

North Thoresby

Aspects of Life and Work in the Nineteenth Century



A. Jancowski.

North Thoresby Twists,
1894.

3, MARKET PLACE,
GRIMSBY.

North Thoresby History Group



Photographic records of the village in the nineteenth century are very rare – the only certain one we have in the Archive is the football team on the front cover. The photograph above is the earliest school photograph we have and, like the group below, probably dates from the 1920s – or perhaps a little earlier. We think that the bottom picture may well be a gathering of the ‘great and the good’ of the village on the occasion of the opening of the Village Hall in 1926.



‘North Thoresby: Aspects of Life and Work in the Nineteenth Century’



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Introduction to the New Edition, March 2024

In the 1970s there was an active history group in the village of North Thoresby, operating under the umbrella of the W.E.A. (Workers Educational Association), directed by the renowned local historian, Rex Russell. In 1976, the group produced a short booklet called ‘Revolution in North Thoresby’ which described the complex process by which the medieval organisation of farming, usually called the ‘Open Field’ system, was transformed by ‘enclosing’ (consolidating) the land into separate holdings. As this was by far the most momentous event for the village, transforming not only its physical layout but ending a system of farming that had existed here for seven hundred years or more, I felt something should be said on the matter in this volume, and this forms a Preface to the original chapters.

In 1978, a second volume was produced by the group, ‘Aspects of Life and Work in Nineteenth Century North Thoresby,’ consisting of seven separate chapters and subject matter. The names of those who contributed to the original publication are listed on page 2 and Alan McKinnell and Elizabeth Kershaw (nee Robinson) still live in the village. I had been shown copies of the publication when I first came to the village, and it quickly became apparent that this was a most valuable and painstaking piece of research which contained a great deal detail of information about the village in the nineteenth century. Unfortunately, the method of printing used for the original had major limitations so reproducing the booklet, using modern digital technology has become a part of the heritage and archive project of the History Group and becomes the fourth booklet we have published since 2021.

The starting point was for the whole booklet to be re-typed, and Tina Dixon has done a marvellous job in this respect. In editing the text, I’ve kept as true as possible to the original (while slightly tweaking the title and one or two chapter headings) and re-phrasing text where I thought the meaning could be clearer. I’ve added quite a lot of additional material at the end of chapters where I’ve thought more background material might help the reader, or widen the perspective a little from the local to the national. Here, I’ve drawn particularly on a number of booklets written by Rex Russell after his work in North Thoresby and from volumes of the History of Lincolnshire series published by the Society for Lincolnshire History and Archaeology.

I’ve also added some handbills from the Skelton collection in the archives at Grimsby Townhall, some copies of documents and some old photographs, which, while early 20th century rather than 19th, give a visual sense to what the village looked like in the later nineteenth twentieth century. Finally, I’ve included some 19th century snippets about North Thoresby from the County Press which give some colour to village life. In all, approximately a third of the booklet is additional to the original 1978 edition, taking advantage of resources published in the intervening years. Together, the seven chapters give us important insights into the life of a rural community in a period of enormous change.

Ian Wright, March 2024

Original Foreword 1978

This second publication deals with several aspects of the history of the parish and its people, mainly during the nineteenth century. It does not pretend to offer a full history of that period. We hope that other students will continue that story: there is much more of interest and value to be discovered and told about the making of the parish as we know it today. Indeed, an excellent future theme could be 'Change within living memory'.

The local history group is indebted to many people who kindly made documents available for study. We wish to thank the Reverend G. L. Bierley, the Rector Wattam, the Headmaster of the County Primary School Mr. J. Armitage, Mrs. E. Toyne, and the Trustees of the Mapletoft Charity. The group is also greatly indebted to one of its own members, Mrs. L. Gloyn, for all the typing which she has done. To the pages which follow all members of the local history group made some contributions: we acknowledge the help of previous group members with gratitude.

The group members were:

R. Bird	E. Shackleton	J. Jupe	D. Northmore
E. Buttery	F. Doig	A. Lee	D. Rawson
H. Canter	F. Gladwin	G. Lee	E. Robinson*
E. Chesters	L. Gloyn	A. McKinnell	R. Russell
F. Chesters	G. Inch	E. Mumby	W. Storr
		F. North	N. Wilson

* now Kershaw

Below: The Square as it would have appeared at the end of the Nineteenth Century.

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North Thoresby Snippets: Extracts from the county press in the 19th century

A Brief Overview

Preface From Open field to Enclosure. North Thoresby was the last parish in Lindsey to go through the procedure of enclosure, although it had first been discussed in 1766. Enclosure had significant social and economic consequences and it also changed the physical layout of the village.

Chapter 1 differs from other chapters in that it covers a number of topics across a wider time range – but with the central theme that life in the village in the nineteenth century underwent many significant changes, which reflected wider national and international developments. First, it discusses the turbulent impact on the area of the years of the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars with France (1792-1815) and those immediately after. There was a great fear of unrest (and the destruction of the hierarchical nature of society) among the authorities during the war and this fear, and the measures taken, are explained and illustrated by quoting from contemporary local sources. Democracy was a word to be feared – men in rural areas did not get the vote until 1884. The introduction of machines in farming, brought machine-breaking in protest and local illustrations are given. This leads to examples of the severity of the legal system, still predominantly based on the deterrent threat. Finally, some measures taken by ‘the smaller tradesmen, smaller farmers and labourers of North Thoresby to make life less hard, to ‘bring some pleasure and comfort into their lives’ are discussed (many which are extended in later chapters). While this chapter is perhaps less cohesive than others which follow, in the sense that it flits over a number of subjects and a wide range of time, its extensive use of local sources is a great strength.

Chapter 2 is a thoroughly researched history of Methodism in the village – its central theme can be summarised by a short extract: ‘Methodism provided a way of life, not merely a chapel to attend. This was crucial in providing a moral compass and self-respect to the working classes.

Chapter 3 discusses the development of schooling in North Thoresby. Before the 1870 Education Reform Act (and further legislation that followed it) education in the country was haphazard, provision, quality and cost to parents varying greatly from one place to another. The chapter follows developments in the village from 1818 onwards. The Mapletoft Charity School (established 1676) and a Sunday School at St Helens were the main providers by the 1830s but, the research suggests, no more than 40% of children received any structured education. By the time of the 1851 census, it seems that this figure had risen to 76% - but the details of provision are not known beyond the Mapletoft school. The big change came with the creation of a Wesleyan school which opened in 1856 and much of the chapter uses the School Logbook to illustrate school life.

Chapter 4 examines the stormy end to the Mapletoft Charity School in 1889 – already in difficulties by the 1850s its demise was inevitable once the Wesleyan School was opened and it was forced to close in 1889, but not without heated arguments as some villagers believed that the prime principle of the Mapletoft endowment, that money was to be used to educate the poor, was being betrayed. As it happened, two years later, in 1891, national legislation was brought in to end fee-paying in state schools. Once again, we see the richness of original sources and their skilled use.

Chapter 5 deals with how North Thoresby treated its paupers. It explains how the Poor Law worked before the 1834 reform and how the process worked at village level. The Accounts of Overseers are presented; tables illustrating support given to villagers are laid out and the impact of the 1834 reform outlined. It reveals a compassionate community, and one where life for much of the population was precarious as the prosperity of farmers ebbed and flowed at the mercy of wider economic forces .and the oldest enemy – the weather.

Chapter 6 is another deeply researched and illustrated piece, detailing the wide variety of social life available, especially after the railway arrived in 1848 – concerts, dances, friendly societies and associations, the Primrose League, a Reading Room, harvest and May Day celebrations, the hunt, cricket and football, Thoresby Feast, ice skating, church activities, trips to the seaside and neighbouring village events, trips to Grimsby, Louth, Hull, Nottingham, even London. Rather surprisingly, chess seems to have been seen as an undesirable activity among the young men!

Chapter 7 is a demographic study using evidence from the census returns for 1851 and 1871 – it gives us the size of the population, its age profile, occupations, family size, place of birth, farmers and their acreages.

Snippets from the County Press in the 19th century – an assortment of stories referring to North Thoresby giving some everyday human colour to life here 150-200 years ago.

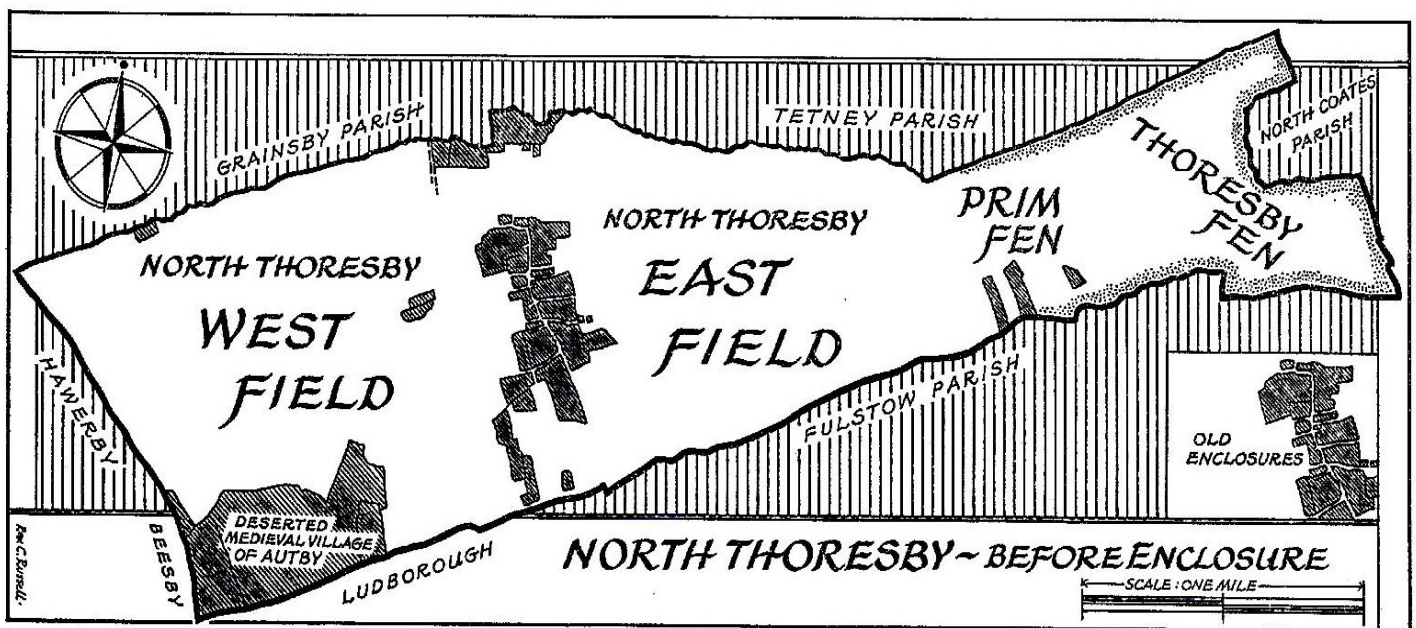


Ludborough Road and The Square looking south in the early twentieth century

Preface: The Transformation of the Village by Enclosure

The Parish before Enclosure: the Open Field System

A very simple division of the land existed before enclosure. The group of small hedged closes which surrounded the houses, cottages, farms and farmsteads formed the heart of the village and separated the two large Open Fields. To the west of the village, stretching westwards over the turn-pike road from Scartho to Louth right up to the parish boundary along Barton Street, lay the West Field. On the east of the village closes lay the East Field and beyond the eastern bounds of East Field lay the permanent pastures and meadows — the Holm, Prim Fen and Thoresby Fen. The map shows this clearly.



Farmers' lands lay either side the village: their farms were made up of scattered, dispersed, arable and meadow lands together with pasture rights (rights of common grazing) over the fallows and permanent pastures.

The extract and map above, reproduced from 'Revolution in North Thoresby: The Enclosure of the Parish by Act of Parliament, 1836-1846' by Rex Russell, illustrates the ancient layout of the village and its setting for the 'Open Field' system of farming. At the centre, is a 'nucleated' settlement, with the villager's homes, surrounded by their 'closes' of land – in medieval times known as 'crofts and tofts' - a croft was typically a garden or field behind a house, while a toft was the house and usually some barns or sheds for crops and animals that stood within a hedged or walled plot.

Most arable land, although owned by individual proprietors (but commonly farmed by tenants), was farmed in two large fields in the case of Thoresby, divided into strips, furlongs or 'selions' without internal hedges or boundaries. Such a system required a high level of co-operation by all the farmers. The working of the open fields was monitored and regulated by the manorial court, presided over by the Lord of the Manor or his representative. Each 'manor' developed its own practices, rules and sanctions for miscreants. By the 1830s, the Earl of Yarborough was the Lord of the Manor for Thoresby and after enclosure he owned 198 acres of land in the parish.

One field was left fallow to recover its fertility and animals would be grazed on this land. The main crops were wheat and rye (sown in the winter), and barley, oats, beans, peas and clover (sown in the spring, and known as 'spring corn'). The wheat crops were used for bread and ale, and the spring crops were used as fodder to feed animals over the winter. Everybody was required to sow and harvest crops in a particular field within a specified period of time. This made it possible for animals to be pastured on the field at other times of the year. Not all the land was arable, and each farmer had some rights to graze animals on common land – intriguingly referred to, for example, as 9 cow-gates, 34 sheepgates or 5 horse-gates i.e. the right to graze 9 cows, 34 sheep and 5 horses on the common land.

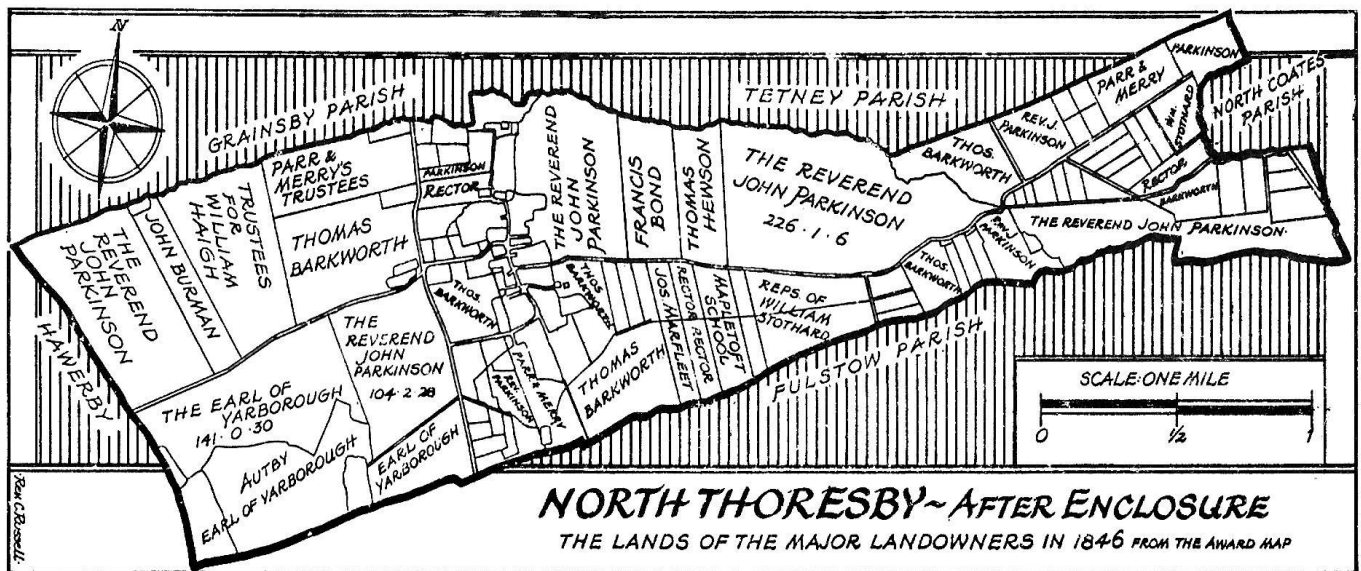
In total, North Thorseby had 2571 acres of land, more than nearby Ludborough (2164) but less than Fulstow (2844). Of this, 1260 acres, 2 roods and 30 perches, just over 50%, was arable land. A rood was a quarter of an acre and there were 40 perches in a rood. These terms, now long archaic, have ancient origins. The perch comes from the Latin name for a measuring pole, whereas a rod comes from the Old English goad that the ploughman used to encourage the oxen on. Initially, like the term oxgang, the measurements varied depending on local usage but were later standardised.

Of the rest of the land, 685 acres 3 roods 14 perches were meadow or pasture; 27 acres 3 roods 35 perches was woodland and 480 acres 0 roods, 16 perches was Common Land.

In the box below is a description of the land, buildings and common rights owned by the Mapletoft Charity School in 1837 (see Chapters 3 and 4). Oxgang is another ancient term – a variable measure of land depending on local custom – from 10-25 acres. The term 'holm' usually refers to an island – so perhaps refers here to a higher area of land in the East Field. As chapter 3 explains, the teacher at the Mapletoft was expected to be a farmer too.

	A.	R.	P.
Arable lands, lying in the West Field, consisting of small parcels, varying from one rod to one acre, containing in the whole	9	3	33
Meadow lands, also lying in the West Field, containing	0	3	12
Arable land, lying in the East Field, containing	10	1	27
Meadow land, lying in ditto, containing	4	3	2
The holm	2	0	0
Nine cow-gates in the fen, 3 roods each, amounting together	6	3	0
Five horse-gates in the fen, each containing 3 roods	3	3	0
One oxgang in Bound Croft	0	0	30
Cottage and garden	1	1	37
Cottage	0	1	19
House and Homestead	0	3	38
Thirty-four sheep-gates, being common rights, over the open field	0	0	0
	41	2	18

The Charity School farm consisted of a little over 41 acres together with grazing rights for nine cows and five horses in the Fen, and the right to pasture thirty-four sheep in whichever of the open fields was lying fallow.



The physical changes brought by Enclosure can be seen in the map above; land is divided into consolidated blocks of land, owned and controlled by individuals. During the process, Rex Russell comments that the village would have been a very busy and agitated place, 'Scores of men would be needed for drain excavation, for staking out the bounds of the new plots, for planting the thousands of hawthorn quicksets to establish new hedges, and for the erection of fencing on both sides to protect them during their growth.' Seven new public roads were laid out, two public footpaths, and 4 private roads were constructed. New farmhouses and buildings were constructed.

Enclosure was a process which began in England in the sixteenth century and ended in the middle of the nineteenth century (North Thoresby's enclosure 1836-46 was very late) by which communal farming in 2 or more large fields, was replaced by smaller compact fields under the control of individual farmers. It mainly affected the midlands of England.

Enclosure made for more efficient farming and enabled an agricultural revolution to take place, for example, increasing crop yields and improving livestock through selective breeding. It enabled the country to support an urban population engaged in industrial production as Britain was the first nation to have an industrial revolution. Enclosure was supported and encouraged by successive governments. However, it was a very controversial process because it transferred formerly common land (Thoresby had 480 acres of common land) to private ownership and ended traditional rights such as mowing meadows for hay or grazing livestock on common land. Between 1760 and 1870, about 7 million acres (about one sixth the area of England) were changed, by some 4,000 acts of parliament, from common land to enclosed, privately owned land.

Enclosure faced a great deal of popular resistance because of its effects on the household economies of smallholders and landless labourers, who were often pushed out of the rural areas.

Large landowners benefitted because land became more valuable. Smaller holders could sell their land to larger ones for a higher price post enclosure. Enclosed land was twice as valuable, a price that could be sustained by its higher productivity. In the decade that it took for the enclosure in North Thoresby to complete, Rex Russell notes that larger landowners bought substantial areas of land. The Reverend John Parkinson (1754-1840) bought 855 acres; Thomas Barkwith 143 acres, Francis Bond 72 acres, William Haigh Trustees 80 acres. Twenty previous owners sold land. While many villagers received plots in the newly enclosed manor, for small landholders this compensation was not always enough to offset the costs of enclosure and fencing. Twenty-five of the forty-three landowners after Enclosure, each owning less than 10 acres, owned a total of approximately 90 acres, whereas the largest 5 landowners held over 1600 acres.

Editor's Notes: Enclosure, Cow Cottages and Cow Clubs

In many local villages, including Ludborough, the adverse impact of enclosure on the labouring class was mitigated by 'Cow Cottages' and 'Cow Clubs'. In the former, when enclosure took place, land was allocated to labourers cottages so that could keep a cow and provide sustenance for their family, alongside pigs and chickens and growing potatoes. In addition, as at Humberston, land was set aside for pasture (grazing) and meadow (hay-making).

"In the parish of Humberston, near Grimsby, there are thirteen cottagers, everyone of whom has one cow, with the means of keeping her, and some of them have more.

The whole of the parish is the property of Lord Carrington. The land on which the cottages stand, with the little paddocks and gardens adjoining, contains in the whole 16 acres. Besides this, at the distance of a quarter of a mile from the village there are about sixty acres of land appropriated to the use of the cottagers. This land is divided into two plots; one of which is pasture for the cows in summer, and the other is kept as meadow land to provide hay for them in winter. Each cottager knows his own piece of meadow land, and he lays upon it all the manure which he can obtain, in order that he may have the more hay. When one of the two plots of ground has been mown for two or three years, it is then converted into the summer pasture, and the other is used as meadow land; by which no part ... is injured by constant mowing.

The cottagers are independent of the greater farmers, holding their cottages & lands directly of Lord Carrington, and not as under tenants. This gives them a degree of respectability, which they would not otherwise possess. The rent, which they pay for their land, is below the farmer's rent; but it is certain that in the greatest part of the Kingdom, the cottager would rejoice at being permitted to pay the utmost value given by the farmer, for as much land as would keep a cow, if he could obtain it at that price.

Lord Carrington is the patron of the Living ... (the Clergyman) has exerted himself very strenuously in the religious and moral improvement of his parishioners. He has laboured with great and good effect. The cottagers are sober and industrious; and it is not known that any man in the parish lives in a course of habitual immorality. The Clergyman, with Lord Carrington's assistance, has also succeeded in establishing, for the benefit of the youth at Humberstone, a parish school; which has been of very essential service to the parish. There is no public-house at Humberston; nor do the parishioners desire one; and on this account there are no cock-fightings, or gaming within the Parish." [1803, from The Report of the Society for Bettering the Condition of the Poor, Thomas Thompson].

Rex Russell suggests that there were three main reasons behind the provision of 'Cow Cottages' and the setting up of Cow Clubs: a philanthropic desire to better the condition of the poor, a wish to keep poor-rates as low as possible, and the drive for self-help which manifested itself in the growth of Friendly Societies (Foresters, Oddfellows, Druids, Rechabites and Free Gardeners) and also in the spread of Methodism. The first two reasons applied, of course, where the land- owners and chief

rate-payers promoted Cow Clubs. The second where such clubs were started by the cottagers themselves.

On the 19th September 1834 the Stamford Mercury printed this report of cow-keeping and a cow club from Saxby-all-Saints:-

"PROVIDENT PLAN. - At Saxby, in the north of Lincolnshire, near the Humber, fifty labourers have each a cottage, a garden of two roods of land, and ground for keeping two cows. As separate allotments of enclosed pasture land could not be obtained for the whole number, two large fields are appropriated for the purpose; one for pasture, the other for growing hay. These are divided into fifty allotments, each labourer farming his portion of meadow ground with his own judgment.

These cottagers have formed themselves into a club, and appointed a Committee of Management every year from their own body. By this Committee the time is fixed for turning the cows into the pasture-field, and also into the after grass of the other field when it is mown.

Each member of the club pays a weekly contribution to a sort of Cattle Insurance Fund, for replacing any cow lost by death. The amount of this contribution is regulated by the number of cows lost during the preceding year and the price at which they can be replaced. The sum allowed out of this fund to the party who has lost a cow varies from £8 to £12. The calves, when fatted, sell for about £6, which sum, added to the weekly proceeds for butter, pays the rent of the cottage and land. The skim milk which the family do not consume, mixed with boiled potatoes, serves to fatten two pigs for each cottage. When old age or other cause of infirmity render the tenant of the cottage no longer able to work, a son or other near relative becomes the inmate and subtenant of the old people, and supports them *without parochial aid*, with the prospect of succeeding to the cottage at their decease."

Many of these clubs lasted well into the 20th century in many areas. The 1857 rules of the Louth Club were typical. Members were to have no more than 2 cows and to occupy no more than 15 acres. There was an entrance fee for each cow of 2s 6p, plus half-yearly insurance fees of the same amount. If a cow died, the cottager received 15s in the £1 for the full value of the cow (a cow would cost around £14-16). Louth, Spilsby and Alford (at one point, it had 220 members) were the three biggest and most successful clubs.

Thoresby was not alone in the absence of either cow cottages or cow clubs - with the one exception noted, nor did the surrounding villages. There were probably several reasons but a key factor was probably that the details of enclosure depended on the attitude of the major landowner(s) and North Thoresby was not the property of a single dominant landowner; not an 'estate' or 'closed' village. The Parkinson family, and others, had been buying up land speculatively in anticipation of an increase in land values when enclosure eventually occurred. Perhaps it was simply that altruism was lacking.

Source of this additional material: Rex Russell, 'The Cow Clubs in Lincolnshire 1800-1892: Charity, Self-Help, Self Interest'. Published 1987 by the Barton branch of the WEA.



Top: Looking north into The Square – shops built after Enclosure in the 1840s on the right. Image probably 1920s but the Square would have looked like this 60 years previously.

Bottom: Shops in the picture above can be seen on the left, Broughton's shop on left in mid-distance. Again, a view nineteenth century villagers would have been familiar with.

Chapter 1 : North Thoresby and the Wider World

It was not only very local changes which affected the lives of the parishioners in the nineteenth century. The village was never isolated, never immune from the influences of events which disturbed either the whole nation or larger areas of Lincolnshire. The officers of the North Thoresby Vestry* were constantly in touch with the market towns in the area with Louth, Grimsby and Caistor: they had to maintain regular contact with the Justices of the Peace over both local and national matters. They were involved for example, with raising the parish contribution to the County rates, with the raising of men for the militia, with the taking of the earlier Census returns, with making returns about the poor rates, the window tax and several other matters.

The worry, apprehension and at times the near panic caused by the French Revolution which began in 1789 and merged into the long and costly war with France from 1792 to 1815, affected North Thoresby. The parishioners certainly heard about (and some undoubtedly read of) that meeting held in Grimsby Town Hall on 31st December 1792, when "... The Mayor, Aldermen, Common Councilmen, Free Burgesses, and Inhabitants of the Town" met "for the Adoption of the effectual method for the checking and preventing of Disaffection to the present happy Constitution of this Kingdom." These resolutions were then passed and inserted in the county newspaper dated 11th January 1793. Some people in North Thoresby read them: - ⁽¹⁾

"... That we will suppress and prevent, as far as we constitutionally can, the Dispersion of all Books, Papers, and Writings, the obvious Tendency of which is to impose on the Ignorant and Credulous, and thereby excite Disaffection and public Disturbance; to loosen the Ties of the Civil and Social Compact, and that due Subordination, so especially necessary to its Preservation..."

"... That we will individually be ready at all Times to afford the most prompt and powerful support to the Civil Magistracy ... in the just Execution of the Laws, against all Tumultuary Meetings and Seditious Practices, and for the Support of Peace, good Order and Government ..."

If people in North Thoresby failed, as is most unlikely, to hear about that Grimsby meeting, they could no fail to hear similar resolutions passed at nearly identical meeting held at Caistor around the same date (10.XII.1792) or at Louth ⁽²⁾. At both places similar resolutions were passed. Those passed at Caistor read as follows: -

"First, that we will ... exert our Vigilance and Activity in discovering and bringing to Justice all Persons who shall, either by publishing or distributing seditious Papers or Writings, or by engaging in any illegal Association or Conspiracies, endeavour to disturb the public Peace, or excite Disaffection to the lawful Government of this Country.

*The 'Vestry' was the equivalent of today's Parish Council – but with more responsibilities. It was called the Vestry because the Church Vestry was the original meeting place.

(1) Stamford Mercury, 11th January 1793.

(2) Stamford Mercury, 11th January 1793 (Caistor)
4th January 1793(Louth)

“Secondly, that we will do all in our Power to aid and assist the Civil Magistrate in maintaining the general Tranquillity, in supressing all Riots and Disturbances that may arise within ... Caistor, its Hamlets, and Towns adjacent, and in bringing the Authors and Promoters thereof to condign (appropriate) Punishment.

“Thirdly, that we will, by the Distribution of Constitutional Writings, and by every other Effort of calm Reasonings, endeavour to undeceive and inform such Persons as may have been misled by the delusive and inflammatory Suggestions of evil designing Men, who seek to excite a general Spirit of Restlessness and Discontent, in Order to subvert that rational System of Liberty and Order, which alike consults the real Happiness of all Classes of Englishmen.

And we do invite all Friends to Peace and Tranquillity, residing in this Town and Neighbourhood, to join with us in the above Declarations and Resolutions, by signing their Names hereto, ... at the George and Talbot Inns, in Caistor.”

The people of North Thoresby would certainly be aware of local plans made, at a meeting of Deputy Lieutenants and other Gentlemen at the White Lion Inn, at Brigg, on the 13th August 1803, to raise “... under the Influence and Superintendence of the Right Honourable Charles Lord Yarborough, a Body of Volunteers, Cavalry and Infantry, amounting to not less than 5,000 Men ... raised within ... the Wapentakes [see note at the end of this chapter] of Manby, Yarborough, Bradley, Haverstoe and Walshcroft ...” Lord Yarborough was Lord of the Manor of North Thoresby and the parish lay within Bradley-Haverstoe Wapentake. The greatest owner of land in the parish, the Reverend Dr. Parkinson of Ravendale, subscribed £30 to this volunteer force’. (Stamford Mercury 16th December 1803)

Farmers in North Thoresby who had burned rubbish in their open fields may have seen and laughed at this notice in the county newspaper in 1804: (Stamford Mercury, 13th April 1804)

“Whereas several evil-disposed persons have made a practice in the night-time of wantonly setting fire to Brush Wood, Stubble, and other Combustibles, in different parishes near the Sea Coast of this County, for the purpose of creating false alarms, which has occasioned the assembling of different Volunteer Corps, and may be attended with much inconvenience to the public: In order to prevent which, and to avoid any confusion and mischief which might arise at this juncture from Fire and Lights being made on the Coast and parts adjacent, other than at the Beacons and Signals which have been established for the purpose of Alarm on the approach of an Enemy.

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN, that all such persons so offending will be prosecuted with the utmost rigour of the Law. W. MARSHALL, Acting Assistant Commissary, Great Grimsby, 28th March 1804

They would hear about the raising of the Louth Volunteer Infantry and the parish had to be concerned with the detailed plans made, under the Country Defence Act of 1803, for the evacuation of the coastal areas in case of invasion by the French ⁽⁵⁾.

Evidence (from the accounts of the Overseers of the Poor) that North Thoresby was concerned with providing men for Militia Service and with the support of the wives and

families of such men whilst they were serving is given in our chapter on the Parish poor relief (Chapter 5).

North Thoresby would certainly hear of the anti-militia riots at Caistor (and Horncastle and Boston) in November 1796. When the Deputy Lieutenants attended at Caistor to receive a list of men's names liable to serve in the militia "... a mob assembled (chiefly farmers' servants) and compelled the constable to deliver the returns of names to them, which they instantly destroyed, shouting 'God save the King, but no militia'..."⁽⁶⁾ The local results of the French Revolution and the long war with Napoleon certainly affected the lives and the ideas of the people in North Thoresby.

[Ed: The militia was unpopular because it required each village to send a specified quota and it took men away from their families and reduced labour at crucial times in the farming year. Members of the militia could be required to serve outside of the county. The county newspapers are full of stories of desertions and the heavy punishments meted out.]

The parishioners were clearly aware too of the harshness of the penal law in the first half of the nineteenth century. At least two men of the village experienced such harshness personally, when at the Quarter Sessions at Kirton Lindsey, Christopher and Joseph Grant were both sentenced to seven years transportation: Christopher was convicted of stealing two geese and three ducks, Joseph of stealing one hempen sack⁽⁷⁾.

The village would certainly hear of the death sentence passed on Joseph Borman for stealing a pony, the property of Mr. Clarke Darnall of Grainthorpe in 1830: the news of the transportation for life of William Larder, aged 33, Elizabeth Leeman, aged 52, and Ann Baldock, aged 25 – all sentenced for stealing one ewe sheep at Wyham (the property of Mr. John Thistlewood, of Kelstern) – would certainly reach North Thoresby.

