



History of Thorrington

A Parish, Manor and its People



Thorrington



Dedicated to Tom Millatt, William Wild, Rita & Ken Sharpe – Historians of this Parish

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Prehistory

Like many villages in north-west Tendring, there are undated cropmarks in many fields south of the Clacton Road at Glebe Farm (**EHER 2438, 2263**) with the suggestion that this might be a Neolithic barrow¹ or long mortuary enclosure. This is a 50m long crop-mark on an alignment of NE-SW.²



Figure 1 – aerial photo of the long barrow³

Drawing from aerial photograph (1985)⁴

Test-pits found three pieces of burnt stone (c7000-400BC) north of Clacton Road. (TTN/06/4, TTN/07/3, TTN/07/4) There were also two potential worked flakes (TTN/07/5, TTN/07/7) excavated from south of Clacton Road. Three sherds of Late Iron Age (50BC–AD50) ‘Grog-tempered ware’ (TTN/06/6, TTN/07/6) were sited to the south of Clacton Road, on the ridge of higher ground, overlooking the marshes and estuaries to the south where previous Iron Age settlements of the Trinovantes tribe have been recorded.⁵

A flint scraper (**SMR 2264**) was found near to St Mary Magdalene’s Church, which dated to the Lower Palaeolithic to Late Bronze Age (500000 BC to 701 BC).⁶ A Neolithic axe (4000 BC to 2001 BC) was given to Colchester museum by A. Andrews found north-east of Thorrington (**SMR 2356**).⁷

1. Ennis T. (2008) **LAND OFF CLACTON ROAD THORRINGTON ESSEX ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION BY TRIAL TRENCHING** p.2.
2. Kemble J (2001) **Prehistoric and Roman Essex** p.53
3. Belton L (2012 ECC) **Developing Local List Records in Essex Project 6018** p.22 **Figure 3** There were 516 cropmarks in Tendring, with only six scheduled. Thorrington was proposed but failed to meet the requirements.
4. Tyler S (1984/5) **Note on Further possible Cropmark Long Barrows** **ESAH 3** 16
5. Collins C (2018) **Archaeological Test Pit Excavations in Thorrington, Essex, 2006 & 2007** p49
6. McMaster I (1975) **Colchester Archaeology Group Annual Bulletin Vol 18, p25**
7. **Accessions to the Museum 1972-73** p18

Roman (43-410AD)

Two sherds of Roman Greyware pottery were excavated from two test pits in Thorrington (TTN/06/6 and TTN/07/1) on this area of higher ground. This is also close to the route of a probable Roman road, connecting the Roman settlement at St Osyth and Colchester.

In Thorrington, the Roman road reportedly runs past Frating Abbey Farm to St Osyth and on a similar alignment to the modern road.¹ Aerial photography in 2008 showed (**SMR 2356**) a *Large circular enclosure, ring ditches, pits, linear features, a long straight trackway (Roman road - 3170)* to the west of Frating Abbey Farm Road.² Other photographs show a *double-ditched trackway* probably a Roman road. (It may link up with **SMR 2534 via 2593, 2575, 2394** and be connected to **2612**.)³

A Roman plough-share was found there in the 1960s⁴ (**SMR 2322**) and a copper alloy figurine of Priapus.⁵

1. Collins C (2018) *Archaeological Test Pit Excavations in Thorrington, Essex, 2006 & 2007* p49-50
2. Ingle, CJ, Strachan, D, Tyler, S and Saunders, H, 1993-2012, *NMP Cropmark Plot - 1:10,000 (Map)* SEX22419
3. Ibid
4. Colchester Museum ARTEFACT Col Mus. Acc. No 54.1966
5. Ferris I (2012) *Roman Britain Through its Objects* p72

Anglo-Saxon (AD 410-1066)

No Anglo-Saxon archaeology has been found, but the village was well established at the time of the Domesday Book. Evidence of early or middle Anglo-Saxon inhabitation is not easily found.¹

1. Collins C (2018) *Archaeological Test Pit Excavations in Thorrington, Essex, 2006 & 2007* p50; Lewis C (2010) *Currently occupied rural sites settlements in Eastern England in The Landscape Archaeology of Anglo-Saxon England* p.88, 103; Ryan MJ, Higham NJ (2010) *Landscape Archaeology of Anglo-Saxon England* p88, 103

Domesday Book

The Domesday Book of 1086 records *Torinduna*, and half a hide of land at *Eilesforda* from a free man, seized by Ralf fitzTurold on behalf of Bishop Odo – maternal half-brother of King William I. He also took land in the Hanningfields (belonging to the abbey of Ely); at Mucking (from Barking Abbey), and at Fobbing (belonging to Count Eustace).¹ Altogether Odo held 575 estates. These actions displeased the King's Commissioner who took the land for King, "... the Hundred does not know how he had this land since neither an officer, nor any other man came on his behalf to prove his right to this land it was taken into the king's hands with the rest..."² Odo had been imprisoned in Normandy since 1082 and was not released until William I's death in 1087. The following year, he rebelled against William II with five of the richest Norman land-owners, was captured in a six week siege at Pevensey Castle, released by ambush on the way to Rochester and surrendered again at the Castle. His nephew had him exiled again to Normandy and he died in Picardy, in 1099 on the way to the first Crusade.³

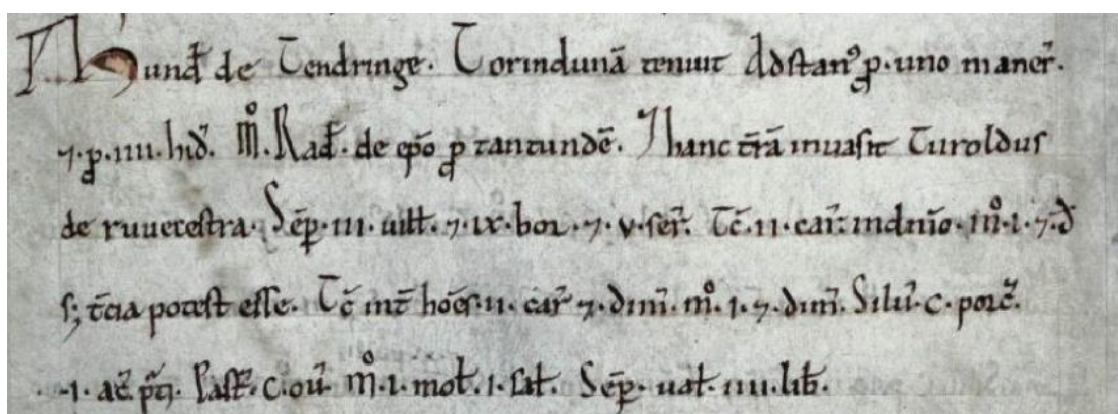


Figure 1 Domesday Record for Thorington © Crown Copyright The National Archives E31/1/1/219

