

THORPE HISTORY GROUP

Newsletter - Winter 2023

**Our next talk:
Manifestations of Madness: Women's Voices from
the Norfolk Lunatic Asylum
Julie Jakeway**

**Friday 17th February 2023
St Andrew's Centre, Thunder Lane**

Beginning at 7.30pm.

**Admission £4 per head – please bring exact money if
you can.**

Update

Welcome to our winter newsletter that contains details of our programme of events for 2023. There are three talks and several guided walks-including some we have not done before.

This edition contains a fascinating article on Ray Bloomfield's memories of Thorpe. It was found in the Janet Smith Archive and has been prepared by Joanna Barker and Pam Harwood and will be of interest to those of you who have lived in Thorpe for some time.

Our last event of 2022 on the Thorpe Schools 1937-1997 went well and there was a lot of interest in the material on display. We are considering doing a further event with more information about these schools, plus other schools not featured

Finally, we have included a copy of our most recent accounts so you can see where our money comes from and where it goes.

Thorpe People – Ray Bloomfield - Part 1

On a visit to the Janet Smith Archive earlier this year, I came across such an interesting handwritten document by Ray Bloomfield in 1987 recalling his childhood memories of growing up in Thorpe as a small boy in the 1920's. Pam Harwood has very kindly typed it up for our newsletter .

Joanna Barker and Pam Harwood

I lived in Thorpe St Andrew, at Southwold House on Yarmouth Road, from early 1921 when I was 7½, until late 1924 when I was 11. Opposite our house, where School Avenue now is, was Dale's Loke Farm. Nearby was a farm which was mainly for pigs, though I also remember watching the cows being milked – by hand of course. My mother was worried when we first moved there, by the powerful farm odours which drifted across the road and penetrated our house. "No, no risk to health", said Dr Davidson, amused, I imagine, at being consulted. In fact, he assured my mother that the smells were positively healthy – something to do with ammonia in the atmosphere, we children were told. What on the other hand probably was a health hazard, was the huge fly population, also engendered in the pigsties and on the farm midden, though nobody seemed worried. It seemed merely a part of everyday life to have a constant buzzing of flies above the dinner table, and there was nothing repulsive about the sticky fly paper, also buzzing with flies struggling to free themselves, which hung from the ceiling.



Across the road at the Red Lion (pictured above), an exciting occasion was the installation of one of the first radios – or rather wireless sets as we called them – to be seen in Thorpe. "Seen" is the word rather than "heard", because the village children, standing around the open door of the saloon bar, gazing in wonder at this contraption, with its large black panel festooned with knobs and dials, never heard any sounds coming out. No doubt, at opening time, the doors were closed in the face of the children, and 2LO was switched on, as the Steward and Patterson mild and bitter was being drawn.

Common Lane, opposite, ran steeply down from the road, and its rutted and potholed surface continued behind our house and those of our neighbours. The village boys played endless games of football in the lane, and I shyly joined in. Common Lane also gave us a short cut to the marshes, and from the marsh dykes came many a jam jar of minnows, sticklebacks, and tadpoles in the spring. The main access to the marshes was, of course, as now, across the station bridge. They were extensively grazed and the grass was short and sweet as it should be in water meadows. One evening, a cow slipped into a dyke, and in my memory's ear, I can still hear her bellowing her misery. As dusk fell, I could just see from my bedroom window, silhouetted in the fading light, a gang of men with ropes advancing along the dykes to haul the terrified beast out.

At the top of Common Lane, was the little shop where we spent our pocket money on gob-stoppers, bulls-eyes, and delicious sherbet, sucked out of little cylinders through a liquorice tube.

A few doors to the east of Southwold House was Mrs Folkes' general store, and a little further along was Mr Strangleman the butcher. My father and Mr Strangleman clubbed together each year to buy fireworks for Guy Fawkes. From the safety and in shelter of the big lean-to in our garden we watched our fathers light the bonfire and set fireworks off, while the village boys clambered up to the less privileged position of our back wall and garden gate.

Favourite walks, especially on Sunday afternoons, were provided by the round of Thunder Lane, Laundry Loke (now Laundry Lane) and Pound Lane, sometimes clockwise and sometimes counter clockwise. Except at the foot of Thunder Lane and Pound Lane, there were scarcely any houses or cottages, and Laundry Loke, in particular, was little more than a footpath running pleasantly now between hedgerows and now across pasture. Here I first learned how to identify and name wild plants. For some reason, oak apples, old man's beard and raged robin stick in my mind. In Laundry Loke, I also first learned to clap cool dock leaves on nettle stings.

On special days, we took a longer walk, going up to the Plumstead Road, a delightful country road running through mature woodlands, strewn in autumn with conkers and also sweet chestnuts. At blackberrying time, there were plenty of choices, but my mother's favourite was a fine bramble hedge bordering a wood at the top of a steep meadow, with a splendid view across to Whitlingham and Crown Point; I think this must have been where the map now shows Hilly Plantation. But the greatest treat of all was a picnic in Postwick Grove, when I climbed a favourite oak and ran up and down the grassy slopes above the Yare. The view across the river was unblemished; I dare not go back to see what it is like today!

