

THORPE HISTORY GROUP

Newsletter - Autumn 2016

Our next talk
'The Norfolks on the Somme'
by **Stephen Smith**
Thursday 17th November - 8pm
at the St Andrew's Centre, Thunder Lane,
There will be a charge of £3 per person.

Summer Events

This summer the group put on a number of events including an Archive day, several river trips guided by Malcolm Martins, a tour of the Rosary cemetery and participation in the Heritage Open Day weekend.



The Group also put on two walks up Chapel Lane guided by Joanna Barker, who talked about the houses and the people who had lived there. The tour included the cottages tucked away at the top of the lane known as Rotten Row and a short visit to the former marl and chalk pit in the dell which is owned and managed by a group of local residents.



Our Last Talk 'Streets and Shops of Thorpe'

Our April talk was given by Thorpe residents, and History Group members, Dale Wiseman and Roger whose book on the shops of Thorpe was published in July this year. Dale and Roger had already published a book on the street signs of Thorpe St Andrew which came out last year, having come up with the idea three years ago while looking at Janet Smith's Thorpe St Andrew archive. As there was already mention of 60 street signs, Dale & Roger were able to work with Janet on their project, which ended up with over 200 street names.

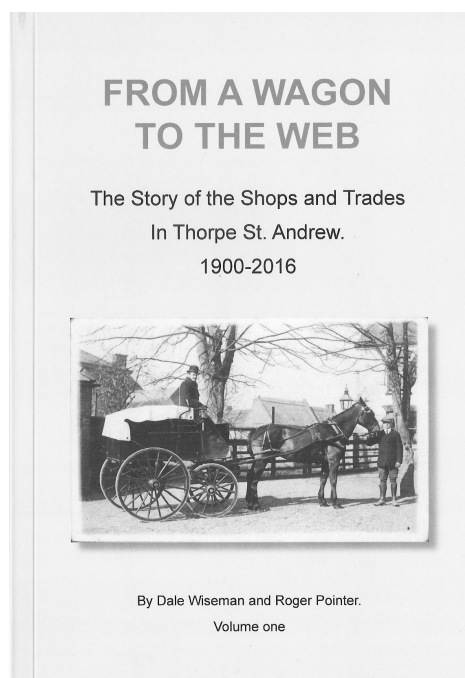
Currently Roger is preparing, and Dale is painting some of the original 1939 street signs for the local community of Thorpe St Andrew. An example of their work can be seen on Aerodrome Crescent. They are doing this on a voluntary basis and it certainly is making a difference.

Their next project was to be the history of shops and trades of Thorpe St Andrew from 1900. They broke the project down in to four time zones and four areas. Dale began by describing in detail the history of 77 Yarmouth Road which has been a shop since 1901 when it was bought by the Parker family as a general store and Post Office. It was the first post office in Thorpe St Andrew, opened in 1854. By 1908 there were 5 walled post boxes in TSA.

Dale went on to mention 12-18 Plumstead Road East which were a greengrocer, high class grocer, Thorpe electrical and Bingham's hardware which closed in 1989. The shops have been knocked down and flats built on the site. He also talked about the history of Fish's newsagents on Plumstead Road East, 1 Spinney Road (hairdresser's since 1930), 104 Yarmouth Road (butcher's since 1871), 92 & 94 Yarmouth Road (Howard's bakers) and Thunder Lane Post Office.

One interesting fact about Mazzoni's on Gordon Avenue is that it was hit during the largest fire bomb raid on Norwich during the Second World War when two were dropped on Gordon Avenue. Dale finished the talk by making the point that the principles of shopping in Thorpe remain the same as they have been for many years; Buy local, Think local, and Be local.

You can find more details in Dale and Roger's book which is available from the Post Office on Thunder Lane and at other local shops, priced £9.50.



Recognise this?

The picture below of the Thunder Lane Garage was taken sometime between 1953 and 1956. The two men shown are from weights and measures, now known as Trading Standards, who are checking the fuel pumps for accuracy which were then sealed with a lead seal. This is still done in much the same way today on a random basis or if a complaint is made and when some parts of the pump needs to be replaced.



We are grateful to Roger Pointer for permitting us to use the picture.

Memories of Thorpe -requests for information

Dussindale

Do you have any information on Dussindale, in particular memories of its development, experiences of living there and any photos of the early year. if so Charles Almond would be pleased to hear from you for a project he is working on. You can contact Charles by email at chasteven@virginmedia.com

Thorpe Home guard

Bernard Peck is looking for photographs of his father Arthur Peck in the Home Guard during World War II. Arthur lived for many years on Belmore Road. If you can help please contact Bernard on 01493 664 802.