There had been little change to the village in the twenty years since the Normans invaded. The Manor and four hides (480 acres) had belonged to Aethelstan in 1066. There were 17 households - 3 villans, 9 bordars and 5 slaves. The Lord now had 1 ½ ploughs with another ready to be used (up ½ plough); the men had 1 ½ ploughs (down ½). There were still one salt-pan and one mill, probably near Great Marsh Farm. There was woodland for 100 pigs and pasture for 100 sheep. It was still worth £4.⁴ No church is recorded anywhere in Tendring, though at least three Saxon churches existed in Essex. The closest was at Greenstead, Colchester.

1. Victoria County History of Essex, i (1903) p.342
2. The National Archives E31/1/1/219
3. Savage A (1984) Anglo-Saxon Chronicles; Sharpe R 1088 – William II and the Rebels (2004) Anglo-Norman Studies XXVI
4. The National Archives E31/1/1/219

The Manor of Thorrington

From Odo, the Manor of 'Thuritone' passed into the Barony of Swaincamp. It was tenanted, but feudal fees were paid to the Baron. Any decision about a sale might require his approval. Geoffrey Talbot held the Manor in 1135 and Walter de Mayenne in 1166. Later that year, the tenancy of Manor was purchased by Hamo (1) d'Ectot for £6 of silver and one knight's fee – which normally required the produce from five hides of land.¹

Hamo (I) married Alice de Hawkwell, a member of an established Essex family, and served as a juror on three grand assizes in 1198. His son Richard had succeeded by 1212 and was a grand assize juror in 1212. He served three times before the special eyre of 1227, as well as being a viewer of essoin in 1233. In addition to his administrative activity, Richard also witnessed a large number of local charters. By 1235, John de d'Ectot of *Churiton* had died and his widow Idon was paid 30/- for her dower – she had claimed a third of 50 acres of land from the tenant-in-chief, his brother Richard de d'Ectot.²

On 19 February 1250, Hamo (II) son of Richard d'Ectot sold the manor and advowson of Thorrington to Hugh fitzRichard of Elmstead for 100 marks. All rights and dues of the Baron were maintained.³ Within two weeks, Warin de Munchenesy the Baron of Swainscombe, Geoffrey Cook and Robert de Bures occupied Thorrington. Hugh fitzWilliam paid one shilling to Henry III to have the matter judicially reviewed at an *assize of novel disseisin* heard before the royal justice, Master Simon of Walton. The justice was changed to Gilbert of Preston and due to be heard at Stratford-atte-Bow on June 4th. fitzWilliam chose not to proceed, so he with his pledges William Christmas of Elmstead and Bartholomew Lemot were fined.⁴

fitzWilliam offered a larger fine of 20/- on 29 January 1251 to have an assize heard before Roger of Thirkleby. The assize was duly held and fitzWilliam appeared before the justice to claim he had been disseised of the whole manor of Thorrington, excluding the advowson of the church. The defendants did not appear. When questioned the Sheriff of Essex and Herts claimed that the writ had arrived too late either for him to attach the defendants or to find one of their bailiffs. The assize was therefore postponed until after Easter (1–6 May) for the Sheriff to attach the defendants; even though Court Proceedings could have carried on without them. There is no record of any proceedings continuing and a royal letter close sent to Thirkleby on 15 February, informed him that the assize had been superseded until further ordered.⁵

Instead, Henry III chose to pardon fitzWilliam of the 20/- fine paid. “.. *Concerning a pardon. The king has pardoned to Hugh son of Richard [of Elmstead] the 20s. by which he made fine with him for taking an assize of novel disseisin between him and Warin de Munchesney before R of Thirkleby, concerning a tenement in Thorrington, which assize was later revoked by order of the king. Order to the barons of the Exchequer to cause Hugh to be quit from the aforesaid 20s. By R Walerand. [Westminster, 28 April 1252].*⁶ fitzWilliam sold the manor to Munchenesy recovering the 100 marks that he had paid.⁷

Later, Warin received a grant of free warren in his demesne lands in Thorrington and in the neighbouring manor of Great Fordham. Both he and his son William (d1298) bought up land and rents in the area.⁸ His daughter Dionysia married Hugh de Vere who succeeded as Baron of Swaincamp. On May 26th 1301, at Kenilworth Castle, de Veer complained to Edward I that *William Baynard had cut down his trees in his wood at Thuryton, co. Essex, while he was on the king’s service, and carried them away.*⁹ The de Veer’s died without issue in 1313.

Thurington passed to her cousin Aymer de Valence, 2nd Earl of Pembroke (1275-1324) for a quarter of a knight’s fee. In 1297 he had accompanied Edward I to Flanders and in the following years he served as a diplomat in France. He was also military commander in occupied Scotland. In 1298, at Blackearnside forest to the east of Newburgh in Fife, Scotland, he was defeated by William Wallace’s army. In 1306 at the Battle of Methven, he defeated Robert the Bruce; but was defeated at Loudon Hill the following year. When Edward II’s favourite Piers Gaveston became unpopular Pembroke supported moves to exile him in 1311. When Gaveston returned without permission, Pembroke and the Earl of Surrey were entrusted to take him into custody on May 19th 1312. Gaveston was seized by the Earls of Warwick, Hereford and Arundel, then executed within a month.

