



The Friends of Thringstone



'Working together to improve our village'

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BULLETIN FOR DECEMBER 2022

News.

Monthly litter pick total – 120 bags removed by 7 people against **111 bags** for the same month last year. On 9 November, which was 'social media kindness day', Keep Britain Tidy gave us 3 hearts on twitter for the work we do in the village, as they celebrated the work of volunteer litter pickers.

Nita got some litter pick sticks from NWLDC in order that she could replace others lost or broken and, to increase our own supplies, ordered a further 6 from Helping Hands. The cost for this will be shown on the financial breakdown next month.

Next meeting – 8 Dec at 7pm at Charles Booth Centre.

Gardening – Anne and Mike spent time tidying up Drury Lane, and planting shrubs they had been given to plant. Mike rebuilt the damaged part of the wall separating our planting from the scrubland at the back of it. Bill Enser collected the free trees we had ordered from NWLDC and has planted these.

Thringstone Miners' Welfare - Ingles FC are looking for committee members and local volunteers who might want to help with pitch maintenance/repair (mowing, strimming, marking etc). bar work, matchday turnstile, club fundraising/sponsorship and social media and match reporting. If you are able to help, please contact the club direct.

The Miners Welfare are putting on a **twinkle tots baby sensory class** on Fridays between 1.30pm and 2.30pm. Cost is £5. Help your baby engage with textures, sounds and lights. Suitable for babies from birth to 18 months.

Air Ambulance Bins – The bins on the roadside at Thringstone Members Club were moved on 24 November to the top end of the car park near to the side jitty by the bowls club. This was done by Air Ambulance because the bins were flooding as the car park slopes downwards to their original position.

Centre – The Coffee Morning in November raised £106. Thanks to all who came out and supported this. **The quiz night** for November and also for December were cancelled by the centre on 15 Nov. They are anticipating starting them again, with the same format, in January 2023. The centre has been advertising for a **new events manager**, and is currently also advertising for **bar staff at £9.50 per hour**. If you are interested, please contact the centre between 9am and 12 noon on 222337.

Whitwick and Thringstone People Zone – A recent meeting of stakeholders saw a low turnout, with nobody coming to represent the interests of Whitwick which is worrying. Discussions took place on issues in the woodlands, identifying assets, and looking at things for young people. A list is being drawn up of proposed physical activity opportunities based on what is already out there, and this is being sent to us for any further comments. We understand it could include a girls



football team being set up on the park at the back of the bowls club, and other ideas are seated exercise and things for youngsters.

Thringstone Members Club – every Tuesday between 7pm and 9pm the Roots Community Choir meet. There are no auditions, and anybody who wants to come and sing acapella is welcome to come along.

NWLDC – The Council's new customer care centre opened on 29 November in town on Belvoir Road, opposite Boyes. They will deal with housing, council tax, benefits and environmental health. The office will be open Monday – Wednesday 9am – 5pm, Thursday is 9am – 4pm, and Friday 9am – 5pm. Anybody wishing to request things, apply for things or pay things is asked to try to do this online in the first instance, if this is something they can do. Anybody writing to the council should now write to NWLDC, PO BOX 11051, Coalville, LE67 0FW. A police enquiry desk will open in the same place next year.

Chairs Report

Emails received/sent: Various from people with whom we regularly share information. Various fly tipping reported, as usual.

Promotion: We have **728 twitter followers**, which is 2 more than last month, and **1,929 facebook followers**, which is 10 more than last month.

Other: Nita has spent hours updating the memory sticks kept at the centre containing all the history things on her computer. These comprise over 7,000 items. The sticks are available for people to borrow and return, and back up all the FoT history things on computer at Nita's address.

What's On

3 Dec – Christmas Fayre at **Thringstone Members Club** 4.30-8.30pm. Grotto and carol singers followed by family disco 7.30 until close

4 Dec – **Carols at the Priory**. Starts at 3pm. Parking at the bottom car park of Bull's Head.

9 Dec – Open mike at **centre** from 7pm.

10 Dec – **Gracedieu Manor Nursery and pre-school** open day. 10am – 2pm. No need to book, just turn up and see what facilities are available.

