

CONTENTS:

1. Village Personalities
2. Mr W E Stainthorpe
- 3 Mr Frederick Miers
4. Mr T W Brown
5. POW's
6. Rita's War memories
7. Winter family
8. Bridge House

INTRODUCTION

Dear Member

This issue contains reports from the 1970's about people who have lived in the village.

The current reports were written in about 1977 and were probably from a Church magazine at the time. Let us know if you remember them.

In later reports, aside from their local contributions, the reporter makes connections across time and country.

Regards

Graham Castle
Chairman

Village Personalities



1968 Thorner Historical Society Committee.
Grace Wood, Edgar Hartley, David Warmesley, Terry Brown, Moira Brown, Ann Carr

The reports on pages 2 to 4 are shown in the same typeface they were produced in. Linguistic style may seem quaint but follow the commas and it makes sense.

Mr Terry Brown and wife.
Co-founder of Thorner Historical Society,
Thorner school headmaster and author.



We think this is probably Percy Miers, as a boy, later the father of Frederick Miers

VILLAGE PERSONALITIES 5

MR W E STAINTHORPE

by our Roving Reporter

Once set on a course of remembering, sequence flies out of the window and odds and ends one had almost forgotten, surface. So it was the other day when talking with Mr Stainthorpe - he and his wife live in the second bungalow at the top of the Ellerker. A kindly man who has spent most of his life in farming, he has a fondness for all growing things as well as a marked understanding who of animals.

Cows, he claims, are excellent weather prophets. Before the school and houses were built in church field, the cows took over in the summer. A quick glance to see just where they were and you knew whether you had to take your umbrella or not. The danger spot was a thick hedge that ran across the field from the gate to the the stile.

Nowadays walking to the village is forbidden to him, though he can and does get about. "But it is to be expected" he says. "It happens to the animals as they age and so it does to us. I've had a lovely life and I've enjoyed it, though I wouldn't want to live it again. In the old days there was a feeling of warmth and a sense of belonging in the village. Of course, we made most of our own amusement. The fair was a great occasion and a band used to be brought to the village to add to the fun. Bags of flour used to fly about and trying to catch the greasy pig was one of the high spots. The whole affair wound up with an impromptu dance to a barrel organ behind the Fox Inn".

He was born at Thorner; so was his mother who was a Prentice. His father was a Methley man. It was about here that dustbins came into the conversation. Come to think of it they are not all that old. Early in this century, in town as well as country, houses had ash-pits. His grandfather, who had four or five horses, had the contract to empty them. This had to be done at night between the hours of six in the evening and nine in the morning. The rubbish (tins apart) was eventually tilled into the land.

Pumps and wells supplied the village with water then. There was one on the railway banking opposite Mr Day's, another by Mr Joe Walmsley's house, one at the foot of Sandhills and Sam Sykes's pump (He was canonized by one newcomer who always referred to him as St Sykes) behind Mr Ford's house in the path leading to the station.

Mr Stainthorpe likes to recall the story of the day his Uncle Fred was born and his grandfather spent the time until the child's arrival chasing the rooster up and down so it hadn't a chance to crow - an ominous happening in those superstitious days.

1929 - Mr J L Stainthorpe at Skitterick Farm





VILLAGE PERSONALITIES 6

MR FREDERICK MIERS

by our Roving Reporter

Four generations of the Miers family have lived in Thorner and played their part in the life of the village but it is questionable if any of them served in as many honorary capacities as Mr Frederick Miers of the third generation. For 37 years he has been a member of the Parish Council, he is trustee of the old School Charity and Matthew Dobson Trust, president of the Produce Association, chairman of the Cricket Club and one time playing member. Before the war there were two cricket fields in the village, the second one being in Carr Lane at Eltofts, the home of Mr Mylchreest who frequently brought players from Leeds and invited some members of the Thorner team to join them. But Mr Miers is more widely remembered for another sport - rugger, in which he was known as a fine player and had the distinction of playing in every position in the Headingley club's team. One game he recalls with particular satisfaction was against Birkenhead Park when Headingley beat them by 28 pts to three. He has another reason for remembering that match, for among their opponents was his future brother-in-law, though he met neither his wife nor her brother till the following year.

To turn to the earlier Miers. His paternal grandmother and her sister-in-law were among those chosen to lay foundation stones for the new chapel to replace the one in Main Street, now Mr Stainthorpe's shop. In these days of inflated property prices it is interesting to note that the chapel cost £5,230 to build and that sum included the land! Both these families had ten children and it must have been an impressive sight to see the parents shepherding 20 children to chapel on Sundays.

His mother, the late Mrs Percy Miers, was a walking history of Thorner and a most interesting companion. She was instrumental in moving what remained of the village cross from North View in Main Street and setting it up on the green. It was her idea, too, to have photographs taken of all the elders of the village so that a record could be kept.

But the name of Miers is known in another and far wider sphere for it was the name of the famous Leeds portrait artist and silhouettist of the 18th century from whom they are descended and tradition has it that the noted Dutch painter, Frans Van Meiris the elder, of Delft, who died in 1681, was a forbear. John Miers was born in Leeds in 1757 and it was here that he did his finest work. Late in 1788 he left the city for London where he attracted many distinguished patrons including George the Third. His work can be seen in many galleries in the British Isles - Temple Newsam has some. His son, John Miers, the eminent botanist, was alive as late as 1879.