Battlefields Trip 2

On Monday, May 9th, a small party from Thorpe, including members of the History Group, attached themselves to a Leger Holidays Tour entitled 'Battle Fields of Belgium.' We stayed in a hotel on the outskirts of Bruges, conveniently situated for the three different days which made up the visit.

Day One began with a visit to the site of the Battle of Waterloo in 1815. As well as observing the area in which the battle was fought, including the Lion Mound, topped by the impressive Dutch monument, we visited the new, and very high tech, Waterloo Museum. Full of flashing images and dramatic sound effects, it proved a real contrast to the older panorama of the battle in another building.

After lunch we travelled the ninety-nine years to the First World War Battle of Mons. It was interesting to see at Nimy Bridge the area where the first Victoria Crosses were awarded for bravery in 1914, and then to learn more about the battle at the new and informative Mons War Museum. The day finished with an opportunity to see the unique and moving cemetery at St. Symphorien, where the dead of both sides are buried, including in the British plots the 'first and last' casualties on the Western Front - Private Parr of the Middlesex regiment who died on August 21st, 1914, and Private George Ellison of the Royal Irish Lancers who was killed on Armistice Day, November 11th.

Day Two was devoted to World War One - there was some overlap with last year's visit, but it proved to be a moving and challenging day. We began with a visit to the large German cemetery at Langemark, and then concentrated on the conflicts around Ypres between 1914 and 1918. After revisiting the impressive Tyne Cot Cemetery, and the newly-renovated Sanctuary Wood Trench Museum, with the Hill 62 Monument, we had lunch at the Hooge Crater Museum.

We travelled down the Messines Ridge, with a stop at Messines itself, where Hitler was billeted in the First World War. After another opportunity to see the Memorial to the Missing at Ploegsteert, we ended the day at the moving Last Post Ceremony at the Menin Gate in Ypres, this time with bagpipes and a large contingent of Chelsea Pensioners brought to Belgium in a fleet of London taxis.

Our final day was extremely interesting, as it concentrated on World War Two, with a look at the liberation of Belgium in September, 1944. We were well received at a small friendly museum in Knock-Heist, and then we crossed into Holland to the Breskens Pocket where the Canadians landed on the coast. On Walcheren Island we saw where commandos fought in November, 1944, a battle commemorated by an impressive Sherman tank memorial overlooking the landing beaches. Our day and our tour finished at the large and interesting cemetery at Bergen Op Zoom. Here, as throughout the visit, we received helpful and valuable information from Mark, our Leger Tour Guide.

John Balls

Thorpe Survey

Some time ago Lesley Barrett asked for memories of Thorpe. In this article she reports back on the response she received. We are most grateful to Lesley and to those who responded to provide a picture of life in Thorpe some years ago.

We can access the history of Thorpe St Andrew itself, its buildings and the history of its prominent families, but what is harder to find is information about what life was like for the majority of its inhabitants. Some members of the Thorpe History Group lived here as children, and have completed a questionnaire to give a flavour of what it was like to grow up here. Their replies to my questionnaire cover a period from the early 1930's to the late 1950's, and here follows a selection of responses which give an idea of what a childhood in Thorpe St Andrew was like for them.

First of all comes what is an important part of any child's life, play. Thorpe St Andrew was far less developed than now with far less road traffic when my respondents were growing up, and their memories are dominated by a freedom and desire to play outside which must seem odd to children today.

Growing Up

Margaret, 1931 – 1946

The children all played together after school and in holiday time. We mostly played on the marshes between the railway line and the river from Griffin to Bungalow Lane. Often we spent the day in Postwick Grove (via Boundary Lane and over the railway line). Our Mums packed us a hard boiled egg, some bread and butter and a bottle of homemade lemonade and we were gone for most of the day. We climbed trees, fell in dykes and generally enjoyed ourselves. This was all up to the time I was 10. We were 'free range'.

Peter, 1937 – 1952

We were always playing outside. Football, cricket, rounders etc. We were allowed to go to the Recreation Ground, the woods, Postwick Grove, Whitlingham.

Michael, 1939 – 1954

We played out in the street after school etc – football, cricket, swimming in the river at Whitlingham. There was no limit to how far we could roam – swings over the pit in the woods, cycle speedway (in the woods). Building dens, marbles, pop guns, conkers.

Patricia, 1944 - 1964

We always played out with all the children – games in season, marbles, football, sledging, conkers, playing in woods, fields. Dens were dug out in the woods, with tin roofs mostly. We cycled, had soapcarts, played hula hoops, and used old tyres and hoops to run with sticks. Pop-guns made out of elder to fire acorns.

Sue, 1947 – 1957

We regularly went down to the marshes on our own and played in the bays (there were two large bays which are almost undetectable now). A friend

lived at Point House on the river and we were always rowing to the island or up the river, no life jackets of course!

