions are paid promptly. If you need to pay on line please contact our treasurer, [peter.yates15@btinternet.com](mailto:peter.yates15@btinternet.com) who will be able to give you the society's bank details.

## A Peep into the Records 5

### THE MILITIA

How was control of criminal activity carried out before the days of the Police Force?

Following the restoration of Charles II in 1660, parliament passed several acts empowering the Lord Lieutenant of each county to appoint officers and raise men for a militia force. Although the king commanded the forces, they were not centrally funded. The burden of supplying men and equipment fell on property owners, in proportion to their income from land or their property value. The militia could be called out for local police actions, to keep the peace, and in the event of a national emergency such as the threatened invasion by Napoleon.



*The Militia late 18<sup>th</sup> century by John Nixon*

Officers were to be appointed from among the property-owning class. Men were to be chosen by ballot from the able-bodied men of the parish between the ages of 18 and 50, and would serve for three years (soon extended to five). If they wished not to serve they could either provide a substitute or pay a £10 fine.

In Thriplow the fees mentioned above seem to have been paid by the Overseers' of the Poor. From 1779 the fees varied from £1.14.8 per quarter to £1.6.0 from 1782 (with two quarters paid in January 1781 and 1782). The Overseers must have travelled to Cambridge to pay these fees as they also claimed 2 shillings for their journeys.

One way the Overseers of Thriplow could manage able bodied unemployed men was to pay them to join the Militia though the Overseers' accounts only mentions this happening twice, first on April 27 1782 Jabez Wallis was paid £4.0.0 as Militiaman and second on April 30 1782 when John Blanks was also paid £4.0.0 as Militiaman.

Thriplow records from Cambridgeshire Chronicle:-

#### **1861 April 20<sup>th</sup>**

Last week about 50 members of the Tenth Herts Rifle volunteers (officers and men) enjoyed an excellent field day in the grounds of their Ensign, H. Perkins, Esq., Thriplow Place, where a bountiful supply of English cheer was provided. Everything passed off most satisfactorily'

#### **1864 April 23<sup>rd</sup>**

Tenth Hert's Rifles - The members of this corps enjoyed a capital field day on the 14th. inst., at Thriplow Place, the residence of Ensign Perkins, who entertained them with good English hospitality. The corps went through a variety of movements, and they were drilled in volley and file firing and skirmishing under the command of Captain Simpson, Lieutenant Phillips and Ensign Perkins. Adjutant Gifford was present and took part in the proceedings.

Before leaving Thriplow Place the corps, at the request of the Captain, gave some lusty cheers for Ensign and Mrs Perkins. The corps enjoyed the hospitable attention of Nash Woodham, Esq., on their way to and from Shepreth Station.



*Thriplow Bury, the home of Ensign Perkins, where manoeuvres were carried out in 1864*

The militia was constitutionally separate from the army, but from the 1790s militiamen were encouraged to volunteer for the army, and did so in large numbers. During the French Revolutionary Wars the militia expanded to a total strength of 82,000 men in February 1799, reducing to 66,000 through a parliamentary act of that year designed to reinforce the regular army by encouraging militia volunteers through the offer of bounties for enlistment.

In 1802 peace with France led to the disembodying of the militia, which was embodied again in 1803, when hostilities resumed. Britain's increasing overseas troop commitments during the Napoleonic Wars resulted in growing pressure on recruitment for the militia, both for home defence and as a feeder for the army. During the period to 1815, 110,000 men transferred to line regiments as against 36,000 prior to 1802. The militia continued to serve as a coastal defence force, as well as guarding dockyards and prisoners of war, and performing other duties including riot control during the Luddite unrest of 1811-13. It was disembodyed in 1815 but balloting continued until 1831.'

While the Militia were used to control civil unrest, each parish had a Constable whose job it was to see that the parish was law abiding. A parish constable, also known as a petty constable, was a law enforcement officer, usually unpaid and part-time, serving a parish. The position evolved from the ancient chief pledge of a tithing, and takes its name from the office of constable, with which it was originally unconnected. For more on this see the Thriplow Society Journal Vol. 17/2 and a fascinating description by Tony Charter of her Great Grandfather who was the last Constable of Thriplow.

*Shirley Wittering*

## The Thriplow Society A G M

When the village hall has fully reopened, and we know that we can safely meet, a date will be set for our AGM and members will be notified.

After the business part of the meeting there will be another opportunity to "Show and Tell". These evenings have proved popular in the past so if you have anything of interest that you could bring along to 'show and tell' a little about please give it some thought - the meeting will be a few weeks away yet so there is time to prepare.

The programme committee will be preparing a programme of meetings for the rest of the year. Several speakers had to be cancelled last year and it is hoped that they will still be available, however, nothing can be confirmed until we know definitely that we can meet.

## GLEANINGS.

### THANK YOU

**Ann Robertson** for putting back issues of the journal onto the Thriplow Society web site and bringing it up to date.

**Shirley Murray** for donating an old minute book from the Over Sixties Club. Also for donating a glass bowl depicting an engraving of The Smithy. This bowl was originally presented to Jack Howe in appreciation of his many years service on the parish council. Jack had served from 1965 – 1968 and again from 1976 – 1992, a total of 19 years which, at that time, was longer than anyone else had served. The engraving was done by Roger Philippo of Harston.

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### CONDOLENCES

We were very sorry to learn of the death of Thriplow Society member Brenda Meggitt on 8<sup>th</sup> April following a short, rapidly progressive illness. Her husband Bernard has said that with her mature student university studies in her 60's with BA and MA in History, Brenda really appreciated the Society's Academic Lecture Meetings, friendship with members, the various outings and Christmas parties and she was happy to do her share of the catering. Although too ill to meet people, she asked Bernard to thank everyone for adding to her happy life since coming to Thriplow ten years ago. We send sincere condolences to Bernard and the family.

We were also very sorry to learn that accomplished artist Gerald Coulson, of Foreman's Road, died on 6 February.

Gerald was named by the Fine Art Guild as one of the top 10 best-selling UK artists no less than 15 times in 12 years and placed at number one on three occasions. He was also a vice president and founder member of the Guild of Aviation Artists and won the Flight International Trophy for outstanding aviation painting four times.

Entirely self-taught, Gerald began his full time painting career in 1969, building a reputation that was second to none. His work covered many different subjects and sold worldwide. Gerald was also a qualified pilot, gaining his pilots licence in 1960. Before taking up his career as an artist Gerald was an aircraft engineer and his knowledge of aircraft engineering, combined with his drawing ability, also saw him become a technical illustrator of service manuals for both civil and military aircraft.

We send sincere condolences to his wife Chris and the family.



*Every day that passes, passes into history*