Died 18/03/1991

VILLAGE PERSONALITIES 9

MR T W BROWN

by our Roving Reporter

"A village community is the best kind of community in which to live". Such is the conclusion reached by Mr T W Brown, of Main Street, Thorner, whose researches into the village's past have greatly interested newcomers and caught the attention of the rest of us. He came to the village in 1954 to be headmaster of the Church of England (Controlled) School, a post he held until 1974 when he retired. During those years his activities have been many; for instance, he was chairman of the Parish Council for nine years and churchwarden for eight, trustee of the Old School Charity throughout his headship, head and correspondent of the Evening Institute and founder chairman of the PTA, to mention a few.

He was a prime mover in restoring the tennis courts, took a practical interest in scouts and guides, cubs and brownies, and also the senior citizens, for whose association he was jointly responsible .

He is still serving as a parish councillor and as the founder chairman of the Thorner and District Historical Society. The lectures he has given to the Society in the last nine years have been greatly enjoyed; so too, have the walks he has arranged.

After listening to one of his early lectures on pre-historic Thorner, a former long-time resident (Mrs Basil Wood) became interested and when walking her dogs began to look about her, with heartening results. Not only did she find flints and fragments of early pottery but two querns and, more important, two Stone Age axes - one on Stubbing Moor and the other in Mr Branson's quarry. To come to more recent times, to the years of the Roman Occupation, near the stream beyond Norwood she found part of a Roman altar which is now in the Yorkshire Museum at York.

All these matters he has lectured and written about (indeed, his history of Thorner must be getting near completion after writing 100,000 words) but his interest is not confined to early man and his environment. Both he and his wife are enthusiasts about antique furniture, pottery and copper. They are great admirers of the tea-pots made by the Castleford pottery and treasure an example in black basalt with beautiful relief work -neither Wedgwood nor the Leeds pottery in its hey-day turned out anything better. Thorner, apparently, had a pottery in Carr Lane, opposite the Victory Hall. Remains of the kiln were discovered by Mr Phil Mayes, leading European authority on pottery kilns, when the new houses at the foot of the lane were being built, and Mr Brown promptly joined him in a limited dig to see if they could find further traces. Luck, however, wasn't with them.

He was more fortunate in another direction, for his was one of the voices raised to persuade the West Riding to modify their plans in developing the village, which they did.

"We must", he emphasises, "look to the future and make sure Thorner is kept as a village".

World War IIcont'd

We have noted VE Day and VJ Day commemorations in previous newsletters but Thorner may have had closer connections with the war.

Looking through the archive we found a picture of prisoners of war in Thorner, which you may find interesting.

Overleaf we include reminiscences of the war from Rita Saville-Stones, one of our members.

Below is a picture of German POW's we think somewhere in the village. Does anyone know where and when?



**Memories of World War II
from Rita Saville-Stones
Thorner Historical Society Committee Member**

"My first recollection of World War II was on the day war was declared, my parents and sister had been visiting my grandmother in Liverpool. She lived in a small village on the Mersey and the Lord of the manor told my mother to get back to Leeds as soon as possible as we would be safer than staying in Liverpool. This proved to be correct, as I remember after the war Lewis's was still a ruin.

We lived near Halton at the beginning of the war and I remember hearing the drone of the planes overhead and on hearing the the siren we all rushed into the air raid shelter in the garden. My father wasn't called up but was in the Home Guard. I started school in 1939 and remember dressing up in a nurses outfit and collecting money for the Red Cross.

We moved to Shadwell in 1942. My mother learned how to make fatless cakes and how to preserve eggs in isinglass. She also saved the cream from the top of the milk and once a week we eked out our rations by sitting round shaking the jar until we had butter and she then removed the rest of the liquid with butter pats. We collected Rose hips for the Government to make Rose-hip syrup and took them to Collingham station for collection.

VE and VJ celebrations were held in the Red Lion but children were not allowed in the pub we had to stay in the back room.

After the war my mother was visiting my grandmother and walking round the back of the house found the washing line full of old £5 notes, the large white ones. My mother rushed indoors for an explanation. Apparently, when war was announced she had withdrawn her money from the bank. She wanted to leave her eight children £100 each and she didn't want the Government to have the money. She wrapped the money in waterproof and buried it four strides from the Damson tree. She hadn't told anyone although she was about 68 at the time. After the war she dug up the money and discovered the water had seeped into the package hence the reason they were drying on the line.

When sweets were no longer rationed I cycled to Knaresborough to buy some as I was fed up eating liquorice root, cinnamon and Cocoa and sugar during the war".

Note:

Rita lives in Shadwell and forwarded the picture opposite and the link to the Winter family.builders and joiners

Above that is an old photo of the Winter family in 1894 at Butts Garth.



At Butts Garth House around 1880
The picture shows a resident nurse and maid with the family.
George Beecroft Winter with wife Sarah Elizabeth Winter.
Seated with them are Sarah's neices Leila & Ida Lumley



Photograph of Crofton Cottages, Shadwell. Originally known as "Winters Cottages" - after John Winter from Thorner who we think, built them.

Bridge House (and cottages now demolished).



If you have any photographs or family history we would be pleased to receive details to give substance to the people in our archive photographs.

Thorer Historical Society

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THSoc have been scanning in archive documents and photographs for the last three years to provide an easily accessible database. Any information you may have about the pictures and documents we have will be added to the archive.

All meetings have been cancelled until further notice. However if you can think of events that we can hold in a suitably safe location which meets lockdown medical criteria, please let us know.

The Leeds lockdown again means that we cannot plan any events as yet.