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NEWSLETTER

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The work continues on the Victorian roller map of Thorney presented to us by the Parish Council. It is now in a more suitable position and a new leaflet and a Society banner have been produced to advertise it. The last stage is a print out of the hidden part of the map, with an overlay on the centre of the village so that people can find their house if they live near Thorney crossroads and compare with the “old days”. It shows pencil notes and lines which seem to record the discussions held by those who planned improvements. Funding was provided by Museum Development Funds, with £240 of locally raised money.

FUNDS

Don't forget the Summer Fayre on July 10th at the Bedford Hall! – We need you!

On June 4th we held a new event – Coffee on the lawn opposite Woburn Drive, together with the Solomons Group, and raised £73 each. Thank you everybody!

Having tried it, we think we will do it again next year.

Members were well represented working at Park Farm Open Weekend, and the stalls earned us around £100. Another very enjoyable record-breaking event!

Victorian Times

Sometimes I repeat myself in this newsletter, but I hope people who have heard it all before will be patient and bear in mind that new readers may not have done so. If you have anecdotes readers may find interesting please send to the editor on fletcher.mgwilym@btinternet.com or drop in at the Post Office.

Some people say Victoria visited Thorney, but was this before she became Queen? She stayed or stopped for refreshments at the Duke's Head, demolished in 1878 (on the site of the Sheratons' house on the corner of Wisbech Road and Abbey Place). Does anyone know any more?

Thorney Churchyard wall was the first project the fourth Duke gave to the young architect Samuel Sanders Teulon. He must have been determined to make a good impression and so imagine how he felt when he heard from the steward that the workmen thought it silly and unnecessary to put in the strange old gravestone on the corner – as we see it today. Luckily the Steward and Teulon prevailed.

Thorney "Model Village" was built in Victorian times when people were realising that insanitary conditions and lack of decent dry and well-lit homes led to illness and early death. In 1832 cholera killed about 60,000 Britons and became known as "the poor man's plague" until it became obvious it also caused the death of wealthy people. Then there were rheumatic fever, scarlet fever, diphtheria, measles; Prince Albert died of typhoid fever in 1861; whooping cough killed about 10,000 children a year from 1840 to 1910. The 7th Duke of Bedford was determined to improve the lives of his tenants and hoped, too, for a healthier workforce. New houses were planned before the new Public Health Act became law in 1848 and building was started soon after. Knowledge that poor sewage disposal was the cause of many ills, led to flush toilets as we know them becoming popular in rich homes in London by the 1850s; in Thorney the sewage problem was solved by earth-flushing toilets built away from the house - a luxury in a labourer's cottage! The night soil man collected waste with a horse and cart and deposited it at the Bedford Hall (behind what is now the Barnes' house); when sufficiently decomposed it was taken out to the surrounding farms as fertilizer. Tycho Wing was the chief Steward of the time. His correspondence with the Duke in 1850 sheds light on the removal of two employees of the estate, Simon Green, sawyer, and William Colbon, a bricklayer, from Church Street:

"They occupied a large house which had been formerly a Tradesman's house of superior character but it was necessary to pull down parts of it to make room for the new schools, and to remove the inmates. They gain nothing by the change, perhaps in point of accommodation they are rather the losers."

Most people were grateful, however, and workers were keen to come to the village.

Were you ever a hooligan? If so, you take after a criminal from Ireland called Patrick Hooligan who gave the London police a hard time in the 1890s. Hooligans were not tolerated in Thorney – whistling was not even allowed in the streets!

Charles Dickens (1812–1870) was very much against hanging people in public and the awful spectacle was stopped in the 1860s, partly as a result of Dickens' campaign of letters to newspapers. Was anyone ever hung at Thorney's "Hangman's Corner"?

The Workhouse

Post Office + Relieving Office

In Thorney, there was a workhouse in 1841, when the census records show there were 11 males and 12 females, with Mr & Mrs John Cooke in charge. The ages of the residents ranged from Mary Johnson at 5 weeks and Elizabeth Sly at 7 weeks to Robert Child who was 80.