When outbreaks of deliberate stack-firing and some machine-breaking disturbed Lincolnshire in the 1830's, the 1840's and the 1850's, the people of North Thoresby were alive to what was happening. Some would see the light from nearby stack fires: others would read this news item in the county newspaper: -

"The panic among the Lincolnshire farmers is universal, particularly such as have thrashing machines on their premises. Many have received threatening letters; and the breaking machines, and conflagration of property, form the unvarying theme of conversation amongst all ranks of society ... the magistrates are on alert, and are actively engaged in swearing in the principal householders of every village as special constables, for the protection of property..."

(Stamford Mercury, 10th December 1830)

(5) Stamford Mercury, 11th May 1804 (Louth Infantry) 2nd March 1804 (Country Defence Act)

(6) Stamford Mercury 18th November 1796

(7) Stamford Mercury 30th January 1801

North Thoresby would know of that meeting of the magistrates for the parts of Lindsey which was held in Louth in December 1830 "... when it was ordered that posting-bills should be immediately circulated throughout the division, offering a reward of £500 for the discovery of any person who shall have wilfully or maliciously set on fire any stack of corn, or who shall within one year from the present time, wilfully commit any such crime ...” (9)

A copy of this magistrate’s printed handbill was probably nailed to the door of the North Thoresby Church. The parishioners would have been surprised at the leniency of the sentence passed on John Rushby, Richard Simons and Robert Atkin "... charged with riotously assembling on the 6th November (1832), at Fulstowe, taking possession of a thrashing machine, and taking it out of the parish". The report of this case at the Lindsey Quarter Sessions at Spilsby reads: - "...Mr. Lucas, the attorney employed to prosecute the three men for rioting, interceded in their behalf, recommending them to mercy on account of their subsequent good conduct. ... Sentence, to be imprisoned for three months to hard labour.” (10)

People of North Thoresby would have seen the light raised by the burning stacks in Mr Hill’s stackyard at Ludborough at the end of November 1834; they would have heard of the firing of the corn stacks of Mr Faulding at Waltham at this time. (11) They knew of the formation of an anti-incendiary association for the Grimsby area, when the county newspaper reported that: "The magistrates, gentlemen, farmers and others ... have with much alacrity formed themselves into an association for the prevention of incendiarism, and the deliberations ... are to be held as strictly private ... (They are) ... having a London police officer moving about privately in the neighbourhood ...” (Stamford Mercury 12th December 1834)

Life for the labouring community was indeed hard, especially in the first half of the nineteenth century. Incendiarism continued. In December 1843, the Stamford Mercury reported, "Another of those agrarian outrages, showing the deep-seated discontent of the labouring classes which is bursting forth on all hands into a demoniacal war against property..." In the following December, one of the chief landowners in Lincolnshire wrote to The Times:

"...At present the agricultural labourer is deprived even of hope; he has no opening before him – nothing to look forward to but a life of toil, and an old age of destitution".

In 1848 the theft of two sheep had taken place in the neighbouring parish of Tetney. William Campion was convicted of this crime at the Quarter Sessions at Spilsby: he appeared before a bench of magistrates composed of five laymen and eleven clerical J. P’s (Chaired by the Reverend William Dodson) and was sentenced to 10 years transportation. The people of North Thoresby would have heard of this savage sentence. (12)

(9) Stamford Mercury, 3rd December 1830

(10) Stamford Mercury 13th January 1832

(11) Stamford Mercury 5th December 1834 (Ludborough)
12th December 1834 (Waltham)

(12) Stamford Mercury 12th January 1849

North Thoresby Vestry and the Overseers of the Poor made use of the old workhouse at Grimsby ⁽¹³⁾. Whilst they appear to have dealt humanely with the poor within the parish, any parishioner sent to Grimsby 'House of Industry' (i.e., the workhouse) may have experienced the hardship of the treadmill there. This report in the Stamford Mercury in 1823, if read by North Thoresby poor (or if read to the poor of the parish), would remind them of the inhumanity of the period.

"In the parish house of industry at Grimsby there is a treadmill which works with the weight of only four men, and grinds sufficient corn for the use of all the inmates of the house, amounting to nearly one hundred. With the labour of two more persons the mill will grind bones in proportion, for manure; it also works a saw in a circular manner to cut bone ... and at the same time turns a grindstone to sharpen edge tools. ... This curious and useful machine was erected by Mr. Wm. Shirlock, jun., son to the governor of the house, for the purpose of curing all 'sham sick', idle and disorderly inmates, and it has already in several instances produced a wonderful reform._ Its adoption in all houses of industry will no doubt speedily ensue." ⁽¹⁴⁾

Later in the century, from April 1837, the parish formed part of the newly created Louth Poor Law Union.

Did the people, especially the smaller tradesmen, smaller farmers and labourers of North Thoresby (those classes on whom the pressures of the times bore especially heavily) form any associations to make life less hard, to bring some pleasure and comfort into their lives? They certainly did. The first of such associations were the Methodist Societies. ⁽¹⁵⁾ The chapel which was most closely a labourers' chapel was the Primitive Methodist, the first of these was built in 1835. This was the first, the most important and the most permanent step in 'self-help'. Another such step was the formation of a 'tent' of Rechabites in the parish in c. 1839. The Rechabites were both a friendly society and an ardent temperance body, and although we find the following entry in White's Directory of 1856 unbelievable, we do recognise the real contributions which the Rechabites made to North Thoresby. White's records: -

"...There were formerly eleven public-houses in the village, though there is now only one, besides that new building near the station."

For a village whose population was 378 in 1801 and 733 in 1851 to have supported eleven pubs is almost beyond belief, but a report of the second anniversary of the North Thoresby Total Abstinence Society in 1840 does end: - "...A short time ago, the village ...was called 'Drunken Thoresby', but now it has cast off that degrading appellation, and is termed 'Sober Thoresby'." ⁽¹⁶⁾

It was natural for services connected with this second anniversary to be held in the village Primitive Methodist chapel. The 'Prims' were in the forefront of this early, popular, temperance movement.

(13) See the chapter on the Government of the Parish.

(14) Stamford Mercury

(15) See the chapter which deals with Church and Chapel.

(16) Stamford Mercury 5th June 1840

The second local friendly society of which we know was a lodge of the Ancient Order of Druids. This was established in the village in 1863, for in May 1884 the members celebrated their 19th anniversary. There were then 80 members who had £160 invested (besides a small balance in the hand of a little over £16): in connection with the men's lodge was a juvenile lodge of twenty members with just over £7 in hand. ⁽¹⁷⁾ The friendly societies, the Rechabites and the Druids, were important in training members in self-help, in giving members a valued body of like-minded friends and in improving their status. ⁽¹⁸⁾

In the period between the decline of the local Rechabites (see note at the end of the chapter) and the rise of the local lodge of Druids, the farm labourers of North Thoresby had taken steps to attempt to improve their conditions. In April 1855 a hitherto unheard-of action was taken, farmworkers went on strike, and with success. The county newspaper wrote: -

“Strike of Agricultural Labourers. - A general rise appears to be taking place in the wage of the labourers in the neighbourhood of North Thoresby. On Monday morning last a wealthy farmer in that parish was about to commence thrashing by steam, when all his hands refused to begin unless their wages were advanced to 1s.6d. per day for women and 3s.0d. for men. The demand was acceded to.” (Stamford Mercury 22nd April 1853).

When farmworkers' trade unions first came into existence in 1872, a branch was formed at North Thoresby, two years later associations of frightened but determined farmers were formed to kill these labourers' trade unions: one which covered the North Thoresby area was formed in March 1874 – The Grimsby and Neighbouring Parishes Farmers' Association. Its object was “...to resist all attempts of the Members of any Labour League or Union to compel or coerce their employers into the payment of an unfair and unjust rate of wages: (The farmworkers' unions were in no position to do this, of course!) The original list of members of this Farmers' Association did not include the name of any North Thoresby Farmer. ⁽¹⁹⁾ Little is at present known of the farmworkers' first trade union in this village. It was, before 1877, a branch of Joseph Arch's National Union of Agricultural Labourers. In 1877 it transferred allegiance to William Banks' Lincolnshire Labourers' League.

North Thoresby parish reached its highest population (in the 19th century) at the census of 1861: it then housed 824 people. Thirty years later the population had fallen to 573, a decline of two hundred and fifty-one people. It is possible that the conditions of the labourers improved as their numbers decreased. That there was less social tension at the end of the century than in the first five decades is certain. The agricultural depression which began in 1875 and lasted beyond 1900 hit landowners, but the depression was a cause of common concern.

(17) Stamford Mercury 23rd May 884

(18) See Rex C. Russell: Friendly Societies in Caistor, Binbrook & Brigg Area in the Nineteenth Century (1875).

(19) See Rex C. Russell: The Revolt of the Field in Lincolnshire (1956)

Editor's Note: The Response to Rural Unrest in the 1830s and 1840s

While panic and 'hard-line' application of punishments (Prime Minister Lord Melbourne proposed enabling the local magistrates to impose the death penalty without trial or jury) there was an alternative current of opinion. On January 18th 1833 the Hull Advertiser (which circulated in the north of Lincolnshire) reprinted an article from the Morning Herald:

How to suppress Incendiary Fires.

... we now speak of that species of crime which is not the act of men hardened to iniquity, but of that class of offenders whose violation of the law is the consequence of the pressure of misery, driving them into temptation, or forcing them to revenge. While the misery of the labouring classes, and the sense of oppression connected with it, continues, it is in vain that the ensanguined sword of vindictive law is suspended over their heads, and that every now and then it cuts off victims, and makes the people familiar with judicial slaughter.

The best law is the preventive law - the law that will protect the labourer against the task-masters that 'grind the faces of the poor', and, by taking from him the means of comfort and of an honest independence, makes him reckless of character, and qualify him for acts of violence and depredation... . . . The Spring-gun bill of Lord Melbourne, which was to put men, women, and children, as the case might happen to be, to death, without the intervention of judge or jury, would only have made matters worse. The penal legislation has long been tried without effect - let the remedial be now attempted - improve the condition of the labourer."

Rex Russell comments, 'The penal legislation continued in use, partly because he incendiarism of the 1830's and 1840's worried and alarmed both the local and national rulers of society and reminded them of the possible effects of the French Revolution. But alongside the penal legislation went the spread of Sunday Schools, Day Schools, and after 1830, the expedient concern of local people of influence and importance with adult education and Mechanics' Institutes.

Mechanics Institutes were educational establishments originally formed (the first was in 1821 in Edinburgh) to provide adult education, particularly in technical subjects, to working men in Victorian-era Britain and its colonies. They were often funded by local industrialists on the grounds that they would ultimately benefit from having more knowledgeable and skilled employees. The mechanics' institutes often included libraries for the adult working class, and were said to provide them with an alternative pastime to gambling and drinking in pubs. Small tradesmen and workers could not afford subscription libraries, so for their benefit, benevolent groups and individuals created mechanics' institutes that contained inspirational and vocational reading matter, for a small rental fee. Later popular non-fiction and fiction books were added to these collections. The first known library of this type was the Birmingham Artisans' Library, formed in 1823. By 1850, there were over 700 Mechanics Institutes in Britain (including one in Louth – now The Mansion House). Source: Wikipedia.

Editor's Note: The Primitive Methodists

Amid the social tensions of the 1820s-40s, the Primitive Methodists – the Church of the labouring classes – played an important restraining role.

As Rex Russell explains:

The most active period of Primitive Methodist chapel building in this county was during the 1830s [before 1820, 5 chapels had been built, all in 1819; 24 were erected in the 1820s and 82 in the 1830s]. During this decade incendiarism was widespread. Russell quotes Joseph Ritson, one of the leading historians of the 'Prims':

" Who intervened in the days when rural England was seething with disaffection, and, securing the moral regeneration of the people, averted a bloody revolution and turned men's minds into the path of constitutional reform? The Primitive Methodists were largely instrumental in accomplishing all these things It was in rural England that the great work of primitive methodism was done.

When machine breaking, incendiarism and violence were rampant ... it came as a healing and regenerative force, creating innumerable centres of sweetness and light. If it inculcated principles of freedom and independence, it laid equal emphasis on obedience to the law, everywhere discouraging violent remedies for the removal of grievances..... The change they affected was often speedy and dramatic. Whether they had to deal with 'Captain Swing' burning down farmsteads in East Anglia, or 'Ned Lud' breaking machinery further north, they went into the very midst of the seething mass of disaffection which threatened England with bloody revolution, and without pay or recognition did more for the cause of law and order than all the parish constables and magistrates put together. Instead of flaming farmsteads ... the nights were made vocal with the sounds of praise and prayer."

Source: Rex Russell, 'From Cock-Fighting to Chapel Building' p34-35

Editor's Note: Wapentake

It is interesting (page 11) to see the ancient term 'wapentake' still in use in the early nineteenth century.

Etymology: Wapentake, an administrative division of the English counties of York, Lincoln, Leicester, Nottingham, Derby, and Rutland, first clearly referred to in 962/963 and corresponding to the "hundred" in other parts of England. Middle English, from Old English *wæpentæc*, from Old Norse *vāpnatak* act of grasping weapons, from *vāpn* weapon + *tak*, act of grasping, from *taka* to take; probably from the brandishing of weapons as an expression of approval when the chief of the wapentake entered upon his office.

Hundreds and Wapentakes were units of English local government and taxation, intermediate between village and shire, which survived into the 19th century.

Originally, the term probably referred to a group of 100 hides (units of land required to support one peasant family). In the areas of Danish settlement these units were usually called wapentakes, and in the extreme northern counties of England, wards. The term hundred first appears in the laws of King Edmund I (939–946), but an anonymous Ordinance of the Hundred (issued before 975) indicates that the hundred was already a long-established institution.

The hundred or wapentake had a court in which private disputes and criminal matters were settled by customary law. The court met once a month, generally in the open air, at a time and place known to everyone. Originally, all dwellers within the hundred were expected to attend, but gradually suit of court (attendance) became restricted to the tenants of specific land.

The suitors normally acted as the judges, but the sheriff was judge on the two annual visits (his “tourn”) he made to each hundred court. Increasingly, hundred courts fell into the hands of private lords. In medieval times the hundred was collectively responsible for various crimes committed within its borders if the offender were not produced. These responsibilities were extinguished by statute in the 19th century, and any reasons for maintaining or remembering the hundred boundaries disappeared.

Source: <https://www.britannica.com/topic/hide-English-land-unit>

The **Rechabites**, more formally, ‘The Independent Order of Rechabites’ was (and still is) a fraternal organization and friendly society founded in England in 1835. It emerged as part of the broader temperance movement, with the primary goal of promoting total abstinence from alcoholic beverages.



While both these images are well into the twentieth century, probably 1930s - these aspects of village life would have been very familiar to villagers in the previous century. Top: George Robinson
Bottom image: 'Baggy Larder (left) with Fred Askew.

Chapter 2: The Methodist Contribution 1760-1856

In the year 1839 the Grimsby printer, W. Skelton, printed “A Brief History of Wesleyan Methodism in the Grimsby Circuit”, written by the Wesleyan Minister Joshua Hocken. It is from this book that we take the following account of the early years of Methodism in the village.

“...In the spring of 1760, Elizabeth Blow, Mary Wilkinson, and Elizabeth Simpson of Grimsby walked on the Sabbath to North Thoresby, to hold prayer-meetings; these persons, in conjunction with Mary Tharratt ... were the honoured individuals who introduced Methodism here. The class and other meetings were held in the house of Robert Davey, a blacksmith, and afterwards in William Burman’s house, which was just opposite, Mr Burman after some time fitted up one of his stables for preaching in, which was called the ‘old chapel’.

The preachers here were subjected to all kinds of annoyance...the opposers of Methodism became ingeniously wicked; sometimes they fumigated the place where they were assembled with the odour of asafoetida, at other times through a hole in the window they syringed blood upon them, and often cut their coats and garments with scissors! Mr Boardman was obliged at length to apply to the magistrates at Louth for redress, who, on hearing the case, condemned the persecutors, after which, peace was restored. The bells of Thoresby were rung to celebrate the victory.” (pp.,31,32).

In 1769 the Methodist Society in North Thoresby had twenty-three members: it was one of seven such societies within a ten-mile radius of Grimsby. The other six societies then existed at Clee, Grimsby, Killingholme, Tetney and Waltham. It is clear that Methodism put down roots in the parish over twenty years before the death of John Wesley and it is certainly possible that some people from North Thoresby heard John Wesley preach in this locality.

Wesley recorded in his journal visits which he made to Grimsby, Louth, Ludborough and Tetney: all these places are easily reached from North Thoresby and on one of the many occasions between October 1743 and June 1788 when Wesley was in Grimsby, or on one of his ten visits to Louth between April 1759 and July 1788 there may have been people from North Thoresby amongst his hearers. We have no proof of this. However, we do know that the local Methodist Society had been established by 1769 and that the members helped to change the quality of life in the parish.

Membership fluctuated. Figures given in Joshua Hocken’s book show this. A membership of 23 in 1769 had declined to one of 10 by 1793 (two years after Jon Wesley’s death). By 1796 membership had climbed to 24 and two years later this had doubled. Between 1800 and 1839 the numbers of society members increased: 28 in 1800; 57 in 1812; 63 in 1831; 76 in 1839; (Hocken, pages 61 and 63)

The numbers of people who attended Methodist services would normally be considerably greater than the numbers of society members; the invigorating influence of Methodism reached well beyond the society.

Local tradition has it that a Methodist chapel was built in North Thoresby about 1765. This is most unlikely, but the tradition was alive in 1851 when the Wesleyan Minister, the Reverend Benjamin Firth, completed the return for the Religious Census in that year. He wrote: "The Chapel erected in 1847 was in lieu of one built in 1821 which was in itself in lieu of the Old Chapel built in 1765".

If an 'Old Chapel' had in fact existed from c. 1765 it would have been unnecessary for local Methodists to ask the bishop for legal protection for an out-building and a dwelling house as places of worship. We know that in 1802 an out-building in the village was so licensed. This Dissenter's Certificate, together with another for 1811, survives in the Lincolnshire Archives Offices: -

'To the Right Reverend Father in God, the LORD BISHOP of LINCOLN, or other Person authorised to Register this Certificate.

We whose Names are hereto subscribed do hereby certify, that a certain out-building the property and in the Occupation of Mary Burman... situate in the Parish of North Thoresby...is intended to be used as a Place of Religious Worship, for those of His Majesty's Protestant Subjects dissenting from the Church of England, commonly called Methodists, and we do and we do request that the same may be registered in your Lordship's Registry, according to the Act of Parliament in that Case made and provided.

Dated this Twelfth Day of April in the Year of our Lord, One Thousand Eight Hundred and two.'

John Pool
Zach^s Toft
Mary Burman
Mary Robinson

The similar document for 1811 requests that the dwelling house of Thomas Twigg in North Thoresby may be similarly licensed: dated 25 March 1811 it is signed by Thos. Twigg (Occupier), Edwd. Towler (or Fowler) and Thos. Heward (or Hansard).

By 1835 there were two Methodist chapels standing in North Thoresby, the Wesleyan Methodist chapel built in 1821 and the new Primitive Methodist place of worship which opened in 1835. Precisely when this second connexion of Methodism – Primitive Methodism – was introduced into the parish we have been unable to discover. In the spring and summer of 1819, the county newspaper printed hostile reports of meetings of this connexion in Lincoln itself, outside the city at the junction of Tilbridge Lane and Ermine Street, and near Caistor. ⁽¹⁾

It is probable that one of the three Primitive Methodist 'missionaries' – Messrs. King, Heath and Herod – visited North Thoresby during their preaching tour in the Grimsby, Louth and Alford areas in 1819 and 1820.

(1) Stamford Mercury 26 March, 28 May, 9 July, 16 July, 20th August 1919. A hostile account of the 'Ranters' meeting at nearby Waltham is in this paper dated 17 August 1821.

Certain it is that, with two Methodist connexions active in the parish, North Thoresby became predominantly a Methodist village before mid-century. The Religious Census of 1851 establishes this fact. At the one service held on 'Census Sunday' in the parish church there were thirty-six adults and thirty Sunday school pupils. This service took place in the morning when neither the Wesleyan nor the Primitive Methodists held services. Both these connexions held afternoon and evening services on the Sunday: the numbers of worshippers were: -

	<u>Afternoon</u>	<u>Evening</u>
Wesleyan	100	186
Primitive Methodist	50	140

The fact that the Methodism enjoyed much greater support than did the Church of England may have been due, in part, to the long periods of non-residence of the rectors, together with the fact that some curates at least acted as ministers in charge of several parishes. The Reverend Richard Powley, for example whilst Curate of North Thoresby, was also curate of Grainsby, Hawerby, Beesby, North Cadeby, South Reston and Legbourne (according to educational returns made by him to the Select Committee on the Education of the Poor, in 1818). In the 1851 Census no Rector is shown as being resident in the parish, the Church of England return for the religious census of that year was made out by the Curate, A. D. Parkinson.

Before we move on beyond 1851, we must go back in time. Evidence for the local activity of both Methodist connexions is contained in the Skelton Collection in Grimsby Reference Library. Therein are many Preaching Plans for both Wesleyans and Primitives together with many handbills and posters advertising both Wesleyan Missions and Primitive Methodist Missions. Chapel anniversaries are also advertised; in 1843, for example, was announced the eighth anniversary of the Primitive Methodist chapel. Two Sermons were to be preached on Sunday 30th July by the Reverend G.W. Lamb, of York – one in the afternoon at two o'clock and the other in the evening at six o'clock. This handbill ends: "N.B. A collection will be made at the close of each service to assist in liquidating the Chapel Debt."

Tea Meetings were not infrequent: in October 1843 this announcement was printed by Skelton: -

Christian Friend,

The Primitive Methodists of Thoresby intend to have a Public Tea Party on Friday Oct. 20th, and affectionately solicit you to favour them with your presence.

Tea on the table at Half-past Five o'clock. After tea Messrs. J. Wright of Louth, G. Lamb, J. A. Baston and several other Friends are expected to address the Meeting.

Tickets, One Shilling each, may be had of Messrs. John and James Cooke, J. Barker, W. Walker, and A. M. Shepherd. Yours truly, G. Lamb Oct. 6., 1843.

The social and educational activities of many parishioners were as much bound up with Methodism as was their religious life. Methodism provided a way of life, not merely a chapel to attend. It provided education right from its foundation. The Travelling

Preachers brought into the village an increasingly wide selection of books and pamphlets: the Primitive Methodist Preachers' Plan for October 1845 – January 1846 announces that "Hymn Books of various sizes and price, in plain or elegant bindings, may be had of either of the Travelling Preachers;" "The Primitive Methodist Almanack and Diary may be had on application to the Preachers;" "Persons wishing to subscribe for the large and small Magazines, are requested to give their orders to the Travelling Preachers..." The letter to Preachers printed on this Plan, together with the Hymn, help us to appreciate the fervour of this connexion. The letter begins: -

"Dear Brethren,

If you neglect your appointments, you miss your reward, injure your souls, grieve your Brethren, stab the cause of God, expose the members to reproach, and strengthen the hands of the enemy..."

The final verse of the Hymn expresses determination and confidence: -

"Oh! We'll never mind an earthly frown,
We'll pull the Devil's Kingdom down,
And haste to reach a starry crown,
All who believe on him.

With sword in hand we'll boldly stand,
By faith and prayer, we'll fight our way,
Haste forward and make no delay,
To reign with him in endless day
On yon celestial hill.

CHORUS

We shall reach the shore,
We shall toil no more,
And when on Jordon's banks we stand
And view by faith the promised land,
We'll march the streets with music grand
Unto our heavenly rest.

In the 'Ranter's' Chapel and in the streets and fields of North Thoresby such hymns could be heard. The confidence and determination which were characteristic of both connexions were evident in 1846 when the Wesleyan decided to sell their existing chapel and built a larger and better place of worship.

In early June 1846 the local Wesleyan society made application to the (national) Building Committee for permission to erect a new chapel: before the end of the month such permission had been obtained. From the application form to the Building Committee, we learn something of the local position of the Wesleyans in 1846. There were then eighty-eight society members and the average number of 'regular Hearers' was 'Not less than 150'. On the existing Wesleyan chapel there was a debt of £100; it was proposed to sell this chapel, pay off the debt out of the proceeds of the sale and use any surplus for the proposed new building. But why was a new Wesleyan Chapel

necessary? Because of the crowded state of the present chapel. And where was this new chapel to be sited? Central in the village, "...in the midst of both a poor and respectable population." What had been the society's past income from seat rents? In 1845-46 this was £11.6s.0d., for the past five years it had averaged £11.0s.0d. The local Wesleyan society was confident that a new chapel was essential, confident that it could be paid for and maintained; the Superintendent and Trustees engaged that the final debt on the new building should not exceed £100. They went ahead to sell the existing chapel and to build the new.

The Grimsby printer, Skelton, printed posters advertising the sale by auction at the Granby Inn in the village, on Thursday 17th, September 1846, of "... that CHAPEL or MEETING HOUSE, (Used as a Wesleyan Methodist Chapel), situate in the centre of NORTH THORESBY.... And fronting the Public Street. The Chapel is well and substantially built, and might at a small expense be converted into a Dwelling-house and Shop, and would form a very desirable situation for Trade..." [Ed: it was located opposite the current Wesleyan Chapel].

In the autumn of 1846, the old Wesleyan chapel was sold. On Thursday the 4th. February 1847, the Opening Services of the new Wesleyan Chapel commenced with two sermons by the Reverend R. Bryant of Alford, followed by two sermons on Sunday 7th February by Mr C. Richardson and the Reverend H. D. Lowe. This chapel is still in use today.

The list of Trustees for this new chapel contains the names of thirteen men. Two were farmers of Holton Le Clay – William Hay and Edmund Turner - a further three were farmers of Tetney – Christopher Hewson, Edmund Hewson junior and John Hay, another was William Coates, farmer of Laceby, and serving with these was John Hobson, John Burman and John Ingleby; George Beckitt (blacksmith), Anthony Stovin (wheelwright) and John Button (a shopkeeper). The Census of 1851 provides a little more information.

The thirteenth man was Thomas Hewson who farmed 80 acres in the parish of North Thoresby, he had two male farm servants living in his household and employed one other labourer; he was the only man in these six who had been born in North Thoresby. John Burman, born in Covenham, farmed 66 acres: George Beckitt, the blacksmith, (born at Tetney) employed one journeyman and had one apprentice: Anthony Stovin (born in Grimsby), the wheelwright and carpenter, employed three labourers and had two apprentices living in his household: John Button (also born in Grimsby) was a shopkeeper and tailor with two men assistants living in his household. The 1851 Census does not list any John Ingleby.

The total estimated cost of the new chapel was given as £320. The subscriptions actually promised, by June 1846 totalled £220 (including £30 from the sale of trust property). There was no intention in 1846-47 to build a Sunday School or to add galleries or vestries. An important note on the Application Form to the Building Committee read: -

SUNDAY SCHOOL. "I regret to state that in this as in many of the towns and villages of the County of Lincoln there is no Sunday School. In Thoresby, the Curate has prevailed upon the Wesleyans to send him their children to teach as well as to take

them exclusively to the Parish Church. As present they have no desire for a Wesleyan Sunday School”.

J. Loutit, John Ingleby, William Hay.

The Religious Census of 1851 reveals that thirty Sunday scholars went to service at the parish church on ‘Census Sunday’ and that neither the Wesleyan nor the Primitive Methodist chapel then ran a Sunday School. It seems likely that a Wesleyan Sunday School building existed by 1855. On the 1st July 1855, the Stamford Mercury reported:

“A Tea Meeting was held at North Thoresby on Tuesday last, in connection with the Wesleyan day school recently opened, and passed off remarkably well: upwards of 300 persons partook of tea in Mr Daniel Patchett’s barn. A sermon was preached in the afternoon, and a meeting addressed in the evening, on the subject of education, by Reverend Gervase Smith of Huddersfield. The collections and subscriptions in support of the school are liberal and most encouraging.”

This Wesleyan day-school had started on 30th April 1855. We presume that it was held in a Sunday school built since 1851. By November 1855 the building of the existing school by the Wesleyans had begun: the rest of the story of the Wesleyan Day School is told in another chapter.

By 1856 the Wesleyan Methodists of North Thoresby had provided a good school for boys and girls of the parish. This school educated children of all denominations – there was just not room in the Mapletoft Charity School for all the children of the parents who supported the Church of England. The Methodists had a major contribution to the welfare of the parish. The fact that, in the second half of the century, the Rectors were resident, may well have brought church and chapel nearer together. That they did come together, in the 1870’s and later, for the purpose of maintaining the (former) Wesleyan school first as a parochial school and then as a Board School is dealt with in our chapter on schools.

[The authors in 1978] added a note on education after school: Methodists in North Thoresby promoted, or at least attempted to further, adult education in the parish as well as the education of children. Our knowledge of this is very limited and confined to 1857. In the January a Wesleyan Minister, the Reverend Thomas Thompson, A.M., lectured on ‘Intellectual Taste’: the Mercury’s reporter was not pleased:

“...it was considered by some that the abstruseness of the lecture rendered it difficult....and that it would have been better adapted to a select party of well-educated ladies and gentlemen! The lecturer used his utmost endeavours to make himself understood by his rustic audience....”

Editor’s Note: At the time of writing the original edition (1978), the village school was still located in what is now (2024), the Wesley Centre. It moved to its present position in 1986.

17

OPENING SERVICES

OF THE NEW

WESLEYAN CHAPEL, NORTH THORNTON.

ON
Thursday, Feb. 4th, 1847,
SERMONS

WILL BE PREACHED

In the Afternoon at TWO, and in the Evening at SIX, by The

REV. R. BRYANT
OF ALFORD,

And on Sunday, Feb. 7th,

In the Forenoon at TEN, and in the Evening at SIX, by

MR. C. RICHARDSON,
And in the Afternoon at TWO o'clock, by The
REV. H. D. LOWE.

 A Collection will be made at each Service.

SKELTON, PRINTER, MARKET-PLACE, GRIMSBY.

Chapter 3: Schools and Schooling in North Thoresby

[Ed: the reader needs to bear in mind that childhood was much shorter in the nineteenth century and child labour common right up to the end of the century, and beyond – a necessity for the poor. It was not until 1880 that education became compulsory and then only from aged 5-10; raised to 12 in 1899. Even in the 1940s children commonly left school on their 14th birthday]

Our earliest authentic information comes from a document of 1818. In that year was issued the Digest of Returns to Circular Letter from the Select Committee on the Education of the Poor, etc., and the Curate of North Thoresby, the Reverend Richard Powley wrote about the state of education in the parish.

Of the endowed school (Mapletoft's Charity) he reported: "A school, enjoyed by a former rector with an estate producing £20 a year ...with which about 22 boys are taught free by a master." There were, in addition to this school "Three schools, and a Sunday school, supported by annual subscriptions": he commented that "...the poor are partly without sufficient means of education." Since the curate gives no full figures of the number of children at school at this date, we cannot say what proportion of the boys and girls was in fact at school.

Eighteen years later, in 1836, we learn a little more about schools in the village. In that year the House of Commons printed an Abstract of Answers and Returns made in response to another national enquiry. There were then "Two Daily Schools", one whereof is endowed by Dr. Mapletoft, with £30 per annum, and contains 26 males and 6 females; in the other School, kept by a female, 6 males and 28 females are instructed at the expense of their parents. ... One Sunday School, at which 31 males and 38 females are instructed gratuitously.

The Sunday school commenced by Rev. Field Flowers in 1833 gave instruction in the 3 Rs in addition to religious instruction. By 1860 there were 89 pupils attending on Sundays, and 10 teachers. The total number of children at Day Schools in the village was then 32 boys and 34 girls. We can be certain that school provision in 1836 was quite inadequate for the child population of the parish. The population at this date was between 544 (1831) and 623 (1841).

About twenty-five percent of the villagers are likely to have been between the ages of 4 and 14. If we assume that the population in 1836 was 600 then 150 children of 'school-age' would be in the village and of this number only sixty-six were in fact in school. There was need for great effort to provide more schools.

White's Directory of 1842 mentions the Mapletoft Charity School (discussed in detail in a separate chapter) which had to compete for pupils with a new purpose-built Wesleyan Day School which had been founded in 1856; this competition eventually proved too much for the continuance of the charity school.

Before looking at the foundation and early years of the Wesleyan School we can profitably go back to 1851. The detailed census of that year enables us to see the school situation in North Thoresby at that date.

