The Friends of Thringstone

'Working together to improve our village'

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Bulletin February 2026

Monthly Litter Pick Total 106 bags by **8** people against **127** bags by **8** people for the same month in 2025. Please remember that we have a **community litter pick on 28 March at 10.30am** from The Green. All welcome.

Meeting notes – 4 present, 6 apologies

Thringstone Together Carnival – Work is underway to provide a carnival at Thringstone Miners Social Centre/Ingles FC on Saturday 20 June from 12 noon until 5pm. Along with FoT, the others involved with Thringstone Together are working hard to ensure that the event has things of interest for people. There will be stalls, bouncy castle, fancy dress competition, quality catering, the bar will be open, and there will be live music. We are currently working with Bright Hope Hospice and also with the local community radio to be there and we are sure there will be something for everybody. Friends of Thringstone will be having a stand there

What I like about my village writing competition – Thringstone Primary have agreed to work with us on this project which launched on 20 January. The pupils will have until 13 February to do their work, which will then be submitted to us for judging. The winning article/drawing will then be printed in Community Voice magazine, who are also supplying the prizes. We are really happy that this idea has had the support of our local school. 12 other schools within the area were approached to take part, but these failed to reply despite phone calls.

Drainage system – In our last bulletin, we reported that Severn Trent saw no problems with the drainage system/sewers near to Thringstone Members Club but County were going to look into the unmapped drainage asset by 132 Lbro Rd, and clear the drainage, once ownership had been established, by 30 Jan. This clearing out took place on that day from Thringstone Members Club down to the Bull's Head and Severn Trent now know the manhole by 132 is part of their network as an unmapped asset, for further investigation by them as and when.

Proposed children's Home – RSXAS Ltd on behalf of Prosperous Care Ltd have put in a planning application to NWLDC to turn 81 Main Street, which is currently a rental property, into a children's home for 3 children with emotional and/or behavioural difficulties between the ages of 4 and 17 years. The plans include creating an extra 2 parking spaces at the front, taking off street parking availability up to 4 vehicles, and 3 full time staff – 2 support staff working 10am-10pm and 10pm – 10am shifts and a manager working 9am – 5pm. This property lies opposite the Booth Road/Main Street junction. Several people have contacted us with concerns, as there are already 2 similar care homes in that stretch of Main Street, one in operation (75) and one being converted (73), and with just one operational home, the parking situation is already creating difficulties for drivers leaving Booth Road and/or Glebe Road who are unable to see oncoming traffic. Some people with mobility issues are no longer able to go down Main Street because of cars parked partly or fully on pavements, and that on one day, there were 14 cars all visiting the one home in operation. The police say that have been to no. 75 three times now over this. We hear that

visitors to St Andrew's are affected because of parking difficulties. We have raised these concerns with our county councillor, who has agreed to investigate further. We suggest that those living nearby who are most impacted by this put in their views in to the planning authorities as well as to our county and district councillors.

Gracedieu Manor Park – A new padel indoor area will be opening shortly. If interested, you need to contact hello@gracedieumanorpark.co.uk Padel is a mixture of tennis and squash, with glass walls and wire mesh that the ball can bounce from. It is typically played in doubles, with solid stringless padels and softer tennis balls.

Charles Booth Centre – Thanks to Bruce and the I Clean team for clearing gutters and windows at the centre for free on 24 Jan.

Greenhouse Coffee Shop – The folks there have changed their opening times and are now closed on Sundays and Mondays. They open 10am-3pm on all other days except Fridays and Saturdays when they open at 9am. The shop are looking for a run club leader with the view to having runners go from there and then return every Saturday morning leaving at 9am and returning at 10am. If anybody is interested in this, please contact the coffee shop direct. They are now also offering business lunches and afternoon tea boxes.

Coalville Library – closed on 26 Jan for 7 weeks for a £150k refurbishment.

Chair's report

Promotion – We have **726** twitter followers which is 5 less than last month and **2,606** facebook followers which is 9 more than last month.

