

# THORPE HISTORY GROUP

## Newsletter - Winter 2024

Our next talk:

### Kett's Heights

John and Vanessa Trevelyan

Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> February 7.30pm.  
St Andrew's Centre, Thunder Lane

Admission £4 per head.

### Update – fire damage to former hospital

By now everybody will be aware that the remaining building on the north side of the former St Andrew's hospital site was badly damaged by fire during the early morning of Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> October. The fire that started just before 5.30 am has been described as arson by the police. The building had stood empty and boarded up for many years following the conversion of the south side into housing. Sadly, this incident is yet another instance of historic buildings being allowed to deteriorate and suffering arson attacks. Since the fire, the building has been demolished and the site cleared.



## **Encroachment on the River Green**

The people of Thorpe have zealously protected their right to use the river green and fiercely resisted attempts to encroach on it. Once stretching from the Horse Water to the Rushcutters the green provided a watering place for horses and cattle and there was a public staithe where goods could be loaded and unloaded without payment of fees.

But on several occasions those rights were threatened as individuals sought to encroach on the green and restrict public access. The most recent attempt, one that provoked a public uproar in the village and attracted much coverage in the local press, took place in 1879. On Good Friday that year carpenters employed by Henry Blake removed railings put up by the parish that separated the staithe from the Yarmouth Road and fenced off the staithe with high wooden palings, Blake lived at Dunollie – a large house opposite the green - and had previously asked the Lord of the Manor, William Birkbeck, for permission to fence off the staithe. He had been refused with Birkbeck making it clear that it could only happen with the consent of the parishioners. Blake asserted that when he bought Dunollie some nine years earlier it had included the common staithe but this was wishful thinking- those involved in the sale were clear the staithe did not form part of the property.

Blake's action caused a furore in the village and at a packed meeting of the Parish Vestry – the committee with responsibility for the management of the parish – held on Easter Monday, he was given an ultimatum to remove the palings by noon the following day. The ultimatum was given force by the support of William Birkbeck who wrote supporting action to remove the palings. Come the appointed hour on the following day a large crowd had gathered by the now inaccessible staithe, some of them no doubt looking forward to a confrontation. In the event things went off smoothly; Birkbeck's steward Peter Hansell supervised the uprooting of the palings which were then carried across the road into the grounds of Dunollie by Henry Blake's manservant. In less than an hour the work was completed and those in attendance gathered on the newly accessible staithe to celebrate. They loudly cheered Hansell and his master Birkbeck for protecting the age old rights of the parishioners of Thorpe to free and unimpeded access to the river green and revelled in the discomfort of the arrogant Henry Blake.

This was the last attempt to encroach on the green. About 60 years earlier, a man called Bullock had attempted to enclose the staithe and there had also been an attempt by Charles Jecks - by coincidence also an occupant of Dunollie - to do so. Both had been resisted and neither was successful.

## **Accounts**

A summary of our accounts for the year ending 31<sup>st</sup> August 2023 is included in this edition. Thanks to our Treasurer Joanna Barker for keeping them and to Lesley Barrett for auditing them. Joanna commented 'We continue to maintain a healthy balance. For the first time for our walks during summer 2023 we charged £4.00 per head bringing in extra income of £234.00.'

## **Thorpe People - Phillip Chetwoode – Soldier**

One of the more intriguing characters to make Thorpe their home was Phillip Chetwoode – or to give him his full title Field Marshal Lord Chetwoode – although he only lived in the parish for a short period. He and his family occupied Dunollie on Yarmouth Road while he commanded the 19th Hussars during their tour of duty at the cavalry barracks in Norwich, renting the house from Henry Blake.

Cavalry regiments of the British Army, often before or after foreign service, were deployed to provincial towns for two year stints. In October 1907 it was the turn of Norwich to receive the 19th Hussars who arrived by train before parading to the barracks in Pockthorpe. Their commanding officer Colonel H G de Pledge was suffering from cancer and did not accompany them, leaving his second in command Colonel Chetwoode to supervise the move. When de Pledge died the following January Chetwoode was promoted to Lieutenant Colonel and given command of the regiment.

The arrival of a new cavalry regiment was always a cause for celebration in the city – the officers added glamour to the social events they attended and the soldiers and non-commissioned officers brought business to the pubs, especially those in and around Barrack Street. The commanding officer would usually rent a house during his stay as Chetwoode did. With its suite of reception rooms and extensive grounds Dunollie would have been ideal for entertaining local dignitaries.

Chetwoode was the eldest son of Sir George Chetwoode, who had also served in the Army. After a period in the Oxford and Buckinghamshire Militia, in 1889 Phillip joined the regular Army and was gazetted to the 19th Hussars. After service with them in Burma he accompanied the regiment to South Africa where, during the Boer War, it was engaged in the defence of Ladysmith and operations in the Eastern Transvaal. Following his time at the Norwich barracks Chetwoode left the 19th and had a short period on half-pay but when war broke out in 1914 he was given command of 5 Cavalry Brigade and sent to France and took part in the retreat from Mons before serving in Flanders. In 1916 Chetwoode was given a post in Egypt but was then appointed to command XX Corps under General Allenby and was responsible for the capture of Jerusalem from the Turkish Army. Post war he served as Commander in Chief of the Indian Army where he was instrumental in the Indianisation of the army - finding suitable Indian cadets to be awarded commissions. Chetwoode ended his military career garlanded with honours, including being made a Field Marshall in 1933. He subsequently served as Constable to the Tower of London from 1943-48. He died, aged 80, at his London home in July 1950. His wife Hester predeceased him.