Pembroke was appointed the King’s lieutenant in Scotland in 1314 and was present at the English defeat at the Battle of Bannockburn, where he helped lead Edward away from the field of battle. In 1317, however, while returning from a papal embassy to Avignon to Pope John XXII, he was captured by Jean de Lamouilly, and held for a ransom of £10,400. Edward II was temporarily replaced in power by Thomas of Lancaster until the Treaty of Leake in 1318. Peace soon turned to Civil War in 1321 culminating in the Battle of Boroughbridge in Yorkshire where Lancaster lost and was executed. Edward II’s new favourite, Hugh Despenser, marginalised Pembroke at Court. On 24 June 1324, while on an embassy to France, he suddenly collapsed and died whilst in Picardy. Pembroke was buried in a tomb in Westminster Abbey. His estates were valued at c£3000.¹⁰

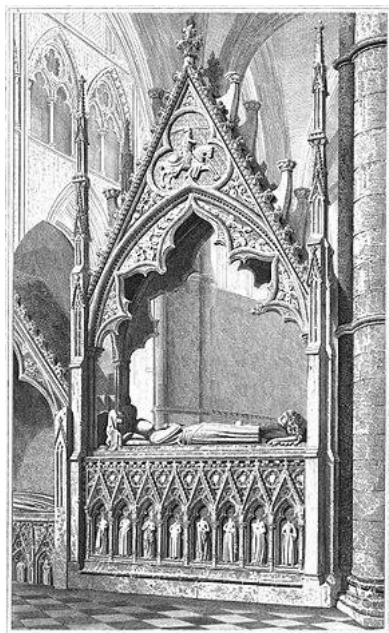


Figure 2 - The Tomb of Aymer de Valence in Westminster Abbey, engraved by Edward Blore (1826)

The lands passed to his second wife, Marie de St Pol (1304-77). She founded Denny Abbey, Cambridgeshire (1336) and Pembroke College, Cambridge (1347). She was buried at Denny Abbey and in 1992 a slate memorial was placed on a pillar opposite her husband's tomb. *“MARY DE ST POL COUNTESS OF PEMBROKE 1304 AD 1377”*¹¹ The estates were then divided between the heirs of Aymer's sisters, with Thorrington passing through Isabel's line and her marriage to John de Hastings, Baron Bergavenny.

They passed to their child, John de Hastings who died in 1389 at the age of 17 whilst jousting.

In 1400, Sir Reynald de Grey, 3rd Baron Grey of Ruthyn, transferred twenty-four manors worth £1000, including *Thoriton*, to Robert, bishop of London, John, bishop of Hereford, knight, Robert de Haryngton, knight, Gerard de Braybrok, knight, the elder, Gerard de Braybrok, knight, the younger, and John Begot, knight.¹²

By 1411, Thorrington and the Barony of Bergavenny had passed to Richard de Beaucamp, grandson of the Earl of Warwick. He was created 1st Earl of Worcester in 1419 and died at the siege Meaux in 1422 during the Hundred Years War. He was succeeded by his daughter Elizabeth de Beaucamp (d. 18 June 1448). In 1436, she married Sir Edward Neville (d.1476), grandson of John of Gaunt. Neville was knighted by 1426 and became a JP for Durham. He was a captain in the Duchy of Normandy, with his son Richard becoming a hostage when England surrendered Rouen.

In 1440, a Feet of Fines recorded that *Toryngton* was temporarily transferred to *John, cardinal priest of St. Balbina, archbishop of York, pl. Edward Nevile, lord Bergevenny, and Elizabeth his wife, def. The manors of Esthanyfeld, Westhanyfeld, Southhanyfeld and Toryngton. Pl. and his heirs to hold of the King and his heirs. Cons. 1000 marks. This agreement was made by precept of the King.*¹³

In 1450, Neville was summoned to Parliament, becoming Baron of Beragavenny. In 1454, he was appointed to the Privy Council assembled by Richard, 3rd Duke of York (1411–1460) as Lord Protector to Prince Edward, along with the other Nevilles'. He was a commissioner of array, who ensured soldiers of a county were in a condition for

military service, in Kent in 1461, and was a captain in Edward IV's army in the North the following year. He was again a commissioner of array in 1470, remaining loyal to Edward IV, unlike his nephew, the Earl of Warwick.¹⁴

Their heir Sir George Nevill (1440-1492) was knighted by Edward VI after fighting at the Battle of Tewkesbury on May 9th 1471.¹⁵ He died in 1492, so the lands and title passed to his son George KG, PC (1469-1535). As a cousin of the new Queen, Anne Nevill, he attended the coronation of King Richard III in 1483 when he was knighted. Having succeeded to his father's peerage and estates in 1492, he achieved prominence fighting against the Cornish rebels in 1497 at the Battle of Blackheath. In 1497 he took his place in the House of Lords and being appointed to the Privy Council. However, in 1506 he fell into serious trouble for keeping an illegal private army, being fined the immense amount of 100,000 pounds and subjected to a travel ban. When Henry VIII became king in 1509, the fine was cancelled, and a pardon granted. By 1512, he was back on the council and in 1513 was elected to the Order of the Garter. In that year he served in the expedition to capture Tournai and then to relieve Guînes.

At the coronation of Henry VIII, he held the office of Chief Larderer and in 1512 he was granted the castle and lands of Abergavenny. He was a keen jousting and accompanied both King Henry VII and King Henry VIII on state occasions, including the meetings in 1520 with King Francis I of France at the Field of Cloth of Gold and with Charles V, Holy Roman Emperor, at Gravelines.

The trial and execution in 1521 of his father-in-law Edward Stafford, 3rd Duke of Buckingham, led to his own imprisonment for a year in the Tower of London. After admitting he had concealed the Duke's treason, he was stripped of all his offices, fined 10,000 marks and had to sell his house to the king. He was then pardoned and allowed to continue serving at court, in Parliament and in war. In 1530 he signed the petition asking Pope Clement to dissolve Henry VIII's marriage to Catherine of Aragon and was allowed to buy back his house. At the coronation of Anne Boleyn in 1533, he once again was Chief Larderer and was allowed to officiate.¹⁶

To pay the fine of 1521, the Nevilles sold the Manors of Thorrington and Ridgewell to the executors of Lady Margaret Beaufort, Countess of Richmond and Derby (1441–1509), grandmother of Henry VIII. The rents from the estates were for the use of St John the Evangelist's College, Cambridge which she helped to found. This was recorded in 1533: *Nicholas Metcalf, clerk, master of the college of St. John Evangelist in the University of Cambridge, and the fellows and scholars of the same college, plaintiff George Nevyle, knight, lord Burgeveny, Thomas Nevyle, knight, and Edward Nevyle, knight, defendant. The manors of Reddyswell and Thoryngton, 1000 acres of land, 100 acres of*

meadow, 500 acres of pasture, 100 acres of wood and 10/. rent in Reddyswell, Thoryngton, Seyntosey, Toppesfeld, Bryglyngsey, Fratyng, Aleford, Weyle, Reddyswell, Norton, magna Yeldham, parva Yeldham, Belcham Seynt Poll, Stanburn and Aschyn, and the advowson of the church of Thoryngton. Def. quitclaimed to plaintiff and their successors. Worth £800. This agreement was made by precept of the King.¹⁷

