

PROGRAMME 2007

March Thursday 15th	How we were in the 1960's/70's. 7.30pm, Bedford Hall with Rita Mackenzie.
March Sunday 25th	6 members are invited to join the Wisbech Society and the Duke of Gloucester at St. Peter's Church in Wisbech, to celebrate the abolition of slavery, on the anniversary of the signing.
March Saturday 31st	Fenland Family History Group are running a research and information day in March, from 10-5pm. Two venues: The Angles Theatre and St. Peter's Church Hall, each end of car park.
April Thursday 19th	AGM + talk by Carenza Lewis on local archaeology – news and discoveries – 7.30pm, Bedford Hall.
May Monday 7th	Flag Fen is holding a special day at which we may have a stall. Volunteers needed for rota please ring 270634 – Margaret.
May Saturday 19th	Local Societies Day in Cathedral Square, run by Peterborough Local History Forum.
May Thursday 24th	Broadway Cemetery: following the clues and clearing the way, with Alan Peasgood and John Thompson. Bedford Hall, 7.30pm.
June Wednesday 13th	Visit to Wisbech Museum, led by Brian Payne. He says he'll take us behind the scenes and down in the depths! Leave Thorney 6.45 pm. (Phone 270634 for lift).
June Saturday 30th	Coffee Morning in Church Street Stalls and busking, chat and fun! 10 – 12.00
August Sunday 26th	Tour of Thorney, with Dorothy Halfhide, Blue Badge Guide – 2pm outside Abbey, ending at Chapel for tea.
August 25th, 26th & 27th	Chapel Flower Festival, featuring a display from the Thorney Society by Ann Looker
Sept Sunday 9th	Heritage Open Day Tour - with Dorothy Halfhide 2pm outside Abbey.
Sept Saturday 29th/ Sunday 30th	Feast of Fenland Exhibition. Food in the fens, growing and sampling. Displays, entertainment, children's activities. 10-4.30 pm. Bedford Hall. This is a prestigious travelling exhibition which the Society has helped plan, and well worth viewing.

THE THORNEY SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

March 2007

100th
edition



The **Flemings in the Fens Research Association** welcomes liaison with individuals, and it promotes active discussion and collaboration in all projects of mutual interest. Please make initial contact via the e-mail address above.

[A version of this paper was published in **Descent**, the Journal of the Society of Australian Genealogists, Vol. 36, Part 4, pages 165-166 (December 2006)].

The Thorney Society has been instrumental in research and liaison for this project. Gordon Beharrel was the first to trace his ancestry – with documentary evidence – through Thorney, Isle of Axholme in Yorkshire, Canterbury, to the area around Lille. Jo McAnn continues to work hard on a related research and has made it a focus of her retirement.

FLAG FEN

BRITAIN'S BRONZE AGE CENTRE

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Flag Fen Bronze Age Centre Needs You!

Do you like working with people?
Do you have DIY or gardening skills?
Would you like to lead guided tours?

We need:

**Tour Guides, Shop Assistants, Demonstrators,
Grounds Maintenance, Gardeners and Educator**
on weekdays and weekends.

For details contact the Office on

01733 313414

The Droveway, Northey Road, Peterborough, PE6 7QJ.

Annual elections for the Thorney Society Officers and Executive Committee

The elections will take place at the Annual General Meeting on 19th April 2007. Nominations should be made in writing before Thursday 5th April 2007. Members wishing to stand should be nominated and seconded and their consent to stand must be obtained before the nomination is made.

Nominations are invited for the Chairman, Vice Chairman, Honorary Secretary, Honorary Treasurer, Curator and between four and eight other members. Nominees shall declare at the Annual General Meeting at which their election is to be considered any financial or professional interests known or likely to be of concern to the Society.

Please send nominations in writing to The Secretary, 144 Wisbech Road, Thorney, PE6 0SE before Thursday 5th April 2007.

The role of Honorary Secretary

After around ten years without a Curator of the Museum, Dorothy Halfhide has been starting to develop her work in this area. This means that there is a vacancy for an Honorary Secretary for the Society. The good news is that much work in organizing social events, the newsletter and the stewards' rota is either already in other people's hands, or will be soon.

The work will involve general correspondence, minutes of meetings of the Committee, and liaison with other local societies. If anyone has skills and interests in managing the Thorney Society website, that too would be very welcome. For further information about the role of Secretary, please contact Dorothy on 01733 270908.