11 Dec – **Santa Fun run** from **Charles Booth Centre**. Starts at 9am. £5 on the day for ticket. Teams or families can run for £15.

14 Dec – **Grace Dieu Manor Park** – Sale of catalogue returns and samples - book an hour slot from 6pm -7pm or 7.15pm- 8.15pm. Tickets are £5 and MUST be purchased in advance from www.eventbright.co.uk There is a booking fee.

16 Dec – **Carols round the tree at the centre**. Leave St Andrew's at 6.30pm and walk to the centre singing carols. U3A choir will be part of the entertainment package at the centre.

18 Dec – **Thringstone Members Club** – family fun day from 5pm-7pm.

21 Dec – **Charles Booth Centre** – 1pm-2pm, and 2.15pm-3.15pm - decorate and make **gingerbread men** for your tree. £3 per child. Session lasts 1 hour. Makes enough for 5 gingerbread men. Tea and coffee for parents. Book your place on 222337.

23 Dec – **Soul Club at Thringstone Members Club** – Christmas party. 7.30-12. Tickets £6. Raffle for Brown Dogs Cancer Charity.

24 Dec – **Thringstone Members Club** – 2pm-4pm – pre-Santa disco with games and prizes.

26 Dec – **Thringstone Members Club** – 12 noon until closing – music, soft play and bouncy castle

31 Dec – **Thringstone Members Club** – Collie singing 80s hits and motown. 8pm – 12.30pm.

Nibbles available. All welcome.

1 Jan – **Thringstone Members Club** – music, soft play and bouncy castle from 12 noon until closing.

6 and 7 Jan – **Thringstone Members Club** – Ace Community Theatre presents murder mystery – The Sound of Murder. Tickets £8 to include high tea. Book online via www.ticketsource.co.uk/ace

21-28 Jan – **TPADS production** of Pinocchio at Charles Booth Centre. Tickets £10 for adults and £8 for children other than 26 Jan when all tickets are £7.

Finance Report

Gen Fund held 1st of month (bank + petty cash + float)	2772.20		
Income		Expenditure	
		Broadband	20.00
		NWLDC for bulbs	92.45
total income to general fund			112.45
		Total general fund at month end	2659.75

Web Report

The website has now updated with all minutes and bulletins and the webmaster has cleared all the stuff from the home page which was out of date and/or unnecessary. Further updates are coming shortly. The webmaster is working on this.

Incident Report

- 5 Nov – the police attended the bonfire at the George and Dragon because people stupidly parked their cars on the bend, and there were also concerns about the amount of people walking down the lane to the venue as there is no lighting down there or footpaths.

History report

- We have received copies of **Antonia Booth's** diary for July and October 1944 in which she talks about the Booth children (Mary, Anne, Matthew and John) coming to Thringstone to stay at Thringstone. The decision to go to Thringstone House was made on 7 July 1944 when Antonia wired Amy Gee, warden of the community centre. It was arranged for Antonia's sister in law to send mattresses and blankets plus bed and crib to Thringstone House for the family to use. She also talks about who she met whilst visiting in October. These include Mrs Gough, various mothers and their babies who were evacuees, Mrs Domoney, and 'Lizzie Scott and her noisy son.'
- We were given copies of photos of the **musicals group** that operated from the centre which turned out to be **County Girl** produced in 1960 by Ron Smith. People on these include Don Hambleton, Roy Burton, Ron Smith, his daughter and wife, Gill Fox and Pam Griffin, June Elliott, Jean Simmonds, Eric Griffin who was a local builder, Ray Dennis, Norma Savage, William Wilkins, Ellen Mansfield, Carol Saunders, Pat Ball, Susan Cook, Mary Hambleton (Don's wife), Eunice Braben-Smith, Margaret Carter, Tom Bradshaw, Harry Bates, Sam Geary and John Brooks who was in the youth club. The owner of the photos left the area about 60 years ago, and has also told us that, given the centre was unlicensed at the time, some of the cast used to go for a quick pint or two over the road at The Queen's Head during the performances. The gentleman was also part of the local youth club at the time that Roy Severn was leader, and used to do scenery painting for the musicals' productions, and his wife was wardrobe mistress. Many of the people on the photos were identified through a facebook post by Norma Berry, who also told us that the mis-match of costumes was due to lack of money for the ballroom scene (2nd act), so people were told to come in their own fancy dress! We have also had contact from Colin Bakewell, whose dad, Joe, was the pianist in the orchestra and himself played the violin. Rita Bakewell nee Kenny was often musical director. We also heard from Georgie Peters nee Blackey (properly Lesley Georgina), who said she remembered the shows in the 1960s with Ron Smith, as she was in these with her sisters, Jill, Roma and Patsy, along with their auntie Anne. Their dad helped out with stage management and some of the scenery was painted in their living room at Grace Dieu by Keith Hill. She was in The Quaker Girl (1963), Rio Rita (1963) and Charisima (1964), along with No No Nannette at Loughborough with Ron and Dick Whittington at Ashby and was Titania in Fairy of the Bells.