The lands were then leased. In 1516, this included *the manor of Thorrington with all rents, dayworks, heriots, waifs, strays and all court-profits*.¹⁸ In 1607, the tenant was Richard Naylor of Stoke-by-Nayland, *for twenty years at the rent of £22 19/8, 16 quarters of whet, 6 bushel of malt, a great and good Essex cheese betwixt Michaelmas and Christmas weighing 4 stone, also £4 10/- worth of wood*.¹⁹ Between 1697 and 1795, the Cook family were tenants.²⁰

In 1860, St John's College estimated they had spent £2,000 – but a yield of 4.5% was expected.²¹ Between 1882 and 1886 they spent £3,750 on drainage and over £620 on house repairs *"as the tenants could not afford it"*. Between 1888 and 1896, a further £850 16/ 5 on repairs and £1,430 11/8 on new buildings; which was £637 more than the money received in farm rent,²² but requested by the incoming tenants.²³ Between 1911 and 1930 FD Girling was resident, and 1934-42 the Burrill family farmed the estate.²⁴ From 1942, the Bell brothers farmed here.²⁵

1. Moore T (2009) The Thorrington dispute: a case study of Henry III's interference with judicial process Para 5
2. Moore T (2009) The Thorrington dispute: a case study of Henry III's interference with judicial process para 5-7
3. C 60/49 Fine Roll 36 Henry III (28 October 1251–27 October 1252), membrane 14
4. Moore T (2009) The Thorrington dispute: a case study of Henry III's interference with judicial process para 8
5. Moore T (2009) The Thorrington dispute: a case study of Henry III's interference with judicial process para 9
6. Public Record office (1895) Calendar of the Patent Rolls Preserved in the Public Record Office: Edward II. (5 v.) p628 Membrane 15d May 26 1301
7. Phillips, J. R. S. Valence, Aymer de, eleventh earl of Pembroke (d. 1324), (2004) Oxford Dictionary of National Biography; Philips JRS (1972) Aymer de Valence, Earl of Pembroke 1307-1324: Baronial Politics in the reign of Edward II p242-5
8. Jennifer C. Ward, 'St Pol, Mary de, countess of Pembroke (c.1304–1377)' (2004) Oxford Dictionary of National Biography
9. 15 Richard II. 17. and 2 Henry IV., after the death of John de Roos and Philip who had also previously benefitted.
10. 19 HENRY VI (1440) 204
11. Pugh T.B. (2004). "Neville, Edward, first Baron Bergavenny (d. 1476), nobleman". Oxford Dictionary of National Biography
12. Davies C (2004) "Neville, Sir Thomas (b. in or before 1484, d. 1542)". Oxford Dictionary of National Biography
13. Hawkyard A (2008), "Neville, George, third Baron Abergavenny (c.1469–1535)", Oxford Dictionary of National Biography
14. Pugh T.B. (2004). "Neville, Edward, first Baron Bergavenny (d. 1476), nobleman". Oxford Dictionary of National Biography
15. Davies C (2004) "Neville, Sir Thomas (b. in or before 1484, d. 1542)". Oxford Dictionary of National Biography
16. Hawkyard A (2008), "Neville, George, third Baron Abergavenny (c.1469–1535)", Oxford Dictionary of National Biography
17. 25 HENRY VIII (1533) 34; Salzman LF(1959) A History of the County of Cambridge and the Isle of Ely: City p5 gives the date of 1530; Linehan P (2011) St John's College Cambridge, a history p.17 footnote 4 MSS D14.170
18. Fisher JL (1942) The *Petre Documents* in Transactions of the Essex Archaeological Society, new series, xxiii p92
19. Sharp R (1995) A Short History of Thorrington p.9
20. St John's College Cambridge, MSS MAB History of Frating file 1
21. St. John's College, Cambridge MSS., D 110/229, valuation of Thorrington Hall farm, 1860
22. St. John's College, Cambridge MSS., SB4; SB 1.22, Senior Bursar's diary, 1897; Howard, Finances, pp.230-1
23. St. John's College, Cambridge MSS., SB I.22, Senior Bursar's diary, 1896
24. STMM Records II 1942
25. Brewing Review (1966) Volume 80, Issue 1 - Page 42

St Mary Magdalene Church

Traditionally, there was a wooden Saxon church on the site serving the existing Anglo-Saxon settlement,¹ but none is recorded anywhere in Tendring for the Domesday Survey of 1086. The first named Rector was Roger d'Esketot (c.1242)² brother of the tenant-in-chief of the Manor of Thorrington. In 1244, there was issued a “.. *license from Fulk bishop of London, by consent of his chapter, of Roger de Esketot, parson of the church of 'Thuritunge,' and of Richard de Esketot the true patron of the same church, to Eadmund the son of Walter de Walpol and his heirs or assigns to have divine service celebrated in his chapel of 'Thuritunge' ; elated on the morrow of St. Nicholas (7th December) in the first year of his pontificate.*”^{3, 4}

On 19 February 1250, Hamo (II) son of Richard d'Ectot sold the manor and advowson of Thorrington to Hugh fitzRichard of Elmstead for 100 marks. After two legal cases and an illegal eviction the Manor and Advowson were purchased by the Baron of Swaincamp.⁵

Fulk Bassett (1244-59) surveyed the churches in his diocese to pay Pope Innocent III a tax of 1/3 of beneficed clergy who were resident and ½ of non-resident. (Henry III wanted a tenth on the pretext of a Crusade.) *Turington* listed Richard Asskot as Patron; the Abbott of Colchester received 6/-; the estimated value of the Parish was 40/- and there was no Vicar resident. So, 20/- were payable in 1254 as the Norwich Taxation.⁶

In 1291-2, Thorrington was reassessed on the orders of Pope Nicholas IV and the assessment set the standard for the following 250 years. St John's Abbey received 3/-pa, and the patron was Sir William de Clynton. *Pensio abbatis Colestr' in Thorinton 3/-* but a new low threshold of papal tax was added in 1302-3 for *Ecclesia de Thorytune £2 13/4 (4marks)*.⁷

