



THORNEY SOCIETY

Charity number: 298235

NEWSLETTER

ISSUE 115 – JUNE 2010



bobdavisphotography.co.uk

Talk on Fen Waterways **Hugh Cave III Memorial Lecture**

We had a very successful talk at the AGM, given by Erin Vos of the Environment Agency, project leader of the Fens Waterway Link. She gave an overview of the project and the aspiration of the link coming south towards Thorney and the River Nene. This will result in the great Cathedral cities of Lincoln, Peterborough and Ely being reconnected by water, together with Crowland, Thorney and Ramsey as part of the Fen Five great monastic houses. In the future these will all be linked up, but subject to national finances it could well be a very long time!

To this end the Thorney society will form an ad hoc group meeting perhaps once or twice a year, to keep the project alive from the Thorney end, and we will keep you updated on an as and when basis.

Michael Sly, Chairman

AGM Results

Chair:	Michael Sly	Curator:	Dorothy Halfhide
Vice Chair:	Howard Fuller	Secretary:	Dorothy Halfhide
Treasurer:	Howard Fuller	Minutes Sec:	Jayne Sheraton
Press Publicity:	Sue Squires	Display:	Margaret Fletcher
Museum Rota:	Carol Fuller		Irene Brookes

If anyone is keen to help on the Committee you can be co-opted: just leave a message on our website: enquire@thornesociety.co.uk Or you may feel, for example like Ann Lefort (Family History), Sean Riches (website) and Gareth Salter (gardening), or Margaret Dewing (sewing costumes), that you don't want to be on the Committee but you would enjoy helping in a particular area.



Fine Art Photography Exhibition

Thank you to Bob Davis for willingly falling in with our request to show his work, and to Steve Dubois who joined him. I think everyone who went will agree the standard could not have been bettered. This was a new venture, intended to extend the range of the Society's activities and perhaps appeal to new members. Local photographs of a high standard also provide a resource for the future. The Bedford Hall has become licensed for marriage ceremonies, so underlying this event we were also showcasing the Bedford Hall. Well, the risk paid off: the photographs were fantastic, general comments were excellent, and there was no loss of funds!

One visitor emailed:

"Really enjoyed seeing the Exhibition yesterday. It was well worth the trip over into the depths of Cambridgeshire. The Museum was also well worth a visit and is very interesting to anyone connected to the fens and its history. It is certainly a credit to you all." Perhaps we will do it again! Thank you to Bob for the photograph on the front cover.



New members:

Ann Spiers of Oakham, Peter Stuffins of Thorney
James Thomas and Bal Dahliwal of Thorney,
Michelle Anderson and David Sands of Thorney, Bob Davis of Northside,
John and Chris Clarke of Eye

The latter 5 signed up at the Photography Exhibition, and John Clarke has immediately thrown himself into more than one photography project, while he and his wife Chris have offered to help on a stall at the Summer Fayre. Special thank you to Tilly Coles, who has just become a Life Member.



An apology: in the last Newsletter the lecture was mistakenly referred to as in memory of Hugh Cave IV, not Hugh Cave 111 - who was our founder. Incidentally Colleen Cave is now at home after a period recuperating from her broken leg in the new Peterborough City Care Centre facility, and beginning to enjoy life again.

Also following from the last newsletter, Bert Brookes says that "eating humble pie" would originally have been "umble pie" relating to the innards of the deer. Nowadays I'm told the innards are known as the grallach.

Dentistry in Thorney

What a good response! Marion Peacock says Mr French was a dentist who used to treat people in the front room of the house next to Mo's Discount Store, but not every day; Morris Spridgeon adds that he remembers being taken to this surgery by his dad to have his first tooth extraction and his first experience of gas, in about 1954. Then we had a letter:

Responding to Jean Bartlett's article in your recent Thorney Society newsletter, I remember that when we arrived in Thorney in 1954 there was a dentist who practised for two half days per week from one of the Bedford cottages on the north side of Wisbech Road - I can't remember where, exactly, but it could perhaps have been the cottage occupied by the Thorney nurse and midwife, for whom the Rural District Council later built a house and surgery (along with a house and shop for the Spridgeons in Sandpit Road).