Questioning Huguenot & Walloon Heritage

By Robert Ford Deboo (deboo@pacificcoast.net)
Victoria, British Columbia, Canada June 2006

Introduction

Many English historians have long grouped all French-speaking Protestant immigrants of the 16th-17th Centuries as “French Huguenots and Walloons” when in fact many were not: They were Flemings from the Southern Netherlands who spoke French (and Dutch). This error in “lumping” newcomers is common in England even today, where, for example, Pakistanis, Bangladeshis and Indians are most frequently grouped together and called Asians. This centuries-old idiosyncrasy clouds English minds and literature, and it often makes determining true origin of family roots unnecessarily complicated and difficult to confirm.

Problems

Many Australians (New Zealanders, Canadians and others) will be told of their “Huguenot or Walloon” heritage when they check into English source materials or contact namesakes and family history groups there. This is usually due to the fact that common surname lists cited in England are largely composed of references to incomplete church records and to language spoken by immigrants rather than to their specific place of origin. Two other features peculiar to domestic interest in genealogy in this great land of immigrants are that many English genealogists had/have no interest in tracing surnames back to the European continent, and they have exhibited little interest in the difficult history and geography “over there”. It is much easier, it seems, to just lump newcomers by language or religion, or to switch to other confusing designations such as “...they came from the Low Countries”.

?? Can you give a little help ??

To ensure the continued growth and success of the Thorney Society we are looking for volunteers who could offer just a few hours on an ad hoc basis.

- **Gardening in front of the Museum.**
- **Occasional cleaning inside the Museum.**
- **A “minutes” secretary able to take the minutes at Thorney Society Committee Meetings (approximately 6 ish per year!).**
- **Honorary Secretary – not such a daunting task as it sounds as a number of the duties have been delegated elsewhere.**
- **Webmaster for the Thorney Society website.**
- **Assistant for the displays and stalls occasionally taken from the Museum to other locations.**

The Thorney Society is a registered charity and therefore the financial rewards are nil, however the satisfaction is considerable!

NEWS NEWS NEWS NEWS NEWS

Tourism Office – We hear, through the Heritage Attractions Group, that a new site for the Tourism Office is being considered for 2009. This may be in the new Railway Station, which would make good sense.

Flag Fen has a new education and learning officer, full of ideas for community outreach and schools programmes. The café area has been improved – try it for homemade cakes and toasted Panini!

Sacrewell Farm has a café too, without having to go around the farm – just drop in for hot chocolate looking across frosted fields, or for a reasonably priced tasty traditional Sunday lunch.

New Neighbours – If someone moved into a house near you, please welcome them with your newsletter! Or request that they be sent a few so that we could give them a chance of becoming members: just phone 270634.

New Displays in Museum – Everybody has enjoyed the wedding photographs, but it was time for a change! We hope football will catch people's attention as strongly, especially the old Comic Football Match photos.

Come and have a look!

Dinner Dance Raffle

We were pleasantly surprised at the results of the raffle, which was over £600! A real windfall. Firstly many, many thanks to all those very generous donors who gave such wonderful raffle prizes.

We are spending money already, as work has already started to improve storage of the Museum collections. The current work will come to about £1700, including flooring and new shelving (more details in the next newsletter).

The Museum was awarded a grant by the Museum Development Fund, and also funding from the Parish Council. We are now able to complete the funding with profits from the dinner/dance. Thank you everybody.

**WILLOW WEAVING
WORKSHOPS**

At King's Cliffe Village Hall 2007

GARDEN TRUGS
Sunday 1st April

GARDEN STRUCTURES
Sunday 13th May and Sunday 3rd June

IRISH SKIBS WITH JOYCE COUNTRY BASE
Sunday 8th July

WILLOW SCULPTURE
Sunday 7th October

WILLOW TENSION TRAYS AND RUSH MATS
Sunday 4th November

CHRISTMAS DECORATIONS
Sunday 2nd December

Workshops are all at beginner's level.
Wherever possible locally grown willow will be available
to weave with on the day.
Workshops begin at 10am and finish at 4pm.
The maximum number on each workshop is 10 people.
Workshops cost £35.00 per person.

For further enquiries or a booking form
Please contact: **SUE KIRK on 01780 470876.**

part of an expanding abbey complex, perhaps for use as guest-houses, stables, or craft workshops.

As well as pottery, animal bone, and roofing material, a large deposit of 13th and 14th century painted glass was found in and around the buildings. The intricate designs on the glass fragments were of very high quality. Elaborate border fragments included foliate and canopy designs, and several pieces joined to show part of a heraldic motif depicting a lion passant. As well as glass, much broken window lead and other lead waste littered the area, and there were ashy spreads and patches of scorching.

The implication was systematic destruction of windows in order to remove and recycle lead. Support for this came from the discovery of a large architectural fragment, possibly a pillar base, that had been re-used for lead working. It was made of a large octagonal limestone block into which a bowl had subsequently been carved. Burning in the bowl and on the upper levels of the block, as well as large amounts of lead waste in the immediate vicinity, provided evidence for its use.

