

THORPE HISTORY GROUP

Newsletter - October 2018

Our next talk

The Development of Dussindale

Rod Spokes

8pm Thursday 11th October
St Andrew's Centre, Thunder Lane
There will be a charge of £3 per person.

Forthcoming Events

Our next talk

Our final event of the year is a talk by Rod Spokes on 'The Development of Dussindale' which should be of interest to those who have seen the area develop. Rod is a Blue Badge guide, and has thoroughly researched the subject so it should be a most interesting evening.

Programme for 2019

We now have a programme of talks (including one on St Andrew's hospital, pictured below during the First World War) and other events for 2019 confirmed and you can find details later in this newsletter and on our website <http://www.thorpe-history-group.org/> and on Facebook.



Beech Hill- another part of our heritage lost

Thorpe has lost another of its most prominent historic buildings following the fire that gutted Beech Hill. The fire service was called to the site about 9.20 on the evening of Sunday 3rd June and discovered the building well ablaze. It had been set alight deliberately – entry had been forced at the rear and fires set in several places. Despite the efforts of the fire service with over 40 firefighters attending, the building was severely damaged and the fire was not fully extinguished until 2am on the Monday morning.



Beech Hill was one of the large houses built during the nineteenth century on the hillside overlooking the river, providing homes for wealthy Norwich businessmen. Its date of construction is unknown but by 1881 it was known as Belle Vue and was the home of Hugh Gurney Barclay, a member of the Norwich banking family. He lived there with his wife Evelyn until 1887 when the family moved to Colney Hall. Whether he owned Belle Vue is uncertain as he is listed as a £12 occupier in electoral registers of the period. During Barclay's time at Belle Vue it, along with Pine Banks and Sunny Hill, were opened to the public to raise funds for local charities and other causes. In August 1880 about 4,000 people attended a garden party there to raise money for a new organ in St Andrew's Hall in Norwich.

Belle Vue later passed into the ownership of the Jarrold family when Samuel John James Jarrold made it his family home, with his wife Ellen and their young family. Samuel was a partner in the family printing and store business in Norwich. He died aged only 41 in October 1890 but Ellen continued to live there. It was put up for auction in 1892 but was withdrawn. The auction details provide a picture of the house, describing it as an 'attractive property known as Belle Vue, situate on the wooded slopes of Thorpe, with charming views over the valley of the Yare. The residence contains 3 entertaining rooms and 8 bedrooms, and is expensively fitted up, and in decorative repair. There are commodious stabling, gardener's cottage, conservatory, fernery, and

undulating grounds of about 3 acres, adorned with ornamental trees and shrubs'. In 1894 it was offered for sale privately which is probably when it was bought by George Morse who changed the name of his new home from Belle Vue to Beech Hill, where he lived until his death. Ellen Jarrold moved away to live at Kirkley, near Lowestoft.

Morse was a partner in Steward and Patteson's Pockthorpe brewery, a director of the Norwich Union Fire and Life Societies and a leading Conservative politician in Norwich. He was Mayor in 1899, and Lord Mayor in 1922, the year he was knighted. Morse had been destined for the army but the retirement from the brewery of his older brother brought him into the business which he would later chair. One of the highlights of his time at Beech Hill was when he entertained the then Conservative Prime Minister Stanley Baldwin in May 1929 shortly before the general election of that year.

Morse took a great interest in his adopted village, serving for many years on the parish council and on local charities. He is commemorated by the Sir George Morse recreation ground and pavilion on Laundry Lane, opened in 1936 by his widow Lady Annie Morse, five years after his death. The recreation ground was paid for by public subscription but the pavilion was donated by Lady Anne in memory of her husband. In his private life, Morse was a keen and very competent mountaineer who travelled widely to enjoy his hobby and served as President of the Alpine Club. Lady Morse lived at Beech Hill until her death there in September 1946. The Morse family maintained their interest in Thorpe and the new pavilion on the recreation ground was opened by George Morse's grandson Sir Jeremy Morse in October 2005.

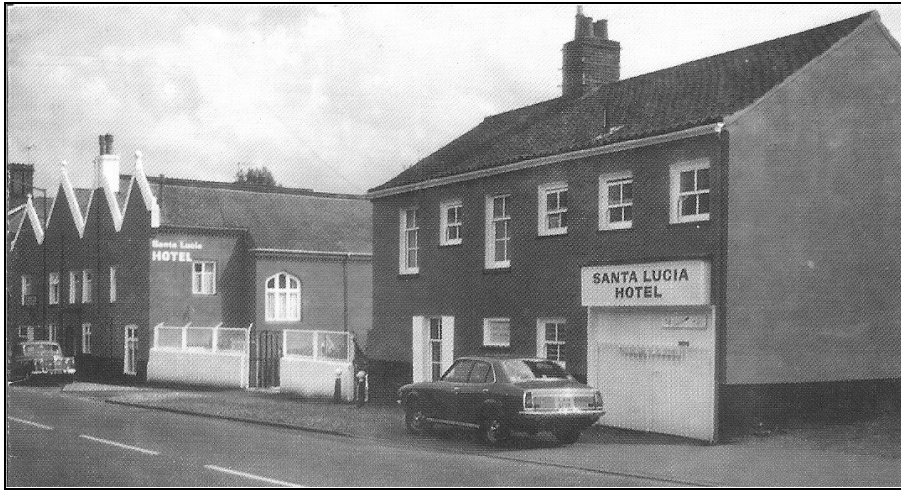
Beech Hill was sold in late 1946. Norwich High School for Boys, having moved from St Giles in Norwich to Langley, were looking for premises for their pupils under nine years old. When Beech Hill, which had once being considered as a site for the main school before the move to Langley, became available negotiations for its purchase began. Agreement was reached on Christmas Eve 1946 and lessons began at the new Langley Junior School three weeks later under the headmaster Mr Tomlinson

