

# THORPE HISTORY GROUP

## Newsletter - December 2020

### This edition

#### Coronavirus update

As we endure the second lockdown the Group, like so many other organisations, has put a stop to its activities. We plan to have a programme of events for the new year when it is to be hoped we will be able to mix more freely.

#### Armistice Day commemoration

A service was held at the cemetery on Yarmouth Road to commemorate those from both world wars who died in the service of their country and honour those service personnel buried there.

#### The Griffin

The former Griffin public house on Yarmouth Road is the subject of an application to demolish it and redevelop the site - more inside.

#### Thorpe in 1881

In this edition is the second part of Lesley Barrett's analysis of occupations found in the 1881 Census of Thorpe next Norwich. It follows on from part 1 which was in the September newsletter.

#### 'Thorpe People'

The Group has recently published its first book – titled 'Thorpe People' it features biographies of many of the people who have had a prominent role in the history of Thorpe. Further details inside.

### Cemetery Tours

On a weekend of torrential rain and high winds Dale Wiseman put on guided walks at Thorpe cemetery on the afternoon of Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> September. Despite the conditions two groups very much enjoyed the event. It was an opportunity to see the extensive clearance work which has exposed 20 or more monuments previously hidden by the vegetation.

Dale intends to organise further tours once the current restrictions on public events during the corona virus pandemic are lifted. We will keep you informed.

## Sunday 8th November 2020 Remembrance Service at Thorpe St Andrew cemetery



A service of remembrance was held at the Yarmouth Road cemetery in honour of 14 fallen soldiers, sailors and airmen involved in WW1 and WW2, who are either buried at the cemetery or acknowledged on family plots.

Volunteers spent the month leading up to this date clearing, restoring and cleaning these 14 plots. This proved to be the first focused project for the group, which has been running since January of this year. Father James Stewart officiated assisted by Revd. Taylor Wilton-Morgan. Father James started with The Act of Remembrance verse followed by two minutes silence. The roll of honour of the men was read out, followed by a reading by Councillor Peter Berry.

Guest John Balls then read out a tribute to the fallen, the youngest being Laurence Wilson who was only 19 when he was killed, and the oldest serving officer was John Robert Harvey who returned to army life at the age of 54 at Gallipoli, after being in the Boer War twenty years earlier. During the course of clearance, we came across a family plot which included Cecil Ducker who served in the Norfolk Regiment. His parents William and Emily lived on Yarmouth Road. Cecil was killed in action near Ypres in a small offensive at St Eloi. Incidentally three other Thorpe lads were killed in the same skirmish; Pte Chettlebugh, Pte. Peachman and Sgt. Bygrave. All three of these are named on the war Memorial at River Green. Pte. Ducker is not named on this memorial, but for the very first time this year he was allocated a cross at the Green, alongside his fellow comrades.

The service was attended by volunteers as well as Town Councillors, members of Thorpe History Group, and Stewart Snelling represented the Royal British Legion Thorpe Branch. For the first time the new volunteer group were able to lay their own crosses to go with those committed by Thorpe Town Council. This was also added to by 1st Thorpe Brownies who delivered poppy stands that they had made in the lead up to Remembrance Sunday.

## Redevelopment of The Griffin?



According to a recent report in the Norwich Evening News there is a proposal to demolish the former Griffin public house on Yarmouth Road, and replace it with up to 100 houses for older people who need extra care. The developers were reported as saying that the scheme, providing retirement housing and extra care living would plug a gap in provision of such properties for over 55s in the county.

It would offer 98 affordable apartments for rent with a range of communal facilities, including a resident's lounge, sun terrace, café/bistro, hairdressing salon, assisted bathrooms and guest suites.

The Griffin has been empty for three years and is currently boarded up and surrounded by a security fence but has suffered from vandalism and is looking more and more derelict. Earlier this year a proposal to demolish it was rejected by Broadland District Council who deemed the pub to be a community asset. It was subsequently offered for let as a public house at a annual rent of about £50,00 but there seem to have been no takers.

There has been a Griffin public house in Thorpe since the eighteenth century but at three different locations. The first was where number 21 Yarmouth Road now stands. It was relocated about 1825 to a location just to the east of what was then the County Lunatic Asylum. This was demolished in the 1840s when the asylum extended its premises and a new Griffin built at the current location.

It would be good to see the site developed as it is an eyesore but perhaps regrettable that a part of the area's heritage will disappear.

