

# THORPE HISTORY GROUP

## Newsletter - January 2019

Our next talk

### 'The History and Natural History of Thorpe Marshes'

**Chris Durdin**

**Thursday 14th February 2019**

**8pm Thursday**

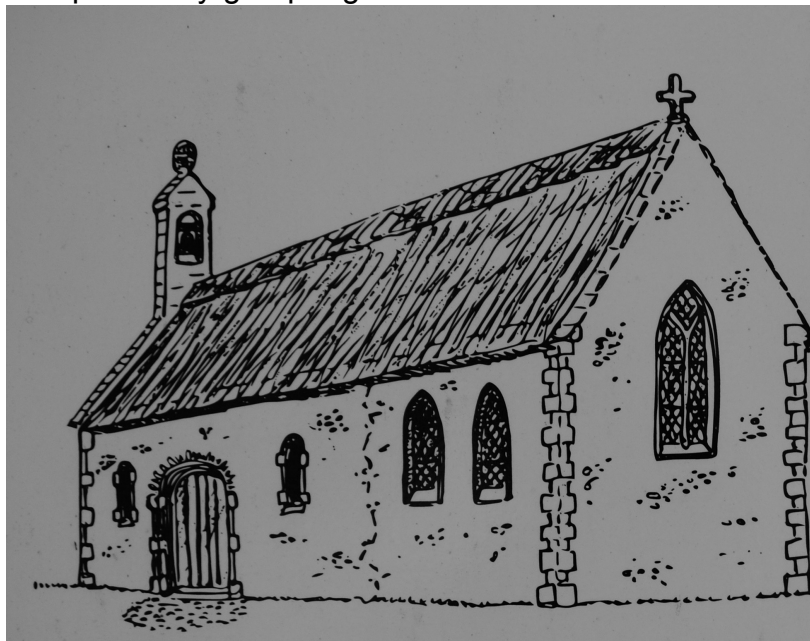
**St Andrew's Centre, Thunder Lane**

There will be a charge of £3 per person.

## Forthcoming Events

### Programme for 2019

We now have a programme of talks (including one on the churches of the parish - the Hillside site is pictured below) 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.



## St Andrews Hospital

The guided walks in the autumn around the former St Andrew's hospital site led by Dale Wiseman were well attended. They provided people with an insight into the operation of the hospital and an opportunity to see how the site has been refurbished to provide housing in a park setting. A good example of the refurbishment of a building erected for a very different purpose from its current use.

It was distressing to see what was left of the north side (pictured) with only part of the former male wards now left and being vandalised. The surrounding area is a wasteland as it awaits development.



## Thorpe People - David Culley

Former Thorpe resident David Culley, recently visited the area and has kindly provided an account of the Thorpe he knew as a small boy in the 1950s. There is a longer version on our website at <http://www.thorpe-history-group.org/> under the Personal Memories section.

The photographs show David at Whitlingham station on his way to Cromer about 1949 and a picture of his class at Hillside School at Christmas 1952 with his teacher Mrs Grimble.

We lived in St Andrews Avenue when it was a stony road with dirt footways each side separated from the road by rough grass. Part way up there was a particular flinty outcrop always negotiated with care whether on a bike or after 1953 in our first post war car. There were two large trees which intruded into the road just past No 19. They had been part of a field boundary before the road was made. Just over the brow of the hill the houses stopped and there was a corn field stretching to Gargle Hill plantation, simply known to us as The Woods. I recall an old faded pink threshing machine driven by a belt from a tractor in the corner of that field and the clatter the iron wheels made as it was at last driven down the hill to the Yarmouth Road over those stones.



The path followed the edge of the field just below the bank marking the edge of the School playing field. Then as now it went up the side of the woods to the Rec. There was no road to cross, but the council housing was being built down the side of the hill west of The Woods.

From the south east corner of the Rec on a clear day you could just make out the chimney of the “new” power station at Yarmouth. Crossing the Rec was a wearisome expedition when I was small but there was the attraction of swings and a slide on the far side. Then it was turn right along Laundry Lane, another stony track with few if any houses and no school, to Pound Lane where a right turn took us to the Yarmouth Road. In those days Pound Lane was entirely rural north of Primrose Crescent. The narrow road ran between two high banks with mature trees all the way to the Plumstead Road. There were no footpaths but traffic was never a problem.

Across the Yarmouth Road was Dunham's shop. A general grocer. Sometimes we would have an errand there but usually a cardboard box of supplies was brought to the house by a boy with a delivery bike. Our return route was through Primrose Crescent. Then as now it was quiet with many privet hedges. In fact apart from a new coat of paler paint, this is one of the least changed parts of the walk. In those days Primrose Crescent was

separated from St Andrews Close by an earth bank with straggling elder you had to push through. This was not to stop traffic using St Andrews Close as a through route as there were very few cars in 1950. I never saw any of the "rough boys" my sister feared we might meet on this part of the walk. The two roads line up perfectly but there is still today a formal separation.