Dentists then, who had practised their art before the advent of the Dentists' Registration Council in 1 believe the 1920s were granted the qualification of Licentiate of Dental Surgery but could not fully practice. They could not administer anaesthesia, so that the Thorney dentist to whom I refer employed the late Dr John Fuller (I imagine on a case by case basis) to give anaesthesia when required.

My other recollection is that the drill used by the dentist for fillings was of the portable treadle variety, an "instrument of torture" which I previously had experience of when receiving emergency dental treatment from an army dentist during my service in the Middle East in 1946.

I wish the Thorney Society well, and congratulate you on the quality and content of your newsletter.

*Yours sincerely
Ted Little*

Thank you very much! I hope we will have as good a response for this:

WANTED

£25 reward for whereabouts!

DICK TURPIN 1705 - 1739 - Is anything known of the connection of this noted highwayman with the Fens? I have been given to understand that he had some farmer confederates in some of the remote farmhouses in the Fens, to one or other of whom he would betake himself when the hue and cry became violent. One such place of refuge, I was told, was somewhere between Thorney and Eye. The name Turpin occurs in the district in several places in the last century (1700s). M.M.D (Contributor)

Taken from Fenland Notes and Queries Volume 3 [Jan. 1895, to Oct. 1897], from Michael Sly

MUSEUM

Recording: Martina King and Dorothy Halfhide enjoyed a personalised day's help in using the Museum's catalogue system Catalist. The system has had all the records of the Museum's collection transferred to it - over 2500 records - and the computer's system has now begun again cataloguing new donations.

Displays: This year we have new displays on schools, floods, Abbey Millennium Tapestry, fire service information, eels (which has been a mobile display). Two smart new boards update displays on Dissolution and land before drainage; Chris Lane's input on these was invaluable and it is hoped he will continue to improve boards in this more modern style. Thanks to Morris Spridgeon, Sean Riches and Kathy Williams for new photographs. (Pending: updating drainage display, Settler display, history and influence of the Dukes.)

Small changes have been made in the War Room but this is one of the longer term projects, probably over two years. We have to get funding for new display boards in that room, for example, and they are amazingly expensive.

Stewards: John Bartlett has mended the water heater by the back sink. If you turn it on when you open the back door the water will be ready to wash cups etc. If it is not used the knob will seize up again; please don't turn it off severely - it does drip a few times after use, but it is better than jamming it. We are waiting for a new washer.

People are needed to steward on Saturday 10th July when the Exhibition starts at the Bedford Hall, either in the Hall or in the Museum. Please ring Carol on 270234. Also, two stewards are needed 12-2pm on the afternoon of the August Bank Holiday Music Festival - very noisy but you get in free!

Garden: There are plans to improve the garden at the side of the Museum, with shrubs, wildlife-friendly plants, bark chippings. Would anyone like to donate a shrub? If so, ring Gareth on 270089

Mobile exhibitions/Displays:

Displays at Park Farm for the Open Farm and Vintage weekend will show information on the Land Girls, evacuees and memories of working on Thorney farms during the war.

Heritage Weekend theme in Peterborough on July 3rd/4th will be (loosely) War. We will have a wartime display just inside the main Cathedral gate and would be grateful for an hour's help on manning or longer if you feel like it. Please ring 270634 or contact enquiry@thornesociety.co.uk Giving out our leaflets at this event seems to be an excellent publicity boost and it's good fun.



Thorney Society Summer Fayre

Sunday 11th July 11 - 5pm

Bedford Hall

We are at the Bedford Hall again because last year's Fayre was so successful and resulted also in a huge increase in Museum visitors and an increase in funds all round. Those people who are nostalgic for the tradition of the Church Street Coffee Morning can take heart from the murmurings from other groups who may take it on.

This time there will be an **Exhibition inside for Saturday as well as Sunday**, on Stories, Myths and Legends of the Fens. These include tales such as Tiddy Munn, stories of our 17th century Settlers, and Black Dog. There are short films on special screens in the "talking willow tree"; some are animations done by children.