Other Nita sent a history article on affiliation orders to **Community Voice** for Oct 2026 and on James and Lydia Gee and their family for November 2026 and Jack Harris for December 2026.

Nita reported 5 lots of **fly tipping** on Melrose Road and 2 on Henson's Lane to NWLDC and also a **smashed up car** on Booth Road which had been there for 2 months to police. Police said they were aware, but council needed to remove it. Nita contacted council who put on it a notice of removal giving 27 Jan as possible date for removal. Car went on 3 Feb.. Nita also reported the chassis of a car has been left in the parking area at the bottom of **Henson's Lane** for months and nothing was happening to it and it needed removing.

We say goodbye this month to Simon Jaggs and his family who leave for the north.

What's On

- 20 Feb – **Whitwick and Coalville Leisure Centre** 11am - 3pm. Health and Wellbeing show. Over 60 stalls and activities on offer.
- 28 March – **Community Litter Pick** at 10.30am from The Green. All welcome.
- 26 April – **Ravenstone Village Green**, St George's day market – stalls and kids' attractions
- 6 and 7 June – **Open Osgathorpe** 12 noon until 5pm at St Mary's church, Osgathorpe. Includes access to open gardens. Adults £5.
- 19 June – **Coalville Theatre Festival** – 4pm-9pm. More details nearer the time.
- 20 June – **Thringstone Together Carnival**, 12 noon – 5pm at Thringstone Miners Social Centre/Ingles FC, Homestead Road. More details later.
- 28 June – **Gracedieu Priory** – celebrate 20 years of the site being open to the public. More details later.
- 8 Aug – **Charles Booth Centre family music day**. More details to come.

Financial Report

.**Gen Fund held 1st of month** (bank + petty cash + float)	**2749.22**		
Income		**Expenditure**	
		Broadband	£20.00

		Zurich Insurance	£7.89
total income received			£27.89
		Total	**£2721.33**

Website

No changes.

Incident reports

- 7 Jan – church **shed** broken into by people using it for drugs, as tin foil was found inside.
- 14 Jan – **speed patrol** on Members Club car park issued fine to one driver for driving at 38mph in a 30 mph zone.
- 14 Jan – at 9.50pm 4 girls, all dressed in nightwear, came out of **Thringstone Co-op** with two baskets of stolen goods which they showed to a passer-by.
- 15 Jan – 1.35pm an adult male stole a basket of food from **Thringstone Co-op,** witnessed by someone on the till who tried to stop the male leaving the shop with the goods but failed
- 20 Jan – bag of goods stolen from **Co-op** found at Thringstone Members Club. Police believe perpetrator was sleeping rough nearby.
- The **next beat surgery** will be at Whitwick and Coalville Leisure Centre on 21 Feb from 3pm-4pm.

History report

- Following on from last month's bulletin and the 1937 coronation programme, it has been suggested that M Wilkin was possibly William Wilkins of Main Street, known as Billy, who worked with his son James as a coal haulage contractor according to the 1939 register. With regard to the children of Arthur Mitchell, the boot and shoe repairer, it would seem that Yvonne Mitchell married Barry Hadley Pegg in 1954 and lived on Millhouse Estate in Thringstone. Her brother Arthur Horace Patrick, known as Patrick, married in 1965 to Pat Simmons and they lived on Main Street. He was a plasterer by trade and also played football for Thringstone. He died in 2006 and his sister Yvonne died in August 2013.
- Again from last month, people might like to look at the short film of **Mrs Walker**, and one of her sons and their dogs, taken at **Gracedieu Garage** in August 1957. You can see the end of an unknown property in the background near the end of the film. https://www.macearchive.org/films/midlands-news-00081957-st-bernard-dogs-thringstone-leicestershire .
- Also from last month, our mention of **Pat Middleton** has caused some interest. Apparently, he played football for Thringstone House from around 1958 and then joined Thringstone Miners Welfare FC for a time.
- **Jack Harris** was also mentioned in our last bulletin at Gracedieu Garage from 1934 until 1938 and we need to revise and update our information for you. This was an alias. He wasn't Jack Harris but **Horace Holt**, registered at birth as **Motta Holt**. Nita has been speaking to Martin Crocker from Hampshire, interested in the Bentley car, the first of its make, which took part in the 1923 Le Mans races, and which was originally on Jack Harris's forecourt and then was sold to the Walker's. Mrs Walker eventually sold it to Tom Wheatcroft in 1980. The following information about Jack Harris comes from a copy of a letter from around 1982 sent by Colin Moore, of Bushwell Cottage, Melbourne Road, Newbold Coleorton, born in 1932, the son of Ernest and Annie Moore of 80 Loughborough Road, Thringstone. Other recollections of his are in our WW2 booklet. 'I first saw the Bentley when it was parked on Jack Harris' forecourt when I went for a pre-lunch Sunday walk with my father. We called at the garage for some chocolate to sustain us on our 4 mile hike. The