Pam Hancocks

The “new” village was planned with a Relieving Office, so financial support could be given to the poor of the village while they lived in their own homes. The evidence of this building, below the former post office, is the carving of Caritas (charity). However, some people still needed what could be described as “residential care” and this was found at the Peterborough Union Workhouse off Thorpe Road, built in 1836. In 1881 inmates here included four men and one woman from Thorney.

In 1897 when Duke Herbrand wrote his book “The story of a great agricultural estate” he believed that the combination of cheap rents and payments of pensions to those on the estate had led to an improvement in the state of the population. “Looking at the list of Thorney men now actually in Peterborough Workhouse, only one can be regarded as being remotely associated with the Bedford Estates, and none of them have ever been employed by the estate. Few parishes of a purely agricultural population of nearly two thousand souls can boast of such freedom from pauperism.” (page 110)

Dorothy Halfhide

Conservation and Restoration

How pleasing to hear of plans to take out the unsuitable windows at 62 Wisbech Road, and the correct style being replaced. This is thanks to a heritage property developer who is sensitive to the heritage of Thorney and has co-operated with Jim Daley and the planning department.

Since this row had metal frames in oblong designs, not the diamond panes, he had to have new wooden patterns made so that the windows could be sand-cast. He will now provide a resource should anyone else need to replace this type of window.

Museum

Visitors 2010: 700 may not sound many but “*these are really impressive figures for a small museum*” said Alice Kershaw of Opportunity Peterborough.

Education We now have an education link with Whittlesey Museum Society and hope to be able to combine our loan box lists, perhaps charging a small amount for loans outside the village. Margaret Fletcher and Dorothy Halfhide took them to an Education publicity event at Sacrewell Park in June.

Family History Research:

We have been lucky to have Ann Lefort as our researcher for some time, but she has now resigned due to pressures of other commitments. Dorothy is carrying on with this and Irene Brookes has volunteered. Would anyone else like to help? Nowadays there is no need to go to the Museum as a general rule as most of our records are online.



DIARY DATES 2011

July 10th (Sunday)	Thorney Society Summer Fayre , Bedford Hall, from 10.30a.m. Lots to do for adults and children – stalls, games, displays (the main theme this year is Victorian), drinks and barbecue by the Rugby Boys! Join us for Victorian Afternoon Tea! New presentation of Village Map in Museum.
July 16–31st	Festival of British Archaeology : to find out more visit: www.archaeologyfestival.org.uk
Aug 26th (Fri)	Abbey Flower Festival : starts with a harp recital in the Abbey, surrounded by wonderful flowers, in the evening.
Aug 27/28/29th	Abbey Flower Festival : beautiful flowers in the Abbey; lots of stalls on the Green; children's entertainment (incl. hunt the mice); open garden; raffle; refreshments. Everyone's support needed!
Sept 1st	Railway History : invitation from Friends of Broadway Cemetery, by Peter Waszak, St Mark's Hall, Peterborough, 7.30pm. (£2 non-members)
Sept 11th (Sun)	Part of Heritage Open Days events: Walking Tour of Thorney – meet at 2pm outside the Abbey (free event). Plus activities at the Bedford hall in support of the Fire Station.
Sept 24th (Sat)	Resurrected: the coffee morning in Church Street!! Not a large event but back to the old tradition of coffee or tea and a chat. It will be a joint event between the WI and the Solomons Group. The Society ran this for some years and lots of people have asked for this custom to continue, so we hope for a sunny day and lots of people.
Sept 11th	Walk Peterborough Broadway Cemetery with the Friends to identify railway graves : starts 2.30pm

T.V. in the Autumn: end of August or early September. “**Hands on History – Dig!**” Look out for Alice Roberts on BBC 2: she will meet experts and archaeologists and visit sites of historical significance.

Ferry Meadows has been continuously upgrading and has all sorts of activities you may not have heard about. This is one way to find out, via their new website: www.neneparktrust.org.uk/about-us/parklife-magazine

YOUR COMMITTEE:

Chairman: Michael Sly 270298
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Treasurer: Howard Fuller 01778 344378
Museum Curator: Dorothy Halfhide 270908
Museum Displays: Margaret Fletcher 270634
Irene Brookes: 271272
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Martina Cole was co-opted after the AGM