The final part of Ray's memories will appear in the next newsletter.

Our last talk – School's Evening

Our last talk of 2022 was on Friday 28th and featured three short talks on the Town's schools supplemented by displays of material on them. The evening started out with the setting out of three large displays to represent the three schools, St Williams, Hillside and Thorpe High.

John Balls introduced the evening and went through the business of the annual History Group AGM and said a few words about the forthcoming Poppy Trails.

John introduced Samantha Podmore our newest committee member. Samantha read an article prepared by Pam Harwood on Hillside that covered the formation of the new school in 1937 and details about the portacabins used there, its head masters and the development of what remains a very important school in this area.

Joanna Barker then spoke about St Williams with a nod to the late Mr Williams who spent several years at the helm of the school. St Williams was opened in 1952 to take the strain of the large redevelopment of the area around the school. Mr Garratt was also mentioned for his long service to this school. Joanna had been lent material from former pupils in the early days of the school and a uniform from the school which were on display.

John Balls finished this part of the evening by covering the large changes that happened at Thorpe High School, going from a split school to the difficulties of getting the children from the north to the south site. He also mentioned several teachers, head teachers and also spoke about his time at the school. He finished by speaking about some of the sports put on and some of the pupils who had passed through the school.

Tea and coffee were then served giving the audience the chance to view the displays which were well received. We are thankful to those who contributed new material. There was good atmosphere in the room and we had 50 people including some guests.

Getting in contact

If you want to know more about the Thorpe History Group or have something interesting on the history of Thorpe to share please contact Nick Williams on 01603 438766 or email him at Spinney72@aol.com

You can find the Thorpe History Group on Facebook - Google Thorpe History Group to find information and photographs and on our website at <http://www.thorpe-history-group.org/>

Thorpe History Group Accounts 2021- 2022

		Income	Expenditure
01/09/2021	Balance brought forward	£1,035.53	
	Insurance		£71.92
	Hire of hall		£48.00
	Income from meetings	£272.00	
	Panel signs and stationery		£63.45
	Donation from Thorpe Trust	£250.00	£250.00
	Poppy Trail(donated to Thorpe Royal British Legion)	£93.00	£93.00
	Stall at spring fair		£7.50
	Donations	£301.90	
	Website costs		£54.00
	Printing programme cards + Yar Rd leaflet		£254.80
	Archive Day refreshments		£5.65
	Book sales	£210.63	
	Total Income 2021-22	£1,127.53	
	Total Income (Including balance brought forward)	£2,163.06	
	Total Expenditure 2021-22		£848.32
	Balance at August 2022	£1,314.74	

Thorpe History Group is grateful for the £301.90 we received in donations and were happy to donate the £93 collected on the Poppy Trail walks to the Thorpe Royal British Legion.

Joanna Barker
Treasurer

Programme for 2023

There is a modest charge of £4 per head for each event, except the walk on 15th September which is part of the Heritage Open Day and the display on Armed Forces Day.

Date	Title	Venue	Time
Friday 17 th February	Talk: Manifestations of Madness: Women's Voices from the Norfolk County Lunatic Asylum.' Julie Jakeway	St Andrew's Centre, Thunder Lane	7.30pm
Friday 14 th April	Talk: 'Thorpe Wood and the growth of the parish.' Frank Meeres	St Andrew's Centre, Thunder Lane	7.30pm
Sunday 11 th June	Talk: 'The view from the River Green in the late 19 th century' Joanna Barker	River Green Booking needed	2.00pm
Saturday 24 th June	Armed Forces Day display.	Thorpe Town Hall, Fitzmaurice Park	2.00pm
Sunday 2 nd July	Guided Walk: 'Dr Hills, the Thorpe Asylum and Beyond, 1861-1915.' Dale Wiseman	Northside Booking needed	2.00pm
Sunday 23 rd July	Guided walk: 'Thorpe Woods and Plantations.' Nick Williams	Woodlands Crescent Booking needed	2.00pm
Sunday 13 th August	Guided walk: 'Sister Monica and the Red Cross in Thorpe 1914-1945.' Dale Wiseman	Thorpe Cemetery Booking needed	2.00pm
Friday 15 th September	Guided Walk: 'Dr Hills, the Thorpe Asylum and Beyond, 1861-1915.' Dale Wiseman	Northside Booking needed	10.00am
Thursday 26 th October	Talk: The Polish community in Norfolk and at St Andrew's Hospital'. Adrian O'Dell	St Andrew's Centre, Thunder Lane	7.30pm

Please note - the number we can accommodate on some events is limited, so booking is necessary. Book by contacting Nick Williams. Payment will be collected on the day.

Booking for the walk on 15th September should be done via the Heritage Open Day website when bookings open in August 2023.

Booking is not necessary for the talks at the St Andrew's Centre – just turn up.