- We were sent information on the properties in the area of **The Green** by the owner of The Willows, which included a map from 1886 showing the area of land purchased by Brunt Bucknall and Co, of Hartshorne, which was sold by the landlord of the Rose and Crown, George James Gough, and the land he retained. We have also received a list of owners of The Willows dating back to at least the 1830s and of properties on The Green going back to 1753 with the **Avarne family**. It is interesting how many of these were hosiers or framework knitters, which we have always suspected to be the case. In many cases, the properties were occupied by tenants rather than the owners. We discovered that, in addition to the doorway from the blue house into the neighbouring property which was bricked up some years back, there is another doorway that is bricked up that comes out by the stairs of the neighbouring property. We are told that when the people at the blue house rendered their gable end, they discovered another doorway at roof height at the back of the chimney stack. This reinforces the idea that the blue house was the master's house and the others, which also had interlinking doors, were framework knitters' properties. The Avarne family were in Thringstone from at least 1672, and we have downloaded several wills for the family, and also discovered that in April 1759, William Avarne of Thringstone won all three prizes for auriculas at the annual florist's feast in Leicester. We also have details of a sale of properties on The Green owned by William Avarne and sold in April 1814. These included 3 dwelling houses with good cellars, stables, gardens and 'every necessary convenience' plus adjoining cottages and land in excess of 20 acres split into 7 lots. Mr Avarne's personal house, which was also for sale, is described as having 4 rooms on the ground floor and 6 lodging rooms, plus barn, stable, walled garden and 2 adjoining cottages in the occupation of Thomas Beverley and William Miller. Various farm animals and implements, and household furniture belonging to Mr Avarne were also for sale. Adjacent to Mr Avarne's house and also for sale was a shop with parlour and kitchen and 4 lodging rooms and bakehouse in the occupation of John Biddle, grocer. Mr Avarne had also owned the Rose and Crown, or the property recognized by the sign of The Crown as it was called, which was also for sale. It is described as house place, parlour and brewhouse, with good lodging rooms, stables and garden with 2 lots of land adjoining. At the time, the pub was being run by John Gregory who was also described as a hosier. There were two cottages and stocking makers' shop adjoining in the occupation of William Revill and John Howe.

The will of **John Gregory** and that of his son Robert helped us to understand the link between George James Gough of **The Rose and Crown** and also Sarah Ann Jesson nee Gough, all of whom are linked to the houses on The Green. It is worthwhile noting that a new licensing act came into force in 1825, which directed that all ale houses had signage outside their premises giving the name of the ale house. This is useful to check against for pubs. However, we have records from 1809 when John Gregory is listed as keeping an alehouse in Thringstone, and by 1827 his name is listed against the Rose and Crown. John Gregory had several children, amongst whom were Elizabeth who married Thomas Kidger Ayre who kept the Rose and Crown from at least 1837. They had a son, with the same name as his father, who died in 1860 aged 22. When the senior Ayre died, his wife Elizabeth carried on with the pub for a while. Another one of John Gregory's daughters was Sarah who married Joseph Field. They had a daughter, also called Sarah who married James Gough. He was the father of **George James Gough** who also kept The Rose and Crown, and Sarah Ann Jesson nee Gough who is also associated with The Willows and other properties on The Green. In other words, Elizabeth Ayre was great aunt to George James Gough and his sister Sarah Ann, and their grandmother was the sister of Elizabeth Ayre. Another interesting angle is the fact that the Rose and Crown was eventually bought by Brunt Bucknell and Co from Hartshorne at the same time as descendants of John Gregory were living in that village, whilst others were still in Thringstone. Maybe they put a word in that there was money to be made? The brewery had 63 pubs, with the Rose and Crown being the only one of their pubs in Thringstone. Nearby ones in the same ownership were in Shepshed and Ashby, plus the New Inn at Pegg's Green at one time. We also have looked into ownership/occupation of other houses in the vicinity of The Willows. We know that **James Massey** who died in 1854 owned a garden on The Green between at least 1830 and 1841 and had previously owned a house there. We also know that **Robert Gregory** who died in