garage was at Gracedieu near Thringstone and owned by Jack Harris, a very jolly man, always kind to youngsters, if not a trifle eccentric. Just inside the sweet shop to the premises was a caged parrot, which used to shout rude things at us and recite nursery rhymes. Jack usually wore a flying helmet, and walked round with a small monkey on his shoulder. He said he knew Amy Johnson. In the top of the roof cavity which covered the petrol pumps he kept white doves. He must have been proud of his electric petrol pumps because he displayed the fact on a large board fastened to a nearby tree. The letters 'electric petrol pumps' were made from small pieces of wood, nailed in place to create the letters. At the entrance and the exit to the forecourt were two boxes which resembled small wooden coffins standing on end, painted black, which contained a lamp in each like an amber fog light facing each other and no matter how fast we danced across the beam, we couldn't do so without it ringing the bell. The garage changed hands, and the Walker family took over and the Bentley used to travel backwards and forwards through Thringstone with its engine just ticking over, burbling along. The racing body of the car had been removed and stored in the garage, and a crane hoist fitted to the rear of the chassis. Traffic was very sparse in those days, and you could play on the road without danger. The only cars were The Squire's Rover, the taximan's Morris which was laid up most of the year on blocks and the Walker's Bentley. At the end of the war, the Bentley took on a new appearance, with a beautifully constructed shooting brake body, thought to be the handiwork of Tom Mann, the local undertaker. Mrs Walker used to show St Bernard dogs, and the Bentley took them all over the country.' Nita then discovered that Jack Harris, who in 1939 had moved over from the garage to live with the Robinson family, went on to keep a grocery and general shop on Top Road in Griffydam from 1940 until his death, and we now have 2 photos of Mr Harris. The Griffydam folk said that Jack was a well-known character in the locality, frequently leaving a 'back in five minutes' sign on the shop door but often being gone for hours. He had a half crown coin glued to the shop counter to see how many customers would attempt to pick it up and still had his African Grey parrot called Polly, which was famous for its wolf whistles. He advertised his shop in adverts which played locally at the Rex and Regal cinemas. He also had a valuable gold watch with the inscription Sergeant Horace Holt engraved on the back. Newspaper articles say that Jack's garage in Griffydam was broken into on 30 Aug 1945 and that Harry Weston, who was 14 at the time, was one of the witnesses to the burglary where minerals to the value of 1s 6d were stolen. Jack liked flags, and used to put up large flags of other nations outside his shop in rotation. A lover of animals, Jack had a pet cemetery in his garden with tombstone, remembering Peggie, Jacko and Flossie. When Jack died on 23 June 1952 at the Red Lion at Pegg's Green in the presence of Harry Weston, his obituary gave his name as Horace Holt, also known as Jack Harris, and his death certificate gives all 3 names. He left £2,254 6s 9d. His parrot, Polly, and £50 went to the Jackson family on The Tentas, £50 each went to Mr and Mrs Weston, the landlord and landlady of the Red Lion, his house and shop was shared between his business partner 21 year old Harry Weston (son of the landlady from Red Lion) and 14 year old David (Dink) Arthur Else upon the latter reaching 21 years of age, plus his stock in trade, household items, monies and furniture in the house, and his motor-car, dog, cats and budgie to David who it appears died in 2022. David used to keep Jack company in his shop after school and at weekends. The rest of his estate went to his brother George and sister Violet Gibson. Harry Weston went on to keep the news agency in Griffydam and married Jean Mary Goode in 1954 and died on 9 Sept 2020. We then spent an eternity trying to find out who Jack really was, using his brother and sister as reference points, to discover that he was christened as Motta Holt but known as Horace which was a family name and when he died, George and Violet were his only siblings left of 6. He was the son of Major William Lyster Holt of Kensington who was a civil engineer and in the Hon. Artillery