There were three teachers living in the village: -

Elizabeth Tyler	married	aged 76	born at Clee ⁽¹⁾
Jane Farrow	Married	aged 43	Born at Scarborough
John Mumby`	married	aged 45	born in North Thoresby

A total of 148 children are described in the census as 'scholars' – they put in some attendance at some kind of school. These 'scholars' (71 boys and 77 girls) represent 76% of the total number of children aged between four and fourteen (inclusive). There had clearly been a great advance in the percentage attending school since our figures of 1836. What age-groups did these pupils belong to? The following table reveals this.

Age Group of Pupils	Boys	Girls	Total
Under 4 years of age	5	5	10
4 – 6	26	22	48
7 – 9	19	31	50
10-14	21	19	40
Over 14 years of age	0	0	0

How does the proportion of 'scholars' at North Thoresby compare with those of 'scholars' in other Lincolnshire parishes? It comes well up in the following list;

Parish	Percentage of children aged 4 to 14 described as 'scholars' in 1851 Census.
Kirmington	81%
North Thoresby	76%
Barton on Humber	68%
Goxhill	56%
Grimsby	54%
Brigg	52%
Worlaby	35%
Keelby	34%
Wootton	31%
Habrough	28%
Fotherby	5.5%

- (1) Louth Advertiser 5th May 1871: On Monday night died Mrs Tyler, the oldest inhabitant of N. Thoresby. She was born at Clee in Oct 1771 so she was in her 99th year. She had been for 77 years a member of the Wesleyan Methodist Society and for about 75 years a resident of North Thoresby to which village she removed the year after her marriage to her first husband, Mr Colan of Louth. For more than 50 years she taught a day school which she opened in the year 1800 – and she was the first teacher in the church Sunday school.

It is quite impossible to estimate anything of the quality of the education provided or of the duration of the school-life of these 'scholars': all we know is that these percentages of children of ages 4 to 14 years were attending, for some period in the year, at some sort of school.

The turning point in the history of education of children in North Thoresby came in 1856 with the foundation of the Wesleyan Day School in the village. Several Wesleyan Day Schools were opened in N. E. Lindsey in the eighteen fifties – at Goxhill, Hatcliffe, North Thoresby, Tetney, Grimsby, Waltham and Louth. ⁽²⁾

The following report is taken from the Report of the Methodist Education Committee for 1856:

North Thoresby (Grimsby Circuit) 1856

In 1849, a plot of ground behind the chapel was given for the purpose of erecting a Sabbath-school. Although it was not until the latter end of the year in 1854 that the building was commenced. Meanwhile, a new idea has struck the friends; and, while in March 1855, the room was completed, and opened as a Sabbath-school, on the 31st April, a day-school was commenced by a certificated teacher from the normal Institution. The room capable of accommodating only from 40 to 50 children, was soon filled, and a larger building with a residence for the teacher, became necessary. Miss Susannah Robinson, in addition to her former gifts of land for the chapel and the Sabbath-school, presented the land on which the new buildings were to stand. Application was made to the Committee of Council on Education for a building grant, which, after some demur on the part of their lordships, in consequence of the existence of a free school in the village, plans were prepared by Mr Wilson of Bath. The erection was commenced on 19th of November 1855, and on the 10th April 1856, the school was opened by the Rev. John Scott, Principal, in conjunction with Mr Armstrong.

The new premises embrace a superior dwelling-house for the teacher, a spacious playground, a school-room 44 feet by 18 feet 6 inches and, two class rooms, each 16 feet by 10 feet. The land being copy-held, was enfranchised by the Earl of Yarborough.

Although no one person in the village of Thoresby contributed or, was in circumstances to contribute a very considerable sum, yet by the cordial co-operation of three fourths of the rate-payers, the entire amount required to meet the Grant was speedily realized. The total cost was £806.17s.5d., towards which the promoters received a Government Committee grant of £30." ⁽³⁾

By 1862, the master of the Wesleyan Day School, William H. Farrah, had 87 pupils in his school. Shortly before the Wesleyan school opened the Rector of the parish reported on the local school situation to his Bishop. ⁽⁴⁾ There existed a Sunday School teaching 106 pupils (fifty-two boys and fifty-four girls).

⁽²⁾See R C Russell: A History of Schools & Education in Lindsey, Lincs., 1800-1902. Part Four: Methodism and the Provision of Day Schools. (1967).

⁽³⁾We are indebted to Eileen Mumby for this report and for the 1862 information.

⁽⁴⁾Lincolnshire Archives Officer: Diocesan Board of Education, 1855 Returns.

In the Charity School were 42 boys, but no girl pupils at all. The annual income of this school was £50, forty pounds coming from the endowment and £10 arising from children's school pence – it was no longer a free school. There were no schools kept by nonconformists: two Dame Schools existed, but the Rector gave no indication of the number of pupils in these. This situation bears out our statement that the turning point in the school-history of North Thoresby was the opening of the Wesleyan School in 1856.

In 1862 the Wesleyan School Logbook began and we are indebted to Doreen Tyson who transcribed every page of the log book from 1862-1900 – now in the Archive. Glimpses of village activities help us to see the school in its village setting and some entries remind us (as the next quotation does) that North Thoresby was well aware of events in the wider world. On 14th November 1862, the Master wrote: "Read a short account to the children this afternoon showing the horrors of the War in America". The Civil War in America was then raging.

Other entries were more prosaic.

1862	
6 th Nov.	"John Isaac publicly warned that if he does not behave better in school, he will receive a second flogging."
21 st Nov.	"Gave a lesson this afternoon on 'The Lion'. The 1 st class are to write an account of it, from memory (on slates) for next Monday morning".
24 th Nov.	"...The best (accounts of the Lion) were Maria Bradley's and Alice Barber's.
2 nd Dec.	"James Taylor (the pupil teacher) gave a lesson to the 1 st and 2 nd Sections...on the Mountain System of England – order moderate".
18 th Dec.	"Charles Kettlewell publicly flogged for telling a lie about another boy's cap".

1863	
10 th Mar.	"The children received a bun each as a memento of the marriage of the Prince of Wales. Dismissed earlier in the afternoon".
20 th July	"School inspected by C. Alderson Esq., 90 present (including 10 Evening Scholars).
3 rd Aug.	"Primitive Methodist Annual Gathering and Camp meeting at Cleethorpes. Attendance less than usual.
7 th Aug.	"Harvest having commenced, the average attendance has been less than last week".
10 th Aug.	"Smaller attendance, nearly all the bigger boys away at harvest work".
14 th Aug.	"School dismissed ... for the usual 4 weeks harvest vacation".

There were frequent singing lessons especially before the Day School Anniversary; this appears to have been a day celebration. The Headmaster noted in 1863: -

“The Day School Anniversary, the children’ dismissed earlier this morning. In the afternoon the Public Examinations continued from 2 – 4 o’clock, followed by a public tea at 5 o’clock. The children taking tea afterwards”.

And again in 1864, the Headmaster reported that at the public meeting in the evening addresses were given by several speakers and a collection taken in aid of the school. This was one way in which funds were raised to finance the school.

There was another account of the Anniversary celebrations in May 1868:

“Yesterday sermons were preached in the adjoining chapel on behalf of the school: today a public examination of the children commenced at 2 o’clock followed by a public tea at 5 o’clock. At the meeting in the evening the financial statement of the Committee, the Inspector’s report etc, for the past year were read. Total proceeds for this Anniversary £4.17s.6ds.”

In May 1863 the Headmaster wrote: “Examined carefully all the children’s copy books and offered one penny to any child who brings his or her book finished, carefully written and containing neither blot nor a mistake.”

This rewarding of good work was counterbalanced by the report, a few days later, of the sound flogging of a boy for idleness and disobedience.

Each year, as harvest time approached, the Headmaster reported a falling off in attendances until the 4 or 5 weeks harvest holiday commenced. Once the school reopened after the holiday, the pupils returned to school slowly, some went gleaning after the harvest, followed by potato picking, sometimes the children were underage according to the Act Regulating the employment of child labour in agriculture and the parents of the children risked being fined. One Headmaster noted in 1875: “The parents when I told them of it, pleaded poverty and so run the risk of a fine for the sake of a few shillings their children may earn.”

The children must have been hardy in the 1860’s – many of them had to walk long distances to school in all weathers; one girl came from Haverby. The schoolroom was not heated until mid-October when the Headmaster gave permission for the fire to be lit.

During the summer term there were many feasts and Statute Fairs [the annual hiring of farm labour and servants] in the neighbourhood. We read of the children being absent in order to go to the Lincoln Fair, Louth Cattle Fair, Thoresby Feast, Binbrook Statute Fair and Grimsby Statute Fair.

The Headmaster reported that the number of children on the Roll continued to increase during 1864, though from time-to-time children did leave to go to the free school (Mapletoft). The Report of H.M.I. of Schools for 1865 was very satisfactory –

“The discipline and instruction of this school reflects the highest credit on the Master.”

A new Headmaster succeeded Mr Farrah in February 1866; there was also a new pupil teacher. The Master wrote in his Log in November 1867 – “Home lessons not so well done as they ought to be, gave notice to the children that there must be an improvement.” His words were obviously heeded as he reported a week later – “Home lessons better this week.”

In January 1868 the Master wrote – “George Cooke left school at the end of the year. He is a good reader, writer and arithmetician, can work sums in ordinary rule of mensuration, parse simple sentences and knows the geography of Europe, England, Scotland and Ireland.” Not a bad attainment for a boy in a village school over 100 years ago!

Early in January 1869 the Master reported that many children were absent from school, they were suffering from a kind of influenza, the first reference to that particular disease in the school Logbook. Over the years there were frequent references to epidemics of measles, scarlet fever, mumps and scabies. The school was closed for a week or two on several occasions owing to the severity of these illnesses; one or two deaths were reported amongst the children as a result of these diseases.

Mr Bayliss became Headmaster at the end of 1869. He stayed for two years and was succeeded by Mr S, L Sanders in January 1872. The new Master reported that 87 pupils were presented for H.M. Inspection in February 1872. There were 92 children present in all and the Inspector reported: “The school in good order and creditably taught. The work of the pupil teacher must improve.”

In 1870 the first Education Act was passed and over the next 30 years a national framework was built [see Editor’s notes at the end of the chapter]. The pupil teacher served a four-year apprenticeship. He had an hour’s tuition from the Master each day, either before or after school hours. He was required to teach the younger pupils daily under the supervision of the Master, who commented critically on his performance. The H.M.I. of Schools examined the pupil teacher in teaching practice at the yearly school inspection and in addition the pupil teacher was required to take an examination either at Louth or Grimsby each year.

There was a change of Headmaster in January 1873 – Mr Spain succeeded Mr Sanders. In early February 1873 Mr Spain reported that there were 105 pupils present and the numbers continued to grow under his Headship.

The committee who managed the school in 1873 consisted of ten members as follows:

G. Beckett	Dr. George	Rev. Dr. Parkinson	D. L Patchett	W. Mastin
James Cooke Snr.	Thomas Bond	F. Champion	S. Coverdale	Wm. Payne

The management committee arranged for the school to be thoroughly repaired, limewashed, colour washed and painted during the Harvest holiday in 1873. The Headmaster wrote – “I find it in a most satisfactory state for health.”

In February 1874 the Headmaster reported that he attended the East Lincolnshire Teachers Association meeting and heard a paper entitled "Needlework", by Miss Watson of Alford.

There were 147 pupils present at H.M. Inspection in February 1874, 62 boys and 85 girls, of whom 87 were presented for examination. The school staff at that time consisted of:

Mr Spain, Headmaster	Geo. Isaacs 3 rd year pupil teacher
Fanny M. Plumtree, 2 nd year pupil teacher	Mrs Barber, the sewing mistress

The H.M.I's report was as follows: -

"The discipline of the School is good. The Reading pretty good, Writing and Spelling fair. Arithmetic weak in all standards but the first. The infants are on the whole pretty well taught. Singing is good. Some more desks are needed, and it is a pity that some arrangement cannot be made for dividing the school yard into two parts for boys and girls respectively. My Lords will look for a great improvement in Arithmetic next year."

At the drawing examination in March 1874, in the First Grade 29 geometry pupils were presented, 60 pupils in freehand and 11 in Model.

Mr Shepherd became Headmaster in January 1875, H.M.I. was not satisfied with the work of the school and in March of that year his report reads: -

"it will require unflagging energy on the part of the new Master to get it into a sound state of efficiency."

In September 1875 the school staff consisted of –

Mr Shepherd, Headmaster	Grace Fysh, 1 st year pupil teacher
George Mumby, monitor	Ellen, monitor

Four pupils left in November 1875 to go to Mapletoft School. When the Headmaster spoke to the father of the four, he said that he had taken them away from the village school because the Headmaster had begun "to larn 'em grammar and geography and such like stuff which they'll never want" – the father wanted them to "larn now't but reading, writing and bit of summing".

Pupils received prizes for good attendance for the first time in 1876. H.M.I's report that Spring was good: -

"Under the present Headmaster the children have made very considerable progress. In all elementary subjects most of them were successful and the poetry had been carefully learnt. The infant classes are well looked after".

The school continued to grow in numbers, 101 pupils were presented for H.M.I. examination in 1878. The report said: -

"Under Mr Shepherd the school has made very creditable progress".

The grant from the Education Dept. for that year was £85.14s.0d. the school continued to receive satisfactory reports from H.M.I. and the grant from the Education Dept. went up to £107.4s.0d. in 1880.

In 1873 the Education Dept. had ordered that 12 songs should be taught in each year and that the titles should be entered in the School Logbook. In 1881 two of the songs included were:

A Hunting We Will Go	The Star Spangled Banner
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The Headmaster reported a very full school of 130 pupils in November 1881. The H.M.I.'s report for 1883 was satisfactory but he did say that new desks were required and he suggested that the large gallery be cut down and the window enlarged, also better ventilation should be secured.

The Master reported that he sent a boy home because he came without his fees after several warnings; happily, the boy returned the following day with his fees. One girl was sent home because she only brought 2d. for her fees instead of 3d., and a message from her parent that she would only pay 2d. until the child got into the 1st standard. Money was obviously tight in those days. The Headmaster reported in 1885 that "Having received a communication from Mr Hill, our relieving officer, to the effect that the Guardians would no longer pay the school fees for Mrs Winn's children, I requested them to bring the fees; not having done so I have been forced (by my instructions) to send them home" and "Thrice this week I have been bound to send back Mrs Winn's children because they presented themselves without their school fees".

The H.M.I.'s report of 1884 was not so satisfactory. During this year both the assistant mistress and the pupil teacher left the school. The Rector, the Rev. R. E. Bassett promised to assist the Headmaster until another assistant was appointed.

In 1886, the H.M.I. report was good on the whole. When the school came under the management of the School Board for the United District of North Thoresby with Waithe and Grainsby the same teachers were appointed. The member of the first School Board were as follows: -

Chairman: Dr. George	Vice Chairman: W. H. Champion	Treasurer: C. Mackarill	Clerk: W. T. Markham
Rev. R. E. Bassett	D. L. Patchett	W. Mastin (Waithe)	W. Sharp (Waithe)

The Education Dept., in London had an interest in the premises of the former Wesleyan Day School as they had given a grant towards the building of the premises in 1856. The Board of Management paid 5s.0d. per annum to the Wesleyan Trustees by way of rent. The Board of Management elected every three years by the ratepayers of North Thoresby. The pupils still paid for their tuition – under 7 years old they paid 2d. per week over 7 years to standard 3 was 3d. per week, and above that, pupils paid 4d per week, the latter fee was reduced to 3d. per week after December 1886 (and abolished in 1891).

In addition to the fees from pupils the Board received a yearly grant from the Education Dept., based on the results of the pupils in the examinations controlled by H.M.I. of Schools, as they had done before the school became a Board school, the Board could also levy a rate of Education – 3d. in the £1 in 1886. The Board had no surplus funds and as fast as the money came in, it was spent, on teachers' salaries, repairs to the premises, cleaning, light and heat. The members of the Board took their duties seriously, rarely was a meeting abandoned because the quorum of 3 was not present.

The Board viewed applications for a reduction in school fees sympathetically, though they pursued the parents of children whose attendance was irregular with persistence. One mother was summoned and fined 3s.0d. by the Magistrates at Grimsby Court. In one instance Dr. George, Chairman of the Board, sent word to a parent that if non-attendance of a child was due to ill-health, he was prepared to issue a medical certificate free of charge. The Headmaster and assistant teachers were appointed by the Board who settled the amount of their remuneration. The school holidays were also fixed by the Board.

A sad little note by the Headmaster in 1887:

"Alice and Fanny Kirman, 2 pauper children attending this school were removed to the Union today, consequent on the recent death of their mother".

In 1889, when Mapletoft School ceased to be certified as efficient, there were several children from that school who transferred to the Board School. The desks and the bell of Mapletoft School were purchased by the Board School. The influx of pupils from Mapletoft made the Board School understaffed under the Education Dept. Code. The Board of Managers then engaged two senior pupils as monitors at 6d. per week. The father of one of them protested at the low payment and the Board eventually increased the payment to 2s.0d. per week.

Mr Shepherd, who had been Headmaster for 14 years, resigned in 1889 to open a private school in Grimsby. The new Headmaster, Mr T. W. Robinson, had trouble with some of the parents who objected to paying for the new Geography books which he had introduced. As an economy measure, the Board decided in 1889 that in future books required by the pupil would be purchased by the Board and sold to the pupils at cost price instead of them being supplied free.

In 1891, the Headmaster reported that the cold weather had kept some children from school and it prevented those who attended from doing good work as their hands were so cold. The death from consumption that winter of a 4th standard boy was recorded with regret.

The H.M.I report of 1891 was satisfactory and a grant of £90.12s.6., was received. In addition to his salary of £70 per annum the Headmaster received 2/5ths of the grant. The Mapletoft Exhibition to Louth Grammar School was awarded to Asaph Hill in 1891 and four scholarships of £5 each were awarded to other pupils at the Board School.

In the autumn of 1891 school fees were abolished. A notice was issued to parents requiring punctual attendance of the children. The teacher was authorised by the

Board to see that children attend school clean and tidy. The teacher gave notice that the parents of children who did not attend would be summoned.

There was a measles epidemic in December 1891 and the school was closed for three weeks, instead of one week at Christmas.

The Rev. R. E. Bassett, who had been a member of the Board since its institution, and who had taken a kindly interest in the teachers and pupils, died in March 1892. The Rev. Garrett succeeded him as Rector.

Drawing examinations for the boys were conducted in January 1892 and 1893; Major Robinson was the examiner. The drawing grant was 1s.6d. for each boy, of which the Headmaster received 2/5ths.

The Elementary Education (School Attendance) Act of 1893 raised the school leaving age to 11.

No opportunity of improving his pupils was lost by the Headmaster. He wrote in his logbook of 1894 – “I gave a lesson today on the ‘value of time’ because I have noticed lately many instances of wasting time”.

H.M.I. reports continued to be good and the results of the Drawing examination in 1895 were “Excellent” – the grant for each boy taking the examination was raised to 2s. 0d. per boy.

In January 1896, H.M.I. was again criticizing the long gallery in the school. “The gallery takes up a great deal of floor space which should be provided with suitable desks for the lower standards. Efficient supervision of the work done on the gallery is almost impossible and the children of necessity hold their slate on their knees when writing. This is not only bad for writing but it also hinders the natural development of the children”.

Mr Robinson resigned as Headmaster in March 1895 after 7 year’s service. Mr C. W. Hall of Lincoln was appointed Headmaster and Miss Louisa Hall continued as assistant mistress. The H.M.I. report that year contained a note saying that a pupil teacher must not be allowed to serve in school more than 25 hours in a week.

The Headmaster wanted to promote physical training and wrote in May 1896, “Scholars used bar bells for the first time”.

Eight scholars received Mapletoft scholarships in 1896, and the Rector, the Rev. Garrett, presented Geo. Foster (a boy who had not been absent from school once the previous year) with 42s.0d. he also presented 2s. 0d. each to three boys who had only been absent once.

The large gallery, of which H.M.I had complained, was removed during the Harvest holidays of 1896 and eight desks were placed where it had stood. H.M.I. reported on the improvement this had made at the inspection in 1897. At the end of 1879 Mr Hall resigned to take up a post in Lincoln; the assistant mistress, Miss L Hall, also left to take up another post. Mr Dudley became the new Headmaster and his wife joined the

staff as an assistant mistress. Miss Sempers, the assistant mistress, resigned after nine years in the post, to get married. The School Board presented her with a handsome marble timepiece.

The school had a very good attendance record in the year ending 31st January 1897 – 39 pupils attended more than 400 times during the year, 3 boys made full attendance (420 times). The School Board and the teachers congratulated the scholars who had attended so regularly, they also complimented the parents of the children.

In 1898, the Headmaster arranged to add algebra to the subjects taught in school. He also provided a practice football for the boys, and 3 balls for the girls. A Day school library was started by the Headmaster. He received a good number of books for the use of the pupils and a few months later he reported that a bookcase had been added to the school apparatus. Teachers and 90 scholars went on a School Outing to visit the Missionary Loan Exhibition at Louth in July 1898. The object was to deepen their interest in Missionary work; afterwards they visited Louth Parish Church and Hubbard Hills.

Geo. Foster set a record for school attendance in January 1899 – he had not been absent once four years.

The School Board of Managers was disbanded in 1903 when the County Council took over the school. A resolution was passed by the Board at its final meeting recording their appreciation of Mr Markham's services, Mr Markham having been clerk to the Board from its formation. The Board also recorded their appreciation of the services rendered by their Treasurer, Mr Charles Mackarill, who had held that office since the Board was formed in 1886.

During the years between 1862 and 1900 there were nine Headmasters successively in charge of the village school. Six of them only stayed for two years and then left to take up other posts. Mr Shepherd stayed the longest – he was in charge for 14 years before he resigned to open a private school in Grimsby. Mr Shepherd seems to have been a very successful Headmaster. H.M.I. usually gave the school a good report in his day; the discipline was always commended, and the pupils usually did well in the examinations.

Reading the School Logbook one can see how he tried to instil a good moral tone and a sense of discipline into his pupils. He tried to enlist the co-operation of the parents in training the children morally, and often sent pupils guilty of misdemeanours home to their parents to be disciplined by them.

The first mention in the School Logbooks about Evening Classes occurs in a report in 1863 which said that Surfleet Lidgard, a Night School pupil, had won a first prize, value £1, at a meeting of the Tetney Agricultural Society, when prizes were given for Riding, Ploughing, Thatching, etc. The Headmaster of the Day School usually arranged the classes and taught the Night School pupils. The School Logbooks contain reports from time to time that the Headmaster had obtained permission to start a Night School: obviously the classes were not a permanent feature in the village. They were probably only held in the winter months and then it depended on the willingness of the Headmaster to arrange them.

The Education Dept. gave a grant for Evening Classes and H.M.I. also examined the Night School pupils when they visited the school to examine the Day pupils. In December 1863, the Headmaster reported a considerable increase in the number of pupils attending Night School. H.M.I. examined the pupils in 1864 and reported "the night school is making good progress, two youths write really admirably"; and the following year H.M.I. reported, "The night school pupils passed their examinations without a single failure, many of them, ploughboys by employment, write a hand which would do credit to a clerk on the railway or in a merchant's office.

In 1892 the Headmaster, Mr Robinson, was conducting evening classes with the Rector, the Rev. Garrett, as second teacher. The same year a meeting was held in the Schoolroom to elect a committee to be known as the Technical Education Committee. This Committee was appointed to administer in conjunction with the parishes of Tetney and Marshchapel a sum of money granted by the Lindsey County Council for the promotion of Technical Education. The North Thoresby Committee was also responsible for the villages of Fulstow and Ludborough. The officers of the first Committee were:

Chairman: Rev. E. A. Gedge of Ludborough	Secretary: Mr J. F. Broughton	Treasurer: Mr Chas. Mackarill
Delegate to Central Committee: Mr W. A. Campion	Delegate to Central Committee: Mr Mackarill	

Meetings of the local committee were held several times a year, sometimes at North Thoresby, sometimes at Fulstow or Ludborough. The committee we elected once a year and was composed of seven members from North Thoresby, five from Fulstow, four from Ludborough, and two each from Grainsby and Waithe.

Courses of Lectures on Gardening, Dairying, Health and Home, First Aid, Bee Keeping, Elementary Chemistry of Agriculture, Cookery and Dressmaking were arranged. When a parish wished for a particular course of lectures it could apply through its own member on the Committee. Handbills and posters were printed to advertise the lectures. Differences of opinion arose when decisions were made on the choice of lectures, some villages did not want the course chosen by other villages; in fact, the problem must have grown to such an extent that it was noted in the Minute Book, "The Secretary wrote to the Education office for a ruling on this problem". The Education office replied suggesting that if the local committee raised some funds, more lectures could then be provided giving wider scope for lectures.

After May 1897 the local committee seems to have concerned itself with providing technical education for the parish of North Thoresby, there is no mention in the minutes from that date of lectures being arranged for Fulstow and Ludborough.

North Thoresby had success in the Lindsey County Technical examinations held in April 1899. In elementary commercial arithmetic G. W. Chambers took 1st prize of £1.10s.0d and F. Lidgard 2nd prize of £1.02.0d. (the total number of pupils examined was 69). Chambers and Lidgard also got a 1st class in bookkeeping and 2nd class in

commercial geography. S. Fawcett got a 1st class in bookkeeping and Jos. Lidgard got a 2nd in the same subject. The latter two also did promising work in commercial geography. These good results reflect the interest in education shown by the villagers of North Thoresby in the latter half of the 19th century.

Headmasters

W. H. Farrah	1862 – 1865 (to end of year)
A. Peake	1866 – 1869 (to end of year)
M. Bayliss	1870 – 1871 (to end of year)
S. L. Sanders	1872 – 1872 (to end of year)
T. D. Spain	1873 – 1874 (to end of year)
J. Shepherd	1875 – 1889 (to March – to open a private school)
T. W. Robinson	1889 – 1896 (to March)
C. W. Hall	1896 – 1897 (to end of year)
T. A. Dudley	1898 – carried on in to the period when it became a school under Lincs. Education Committee.

Editor's Note:

The 1870 Education Act and further reforms in the Nineteenth Century

Until the 1870 Act, together with other Acts which followed, education in Britain was haphazard and unsystematic, provision, quality and cost (to parents) varying from place to place, as is clearly illustrating by the evidence presented in the article produced in 1978.

In the 1860s the annual funding allocated for schools by Parliament exceeded £800,000. But there was growing pressure for the state to provide schools in areas where none existed. One of the chief stumbling blocks was the vested interests of religious societies. There was conflict of opinion over whether the state should pay for schools run by particular religious denominations, or whether schools should have no association with any denomination.

School funding

Matters began to move forward, however, in 1869 when the recently formed National Education League began its campaign for free, compulsory and non-religious education for all children. The views expressed by industrialists that mass education was vital to the nation's ability to maintain its lead in manufacture carried considerable weight in Parliament. A Bill which met many, but not all, of the League's wishes was drafted and introduced by W. E. Forster, and quickly passed.

1870 Education Act

The 1870 Education Act stands as the very first piece of legislation to deal specifically with the provision of education in England and Wales. Most importantly, it

demonstrated a commitment to provision on a national scale. The Act allowed voluntary schools to carry on unchanged, but established a system of 'school boards' to build and manage schools in areas where they were needed. The boards were locally elected bodies which drew their funding from the local rates. Unlike the voluntary schools, religious teaching in the board schools was to be 'non-denominational'. A separate Act extended similar provisions to Scotland in 1872.

More Education Acts

The issue of making education compulsory for children had not been settled by the 1870 Act. The 1876 Royal Commission on the Factory Acts recommended that education be made compulsory in order to stop child labour. In 1880 a further Education Act finally made school attendance compulsory between the ages of five and ten, though by the early 1890s attendance within this age group was falling short at 82 per cent.

Many children worked outside school hours - in 1901 the figure was put at 300,000 - and truancy was a major problem due to the fact that parents could not afford to give up income earned by their children. Fees were also payable until a change in the law in 1891. Further legislation in 1893 extended the age of compulsory attendance to 11, and in 1899 to 12. Compulsory education was also extended to blind and deaf children under the Elementary Education (Blind and Deaf Children) Act of 1893, which established special schools. Similar provision was made for physically-impaired children in the Elementary Education (Defective and Epileptic Children) Act of 1899.

Ed: Source: www.parliament.uk/

Below: Extract from the Logbook. In the archive we have the original Logbooks and a transcript from 1862-1900 by Doreen Tyson.

27

1863.
June 29 The 1st class wrote from dictation, an ordinary newspaper paragraph, on slate. Total mistakes 33:- average no. for each child 2.3 -

30 James Taylor's lesson to the 1st & 2nd classes on England (first lesson on the river system of) was worth 9 of the maximum. Order very fair.

July 1 The children belonging to Standards (P.C.) were well drilled on the blackboard in forming letters &c., & an exercise given upon the same, on slate, for to-morrow morning.

2 Out of 8 sums (compound rules, common weights & measures) set on the blackboard for the 1st class, 6.3 were worked correctly on the average, by each child.

3 Examined the children this afternoon, in Standards II-VI (P.C.), in Arithmetic. The total no. of sums done correctly in all these Standards, was 9 of the maximum.



Dr Guy Witton Miller, pictured with his wife, Elizabeth Ann, daughter Margery Ellen and members of staff. He became the village GP in 1908 and the family played a full part in social life, particularly holding tennis competitions at their home, named 'Pinhoe' after the Devon village he had lived in before coming to the village. He served in the 1914-18 war from 1915 and didn't return to the village at the end of the war.

Chapter 4: The Demise of the Mapletoft Charity School

In 1818 the Rev. Richard Powley, the curate, reported to a Select Committee on the Education of the Poor that this school “...endowed by a former rector with an estate producing £20 a year” was educating about 22 boys free of charge. Eighteen years later a second national enquiry into education (instituted by the House of Commons) informs us that the annual income of Mapletoft’s charity [see notes at the end of the chapter for a brief biography of Robert Mapletoft] was £30 and that the school contained 26 boys and 6 girls. William White’s Directory of Lincolnshire for 1842 adds further relevant information:

“The Free School was founded in 1676 The school land comprises about 47 acres, worth about £50 a year, but charged in 1838 with about £300, towards the expenses of the enclosure, which is to be paid off in twenty years, by instalments. The master has a good house, near the school, and is required to instruct as free-scholars all the poor children of the parish”.

The master at this date was John Mumby. He had succeeded Edward Mumby in this post and had, unfortunately for the success of the school, undertaken the impossible duties imposed upon Edward Mumby at the time of his appointment in January 1787. Edward, appointed by the Lord of the Manor, Lord Yarborough, “with the consent and approbation of the parishioners...” had agreed to these terms:

“That ...Edward Mumby..., should, during the time he continued schoolmaster, instruct the children of the poor parishioners... keep the schoolhouse and premises in good and tenantable repair, and farm the land belonging to the school in a husband-like manner...”

When the Charity Commissioners published their Report on Lincolnshire Charities in 1837, they noted, with adverse criticism, that Mr Mumby did in fact both farm and teach. They condemned this state of affairs and wrote: -

“The practice...of the schoolmaster farming the land appears objectionable, as such operation must necessarily interfere with his other duties”.

It is certain that the Free School of North Thoresby (the Mapletoft School) was in difficulties from before the enclosure of the parish (in the 1840s) up until it was forced to close in 1889. It faced four main difficulties. Firstly, no teacher could both farm and teach efficiently; secondly, the income of the charity became too small to allow for the need to teach the fast-growing number of children of school age; thirdly, enclosure expenses had to be met out of charity money thus reducing the income available for teaching and fourthly, a further debt was necessarily incurred when in July 1853 the Trustees decided that it was essential to build a new school-house and house for the master. {Ed: this property is still to be seen on Church Lane}.

The well-kept Minutes of the Trustees of Dr. Mapletoft’s School make it perfectly clear that these difficulties existed. Their new school was built “... for the reception of Seventy-five Boys” (Minute dated 6th January 1854). Three years before this date there were already 148 children attending schools in the village (76% of the children aged between four and fourteen). The new Mapletoft School was far too small to meet more

than a fraction of the educational needs of the parish and its income was quite inadequate to pay a good teacher (let alone more than one teacher) to educate the seventy-five pupils who could be accommodated. The good intentions of the Trustees could not be realised.

The Trustees were realistic in two respects, at least. They were correct in recognising that a new school building was essential, they were sensible in electing (in February 1854) only 20 Free scholars. Presumably any other pupils would have to be paying pupils. The master would certainly need many paying pupils before he had a salary on which he could live. In 1855 his year's salary was only £16.8s and in 1857 it was even less - £14.15s. (Treasurer's accounts in the Minutes). In later years the salary is recorded as follows: -

1858	£15.12s.6d.
1859	£31.02.0d.
1860	£31.15s.0d.
1862	£33.4s.0d.