Barrel Organ, market stalls, archery, games and roundabout for children - have your photograph taken as a King or Queen!

Help needed:

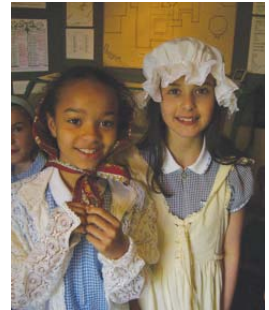
Small gift items for boys, girls,
and adults for two stalls

Raffle items

Serving food inside

Gifts of old silk or velvets to convert into
period costumes for adults or children?

Help to dress up children on dress-up stall.



Anyone willing to get dressed up? You won't be the only ones! Stuart Orme will step out from the 17th century, Cornelius Vermuyden and Francis the Earl of Bedford will be there and other members are being brave enough - what about you?

17th century Settlers: their story

Look out for a new book published by the Thorney Society, about the Settlers that came to Thorney by invitation of Cromwell and William the Fifth Earl of Bedford. This gives background to their story and lots of research. Many residents still are not aware that once the population of Thorney was half "foreign" and many spoke French! This book is probably of a wider interest than the graveyard booklets, although those are still available for Family History researchers and anyone who wants photographs that evoke the atmosphere of the old Graveyard. Perhaps someone would like to review it later.

Have you Settler ancestors?

There is a useful website which is regularly recommended to enquirers at the Museum: <http://pacificcoast.net/~deboo/Flemings>.

Jo McCann, a member researching Huguenot (Walloon and Fleming) Settlers, is willing to answer queries: SAE please: 46 Stanley Avenue, Rainford, Merseyside, WA11 8HU.

More about the past

TV: Look out for Time Team at Norman Cross on the 20th June.

Counting? Playing? Any Ideas?



Spotted by a sharp eyed person on a cottage wall in Wisbech Road.

General Costs

...of particular concern to the Committee! Members should know that the £750 from our subs is swallowed up by our Insurance (public liability as well as internal Museum insurance). Electricity and maintenance of the Museum costs about £1400 per annum, and publishing and administration take more: sales and donations last year brought in £600. We are lucky with occasional grants for specific purposes, but we rely on events to raise more money, and a membership drive would boost our funds. If we all found another member or two, it would be tremendous!

Jacque Beeby (now Fryett) and Joan Chapman (now Greer)
would like to invite all who are interested to a
Duke of Bedford School Reunion
mainly 1954 - 1974 but anyone from outside this era is also welcome,
pupils and partners, teachers too - spread the word!
Saturday, September 25th from 7pm
Thorney Golf Club
£5 including light buffet - bookings 01733 205724
Plenty of parking, raffle, school photos on view during the evening,
profits to the Heroes Fund.
Thorney Museum will be open at the Bedford Hall from 3pm and
stewards will be pleased to welcome you if you pop in there first.

Planning Ahead

The Committee is already making plans for 2011 for next year's Summer Fayre. The theme is likely to be Victorian Times (starting in 1837). If you live in one of the Duke of Bedford cottages you may know or want to investigate its history - have you any records of who lived there? Any photographs? Any ghosts or anecdotes? Collect as much as you can and later maybe your house history can join our displays.

More from Fenland Notes and Queries

Thorney Volunteer Infantry 1803 -1805 At the height of the Napoleonic wars, invasion threatened. There were two companies of Volunteer Infantry formed at Thorney. The Right Company under John Wing, Esq., Captain-Commandant, afterwards Lieut.-Col. The Left Company under Mr. Isaac Pears, Captain. When first enrolled, October 1803, there were 145 (including Officers) in the two companies. On April 18th 1804, 6,804 balls, 3,780 blank cartridges and 630 flints were taken into store. There was a fair amount of firing done considering the numbers. Between June 4th and October 8th, 3324 cartridges were used, here is an example:

Aug. 6th 40 shots and 5 into target
Aug. 7th 30 shots and 7 into target
Aug. 8th 45 shots and 10 into target
Aug. 9th 51 shots and 11 into target

Between October 1st and January 1st they met for drill 30 times, January to August, 54 times and August to February 1805, 21 times. Attendance at drill was good with at least 117 at a time. Various wagons and carts were supplied for the use of the volunteers by local gentleman.