Company and whose image we have. Jack's mother was Catherine Dulin. Major Holt died when Motta was 11 in 1889 aged 50 of a heart attack. Jack had brothers George Lindsay Holt (a stockbroker), Herbert Gordon Holt who died in South Africa of meningitis, and William Bacon Lyster Holt who also moved to South Africa, and sisters Lilian Mary, Violet Katherine (of whom we have a wedding photo) and Emilie Dorothy. Lilian Mary, who moved to live in Switzerland, initially married into the aristocracy, so this was a wealthy family. Horace was in Swindon, where 2 of his brothers lived, from at least 1899 as he put on Edison Bell phonographic exhibitions. He was a keen runner, played water polo for a Swindon team, also organised, ran and won walking races, which he widely celebrated to promote his business as proprietor of the Fountain Hotel between June 1901 and December 1904. His walking pace at 11 minutes a mile is still considered fast. Newspaper articles said that he was a popular landlord. He married Louie England on 9 November 1903, but by 5 May 1904 had put in the notice in the newspapers to say that he would not be responsible for her debts and they separated. She moved to Canada. He then appears as a Sargeant in the City of London regiment of the Royal Fusiliers during WW1 and then there is another gap until he appears at Gracedieu. All this information has been shared with interested parties, including Griffydam History Group.

- **Dec 1876** – On **Christmas Eve**, snow, frost and a biting wind hit the area, and put paid to a lot of external activities planned around the village and neighbouring Whitwick.
- **Sept 1896 -** From Fur and Feather magazine – 251 fur and feathers. What offers? Rabbits preferred. **Joseph Griffin, Towles Yard**, Thringstone. The Towle family lived at The Gables, Main Street, so presumably Towles Yard was somewhere there.
- **Nov 1898 -** The Urban District Council of Coalville put out notices to the effect that they were applying to **manufacture, use and supply gas** to the district to include Coalville, Whitwick, Hugglescote and the parishes of Thringstone, Swannington, Ravenstone and Snibstone with Alton Grange and Bardon, all in the county of Leicestershire. A list of land on which the gas was already being manufactured was given which included southward and westward from the junction leading from Whitwick to Coalville and lands from the north and west of this area which included lands which were reputed to have belonged to Mrs Clara Stenson and were now reputed to belong to **Thringstone shoemaker Albert Ottey**. In addition, lands reputed to belong to Thomas Jesson, Mrs Elizabeth Branson and Edward Matchett were mentioned. Mention was also made of land in Green Lane, Whitwick which had belonged to Mrs Sketchley (mentioned in previous bulletins) and now belonging to Charles Spencer.
- **April 1899** – newspapers were heralding the opening of a new drapery store in Thringstone known as **Gledhill's.** No address was given for this shop but it offered the best value in the area.
- **Feb 1916** - **Florence Hallam** aged 18 was in court for stealing two 3 shilling pension orders from her grandfather Josiah Hibbert. She said she had found the pension book behind a picture, and admitted to cashing in one pension for 2 shillings having signed her grandfather's name and said that she had lost the other order. PC Dobney said that she had not been convicted but lead the life of an abandoned person. She was unable to get employment as other girls wouldn't work with her, and her parents had no control over her. She said she wanted to go to a home to be trained, but on calling her mother to the court, she told the court she did not want her daughter to go. Florence said she wanted to go to prison, but was bound over on condition she went to a training home, but if she refused to go or did not stop there, she would be brought back to court for sentencing. The 1911 census shows Florence living with her parents, Thomas and Rebecca, on Brook Lane, Thringstone along with 5 siblings. By 1921 she was with her mother at Kirby's Yard (The Green). In 1939 she