## Employment in Thorpe in 1881 - from the Census - Part 2

Special enumeration books were completed for institutions such as workhouses, barracks and hospitals in every census year from 1851, so the population of Thorpe next Norwich was not artificially swelled by details of the patients in the Norfolk County Asylum. Its capacity had increased from 140 patients in the late 1850s to 700 in 1881, when an auxiliary asylum was completed. No Thorpe residents were recorded as working at the asylum in 1851, it is only mentioned because two women were described as having husbands who worked as porters at the asylum. This changes markedly in the 1881 census, which records 17 people working there. They perform various practical roles, eg Benjamin Chapman, aged 14, was an apprentice painter, William Brock was a stoker and engine tender, Charles Cannell was an engineer, James Woolley was the Asylum Lodge gatekeeper and Robert Carver and James Ramsey were attendants. One woman, Rosa Dack, 56, described her occupation as 'night watch at the asylum'.

Another industry offered increased employment opportunities for men in Thorpe even more than the asylum; Whitlingham railway station opened up in the 1870's and the number of men employed on the railways increased from four in 1851 to 24 in 1881. They were station staff; eg George Chissell, 31, was a Station Master, George Daynes, 27, collected tickets, Gerald Morton, 17, was a porter and Herbert Emms, 15, was a clerk. They maintained tracks and manned signals; eg William Baker, 35 and Jonathan Todd, 53, were railway platelayers, Charles Elgood, 22, was a signal fitter and William Day, 33, was a signaller. Working with the actual trains, Robert Moore, aged 31, gave his occupation as an engine driver. John Plow and John Todd, both 17, cleaned engines while Daniel Todd, 21 and John Tubby, 31, were railway firemen.

If railway expansion and the asylum brought more jobs for men, new legislation concerning education and law enforcement brought a few more, even for women. Victorian authorities saw the need for an educated workforce and beginning in the 1870s, the state began to legislate to increase the provision of education. The 1881 census records William Barker of School Lane as a certificated schoolmaster. Three women, Ellen Shardelow (daughter of plumber Benjamin), Charlotte Hardy and Swiss-born Henriette Blanc identified as school teachers. William Ramsey and Arthur Emms were recorded as pupil teachers. The County and Borough Police Act of 1856 required all counties and boroughs to have a uniformed police service, and the Thorpe of 1881 was policed by a Sergeant Mash, assisted by Constables William Baldwin, Walter Fulcher, Frank Shaw and Clerk to the County Constabulary Thomas Gamble Nurse. The last three households of the census, numbers 309, 310 and 311, are the houses belonging to the County Police Station. The previous households were listed as being in Plumstead Road so it is likely that the station was also in that vicinity.

People had several more shops to go to in 1881 than in 1851; amongst the shopkeepers were Walter Brown, a greengrocer of Howards Buildings, John Waters, a pork butcher, Nathan Thurlow, a baker and greengrocer and lastly Jane Burton, wife of carpenter and wheelwright Thomas, who is listed as a

grocer. People could use the telegraph as well as the postal service as inland telegraph companies had been nationalised in 1870 and then run as part of the General Post Office; Walter Humphries of the Post Office on Yarmouth Road was described telegraph clerk and subpostmaster. The doctor recorded in the 1851 census had left the area; by 1881, Thorpe only had a dentist for those who could afford him, Richard Wentworth White. His name in the census was followed by details of his qualifications (he was a member of the Royal College of Surgeons) so those who paid could have some confidence in his treatments. With or without a doctor, life in Victorian England was very unhealthy with endless epidemics of infectious diseases. People bought dubious products supposed to cure many complaints from patent medicine vendors like Thomas Rackham of Yarmouth Rd, listed in the 1881 census, his business enabled him to employ 5 men and a boy, and 3 women as household servants. Men of newer professions appeared in the census, such as photographer Thomas Stannard (whose wife came from Sydney, Australia) and Walter Wadman, a professional chemist.


Before, during and after Victorian times there has been much concern about the high levels of drunkenness and alcohol consumption amongst all classes. Just before the 1881 census, in 1876, the British Women's Temperance Society was formed with the aim of reducing or eliminating drunkenness and/or alcohol from society. In 1878, the government passed the Habitual Drunkards Act, which ultimately failed in its attempt to help the worst affected to give up alcohol because of lack of funding. In Thorpe, there were six public houses for its 1189 residents, all along the Yarmouth Road: the Cremorne, the Kings Head, the Buck, the Tunns, the Red Lion and the Griffin (this number increases to seven if the Hero of the Redan on Yarmouth Road is counted, although it doesn't show up in the census records). People of means who wanted to entertain themselves at home could buy the pianofortes and sheet music being sold by James Daskew of Yarmouth Road.