As the school debts were slowly paid off, the master's salary slowly improved, but the accounts which are incorporated in the Minutes are more easily intelligible to the Trustees of the period than to us today.

Specimen entries (about the master's salary) read for example: -

1868	May 13 th	Paid the Master's Salary	£18.17s.6d.
1868	Nov. 21 st	Paid the Master's Salary	£ 3.17s.6d.
1869	May 14 th	Paid the Master's Salary	£19. 5s.0d.
1869	Nov 23 rd	Paid the master's Salary	£ 4. 5s.0d.
1870	May 14 th	Paid the Master's Salary	£19.12s.6d.
1870	Nov 21 st	Paid the Master's Salary	£ 4. 12s.6d.

From these entries we assume the Master's Salary was £22.15s., in 1865, £23.10s., in 1869 and £24.5s., in 1879. No school, in 1870 could expect to attract an efficient master for such a salary. It comes as no real surprise that the Mapletoft School was closed in 1889.

Annually, after the new school-building was opened, an examination of the pupils was undertaken by the Trustees. In this matter they were far too complacent of standards reached; they were deceiving themselves as to the efficiency of their school. They were to be rudely awakened by the reports of H.M. Inspector! On 1st May 1878 the Trustees resolved "...to write to the Government Inspector of Schools ...and ask him to have the goodness to appoint a day for the inspection of the above school...".

The first H.M.I.'s report (letter dated 24th January 1879) certified the school as efficient. (Minutes, page 106), but it was a critical report. The report of a second inspection, held in December 1879, showed that all was not well:

"The instruction is not being carried on in this School as it should be. In Reading the Boys did fairly well, but in other subjects their work was moderate. The infants are much neglected. Reading Cards, Black Board, Colour Board, and Ball Frame are

required. The school will not be certified next year, unless much improvement be shown in the work generally”.

The Rector, Richard Bassett, realised how great an improvement was necessary. He signed the Minutes which read: -

“...And they (the Trustees) further trust, that every effort will be made by the Master, to improve the general condition of the School, as his tenure of office depends upon the result of the next examination: for should the School fail to be certified as an efficient School, it would not be recognised as a School...” (Minutes p.110).

The H.M.I.’s report of December 1880 indicated a little improvement had been made, but that of January 1882 was damning: -

“Reading appears to be the only subject in which the Teacher is able to obtain any material success, handwriting is poor ... Spelling is inaccurate, and Arithmetic is almost worthless in Standards above the first. The infants do not show that they have been taught with any care whatever. Under the present Teacher it is impossible to certify that the instruction is efficient.”

Mr Mumby tendered his resignation as teacher: he was allowed to retain his office until 13th May 1882 (Minutes P.116). He was 76 years of age!

Mr John Brown succeeded Mr Mumby. The local surgeon, Dr. George, attended the Trustees meeting on 9th March 1882 “...as representative of the Parish with a view to bring about an amalgamation of the Parish School with Dr. Mapletoft’s School.” (Minutes p.177). No such action was taken.

In May 1882 the Trustees received a letter from the Charity Commissioners. It warned then that “It seems clearly desirable that these Charities should be regulated by means of a Scheme to be established by this Board...”. The Charity Commissioners had been alerted to the situation in North Thoresby by a letter from Mr Thomas Bond. The Commissioners gave warning as to the future:

“...The liability to provide sufficient School accommodation ...being now by law imposed upon the Ratepayers, the Commissioners could not consent to a proposal to expand the funds of the Charity for the purpose, more especially having regard to the directions, contained in the Codicil to the Will of Dr. Mapletoft, that the Scholars should be made fit for the Grammar School...” (Minutes p.121).

Mr Thomas Bond had been directed by ‘the Meeting of the Parishioners in Vestry assembled’ (on 7th February 1882) to write to the Charity Commissioners. His letter asserted that “...the Charity has not really been any benefit to the Parish, this last 50 years: the Children being taught under the Old Regime and the late Masters, and his Father never were efficient Teachers”.

His letter concluded: “...we pray your Lordships to allow the Charity to be applied towards the benefit of the present School (i.e., the Board School in the Wesleyan building) ...it has accommodation for the whole of the Children in the Parish... The Trustees will also favour this Scheme...”.

Mr Bond, who kept a Grocer's & Drapers shop in North Thoresby, [almost certainly the current location of Morrison's shop at the centre of the village] was mistaken (it seems), in his assertion that the Trustees favoured the scheme proposed. The Trustees defended the efficiency of their School in a long and spirited letter to the Commissioners, and they were unkind enough to point out that three of Mr Bond's last apprentices had been educated at the Mapletoft School and "gave every satisfaction to Mr Bond and his Father in the business..." (Minutes p.125-126).

In December 1882 H.M.I. gave warning that the school must improve further. "...unless much improvement be shown... it will be impossible to grant a certificate of efficiency...". The warning was repeated a year later. The Rector noted in February 1884 that "The room is sufficiently large to accommodate 44 Scholars – 36 being the average number in attendance during the last year". (Minutes p.130). Although the inspections of 1884 and 1885 recorded some improvements in the school, that of 1886 noted that "... the attainments of the Children are much below those of last year". In December 1888 the death sentence was passed on the Mapletoft Charity School.

"My Lords are unable to continue to certify the School as Efficient." (Minutes p.143).

The Trustees gave notice of dismissal to the Master and resolved to send a memorial to the Charity Commissioners "praying that as the School is not considered efficient and the income is insufficient to secure another Master, they may grant Scholarships tenable at the North Thoresby Board School to the sons of the residents in North Thoresby." (Minutes p.144). [fees were paid until 1891].

Long and heated debates then followed within the village and between the parishioners and the Charity Commissioners. On 7th August 1889, the following Editorial appeared in the "Louth and North Lincs. Advertiser":

"The new scheme for the administration of the Foundation known as the Mapletoft School in the parish of North Thoresby does not appear to give satisfaction to the ratepayers of that parish. Dr. Mapletoft, by his Will, made provision to educate 20 children of the poor in this parish to fit them for entrance into a Grammar School. With the introduction of a Board School into the village there seems to be no necessity for a rival institution and the consequence has been that the Board School has become the only educational establishment in the village".

We cannot be surprised at this when we see who the gentlemen are who constitute the School Board, and it would seem to have been the general wish that the income derived from Dr. Mapletoft's foundation should be handed over to those who, at the Board School, are carrying out the educational programme upon lines similar to what Dr. Mapletoft desired. The Charity Commissioners, however, propose to divert the income of the foundation to maintain scholarships and exhibitions. [Ed: scholarships were for up to the official school leaving age which was 10 between 1880 and 1893, when it was raised to 11; then to 12 in 1899. Exhibitions referred to grants for ages above the legal leaving age].

The scholarships are to be of a yearly value, not exceeding £6 tenable in any public elementary school or schools in the school district of North Thoresby.

Scholarships are to be conferred upon those who have received certificates of having reached a standard of education as to exempt them from the legal obligation to attend school. By this means there may possibly be found some six or eight scholars who will avail themselves of the opportunity. The other half of the net income is to be applied in maintaining exhibitions each of a yearly value of not more than £20, tenable for not more than three years at a higher place of education, such as a Grammar School.

These exhibitions are to be given to those who are or have been scholars for not less than three years in any public elementary school in the North Thoresby district. From what we can gather the funds are not likely to admit of more than one or two having the benefit of this exhibition and those will in all probability be found amongst people who would in all likelihood have sent their children to a Grammar School without such an exhibition. The scheme can hardly be pronounced satisfactory.”

It is obvious from this that feelings were running high, and on 7th September 1889 it was reported in the Advertiser that a meeting was held in the Board School on Monday evening for the purpose of explaining to the working classes the Charity Commissioners proposed scheme for the future use of the funds of the Mapletoft Charity. Dr. George (Chairman of the School Board) presided, and there were also present, Messrs. T. Leek J. F. Broughton, W. Ward, H. Fawcett, J. Mumby, C. Stephenson, W. Johnson, F. Janney, J. Shaw, G. Jenney, A. Hill, J. Pickett and others.

[Ed: In an intriguing series of documents I possess which relate to the occupation of the Thatch back to 1744, a legal document relating to the acquisition of the tenancy of the cottage and attached land, this gentleman is described as Thomas Leek (*formerly Leake*) and a Police Pensioner. He was born in 1835 and died in 1907. He and his wife Sarah, are buried in the Churchyard.

In the first document, Thomas is paying £435 to acquire the tenancy from William Hosea Campion, Dr Henry George and Charles Mackarill - names which appear regularly in the Parish News and other documents of the time. In 1907, Thomas having died, in another legal document, July 7th, 1907, his widow Sarah (nee Mumby) acquires the tenancy by inheritance.

In March 1920, the tenancy is transferred to Mr J. H. (Jack) Hinch for £600. Sarah passes away later in the year and Jack Hinch receives a letter from the deputy steward of the Lord of the Manor (the Earl of Yarborough) giving Jack the opportunity to buy the property freehold. He doesn't take it up at that time but does so in 1924. The Halifax Building Society give a mortgage of £1353. The property is described as 'One freehold bungalow, cottages and outbuildings', there was also land attached but this is not mentioned. These documents answer a question that had long puzzled us – how long did the Duchy of Lancaster continue to own land, and therefore have tenants, in the village. The answer appears to be the 1920s. Henry IV (ruled 1399-1413, born in Lincolnshire and also known as Henry Bollingbroke) and established the Duchy of Lancaster as land directly owned in person by the Crown. We have a transcript of the 1608 Duchy survey of the village when 98% of the land is owned by the Duchy. The Duchy of Lancaster still exists bringing in revenue of over £6 million a year to the King]

It was a lengthy meeting, and the main points of the scheme were explained. The freehold and leasehold land and hereditaments belonging to the foundation to be vested in the Official Trustee of Charity Lands, also all stock, shares etc.

The proposal was that the net income of the foundation would be used in maintaining scholarships and exhibitions, half the income for yearly scholarships of £6, tenable in any school in the North Thoresby district, the other half income for exhibitions, each of a yearly value of not more than £20, tenable for not more than 3 years, at any place of education higher than elementary school.

It was stated that the Governors would award the scholarships and exhibitions, and “any scholarships or exhibition for which there shall be no duly qualified candidate who on examination shall be adjudged worthy to take it shall for that term not be awarded”.

After the Chairman had read the scheme, the meeting was thrown open for general discussion, and many people were upset at the proposals. Mr Leek said that as a ratepayer of North Thoresby he felt humiliated in thinking they been brought to this position, and he maintained that when the late Mr Mumby retired the Trustees should have put in an efficient Master to manage the school.

Although the Chairman endeavoured to explain that they could not have got an efficient man for the money, Mr Leak made the point “that it was a sad thing for a man’s Will to be tampered with. There was no doubt Dr Mapletoft meant this money to be devoted for the poor boys’ education.”

Various propositions were made, and then amendments, but it was obvious that the meeting was getting out of hand and eventually it was agreed to adjourn the meeting until the following Monday.

The adjourned meeting to “consider the new scheme relative to Dr Mapletoft’s Charity” was again chaired by Dr George who said “they were met for the explanation of the new scheme proposed by the Charity Commission, etc.” and went on to say that in his opinion the scheme was to entirely deprive the poor of the parish of any benefit in this charity at all. No working man could afford for the sake of some four or five pounds given for the exhibitions or scholarships to keep their children at school after they had passed the necessary standards.

The Chairman was asked if he had seen Dr Mapletoft’s Will, and Mr G. N. Nutt (of Grimsby), said he had an extract of it which referred to the Charity and read it.

Again, there was much dissension. Mr Fawcett believed that the Commissioners by advertisements in the local papers invited suggestions on the scheme supplied; he supposed that the Mapletoft School was misrepresented by some gentleman in the village to the Commissioners, who consequently decided that the school was of no use. He thought it could not have been the School Inspector’s fault because that person was not in the village when the inquiries were made. As suggestions were invited, he would propose that the school be re-opened and that they should ask for it to be carried on as it had been during the last fifty years. This was seconded and agreed.

After a stormy exchange of remarks, it was agreed to send a Petition to the Commissioners. At that point Dr George (Chairman), had indicated he would be willing to sign the Petition, but then Mr Leek said it was known to be a good school before Mr Mumby was called upon to resign and now it was to pass away from the poor. The Trustees could have obtained a man who was efficient if they had advertised for one.

The Chairman then bid them good evening. "He should be very glad to sign anything for their benefit, but this he could not agree with". He then retired amidst loud applause. After Dr George's departure Mr Leek was unanimously elected to the chair, and immediately addressed the meeting in strong words stating "They were perfectly aware that the trustees had not taken the interest in the school that they should have taken. If the clergyman had looked after the school as he should have done it would have been a school in preference to the Board School and it would have educated every poor child in the parish free of everything."

Two members of the School Board, Mr Broughton and Mr Mackerill [in the document I possess this name is spelt Mackarill, but I've kept the 1978 spelling], were at the meeting and whilst Mr Leek was making his verbal attack on the way the School Board had done its work, he extended his sympathy to these two gentlemen by stating that 'he thought they were in an uncomfortable position because of their association with the School Board, and they meant no offence to them'.

After various people had had their say, Mr Broughton proposed that a resolution be sent to Sir Wm. Hart-Dyke, who was above the Charity Commissioners. The proposition was as follows:

"To the Rt. Hon. Sir Wm. Hart-Dyke, MP. Vice President of the Committee of Council of Education.

"This meeting of the working classes of North Thoresby is of opinion that the scheme of the Charity Commissioners, relative to the charity left by the late Dr. Mapletoft, is contrary to the spirit of the Will of Dr. Mapletoft. In as much as it is impossible for labouring people to send their children to school sufficiently long to obtain scholarships, and respectfully ask that the endowment may continue to be spent in the direct education of the poor children of this parish, and more conformity with the Will of the Testator."

Mr Pickett seconded this motion, but it is not clear if it was carried, because immediately various other propositions were made, i.e. to ask the Commissioners to postpone their decision. Mr Mackerill proposed that a small committee be formed to take into consideration the scheme and make investigations into the Will of the late Dr. Mapletoft, and a variety of other documents, which would throw light on the matter. Mr Fawcett seconded, and a Committee of 9 members was formed, and was asked to hold a meeting on Thursday.

At this Committee Meeting, Mr Coun. Ingoldby (the local representative on the Lincolnshire County Council) was elected Chairman and there were also six other members present. They looked into the scheme and ultimately resolved to petition the Charity Commission to modify the scheme so that 60 North Thoresby children could

receive an education at the Board School free of expense to their parents, and that the balance should be applied to the scholarships proposed in the scheme.

The proposed constitution of the Board of Governors was also criticised, and a strong opinion was expressed that at least a proportion of the nine governors should be elected by the North Thoresby ratepayers.

Advertiser – 12th October 1889:

“ A public meeting was held in the Board School on Thursday to consider the amended scheme prepared by Coun. F. J. Ingoldby, Mr T. Leek was unanimously voted to the chair, and in his opening remarks praised the efforts of Coun. Ingoldby in preparing the petition, who had also shown it to Mr A. Raymond Heath, MP., who had approved and promised to present it to the Commissioners.

The petition is as follows:

In the matter of the Foundation known as Mapletoft School. In the matter of the Endowed Schools Act 1869 and amending Acts.

To the Charity Commissioners for England and Wales acting under the above-named Act.

‘The humble petition of the undersigned ratepayers and inhabitants of the parish of North Thoresby and other persons directly affected by the proposed scheme for the administration of the above mentioned foundation aggrieved thereby sheweth that Robert Mapletoft, Dr. of Divinity and Dean of Ely and Master of Pembroke Hall, in the University of Cambridge, by a codicil to his Will, dated 29th July 1676, gave ‘To the use of the towne of North Thoresby in the county of Lincoln, all those, his two cottages and one messuage, with all his land arable, pasture, meadow, and their appurtenances lying and being in the towne and fields of the said North Thoresby for ever, to be settled upon trustees for and towards the maintenance of one fit person to teach the scholars there to read, to learn their catechism, and instruct them in it, to write, to cast accounts, and to teach them their accidence, make them fit for the Grammar School, according to the rules and orders which he or his executor or executors should prescribe”.

“That the draft scheme for the future administration of the above-mentioned foundation does not provide for the free and elementary education of the children of the parish of North Thoresby, as contemplated by the said Robert Mapletoft.

That whereas the said Robert Mapletoft limited by the said codicil to his said Will the benefit to scholars in the parish of North Thoresby alone. The said draft scheme proposes to include certain other parishes in the School District of North Thoresby in respect of which no benefit is conferred by the said Robert Mapletoft.

That, although under the Elementary Ed. Act 1870 the School Board has power to remit the whole or any part of the fees payable by the children, in the case of any child when they are of opinion that the parent of such child is unable, from poverty, to pay the same, it is submitted that the intention of the said Robert

Mapletoft was to give the scholars in the said parish of North Thoresby a free education, independent of poverty or station in life.

Your petitioners therefore humbly pray that paragraph 24 of the said draft scheme and such parts of paragraphs 26 and 27 as relate to scholarships, be omitted from the said draft scheme.

That one half of the net income of the Foundation shall be applied in affording as many children as possible residing in the parish of North Thoresby with a free education, and in providing the necessary schoolbooks and other necessities at any Public Elementary School in the School District of North Thoresby. Such children to be nominated by the Governors of the said Foundation.

That such children be educated at the Board School of the School District of North Thoresby, and that the School Board be requested to arrange for such free education with the said Governors of the said Foundation under section 13 of the Elementary Ed. Act 1873.

That any, or all of such children, shall be eligible to attend the said school until he or she, or they, shall have passed one standard of education higher than such a standard of education as would, under the bye-laws in force for the time being in the School district in which such children respectively are resident, entitle them to exemption from the legal obligation to attend school (up to 10 at that time).

That the other half of the said net income shall be applied according to paragraph 25 in the said draft scheme, save or except to the exhibitions, shall be awarded only to boys and girls residing in the parish of North Thoresby.

That the Governing body referred to in paragraph 2 of the said draft scheme may (subject as therein provided as to the first co-optative Governors) consist of nine competent persons, two to be called ex-officio Governors, three to be called co-optative Governors, and four to be called representative Governors.

That the ex-officio Governors shall be the Rector of the Parish of North Thoresby and the Churchwarden of the same Parish, who shall be elected by the parishioners.

That the Representative Governors shall be appointed as follows: Two by the School Board of North Thoresby; one by the Governors at the Grammar School at Louth; and one by the owners and occupiers of the parish of North Thoresby, to be elected at a public meeting to be held for the purpose, and such a meeting to be called by the co-optative and ex-officio Governors, or some persons appointed in writing by them for the purpose."

It is obvious that a lot of work and effort had gone into the preparation of this document and the Chairman said the scheme, as prepared by Mr Ingoldby, was far better than that of the Charity Commissioners and urged the audience to sign the petition, which many did."

This petition was duly forwarded to the Charity Commission who replied that “they are disposed to think that progress with the scheme might be facilitated by a conference between a deputation appointed by the Parishioners of North Thoresby who object to the scheme and one of their Assistant Commissioners. They have accordingly instructed Mr Durnford again to visit North Thoresby and to discuss the best means of utilising the endowment.”

Extract of Report of Meeting in the Advertiser 12th December 1889:

“Mr Durnford, an assistant Charity Commissioner, met a deputation of the inhabitants of the village in the Board School for the purpose of hearing suggestions in connection with the proposed scheme of the Charity Commission relating to the Mapletoft Charity. There were present Messrs. S Dowse, W Campion, T Leek, H Fawcett, J Mumby, W Ward, C Ostler, W Johnson, J Dennis and others. Mr F J Ingoldby appeared as the representative of the committee appointed by the inhabitants and Mr H F V Falkner represented the trustees of the Charity. Mr Durnford in opening the proceedings asked if any of the trustees were present. Mr Falkner said there were, Mt Campion (trustee) and Mr Dowse (Church warden).

It was a long and far-ranging meeting, and although Mr Durnford allowed free expression of feelings, he was in control. Mr Leek had much to say, and it was apparent that because Mr Ingoldby had had correspondence with the Commissioners and not shown it to the Committee, Mr Leek was most suspicious of his motives. Mr Leek still kept referring to the Mr Mumby who had been school master for 41 years and Mr Dowse, who was defending a later appointed master said, “He was a great deal better than Mr Mumby. I was here 70 years ago and have been in the school when the boys have been spinning tops and playing for hours”.

After a further exchange of views, Mr Durnford said that if their scheme meant they wanted a free school, there would be no Government Grant and he thought the re-establishment of the school would not be hopeful. There was much discussion about the cost of paying the salary of a master. Mr Durnford asked Mr Campion for an explanation of the circumstances of the establishment of the School Board and he said it was by the action of the ratepayers. They had to have a voluntary rate, and one-fifth of the assessment of the parish declined to pay.

At one point in the meeting Mr Ingoldby referred to Dr Mapletoft’s Will and Mr Durnford said, “From the Will he contemplated an education beyond elementary for all classes of children in this parish. He said nothing about poor – necessitous poor – but it was provided for the education of 24 children. I think that is completely lost sight of by one section of the parishioners and, it being intended for all classes, it is a grand assumption that it was for the poor alone”.

Towards the end of the meeting Mr Durnford asked Mr Leek and Mr Ingoldby to settle what recommendation they wished to make as a representation of the parishioners and on Mr Ingoldby enquiring, “Will you state your private opinion?”, Mr Durnford said, “It does appear to me that the re-establishment of the school was not within the range of practical possibilities”. Mr Durnford said, “Of course I

shall state to the Commissioners what modification you have suggested in it and, it must be fully understood by trustees that it must not be taken for granted that of necessity the prayer of the petition would be complied with.” He closed the meeting by saying he hoped the scheme would be for the benefit of the parishioners of North Thoresby.”

In spite of the heated arguments which had taken place, the scheme that was eventually decided upon by the Charity Commissioners was very similar to their original plan and so the wishes of the vociferous element of the meeting were disregarded. This can be seen from the report which appeared in the Advertiser – 8th February 1890:

“We learn the Charity Commissioners have amended the scheme by allowing the present Governors to remain in office for life by altering clause 24, so that £10 yearly may be applied by the Governors in rewards for regularity of attendance and general proficiency to poor boys and girls of the parish of North Thoresby, each reward to be of an amount equal to the year’s tuition fees and the minimum qualification for a reward to be 350 school attendances, and by altering the value of the exhibitions to not more than £30 instead of £20”.

In May and July of that year there were public notices inviting objections to the published scheme of the Charity Commissioners, otherwise, such scheme may be approved by Her Majesty without being laid before Parliament. On 8th November 1890 the following article was published in the Advertiser:

“Mapletoft Charity – The new scheme for the government of the Mapletoft School at North Thoresby is now in force. The Rector and Churchwardens of N. T. are exofficio Governors, the School Board of the district are empowered to appoint two Governors and the Governors are Messrs. T. Harneis, C M Nainby, R J H Parkinson and W H Campion. In future the trust is to be called ‘Mapletoft’s Scholarship Foundation’ and the nett income is to be divided into two equal parts, one called ‘The Reward and Scholarship Fund’ and the other ‘The Exhibition Fund’. Out of the former £10 annually may be applied in payment of rewards for regularity of attendance at N. T. Board School to deserving poor boys and girls, such rewards being equal to the tuition fees paid by the boy or girl.

From the same fund the Governors can give scholarships to the Board School boys and girls who have passed the standard entitling them to leave. ‘The Exhibition Fund’ provides for exhibitions value up to £30 tenable at higher elementary schools by boys and girls, who have for three years been scholars at the Board School. Dr. George and Mr C Mackerill have been appointed Governors by the Board School and the Rev. Can. Wilde was appointed a Governor at a meeting of the Louth Grammar School Governors, held yesterday morning”.

Robert Mapletoft 1609-1677: Biographical Note

Born at North Thoresby, Lincolnshire, son of Hugh Mapletoft, rector there. BA Queens’ College, Cambridge 1628, MA 1632, BD 1639, DD 1660. Fellow of Pembroke College, Cambridge 1631. Rector of Bartlow, Cambridgeshire 1639. Dean of Ely 1667. He had a reputation for piety and charity.



Views of the Leek's family home in Campions Lane.

Chapter 5: The Poor Law Accounts for North Thoresby

“For ye have the poor with you always”. St Mark’s Gospel Chap. 14 vs 7.

Before the mid-14th century, many serfs were “tied” to their manor. The Lord of the Manor had an obligation to look after his people, in return for their boon-work. After changes following the Black Death in 1349, some people left the villages for the town, seeking higher wages, and some villages were depopulated by the plague. Many of the poor were catered for, in those days, by monastic foundations, by friars, and by the clergy in both town and village, paid for by alms.

In 1388 an act was passed forbidding vagrancy. The vagrants had either to stay where they were, or to be returned to their birthplace.

During Tudor times, bands of beggars were roaming the countryside. The nursery rhyme, “Hark, hark, the dogs do bark. The beggars are coming to town...” Was no mere jingle!

Legislation imposed severe penalties, whipping, loss of ears and hanging were to be imposed for first, second and third offences. A measure of 1547 imposed branding and slavery for vagabonds. During Elizabeth’s reign, acts were passed for the clergy, bishops and magistrates to exhort people to give charitably to the poor.

An act of 1597-8 ordered the appointment of overseers of the poor in each parish by the Justices of the Peace.

The great Poor Law Act of 1601 (43 Eliz. Cap 2) laid the foundation for all poor law until the reforms of 1834. Justices of the Peace could appoint overseers who could levy a poor rate in each parish. Each occupier of a house, tithe recipient, coal-mine owners and landowners were taxed for this purpose. From this fund, relief could be paid to the poor of the parish by the overseers.

A stock of hemp, flax, wool, iron or other stuff, had to be bought to set the poor to work. Pauper children could be apprenticed. Workhouses could be set up, the able-bodied to have their work supervised and the infirm could be provided for. Legislation during the next two centuries attempted to bolster these main provisions and also help to close loopholes. Constables could search out rogues to be taken to the House of Correction.

The Act of Settlement in 1662 was passed so that a stranger could be removed from the parish unless he or she could find security to discharge the parish of all expenses or if he or she had rented accommodation costing £10 p.a. A temporary worker (e.g. for harvest), had to have a certificate from his own parish to have him back.

A forty-day settlement, after written notification to the churchwardens or overseers, was allowed in 1685. In 1691 this had to be registered in the parish-book and had to be read aloud after Sunday service. Poor persons could enter a parish if they brought a Certificate of Settlement in 1697. Paupers, adults and children, had to have a letter P on their right shoulder and also the initial letter of their parish. An Act of 1722 gave

parishes the power to buy or to hire workhouses and to refuse assistance to paupers who were unwilling to enter them.

Gilbert's Act of 1781 allowed a parish, or unions of parishes, to change the workhouse to a poorhouse, to which only the aged and infirm were to be admitted. The unemployed were to be found work, to be subsidised from the poor rate if their earnings were insufficient. The act was only 'permissive' and by 1830 less the 1,000 out of 15,000 parishes had availed themselves of it.

One attempt of help the poor was made in Berkshire in 1795. The magistrate of that county met at Speenhamland on the outskirts of Newbury for the express purpose of fixing a minimum wage in relation to the price of bread. This would have been a difficult policy to carry out in an era of price fluctuations but may have been of real help to the poor.

The JPs were persuaded to supplement wages out of the parish rates. They drew up and published a scale, which was geared to pay each man and his dependants, when the loaf cost 1s 0d., the difference between his wage and the desired subsistence for the number in the family. When the price of the loaf rose, the dole would also be increased.

Many Southern counties adopted this scale, known as the 'Speenhamland System.' The result was that some farmers deliberately paid a small wage and thereby the small independent parishioner helped to support the larger landowner. The major drawback was that it made the farm labourer become a pauper, even when in full work, and thus morally devastating to him. As prices rose in the Napoleonic War the amount paid from the Poor Rate rose dramatically, whilst the problem of poverty was greater than ever. As a result, the rates by property owners had to rise, to pay even more paupers. Money was even paid out, so that the poor could pay their Poor Rates and there are instances of this in some of the payments paid in North Thoresby.

This brief outline gives the main legislation before 1834. By the 1790's many influential people were complaining of the cost, ever rising, of supporting the poor. This was aggravated by rising prices during the Napoleonic Wars. During years of bad harvests, the prices rose higher than ever, particularly the price of corn. A demand for reform led to the Poor Law Report., the 1834 Act, and changes in the ways in which relief could be claimed by the paupers.

Let us now see how help was given in the Parish of North Thoresby before the 1834 reforms were introduced. Each year an Overseer of the Poor was elected at the Vestry meeting, usually at the end of March. [Ed: The Vestry has a double meaning – both as a room or building attached to a church, used as an office and for changing into ceremonial vestments and a meeting of parishioners, originally in a vestry, for the conduct of parochial business.]

The Overseer, had to be sworn in by the Justices of the Peace and he had a booklet presented to him, outlining his duties. A statement of accounts had to be kept and audited each year, usually about the beginning of April.

Here is a list of **Overseers of the Poor for North Thoresby** from 1808 to 1855 for most years and how much was spent. [Ed: These are very substantial sums. My Googled source says that £400 in 1800 would be the equivalent of over £40,000 today].

Year	Overseer	Times Served	Rate in Pound	Total Spent £ s d			Population
1808-09	P. Hand	1	2s 6 ¾ d	157	2	2	
1809-10	Thos. Robinson			232	7	3	
1810-11	Wm. Procktor	1					342
1811-12	Wm. Procktor	2	3s 7 ½ d	226	15	2	
1812-13	A. Hewson	1		478	3	3	
1813-14	T. Barkworth	1		319	3	0 ½	
1814-15	G. Myres			266	8	6	
1815-16	H. Barker	1		288	17	7	
1816-17	J. Procktor			221	7	6	
1817-18	J. Mumby	1		228	9	5 ½	
1818-19	J. Dows	1		304	12	11 ½	
1819-20	J. Brown			201	1	11 ½	
1820-21	P. Hand	2		215	2	8	484
1821-22							
1822-23	R. Ostler	1		227	5	6	
1823-24	T. Barkworth	2	10 d				
1824-25	J. Dows	2					
1825-26	H. Barker	2		231	5	2	
1826-27	A. Hewson	2		307	12	5	
1827-28	A. Hewson	3		312	9	7 ½	
1828-29	J. Stothard	1		328	12	7 ½	
1829-30	J. Mumby	2		341	10	5 ½	
1830-31	R. Ostler	2					544
1831-32	J. Barker	1		464	8	8 ½	
1832-33	E. Mumby			420	5	1	
1833-34	A. Hewson	4		402	19	9	
1834-35	J. Dows	3		418	19	3 ½	
1835-36	J. Procter			342	6	10	
1836-37	T. Bingham	1		317	18	0	
1837-38	Thos. Barkworth	3		308	16	0	
1838-39	John Dows	4		241	4	0	
1839-40	John Mumby	3		256	14	11	
1840-41	J. Dows	5		250	12	11	
Year	Overseer	Times Served	Rate in Pound	Total Spent £ s d			Population
1841-42	A. Hewson	5		263	13	11	
1842-43	J. Stothard	2		318	17	9	
1843-44	J. Borman			338	19	11	
1844-45	James Barker	2	3s 6d	337	11	4	
1845-46	William Walkersley			386	5	1	
1846-47	A. Hewson	6	3s 6d	370	17	6	
1847-48	Thomas Bingham	2	4s 1d	432	16	5	
1848-49	John Cooke			346	14	6	
1849-50	Thomas Barkworth	4	3s 4d	376	9	4	
1950-51	J. Dows	6		359	17	4	

1851-52	J. Mumby	4		408	9	1	
1852-53	T. Forman			499	16	10	
1853-54	J. Dows	7		373	19	0	
1854-55	Thomas Dows			445	12	4 ½	

Some of the overseers served more than once

J. Dows	7 times
A. Hewson	6 times
T. Barkworth	4 times
J. Mumby	4 times

The Poor Law Accounts for North Thoresby 1811 -12 Overseer William Procktor

Many of the entries show that money, coal, clothes and rent were some of the ways in which help was given. Here are some of the extracts from the accounts:

		£	s	d	
4 th May	Paid Solm. Janney for Relief		12	0	(25)*
4 th June	1Chn. of Coals leading for John Mumby (Note: Chaldren means 4 quarters in capacity)		5	0	(6)*
20 th July	Paid for Sowden's Stove and Oven		8	0	
2 nd Sept	Paid for Thistleton's Child	3	0	0	
5 th Nov	Paid Thos. Sowden's Rent		10	6	(10)*
15 th Nov	2 Qtrs. Of Coals for J. Mayfield		19	0	
17 th Nov	Ann Lewis' Board 4 weeks		12	0	
28 th Nov	Paid for Ann Wallis' Wheel		0	6	
4 th Dec	Paid for Poor House Windows mending		8	0	
4 th Dec	Paid for Ann Wallis' Wheel		9	0	
23 rd Dec	Mary Barnet's Shoes & Daltons		12	11	
28 th Dec	Paid Midwife for 2 Women		10	0	
2 nd Jan	Paid Richd. Birch for a Child's Funeral		2	6	
28 th Jan	Paid ye Clerk Shop Bill & Nurse for Wright		16	0	
28 th Jan	Paid J. Dows for Amy Chapman's Child's Coffin		5	0	
20 th Feb	Paid Mayfield's Town Rates		8	0	
	Paid for Coal House		8	0	
	Mr Powley pd. For Mary Barnet's Collection for 50 wks, @ 3s.0d. per wk	7	10	0	
	Paid John Mumby for Leather	5	4	0	
	The total for 1811-12 was	£226	15	2	

*The number in the bracket denotes the number of similar entries for this year.

