



The Friends of Thringstone



'Working together to improve our village'

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BULLETIN FOR JULY 2020

Monthly litter pick total - A staggering 148 against **81 bags** for the same month last year. Nita has recruited another **litter picker**, albeit on a temporary basis whilst he is unable to travel round the world with his work, to help with litter picking in the woodlands. He walks around 30 miles a week and wanted to litter pick in our woodlands whilst he walks round, so now has a litter pick stick to do so.

July has been labelled as **Plastic Free July** and the organisers of the project are looking for people to think hard during July about what plastics they have in their house, and what is really needed. Go to <https://www.plasticfreejuly.org/> for further information.

During the first week of June, Environment Secretary Roseanna Cunningham announced that new measures - making it an offence to drop litter from vehicles - will be included as part of a future **Circular Economy Bill**. These changes tighten up and toughen up the legislation to clamp down on the thoughtless actions of people who throw litter out from their vehicles.

On 15 June, several MPs in discussing the **new law which bans the sale of plastic straws, cotton buds and stirrers**, also asked for a ban on launching balloons and sky lanterns which cause so much damage to the environment and kill many animals each year.

Message from Grace Dieu Park Cricket Club: We have let our cricket pitch be used for moderate exercise during lock down. This isn't, however, a ground for picnics and social drinking. Please take your rubbish with you! The ground will be more frequently used by its members now as we hope to return to cricket very soon. During this time the club has been more than accommodating for everyone upon the grounds. With the recent vandalism and litter being left we will have no option but to be more strict with our own rules.

Dr Wendy Freer, Chairman of the Leicestershire and Rutland History Forum, asked for information on what villages and communities were doing for a future newsletter. Nita sent information to her on the Thringstone Creates project, about the Rock Snakes idea and about the 90 odd photos taken during the VE Day stay at home party. This newsletter came out on 11 June and was sent round to members.

Wendy is known to us through the project she did on the life of **Charles and Mary Booth** earlier this year. For those that want to watch the film made with the children from Grace Dieu Manor School, here is a link. It is a charming film of 20 minutes in length, and quite poignant since the school is now closed. The link was sent to all the Booth family members whose email addresses Nita has, and some have sent wonderful reviews to both us and to Wendy direct. Link to Charles and Mary: <https://youtu.be/16rDeRPLYLPI>. **Grace Dieu Manor School** and land is now up for sale with Lambert Smith Hampton of Birmingham.



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Geoff Walker has decided to call off **Thringstone's Got Talent** for 2020. We are sorry that this is happening, but quite understand why.

Along with other premises, **The Bull's Head and George and Dragon** are expected to reopen on 4 July. The George and Dragon have decorated through, a new treatment plant has been installed and the car park extended. The Bull's Head will be working on bookings, so please go to <https://www.stonehouserestaurants.co.uk/tablebooking>

St Andrew's, St George's and St John's have no intention of opening in the short term for private prayer. We also understand that there is no movement in finding a new vicar. However, Osgathorpe church will be open every Tuesday afternoon from 4pm to 6pm. In addition, other churches in the benefice will be open as follows:

Monday, 5-7pm. - All saints, Long Whatton

Wednesday, 10-12noon - St. John the Baptist, Belton and St. Andrews Kegworth

Thursday, 10-12noon - St Michael and all angels, Diseworth

Friday, 10-12noon - St Peter and St Paul, Hathern

Saturday, 10-12noon - St. Andrews Kegworth

You are welcome to enter these churches at these times, but we would remind you to respect hygiene and physical distancing guidelines (there will be guidance at the door on how to use the church during this period) and, in particular, we ask people to use the hand sanitiser provided before entering the building and again as you leave.