Janet, 1950 – 1960

I regularly played with my schoolfriend who lived opposite, but never in the street or pits. I would play often in Whitlingham Lane and walk the marshes with sister and friend on Sunday mornings.

Richard, 1951 - 1965

Mainly cowboys and Indians, English v Germans re-enacting WW2 or any other goodies versus baddies games with toy guns – usually in the Cottage gardens and approach roads. Kicking a ball around the recreation ground with friends. Trainspotting at Whitlingham station.

The Shops

The shops which served the community then were not the large chains of today. My questionnaire respondents remembered: bakers -Howards; butchers –Sendalls, Whittakers (who kept bantams in their yard), Laws, Chapman; general grocery/greengrocers – Forkes, Ransomes, Dunhams (which later housed a Post Office), Shorts, Frosts, Clarkes, Bury's, Reeves and the Co-op. Confectionist – Parfitts. Fish and chips – Mr and Mrs Park, Thurstons.

Richard recalls that Clarkes at Thunder Lane Corner seemed to ignore Sunday trading restrictions and regularly fell foul of the law for doing so. He writes 'they also had a cold milk machine from about 1960 – a wonderful invention in those days when we had no fridge and we would get ice cold milk in a waxed cardboard container – heaven on a hot day!'

Margaret's Mum 'had Mr Sparrow from the International Stores, who came on a bike and wrote down her order which would be delivered a few days later by van'. Patricia's main family shopping 'came via the Co-op who delivered in a van'. The Co-op,(corner of Spinney Road and Thunder Lane) according to Richard was 'refurbished sometime in the late 1950s/early 1960s and became the first self-service store that I'd ever seen. I marvelled at the fact that you could help yourselves to goods off the shelf and just take them in a basket or two to what we later came to know as a checkout'.

Milk deliveries evolved from 'Mr Dale brought milk in a churn on his pony and cart and filled the jugs left out for him' (Margaret) to Longs Dairy Van (Patricia), Rumps (Michael) eventually to the Milk Marketing Board (Janet).

The streets would have been busy over the years with tradesmen making home deliveries too: coal from Moyes, bread from Howards and Forkes, a Mr Williams, a local greengrocer delivered daily by pony and cart; also on a Saturday Mrs Short & son would come with a lorry selling fresh veg and produce (nuts near Christmas too). A Mr Bootman also came round on Saturday afternoons with cream cheeses and pork brawn for sale. Corona (a soft drink made at a local factory) was delivered to the door, and there were ice cream vans, rag and bone men, and lorries to empty the cesspools.

Margaret was allowed to go to shops from the age of 5 ('there was very little traffic on the roads then'); Sue went to the shops alone at '7 or 8', Peter 'was sent to get a few things aged 8/9'.

Visits to Norwich varied in frequency for our respondents. Michael 'We did very occasionally go to Norwich – to the Maypole.' Janet 'seldom went to Norwich shopping.' Richard 'visits to the city were sporadic – except for larger or more specialised items there was no need to go there.' Margaret 'shopped in Norwich 2 or 3 times a month.

At School

We often hear these days of schools closing owing to bad weather, but none of my respondents could recall their schools closing. Michael 'no, never, in the bad winter of 1947 it stayed open all the time'. Before Thorpe Grammar School opened, older children attended Wymondham College and Patricia recalls 'her bus couldn't get to Wymondham College owing to snowfall in 1958'. What is noticeable compared to today is their attendance at Church and Sunday school. All but one of them attended, three of them went to the Postwick Methodist Chapel. Patricia 'I went to Postwick Methodist Chapel (now under the Business Park, Old Chapel Way). I attended regularly as my mother and near neighbours did. We walked there twice day, for Sunday School and Evening Service, 3 times if it was a Sunday School Anniversary and there was an afternoon service'.

Neighbours

It is a belief these days that people do not know their neighbours. In contrast to today, my respondents all knew their neighbours, and agreed that people would help each other out when needed. Richard 's family 'knew many of the people in the road. People were out and about more in the 1950s as there were fewer distractions such as TV and car ownership was limited so we regularly met people when walking to the shops, school or generally going about our daily business.' Patricia says 'We lived in Primrose Crescent where everybody knew everyone. Neighbours were well known and spent time with each other. Neighbours looked out for each other. I knew where I could go when alone. Cups of tea were shared. Neighbours (Mum included) sat with the dying and sick.' Peter also recalls 'While on rationing owing to the war everybody helped each other. If there was a death there was a collection for the family. If anybody was dying a neighbour would sit with them'.