St Andrews Close, a private development, still had many empty plots on both sides. The family at the first white house on the left as you leave Primrose Crescent kept hens. I was often taken to see them and learnt about pullets, broodies and chicks. The eggs had been traded with neighbours throughout the war. Near the top of St Andrew's Close on the south side was another space with rough grass and on the far side a tall fir tree where once a swarm of bees had hung from a low branch. Near the road was a straggly broken elder where we used to scramble.

Back then down St Andrew's Avenue and home. Yes it's changed but I can still see it as it was in the 1950s. In several cases I can see too the folk who lived there and I know what they might say. It surprised me though to see how much their houses have shrunk.



*Hillside Avenue. 1952? P2. Mrs Grimble.*

Our house backed onto the school playground and there was a gate in the chestnut fencing at the bottom of our garden allowing me easy access for the 5 years I was there. It was a very happy time. The all female teachers were in retrospect, outstandingly competent with classes of over 50. In winter, in the huts, there was a coke fire the teacher stoked and the milk crate next to it. On one occasion in the second year I was assured by other pupils that my house was on fire. You could see the smoke billowing from a chimney fire and firemen on the roof. They just wouldn't have it that it was the neighbour's house. I used to look at that neighbour's chimney with fascination. My mother told me how during the war a four engined plane returning from a daylight mission with 2 engines dead had wiggled its wings to get between our house and the neighbours. If it was as she said, I fear the crew will not have survived their desperate plight.

## Our last talk: 'A History of Dussindale'

Our final event of 2018 in October was an entertaining and interesting talk by Rod Spokes on 'A History of Dussindale'. Rod outlined the early settlement of the area which included a Roman presence, the arrival of the Danes - from who the name Thorpe - meaning a minor settlement - is believed to originate, and later the Normans. It was the Normans who recorded the ownership, extent and value of the land and other assets, including people in the Domesday Book, providing a record of Thorpe and Dussindale as it was over one thousand years ago. In passing Rod touched on the Paston family, awarded the Lordship of the Manor by Henry VIII following the dissolution of the monasteries in the sixteenth century.

Rod then summarised the evidence, hearsay and more recent academic research, that indicated where the battle of Dussindale took place. Fought on the 27th August 1549 it was the final act of Kett's rebellion when a royal army sent by Edward VI brutally crushed the rebels who had opposed the enclosure of common land near Wymondham. His conclusion was that the battle took place in the broad flat bottomed valley where Green Lane runs.

He then brought the story of Dussindale closer to today and outlined its development. With the loss of thousands of houses during the last war and massive increase in population subsequently there was a desperate need for more housing. Planners looked for new areas to develop and identified land to the east of Thorpe for 2,300 extra homes. Initially the new development, known as Dussindale, was to have shopping facilities but no supermarket and no school. By the 1990s house building was well under way either side of Dussindale Drive, the new spine road, although sales were slow at first. But as they increased values rose and more were built. Nearly all were built for sale - there are only 35 socially rented houses in the whole of Dussindale.

One point Rod raised caused much interest - why were all the roads but two named after people and locations linked to the English civil war of the 1640s? There appears to be no clear explanation. The two roads not so named are Dussindale Drive and Mary Chapman Close - named after the founder of the Bethel Hospital in Norwich, the first purpose built hospital for people suffering from mental illness. Subsequent developments included a large Sainsbury's supermarket, the Dussindale community centre, the Fitzmaurice pavilion and at long last in 2007, a new school - the first to be built in Norfolk for 30 years. But no pub and no church.

Rod concluded his talk by pointing out the continuing need for more housing with a projected national need for 210,000 new houses to be built each year from 2014 to 2039. There are plans in place for a further 2,000 new homes including the Oasis site, Brook Farm and Smee Lane. Perhaps these will become a new Dussindale as Thorpe expands further to the east and north.

## Can you help?

### **Recording Thorpe memories**

The Thorpe History Group is considering widening the reach of the audio archive with a view to encouraging more residents to share their memories of living and working in Thorpe St Andrew and would be happy to hear from any of you who wish to tell your story.

The interviews would be recorded following guidelines laid down by the Norfolk Record Office (NRO) sound archive and would be offered to the NRO once complete.

Please contact Pam Harwood on 01603 434263 if you are interested.

### **Research**

There are many aspects of the history of Thorpe St Andrew that need investigation. If you would be interested in carrying out research on one of them for publication in our newsletter or elsewhere we would be delighted to hear from you.

Don't worry if you haven't done any research before - we can offer help to get things going and someone to talk to if you get stuck.

If you are interested please ring Nick Williams on 01603 438766

### **Have you any films of Thorpe**

We are putting on another film show in July of films of Thorpe from the past. We have quite a number but several of them concentrate on the river and boating.

We would like to find some that show other aspects of life in Thorpe so if you have any you would be prepared to lend we would be delighted to hear from you.

Please contact Nick Williams on 01603 438766 or by email at [spinney72@aol.com](mailto:spinney72@aol.com).

# Programme for 2019

Below is our programme of events for this 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 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.**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Venue</b>	<b>Time</b>
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](mailto: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.