Hare and Hounds – The landlord and landlady (Allen and Maz) are leaving and as such the pub remains closed. However, we understand a chap called Jim is likely to be taking over in August. The following message was received 'Barn View - thank you for the £700 raised and also Forest Way School for the £700 raised, plus £70 for toys which would not have been possible without you all. The Gents at the bar thank you for all your pennies for the Prostate Charity which totalled £119. '

Black Lives Matter - Following all the recent media interest in slave traders, we were approached about Charles Booth's shipping line as there was an online account which suggested Charles had taken out a Confederacy loan during the US Civil War, which would indicate he agreed with the southern states who wanted to keep slavery going. We thought this unlikely, but eventually our member found the answer from Dr Mike Redwood who has written about Charles Booth. This is the reply: 'The Booth Co was in its infancy in the 1860 to 1864 period, having properly started in 1862 but with Alfred having got some things going from 1860 on his own. They did not make any money and the political situation did not help, or that their American partner who knew the leather business became ill and had to leave. They were new to leather. They were rather against the trend, certainly in Liverpool, and sympathised with the north rather than the south. Unlike other Liverpool traders they did not take up the loan in 1863 and one of Alfred's letter states that they agreed with William Rathbone that the loan was "a disgrace to this country". Charles was in New York at the time as he was dealing with their American partner's illness.

The leather trade they did was over the counter in New York, and then a little later with trips to Boston and New York. They did do very small amounts of commodity trading around 1864 but I think that was all down from New York, and since they had little knowledge and were using brokers soon backed off. Their spare cash they then put into starting a shipping line which ran between Liverpool and the Amazon and it was the shipping and the leather business that they continued with. The leather business was what funded his social studies in London, and his ability to fund the house in Leicester, building the cricket pitch and holding the annual party etc. The amounts of personal cash he put into running his London social research was quite phenomenal.

I worked for his grandson and it seems to me all three generations were remarkable, humble and very special people. Both Charles and George turned down what would have been well deserved peerages, as you probably know.'

Reddington Homes - June was officially Reddington Homes busiest, best and brightest month since they first opened our doors in Thringstone. Following lots of sales, lettings and happy customers, they were awarded the top performer award for LE67

Centre News: The prospective playschool operators are continuing to work on the area they wish to use, including using the allotment which comes with the hiring of the centre, plus putting a swing



and ladder in The Closs for use with Forest School and hugely improved the secret garden area and little house there.

We understand that the centre will reopen for limited hours from 6 July. However, obviously this will be subject to national government guidelines and making sure that all the appropriate and necessary health and safety procedures are in place.

We are told that work is being undertaken to improve the gents' toilets and freshen these up, along with the corridor and the new downstairs extended room, and that the centre is looking at getting in plastic screens for the bar areas. New quotes are also being obtained for a lift to the upstairs hall. Ultimately, the plan is to then repaint the reception area and kitchen. Tom Walters and his team of volunteers at the centre received a local heroes thank you from NWLDC for all the work they have done during the current crisis situation. Thanks should also go to the team at the George and Dragon who have been supplying meals to deliver to people in Thringstone and to the team working for Woodstock in Whitwick.

Chairs Report

Letters received: None

Emails received: Various from people with whom we regularly share information.

Promotion: We have **644 twitter followers**, which is one more than last month, and **1,340 facebook followers**, which is 23 more than last month.

Other: Information and photographs to allow Thringstone to be part of **Hello Heritage 2020** have been submitted to the council by Nita. There are expected to be 3 boards in the village detailing 11 properties. A film on Grace Dieu Priory and another on Charles Booth and Grace Dieu Manor are likely to go onto the NWLDC's Hello Heritage webpage.

Nita is to be interviewed by **BBC Radio Leics.** on 3 July about what our volunteers have done during lockdown and what we will take forward from it.

Finance Report

Tony Newton has completed the examination of the accounts ending March 2020. This is available to members upon request.

Gen Fund held 1st of month (bank + petty cash + float)	£2,152.69		
Income		Expenditure	
Donations	£45	Broadband	15.00
total income to general fund	£45		£15
		Total general fund at month end	2182.69

Publications Report

N/A

Web Report

The webmaster is still trying to get us extra space to continue his updating of the site.

Police Report

- Grace Dieu Park Cricket Club has 3 times been subject to vandalism. They initially put out a message asking people to support them and the community, and not try to take things from their premises that aren't there in the first place. We then discovered there has been further vandalism on 7 and 29 June. 2 kids aged between 10 and 12 were seen doing this. Police aware.



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- A group of youths and cars on the car park to the Melrose Rd recreation field have twice caused nuisance to neighbours, urinated on parked cars and left bags of rubbish mostly McDonalds, bottles and cans. Police informed.
- Various police visits and involvement on Melrose Road area dealing with suspected drugs use and parties this month.