In 2009 it was announced that the school, now known as Langley Preparatory, was to merge with Thorpe House School which occupied neighbouring Sunny Hill where the new school would be based. It would be known as Thorpe House Langley Preparatory School and would open in September 2010. Beech Hill then stood empty until the arson attack in June 2018.

The June fire was the second arson attack on a major historic building in Thorpe in recent years. In July 2014 Pinebanks, a prominent house close to Beech Hill and the former Norwich Union social club, was so damaged by fire that the bulk of it had to be demolished. Pine Banks had been the home of John Oddin Taylor, a Norwich solicitor and chess enthusiast, who reputedly used the room in the tower which was a feature of the building to escape from the worries of the world by playing chess there. The site itself remains undeveloped although there is planning permission for over 200 homes there.

Santa Lucia Hotel

I thought readers may be interested to see this undated card, printed to promote the Santa Lucia Hotel and recently donated to the History Group.



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HOURS OF MEALS

BREAKFAST

Weekdays: 7.45 to 9.00 a.m. Sundays: 8.30 to 9.30 a.m.

DINNER

Weekdays: 6.00 to 7.00 p.m. Sundays: 1.00 p.m.
Sundays: Supper from 6.00 to 7.00 p.m.

EARLY MORNING TEA

Weekdays: 7.30 a.m. Sundays: 8.15 a.m.

BED, & ENGLISH BREAKFAST Including V.A.T. £ per person per day

DINNER, BED & ENGLISH BREAKFAST Including V.A.T. £ per person per day

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Summer Activities

The Group has been busy during the summer putting on several events, most of which were free. In June Joanna Barker provided a guided walk up Chapel Lane highlighting many of the historic buildings and talking about the former inhabitants. They included the station master at Whittingham and the builder responsible for one of the most interesting houses on the lane.

In July we put on a Saturday afternoon film show at the St Andrew's Centre (pictured below). The show, with a break for tea and cake, showed several films of Thorpe including one from 1995 on Hearts Cruisers, a film made in 1961 in aid of efforts to resist the incorporation of Thorpe into Norwich and a longer film from the 1980s which showed many aspects of life in the village - including well known landmarks such as the Red Lion and the Texaco petrol station which have now gone. Incidentally, petrol was then 40 pence a litre! There was an large audience who all appeared to enjoy the opportunity to see the Thorpe of years gone by. Thanks to Malcolm Martin for obtaining the films and organising the showing.



Unfortunately the tour of the Rosary planned for later that month had to be cancelled due to illness. Apologies to those of you who had booked but we will be putting it on next year - see the list of events for 2019 later in the newsletter.

During September the Group put on a talk at Thorpe Lodge about the house and its history during the Heritage Open day event on two days. Later in the month several guided walks around the former St Andrew's Hospital site were put on. One had to be cancelled but the others went ahead and attracted an interested attendance who seemed to enjoy the event.

Programme for 2019

Below is our programme of events for next year which we hope you will be able to attend. We make a modest charge of £3 per head for the talks and the walk around St Andrews Hospital to contribute to our costs but the other events are free.

Please note that the number of people we can accommodate on the tour of the Rosary, and the walk around St Andrews Hospital is limited so booking in advance is necessary. You can book by contacting Nick Williams.

Date	Title	Venue	Time
Thursday 14th February	Talk 'The History and Natural History of Thorpe Marshes' Chris Durdin	St Andrew's Centre, Thunder Lane	8pm
Thursday 11th April	Talk 'The Three Churches of Thorpe St Andrew' Ian Hinton	St Andrew's Centre, Thunder Lane	8pm
Saturday 13th July	Films of old Thorpe	St Andrew's Centre, Thunder Lane	2pm
Sunday 21st July	Tour of Rosary cemetery	Rosary Cemetery, Rosary Road	2pm
Friday 13th September	Heritage Open Day event	Thorpe Lodge	2pm
Sunday 22nd September	Guided walk around St Andrews Hospital	Northside, St Andrews	2pm
Thursday 10th October	Talk 'St Andrew's Hospital' Dale Wiseman	St Andrew's Centre, Thunder Lane	8pm

Getting in contact

If you would like 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

You can also find the Thorpe History Group on Facebook - Google Thorpe History Group to find information and photographs.

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