In a local Journal of 30 years ago (1850/60s), some verses on the Volunteer Movement occur, from which the following is an extract:

Did not our Fathers in the days of yore,
When first Napoleon threatened Albion's shore,
Rally round their leader, Thomas (John?) Wing,
Unto the nation's Standard nobly cling
To defend their homes and Britain's rights maintain?
Were they not mustered under Captain Crane?
A Noble Stalwart Band, deny it who dares,
Were then the Thorney Local Volunteers. S.Egar - Wryde

Taken from Volume 1 pg 128-129 [Apr. 1889, to Oct. 1891] - Michael Sly

Salmon in the Nene - On Wednesday, the 11th September 1822, a fish of the salmon species, and called a hook-bill salmon*, was caught in the river Nene, about two miles from the town of March. It weighed upwards of 16 lbs and measured 42 inches.

*Hook-bill or the male of the Species!

Taken from Volume 1 pg 244 [Apr. 1889, to Oct. 1891] - Michael Sly



Dark Fire, C J Sansom : the book following **Dissolution**.

The sounds and smells of Tudor England come to life in this series. Thomas Cromwell enlists Matthew Shardlake for another assignment, this time to find the secret of Greek Fire, lost for centuries (you will realise as you read, that you recognise under another name). Brutal murder ensues. The endearing personality of the investigator draws the reader along in the atmosphere of the past. If you enjoyed **Dissolution**, this is next!



DO YOU KNOW??

... when Thorney Library opened between 1940 and 1965 ...

if you can help please send your answers to Dorothy on
enquiry@thorneysociety.co.uk



DIARY DATES 2010

June 12th/13th (Sat and Sun)	Thorney Open Farm and Vintage Weekend at Park Farm, 10-4pm. Two days of displays, market stalls, farming activities, working machinery, farm animals. Shelter in case of inclement weather, refreshments and chat.
June onwards	Come and see progress at Railworld after refurbishment.
July 3rd/4th (Sat and Sun)	Heritage Festival outside and within the Cathedral Precincts. The theme is War through the Ages : Roman soldiers, Vikings, Medieval Knights, English Civil war Roundheads, Soldiers of the first and second World Wars. Re-enactments, stalls, displays. Any help manning our stall will be welcome. 270634.
July 10th/11th (Sat and Sun)	Stories of the Fens - Myths and Legends. A touring exhibition organised by the Eastern Museums Renaissance Group (including us). Our own local stories and legends are featured: come and see! The highlight is an amazing "talking" willow tree! 11-5pm, and some refreshments all day.
July 11th (Sun)	Thorney Society Summer Fayre, Bedford Hall, 11 - 4pm. Market stalls, displays, colourful costumes. Archery, a barrel organ, children's activities. Museum open. Exhibitions (see above) and food until 5pm.
July 12th (Mon)	Monday Friendship Group is invited to enjoy the exhibition at their leisure, including the audio visual tree!
July 14th - 15th	Carenza Lewis is planning another series of small archaeological digs through the Higher Education Field Academy, Cambridge University. This time if you are involved you will receive a letter.
Sept. 11th/12th	Heritage Open Days: event to be arranged. Lots happening: find out at www.heritageopendays.org.uk
Sept. 25th (Sat)	Duke of Bedford School Reunion, Golf Club 7pm. £5 including light buffet. Mainly 1950-1974 but all welcome.
Dec. 5th	Christmas Fayre at Pigeons' Farm.

Solomons Fundraising

Links between the Abbey and the Thorney Society forged by Danny and Sue Besa'a while they lived here led to education links with Danny's home village in the Solomon Islands. The Thorney Society has supported this venture by letting boards be used for example, or laminating photos. We have sent by sea six boxes of goods for the Kindergarten. Small parcels are still being sent almost every month. Several children have been sponsored and we are saving to sponsor another primary-age child. There is an update newsletter: if you would like a copy please email fletcher.mgwilym@btinternet.com or ring 270634.