Community Report and What's On

6 Sept - **Grace Dieu Priory** – historical walk at 3pm from Bull's Head car park. £3 per person. All welcome.

History report

- **Thringstone man who died during WW2** - Nita received an email from Thomas Thorne who is researching the men of the Hallamshire Battalion, York and Lancaster Regiment, killed during the NW European campaign, 1944-1945. His grandfather was the battalion chaplain. He was interested in **Fred Grice**, who is commemorated in Thringstone church, and was on attachment from the 1st Leicesters when he was killed on the south edge of Tessel Wood. Nita sent him all the information we have, including 3 photos, a press cutting and a page from a book about the events leading up to Fred's death. Thomas told us that Fred's death is mentioned in the personal diary of Capt. Chris Somers, who at that time was 2nd in Command, B Company, Hallamshire Battalion, York and Lancaster Regiment.
It says: *"As we were getting a bit bored and stale, A Company did a raid one day. At the same time we let fly with every weapon we possessed for half an hour. I didn't know if we did much damage. We got a little back in return and a visiting Leicestershire Cpl got killed while helping us with a Bren, which was rather unfortunate"*. This obviously refers to Fred Grice.
At the time the Hallams were holding the line on the southern edge of Tessel Wood, a position which they occupied for several weeks. The Hallams' war diary has this to say of the raid: *'A Company carried out a major raid on the enemy positions east of Vendes with the objects of testing enemy powers of resistance and raising the offensive spirit in this company, which suffered badly at Fontenay. At the same time a platoon of 'B' Company reced in force east of the cross roads. Casualties – Officers, Lt H E Poyner killed, Capt P H Willis-Dixon and Lt C Dease wounded. Other ranks, 4 killed, 16 wounded, 3 reported missing.'*
He also attached a map showing all of the temporary burial locations at Tessel Wood. Grice was buried at No. 4. The burial would have been carried out by his grandfather and, according to an interview with one old Hallam, the men were always buried "with their head facing the enemy". Fred Grice was exhumed on 22 June 1945 and re-buried in his permanent grave in St Manvieu Cemetery.
- We have been told that **Coddy and Bertha Carter** (brother and sister) who ran the farm near Whitwick Moor also owned the properties opposite them called St Mary's Cottages, just inside the Whitwick boundary. We are told that during the general strike in 1926, they helped people who had financial difficulties by not charging any rent, and agreeing that they could pay back what they owed at a penny per week extra after the strike ended.
- A visit to the church at Breedon on the Hill brought to light a grave at the rear of the church of **John Holmes**. The gravestone says he died in 1859 and was 'late of Thringstone'. This gent was born in Hugglescote in 1778 to Francis of Stanton Under Bardon, was baptised at Bardon Park Presbyterian chapel on 12 February 1778, and was a cordwainer (shoe maker). The census of 1851 shows him living in Main Street with wife Elizabeth from Whitwick.
- Nita helped a man find more information on his Thringstone **Truswell family tree**, and also found several photographs relating to the **Wilkins family**, which were passed on to Ann for the archives.
- A gent who has moved from Talbot Lane into **Bauble Yard**, the houses with long front gardens which face onto The Green, has provided us with copies of wills, deeds and maps relating to that area. These cover information from 1744 to 1996 which Ann has copied for our archives and which show that there was property on that area of The Green in the 18th century.



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The 1744 deed is a conveyance from Mr George Chapman yeoman to Mr Thomas Varnham, husbandman for the sum of £87.00. The land is in tenure of Francis Tatenhill (may be Tatnal) and there is also a piece of enclosed ground opposite the said message containing 1 rood of land. Both Mr Chapman and Mr Varnham appear in the 1741 poll books. Thomas Varnham appears to have been born in 1702 in Whitwick and looks to have owned more than this property in Thringstone. His wife Elizabeth Tatnal (see above relating to Francis Tatenhill) and he had several children including sons John, William and Francis, as well as a daughter Ann.

In 1767 there were 2 properties on the land, unoccupied, and in a poor state. There are several other conveyances from **Thomas Varnham** to his son **John Varnham**, and mention is made in 1772 of **Ann Varnham** renting as tenant and a newly built house.

