

THORPE HISTORY GROUP

Newsletter - Winter 2017

Our next talk

'Pinebanks - the house and its history' by John Balls'

Thursday 16th February - 8pm
at the St Andrew's Centre, Thunder Lane

There will be a charge of £3 per person.

Recent Events

We have been enjoying a lull since **our** last talk on The Norfolks on the Somme in November but now Christmas is over we will be starting our programme of events for 2017, beginning with the talk on Pinebanks advertised above.

One of Thorpe's most well known buildings it currently forms part of a scheme for a major housing development which has proved controversial. On the 16th of February there is a chance to hear about its history and that of some of its occupants.

This edition of the newsletter is smaller than last months which contained a detailed report by Lesley Barrett on the survey she conducted last year. We have now finalised our programme of events for the year which are listed on the last page. For some **events** there is a limit on numbers who can attend so, if you are interested, please contact Nick to find out more.

The Trust is always interested to hear about the history of Thorpe and in particular to see photographs of buildings that have been demolished. If you have memories of Thorpe **or** any mementoes we would be delighted to hear from you. Contact Nick - details on last page.

Our Last Talk 'The Norfolks on the Somme'

In November Steve Smith gave a very detailed account of the involvement of the Norfolk Regiment in the battle of the Somme which lasted from the 1st July to the 18th November when the British assault ceased. In all the British Army suffered over 400,000 casualties, including 2,803 from the Norfolk Regiment for the gain of only 6 miles.

On the 1st of July the initial assault was launched which was to result in 60,000 casualties, of which 20,000 were killed, the greatest number of men killed in one battle in the history of the British Army. This battle had a particular significance for me as one of those killed from the 8th battalion Norfolk regiment was my Grandmother's brother James Barsham Burgess aged 20, a farm labourer from Tasburgh. He has no grave identified yet but my family are still doing research and we believe he is buried at Carnoy. Billy Neville and Captain Bernard Ayres, also from the 8th battalion are buried in Carnoy cemetery.

Steve explained that, originally, the graves had wooden crosses which were later replaced with standard War Graves Commission headstones. One such cross from Arthur Green's grave can be seen in Winterton Church. If a member of the public sees a wooden cross from a First World War grave in a Norfolk church, it would be appreciated if you would let Steve Smith know. Steve went on to lay out the course of the battle highlighting some of the more intense actions including:

The 7th battalion at Ovillers on 3rd July. They were a support battalion to 3 battalions which had gone over the top. They lost 119 men in one advance.

The set piece battle to gain Horseshoe woods from the 4th to 14th July which was followed by two days of fighting in Trones wood. Both woods were totally destroyed and left as matchwood; unexploded bombs are still found in the wood today

On the 17th and 18th July (8th battalion) a battle took place at Delville wood (Devil's wood) near Longueval where only 800 men survived from 3,500 Norfolks.

On the 23rd July the 1st battalion took part in a cavalry charge at Highwood which was one of the last 'great' cavalry charges of WW1. William Charles Fox from Thorpe St Andrew was killed here although the exact date of his death is unknown.

The 9th battalion were involved in the fighting at the Quadrilateral which was the first time tanks were involved in the war. However, only one tank was working and this was destroyed by the Germans.

The 8th battalion were involved in the battle to capture Thiepville on 26th and 27th September. The Thiepval Chateau was destroyed in the battle. It is now the site of the Thiepval war memorial & cemetery.

Pam Harwood

The Oasis

With the recent planning application to demolish the Oasis and re-develop the site we **thought** you may be interested in the pictures below which shows the building when it was a private house known as Woodlands and the ornamental lake within its extensive grounds.



Thorpe Old House and the Weston family

Thorpe Old House (below) on Yarmouth Road was the home of the Weston family until the death of Charles Weston in 1864. The family had been prominent in Norwich for several generations, one had opened one of the first banks in Norwich. Later the Westons branched out into brewing and their St George's brewery, which stood on the site of the Playhouse Theatre was one of the best known in Norwich. They also owned 40 public houses - two thirds of them were in the city and the remainder in the villages outside. One was The Buck, on Yarmouth Road a short distance from the house.



After the death of Charles Weston, the house, other properties in Thorpe and various parcels of land were sold at auction along with the brewery. Thorpe Old House was described as 'The family Residence, having a Terrace Walk, extending the entire length of the same, ornamental Pleasure Grounds, planted with Choice Shrubs and Trees, productive Kitchen Garden, two Vineries, Conservatory etc.' It contained a drawing room 24 feet by 16 feet, seven bedrooms on the first floor and six on the second - presumably the servants' quarters.

The house sold for £1,690 to a Mr Cooke and much of the land was bought by the Birkbeck family to add to their already considerable holdings in Thorpe. The brewery and the 40 pubs were bought by Norwich brewers Youngs, Crawshay and Youngs for £15,300.

Old Thorpe House is a private house and was recently advertised for rent at £1,750 per month part furnished.

We hope to have a more substantial article on the Weston family in a future edition of the newsletter.

Future Events

Date	Title	Venue	Time
Thursday 16th February	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
Sunday 11th June	Chapel Lane Walk by Joanna Barker	Chapel Lane	2pm
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
Sunday 6th August	Chapel Lane Walk by Joanna Barker	Chapel Lane	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.

We now have a website at <http://www.thorpe-history-group.org/> so do take a look.