This was raised from a rate of 3s.7½ d. in the pound. [Ed: The 'rate' was a tax on land value].

Many of the entries were duplicated in type, if not in detail. There were many for Relief paid, collections, coal. What was the wheel for Ann Wallis? Note that rates were paid for Mayfield.

Some interesting items from this year were payments made in respect of the militia. Here they are set out to show part of the involvement of North Thoresby in the Napoleonic wars of 1793-1815.

		£	s	d
13 th June	Paid for Local Militia men's wives Orders		2	0
19 th June	Paid for Local Militia men's wives Orders		4	0
2 nd Aug	Journey to Caistor for Local Militia Money		5	0
14 th Aug	Paid to Militia Men's families	10	0	6
1 st Jan	Paid for Militia men's families	4	5	6
20 th Mar	Paid Militia Men's families	4	2	0
	8% of Total	£18	19	0

The largest payment this year was Grimsby Workhouse £12 3s 0d

Illness & Death – entries for 1811 -12

		£	s	d
28 th Dec	Paid for Midwife for 2 Women		10	0
30 th Dec	Paid Nurse for Amy Chapman		5	0
2 nd Jan	Paid Richard Birch for a Child's funeral		2	6
28 th Jan	Paid ye Clerks Shop Bill & Burse for Wright		16	0
28 th Jan	Paid J Dows for Amy Chapman's Childs' Coffin		5	0
18 th Mar	Thos. Wright's Coffin & laying out	1	10	0
18 th Mar	Paid Fred Esbergers for med. For T. Rose		6	0
18 th Mar	Dalton's Journey to Louth to fetch medicines for Thos. Rose		2	0
		£3	16	6

The people of North Thoresby seemed to care for people who were ill, and no doubt gave comfort to those in need.

Legal Fees, Warrants and Journeys, 1811-12, William Proctor

		£	s	d
7 th May	Journey to Grimsby for Appointment		4	0
	Paid for Appointment		3	6
14 th May	Journey to Grimsby to Appoint Overseer		4	0
28 th May	Removing Ann Davy		10	0
8 th June	Removing West & Bridget Mumby		8	0

20 th June	John Mumby's Day & Summons		5	0
17 th July	Taking account of Population Journey to Grimsby & Schedule		5 6	0 0
9 th Nov	Journey to Grimsby with Bridget Mumby & Summons		6	0
20 th Nov	A Meeting Warned			6
11 th Dec	Journey to Waltham respecting Thos. Wright		2	0
14 th Dec	A Meeting Warned			6
27 th Dec	Journey to Louth for Advice respecting Eliz. Dalton		4	0
29 th Dec	Journey to Swinthorpe		2	6
1812				
1 st Jan	Joseph Dalton's Expenses to Kirton		4	0
10 th Jan	Journey to Grimsby with J Mumby & Summons		6	0
11 th Jan	My Journey to Louth & Eliz. & J. Dalton's Day		7	6
18 th Feb	Journey to Louth to swear Ann Freeston Paid for Examination & Warrant		4 4	0 0
20 th Feb	Paid Louth Constable's Day for Ann Freeston		5	0
21 st Feb	Paid for Jane Wolf's Exam. & Warrant and my Journey to Grimsby		4 4	0 0
	Journey to Louth for Lewis' Certificate Paid Mr Powley for taking account of ye Population & Journey to Louth		4	0
21 st Feb	Accounts making & C for 1 year	1 1	1 1	0 0
	3% Total	£7	5	6

There were: 6 journeys to Grimsby, 6 journeys to Louth. Here is a breakdown of the figures from the year 1816-17 to show how the money was spent.

	£	s	d
Journeys – Louth, Grimsby, Caistor, Brocklesby, etc.	3	9	6
Rents (for 7 paupers)	17	13	0
Work done – road repairs & ditching	3	4	0
Grimsby Workhouse	53	0	0
Coals	16	17	9
Coals – leading	4	11	6
Sundry Expenses – Coffin, burial fees, shop bills, doctor's bill, shoes, straw for poor-house)	28	0	4 ½
Relief & Collections approx..	102	0	0
	£228	17	7

It will be seen that the bulk of the money went to help the poor and was not wasted on journeys, or litigation for removal of paupers to other parishes when settlement had been proved. In some years more money was spent on journeys, warrants and litigation. Here is a very simple breakdown of some of these charges:

Year	Total Spent			Warrants, Legal fees, Journeys			Percentage
	£	s	d	£	s	d	
1808-09	157	2	2	9	9	8	5 ½ %
1809-10	232	7	3	10	5	7	4 %
1812-13	478	3	3	117	19	7	24 ½ %
1818-19	303	4	11 ½	98	3	2	32%
1819-20	204	1	11 ½	8	1	6	4 %

In the accounts for 1818-19 there were four large bills which made the percentage abnormally high for that year.

	£	s	d
Paddison (attorney's bill)	35	8	8
Phillips (attorney's bill)	21	10	10
Mr Croft (valuation of a cottage)	14	3	6
Mr Fieldsend (attending sessions)	14	3	6

This is a more detailed study of one year in the accounts of the Overseer of the poor and it is amazing what one can learn of village life. Every item is clearly detailed and at first sight it seems to be a rather boring record of payments, but as one progresses there is quite a story.

For example, take year 1809-1810, and what happened to Frances West. On 8th April 1809 she received 4s0d relief and during the following months she received amounts totalling £2 8s 0d. On 19th April paid Mr Eve for 3 blankets and rug for F West, 19s9d. during this year F West was twice 'brought to bed' and at various times mutton, offal and meal was provided at a total cost of 17s 4d.

On 12th April 1810 paid Mary Wright for attending F West, 5s 0d and paid West's child's funeral 2s 0d. Paid Frances West's rent to May Day last 6s 0d.

During the year Robert Wallis was paid £1 5s 0d for relief, also 50 bricks for Wallis' chimney 1s 8d and paid D Wilkinson for repairs to chimney 3s 0d.

	£	s	d
John Farrow was paid for a cow he had lost	1	1	0
Paid boy for warning a meeting			2
Paid Thos. Heal's Exam. & swearing to settlement to Fotherby		2	0
Paid Grimsby Workhouse	12	3	0
Paid Wm. Dannatt walling Poor House		7	0
Paid rent Town Coal House		5	0

Then there is the story of Jane Wells, from 15th April 1809 for a few weeks she received sums of 2s 6d totalling 15s 0d.

		£	s	d
3 rd June	Paid Ann Barker for laying out of Jane Wells		2	6
30 th June	Paid R Kemp for Jane Wells Funeral		2	6
5 th July	Paid Johnson Brown for ringing J Wells passing bell		2	6

There is also a record of Hannah Wells, from 30th May 1809 until 3d July she received payments of a 1s 0d a time amounting to 6s 0d. It is interesting to note the difference in payments awarded to her and Jane Wells.

		£	s	d
10 th July	She received a payment of		2	6
12 th July	Mutton			7
1 th July	She received		3	6

14 th July	Paid Han. Lewis for nursing H Wells etc		6	3
	Paid R Kemp for H Wells Funeral		2	6
	Paid E Mumby for writing accounts		7	0

It is possible to trace the misfortunes of one individual over a period of years, but as you can appreciate some Overseers are not as detailed in their accounts as others. However, take the case of Solomon Janney, we get quite a lot of information about him and his family. In the year from Easter 1810 – 1811 he received the following:

		£	s	d
	Table		1	6
	2 beds and feet		1	6
17 th Oct	Removing Solm. Janney (although it does not say where)	1	15	0
Also during the year he had payments for relief amounting to		2	8	0
The following year Easter 1811 to Easter 1812 the only payment was for Relief			12	0
In the year Easter 1812 to Easter 1813 he received				
	Bedstead		8	0
	Mattress		3	0
	1 Blanket		5	0
	2 Chairs		3	0
	2 Sheets and making		1	0
	2 cups and saucers, bason (1), teapot and chamber pot		1	2
	2 Shirts and 1 Shift making		2	0
	Child's Clothing		6	8
	Gill of Rum		1	4
	2 pairs shoes for Solm Janney & Wife		16	6
	Oil			8
17 th June	Carrying Solm. Janney to Grimsby		6	0
19 th June	Journey to Grimsby Solm. Janney Examination		6	0
2 nd July	Journey to Louth for Solm Janney		4	0
8 th July	Paid Solm. Janney's expenses at Louth		1	6
This time we know he returned because on 7 th August there is an item				
	Fetching Solm. Janney home		6	0
During the month of August, he did 5 days' work for which he received			14	6
23 rd Oct	Removing Solm. Janney to Tetney (But there is no record of when he came back)		7	6
Also in October there is an item:				
	Paid Mr Bennett, Apothecary re Solm. Janney	9	0	0
During the year he had payment relief amounting to		2	9	6
There is a very detailed entry for a small amount which does not convey much information				
3 rd March 1813	Order from Daubney for 16s 6d Solm Janney			3
At the end of the financial year on				
14 th April	Carrying Solm. Janney to Louth		1	6
And the final item				
	collection 1 wk. @ 3s 0d 12 wks. @ 10s 0d	6	3	0

Year 1813-1814				
13 th May	Paid Solm. Janney for Lewis's child 6wk @ 3s 6d per wk.	1	1	0
7 th June	Paid Zealand for Solm. Janney's rent		10	6
11 th Aug	Salve		1	0
9 th Oct	Paid Solm. Janney to redeem his bed		10	0
During the year he received various payments for Relief amounting to		2	17	0
In June it says:				
	Paid Solm. Janney (no more information is given)	3	0	0
In the Year Easter 1814 – Easter 1815 he had the following payments				
	Relief		18	4
1815				
20 th Jan	Journey to Grimsby with Janney's wife		4	0
30 th Jan	Journey to Grimsby to get Warrant for Janney		4	0
31 st Jan	Journey to Grimsby and warrant		6	0
In the year Easter 1815 – Easter 1816				
14 th July	Journey to Waltham for Dr for Janney		2	0
	Relief		7	2
The years Easter 1816 – Easter 1817 was a tragic one for Solm. Janney. In the previous year small payments amounting to 15s 0d had been paid to Mary Janney and this years payment amounting to 8s 0d were made. Then in 1816:				
23 rd Nov	Paid for burying Solm. Janney's child		2	6
1817				
8 th Jan	Journey to Louth to meet Mary Janney		4	0
20 th Jan	Paid Mrs Hewson for laying Mary Janney (a payment made whilst Mary Janney laying-in after childbirth)		5	0
19 th Mar	Relief for Solm. Janney		2	6
22 nd Mar	Relief for Solm. Janney		1	0
The following year – Easter 1817 to Easter 1818 was even more tragic for Solomon Janney and his family				
From the 16 th May 1817 Solm. Janney had fairly regular payments of relief amounting to £2 19s 0d				
Then on 28 th July 1817				
	Paid Solm Janney's Bearers		6	0
	Paid West & Smith for laying Solm. Janney out		6	0
	Paid R Birch for Janney's Funeral		2	6
The burial Register records on 28 th July 1817 the burial of Solomon Janney, a Pauper, aged 42.				
But it is not the end of the Solomon Janney story. After this date Mary Janney was paid regular payments of relief amounting to		4	16	0
24 th Sept 1817	Journey to Louth to meet Mary Janney		4	0
On the 25 th December 1817 a Record in the Marriage Register shows Thos. Lammiman (Batchelor of North Thoresby), married Mary Jenney (or Janney) widow, of North Thoresby. Both signed Register with their marks.				
29 th Dec	Solm. Janney's Children		5	0

The next Financial Year 1818-1819 the following items appear:-				
31 st Mar 1818	Paid Thos. Lammiman for Janney's children	1	10	0
1 st Jan 1819	Paid Thos. Lammiman for Janney's children (no further details)	1	0	0
The year Easter 1819 – Easter 1820				
15 th April 1819	Paid S Janney Children's Clothing	2	0	0
3 rd Jan 1820	Paid S Janney Children's Clothing	1	0	0
February 1820	Paid Lammiman for Janney's children 52wks @ 6s 0d	15	12	0
In the year Easter 1820 – Easter 1821				
4 th May 1821	Paid Thos. Lammiman for Clothes (sic) for 2 Janney's children	2	0	0
1821	Paid for Solm. Janney's 3 children 3wks. @ 6s 0d		18	0
	Paid for Solm. Janney's 2 children 49wks. @ 4s 0d	9	16	0
The accounts of the Overseers for the year Easter 1821 – Easter 1822 are unavailable.				
Easter 1822 - Easter 1823				
	Sol. Janney's collection 7 wks. @ 1s6d		10	6
	Wm. Janney's collection 7 wks. @ 1s 0d		10	6
The Records for the year Easter 1823 to Easter 1824 are incomplete and there is no mention of payments to the Janney family.				
However in the following Financial year Easter 1824 - Easter 1825 there is an entry in May:-				
	Paid Janney's Girl 52wks. @ 1s 0d	2	12	0
And the next financial year on 29 th March 1826:				
	Paid Mary Mumby 2wks for Mary Janney Girl		3	0

In the next 2 years no further payments were made.

The 1834 Poor Law Reform Act radically changed the system by which the poor were dealt with, removing responsibility from village level. North Thoresby was one of the 86 parishes in the Louth Union, formed in 1837 by the New Poor Law Commissioners. The Union Workhouse was built at Louth in 1837 at a cost of £6,000 and that had room for 300 paupers. It was controlled by a Board of Guardians, one from most of the parishes, and 3 from the borough of Louth. This board met each Monday. This could have been only monthly at first, suggested by an entry from the North Thoresby accounts of 1841-42:

	£	s	d
Guardian 12 Journeys	2	8	0

After 1837 the Poor Law accounts for North Thoresby became more meagre. There are some new entries.

		£	s	d
15 th July	Paid to the Bank for the Union	48	3	0
18 th Oct	Paid to the Bank for the Union	64	4	0
31 st Jan	Pd. To the Union	45	4	0

There were some payments to some named persons, but fewer in number than in the earlier years. Of the total payments of £308 about 75% of the money paid was paid to the Union at Louth.

It is clear that leading figures in the village could see the potential harm that could face vulnerable members of the community – and is much to their credit.

Special Meeting – Minute:

“On 17th April 1838, at a meeting this day it hereby agreed that there is to be a meeting once a month for the overseers *to keep such people from the Union as the parishioners thinks best* and we hereby agree that the overseer shall be paid by a rate from the parishioners as witness our hands:

Thomas Barkworth Thos'. Bingham John Walkersley Thomas Forman John Burman

[Ed: It is clear that leading figures in the village could see the potential harm that could face vulnerable members of the community – and is much to their credit.]

Editor's Note: The Poor Law and North Thoresby's Bath House

The contents of this chapter explain, in impressive detail, the working of the Poor Law in early nineteenth century North Thoresby – and it paints a picture of a compassionate community. Prior to 1834 the poor were provided for under the auspices of the "Old Poor Law," introduced in the Tudor period, which was funded by a parish rate levied on landowners and tenants. The 'rate' required the valuing of land by local assessors appointed by special Commissioners (usually local Magistrates). The total value of a parish's land was usually displayed on the Church door and a total quota of tax fixed, so objections could be made. From this fund, each parish provided relief payments to residents who were ill or out of work. Examples for Thoresby are given in this chapter. This localised system came under threat and a new, much harsher structure was imposed by a new Poor Law in 1834.

As the population grew – increasing by two thirds to almost 15 million between 1801 and 1830 – more and more people became dependent on parish relief, ratepayers began to complain about the costs, and increasingly lower levels of relief were provided. There was also a feeling amongst the middle and upper classes that they were paying the poor to be idle and avoid work. The way in which poor law funds were disbursed led to a further reduction in agricultural wages, since farmers would pay their workers as little as possible, knowing that the parish fund would top up wages to a basic subsistence level.

Bill Painter in his book 'Upon the Parish: The Story of Louth Workhouse and the Paupers of East Lindsey' explains the system prior to the New poor Law Act of 1834.

“The overseers of the poor were elected by parish members at the vestry meeting. Parish constables, churchwardens, dykereeves and the like were similarly chosen, holding the post for one year. A parish rate was fixed to cover the cost of the office. These appointments were not particularly popular. The post-holder, often responsible for collecting the rate, tended to rest within the same group of

volunteers. Disputes with parishioners were settled before the local magistrate, who supervised and audited the accounts.

In addition to administering relief, overseers attempted to find work for the needy. Sometimes the functions were combined, spinning wheels and wool being supplied for the poor to work for their keep. The great majority were maintained in their own homes by relief given either as cash or in kind - coal, bread or flour. Such assistance was referred to as out-relief.

Homes provided and furnished by the parish for the destitute became known as the poorhouses. These dwellings were sparsely furnished with a long table and chairs in a communal room where the inmates fed, an open fire grate, a tea kettle on the trivet, fire tongs, bellows and a warming pan. There was a chest of drawers or an open cupboard with candlesticks, and racks of wooden bowls or platters for their food, and wooden spoons to eat with.

The kitchen was the warmest room in the house and opened into the pantry. A range or oven block was used for cooking. A copper boiler had its own grate. There were tubs for washing, brewing, and baking, pots and bowls of wood and iron, and a small table to work on. In the dairy were churns, buckets and a yoke, and a milking stool, with saucepans, brass ladles, earthenware pots and a pewter hand basin.

Perhaps a room would be set-aside for the warden with more cupboards, a chest of drawers, table and an armchair, and, very rarely, some curtains at the window on a pole. The chambers, or bedrooms, contained little except beds and bedding on bare floor boards, blankets, rugs and bolsters, with maybe a stone water bottle, and, occasionally, a lock on the door.

It became a simple progression for the more populous parishes in the towns to combine accommodation with a simple manufacturing process. Spare rooms were provided with spinning wheels, and those who were able were set to weaving jersey or linen. These 'houses of industry', or workhouses as they later became known, enabled the paupers' labour to make some small contribution to their keep."

The Poor Law Amendment Act 1834, dubbed the 'new Poor Law', overhauled the system of providing support to the poor in August 1834. The Act grouped local parishes into Poor Law unions, under 600 locally elected Boards of Guardians. Each of those boards had its own 'workhouse'. The boards were controlled by the Poor Law Commission (established by the 1601 Act), which was responsible for administering the new system of providing relief to the poor (including the administration of the workhouse and workhouse infirmary).

'Outdoor relief' (assistance provided outside of a workhouse) was withdrawn unless a person was unable to work due to old age or 'infirmity'. Those who were 'able-bodied' but unemployed could not draw state support unless they entered a workhouse, where they earned their keep. Workhouses also housed the sick, 'mentally ill', unmarried mothers, the elderly and 'the infirm'.

The government's intention was to make the experience of being in a workhouse worse than the experiences of the poorest labourers outside of the workhouse. This policy was to become known as the principle of 'less eligibility'. This was a punitive approach, borne out of a desire to deter idleness and curb spending relief on 'able-bodied' people.

The Commission which led to the reform, laid bare its reasoning, "Into such a house none will enter voluntarily; work, confinement, and discipline, will deter the indolent and vicious; and nothing but extreme necessity will induce any to accept the comfort which must be obtained by the surrender of their free agency, and the sacrifice of their accustomed habits and gratifications." The law passed with little opposition in Parliament – still dominated by large landowners.

Experiences in workhouses were extremely unpleasant, with inhabitants forced to do hard labour, live in poor conditions and receive poor nutrition, families were separated... People ended up in the Workhouse for various reasons, generally because they were too poor, old, or ill to support themselves. Unmarried pregnant women were often disowned by their families and workhouses were the only places they could go and the mentally ill were often consigned to workhouses. Entering a workhouse was very distressing and – by design – was a shameful experience and life in the workhouse was governed by strict and highly detailed rules, with uniform clothing worn. From the beginning the system had opposition from outside parliament, and its simplistic logic was challenged. Gradually, the defects and cruelty of the system became clear and a more rounded understanding of what caused poverty – helped by the research of Charles Booth in London and Seebohm Rowntree in York - emerged. Nevertheless, the Poor Law Unions were not abolished until 1929.

North Thoresby seems to have played an unusual role in the Louth Poor Law Union and this seem to be a piece of our history that has been missed by generations of previous local historians in the village. Vagrants – men, women and children – with no fixed abode seem to have posed a particular problem and were disliked by other occupants of the Workhouse. Bill Painter in his book 'Upon the Parish: The Story of Louth Workhouse and the Paupers of East Lindsey' (published 2000) says they were often the worse for drink and prone to violence, often destroying bedding, furniture and clothes. The number of these vagrants increased when there were fairs, horseracing, and public amusements.

"Vagrants were housed apart from the other paupers, in a wooden shed, later a brick-built ward, at the rear of the workhouse. Their admission was placed within the province of the constables of Louth, and the police superintendent was paid a yearly allowance. Vagrants and wayfarers from Binbrook were refused all relief and lodging, and others only accepted before 4p.m. in the winter, and 8p.m. in the summer. Those admitted were forced to take a bath and were searched. Any found in possession of money were taken before the magistrate.

Before departure the following morning, men were set three hours of stone breaking. Women were directed to mend clothes or clean the vagrants' ward. Those known to be difficult were not fed until after their labours were complete.

To keep vagrants out of Louth a vagrants' ward and bath house was established at North Thoresby in the 1850s. This was fitted out with boards and bedding, a wooden bath and a fireplace, and a cast iron copper for heating gruel and broth. The accommodation, for both male and female travellers, was administered by a local superintendent. The ward remained in use for some 20 years, but local historians are unsure of its precise location." Bill Painter p55-56).

Editor's Note: The Vulnerability of the Rural Poor

Bill Painter in his book 'Upon the Parish: The Story of Louth Workhouse and the Paupers of East Lindsey' and R.J.Olney in, 'Rural Society and County Government in Nineteenth Century Lincolnshire,' provide an overview on the vulnerability of rural labourers and their families in the first half of the nineteenth century.

"In rural areas the agricultural labourer and his family formed the majority of the poor. Small cottage accommodation of wattle and daub, or clay, with a straw thatched roof, was relatively warm, but not as dry as brick. Usually there were only two rooms: a living room where an open fire or stove was set for warmth and cooking, with dried cow dung and turves mixed with sawdust and small coals as fuel, and a bed chamber where parents and children slept together, sometimes in the same bed, or on rags upon the floor. Water came from the parish-pump; and night soil was deposited around the yard. Candles were used in the darkness.

Meals were based around bread, potatoes and oatmeal. There was thin porridge or gruel, boiled meat, perhaps bacon, pork or mutton once a week, and soups and stews with a few vegetables, milk and small (weak) beer. Half the income of a labouring family was probably spent on food.

Clothes were homemade or second-hand. The men wore flannel or leather breeches, a linen shirt, wool stockings, hat, and waistcoat. The women dressed in a woollen gown or linen shift, petticoats, bodice or stays, woollen stockings, a cotton shawl or neck cloth, a coarse apron and black bonnet. For Sundays and best they wore' a cotton gown, a cloak and a pair of shoes.

Apart from agriculture there was little work. Many farmers hired labour by the year at the fairs in May. Wages at Spilsby, Alford and in the Wolds were less than those paid on the Marsh and eastern parts of Lindsey. In Lincolnshire, provided the weather was mild, there was work throughout the year. Ditching in winter was paid by the measure at one shilling and sixpence a day with 6d extra for 'going down in the bottom'. Common labourers earned about the same, 'without victuals'. In summer, piecework (you got paid for what you did) prevailed: mowing hay at 3 shillings an acre and up to 10 shillings an acre to reap the corn. Spirits and liquors brought problems of drunkenness; a labourer might drink a gallon of beer a day when harvesting. An industrious man could earn 30 shillings a week and nearly treble his income. Note: 12 pennies (abbreviated: d) made a shilling (s) and 20 shillings made a pound (£).

There was less work for women. 2d a day for weeding corn, serving in the ale houses for slightly less, or taking in washing. In winter they might spin worsted or jersey, but the work was very poorly paid and few applied for it. There were schools of industry for children at Spilsby and Alford where they learned to spin, a trade that might support them in later life. The schools were later discontinued as it was considered that the sedentary nature of the employment made the children puny and weak, and of little use to the farmers when their time came to work upon the land.

Those labourers whose income was below subsistence level had their rent paid by the parish. They might also be allowed a pig or a cow to graze upon the common land and the village lanes. Some were supplied with coals. Sir Frederick Eden's survey of the poor, conducted in 1797, calculates the income of an agricultural worker in regular employment as between £26 and £30 a year. A family of four might spend about 8 shillings a week on food. Rent, fuel, clothes and the cost of burials, births, sickness and injury brought their annual outgoings to about £27. How close to destitution were the poor?.

Poverty always threatened. Some were able to live at a subsistence level; others faced starvation. Furniture, bedding and clothes were sold. Inadequate housing and a meager diet laid the way to ill health. Little wonder that smallpox, typhus, influenza and tuberculosis found easy victims. Without the support of relatives, old age and infirmity lead steadily to pauperism. " (Bill Painter)

R.J. Olney (p78-82) distinguishes between the classes of farm worker, explaining the greatest vulnerability among 'day labourers':

"Much of the history of the English farm worker in the nineteenth century remains obscure. This applies even to the basic facts of wages and conditions of work, and it is particularly true of the period 1800-50. Statements are common enough that in a particular county, at a certain date, the labourer earned so many shillings a week. But earnings and wages were different things. Wages could vary from district to district, from farm to farm, from season to season, and from occupation to occupation. This last is particularly important, for not all farm workers did the same unspecialized job. There was, especially on the larger farms, a well-defined division of labour and a corresponding range of terms of employment. The principal division was between farm servants or confined men, and ordinary or day labourers.

On a large Lincolnshire farm the foreman, shepherd, yardman, and waggoners (or horsemen) were all confined men. The foreman and shepherd might live in tied cottages. The waggoners, who were usually men and unmarried, might live with the farmer himself or foreman. However accommodated, they were all on yearly hirings generally from old May Day (14th). The tending of livestock needed a regular workforce, living conveniently close to its work and available all year.

Payment of farm servants was partly in kind. When Richard Hill went to serve Thomas Skipworth of South Kelsey as foreman in 1808, he was to have £20 a year, a house, nearly a rood of garden ground, and the keeping of a cow and two pigs. Four years later his wage and allowances were doubled when he agreed to

board and lodge two of his master's servants. At the end of the century farm servants in the Caistor rural district were receiving allowances in the form of rent-free cottages and gardens, potatoes, beer, and bacon. Farmers did not object to pig raising and potato growing, but cow keeping was thought by many farmers to take up too much of the men's time and make them too independent. Wage rates for farm servants also declined during the period 1800 to 1850, in the case of a first waggoner from about £16 to £12. No wonder the young farm lads of the 1890s were attracted to the shorter hours and higher wages of the towns.

Ordinary labourers were paid by the week but they were, in reality hired by the day, and the practice of laying off hands unpaid on rainy days did not die with the nineteenth century. In 1794 Thomas Stone wrote that wages rates fluctuated very much with supply and demand, thus bringing out the near-casual nature of day labour. Wages varied from season to season, and even in 1900 the winter wage averaged 13s 6d., compared with a summer wage (for longer hours) of 15s.. From season to season wages fluctuated with the price of corn, a phenomenon observable in Lincolnshire until the early 1890s. During the mid-century depression wages dipped down to 10s, less than the level of fifty years before.

Allowances for day labourers were few, apart from beer at harvest or straw for the pig. But piece-work could help to swell the farm worker's meagre wages, and during the nineteenth century operations such as hoeing, turnip pulling, and potato lifting were increasingly done on that system. The great opportunity for extra earnings was the harvest, which in a good season might bring the labourer as much as £10. A bad harvest, however, such as that of 1860, meant a shortage of new shoes and winter clothing for many a family.....

For most of the nineteenth century the day labourer had to contend with chronic insecurity as well as low wages. Women and children were increasingly employed as potato growing developed in the Fens and as elaborate turnip cultivation became part of the routine of high farming on the less fertile uplands. The shilling a day earned by the wife or the sixpence by the child could add appreciably to the income of a labouring family, but they adversely affected the bargaining power of the labourer himself.

In addition, the crucial harvest earnings of the day labourer were frequently depressed when the labour market was flooded by immigrants. Thomas Stone wrote in 1800: 'I have on a fine morning been obliged to arise at the Inn, at Long Sutton, and march long before my avocations required it, on account of the assemblies of harvestmen under my windows, talking as many different dialects as the builders of Babel, Irish, Scotch, and Welch, upwards of fifty in a body, bargaining with the farmers for the work of that day;'

But winter unemployment rather than summer underemployment was the final disaster that drove many labouring families on to parish relief."

Chapter 6 Social Activities in North Thoresby 1850 – 1900



Above: One of the many social activities available to villagers in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries discussed in the following chapter. The opportunities available, and organised in the village, completely outstrip what is available today, despite the best endeavours of community groups.

The church and the chapels, particularly the latter, were probably the institutions upon which much of the social life of the villagers depended. Apart from the normal Sunday services there were numerous activities in which members and non-members took part. These ranged from fund-raising efforts, such as bazaars and garden parties, to temperance and missionary meetings.

There were however other ways of spending leisure time, and this chapter will endeavour to describe those aspects of social life in North Thoresby in the second half of the nineteenth century of which evidence survives. Information has been collected from local newspapers, the School Logbook, some Church Magazines, the minutes of the School Board and from an octogenarian villager.

In 1860 the village had a Mutual Improvement Society, which in fact may have been founded earlier than the first mention of it in the Louth Advertiser, for an article in the Advertiser of 19th March 1859 gave details of a lecture given in the Wesleyan School by the Rev. Mellor of Grimsby on Nineveh. The lecturer described the “excavations by Mr Layard”. The article concluded, “The young men for whose benefit the lecture was given were suitably addressed by Mr Mellor in conclusion, and though the audience was not very small we are only sorry the room was not crowded, as such meetings must be productive of much good”.

Perhaps these young men were the members of the Mutual Improvement Society, which was mentioned in the Advertiser of 12th May 1860, when "Our Correspondent" wrote, "We are glad that our village possesses such a good Institution as a Mutual Improvement Society, the rules of which, with one exception, meet with general approval, but that one which tolerates chess-playing is causing considerable dissatisfaction, and it is to be hoped the Committee will see the propriety of prohibiting this game, and thus securing the universal confidence of the inhabitants in the management and tendency of the Society".

The following week the Advertiser printed a letter to the Editor in which the writer refuted the suggestion that the chess-playing was "an obstacle to the improvement of the young men of North Thoresby" and added, "we find it introduced into most of our mechanics institutes and mutual improvement societies".

Whether it was the immorality of playing chess or some other factors which led to the decline of the Mutual Improvement Society we do not know, but there was no mention of the Society in the late 1880's. An institution which was established for the young men of the village, and had a much longer life, was the Reading Room. It was started in the Autumn of 1889 and functioned until the first World War, possibly later.

It was first mentioned in the Advertiser on 12th October 1889 when a list of donors was printed. These included Rev. Bassett who gave 10/6d. and a daily paper; T. Harneis Esq., Hawerby Hall £1; Miss Harneis, books; Miss Young, Covenham Manor, 5/-d. and books; Dr George, books; Miss George, books; Miss A George, games; H D Simpson Esq., Louth the Graphic; and Mrs Smythe of Elkington Hall, through Miss George, two volumes of the Quiver. The article concluded, "...we hope a need, which has long been felt in this village will now to a great extent be supplied, and the undertaking prove in every way a success. The Rector lends his Sunday School Room for each evening meeting from 6.00pm to 9.45pm."