John Mills, carpenter of Sheepshed, is also mentioned at this stage. He owned land and collected the rent on properties there, some of which fell into disrepair. By 1778 one house was now divided into 5 dwellings, one empty, but others in the occupation of Thomas Baker, John West, Joseph Towle and Edward Bradwell. A conveyance at the cost of £400 dated 1864 between **John Keightley Mills** and **William Gough** (who kept the Bull's Head in 1862) shows the house that the Gee family lived in, but none of Bauble Yard or Hope Terrace in Main Street. The will of Catherine Mills (said to be spinster of Knightthorpe- found to be Knightthorpe Hall where she was in 1841) giving property/money to John Keightley Mills is included in the information given, and it states that he was at Manor Farm, Gracedieu with William Jesson at the time her will was written in 1837. Having found a will dated 1773 relating to John Mills, carpenter of Shepshed and his nephew also called John Mills, we have been trying to find out where John Keightley Mills fits in with the John mentioned earlier and with Catherine. It seems that there were originally 3 brothers called John, Thomas and Robert Mills. John died without issue, and left money to his nephews, John and Robert, as his brothers had already died. His nephew John got the property in Thringstone. Catherine is, we think, the original John Mills's great niece. Her father, also called John Mills, bought Knight Thorpe Hall in 1797 and died there in 1805. The Mills family sold the hall to the Cradock's sometime around 1836 and the property was then tenanted for some decades. Miss Elizabeth Mills of Knightthorpe Hall, sister to Catherine, is mentioned in the deeds, and we have checked out what is written and confirmed that she died on 14 November 1832 at Knight Thorpe Hall. A deed of administration allowed £450 to go to her mother, also called Catherine. **William Gough** later moved to Morecambe where he kept a bazaar but moved back to Thringstone to Sunset Cottage where he died in 1900. On his death, the properties went to his daughter Elizabeth Thornton of Morecambe, his son Fred, who had moved to Norwich, and their brother, Henry Gough who died on 17 December 1902. Henry's property portfolio then went to his wife Harriet, who remarried Reg Brooks in 1906. At that time, Bauble Yard comprised of 4 dwellings and a shop, which was the post office at the end of the row, and by the mid 1930s there were 6 houses there, and the area was known as Post Office Row. We already knew that **Samuel William Hallam** of the Queen's Head, who is also mentioned, bought land and property in the area, including Gladstone Cottages in Main Street, the old post office and land in Bauble Yard, as it eventually became known in the 1940s and a thatched cottage on The Green at that time in the occupation of William Upton which is mentioned at his death in 1909. By 1911, William Upton was living on Drury Lane.

We believe that **John Keightley Mills** who inherited the properties and land was the 2nd cousin of Catherine. John Keightley Mills was born in Thringstone in 1820. Information in the deeds relating to the will of Catherine said that he would inherit substantial money at the age of 21, and he was only 17 when she drew up her will, so it is not surprising that by the time of the census of 1841 he was living in Belton with independent means. By 1861 he lived in Thringstone and farmed. He is also mentioned in the poll books for 1857 under Thringstone, in the electoral registers for both Thringstone and Belton at various points, and research has shown that he was the overseer for the poor of Belton in 1865. He married Catherine Sharp in Birmingham in 1866, was living in Cademan Street, Whitwick by 1871 and died in 1878. By 1900 Bauble Yard was there as now, plus Hope Terrace. William Gough had died, and his grandson Harry seems to have



bought some of the land in a sale at The Rose and Crown. Nita has downloaded the wills for John Keightley Mills, William Gough and George Chapman to add to our archives.