Where women were listed as having an occupation, these occupations were limited to the domestic sphere, education, shopkeeping or assisting their husbands, eg farmer's wife or dairywoman. Females outnumbered males; there were 360 boys and girls under 14, 466 women and only 363 men, perhaps some of this imbalance is due to the young men of Thorpe moving to towns and cities for better work opportunities; the population of Norwich had increased to 87,842 by 1881; up by 7,000 since 1871. Some of the disparity could be down to the high number of female servants, 44 households in Thorpe listed 93 female servants between them. John Patteson, Rector, living in Rectory house had a cook, a lady's maid, a parlour maid and a kitchen maid to look after him, his wife and three daughters. Geoffrey Fowell Buxton had a cook, a lady's maid, two nurses, a parlour maid, two house maids and a kitchen maid for him, his wife, son and mother-in-law. Thirty-four women gave laundress or washerwoman as their occupation, seven said they were charwomen and 25 were either seamstresses or dressmakers. Seven women lived on the proceeds of annuities or investments; one of them was Charlotte Postle, aged 80, who had been listed in the 1851 census. Widowed Harriet Blakiston, 77, who had been the wife of a navy commander, was another survivor from the 1851 census. She lived at Thorpe Old Hall with her daughter and her family, attended by six servants. For one wealthy widow like Harriet Blakiston, there were many more women like Sarah Gibbs, who at 70 had to support herself and her unemployed farm labourer husband Samuel, aged 71, by working as a laundress.

# Harry Pointer



HIGH HOUSE and  
HILL CREST ESTATES  
THORPE :: NORWICH



*Presented with the Compliments of*

**HARRY POINTER**

CONTRACTOR

AYLSHAM ROAD  
NORWICH

TELEPHONES—NORWICH 1886/7/8  
AND THORPE 10

We were recently given the above photograph of the Pointer family which may be of interest. Harry Pointer (number 9 in the photo) was a successful road haulier and contractor with interests throughout Norfolk.

During the 1930s he bought and laid out the groundworks for what became the High House and Hill Crest estates in Thorpe.

Harry and his wife Gladys (number 15 in the photo) lived at Thorpe Lodge (now the offices of Broadland District Council) for over a decade until his premature death there in 1944. Thorpe Lodge later became the head office of the Eastern Gas Board before its current use.

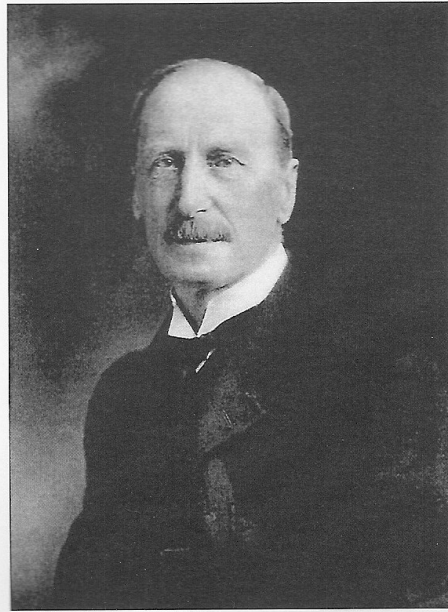
## Thorpe People

Thorpe History Group has published its first book. Called 'Thorpe People' it contains biographies of 24 men and women who have made a contribution to the history of Thorpe St Andrew. Although individual members of the Group have published their own work this is the first publication under the auspices of the Group.

Well illustrated in black and white with a colour cover it has 156 pages in a B5 format and is priced at £8.50. It is available from Nick Williams who will deliver within Thorpe. If it is to be posted the cost will be £10.

# THORPE PEOPLE

Men and women of Thorpe St Andrew



THORPE HISTORY GROUP



## Annual Accounts

Below is a statement of our annual accounts.

<b>THORPE HISTORY GROUP Annual Accounts</b>		
Oct 2019 - Sept 2020		
Community ac 07/09/2020 £1,572.18		
<b>DESCRIPTION</b>	<b>INCOME</b>	<b>EXPENDITURE</b>
Balance brought forward 07/09/2019	£1,625.00	
hire of hall		£48.00
insurance		£69.68
catering		£10.70
stationery and misc		£80.94
printing of programme cards		£59.00
donations from St Andrews walks	£57.00	
maintaining website /software license		£54.00
money collected at meetings	£261.00	
present for catering helpers		£11.00
Towns Womans Guide talk donation	£30.00	
lecturn		£25.00
preparation for schools talk/display		£42.50
<b>income in accounting year 2019-2020</b>	<b>£348.00</b>	
<b>Total income (incl balance brought forward)</b>	<b>£1,973.00</b>	
<b>Total expenditure</b>		<b>£400.82</b>
<b>Balance as at 07/09/2020</b>	<b>£1,572.18</b>	

### 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.