was in Regent Street, Loughborough at the public assistance institution, nurses and master's home, which was another term for a workhouse. For occupation it says incapacitated and gives a birth date of 25 Jan 1899, which is apparently wrong as descendants have given a birth date of 1898, Florence didn't marry until 1961. We have a photograph of her and also her daughter Bella who was born out of wedlock.

- **Nov 1916 – William Gee,** a collier of Thringstone, was in court to arrange an affiliation order, the case being brought by Annie Freeman of Talbot Lane, Whitwick. The mother and the sister of Annie Freeman, who was Jessie Sykes of Thringstone who with her husband went on to keep the Rose and Crown, said that the couple had been engaged, and he had even bought her a coat in which to be married in, all of which William Gee denied. He said he was a colliery banksman and earned 27 shillings a week and 3 shillings a week in bonuses. After a lengthy discussion, the bench made an order for payment of an affiliation order in the amount of 3 shillings and 6 pence a week, to be paid from the date of birth of the child until it reached the age of 14, and to pay 17 shillings in costs and 2 guineas advocate's fee. Annie Jones has been the subject of previous research. She was in the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps in WW1 as an assistant cook, and had a colourful time whilst in their service having previously worked at Stablefords in Coalville. When she left the corps her officers said her work and personal character had been equally unsatisfactory. The child in question was Diamond Freeman born in October 1916 about whom we have also written before and of whom we have a photograph. He was in the RAF as a gunner, having previously been a shoe hand working in Leicester, and was shot down and killed on 26 July 1942 in France having only been married for 6 months.
- **Dec 1921 - William Gee**, a collier of Thringstone, was in court again over arrears relating to an affiliation order to Mrs Annie Jones, formerly Freeman, married woman of Whitwick. He was £7 10 shillings in arrears, and was supposed to pay 7 shillings a week. He said that his pay from Whitwick Colliery was £1 3 shillings and 4 pence a week, and had recently married a widow with 4 children. He was ordered to pay 2 shillings and 6 pence a week, and apply for his affiliation order amount to be reduced. He was given 4 weeks to pay.
- **Jan 1923 – William Gee**, collier of Thringstone, was in court again over arrears relating to an **affiliation order** to Mrs Annie Jones, formerly Freeman, married woman of Whitwick. We have written about this woman in the past as she was in the Women's Auxiliary Corps during WW1. He said he had not been able to pay the 30 shillings for the upkeep of his son having been in poor circumstances. He was a married man with 4 children (which at that time included 3 step children) and working as a colliery banksman earning 30 shillings a week. The order was for 5 shillings a week. Mrs Jones said that she had a husband to look after her and their children, but this child was fathered by Gee and he should pay what had been ordered. Mr Gee was given a fortnight's prison sentence, suspended for a month to give him time to pay both the arrears and the 5 shillings per week.. The 1921 census shows him living with his wife Florence Ethel and 4 children on Main Street. He was born on 4 May 1893 and had married Florence Ethel Jarvis nee Timson in 1920. Known as Ethel she had been married to Charles Jarvis of Osgathorpe in 1912. Charles had died aged 29 in 1919, the same year that his son Frederick was born. Ethel and Charles had 2 sons, Charles and Frederick and 2 daughters, Florence and Hilda and William and Ethel had 4 daughters, Sarah, Nellie, Francis and Freda, and 2 sons Ron and Kenneth. In 1939 William Gee's address was Primrose Cottage, Main Street. William Gee died in 1966 and Ethel in 1943 aged 50.

Date of next meeting 5 March at 7pm at Charles Booth Centre. All welcome.