The earliest archaeology found of St Mary Magdalene Church is from the early fourteenth century when a stone church of nave, chancel and the eastern part of north aisle was constructed. Features included the East window, two south windows of the chancel, piscine in the south-east corner of the Sanctuary and a Norman window in the North wall of the chancel (removed during the 1866 restoration.)⁸ The South Porch complete with Roman Brick quoins from a neighbouring villa may be as late as 1350.⁹

In the fifteenth century, the North aisle was extended to the West. The flint tower dates from c1480, as recorded by the brass engraving of its benefactors John (d. 1477) and Margery Deth (d. 1483).¹⁰ The earliest bell dates from this period being made by Henry Jordan.¹¹

In 1521, the advowson was transferred to St. John Evangelist in the University of Cambridge,¹² recorded by a Feet of Fines in 1533. *Nicholas Metcalf, clerk, master of the college of St. John Evangelist in the University of Cambridge, and the fellows and scholars of the same college, pl. ... The manors of Thoryngton, 1000 acres of land, 100 acres of meadow, 500 acres of pasture, 100 acres of wood and 10/. rent in ... Thoryngton, ..., and the advowson of the church of Thoryngton. Def. quitclaimed to pl. and their successors. Cons. £800. This agreement was made by precept of the King.*¹³

By 1548, Visitations from the Archdeacon of Colchester had found that “.. *John Gawton, Churchwarden there by thassent of thole parrshe hath sold by thands of John Clare and William Colman certayne of the churchpalte to the somme of £31 8/6 to the use of reparacions of the Churche and making of a bridge called Borefleet brigge which standeth in daunger of the See as they saw..*” 5/ 8 was spent on *two books and a pulpit.*¹⁴

The 1552 Visitation, saw the confiscation of plate and vestments; the whitewashing of wall paintings (rediscovered in 1866); replacing stained glass with plain glazing; and taking down the altar of Bethersdon marble (removed to floor of belfry) which was replaced with a sixteenth century carved oak table.¹⁵

In 1558, the surviving registers started to be kept.¹⁶ The first Baptism was of Emma Burre on the 12th January; the first Marriage was between George and Anne Archer on 18th January and the first Burial was of William Brekes on the 1st January 1558.¹⁷ In 1564, a brass to John Clare was installed; he lived at the modern Gatehouse Farm.¹⁸ A stone Tudor font was installed.¹⁹ In July 1566 Edward Lambard of East Mersea, gentleman, left 6/-8 to make the steeple of Thorryngton Church – to be built within one year or spent on firewood for the poor of Brightlingsea.²⁰ Also remaining from this Early Protestant period; are a seventeenth century hour-glass stand and a chest for registers.²¹

In 1610, the Churchwardens sent in an agreed Presentment listing offenders against Church Law over the past year – but one of them, Denby Wilkes sent in a second version omitting some names.²²

At the 1683 Visitation, the Rector was Thomas Braughton, the Curate was Gul’us Dalton and members of the Vestry were Jacobus Brand, Rich’us ffrewer (*Gards antique*), Jacobus Cooke and Ambrious ffritzby (*Gards elect Jurat*). It was found that *There is noe booke of homilies nor Cannon, nor table of the degrees of marriage. There is a Challic and cover of silver, ye Inscription on ye Cupp ‘David Tuke’, on ye foot of ye Cover ‘I.H.S. 1568.’*

There is pewter flagon and Patten. There wants two Napkins for ye Comunion Table. The wast window wants glaseing. There is ware four bells. The fence of the churchyard wants repaire. There is noe Catachizing. There is no Churche Clarke. There is noe Terrier. The Minister, Churchwardens, and the Roger Hempson, to meet to make a Terrier. The Parsonage house, with the outhouses, out of Repaire."²³ Later visitations found the pewter flagon was seventeenth century, and the pewter plates were marked with 1736 and the device of Timothy Fly.²⁴

In 1794, a wooden Church Wardens' stall was erected in the east end of the North Aisle. In 1813, a wooden singers gallery was added at the western end of the Nave. Musicians accounts show that they played fiddles and pipes.²⁵

In 1841, the Church raised £5 10d for the Essex and Colchester Hospital.²⁶ The 1851 Census records that St Mary Magdalene's Congregation was 61 for the morning Service, 128 for the afternoon and 190 for the evening.²⁷ On October 9th 1851, John Henry Hedge esq. of Reed Hall, Colchester married Elizabeth Maria, daughter of WS Frost esq.²⁸ On October 13th 1853, Mr Harrington married Ann, eldest daughter of Mr G. Cooper.²⁹ On April 28th 1864, Henry Robert of Park Farm, Whernstead, Ipswich married Marianne daughter of Mr WS Frost of Thorrington Hall.³⁰

In 1860, the stone tower was repaired³¹ and plans were made to close the church for a year whilst a large restoration took place. The Church closed in 1866 and the Church Wardens appealed for tiles. *Wanted A quantity of good old PLAIN TILES. – Apply at Mr J Grimes Office, Colchester; or to the Foreman at the Works at Thorrington Church; or to St John's Parsonage, Ipswich Road, Colchester.*³²

The architect for the £1700 project³³ was Mr E Christian of White Hall Place, London and the builder Mr Joseph Grimes of Colchester The "*unsightly gallery at the western end was taken down*"; the external walls were taken down and rebuilt trying to retain as much of the original fabric as possible. The North Chancel window was lost but the south windows were replaced with stained glass. The north arcade of plastered bricks was removed with three pillars of Bath stone installed. Varnished framed benches were installed for the Congregation,³⁴ with seating allocated.³⁵ The flooring was replaced with small oak blocks resting on concrete at the suggestion of the builder. The passages were paved with Poole Tiles and the chancel with Minton's encaustic tiles.³⁶ Also in 1867, a new harmonium was also added.³⁷

Funding largely came from donations, with the Rector paying the remainder from the Building Fund. £200 came from St John's College, £50 from Caius College, 25 Guineas from WW Hawkins of Alresford Hall, £20 from Jas.