The room alluded to was the old Parish Room standing until the 1960's on Smith's Charity land down Haith's Lane [Ed it probably survived until the development of new housing in Haith's Lane in the early 1960s and was located directly behind the Village Hall].

A fortnight later the Advertiser had another report in which more benefactors of the Reading Room were listed, and the following comments appeared, "It is scarcely a month since a meeting was held in the Church Sunday School Room to consider whether it was in the region of possibility to establish a reading room in this village. Now the proposals which were then brought forward are so far carried out that each evening most of the young men who reside here assemble together in the above-named room, and there amuse themselves by reading and games".

On 30th November two more benefactors were named: A Raymond Heath Esq., the Conservative MP for the Louth Division, who gave £1 and weekly copies of the Louth Advertiser (which had a very definite Conservative bias) and the People, and G.H.C. Haigh of Grainsby Hall who gave £1.

It seems probable that Miss Adelaide George contributed not a little to the success of the Reading Room. She was a member of the committee and her name appeared frequently in connection with the institution. She was in a position where she was able to gain the support of influential people. Her father was a local GP and her eldest sister was a Warden of the Primrose League of which Mrs Smyth of Elkington was a senior local officer. The local MP was of course very concerned with the Primrose League and so Miss George would know him. Miss George successfully approached Mrs Haigh of Grainsby Hall for assistance for it stated in the Advertiser of 22nd March 1890, "Reading Room, this institution has been favoured during the present week with a generous gift of books from Mrs Haigh of Grainsby Hall, per Miss A George. The list comprises no less than sixteen well bound volumes and includes volumes of The Friendly Visitor, Band of Mercy, British Women, Animal World, Band of Hope, etc".

[Ed: the George family feature frequently in this chapter. Dr George had become the village GP in the late 1850s and he had five daughters – Mary (b1853 d1812); Kate (1855-1925), Alice (b1856), Adelaide (1861-1938) and Grace (1864-1948). The Georges played a significant part in village life].

Public entertainments were sources of revenue to augment the funds of the Reading Room and two examples were reported by the Advertiser. The issue of 15th February 1890 contains a detailed description of a conjuring entertainment given by Mr H Bourne of Louth in the Board School. By happy coincidence the Primrose League had a tea on the same day which 120 people attended and a large number of these went on to the entertainment. "These together with a large proportion of the inhabitants of the village filled the room to overflowing". Music and songs filled the intervals and the evening concluded with a dance which ended at 3.00am. the treasurer received £4 10/9d clear. [The location of the Reading Room is not known].

In December 1891 Miss A George engaged the Louth Amateur Minstrels to give an entertainment in the Schoolroom in aid of the Reading Room Funds. According to the Advertiser of 19th December the whole concert gave great satisfaction. "The Cornermen, Mr H Colbeck and Mr P Boswell, were in fine form and kept the audience in a continual roar of laughter. The concert was followed by a dance which was kept up till 2.00am.

The AGM held on 6th October 1890 was fully reported in the Advertiser on 25th October. The average number of members attending throughout the year was 22 and 29 members paid their monthly subscriptions during the six winter months, but during the summer this number was reduced to 15. The receipts were as follows: -

	£	s	d
Contributions	10	4	9 ½
Proceeds of entertainment	4	8	11 ½
Donations	5	17	0
By sale of Newspapers		19	3
Expenditure: -			
Chess & Money Boxes		3	6
Bagatelle Board	5	0	0

It is evident the Reading Room did not attempt such high standards as the Mutual Improvement Society had done. The names of committee members were given, headed by Miss A George. The members were reminded of their indebtedness to “those generous donors who have borne one fourth of the expenses, and also to those who were the means of raising sufficient money to pay another fourth by a successful entertainment”.

The committee members were evidently keen to make good use of old reading matter, for an Advertiser report (11th May 1892), of the meeting of the Louth Board of Guardians included the following, “The North Thoresby Reading Room Committee have sent a number of copies of the Graphic for the inmates of the workhouse”. The Clerk was instructed to thank Miss A George and the Committee.

The national organisation which had a branch in North Thoresby was the Primrose League which was founded in 1883 to perpetuate the memory and disseminate the ideas of Lord Beaconsfield, [Ed: formerly Benjamin Disraeli, British Prime Minister, 1868 and 1874 – 1880]. District groups or habitations were started and many villages in this area soon formed branches. It was 1888 or 1889 before the North Thoresby branch was born and it owed its birth to the energies of Miss George.

On 2nd March 1889, the Advertiser published a report of a tea held in the Church Schoolroom on 15th February. After tea, the members adjourned to the Board School where ‘an entertainment, consisting of Mrs Jarley’s waxworks, songs, readings and recitations was given... concluding with a dance’. During the evening a vote of thanks was accorded the Warden (Miss George), who briefly mentioned that last year no branch of the Primrose League existed in North Thoresby. Now there were between 50 and 60 members, and she trusted far more in the near future. Her trust was rewarded, for according to the Advertiser of 23rd March 1889, 70 members at North Thoresby had paid their year’s ‘tribute’ up to April 1890.

It seems likely, in fact, that the branch had been formed in 1888, for in September (1889), monthly meeting of the Louth and District Habitation of the Primrose league Miss George, the Warden for the North Thoresby Branch, was presented with a Special Service Clasp for 1888.

It must be remembered that it was only after 1884 that working class men in county constituencies were enfranchised and consequently for the first time they became important politically. Miss George, and ardent Conservative, made full use of the propaganda potential of the Primrose league by attempting to involve as many villagers as possible. This was evidenced by the long report on the Primrose League in North Thoresby contained in the Advertiser of 8th February 1890.

The Annual Tea of the North Thoresby Primrose League was held in the Church Schoolroom the previous Monday when about 120 people (50 of whom were members), sat down to a “sumptuous knife and fork tea”. Miss Fysh had tastefully decorated the room with ‘wreaths of evergreens and at one end of the building was the motto ‘Success to the Primrose League’ in scarlet and white and the other, ‘Welcome Merry Guests’ in scarlet and navy blue”.

Miss George reminded the company that it was Lord Salisbury's (Ed: the PM] 60th birthday and 'three hearty cheers' were given for him. Enthusiastic cheers were also given for Miss George and other dignitaries of the Primrose League and also to 'our worthy representative, who, Miss George trusted, might long continue to represent the Louth Division'. Wardens from the Elkington, Ludborough and Fulstow branches were present as were representatives of the Marsh Habitation. After tea, the members moved to the Board School for the conjuring entertainment and dance in aid of the Reading Room Funds.

This was not the end of the festivities, if one may use the expression, for 'on Tuesday evening the members of the North Thoresby Branch of the Louth Habitation of the Primrose League gave a free knife and fork tea, in the Church Schoolroom, to all the widows, widowers and poor of the parish. About 30 sat down, and more than 20 aged, sick and infirm people had tea taken to them in their own homes. Mrs Stephenson and Mrs M A Danby presided and there were also present Miss George (Warden of the Primrose league) and Miss A George, each of whom took tea with their guests. Mr Charles Stephenson and Mrs Harry Isaac carved and John W Prestwood waited upon the company. An enjoyable tea was partaken of, and thanks are due to Miss George for such an estimable treat being given".

The following year, 1891, an advertisement in the Advertiser of 21st March announced that public 'Knife and Fork Tea' would be held on Easter Monday. Members would be admitted by free ticket (they were to wear badges), while for non-members the charge would be 1/-d. After giving other details of the function the advertisement concluded, "God Save the Queen. By order of Mary George".

A meeting was reported in the Advertiser on 4th April. Once again, the Church Schoolroom and the Board Schoolroom were suitably decorated. The former bore the mottoes 'Success to the Primrose League' and, 'Imperium et Libertas', and 'Peace with Honour', while the Board Schoolroom, as well as displaying mottoes, was also decorated with the names of Beaconsfield, Salisbury and Hartington. The latter building was used in the evening when members and friends were addressed by Miss George and Mr Heath MP. Miss George, welcoming the MP, claimed that North Thoresby had great reason to be obliged to Mr Heath for he always gave help when needed whether concerning education, Reading Room or Primrose League. Mr Heath made a long speech and then the rest of the evening was devoted to dancing interspersed with songs. On the following day '12 poor invalids' were each sent a plate of meat and on the Wednesday evening a tea and entertainment were provided for about 50 widows and elderly couples.

So far, no evidence concerning the activities of the Primrose League in 1892 have been found. This may be due to the fact that a general election was held that year and members were too busy electioneering to spend time, effort and money on anything else. The local members of the Primrose League were no doubt disappointed with the result in the Louth Division for Mr Heath lost his seat, being replaced by Mr Perks the Liberal Candidate. Mr Perks was a nonconformist and a temperance advocate and so was able to command support from many of the numerous Methodists in the Louth area,



Three of the George sisters, pictured in later life.

However, by 1893 the earlier pattern of a 'Knife and Fork Tea' followed by speeches and culminating in a dance was repeated and was fully reported in the Advertiser on 8th April. In the course of her welcoming speech, Miss George referred to the next election and stated "I trust we shall willingly strive to fight for our Queen, Country and the right to protest". During the evening a resolution "That this meeting protest against the passing of the Home Rule Bill (Ed: i.e. for independence of the island of Ireland) now before Parliament believing that it will be inglorious to both England and Ireland" was passed. The report makes no mention of a tea for widows and widowers.

One of the several ways in which the local papers of a hundred years ago differed from those of today was the small amount of space devoted to sport, particularly football. The Louth Advertiser of the 1880's sometimes had little more than half a column giving reports on a few Football League or FA Cup matches. (Grimsby Town's matches might be given five or six lines), but there was no indication that any villages had football teams. This is not surprising as many of the young men of the village would be at work on Saturday afternoons and so unable to play. Cricket, of course, was played during the light evenings and so more players were available for matches.

The first reference to a football team in North Thoresby was found in the Grimsby News of 2nd January 1891 where it was reported that North Thoresby had played West End United Reserves (Grimsby) at Thoresby on Christmas Day and at Grimsby on Boxing Day. Thoresby lost 2-3 at home and 3-13 away. The following week a letter from G Potter, the secretary of the North Thoresby Alma Football Club explained that the second match reported had not in fact been a match. Only five of the team turned up who 'after procuring assistance' agreed to 'have a friendly kick with them'.

Only two other mentions of a Thoresby Football team have been found, the Grimsby News of 3rd April 1891, gave a result, Grimsby Britannia 2, North Thoresby 0. This match had presumably been played on Easter Monday; Easter Sunday was 29th March. The other match was reported in the Advertiser on 2nd December 1893. A friendly match was played at North Thoresby between Grimsby West End, who won 4-0, and Thoresby Alma. The reporter commented "MacSwain, the home captain, played a dashing game as centre forward, and had he been fed more by the wings the result would not have been so one-sided". The cover photograph for this booklet features the oldest photograph we have of the village – the North Thoresby Swifts football team of 1894.

Many of the villagers no doubt enjoyed sport of one type or another but, except for cricket, few reports concerning sporting activities have been found. The Brockelsby Hounds hunted this part of the county and presumably some Thoresby farmers hunted, though we have no proof of this. We do know however, that schoolboys often followed the hounds on foot. Many entries in the School Logbook give evidence of this. The entry on 11th November 1864 read, 'This morning the foxhounds met a Hawerby, 1½ miles distant. Fine day. A few boys absent'. On 3rd March 1868 the master wrote, 'Several scholars absent this afternoon in consequence of a hunting meeting at Ashby'. There were two more entries that year concerning hunting, the one on the 17th December stated, 'Hunters in the neighbourhood, several of the bigger boys absent'.

One headmaster was not very sympathetic to the idea of boys quitting lessons to follow the hounds, for he wrote, on 7th February 1879, 'The hounds came through the village

yesterday as the children were leaving for dinner; this proved too tempting for some half-dozen of the bigger boys, who followed them without leave. As Mrs Atkin had not punished her two sons (one in 5th and the other in the 6th stand), I felt it my duty to send them home again to be punished'. However, two years later the practice of choosing hunting in preference to lessons still continued, for the entry for 16th April 1889 read, 'This morning there were only 75 children present, and in the afternoon the school had a holiday. This was owing to the Earl of Yarborough's hounds meeting in the village'.

Hare coursing also had its devotees, and it is the School Logbook which is our source of information. Three entries, all made in 1863, mentioned the sport; on 5th February, 'A coursing meeting in the neighbourhood, many boys absent in the afternoon'. On 3rd December, 'Very stormy day, coursing meeting at Thoresby. Attendance rather below average'. The last one on 17th December, 'North Thoresby Coursing Meeting, many of the boys absent in the afternoon'. Some of the absentees were probably spectators but some may have been helping to drive the hares.

Sport of a different type was enjoyed during the hard winter of 1895. The Parish Magazine of April that year mentioned the skating matches 'so well arranged by Mr Butt to attract people to seasonable pleasure, and at the same time to remember the widows and orphans of the Grimsby Fishermen, were enjoyed by many and made the best of by many who were prevented from doing their ordinary work'.

A sporting incident which no doubt evoked much interest, at any rate it was considered important enough to warrant space in the Advertiser of 20th September 1890, occurred after Mr T Sands of Grainsby wagered that his pony could trot a mile in five minutes. Mr T Bond bet £2 to £1 that it could not. 'The event took place on the Grimsby Road, the winning pony by 3½ seconds.

Brambling was not a leisure pursuit which could always be followed with impunity in those days. The Grimsby News of 20th February 1891 in its report of the proceedings in Grimsby County Police Court included the following, 'Thomas Matthews was charged with damaging underwood on the property of G H C Haigh Esq., Grainsby Hall, on 10th October last. Since the damage was committed, the prisoner had absconded, and only recently been arrested on warrant... PC Dring said he saw Matthews and another man gathering brambles on the date mentioned, and they did some slight damage to the underwood... Fined £1/2/9d or in default 7 days imprisonment.

The PC Dring mentioned in the case. featured in an item in the Advertiser of 27th September 1890 when it was reported this his dog Tartar had killed a silver-fawn coloured badger weighing 27½ pounds 'in the highway in the parish of North Thoresby'. The constable took the carcase to Mr Haigh at Grainsby Hall.

Cricket was the sport which enjoyed the most coverage in the local press. It was of course considered a gentlemanly game and was often encouraged and supported by the gentry and clergy. Teams such as Hainton, Elkington and Grainsby counted members of the family of the squire among their players. From 1880 onwards, possibly earlier, Thoresby had a cricket club, known officially as North Thoresby Albion Cricket Club. In 1880 the Advertiser reported three matches, one played at North Somercotes

on 12th June, one against North Somercotes Mathilda on 3rd July, again at Somercotes, and one at Thoresby on 10th July with North Somercotes again being the opposition. It seems probable that the Thoresby team which played on 3rd July was the second eleven for none of the players took part in the other two matches. The reporter commented on the last match... 'This return match was played in fine weather on Saturday last... at Thoresby and was witnessed by a highly appreciative and respectable company, who evinced much satisfaction at the defeat of the visitors. The home team in every respect acquitted themselves with much credit but the visitors were scarcely at home, which is perhaps accounted for the difference of ground, they being used to a sandy ground with a fast wicket, while on this occasion they had to play on a heavy ground with a slow wicket. [Ed: At this time, it seems the cricket pitch was in the field opposite the current, 2024, football pitches].

It seems that clubs occasionally borrowed players. Thoresby players sometimes appeared in a Grainsby team while member of the Haigh family on occasions played for Thoresby. In a Tetney team playing against a team from Louth on Tuesday, 19th July 1881 were four players who had played for Thoresby or Grainsby or both. T Sands who came from Grainsby was Thoresby's captain in 1880 yet a T Sands played for Tetney against North Somercotes and later that summer a T Sands played twice for North Somercotes.

Among the teams North Thoresby played during the last two decades of the century were Holton-Le-Clay, Grainsby, Tetney, Fulstow, Covenham, Yarborough, North Somercotes, Grimsby St John's, Grimsby Fish Box Company and Mr Empson's team from Grainsby. A match with the last team must have been a special occasion according to the Grimsby News of 2nd September 1891. It gave the teams (four Haighs played for Thoresby), and the result, a good win for Thoresby concluded, 'After the match both teams adjourned to the pavilion where a splendid tea had been provided through the generosity of Miss Adelaide George.... The members of the North Thoresby Cricket Club are very much indebted to Miss A George, for her kindness in giving tea, also Mrs George, Miss George and Miss K George for their assistance at the tables'.

The number of matches played during a season was not large as evening matches would not often be possible. Working hours were longer and transport was not as available or as speedy as today. In 1891 eleven matches were played, 6 being won and 5 lost, while in 1892, 8 matches were played of which 7 were won. Thoresby scored a total of 423 runs while their opponents managed only 174. In 1898, according to the Parish Magazine of February 1899, 8 matches were played, 5 being won. That Thoresby had some skilled players was indicated by a report in the Advertiser of 6th December 1890, where, under the heading 'Success of Local Cricketers in London', it was stated that T Plumtree had been presented with a guinea bat for the best batting average and Locking Skelton received a 7/6d ball for the best bowling average. The presentations were made by members of the Hartley CC

Money-raising events had to be organised to provide funds and the usual method was a concert followed by a dance. The Advertiser on 4th May 1889 reported, 'A concert was given in the Board Schoolroom on Friday evening for the benefit of the Cricket Club' the platform was very tastefully decorated with plants, flags, bats, wickets, etc.,

under the able supervision of Miss Grace George and Miss Bailey.' The artists and the items they performed were listed and the club benefited to the tune of £7.

Miss Grace George worked hard for the Cricket Club and in 1893 was elected on to the committee, while in the following year she was made vice-president. (Louth Advertiser, 14th April 1894). Some evidence of the work she did was given in the report on the Advertiser of 11th January 1890 of a concert and dance in aid of the Cricket Club. The report began, 'On Friday evening last a concert was given in the Board School which proved to be one of the most successful ever rendered in this village, in very great part owing to the indefatigable labours of Miss Grace George and Miss Bailey. These ladies undertook to procure the performers, to sell the tickets and to superintend the preparation of the room for the occasion, and in each of these particulars their efforts were eminently successful, for the beautifully decorated room was packed and each performer was applauded to the echo'.

Such concerts seem to have been an annual affair. The first one recorded was in 1884 when an entry in the School Logbook on 28th November stated, 'Holiday today owing to school being required for a Cricket Club Concert'. Concerts were not the only winter-time activity of the Cricket Club for there were several reports in the Advertiser of Annual Dinners or AGM's. They usually took place at the New Inn and seem to have been convivial affairs.

Thoresby villagers had the opportunity of watching cricket on two grounds within walking distance. The Thoresby ground was in the Rectory Field opposite the old mill, while by walking down Stanholme and across to Grainsby Lane the spectator would come to the Grainsby ground which was in the park of Waithe House. The pavilion there was used as a bungalow after the Grainsby team ceased to exist and ruins of it could still be seen in the 1970's in the copse opposite the farm buildings down Grainsby Lane.

A different kind of excitement was provided for the villagers when the wedding of an important personage of the village took place. Thoresby witnessed what must have seemed real pageantry when George Henry Haigh Esq., brought home his bride in December 1859. The Advertiser described the scene in the issue of 31st December. "On Saturday upwards of 50 gentlemen, principally Mr Haigh's tenantry, mounted on horseback, met the happy pair at North Thoresby station, and escorted them to their home, the progress to which was enlivened by flags flying, the bells ringing in the towers of three or four churches, and the greetings of an enthusiastic multitude on foot who awaited them about a mile from their destination and insisted on relieving the horses and drawing the carriage, with shouting and cheering up to the entrance.

Two beautiful triumphal arches had been erected for the procession to pass through, and altogether such a scene of rejoicing was witnessed...as was never known in the neighbourhood and one that will be forgotten".

On 28th June 1890, the Advertiser reported the wedding of "Caroline Elizabeth, youngest daughter of the late Mr F Campion". According to the reporter, "the village wore an aspect of general rejoicing. At an early hour the peal of bells from the parish church gave evidence that something unusual was to take place". After describing the scene at the church and the festivities that followed the report added, "that day will

long be remembered in Thoresby, for not only did Mr Campion, (brother of the bride) offer unlimited hospitality to his personal friends, 'But while he feasted all the great. He ne'er forgot the small'.

Similar celebrations occurred in Waithe when Mr W Mastin married:

"In commemoration of Mr W Mastin's marriage his labourers and friends from Thoresby, Grainsby and Waithe were entertained by him on Friday evening in last week, when a good English supper was provided...A dance followed and was kept up until the small hours on Saturday morning. About 100 were present at the supper. On Saturday Mr and Mrs Mastin entertained the children in the parishes of Waithe and Grainsby to a tea". (Louth Advertiser 21st November 1891). One entry in the School Logbook mentioned a wedding which had given pleasure to the pupils. It read, "Matrimony – Through the kindness and liberality of Mrs Thos. Patchett, of Fulstow, - late of this parish – whose niece has been married this morning at Fulstow, to Mr L Patchett, farmer, of this parish, all my scholars have received a bun (supplied by Mr Jos. Mumby) in honour of the happy occasion".

Another type of festivity connected with an old custom which had not quite died out, was the harvest supper. Two examples have been found. The first was an Advertiser report of 9th November 1889 which described a celebration at Autby. It read, "On Thursday in last week through the liberality of Mr J Wright the labourers and tradesmen employed on his farm were entertained to a first-class supper, being regaled with roast beef and mutton, boiled fowls and roast duck, followed by plum pudding, etc. the catering was carried out under the superintendence of Miss Foster. The health of the generous master was drunk with musical honours and Mr Wright suitably responded. Dancing and singing followed and at about midnight the singing of the National Anthem and 'Goodnight, dear friends, Goodnight' with three ringing cheers for the host brought a very pleasant evening to a close".

The second example illustrates why harvest suppers were frowned on by some members of the community. The entry made in the School Logbook on 12th October 1894 read, "...Today I had as a reason why a boy (Richard Pickard) was absent that he was drunk last night through imbibing too freely at Mr Harneiss's Harvest Supper".

Generosity to the less well-off was not confined to the farmers, for on at least two occasions Mrs George provided a tea for the old people of the village. Reports of these Boxing Day events in 1892 and 1893 were reported in the Advertiser. In 1892 the tea was provided for 'the old people of this village and for the members of the Reading Room'. About 75 attended.

"A sumptuous tea of beef, ham, plumbread and butter, plain bread and butter, and all sorts of confectionery, even to iced cakes, was heartily enjoyed, after which the members of the Reading Room and others entertained the assembled company with several songs concluding with the National Anthem... The old people then said 'Goodnight' and any young people who liked to come were admitted free to the dance which followed...Mrs George must have felt very happy in witnessing the pleasure she gave...Next day Mrs George gladdened the hearts of many in the village by sending them dishes of food, and we hope her benevolence will have a happy reward'.

A similar treat was given on Boxing Day 1893 and further research would reveal for how long such generosity continued.

No-one can study the history of Thoresby in the latter part of the century without being made aware of the important part played in the life of the village by Dr George and his wife and five daughters. We have seen how Miss Adelaide George founded the branch of the Primrose League and devoted much time and effort to the establishing and successful running of the Reading Room, Miss Grace George lent her support to the Cricket Club. Although Miss Kate, Alice and Mary George are not specifically named they may have been engaged in other work...for example, in connection with the Church. Apart from her philanthropy, described above, Mrs George supported those activities in which her daughters engaged.

Dr George also took part in village affairs. He was active in the Conservative cause and was, on occasions, chairman of the School Board. Dr George's name was first found in the Advertiser in the edition published on 18th December 1859, when he was the plaintiff in a County Court case held at Louth. He had exchanged horses with, and paid £10 to a Louth veterinary surgeon. When his new horse turned lame Dr George sold it, after the defendant refused to take it back, and sued for £11/19/0d, which he claimed to have lost through the transaction. Both sides called expert witnesses who gave completely contradictory evidence but Dr George won. [Ed: The home of the family remains on Station Road and today is known as 'The Georges']

Dr George's name next appeared in a surprising context. In an advertisement by G B Musson of Louth advertising Henry Lawrence's Improved Spectacles (Advertiser 21st March 1891), was a testimonial from Dr George which read, "I am extremely pleased with the spectacles you have supplied to me; they are soft to the eyes and by far the best I have ever had".

Another lawsuit in which Dr George was plaintiff provides some information about the Druids Friendly Society of North Thoresby. The case was heard at the Louth County Court and reported in the Advertiser on 12th October 1892. Dr George had sued two trustees of the Druids, Mr Haith and Mr Stephenson, for the sum of £15/15/0d, which he said was owing to him under an arrangement made in 1888. Dr George had agreed to provide medical attention for all members residing within an area of five miles and in return would receive 5/0d, for each member of the lodge. In January 1891, he had received £15/15/0d, for 63 members. The defendants claimed that this system had been ended at the beginning of 1891 and instead any member had to procure his own medical attention, from any doctor, pay the bill and claim the money back from the Society. Dr George contended that he had not been officially notified of this change and considered that the original agreement still stood. He won the case.

It appears that North Thoresby Lodge, No. 482 of the Ancient Order of Druids was founded in 1863, for a report in the Advertiser on 22nd May 1869 described the celebrations in connection with the sixth anniversary of the Lodge. The members met at the Lodge-room at 1.00 pm, and after attending a service at the church, where the Rector chose an appropriate text, 'Be kindly affectionate one to another with brotherly love', and attending the Rectory, where they were given a donation of £10/0d, they repaired to the New Inn for dinner.

After dinner a business meeting followed at which the secretary reported an increase in membership of seven and an increase in funds of £20. Many votes of thanks were passed and then “The member of the Lodge again processioned the village and enlivened its usual dullness (sic) by the display of their distinctive colours, and the pleasing strains of the Fulstow Brass Band which through the day rendered very efficient service. We hope the Lodge will long continue its improving, honourable and useful service”.

A similar programme on the occasion of the seventeenth anniversary was reported in the Advertiser on 21st May 1881. “The members met at the Station Hotel at 10 o’clock and headed by the village brass band walked in procession to the church”. Later about 60 members sat down to a public dinner at the New Inn. Mr J Cusworth (ex-mayor of Louth) presided, and he was supported by Rev. Bassett (Rector of North Thoresby), Rev. Baxter (Rector of Hawerby) and Rev. Gedge (Rector of Ludborough) while Dr George occupied the vice-chair. “The weather was most enjoyable and, in the day, will long be remembered”.

By 1884, according to the Stamford Mercury, which on 23rd May 1884 published an account of the nineteenth anniversary celebration, the Lodge had a membership of 80 with another 20 members in a juvenile lodge. Altogether they had £160 invested and a total of £23 in hand. This seems to be a bigger membership than was indicated in the lawsuit with Dr George in 1891, but Dr George was only concerned with members who lived within an area of five miles and presumably some members who had moved away from the village retained their membership.

The only other reference to the Thoresby Druids so far found was in the Advertiser of 25th May 1895 where it was reported that Col. Francis M Lucas of Elkington Hall had donated £2/2/0d, and Mr Perks MP £1 to the North Thoresby Druids Society.

Although the village might have appeared dull to the reporter from the Advertiser in May, many of the villagers, especially the young, probably found May the least dull month of the year, for it was the time when Old Mayday was kept up and fairs were to be enjoyed at Louth, Grimsby, Waltham and Binbrook and Thoresby Feast usually took place in May. Many comments in the School Logbook referred to Old Mayday...e.g. 13th May 1862 “This week both Thoresby Feast and Mayday unite in making the attendance small”, 13th May 1864 “(Old) Mayday. Many ‘feasts and statutes’ in the neighbourhood about this time. Attendance rather less than usual”. In 1866 there were two entries – on 1st May “Several girls absent this week in order to help their parents prepare for ‘Mayday’”. On 8th May, “Attendance not so good as usual this week – People very busy”. [Ed: ‘statutes’ refers to an open meeting where farmworkers and servants were hired and all sorts of entertainments were present).

For young men working as farm servants and girls in domestic service this was their holiday – the week’s interval between ending one year’s work and starting a new engagement. Some went to the statutes to be hired, others went for entertainment. The Grimsby News of 20th May 1881 commented on the Statute:

“Servants were plentiful but wages low...most, in fact all, of the hiring was done at the registry offices and not at the Statute”. The Louth May Statute of 1892 was

fully, and sympathetically, described on 21st May. The railway company carried 4,506 visitors and to the number had to be added the many who travelled in carrier's carts or walked. The report continued, "On looking round we came to the conclusion that all the bone and sinew of the old country had not crossed the ocean as croakers would make us believe, nor have we lost the healthy, buxom country lass, the principal main prop of Old England. No very great amount of hiring went on, the wise having secured places at earlier such business statutes as Binbrook.

..The pleasure department was crowded, Tuby's Steam Merry-go-round attracting the greatest attention. There were also the usual swing boats, shooting galleries, etc., all being well patronised...

The general conduct was excellent, the great crowd of visitors being orderly and good-tempered in their enjoyment: a fact that speaks well for the growth of education and the improved quality of the beverages supplied".

The last sentence is a marked contrast to the comments on the Louth Statute which appeared in the Advertiser on 23rd April 1859.

..." These demonstrations are becoming less popular with moral and religious servants and masters. It is thought by many to be only a step above barbarism and slavery, for a group of young people to collect together in the open market to let themselves to the highest bidder: and associations and pursuits on such occasions are contaminating and demoralising; subversive of feminine modesty and manly dignity and sobriety. The unfavourable weather this year caused the public houses and beer shops to be crowded so that more excess than usual was indulged in by many, who for once in a year rioted in their liberty and freedom from restraint, and so laid up in store abundance of material for bitter future reflections. The amount of business done was very limited, except in petty thefts, in which line an extensive traffic was carried on".

The origins of Thoresby Feast are not known. There is no evidence that it had been a statute fair, nor does it seem to have been the anniversary of a friendly society, as was the case with some feasts. It did not occur on a definite date each year but from the evidence of a number of dates given in the School Logbook it seems to have been celebrated during the week of the fifth Sunday after Easter. According to an elderly villager [in 1978] who remembers the Feast at the end of the nineteenth century it was solely for pleasure. There were coconut shies, sideshows, roundabouts, etc. Donkeys were brought from Cleethorpes and wagonettes took passengers on a tour round the village for 4d. the Feast continued to be held up to the First World War, but it seems not to have survived the changes that resulted from the War.

The social activities mentioned so far in this chapter took place in the village itself. However, it is clear from newspaper reports and entries in the School Logbook that by the second half of the 19th Century many of the people of North Thoresby were involved in social events outside the village. They were attending events held in neighbouring villages, in Louth and Grimsby, or travelling further afield to the seaside and on excursions organised by the Great Northern Railway. Various activities were reported in the 'District News' section of the Louth and North Lincolnshire Advertiser and the School Logbook gives additional evidence of North Thoresby people attending

social functions outside the village when reporting reasons for low school attendances on certain days.

When we remember the importance of farming in the lives of the people, it is not surprising to read of North Thoresby villagers attending many agricultural shows, feasts and fairs. Louth May Fair has already been mentioned. In addition to this the School Logbook reported lower attendances because of children visiting Louth Cattle Fair, Louth Flower Show and Louth Candlemas Fair, Agricultural Shows at Grimsby and Market Rasen, Lincoln Fair, Binbrook Statute, Tetney Gala, Tetney Fair and Marshchapel Feast.

For some of these events the school children were given a half-day or day's holiday, as these extracts from the Logbook show:

17 th July 1873	Thin attendance owing to Marshchapel Feast and Tetney Fair.
22 nd July 1875	I was away on the 20 th at Tetney Fair (or rather Tetney Wet). Holiday for tomorrow as it is the popular day for the Agricultural Show at Grimsby.
18 th July 1884	Have given a half-holiday this afternoon on account of the Louth Flower Show.

North Thoresby people could attend more distant agricultural shows and fairs by means of the cheap excursions organised by the Great Northern Railway. For example, in 1891, cheap excursions picking up at North Thoresby station ran to Nottingham Goose Fair, Brigg Agricultural Show, Boston Flower Show, Skegness Flower and Horse Show, Hull Fair and even the London Dairy Show. The Advertiser for 1st October 1870 gave the return far for a day excursion to Nottingham Goose Fair as 4 shillings. Most of the advertisements, however, did not give the cost of the far.

This one on 26th September 1891 is typical:

“Great Northern Railway, Cheap Excursions Nottingham Goose Fair. For one or two days”. (The train departed North Thoresby at 6.00am).