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1870 lived in a small dwellinghouse on The Green at some stage, as did **James Henson**, and that **Mary Poxon** lived on The Green with her sons in 1851, adjoining the westwardly side of a cowhouse, fronting Upton's Lane (thought to be Drury Lane and so called at the time because the Upton's lived there), and where there was a small plot of land on Thringstone Green Common. Next to the **Rose and Crown** in the time of Thomas Kidger Ayre, landlord of the pub from 1846-57, there was a dairy, barn, stable and cowhouse adjoining to the southwardly end of the dairy. **John Holmes** owned 2 closes of land of 2 acres plus, thought to be what is now known as Bob's Closs. At some stage, Bob's Closs was sold to Robert Henson, hence the 'Bob'.

When The Willows was sold by **Sarah Ann Jesson** (sister to George James Gough who at the time was the landlord of the Rose and Crown) in 1894, The Willows was described as a well-built brick and slated dwelling house containing 6 living rooms and larder, surrounded by large garden well stocked with fruit trees with ornamental brick and ironwork fence to Main Street and having cart entrance by the right of road over the yard of the 2 x 3 storey houses and the 2 cottages at the back. The garden was sold off to build Bill Kent's house. Prior to 1919 when Brunt Bucknall sold out to another brewery, there was a right of way along Kirby's yard and adjoining property which belonged to that brewery. The cart access is still there. It is next to the last of the 3 storey houses and goes down the back towards The Willows.

In 1894, 2 of the 3 storey houses on The Green were in the occupation of **William Varnham and George Laurence**. These were bought by John Kirby, who lived in The Blue House, so we are presuming that one of these properties was that one as he had his grocery store at Forest View. There were 2 cottages at the rear of those properties occupied by **James Toone and A Tingley**. A cottage and garden in Drury Lane was occupied by **John Varnham**, and was also bought by Mr Kirby. It would appear that there were formerly six cottages with yards, stables and outbuildings and gardens on The Green of which the 3 storey properties were a part, and one of those was occupied by **Fred Hawkins**.

By 1937 the pub was in the occupation of the Sykes family, and the other properties were in the occupation of John Cliff, Wilf Black and Arthur Bird. In 1937, there were 2 former cottages used as wash houses.

Following on from this research, we looked at the family of **Fred Hawkins**. Properly Alfred, he married **Harriet Hutchinson**, illegitimate daughter of Sarah Ann Watson who became Sarah Ann Varnham who has been mentioned before living down Drury Lane. The Hawkins family appear on the 1891 census on The Green and lived in Thringstone until at least Oct 1892 as their first two children John William and daughter Sarah Ann were born in Thringstone, the latter in Oct 1892. They then moved to 31 Talbot St., and their next child was born there in 1895. Fred Hawkins was part of the rescue party at the Whitwick Pit Disaster in April 1898 and suffered burns to his arms and face. His brother in law, James Wright, who had fathered 9 children, was killed in the disaster, and his body never recovered. Fred's son, Frederick, married Annie Elizabeth Shaw on 21 April 1924 at St Andrews. Interestingly, both **Fred and Annie were deaf and dumb**, and their wedding made national papers, as they had to get a sign interpreter for the vicar to conduct the wedding. Fred had gone to the deaf school in Derby for his education and played cricket for Grace Dieu Park Cricket Club as had his father before him from 1890-97. We now also have photos of both Alfred and son Fred and Fred's wife Annie and of their daughter Sarah Ann in older years. The first child of Harriet nee Hutchinson (John William Hawkins) was with his grandmother **Sarah Ann Varnham** down Drury Lane in 1911. Harriet was the niece of William Varnham who was next door but one to the Hawkins family in 1891. Sarah Ann Varnham was the daughter of **John Watson** who lived down Drury Lane and about whom we have written in the past as he was Old Duke.