In the late 16th century, a small hall with a central hearth was built up against one of the earlier medieval buildings – evidence that wholesale demolition did not take place until some time after the abbey was dissolved.

Though the excavation site was clearly a peripheral location in the abbey complex, the archaeology was deep – evidence of a busy history. While there was much interaction between the abbey and nearby farms, chapels and settlements, there was also contact with the wider world – despite the isolated geographical setting – with pottery from as far away as Scarborough, Kent and the Surrey/Hampshire border, as well as imported Saintonge ware from France.

Author: John Thomas, Project Officer
University of Leicester Archaeological Services,
Jst6@le.ac.uk

Chairman's Report

Welcome to our first newsletter of the year.

It was very pleasing to see so many members and friends enjoying our latest social events, and many thanks to everyone who helped organize them.

The funds raised are being used towards the refurbishment of our archive storage area to bring it up to the standard museum accreditation by 2009. Also many thanks to the Parish Council and the Museum Development Board for their generous grants.

On the subject of the museum could all members give consideration to helping on just one Sunday afternoon in the year to act as a steward at the museum. No experience is needed and it does give you a good opportunity to revisit the museum yourself and possibly find many interesting aspects of Thorney of which you are unaware.

The draft report of our Abbey Fields community dig is in its final stages and discussions on the resultant display inside and outside the museum are now starting. Also an information leaflet will be produced which we hope to circulate throughout the village.

Finally, I hope we can count on your support in attending the forthcoming talks that have been arranged for members and friends, and of course look forward to seeing and hearing the views of as many members as possible at our AGM in April.

Best Regards,

Chris Coakley

Tracing Roots

In January 2007 Linda Johnson of Surrey wrote to the Society asking if we could trace any information on an ancestor of hers named Frances Denny born 1801 and who married John Baily of Thorney (in 1825).

The Cambridgeshire FHS list showed four children baptized in the village from the union., the youngest Henry (1831) born on the day Frances Baily (nee Denny) was buried; presumably she died in childbirth.

Mrs Johnson had also discovered that John Baily and two of the sons John aged 9 and George aged 8 were all recorded as buried in February 1836.

Our curator, Dorothy Halfhide got on the case and was able to turn up the following, extracted from the Stamford Mercury detailing the tragic plight of John Baily and his two sons.

'A most unhappy circumstance took place in Thorney Fen on Thursday evening 28th ult., in the death of Mr. Baily, a respectable farmer, and two of his sons. It appears from evidence that poison was administered by the father to his sons, which caused their death, and that he then shot himself with a pistol, and died almost instantly. The wretched man purchased the poison at Wisbech, put it into small bottles, and on going to bed administered some to his children: about 12 o'clock on Friday this produced the contemplated effect, in the death of one of the youths; upon which Mr. Baily immediately shot himself, and the report of the pistol brought the inmates of the house to his room. The second child died on Saturday. Another was happily from home at the time, or it is thought the desperate parent would have sacrificed its life also. A morbid melancholy, attributed to declining circumstances, is believed to have been the cause of this family immolation. Mr. Baily was the brother of Capt. Baily, formerly of Stamford. The poison he used was prussic acid, in which he steeped some raisins'.

How it all began

Stuart Hogg, a teacher at The Duke of Bedford School approached Hugh Cave III needing some historical insight into village life. Hugh had a lifelong ambition for an organizing of the history of the village. Margaret Fletcher came on board and an inaugural meeting of the proposed Thorney Society was called in January 1985.

The founder members were Stuart Hogg, Margaret Fletcher (secretary), Hugh Cave III, (chairman and later president), Renate Cave, Hugh Cave IV, Ginette Cave (now Higgs), who became treasurer, Margaret Francis (who became our Blue Badge Guide), Trudie Tegerdine, Alan Harris, Sylvia Birchall, Ernest Clayton (who made the Museum models), Peggy Watts Russell and David Orrell (local policeman at the time).

Jim Gregory, still remembered by many with respect and reverence as our first Curator of Thorney Museum, was always a bit miffed as he had been unable to be at this meeting. He joined us later and worked tirelessly for the Society in his retirement, both as Curator and family history researcher.

The membership grew quickly and it was gratifying that members were long established residents as well as village newcomers. Looking around at the recent dinner/dance, the support is from well established families as well as new-comers, which is very pleasing.