- Nita has downloaded **the electoral registers** for 1863, 1864, 1865, 1866 (part), 1868, 1870, 1871, 1875, 1879, 1880, 1882 and 1885 for Thringstone. These are interesting reading and give all the main names of gents of the time in the area. Further electoral registers for the 1920s and 30s are also now available, so Nita has downloaded 1921 – 1931. There was nothing for 1925, and where there was more than one election a year, only the Autumn copies have been downloaded.
- Nita has been talking to a chap whose grandfather was **Dennis Betts**. One of 4 brothers, the others being Henry, Brian and Ken, their parents were John Henry and Ada (born 10 Feb 1899 in Thringstone) and they had another child, a girl called Dorothy. The family used to live in the house opposite The Bull's Head on the bend there and John Henry Betts (born 14 Jan 1898) is shown as living at Cross Lanes from at least 1921-1930 according to the electoral registers. John Henry Betts had served in France and Italy in WW1 with the Yorkshire and Lancashire regiment and married Ada Wilkins on 20 June 1920 at St Andrew's, Thringstone. By 1939 they were living in Forest Road with Ada's dad Arthur Wilkins, her mother Clara having died in 1922.
- **Forest View** – the blue house on The Green. We have been in touch with the owners of Forest View and discussed going round with them at some stage to look at their renovation works. We also mentioned their cellar – and got this reply: 'Our house does have steps to what was the pub and our cellar is very pub like with the arches and shelf made of bricks for the barrels. We have tried to do it up sympathetically, but there was nothing old left, just a shell as Rick, the previous owner, had ripped out everything, literally.'
- For some time, we have been confused over the names Samuel Wilson Hallam and Samuel William Hallam and who kept **The Queen's Head**. We now have the wills for both these gents, and have realised that Samuel Wilson Hallam, who died 28 Sept 1889, was the father of Samuel William Hallam of The Queen's Head. Both were publicans, with the father being the publican at Talbot Inn in 1861 before becoming a grocer and postman in Thringstone, and the person who gave Thringstone its first ever post office in 1856. We have achieved this understanding by checking Samuel William Hallam's siblings against the children of Samuel Wilson Hallam. They agree. Samuel Wilson Hallam's children were Samuel William Hallam, Reginald Brinsley Hallam, George Henry Hallam (who also kept The Queen's Head), Sarah Annie Beckworth nee Hallam (whose husband died after 5 years of marriage then moved to Vancouver), Arthur Wilson Hallam, Elizabeth Frances Newham nee Hallam, and Mary Theresa Heardiman nee Hallam, who also went to Canada with her husband and children in 1882. The father, Samuel Wilson Hallam, whose obituary we have, had been married to Sarah Anne Brinsley from 1818. He had kept the Talbot Arms in Whitwick from 1855 to 1869 when Samuel William Hallam took over. Samuel William Hallam stayed at Talbot Arms until 1890 when he moved to Queen's Head. We now have photos of Sarah Anne Brinsley, Sarah Annie Beckworth and Mary Theresa Heardiman. We also discovered during this process that a meeting was held of all the local lodges of **Oddfellows** at Rising Sun, Church Gresley in January 1879. At that meeting, Jabez Henson from Thringstone became Grand Master with Samuel William Hallam becoming Deputy Grand Master. The same year Samuel Wilson Hallam, his father, was elected as vice chair of Charnwood Forest Rangers **Ancient Order of Forresters**
- From looking at the electoral registers, we saw that William and Mary Pepper were also at **Stoneycroft Farm** at the same time as the Humphries family - from at least 1923 until 1931. It took quite a while to work out that William (born 30 June 1861 in Shepshed) and Mary were the parents of Eunice Emma who married Albert Humphries in 1916. William and Mary Pepper had 4 children – Mary Amelia, Frederick, Eunice Emma and Thomas Joseph. They were living on Burton Road, Hugglescote in 1922 with their son Thomas Joseph Pepper, who went on to be a school teacher and continued to live in Hugglescote. By 1939, Albert Humphries (by now a builder's labourer) and Eunice and 6 of their 7 children were living at 50 Dennis Street, with her father William Pepper, who was a widower by that stage as Mary had died the year before. William died



in 1953 in Coalville. Stoneycroft Farm must have been very crowded with a couple, her parents and 7 children!

Council report

Parking charges in council car parks returned from Wednesday 1 July. Payments will be by contactless card only to reduce hand contact and help control the spread of coronavirus. Council car parks will remain free beyond 1 July for NHS staff members, health and social care workers and NHS Volunteer Responders when on official duty. Eligible staff can get a free Government parking pass from their employer, NHS Trust or the Royal Voluntary Service.

Gardening and environment

Bernard has continued to do bits of planting and weeding.

Next bulletin will be in early August all being well. We might even get to meet up!