Inglis of Colchester, £10 from John Boghurst of Frating Abbey and £400 by friends and relatives of the Rector. Items for the Church reopening were also donated. Mrs Driffield, widow of the late Rector, gave the stained East Window, cushions for the font, altar linen, communion cloth, cloth for pulpit and the alms bags. The Church Plate came from the Church Warden, Mr WS Frost of Thorrington Hall. Mr J Boghurst donated the Oak Pulpit; two Oak chairs for the Communion Table came from Rev JEB Mayor; the Stools from Mrs Milner; the Kneeling cushions for the Congregation from Mrs Hartshorne and the sisters of the Rector. Eighty-eight parishioners subscribed to, and presented, the Bible and Prayer Book. The Communion books were donated by Mr & Mrs Farman. The opening services were held on Thursday 18th April 1867; at 1pm for invited guests, followed by Luncheon in the School Room, delivered from the George Hotel, Colchester and at 6pm for labourers. Collections raised £86 10/6 and £5 2/6 towards the Building Fund. St John's College also gave £200 and the site for the new School Room.³⁸

In July 1869, the Rector gave a guided tour to members of the Essex Archaeological Society.³⁹ In October 1882, Rev Brooks gave a lecture about his tour of Burgos Cathedral, Seville, the Alhambra Palace and Granada in southern Spain in the School Rooms, in aid of the Thorrington Church Choir Fund.⁴⁰

In 1873, the Commandments painted on metal by GA Read of Colchester were installed.⁴¹ In 1885, bells were rehung in the Tower.⁴² In 1889, the St Osyth Ruridecanal Conference was attended by Rev CR Rawlinson, Mr F Frost, F Cooper, WT Beaumont. As part of the *Deanery News*, it was announced that the bells had been rehung.⁴³

In 1902, a new treble bell was installed;⁴⁴ in 1913 the altar stone was replaced⁴⁵ and in 1914 an American organ replaced the harmonium.⁴⁶ The churches and buildings of North-Essex East built before 1700, were surveyed by the RCHME and in 1922 the text was published. This included a plan of the church (1/576) and a photograph of the Tower.⁴⁷

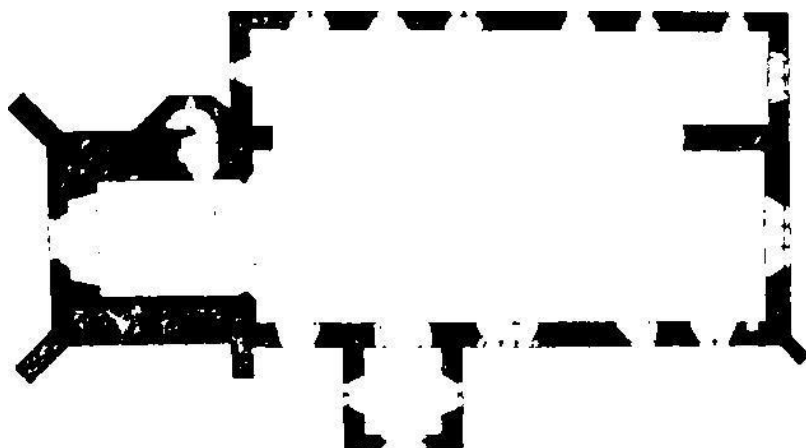


Figure 3- Plan of St Mary Magdalene Church in 1922⁴⁷

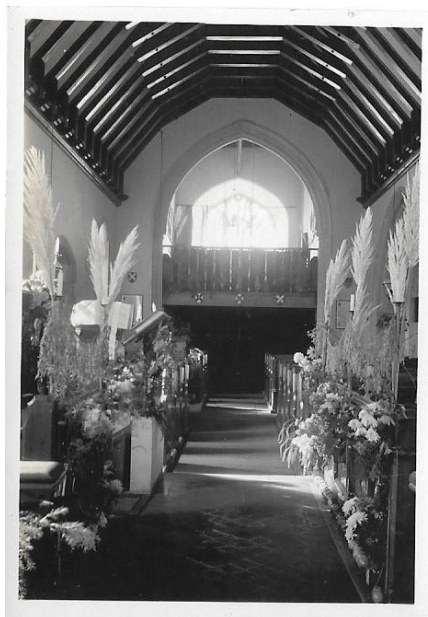
**Figure 4 –
1914 Thorrington: Parish Church of St.
Mary Magdalene.⁴⁷**

In 1928, the tenor bell broke its mountings. In 1933, the bells were rehung by Alfred Bowell in a steel frame, retuned and fitted with new head-stocks at a cost of £209 15/- raised by subscription, with 35 named people donating £71 19/11. In 1937, a ringing gallery floor was added⁴⁹ and a *Robson* organ from Layer-de-la-Haye Church, originally played in Wivenhoe, was installed. The North Chapel was enlarged to accommodate it.⁵⁰



**Figure 5 –
1931 - View from the
Gallery of the Nave, Chancel
and Communion Table**

**Figure 6 –
Easter 1938 – view looking
West showing the choir,
Nave and gallery**



In 1947, the new electric lighting was first used at the Christmas Service at a cost of £92.⁵¹ In 1950, a brick Lych Gate was built.⁵² In 1959, the Robson organ was exchanged for a Cedric Arnold organ, rebuilt with two manuals and pedals. In 1963, a wooden-framed draft screen was fitted to the tower.

In 1969, electric heating installed and in the 1980s the Elizabethan altar table was restored. The Church has been continuously repaired. In 1976/7, three window quarries to three-light windows in South Nave and West of North aisle were repaired at a cost of £110.⁵³ The bell frame was de-rusted and repainted at a cost of £20. Damp treatment cost £14 and the wood blocks near the Lectern were levelled for £20.⁵⁴ The North slope over the Nave was striped, re-felted, flattened and retiled for £1981.75. In February 1979, broken tiles to the south were replaced at a cost of £17.83. In December 1979, loose tiles were replaced for £22.58.⁵⁵ In 1981, the South Porch was repaired costing £166.75; the organ heater replaced and repainted for £73.65; the organ motor replaced for £141.68 and electrics updated for £250.18.⁵⁶ In 1985, the East Window was repaired costing £644.35; the roof was repaired on three slopes costing £7,787.11 and repairs made to vandalised windows on the South.⁵⁷ In October 1987, the “Big

Storm"toppled trees and a new yew tree was planted.⁵⁸ In 1997, the Tower was repointed by a team of abseiling builders.⁵⁹ In 2000, a new yew tree was planted to commemorate the millennium.⁶⁰ In October 2001, asbestos in the organ was removed.⁶¹