The Project

Because Flemings have been lumped with others in England since Roman times, and often misidentified as Dutch, French, Huguenot, or Walloon, a research association was formed in 2004 to explore and explain the Flemish Fact in England. The association has selected the Fens of Eastern England as the focal area, and information gathered can be found at the website Journal: <http://pacificcoast.net/~deboo/flemings>

Readers of **Descent** might be interested to know:

Flemings had been the largest group to settle in England up to the time of the major arrival of Huguenots from France in the 1680's;

One-third of William the Conqueror's army of 1066 was composed of Flemish mercenaries;

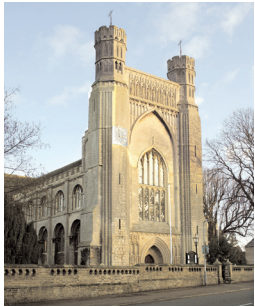
Most of Edward I's (1239-1307) immigrant weavers and textile workers were Flemings;

The Flemings in the Fens Project is primarily concerned with origin and history of about two hundred families who came from Flanders to drain land and to farm in Eastern England beginning about 1626. Names researched to date (and posted on the website) include Beharrell, Brunyee, Deboo, Fovargue, Priem, Smagghe, and Taffin. About twenty others are presently under review;

Project advisors include specialists and academics in England, Belgium, France and the Netherlands;

Members of the **Society of Australian Genealogists** are invited to join us in this project, to read and promote this (free) Journal, to contribute new information, and to provide constructive criticism and comment.

Continued overleaf



Thorney Abbey Discovered

A team of archaeologists from Leicester University have been searching for a fen-edge abbey that disappeared without trace after the Dissolution of the Monasteries. Working at the village of Thorney in Cambridgeshire, they have found evidence for medieval life in a marginal landscape stretching back over 600 years.

Thorney Abbey was surrendered at the Dissolution of the Greater Monasteries in 1539. Its buildings were afterwards demolished and the stone carted off for reuse. Little was known, therefore, of the abbey's former layout. Excavation, undertaken in 2002 prior to redevelopment, took place on the northern edge of a former island, where the abbey had once stood surrounded by fen wetland.

The earliest documentary references to the site refer to a mid-7th century hermitage that was destroyed by a Viking incursion in the late 9th century. A Benedictine monastery was founded in the late 10th century, but a huge rebuilding programme followed the Norman Conquest – and it was from this period that the earliest archaeological evidence was recovered in the form of ditches, pits, ephemeral structures, large quantities of Late Saxon pottery, and an unusual pair of bone ice-skates.

In the late 12th or early 13th century, the focus of settlement shifted away from the fen edge, and the site became a rubbish dump – perhaps because of encroaching water. Only in the 13th and 14th centuries was it reoccupied, when clay layers were deliberately laid over the soft fen soils to provide firm foundation for timber buildings. More substantial buildings were erected from the early 16th century, and these are thought to have been

The Methodist Church

The work of Thorney Society touches all aspects of Thorney history not least that of the Methodist Church whose building was purchased from the Duke of Bedford about 1920. Prior to 1845 the building had been used as an office in the Duke of Bedford's development scheme and was first let, free of charge and later rented, to the Methodist Congregation. Development has gone on ever since.

The original Chapel area, now the hall, served as a place of worship until after 1920 when the current Chapel was built by the members. Over the years the buildings have been maintained and improved but government regulations now require more serious improvements. We have an up-to-date heating system and a refurbished kitchen. The Disabled Toilet facility is our next commitment.

This year, the main project towards achieving our goal, is a "Flower Festival" during the August Bank holiday week-end, 25th, 26th, 27th. The Chapel and surrounds will be open during this period. Lunches and refreshments will be available with stalls on the green area, weather permitting. Details will be notified nearer the time. So come and see part of Thorney's heritage. Already we have sponsors from the various societies in the Village, including Thorney Society itself. Ann Looker has very kindly offered to prepare the Thorney Society contribution for the displays, for which we are grateful and relieved! Thank you, Ann. Whatever your particular views, to-day's Thorney owes its vitality and energy to the past endeavours of all its inhabitants and so the theme of our Festivals is 'Praise and Thanksgiving' for our inheritance and our future.

THORNEY SOCIETY DINNER DANCE

WHAT A WONDERFUL EVENING

“ Attending Thorney Society’s Annual Dinner Dance with friends from Kettering for the first time.

I would like to congratulate John Richardson & his fellow committee members for organising such an excellent evening.



From the atmosphere created as soon as you walked in the door, the welcome glass of bubbly, soft glow of the lighting, layout of tables, the excellent meal and wine, the Magician weaving his way round the tables, entertaining us while we dined, plus music for dancing, what more could one ask for. I’m sure we could not have found



better if we had travelled up to London for a special evening out, at treble the cost.

I have only one complaint I didn’t win the “Balloon Ride” in the excellent Raffle. I will certainly be one of the first in the queue for tickets for next years event and hope lady luck will grant me the winning ticket for the Balloon Ride!!!!!!!!.



Keep up the good work.”

*From
Margaret Dewing
& Friends*