- **Jan 1843** – **Mary Biddle**, wife of John Biddle, grocer of Thringstone, was 'found suspended by the neck in her bedroom and quite dead. Much loved by her poorer neighbours, no reason can be assigned for the commission of the fatal act, except that of temporary insanity.'
- **Sept 1959** – **Jean Reid**, one of the members of Thringstone House Community Association **Drama Group**, wore the actual wedding dress in which she had been married in June for her part as Shirley Hornet in *Sailor Beware*, a three act comedy at Thringstone House. Others taking part were Jessie



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Willmott, Catherine Haywood, Jenny Griffin, Dudley Watkins, Eric Wright, Malcolm Wardle, Pat Jessop and Bernard Dong, who was also the producer.

- **Oct 1961 – Rev Willis** put forward a proposal to house a sandpit for local children in the fields next to the vicarage, known as **church fields**. He felt that it would give local children a focal point and be much safer than playing on the streets. This was only in the embryonic stage and Rev Willis was hoping to get free bricks and cement to make the idea a reality. It never happened.
- **April 1966** – An inquest into the death of Wilfred Sykes of Lbro Rd gave a verdict of accidental death. Mr Sykes was working for the Electricity Board in Shepshed when a wall collapsed on him. The inquest heard that the foundations of the wall had been affected by the amount of wet weather in the previous 8 months. The 5 men were digging about 9 inches away from the wall, which appeared to have no foundations, and were not using picks, just shovels when the wall fell, covering Mr Sykes other than his head, left shoulder and left arm. When firemen came to release Mr Sykes, they found him dead.
- **May 1966 – Jenny Houlton** from Thringstone was chosen as Thringstone Miners Welfare Gala Queen. 15 year old Jenny was chosen at an event at the community centre by Mr W Unsworth, general manager of the Leicestershire and South Derbyshire Coalfield. In June, Jenny from Brooks Lane, took part in a gala procession round the village, aimed at raising money for a pavilion on the Homestead Road football ground. 500 people attended, and William Betts of Loughborough Road was the chairman of the organising committee.
- **Oct 1966** – Miners families on the Melrose Road development in Thringstone who were falling into rent arrears were the subject of a heated discussion at a council meeting. It was eventually agreed that any arrears could be deducted straight from their wages on the agreement of the tenant after the coal board had given their approval. During the debate there was discussion on the 'standard of tenants being brought in'. The coal board were, it was said, in such a position that they took on anybody who applied, but even tenants on the estate were worried about some of the people moving in. It was wondered whether other council tenants were 'vetted' and the meeting was told it was not practice to take on people who had existing rent arrears but it became apparent that some of the people coming to Thringstone had 'a history of bad payment of rent'. If people were being transferred from one area to another, their habits would be transferred with them. Cllr. Robinson said that most of the problems revolved around people 'doing moonlight flits', a statement to which the clerk to the council concurred. Cllr. MA Wyatt said 'The fact that the coal board says it is endeavouring to provide a high standard of tenant is obviously incorrect. If those doing moonlight flits are a high standard, I would hate to think what a reduced standard would produce.'
- **March 1974 - Gracedieu Park Cricket Club** celebrated their annual dinner with a presentation of the Peter Horner Cup for the highest scoring batsman in the season going to A Brotherhood with 109 not out. Club officials were President George Booth, chairman A Hitchcock, Secretary Len Wass, treasurer A Willmott, 1st 11 captain J Harper, 2nd 11 captain R Harrold, Sunday team captain David Fitt (from the community centre).

Next meeting 8 December at 7pm at Charles Booth Centre