Much of the information in this article came from Chetwoode's obituary in The Times and from local press reports.

## Our last talk–The Polish Community in Norfolk

Our last talk of 2023 was titled 'The Polish Community in Norfolk and at St Andrew's Hospital.' It was given by Adrian O'Dell whose Polish father arrived in England during the second world war and settled here so he spoke with passion and knowledge on the subject.

With a combination of visual presentations and audio clips Adrian spoke on the impact of successive waves of immigration in Britain before going on to talk about the arrival of many Polish service men and women. In escaping from their native country after the German invasion of 1939 they endured a series of daunting obstacles before reaching Britain where many joined the British armed forces. Adrian finished his talk by giving some examples of Polish men and women who had made their lives here – including one who served as a psychiatrist at the former St Andrew's Hospital. He reminded the audience of the presence of the cemetery (pictured) that served the hospital where Polish patients and others are buried.

There was a good attendance and many took the opportunity to speak to Adrian about their experiences of St Andrews.



### Getting in contact

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

You can find the Thorpe History Group on Facebook - Google Thorpe History Group to find information and photographs and on our website at <http://www.thorpe-history-group/>

## Thorpe History Group Accounts 2022 - 2023

		Income	Expenditure
01/09/2022	<b>Balance brought forward</b>	<b>£1,314.74</b>	
	Insurance		£71.92
	Hire of hall		£84.00
	Income from talks	£531.50	
	Income from walks	£234.00	
	Poppy Trail	£100.00	
	Poppy Trail gift Cards		£100.00
	Stationary and misc.		£96.46
	Sales of 'Thorpe People'	£110.50	
	Website costs		£65.50
	Flowers		£30.00
	Table at Spring book festival		£10.00
	Printing programme cards		£68.00
	Display case		£49.98
	Refreshments		£6.80
	Donations	£25.00	
	Speaker's fees		£100.00
	Wreath		£20.00
	<b>Total Income 2022-23</b>	<b>£1,001.00</b>	
	<b>Total Income (Including balance brought forward)</b>	<b>£2,315.74</b>	
	<b>Total Expenditure 2022-23</b>		<b>£702.66</b>
	<b>Balance at 31st August 2023</b>	<b>£1,613.08</b>	

# Programme for 2024

There is a charge of £4 per head for each event, **except** the walk on 6<sup>th</sup> September which is part of the Heritage Open Day.

<b>Date</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Venue</b>	<b>Time</b>
Friday 23 <sup>rd</sup> February	Talk: 'Kett's Heights' John and Vanessa Trevelyan	St Andrew's Centre, Thunder Lane	7.30pm
Friday 12 <sup>th</sup> April	Talk: 'Exploring Thorpe St Andrew history at the Norfolk Record Office', Victoria Draper	St Andrew's Centre, Thunder Lane	7.30pm
Thursday 30 <sup>th</sup> May	Talk: 'Sister Monica and her time at Coonor 1914-1918' Dale Wiseman There will also be an exhibition of related material.	St Andrew's Centre, Thunder Lane	2.00pm
Sunday 21 <sup>st</sup> July	Guided walk: 'Thorpe Woods and Plantations.' Nick Williams	Woodlands Crescent <b>Booking necessary</b>	2.00pm
Sunday 11 <sup>th</sup> August	Talk: 'The view from the River Green in the late 19 <sup>th</sup> century' Joanna Barker	River Green <b>Booking necessary</b>	2.00pm
Friday 6 <sup>th</sup> September	Guided walk: 'Dr Hills, the Thorpe Asylum and Beyond 1861-1915' Dale Wiseman	Northside <b>Booking needed via the Heritage Open Day website when bookings open</b>	10.00am
Friday 13 <sup>th</sup> September	Talk: 'The Thorpe Rail Disaster of 1874 -150 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary' Phyllida Scrivens	St Andrew's Centre, Thunder Lane	7.30 pm
Saturday 14 <sup>th</sup> September	Guided walk: 'The Thorpe Rail Disaster 1874'	Meet at cemetery on Yarmouth Road <b>Booking necessary</b>	11.00 am and 2.00 pm
Friday 25 <sup>th</sup> October	Talk: 'John Harvey and Thorpe Lodge' Nick Williams	St Andrew's Centre, Thunder Lane	7.30pm

**Booking is not needed for talks at the St Andrew's Centre – just turn up.**

**Booking is needed on the guided walks as numbers are limited. Book by contacting Nick Williams. Payment will be collected on the day.**