North Thoresby people attended many other types of social events in nearby villages apart from agricultural shows and fairs. The Advertiser for 23rd June 1860 reported that members from North Thoresby went to the Annual Festival of the Total Abstiners as Ludborough. Another report for 24th July 1880 stated that the procession marking the 36th anniversary of the Marshchapel Foresters was led by the North Thoresby Brass Band.

The nearby town of Louth held many functions which attracted visitors from North Thoresby. The School Logbook for 1868 noted that on 15th June several children were away attending Louth Foresters' Fete and on 27th October there were many absentees because of a “Great tea-meeting at Louth, also Missionary services in the adjoining chapel”. On 16th May 1891 it was reported in the Advertiser that the 6.10pm train from Grimsby and the 9.30pm from Louth would stop at Ludborough to enable visitors to attend a “Practical demonstration of Edison's latest improved Phonograph or Wonderful Talking Machine”, to be given in Louth Town Hall. Another Louth exhibition

attended by many people from North Thoresby was a Missionary Loan Exhibition in July 1898. The School Logbook recorded that the school was closed on Friday 17th July for a visit by the children to this. A fuller account of the event was given in the Parish Magazine for July 1898. We are told that ninety children and teachers attended. "After leaving time the children passed through the Parish Church and went to Hubbard's Hill, where the trees were in perfection of foliage. The time, however, in Louth, a short four hours, did not suffice to do all, including the walk under the noonday sun, without a good deal of fatigue".

There was also a variety of social events held in Grimsby which were attended by people from North Thoresby. The school was closed on 17th August 1883, when villagers went to see the opening of People's Park by a member of the Royal Family. The railway regularly advertised cheap excursions to Grimsby, calling at North Thoresby, to such events as concerts, 'theatrical attractions', athletic sports, the pantomime and football matches. A typical advertisement in the Advertiser on 2nd January 1892 read: "Cheap Excursions to 'theatrical attractions' at Grimsby. Special train returns at 11.30pm".

The influence which the railway had on the social life of the inhabitants of North Thoresby during the second half of the 19th century is very clear. It gave them the opportunity of attending social events much further afield by means of many cheap excursions. Almost every week advertisements appeared in the columns of the Advertiser. The ones mentioned in this chapter were all run by the Great Northern Railway, and all called at North Thoresby station. In 1870 one such excursion went to the Pantomime in London. Hull was also visited on these trips.

On 27th July 1863 the School Logbook noted that there was a low attendance because of a cheap trip to Hull; another was run on 25th June 1870 for the 'Working Men's Industrial and Art Exhibition', and the 'Humber Rowing Regatta'. The return fare from Thoresby being 1/6d and entry to the exhibition 6d (if railway tickets were shown). A further cheap trip to Hull took place on Saturday, 15th January 1881 on the occasion of cutting the first sod of the new dock. A similar excursion went to Mablethorpe on 19th September 1891 to the commemoration of the opening of the Mablethorpe line. Lincoln was also a popular place for excursions, in particular visits to the Temperance Festivals, Pleasure Fair and Spring Races.

A completely different event which appears to have been popular at this time was the Volunteer Review. The Volunteer force was formed when Britain feared invasion from France. It is likely North Thoresby had some members of the Volunteers as most villages in the area had. Reviews took place regularly in different parts of the county. In 1869 and 1873 the school log recorded Volunteer Encampments at Thornton Abbey.

25 th June 1869	Volunteer encampment at Thornton Abbey – cheap excursion, several children absent.
23 rd June 1873	Encampment at Thornton Abbey during the whole of this month.

The Advertiser for 14th June 1890 advertised a cheap excursion to see the Review at Thornton Abbey and there was a similar notice on 25th June 1892 concerning the Encampment at Gainsborough. In 1869 the Volunteers held their Review nearer at hand, at Cleethorpes and the school log reported:

25 th June 1869	Volunteer Review at Cleethorpes this week, many people from the village going, the attendance is thin in consequence.
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Finally, in 1872, the Volunteer Review came to the neighbouring village of Grainsby and a half-holiday was given to the children on 4th April to enable them to attend.

Another way in which the people of North Thoresby became involved in social events outside the village was through town and county societies. Several of the leading villagers were members of the Lincolnshire Agricultural Society and probably became involved in its various social activities. The Advertiser for 28th September 1889 listed ten North Thoresby people among the subscribers to the local fund of this society, including Dr. George, (£1 1s 0d), and the Rev. Bassett, (£1 0s 0d).

Louth Conservative and Constitutional Association and Club would also attract members from North Thoresby. On Thursday 9th July 1891 they held their Summer Excursion to Matlock Bath, Rowsley, Bakewell and Buxton, the train picking up a North Thoresby at 6.01am. In the following year the outing was to Oxford, the special train departing North Thoresby at 6.00am; third class far 5/-d. the notice in the Advertiser for this event also gave members a list of hotels where food could be obtained and told them that the train would be met by guides for visits to the Oxford Colleges.

Finally, we cannot leave the social life of North Thoresby without mentioning the popularity of the seaside. Cleethorpes, Mablethorpe, Sutton-on-Sea and Skegness were all visited frequently. Cleethorpes was chosen as the destination for the summer outing of the scholars of the Sunday Schools on 4th August 1864. The School Log reported that the school had a holiday, and the scholars were transported to Cleethorpes in wagons.

Cleethorpes was also visited by the Wesleyan Sunday School for their annual treat on Friday 26th August 1892. A report of the treat in the Advertiser stated that fifty scholars and their teachers were conveyed to Cleethorpes in traps lent by Mr J Broughton and Mr William Hewson. Games of cricket and football were played, and the teachers spent the day amusing the children. 'After visiting the Gardens and the Whale they returned home about 8 o'clock, highly delighted with their outing'. When Cleethorpes pier was opened on 4th August 1873, we are told that several pupils were absent to be there.

Mablethorpe and Skegness were also chosen for outings. On 3rd June 1878 about 110 scholars from the school went on a day trip to Skegness, the treat being provided by public subscription. Also reported in the Advertiser, was the visit made by fifty to sixty members of the Primrose League on 18th August 1894, when they, 'spent a pleasant half-day at Mablethorpe'. The Methodist Temperance Society's Band of Hope trip the following year was also to Mablethorpe.

Bank Holiday was the time when many people seem to have visited the sea-side. The School Log entry for 8th May 1882 read: 'Yesterday being Bank Holiday some 30 scholars absented themselves for the purpose of visiting the seaside'. The railway also ran cheap excursions to the seaside over the Bank Holiday periods: in 1892 there were trips on Easter Monday and again on Whit Monday to Mablethorpe, Sutton and Skegness.

It is, therefore, quite clear that the social life of the people of North Thoresby in the second half of the 19th century was not limited to the events which took place in the village. Above all, the railway had made it possible for them to become involved in social activities surprisingly far from home. It will have been seen that a considerable amount of knowledge concerning the ways in which the villagers of North Thoresby spent their leisure time has been accumulated.

It must be re-emphasised that this chapter had not included church or chapel activities which were probably the main interests of many of the active members of the chapels particularly.

Editors Note: The Primrose League was founded in 1883 to further Conservative Party principles. At this time Liberals and Conservatives competed for office, the Labour Party not being formed until 1906. The primrose was the favourite flower of Benjamin Disraeli (1804-81) who was Prime Minister between February and December, 1868 and again between 1874-80. While in office Disraeli regularly received primroses from Queen Victoria handpicked by the ladies-in-waiting of the Windsor Castle court. Coincidentally this distinctive flower came into seasonal bloom as the anniversary of his passing loomed. Thus, they were in tremendous demand and ceremoniously placed in many a city gents' buttonholes or respectfully laid at his statue in Parliament yard.

The Primrose League was the first political organisation to give women the same status and responsibilities as men and by 1890 had over 1 million members – a 7th of the electorate.

By 1888 The Times was reporting that 'women's influence on the Primrose League was unprecedented'. The League struck a chord with upper-class matriarchs who'd been converted when residing in London for 'the season'. The silver badge that marked you out as a Dame of Order became a much sought-after fashion accessory. As these ladies who lunch put aside philanthropy for politics and went back to the provinces under instruction to spread the word to the masses.

Members were expected to actively support the league, and to keep up interest, a programme of social events was organised for the membership, of which the Primrose summer fête, often held in the grounds of stately homes opened for the first time for this purpose, provided the grand annual climax. There were, however, also day excursions and winter evening entertainments for league members, leading Flora Thompson to conclude that "It was no wonder the pretty little enamelled primrose badge, worn as a brooch or lapel ornament, was so much in evidence". At the events, the members would often be addressed by, and have the opportunity to meet, members of the Parliamentary Conservative Party. The attraction of the League was due to its cross-class appeal: workers could enjoy the fêtes; the middle-classes could enjoy meeting the local nobs; while for upper-class women, the League offered an opportunity for political mobilisation, with the new bicycles providing means for them to reach a wide range of country villages.

Subscriptions were staggered by wealth making it affordable to the industrial workers congregated in the growing urban sprawls and farming communities in traditional rural belts. The League espoused the chivalric virtues of brotherhood and benevolence supporting this virtuous claim with annuity provisions for members unprotected by the government against sickness, old age and death. This forward-thinking small-scale benefit allowance showed that behind the bluster and competition banners was a solid dependable comradeship.

Doorstepping and town square soapboxing required transportation and here the League was indispensable with its availability of carriages supplied by the ever-reliable *Grand Dames*. On the ground level bicycle corps of mostly female formations assisted with voter registration. Occasionally encroached on the campaign trail by a disenchanted radical they were renowned for an ability to purposefully engage in debate. Information was heard at League meetings on the big issues such as trade tariffs and Irish Home Rule.

It wasn't all work, work, work at the Primrose League as the leisure aspect was crucial to its dynamic. In the summer months country estates owned by the League luminaries opened their gates for memorable weekend fundraising fetes. Arriving sometimes on chartered trains the attendees in Sunday finery were treated to a jamboree of sports, shooting galleries, swings and conjurors. All good clean fun as beer and skittles was replaced by burdock and buns. But this temperance atmosphere didn't mean the entertainment provided ignored contemporary trends. Crowd-pleasing music hall acts, and exotic magic lantern slide displays figured high in the varied scheduling. Annual balls attracted a younger vibrant demographic wanting to dance the night away. Gordon Baden-Powell MP dropped in at the Ormskirk shindigs listening to Mr Harry Collins of 'Magic Moments' fame performing the 'First Rose of the Year' and his showstopper 'The Place Where My Old Horse Died'.

Various sources, especially www.parliament.uk

Editor's Notes: Friendly Societies came to the fore following the industrial revolution in the 18th century and their popularity grew from the simple premise that if a group of people contributed to a mutual fund, they could receive benefits at a time of need - particularly illness, death or unemployment of a household's breadwinner. In 1875, friendly societies were acknowledged by the government under the Friendly Societies Act 1875 and membership was encouraged as new systems of auditing and registration were introduced. People joined in large numbers and by the late 1800's, there were around 27,000 registered Friendly Societies across the UK in towns and villages. Friendly Societies also had an important social role in providing opportunities for people to build solidarity and to assist each other.

Between 1911 and 1948, Friendly Societies administered the state sickness benefits scheme for working people for whom membership of a friendly society was compulsory under the National Insurance Act of 1911. By 1945, before the nationalisation of the Welfare State, 14 million people, mainly male workers, were members of friendly societies. Numbers fell when the welfare state was nationalised in 1948, and the NHS as we all know today was introduced. There are still 140 or so Friendly Societies in existence in the UK.

Editor's Note: The Slow Dying out of the Old Ways

This chapter illustrates the dramatic changes in popular culture during the 19th century and the expanding opportunities available to the population. 'Coarse' aspects of country life – particularly the prevalence of drunkenness – gradually died out, but still lingered as shown by Rex Russell, in his booklet, 'From Cock-Fighting to Chapel Building : Changes in Popular Culture in 18th and 19th Century Lincolnshire.'

The Stamford Mercury 11th November 1842 reported a wife sale in Louth:

"One of those disgraceful scenes which occasionally violate the laws of God and man, and put to the blush public morals, took place in Louth at 12 o'clock last Wednesday in the open market. A man sold his wife to another man for 5s., receiving 6d. back for luck. Placing a white ribbon about the woman, he finished the business by saying, 'There, now, thou wilt either lead or drive.'"

Another was prevented that December, Stamford Mercury 9th December 1842:

"Sale of a Wife prevented. - We are sorry to have to record that another of those disgraceful ebullitions of public depravity, the sale of a wife in the public market (happily prevented from being effected by the vigilance of the police) occurred on the 30th November. The offending parties, followed by a vast crowd, were brought before S. Troughton Esq., who investigated the affair.

The names of the married couple were James and Maria Goyin, from Horncastle, that of the would-be purchaser, John Slight, of Louth. Goyin and his wife had been married for two years, and never lived in peace, which led to the elopement of his wife, who for the last eight months had lived with Slight in the capacity of housekeeper - but as an adulteress, according to the statement of Goyin.

A reconciliation being vainly attempted between the wife and her husband, the latter and Slight, after a good deal of fruitless negotiation owing to the fickleness of the husband's resolution, at length decided the wife should be sold in a halter on the above market day, to the best bidder, Slight purposing to snap the bargain of what he called 'so very amiable and agreeable creature'. The worthy Magistrate lamented the popular ignorance which led to so quick a repetition of the outrage on public decency, and pointed out to the parties, and to a full court of curious hearers the moral and legal delinquency of such conduct, all the parties arraigned being highly censurable, the wife as much so as the two men for her immodesty, and her folly in not considering that the brute to whom she would have been sold, might be satiated with her in a week, and she turned over to another in the same disgraceful way.

Mr. T. said it was intolerable to witness a wife dragged into the market for sale like a brute beast, and it was the determination of the Magistrates to put an end to a system which subjected the happiness of the domestic circle to the libidinous propensities of every designing knave who chose to corrupt it. The parties had had a narrow escape, as, had the sale been effected, he would certainly have fully committed them to the Quarter Sessions to take their trial for so gross an outrage: as it was, he would bind the parties in £5 each to keep the peace in

future. On their liberation, they were chased round the church by the mob, and it was not until the protection of the police had been obtained that they were enabled to effect a safe retreat to their proper homes."

Public hangings, turned into a form of entertainment, continued in England until 1868. In 1827, the Stamford Mercury reported an execution in Lincoln:

"Udale, the wretch convicted for sheep-stealing, was executed on the 23rd rd. inst. About a quarter before twelve, the usual melancholy procession issued from the prison, and crossed the castle yard to ... Cobb's Tower, upon the top of which the platform had been previously erected. In the lower chamber of the building the last services of religion were administered ... till within a few minutes of 12 o'clock, at which time Udale ascended the steps leading to the scaffold with many penitential exclamations, accompanied only by the executioner (a convicted horse stealer) and the gaoler. He walked with a firm step; and as soon as the rope was adjusted properly, the executioner hurried below to draw the bolt which supports the flooring: the criminal, dropping through the opening, appeared to die almost instantaneously: he being a light man, a longer rope was allowed than usual, in order to produce a fall of sufficient effect; on which account but little of his body was visible to the crowd below.

The concourse of spectators was as large perhaps as ever was known, for a quarter of an hour before the execution, they continued without intermission pressing forward up the hill in one dense unbroken stream, and from their apparent demeanour might as easily have been supposed to be hurrying to a horse-race or a boxing-match as to the most awful of all sights which a human creature can witness. It is particularly disgusting on these occasions to observe the number of females, and children, the latter perhaps shouting and chasing each other through the crowd, as at any other place of 'public amusement', and many of them (incredible as it may seem) actually brought by their parents for the express purpose of taking warning.

Such parents should surely be told, that an education begun at the gallows is often but too likely to end there; and, with the additional course of instruction to be derived from dog-fights, pugilism and bull-baiting, has but too often so ended. One is tempted to wish that the same discretion which excludes children from the fouler details of a court of justice, was also exercised in regard to the brutalising processes of our public executions ... "

Rex Russell notes that at some of these public executions the 'Ranters', the Primitive Methodists, were present. Reports of hangings at Lincoln in both 1819 and 1820 make mention of this. When John Louth was executed ... the moment he was turned off, the religious society of Ranters (who have had their meetings in this city of late) began singing hymns. The Ranters were representatives of the newer culture and moral values. .

Cock-fighting was a common aspect of country life at the beginning of the nineteenth century with advertisements commonly appearing in the Stamford Mercury; this on May 3rd 1805:

To be FOUGHT at THORGANBY, near Caistor, in the county of Lincoln, on the 15th and 16th of MAY instant; twenty-one main for 5 guineas a battle and 50 guineas the odd, and ten bye battles for 2 guineas the battle and 10 guineas the odd, between the Gentlemen of Lincolnshire and the Gentlemen of Yorkshire. Feeders For Lincolnshire ... JACKSON For Yorkshire BEE

In 1835 by Act of Parliament it was made illegal in certain circumstances in England and Wales: in the Cruelty to Animals Act, 1849, more stringent measures were included to stamp it out. In 1841 the county newspaper, which had in earlier years carried not a few advertisements for cock-fights, deplored the fact that this sport was still in progress.

“COCK-FIGHTING. - We regret to learn that, notwithstanding the progress of knowledge and refinement, and all which poets and moralists have written, this barbarous and inhuman practice still obtains in this county, and is patronised by names in other respect reputable. At this we are the more surprised, for even in the days of our half-civilised ancestors, the noble and high-bred gentry, and even the brave yeomanry, would not stoop to so degrading a sport. Those found blustering and cursing at a cock-pit, were usually gamblers and the most brutalised of society.

The approaching Shrove-tide (time of confession) reminds us of these exhibitions. We are informed that one was numerously attended at Cainby, near Spital, last year; and it is rumoured that preparations are going on for a still more splendid celebration the next anniversary.

Scores of these beautiful and generous birds are distributed throughout the neighbouring farmsteads to be disfigured, pierced, and doomed the victims of wanton cruelty; while the horrid imprecations of gamblers and ruffians will rend the air, and cards, cheating, and excesses will close the late orgies of the evening. We may ask, what will the Magistracy in the vicinity be doing? How dares the innkeeper risk the loss of his licence? How can well-disposed parents allow their youth to be seduced to witness scenes which must blunt their moral sensibilities? We trust, if no local energy exists, the Society for Preventing Cruelty to Animals will interfere, to remove such a stigma from the neighbourhood." Stamford Mercury, October 12th 1849

The tradition of **Plough Monday** (the first Monday after the Twelfth Day of Christmas) came in for much criticism in the local press. Ploughmen (commonly referred to as Plough Jags or Jacks) dressed in 'the most fantastic motely fashion', performed plays, danced and played music in the streets, looking to be rewarded with payment. Not everyone was critical and as late as the 1870s, Caistor enjoyed the spectacle.

"The town and neighbourhood of Caistor was last week perambulated by an exceptionally clever and well-got-up company of 'plough morrisers', whose rustic mummings obtained for them a general welcome and pecuniary encouragement." (Stamford Mercury January 7th 1876)

"Morris-dancing is fast becoming a rarity, even in the rural districts of North Lincolnshire, but last week Caistor and the villages adjacent were visited by a full company of those rustic merry-men, the 'Plough Jacks', whose grotesque costume and clever acting were worthy of 'the good old times' of their grandsires, commonly described as 'when George the Third was King.'" (Stamford Mercury January 4th 1878)

However, In general the press were hostile – it must be borne in mind who controlled the newspapers, who their audience was, and what ideas prevailed among the 'intellectual' and religious groups.

Rex Russell comments:

"Looking through the newspaper attacks on Plough Jacks between 1846 and 1867 certain fixed attitudes predominate. The reports mention the 'ill effects of what are termed 'ancient customs' ... ', 'heathenish customs', 'the silly pagan custom', 'this absurd custom', 'the old fooleries of the plough-boys', 'rustic fooleries', 'their usual uncouth performances'.

The assumption is constantly made that the performance of Plough Plays ought to diminish as education progresses, that they are totally out of place in the streets of 'intellectual Louth', totally inappropriate for 'this enlightened and reputedly Christian country'.

The performers are denigrated as 'rustic mendicants', they ought to be imprisoned because they are begging. Finally, there is condemnation of the collection of money because it is spent on drink. "Other beggars, who are a far less nuisance, are taken up and punished"; '... they do not beg from necessity, but for the sake of getting money to spend in riot and excess;" 'to levy blackmail for the purpose of furnishing the means of drunken orgies ... " (Rex Russell, in his booklet, 'From Cock-Fighting to Chapel Building : Changes in Popular Culture in 18th and 19th Century Lincolnshire" p20

Stamford Mercury, January 15th 1858 :

"Anciently, on the first Monday after Epiphany all husbandmen resumed their ploughs; and in many parts of England, especially in the north, the plough is still drawn in procession from house to house. This almost obsolete custom of agricultural origin was carried on in Louth on Monday the 13th, though its object was certainly lost sight of by those who commemorated it. The festival was made a mere subsidiary means of getting money ... here was a much larger number than usual of farm servants, dressed up in fantastic style, with blackened and ochred faces; ... "

A year later, a report from Stamford:

"The rustic fooleries usually tolerated on Plough Monday brought to Stamford ... a large number of agricultural labourers, who with painted faces and tawdry disguises importuned the inhabitants for contributions. One stalwart fellow tried to do 'the state some service' by bringing into ridicule the prevalent mania for

crinoline. He had borrowed some flowing locks to adorn his cheeks, and had surmounted these with a pimping thing called a bonnet, and his nether limbs were enclosed in what ladies call a 'skeleton', that is, a kind of network of steel, whalebone, or some other substance used to puff out gowns. This extraordinary apparel answered the purpose, as the man obtained many donations. Plough Monday is an English institution, just within the ancient boundary which ... every year becomes more and more effaced ..." Stamford Mercury January 14th 1859.

The attack on Statute Fairs has been mentioned in this chapter and the critical comments reflect those of Plough Monday and Morrismen.

Spilsby Statutes 8th May 1857 and 7th May 1858 Stamford Mercury.

"The open immoralities which have of late years been generally practised at statutes, and the evil consequences by which they have been followed, have led to a determination ... of most of our principal farmers to hire their servants at home rather than in places of public resort. The best class of servants begin to see it is degrading to themselves to be placed like cattle in the market ... "

" ... Of respectable looking servants ... only few were to be seen ... The shows were of a low character: ... The statute altogether furnished another proof that ... such gatherings are unmitigated nuisances, fast passing into desuetude by all respectable classes, and which, if not put down by legislative enactment, will ere long be swept away by the advancing tide of moral and religious influence."

Ulceby Statute. May 21st 1858 Stamford Mercury

"The profligate conduct of many agricultural servants has this May-day clearly shown that liberty without salutary restraints will almost certainly degenerate into licentiousness. It seems as if the moral restraints afforded by the religious education of our Sunday and National Schools were utterly disregarded. This mischievous custom of periodical hiring would unquestionably be wisely superseded by engaging servants through a system of registration ..."

The survival of Rantanning is another example of how old customs continued into the late nineteenth century. Rantanning (or Rough Music or 'Riding the Stang') was a method of community insistence that certain social conventions would be upheld. When such conventions had been contravened, the local community forcibly, noisily and effectively drew attention to such breaches of the code. One common example was action against husbands who had beaten their wives.

Examples from the Stamford Mercury:

25th April 1823: Great Coates

" ... A number of people with horns, tin cans, &c., being collected before a cottage occupied by a man of the name of West, were making a great uproar to annoy him for having beaten his wife. One of his neighbours named Philipson, who had also been guilty of a like offence, thinking that this shouting and

hooting was partly intended for himself ... took his gun, and in the heat of passion fired upon the crowd ... Philipson has absconded."

31st January 1862: Grainthorpe

" ... Grainthorpe was a few days ago frightened from its propriety by a party of boys, engaged in the interesting exploit of 'riding the stang' ... the performance was specially got up for the amusement of a labouring man, who, haunted by the green-eyed monster, had revenged himself by thrashing his wife ... "

19th January 1872 Market Rasen

"The tin-pot band

, happily in an almost obsolete institution of former days, has during the week been revived in the town in dishonour of a ... dealer in coal, who for some time past has made himself notorious by his loose notions on the privileges of married life."

None of the examples of these 'old ways' have been drawn from North Thoresby, but they were part of the culture of rural communities and would be familiar to villagers here in the nineteenth century.



Two of the George sisters pictured in their garden.



The Village in the ninth century would be well served by shops and workshops. The butcher's shop was in a building long demolished but the building to the right of it is Broughton's Stores, until recently, the location of our Post Office.





"Health is the gift of heaven, and worthy of preservation."
"The Lord hath created Medicines out of the earth, and those that are wise will not abhor them."

J. OUGDEN,
DOCTOR AND DRUGGIST,
BOND-STREET,
NORTH THORESBY,

Has during the last Twelve years, devoted his attention to the preparation of Medicines for the relief and cure of the afflicted labouring under the following diseases; viz.,—
 Consumptions,—Liver complaints,—Asthmas,—Hooping Cough,—Bowel complaints,—Pain in the Breast,—Spitting of Blood,—Nervousness,—Head ache,—Loss of Appetite,—Dyspepsia, or Indigestion,—Heart-burn,—Habitual Costiveness,—Tumours,—Fever and Ague,—Colds,—Coughs,—Inward Weakness,—Depression of the Spirits,—Palpitation,—Fits,—Faintness,—Female complaints,—Gravel,—Rheumatism,—Gout,—Worms,—Swellings and Weakness of the Joints,—Sprains,—Bruises,—Pains in the Back,—Tooth-ache,—Corns,—Chilblains,—Scalds,—Burns,—Sore Eyes,—Pimples in the Face,—Scurvy,—Sore Legs,—Piles and Ulcers of every description,—White Swellings,—Scrophula,—Ringworms,—Scald-Heads,—Saint Vitus' Dance,—Tic-Doloreux,—Cholera Morbus,—Itch,—and Disease resulting from Intemperance and Improprieties of Youth.

**ALL KINDS OF DRUGS OF THE BEST QUALITY
 SOLD AT THIS ESTABLISHMENT.**

ADVICE GRATIS.

Above: One of the shops built in the Square in the 1840s. Below an advert of 1848 for one of the shops – intriguingly, the address is Bond Street' no doubt originating with the bond family, wealthy landowners and grocers. This is the only reference to Bond Street we have.

Chapter 7 A Demographic Study using the Census Records of 1851 and 1871

Introduction

North Thoresby at the time of the 1851 census returns used in this study was a Lincolnshire rural community, with the parish running roughly west-east from the edge of the Wolds to the coastal plain or fen. It lies almost midway between Grimsby and Louth, and in the earlier years of the century relied upon the latter as its main town. Although Louth continued to have an important administrative function throughout the period of this study, and its population more than doubled in the nineteenth century, Grimsby was growing in importance all the time and far outstripping the older centre in terms of population, employment and wealth. The biggest growth was in the 1840s when the railway arrived and Grimsby's market for its fish greatly expanded.

The Enclosure of North Thoresby took place, following the General Enclosure Act of 1836, between 1836 and 1846, and the railway arrived soon after. The village in 1851 had therefore just gone through something of an upheaval.

Population Growth in Grimsby and Louth

Date of Census	Grimsby	Louth
1801	1,524	4,258
1821	3,064	6,055
1841	3,700	8,835
1851	8,860	10,553
1861	11,067	10,667
1871	20,244	10,610

The Population

In 1851 there was a total resident population of 720, with visitors at the time of the census bringing the official figure up to 733. This was nearly double the figure at the beginning of the nineteenth century [Ed: the first national census was in 1801], when there were only 378 inhabitants. After this dramatic rise the rate of increase levelled out somewhat, with a peak of 824 being reached in 1861 (in fact the highest figure for the next 110 years) and a decline to 765 residents in 1871.

The twenty-year span covered by our two census returns might then seem to cover one of the most stable periods during the century. Enclosure had been achieved, the railway had arrived, and population figures were fairly steady. But beneath this there would seem to be evidence, as will be seen later, that the situation was very far from static. During the twenty years immediately following our period, there was a decline in the population of some 25%, to 573 in 1891. These are well known as years of rural depopulation throughout the country, but it is at least arguable that this migration was already well under way in North Thoresby by 1871.

The 720 residents of 1851 lived in 162 households; in 1871 the 765 residents lived in 172 households, so that in both years the average size of household was 4.44. This may at first sight give the lie to the popular view of the large Victorian family, but for real evidence of family size we need to look further. A slightly better indication is given by looking just at those households which had children under fourteen years of age, here we find an average of 2.9 children per family in 1851 increasing to 3.5 in 1871, so that the size of the family seems to have increased fairly significantly.

This of course still only takes into account the younger children, since above the age of fourteen many would have left home to go into domestic or farm service, or to be apprenticed, or indeed as they grew older still would have married and gone to live elsewhere. Some clue to this is given by the fact that there were, in 1851, 34 unmarried young people, presumed by name and age to be of North Thoresby families, working in residential employment in the parish. Add to these the 70 children aged over 14 who were still living at home, and the family size is building up all the time.

The obvious if surprising feature of the age-structure pattern is that the majority of the population is young and that this weighting increased over the twenty-year period. In 1851, 39.9% of the population were aged 14 years or less and a further 23.7% were under 30, so that 63.6% had been born since 1821. This is not exceptional; the figure for England and Wales in total was 62.7%. [Ed: the population of Britain increased more rapidly than any other European country in the nineteenth century, and Thoresby's young population is a reflection of this]

By 1871, the figure for the under fourteens has markedly increased, to 43.1%, but the under 30 age group in total has gone down slightly to 63.1%. Herein lies one of the main changes since 1851, since the growth in the youngest sector of the community has been more than compensated for by a shrinkage in the age group 25-29 years old, which formed 8% of the total in 1851 but only 4% in 1871. Put differently, there were 89 children aged between 6 and 10 years in 1851, but twenty years later there were only 31 adults aged between 25 and 29 years.

This is evidence of a high level of emigration. In fact, if we look at the 31 adults in the 25 to 29 age group, only seven were actually born in the parish, even allowing for the fact that a number would have moved in before the 1851 census there must be strong supposition, to put it no higher, that the young adult population had started to move away from North Thoresby.

There is one other statistic which supports the earlier evidence, and that is the number of children who lived with relations other than their parents. In 1851 there were only five instances, but in 1871 there were twenty-four. Taken together with the low numbers of young adults revealed by the 1871 census, the only logical conclusion must be that the population decline was further under way than the simple figures of total population might indicate, and that the countryside was now being abandoned in favour of the expanding towns or even the colonies. The young adults had departed in hope, leaving the children to follow later when a settled living had been found.

The absence of young adults is in fact further underlined if one looks at the total age range from 20-34. Even in 1851, when the population was still some years short of its peak, only 21.2% of the total were in this bracket, compared with an England and

Wales figure of 24.6%. This is curious in view of the fact that North Thoresby was an 'open' parish (i.e. one that was not dominated by one large landowner or squire which are commonly referred to as a closed or 'estate' village, where labourers lived in accommodation provided by a landowner), and one therefore one which labourers would normally gravitate to in search of work and accommodation. The comparable figure for Binbrook, a large 'closed' parish not many miles away, is 24.43%, almost exactly in line with the national average.

At this stage, therefore, the question can only be posed: do figures, which show an abnormal shortage of residents between the ages of 20 and 34 in both returns, and a quite remarkable one in 1871, correlate with any other evidence of young adults moving away from the village, or lack of young adults moving in? More succinctly, why was North Thoresby apparently not a good place for the young adult to be? [Ed: the speedy growth of the population of Grimsby, with its fishing fleet and accompanying industry being one obvious destination, the growth of Cleethorpes as a resort another and the coming of the railway brought great mobility].

Before leaving the age structure, it may perhaps be asked how it was that in 1871, with all these 'missing' people of the normal age of parenthood, the number of children showed an increase. The number of under five-year-olds has gone up to 18.7%, compared with 15.6% in the earlier census. So, who were their parents?

The increase in family size, noted earlier, answers this in part, since it needed fewer parents to produce more children. But the fact remains that well over half the under-fives had parents both of whom were over 35. Perhaps this is not remarkable, but it does serve to illustrate why, as we shall see in a later section, relatively few women were working for wages, and to underline the fundamentally childbearing and rearing role of women at the time, to the exclusion of any other activity and that this did not stop at an early age. In passing, one might spare a thought in this connection for the wife of one Martin Lamming who, at the age of 45, had one month earlier produced her ninth child, (or maybe more than ninth if others had died or left home), and was running a household consisting of, in addition to the baby, six sons aged 22, 21, 18, 15, 11 and 3, two daughters of 8 and 5, and a grandson of 3 just for good measure.