In 2004, the fifteenth century floor brasses were displayed on the wall either side of the North door to protect them from damage.⁶² In 2008, a kitchen was donated by St Osyth Church and fitted in the North-West corner.⁶³ The church was closed from Easter 2011 for three years, due to a leaking roof causing the nineteenth century plaster to come off laths. During this closure, funds were raised; the ceiling, roof and tower crenelations were repaired. The repairs cost £115,446; with £60,000 granted from the National Lottery and a low interest loan of £22,000.⁶⁴ The Congregation met in the Village Hall during this period. In 2018, the remaining pews in the North aisle were removed and a disabled toilet was installed in the base of the Tower at a cost of £57,400. The floor was retiled and laid out with a table for coffees, and with children's toys and books during family services.⁶⁵

St Mary Magdalene was in the Diocese of London until January 1st 1846, when due to the rapidly rising population it was transferred to Rochester until May 1877, then St Albans, and Chelmsford from 1914. The parishes of Thorrington and Frating were united into one Benefice in 1763. In 1976, the church at Frating was made redundant and sold. Between 1989 and 2009, the Parish was in a united Benefice with Great Bentley. Since 2009, it has been in a United Benefice with St Andrew's, Alresford;⁶⁶ with St Anne and St Lawrence, Elmstead joining in 2016.

1. Millatt TB, Sharpe R (2009) *A Short History of the Parish Church of St Mary Magdalene* p.4
2. *Ibid* p.17
3. Fowler RC (1923) Essex Chapels in *Transactions of the Essex Archaeological Society new series*, xvi p118; *Hist. MSS. Comm., vol. ix., p. 32.*
4. Round JR (1900) The Descent of Thorrington in *Transactions of the Essex Archaeological Society new series*, viii p374.
5. Fowler RC (1926) *Fulk Bassett's Register and the Norwich taxation (cont'd)* *Transactions of the Essex Archaeological Society, new series xviii p.15-6, 124*
6. Astle T., Ayscough S. and Caley J.(ed) (1802) *Taxatio Ecclesiastica Angliae et Walliae Auctoritate P. Nicholai IV*
7. Millatt TB, Sharpe R (2009) p.5.
8. *ibid* p.6
10. *ibid* p.6
11. *ibid* p.7
12. *ibid* p.17
13. *ibid*
14. 25 HENRY VIII (1533) 34 Eas. and Mich.
15. *Embezzled Church goods* *Transactions 2* xiii p. 165; Oxley JE (1965) *The Reformation in Essex to the death of Mary* p152, 168
16. Millatt TB, Sharpe R (2009) p.4 The Minister also went into exile during this period.
17. ERO A12195
18. Millatt TB, Sharpe R (2009) p.7-8
19. *ibid* p.8
20. *ibid*
21. Emmison FG (1980) *Elizabethan life: Wills of Essex Gentry and Yeomen* p.40
22. RCHME (1922)
23. Haigh C (2007) *The Plain Man's Pathways to Heaven: Kinds of Christianity In Post-reformation England 1570-1640* p7
24. Pressey WJ (1942) *VISITATIONS HELD IN THE ARCHDEACONRY OF COLCHESTER IN 1683* in T223 p.149
25. Pressey WJ (1925) *THE PEWTER COMMUNION VESSELS OF ESSEX CHURCHES* T218 p.210, 214
26. Millatt TB, Sharpe R (2009) p.8-9; Pevsner (2007) p.781
27. *Essex Standard* Friday July 30 1841
28. TNA HO 129/203 p.2
29. *Essex Standard* Friday, Oct. 10, 1851 ; *Morning Chronicle; & The Standard* Saturday October 11 1853
30. *Essex Standard* Wednesday October 26 1853

31. Essex Standard Friday, Apr. 29, 1864, Wednesday May 4, 1864
32. Millatt TB, Sharpe R (2009) *A Short History of the Parish Church of St Mary Magdalene* p.8-9
33. Essex Standard Friday Apr. 13, 1866, Wednesday Apr. 18, 1866
34. Millatt TB, Sharpe R (2009) *A Short History of the Parish Church of St Mary Magdalene* p.7,9
35. Essex Standard, Friday April 26 1867; Wednesday, May 1, 1867; Bury and Norwich Post Tuesday, Apr. 30, 1867
35. Sharpe R (1995) *A Short History of Thorrington* p13
36. Essex Standard, Friday April 26 1867; Wednesday, May 1, 1867; Bury and Norwich Post Tuesday, Apr. 30, 1867
37. Millatt TB, Sharpe R (2009) *A Short History of the Parish Church of St Mary Magdalene* p.11
38. Essex Standard, Friday April 26 1867; Wednesday, May 1, 1867
39. Essex Standard Friday July 30, 1869
40. Essex Standard Saturday Oct 21 1882
41. Millatt TB, Sharpe R (2009) p.10;
42. Pevsner (2007) p.781
43. Essex Standard Saturday July 27 1889
44. Millatt TB, Sharpe R (2009) p.10
45. *Ibid* p7
46. *ibid* p.11
47. *An Inventory of the Historical Monuments in Essex, Volume 3, North East (1922)* p.214-216; Plate 107 p.107
48. Millatt TB, Sharpe R (2009) p.10; details of the bells p.11; <https://www.eacr.org.uk/ne-eacr/thorrington.html> Gardiner 1732 9-0-22cwt
49. *ibid* p.11-2
50. *ibid* p.12
51. *ibid* p.13; <http://tenpennyvillages.uk/stmmbells.html> , <https://www.eacr.org.uk/ne-eacr/thorrington.html> ; STMM Records II August 17th 1947
52. *ibid* p.12
53. STMM Teal Church Log Book 1976-2001 p.6
54. STMM Teal Church Log Book 1976-2001 p.7
55. STMM Teal Church Log Book 1976-2001 p.10
56. STMM Teal Church Log Book 1976-2001 p.14
57. STMM Teal Church Log Book 1976-2001 p.17
58. STMM Teal Church Log Book 1976-2001 p.23
59. STMM Scrapbook 2022
60. STMM Teal Church Log Book 1976-2001 p.37
61. STMM Teal Church Log Book 1976-2001 p.35
62. Daily Gazette December 31st 2004
63. *ibid* p.7, 8-9,12; St Mary Magdalene's Church Thorrington notice-sheet November 2008 p4
64. Daily Gazette May 3rd 2011, January 31st 2013; Frating Parish Council Annual Report 2011/2; STMM Grant Application Forms
65. <http://tenpennyvillages.uk/stmmhistory.html> ;
66. Millatt TB, Sharpe R (2009) p.16, 18; <http://tenpennyvillages.uk/stmmhistory.html>

Medieval

15 sherds of locally made High medieval (AD 1066-1399) were identified as Essex Grey Ware and Essex Red Ware.¹ These are probably the result of separate nodes of settlement, and likely farmsteads. One of these sites yielded five sherds or more of pot, which is generally considered indicative of settlement present on site at that time.² This test pit was (TTN/06/8) at Pond Farmhouse along Church Road, but the presence of four sherds (TTN/06/5) along Clacton Road and three sherds found at (TTN/07/6) Glebe Farm. Single sherds of high medieval pottery may be likely to indicate agricultural activities, such as manuring.³

Nine sherds of later medieval (AD 1400-1539) were excavated including three pieces of German Stoneware.⁴ This indicates a continuation of activity at these probable farmsteads through the medieval period, although it may have been thinly occupied.