Far fewer people had telephones in the years covered by the questionnaire and ringing the surgery at 8 am for a same-day appointment, as we do today, from a public telephone box would have been difficult. Instead, as Richard says there was no appointment system, you just turned up. On arrival, you went into a smallish waiting room, handed in your medical card to the receptionist, made a note of who was in front of you and then waiting until they had all been seen, then it was your turn. The system seemed to rely on everybody's decency, but in the early 50s the tradition of waiting one's turn in a queue was very much adhered to. Sometimes the waiting room was full and people had to queue in the corridor outside. At certain times the coughing, snuffling and sneezing in the confined area of the waiting room guaranteed that you would go out with germs even if there was nothing much wrong with you when you went in! Janet and Sue agreed that home visits seemed more available, as Sue writes 'As houses were cold, when we were ill we were put to bed and the doctor visited us at home. They always came on the same day and would revisit!

Peter remembers the baby clinic at Roxley Village Hall, and Michael remembers 'Whilst at school the 'nit nurse' and the dentist would visit, probably as often as once a month'.

Special Days

My questionnaire included a question about significant calendar dates, festivities and special occasions, to see if they were celebrated any differently to today. Most of my respondents reported that Guy Fawkes bonfires were held in people's gardens (except during the war), unlike today when people go to special displays, which is probably the safer option. Sue wrote 'we set off our own fireworks in the garden. I remember once a jumping jack jumped into a bag of rockets and they shot off at different angles across the garden!' Patricia and Michael said that they enjoyed Valentine's Day, which was enlivened by traditional practical jokes associated with the figure of Jack Valentine. For example, a child would answer the door to find a package on the door step. When the child reached for it, it would be yanked out of their reach by a person holding the other end of the string round the package. The child would have been warned of dire consequences if they tried to follow the package so this would happen several times until the person on the other end of the string decided to let the child keep the package, which would contain a present for them.

Patricia remembers 'the Queen's coronation when we were presented with the New Testament and I believe we had a day off as well!' Michael remembers the big August Bank Holiday fetes held on Thorpe Recreation Ground, with fairground rides such as the cakewalk and swingboats. He recalled too 'celebrating the festival of Britain in 1951 when all the village celebrated – gala on River Green with Nobby Clarke in a barrel in the river with his water cycle 'Nutty Slack'.

Some of their memories are related to war. Michael remembers 'celebration for VE day in Primrose Crescent, singing and dancing on street corners. Armistice day was marked by a procession from Whitlingham Lane to River Green. British Legion, scouts, guides etc marching to River Green and War Memorial'. Margaret recalls: 'I well remember the ex-service men from the first world war gathering at the bottom of Pound Lane and marching to the Parish Church on Remembrance Sunday. When she attended the Notre Dame School, she 'remembers walking to school the morning after a bombing raid on Norwich (there were no buses running) and having to pick my way over hosepipes and rubble in a smouldering Orford Place'.

The most poignant recollection came in a brief email from Trevor, who lived in Thorpe St Andrew only from 1935 – 1942. He remembered ' I saw the film The Three Little Pigs at school one evening, and on the way home stopped to look at the air raid siren on Gordon Avenue. Someone said wouldn't it be funny if it went off, and suddenly it did. The slow starting wail has always struck me with fear ever since'.

I would like to thank Janet, Margaret, Patricia, Sue, Michael, Peter, Richard and Trevor for kindly sharing their childhood memories with me.

Future Events

Date	Title	Venue	Time
Thursday 17th November	Talk 'The Norfolks on the Somme' by Stephen Smith	St Andrew's Centre, Thunder Lane	8pm
Thursday 16th February 2017	Talk 'Pinebanks - the house and its history' by John Balls	St Andrew's Centre, Thunder Lane	8pm
Thursday 6th April	Talk 'The Thorpe Railway Disaster of 1874' by Nick Williams	St Andrew's Centre, Thunder Lane	8pm
Saturday 15th July	Archive Day - a chance to view items from the Janet Smith Archive	St Andrew's Centre, Thunder Lane	2-4pm
Sunday 23rd July	Tour of Rosary cemetery	Rosary Cemetery, Rosary Road	2pm
Thursday 7th and Friday 8th September	Heritage Open Day event	Thorpe Lodge	2pm
Sunday 24th September	Walk along Yarmouth Road	Meet at Broadland Council offices	2pm
Thursday 12th October	Talk 'The builders and the building work in Thorpe since 1920' Dale Wiseman and Malcolm Martin	St Andrew's Centre, Thunder Lane	8pm

We hope to add to this programme. Details will be in future newsletters and circulated by email.

Getting in contact

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

The Thorpe History Group is also on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1613500998930684/> or Google Thorpe History Group on Facebook to find some interesting information and photographs.