Place of Birth

It has already been noted that North Thoresby was an open parish, and that the time was one of little mobility of the rural population. We have also seen that, while the total population figures indicate an apparent stability, there was, at least towards the end of our period, the beginning of depopulation, and even 1851 a lack of residents in the younger adult age groups. The place of birth of the people of the village should therefore shed some further light on these aspects of its structure.

There is a slight difficulty in applying the usual 5-mile, 20-mile and over 20-mile radius rules, since only just over five miles to the east lies the North Sea. The tables therefore show:

1. those born in North Thoresby itself
2. those born in the immediately adjacent parishes of Haverby cum Beesby, Grainsby, Tetney, North Coates, Marshchapel, Fulstow, Ludborough and Wyham cum Cadeby

3. those born in parishes within the general region of North East Lincolnshire dominated by Louth, Grimsby and Caistor
4. those born elsewhere in Lincolnshire, and
5. those born outside Lincolnshire.

Place of Birth, All residents	1851	1871
North Thoresby	46.1%	49.6%
Adjacent Parishes	11.4%	11.6%
North East Lincolnshire	26.7%	25.9%
Rest of Lincolnshire	9.3%	8.7%
Outside Lincolnshire	5.4%	4.2%
Not Known	1.1%	-

These figures show a fairly normal distribution, although they are slightly below the average for the region for the proportion born in the parish. The growth in this classification in 1871 is almost entirely due to the increase noted earlier in the number of young children. The figures for the adult (defined as over 14 years old), population are very different.

Place of Birth, Residents over 14 years of age	1851	1871
North Thoresby	30.4%	29.7%
Adjacent Parishes	14.1%	12.7%
North East Lincolnshire	31.9%	38.5%
Elsewhere in Lincolnshire	14.1%	13.0%
Outside Lincolnshire	7.8%	6.1%
Not Known	1.7%	-

The 1851 figures show at first sight what one might expect from a community which had virtually doubled its population in the space of 50 years and which was an open parish, that is to say a high percentage of 'local immigrants' and lower figures for those born in and immediately around North Thoresby. But once again after twenty years of apparent stability in terms of the total figures, we find the figures still to be much the same, in fact showing a marginal decrease in those born in and around the parish in favour of local incomers.

So once again, the detailed picture shows, not stability, but an undercurrent of migrancy, albeit within a relatively limited area.

Three other small pieces of evidence all help to corroborate this picture. Firstly, of the forty tradesmen and craftsmen in 1851, only twelve were born in the parish; in 1871 the figure was 10 out of 36. These are just those occupations where one might expect some sort of settled family succession, but there is no evidence of this.

Secondly, if one looks at the birthplaces of married couples, we find that in 1851 only thirteen cases exist of both partners being born in North Thoresby, and in 1871 this number had shrunk to seven.

Thirdly, one finds in most settled communities a high proportion of related people, of families with the same patronymic, indicating a long-term growth of the same families

over succeeding generations. Thus, a study done on the village of Naseby, Northamptonshire, of roughly the same size as North Thoresby, showed 95 households being represented by only 14 surnames, all of which appear three or more times. In North Thoresby however, only nine surnames appear more than twice in the 1851 return, accounting for 57 households; by 1871 there are eighteen surnames appearing more than twice, representing 63 families. It is noteworthy that in 1851 the Mumby family accounted for over 8% of the population, with a least 60 people in the village bearing that name.

Surnames appearing three or more times in the Census as head of household	
1851	1871
Mumby (13)	Mumby (9)
Proctor (6)	Dows(6)
Wright (6)	Hewson (5)
Kermond (4)	Cooke (5)
Dows (4)	Lingard (4)
Cooke (4)	Denniss (4)
Hewson (4)	Kettlewell (3)
Robinson (3)	Proctor (3)
Allison (3)	Smith (3)
	Bradley (3)
	Presswood (3)
	Atkinson (3)
	Pickard (3)
	Barker (3)
	Fawcett (3)
	Wright (3)
	West (3)
	Patchett (3)

Occupation

It would be astonishing if the vast majority of the working population was not involved with agriculture in some way or another. The figures for those most directly concerned are:

Agricultural Occupations	1851	1871
Farmers	19	20
Farm Servants	26	16
Agricultural Labourers	110	93
Cattle Dealer		1
Farm Bailiff		1
Dairymaids		2
Total	155	133

Farmers, with Acreages and Employees					
1851			1871		
Name	Acres	Men	Name	Acres	Men
Th. Bingham	550	18	Th. Bingham	600	16
Th. Barkworth	320	5	Daniel Patchett	470	14
Stephen Dows	240	6	Francis Campion	355	12
Ant. Hewson	180	4	Stephen Dows	260	10
John Dows	175	3	Eliz. Hewson	192	7
John Mumby	160	8	John Dows	170	6
Daniel Patchett	110	7	John Mumby	150	3
Robt. Stothard	100	2	Wm. Drewry	136	3
Th. Bond	96	4	Jane Bond	110	5
Ch. Cordock	82	2	Isaac Dows	94	8
Th. Hewson	80	3	John Cooke	80	6
John Cooke	76	4	Saml. Patchett	60	3
John Borman	66	1	Mary Lister	60	2
Wm. Walkerley	60	1	George Beckett	40	-
Robt. Lister	60	1	Saml. Cooke	34	2
Susan Marfleet	40	4	Wm. Oak	25	-
Saml. Cooke	34	1	Th. Proctor	10	-
Th. Forman	24	3			
Francis Robinson	5	-			
Total	2,458	77	Total	2,846	97

Farmers did not necessarily own all or any of their acreages but were tenants.

NB: Also

Thomas Patchett Farmer & Butcher

Thomas Bond Farmer & Grocer

Andrew Isaac Farmer in Partnership in Grainsby

All with acreages undeclared.

The number of men employed is derived from two sources, firstly the declaration of employees on the census return, and secondly the number of male servants resident in the household.

Thus, only eight farms are still run by the same family over the twenty-three years, and of the nine smallest in 1851, only three survive, whereas of the five biggest, four survive. Without having the pattern of ownership clear from the census returns, one cannot be sure how many are owners and how many tenants, but we do know from the Enclosure award that of the bigger farmers in 1851 only Thomas Barkworth had any substantial acreage of his own, and he is the one to have disappeared by 1871. Others in the 1851 list who have acreages in the Enclosure Award roughly corresponding to the acreage declared in the census are Robert Stothard, Thomas Bond, Thomas Hewson, John Borman, Susannah Marfleet and Thomas Forman. All have ceased farming by 1871, although Bond declares himself as a farmer and grocer with no acreage stated.

It is interesting that the total acreage returned in 1871 has increased by 532 compared with the earlier years. This does of course not mean that the parish boundaries had enlarged. The 1851 figure is nearly enough in line with both the tithe award figure (2,454 acres) and the Enclosure Award (2,226 acres) to imply that most of the farming was done inside the parish.

Therefore, by 1871 we must assume that some of the bigger farmers were also operating outside the parish, though we cannot tell whether as owners or tenants. Daniel Patchett is the only one in both returns to have made a substantial increase in his acreage, from 110 to 470. Thomas Bingham, the Earl of Yarborough's tenant at Autby House, has grown big or prosperous enough to employ a farm bailiff, and it would appear likely that Francis Campion bought or inherited the former Barkworth land.

With the number of farmers down, and the total acreage up, it is not surprising that the average size of farm has increased by nearly one-third in 1871, from 122 acres to 167.

Before leaving the farmers and farming, it is worth noting that in 1851 there were two people described as 'Landed Proprietors', although there is no record in either the census itself, the Enclosure Award, or White's 1856 Directory, or them owning land in the parish. Both however, were born in North Thoresby, Faith Winter, a widow, in 1771, and John Harrison, a married man, in 1796. Harrison had no children, and his widow survives him in 1871 as an annuitant [an individual who is entitled to collect the regular payments of a pension or an annuity investment], so presumably whatever land was concerned had been sold on Harrison's death or passed to trustees.

The trades and callings were very much those one would expect in a rural community of this type, and of course most would not have existed without the economic substructure of farming.

Professional Occupations

	1851	1871
Clergymen	1 (Curate)	1 (Rector)
School Teachers	1 male	2 male
	2 female	2 female
	1 governess	1 female retired
		1 governess
		1 pupil teacher (male)
Doctors	None	1
Others	1 Excise Officer	1 Police Constable
	1 Relieving Officer	1 Solicitor's Clerk
	1 Solicitor's Clerk	1 Stationmaster
	1 Stationmaster	

Looking first at the professions, we find that in the period between the two censuses the village acquired a residential Rector, having previously been served by a Curate. The Curate's name was Parkinson, and it is probable that he was a member of the Parkinson family of Ravendale who were large landowners in the parish.

In 1851 there was one charity school in the village, with John Mumby as headmaster, two schoolmistresses, Elizabeth Tyler aged 76, wife of a Chelsea Pensioner, and Jane Farrow, wife of an agricultural labourer. John Mumby's mother is listed as a schoolmaster's widow, so the profession (and possibly also the position) ran in the family. In 1871, Mumby was still the schoolmaster (and Mrs Tyler now a retired schoolmistress and the village's oldest inhabitant at 96), but we now also have the Wesleyan Day School, run by one Michael Bayliss from West Bromwich. There are still two lady teachers, though it is not clear at which schools, and a fourteen-year-old boy staying on at school as a pupil teacher.

Two of the 1851 jobs have disappeared twenty years later, the Excise Officer George Ablett and the Relieving Officer Edward Brown (who is also described as High Constable). On the other hand, the village has acquired its first General Practitioner, Henry George, and the Law had arrived in the person of John Lawson, Police Constable. The Governesses in the two years were both daughters of people just mentioned, the Relieving Officer's daughter in 1851 and the Doctor's daughter in 1871. It is not clear which children came under their care.

Charles Marfleet, bachelor son of a farmer, was the Solicitor's Clerk mentioned in both returns, but it is not known whether he acted in North Thoresby on behalf of Solicitors in practice elsewhere, or whether he was an early commuter, perhaps on the new railway, to an office in Grimsby or Louth.

One young man not mentioned in the table above because not in employment, but nevertheless one who must have been regarded as something above the run of the mill village people, was an undergraduate at Oxford. He was the grandson of Jane Bond, the same who farmed 110 acres and was a shopkeeper. It is not at all clear, although he was born in North Thoresby, who his parents were. Unfortunately, he was born just too late for the 1851 census, and Jane Bond in that return is described as housekeeper, (but also related in an unstated way) to farmer Thomas Bond, aged at that time 23, and unmarried, perhaps sister.

Trades and Crafts

Among the tradespeople and craftsmen, the evidence is mainly of continuity with variations. The shoemakers, grocers, butchers, bakers, saddlers and carriers are constant in number or reasonably so, but half of the names change. There is a curious variation in the woodworkers, one wheelwright and seven carpenters in 1851, no pure wheelwrights in 1871 but six joiners most of whom claimed to be wheelwrights as well, and only one carpenter.

Out of all these, only two names are common to both years. Of the five bricklayers, with one journeyman and one apprentice, in 1851, only one apprentice and two labourers survive in 1871, although by the later year we have a fully-fledged builder and also a painter, plumber and glazier (all one man!).

There was only one house being built in the village in 1851 [Ed: the 1840s had seen a building boom in the 1840s with, for example, the buildings, once shops opposite the

current Morrisons, the cottages east of Sadlers and the homes – again once shops – opposite] and none in 1871, so any work being done by these people other than maintenance work must have been outside the parish. Similarly, there were four brickmakers in 1851, only two in 1871, so the building trade in general seems to have gone into something of a decline. Each year shows four blacksmiths, but only one name is the same, and the number of journeymen and apprentices had shrunk from four to one. Journeyman’ is defined as a skilled tradesman but not yet a ‘master’ craftsman so assumption in interpreting the data, is that those in the right hand columns are additional to those ‘masters’ in the left.

Trades and Crafts

	1851		1871	
Shoemakers	4	4 journeymen 1 apprentice	5	1 journeyman 2 apprentices
Grocers	3	1 apprentice	2	3 apprentices
Wheelwright	1		0	
Wheelwright & Joiner			6	4 apprentices
Bricklayers	5	1 journeyman		1 apprentice
Blacksmiths	4	2 journeymen 2 apprentices	4	1 journeyman
Butcher	1	1 journeyman	1	
Carpenters	7	1 journeyman 3 apprentices		1 apprentice
Maltster	1		0	
Tailors	4	1 journeyman 5 apprentices	2	1 apprentice
Innkeepers	1	Granby	2	Granby & New Inn
Millers	2	1 journeyman	2	
Carries	2		3	
Brickmakers	4		2	
Sadler	1		1	
Coach Painter	1		0	
Needlemaker	1		0	
Lodging Housekeeper	1		0	
Hawkers	2		1	
Rag Collectors	2		0	
Plumber/Glazier/Painter			1	
Baker	1		1	
Builder	1		1	2 apprentices
General Dealer	0		1	
Netmender	0		1	
Brewer/Ostler	0		1	
Foundry Engine Driver	0		1	
Ratcatcher	0		1	
Engine Fitters	0		2	1 apprentice
Dressmakers	4		11	
Nurses	1		6	
Straw Bonnet Maker	1		0	
Milliner	0		1	

The village's two mills were running in both years, with the Pottage family still running one, but a change of hands at the other one. William Smith kept the Granby Inn over the whole period, but by 1871 the New Inn had opened at the railway end of the village. Tailoring has dwindled from a complement of four tailors, five apprentices and one journeyman in 1851 to just two tailors and one apprentice in the later year.

It is interesting that mechanised agriculture seems to have made little impact in either year, with no one in 1851 in occupations that might be connected with farm machinery as such. In 1871 there are two engine fitters and one apprentice, but there is no means of telling whether these were agricultural engines. In fact, the presence of a foundry engine driver suggests otherwise and may indicate the arrival of the Foundry on the High Street.

The presence of a coach painter and needle maker in 1851 seems to be freakish, in that both were staying at a lodging house, and therefore probably itinerant. Mr Button may have had a use for needles, but it is unlikely that there were many coaches to be painted. Similarly, the netmender in 1871 was staying at the Granby, and presumably on his way to or from Grimsby.

The number of working women is low in both years; apart from the teachers and governesses and the girls in domestic services, there is just a handful of dressmakers and 'nurses', probably wet nurses, but maybe looking after the old also. This is an indication of the village's remoteness from any centre of female intensive industry such as clothing, which would have provided outwork. Nevertheless, there are more wage-earning women in 1871 than there had been in the previous return.

Other Occupations

	1851	1871
Pensioners/annuitants	5	2
Railway Porter	1	1
Railway Labourer	1	0
Bricklayers Labourer	1	2
Housekeepers	3	3
General Servants	29	28
Errand Boys	2	0
Coal Porter	1	0
Paupers	25	5
Grooms/Gardeners	0	5
Platelayer	0	1
Legatees	0	2
Charwomen	0	6

It may perhaps be supposed from the above that at least some people of the village were prospering since somebody must have employed the sudden access of grooms, gardeners and charwomen. And of course, the reductions of paupers indicate the

changing Poor Laws over the period [Ed: the paupers would have gone to the workhouse in Louth], and is by no means unique to North Thoresby.

Summary

It must be said that the census return of 1851 and 1871 show nothing startling about the state of North Thoresby. Enclosure may have been something of a revolution in the landscape, and no doubt caused no little upheaval while in progress, but the village would seem to have settled down quickly into its new way of life.

That the village was not in a state of expansion would seem to be shown by a lack of change in the occupational pattern, by a remarkable consistency in the size of farm buildings, and by little change in the total population figures. That it did not, despite being an open parish, particularly attract people to come and stay is evidenced by the low proportion of young adults and the widespread places of birth of the residence.

The decline in population of the last quarter of the nineteenth century, typical of rural communities all over England, was already well under way here by 1871 and is clear not only from the marginal fall in the total population, but by the fall in the percentage of young 'job seeking' adults and perhaps by the increasing number of children living with grandparents or uncles and aunts. Grimsby was entering a period of rapid expansion, and the people might not have gone far away, but the expanding West Riding and Midlands were possibly just as magnetic, with the colonies also beckoning the more adventurous.

Nevertheless, it is hoped that a clear picture of a community had emerged from the bare statistics of two census returns. Interpretation of statistics is a dangerous game at the best of times.

Additional Notes 2024: Background to the National Census

Although the 1841 Census is considered to be the first 'modern' census, there were earlier decennial censuses in 1801, 1811, 1821 and 1831. The objective of these 'Pre-1841' censuses was to determine population numbers and trends. Personal details were not officially recorded until the census of 1841. The first four decennial censuses in Great Britain in 1801, 1811, 1821 and 1831 were run by John Rickman. Rickman's first census in 1801 found the population of England and Wales was 8.9 million, not counting those at sea, in the military, or prisoners. That's roughly what the population of London was in 2020. The 1821 Census showed that almost half the population was under 20 years old. Rather than households completing forms for themselves, the early censuses, up to 1831, were carried out by an enumerator filling in counts for local areas. The task of census-taking was given to Overseers of the Poor and clergy, who detailed local births, marriages and deaths.

1841 saw the first 'modern' census, led by the General Registrar 'Mr Lister', with forms filled out by households directly. Many people couldn't read or write and getting all the returns was a challenge but the exercise of people filling in their own census was deemed a success. It was also the first census form available in Welsh. By the 1850s, the census revealed people in certain jobs were dying younger than others. This was

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In the Archives, courtesy of research by villager John Sanchez in 1991, we have a full record of the 1871 Census analysed in several ways. The extract below is by family group and relationships. Another set displays by occupation, another is by place of birth.

	M R_to	Cond	Ag	Occupl
Mary Brooks	F Head	W	66	Retired Farmer
Alice.M. Payne	F G.Dau	Unmar	16	Farmers Daughter
Hannah.M. Payne	F G.Dau		9	Scholar
Sarah.A. Payne	F G.Dau		7	Scholar
Charles Button	M Head	Mar	41	Tailor and Draper / Master employing 1 youth
Mary Button	F Wife	Mar	36	
Anne Button	F Daugh		7	Scholar
Kate Button	F Daugh		2	
xxxxx.W. Button	M Son		5M	
Henry Hewins	M Head	Mar	63	Carrier and Shoemaker
Sarah Hewins	F Wife	Mar	58	
Fanny Hewins	F Daugh		16	
Henry Hewins	M Son		15	Bricklayer's Apprentice
John Hewins	M Son		12	
Ann Wright	F Head	W	68	Agricultural Labourer's Widow
Edward Coney?	M Head	Mar	50	Joiner ; Master
Margaret Coney?	F Wife	Mar	56	
John Vickers	M Head	Mar	50	Carrier
Maria Vickers	F Wife	Mar	54	
Moses Vickers	M Son	Unmar	21	Agricultural Labourer
Charles Larder?	M Lodg	Unmar	23	Joiner
Henry Freshney?	M Lodg	Unmar	22	Wheelwright
John Plumtree	M Head	Mar	45	Plumber, Glazier & Painter
Georgiana Plumtree	F Wife	Mar	36	
Fanny.M. Plumtree	F Daugh		13	Scholar
Susannah Plumtree	F Daugh		11	Scholar
John.W. Plumtree	M Son		9	Scholar
Georgiana Plumtree	F Daugh		7	Scholar
George.E. Plumtree	M Son		6	Scholar
Tom.B. Plumtree	M Son		3	
Thomas Patchett	M Head	Mar	50	Farmer & Butcher
Martha Patchett	F Wife	Mar	40	
Martha Capes	F Niece		7	Scholar
Mary Dishman?	F Serv	Unmar	20	General Servant
Edward Allitt	M Serv		15	Farm Servant
Joseph Mumby	M Head	Mar	47	Baker
Eliza Mumby	F Wife	Mar	33	
Jane Mumby	F Daugh	Unmar	18	
John Mumby	M Son		9	Scholar
George Mumby	M Son		6	Scholar
Sarah Mumby	F Daugh		1	
Holland Kirman	M Head	Mar	36	Groom & Gardener
Mary Kirman	F Wife	Mar	30	
Fredrick Kirman	M Son		7	Scholar
William.H. Kirman	M Son		3	Scholar
Eliza Kirman	F Daugh		5	Scholar
Eliza Kirman	F Daugh		7M	
William Haith	M Head	Mar	61	Blacksmith
Mary Haith	F Wife	Mar	53	
Elizabeth Haith	F Daugh		14	Scholar
John Wilkinson	M Serv	Unmar	22	Journeyman Blacksmith
Joseph Dinnix?	M Head	Widr	63	Agricultural Labourer
Ann Dinnix?	F Daugh	Unmar	21	Housekeeper
Joseph Dinnix?	M G.Son		12	Scholar
Martin Lanning	M Head	Mar	49	Agricultural Labourer
Frances Lanning	F Wife	Mar	45	
Fred Lanning	M Son	Unmar	22	Agricultural Labourer
Henry Lanning	M Son	Unmar	21	Agricultural Labourer

North Thoresby Snippets

Newspaper articles from County Newspapers. **With thanks to Doreen Dyson.**

Oxford Journal 7th May 1803: Marriage : At North Thoresby, near Louth Mr. J. Mumby, Farmer and Grazier to Miss Wright of the same place. About three hours after the marriage ceremony was performed the bride presented her spouse with a fine smiling girl. (Marriage: 1803 Apr 7 - John Mumby = Theodisia Wright (signs Theodosha). By Licence, Both sign. Wits: Robert Barker, Robert Kemp. Robt Powley, Curate. Baptism same day 1803 Apr 7 Catharine Mumby d/o John & Theodisia).

Stamford Mercury 16th May 1815: Marriage - On the 27th ultimo at North Thoresby, Mr. Squires of Fulstow to Mrs. Wallis of the former place, being her third husband in thirteen months.

Stamford Mercury 31st October 1823: Stolen or Strayed out of North Thoresby Field on the 19th instant. An aged Bay Horse with four white legs, white face and short cut tail. Whoever will restore the said horse to Mr. Francis Bond of North Thoresby, shall be handsomely rewarded for their trouble.

Stamford Mercury 10th March 1837: Capital Investment – To Innkeepers and Others. To Be Sold by Private Contract. All that spacious and good-accustomed Inn known by the name of the ‘Granby Inn’ situated on four crossroads in an open field which is now inclosing, half way between the port of Grimsby and the flourishing town of Louth, being in the parish of North Thoresby in the county of Lincoln, containing Dining-room, Traveller’s room, Tap-room, Bar, Five Kitchens, excellent Vaulted Cellar etc. etc. Brew-house, Stables, Coach-house, Garden and all other requisite Appurtenances. There are two coaches to and from the tides and the London mail calling daily – The inventory is small (about £70). Brewing Utensils included. The articles to be taken at a fair valuation. For further particulars apply to Mrs Croft, the owner, Grainsby or 14 Vallance-place, Blanket-row, Hull, Mr. Geo. Croft at Mr. Eastwood’s 91 Queen-street, Hull or at the Hull Advertiser Offices.

Stamford Mercury 24th May 1839: Disgraceful Scene – A prize fight took place on Sunday night in the village of North Thoresby near Louth, for a sovereign aside, between two ruffians – a celebrated boniface being Major-Domo of the affair.

Stamford Mercury 27th September 1839: An inquest was held at North Thoresby before the coroner F.F. Goe on the body of a child named Stones, which came to his death by having oil of vitriol administered instead of an anodyne: the mistake occurred through the negligence of a shop keeper's wife named Dowse whom the coroner severely reprimanded. Verdict 'Accidental Death'. [George Stones was buried in St. Helen's Churchyard 25th September 1839, aged 7 months]

Stamford Mercury 4th June 1840: Teetotalism – On Thursday the 28th ult the second anniversary of the North Thoresby Total Abstinence Society was held. A numerous and well-dressed procession, headed by that zealous advocate, the Rev. J.M. Holt, and an excellent band, paraded the village, and marched as far as Ludboro’ and back, after which they, together with a numerous company in Mr. Barker’s spacious barn, partook

of tea and cake. In the evening a public meeting was held in the Primitive Methodist Chapel, the above Rev. Gent in the chair, the meeting was addressed by Messrs Parker and Thompson, and the district agent, Mr. Leighs of London. A short time ago, the village of North Thoresby was called "Drunken Thoresby" but now it has cast off that degrading appellation, and is termed "Sober Thoresby".

Lincolnshire Chronicle 19th March 1841: A boy named Hewins, whilst driving some horses in the yard of his grandfather, Mr. John Mumby of North Thoresby on Sunday last, received a kick from one of the horses upon the head which fractured his skull, and he died in consequence on the following Tuesday. [Robert Hewins was buried in the Churchyard of St. Helen's on 18th March 1841, aged 11 years].

Stamford Mercury 4th June 1841: Two Pounds Reward – Stolen or Strayed but supposed to be Stolen from a Paddock adjoining the parish of North Thoresby, late on Monday Night or early on Tuesday Morning, a Dark Brown Stallion Pony about 13 hands high, 4 years old, branded with a 'T' upon his far thigh, the property of Mr. Cook, butcher North Thoresby. If strayed, whoever will restore is to the owner shall be handsomely rewarded and have all reasonable expenses paid. If stolen whoever will give information of the offender or offenders so that he or she may be brought to justice and convicted, shall on conviction receive from the aforesaid Mr. Cook Two Pounds Reward.

Lincolnshire Chronicle 27th August 1841: Yesterday night week, three cottages at North Thoresby belonging to William Glover of that place were burnt down. The fire is supposed to have originated from one of the occupiers having placed some kindling under the grate which ignited from some embers, and from which the chimney first took fire. The inmates, unconscious of the danger surrounding them, slept soundly until about two o'clock by which time the flames had made sad havoc with their humble dwellings, and had not they been aroused by some neighbours, it is feared that they would have perished in the flames. We understand that most of the furniture in the houses was consumed and in addition one poor man, a rag gatherer had rags to the value of £8 totally destroyed. We believe the houses were not insured, consequently the loss is heavy upon the proprietor, who is an old man, and whose livelihood materially depended upon the rents therefrom.

Jackson's Oxford Journal (taken from Lincoln Mercury) 26th March 1842:

Jack In The Hedge – There is now living at North Thoresby a skilful old doctress, named Bradley, who cured cancers, having now or recently under her care several cases of cancer on the head, mouth, cheeks and lip. Her panacea consists of an ungent made of herbs, the patient formenting the aliment with a decoction of horehound and wormwood. The woman is said to be in possession of the secret prescriptions and books of a poor man famous in the annals of the village olden times, and who was distinguished by the cognomen of "Jack in the Hedge". His end was tragical, his skill exciting the envy of the "doctors" they resolved on his destruction, and to get rid of him invited him to a feast, and despatch him by poison..... So runs the tale!

Lincolnshire Chronicle 25th April 1845: North Thoresby – On Friday the 11th inst. while Mr. James Cook, blacksmith of North Thoresby was in the act of shoeing a horse

belonging to Mr. Coates of Grainsby House, the animal forced itself upon him, and broke his leg in two places, but we are happy to say he is in a fair way of recovery.

Supposed Murder – As some workmen were employed during the past week in cutting a ditch in North Thoresby West Field, by the side of a turnpike leading from Louth to Great Grimsby, they dug up a human skull, together with some bones, which appear to have been deposited there at some very remote period. Of course the circumstance is productive of various conjectures, but the prevailing opinion is that they are the remains of someone who has been murdered near the spot.

Stamford Mercury 12th May 1848: To Surgeons and Others, To Be Let and entered upon immediately, a neat and commodious House in the improving village of North Thoresby where there is an excellent opening for a Surgeon, North Thoresby being in the centre of a number of small villages as well as the Tetney district of the Louth Union, there is no medical man within several miles. For rent and particulars please apply to Mr. W. Bond, North Thoresby, near Louth.

Stamford Mercury 24th May 1850: North Thoresby – An ancient gold ring, in a beautiful state of preservation was picked up in a field at this place last week by a labourer named Peacock. It is a signet ring, exactly the weight of two sovereigns and has upon it the initials “G.S.” and a wheat-sheaf. It is now in the possession of the Rev. Dr. Parkinson of Ravendale.

Stamford Mercury 14th June 1850: Jubilee In the Village – On the 13th inst., Mrs. Tylar schoolmistress of North Thoresby, regaled the children of her school with plum bread and tea in the orchard, in commemoration of her 50th year in that capacity in the same house, she never having given up her school for that long period, and having consequently taught the second and third generations! She is now 75 years old, and is as much in her element as heretofore, and she is likely for some time to continue her work. Dame Tylar has been connected with the Methodist Society (Wesleyan Church now) above 50 years and it is impossible to calculate the amount of moral and spirited benefit which must have resulted to her numerous little pupils under the plain and pious teaching of this venerable female.

Stamford Mercury 22nd April 1853: Strike of Agricultural Labourers – A general rise appears to be taking place in the wages of the labourers in the neighbourhood of North Thoresby. On Monday last a wealthy farmer of that parish was about to commence thrashing by steam, when all his hands refused to begin operating unless their wages were advanced to 1s 6d per day for women and 3s for men. The demand was acceded to.

Stamford Mercury 8th September 1853: A correspondent suggests the immediate formation of a sanitary committee at North Thoresby as the appointment of such a body might adopt measures calculated to keep off the cholera. He also asks what the farmers are about to allow the existence of such filthy pools of stagnant water are to be seen in the above village.

Lincolnshire Chronicle 9th September 1853: William Croft Smith of the ‘Granby Inn’ in the parish of North Thoresby was summoned by the superintendent charged with

drawing ale during divine service on the morning of the 28th of August. Fined £1 and costs and cautioned as to the manner of conducting the house in future.

The Hull Packet 16th June 1854: Fatal Accident – On Friday morning last about 10 o'clock Mrs. Ann Ingoldby the mother of James Ingoldby, carrier of North Thoresby was driving her son's cart to the market in his absence at the wedding of a relative and in crossing the railway bridge at the entrance to the town, an engine then passing under the bridge gave a sudden whistle, which caused the horse to shy and throw her out of the cart. She fell upon her head and the wheel of the cart passed over her neck. When taken up she was dead. At the inquest the jury remarked that over the railway bridge was the principal thoroughfare into the town, and being so near the station, there was a constant whistling of the engines and blowing off of steam, in consequence whereof the shying of horses in passing was of frequent occurrence, and, in some cases several very narrow escapes. They requested the Coroner to write to the manager on the subject.

In July 1858 :John Dinnis was charged by Judith Lewis with being the father of her illegitimate child. Ordered to pay 5s per week for the first six weeks and 1s 9d per week until the child attains the age of 13 years.

In December of 1858: Ellen Rayworth was charged with stealing 11 yards of print, 2 worsted scarves a silk neck-tie, one cotton & three silk handkerchiefs from the shop of Thos Dowse, North Thoresby. She was committed for trial.

Lincolnshire Chronicle 1st August 1868: Sarah Bradley pleaded guilty to endeavouring to conceal the birth of her illegitimate child at North Thoresby on 12th July 1868. She was imprisoned for 12 months with hard labour.

The Hull Packet 16th January 1874: Choir Treat – The members of the choir belonging to the Wesleyan Chapel together with the teachers of the Sabbath School were regaled with a knife and fork tea in the day school, on Wednesday. A sumptuous repast was presided over by Mrs. Sempers and Mrs. Smith. After tea a number of choice pieces were sung, and a right merry evening was spent by the young folk. In conclusion Mr. Anthony Stovin, the senior superintendent of the school gave a suitable address to those present, appealing to the youthful part especially, to give their hearts to God early in life. The proceedings were brought to a close with singing and prayer.

The Hull Packet 6th December 1878: Mr. Thomas Bond of North Thoresby succeeded in carrying off the first prize at the Norfolk Show, held at Norwich. The Prince of Wales Medal, a prize worth in all £100. There was a large number of competitors including the Prince of Wales, Mr. Colman M.P. and Mr. C.S. Read M.P. The prize won by Mr. Bond was for the best beast in the yard.

The Hull Packet – 2nd February 1883: Fatal Accident – On Monday noon Mr. S. Atkinson, iron-founder and machinist, North Thoresby was killed in the fitter's shop at his own works. It appears that deceased was descending a ladder from the top of his shop when his coat laps were caught by a revolving shaft which ran the length of the building and he was thrown with such violence against one of the beams as to cause almost instant death. Deceased had extensive business connections at Grimsby where he was much respected by all who knew him.



Top: North Thoresby Boys Football Team, 1923. Bottom: School Football Team 1930-31