A potential metallised surface was identified through two test pits at the front of Pond Farmhouse, which is perhaps twelfth or thirteenth century.⁵

After the Plague of 1348, 163 acres of farmland at Thorrington were allowed to become wetland pasture.⁶

In 1350, the Royal Commissioners of the Essex Session for Peace heard a case against Thorrington residents. *Johannes Brunne de Great Bentley, Johannes Brekesper', Ricardus Swalewe and Robertus le Dryuer' de Thoritone assaulted Thome Granger, canon of St. Osyth, and badly beat and wounded him against the peace ... and kept him in prison until he made fine with them for a half mark? They are common malefactors and disturbers of the peace.*⁷

After the Peasant's Revolt failed, existing laws were harshly applied. On June 6th 1381, two serfs were penalised even though they had already paid a fine of *merchet* for their daughters' marrying. Villans had to pay *chevage* to the Lord of the Manor in order to leave the village. William Phelps's mother Juliana, uncle and brother John were fined for receiving him after he absconded from Thorrington. John was also employed for 36½ days fencing a local park – probably without the Lord's knowledge. All were involved a week later when the Court Rolls of Thorrington were burnt.⁸

The complicated nature of land-transfers can be seen in the surviving records. Often farms stretched across two or more parishes. In 1295, Thomas, son of Wolferton purchased six acres of land, 20d of rent and a quarter part of two messuages in *Tyrington ... to hold of the chief lords, worth 100 silver.*⁹ Ralph de Coggeshale received from Roger de Coggeshale 2 messuages, 280 acres of land, 50 acres of marsh, 64 acres of wood, 5 acres of meadow, 30 acres of pasture and 22s. of rent in *Thoriton, Alesford, Fratyng and Great Benelegh... rendering yearly 1 clove of a gillyflower at Easter and doing to the chief lords all other services.*¹⁰

In 1322, Henry de . . . londe and Emma his Wife bought 1 messuage, 40 acres of land, 1 acre of meadow', 3 acres of marsh and ½ acre of alder in *Thoriton. Plea of covenant. Pl. and the heirs of Henry to hold of the chief lords. Cons. 40 marks of silver.*¹¹

In 1341, *John de Moueroun the elder and John his son, received 3 messuages, 1 mill, 400 acres of Janel, 12 acres of meadow, 20 acres of wood, 2c acres of alder and 40s. rent in Great Bromlegh, Fratyng and Elmeded .. to hold of the chief lords, with remainder to William de Harewold and Cecily his wife and the heirs of their bodies and the right heirs of John de Moueroun.*¹² *William de Harewold and Cecily his wife gained 1 messuage, 353 acres of land, 26 acres of meadow, 30 acres of pasture, 60 acres of wood, 180 acres of marsh, 26/9 ½ d rent and two parts of one messuage in Wodeham Mortymer, Hayleslee, Purlee, Brightlyngeseye, Thurriton, Great Bromlegh and Fratyng and the advowson of the chapel of Hayleslee to hold of the chief lords, with remainder to John de Moveroun the elder and John his son and the heirs of the body of John the son and the right heirs of William.*¹³

In 1344, *John de Moveroun the elder, purchased 50 acres of land, 1 acre of meadow, 50 acres of marsh, 2/10 rent and a third part of r messuage in Brightlyngeseye, Thuryton, Great Bromlegh and Fratyng. ..rendering 1 rose.*¹⁴

In October 1355, *William Chesteyn, gained 1 messuage, 72 acres of land and 1 rood of meadow in Thuryton to hold of the chief lords. Worth 20 marks.*¹⁵ At Easter 1375, *Richard Wynslowe, vicar of Great Claketon, and John atte Rode received 42 acres of land and 2 acres of marsh in Thoryton. .. -of Richard to hold of the chief lords. Cons. 20 marks.*¹⁶ During Trinity 1377, *John Smyth of Fyngrynghe and Agnes his wife, bought 1 messuage, 20 acres of land, 1 rood of wood and 20 acres of marsh in Thoryngton. Cons. 20 marks.*¹⁷

The Rectors of Thorrington, Richard atte Doune, and Tendring, Griffin de Sutton, sold to *John, son of John de Waleton and Margery his wife, 2 messuages, 2 mills, 540 acres of land, 30 acres of meadow, r6 acres of wood, 160 acres of marsh and 120/- rent in Mockynge, Stillebery, Westillebery, Chaldewelle, Duntone, Horndon, Stanforde, Stowe and Purle and a moiety of the advowson of the church of Stowe by Fanbregge... to hold of the chief lords.*¹⁸

In 1417, John Philip of Thorrington granted to John Philip, Rector of St Margaret's, Bridge Street, London, Richard Jepe, rector of All saints, Honey Lane, London, and Thomas Coke, chaplain, property at New Hythe, Colchester [Essex].¹⁹

*John Bewest alias Slynge of Thoryngton and Katharine his wife old to Robert Bewest and John Crullyng, one messuage, 60 acres of land and 4 acres of wood in Elmestede. Cons. 20/-*²⁰

Records exist from 1237 of *Turriton* paying a tax of 12/1 to Henry III. Villagers with goods valued at 40d or less were exempt.²¹ In 1327, the *Villata de Thorintun* was assessed to pay a Lay Subsidy of 1/20th of moveable goods (eg- cows, sheep, crops) towards the Defence of the Realm.²² De Thomas de Blount was assessed at 6/; Nicholao Germain 20d; Nicholao atte Marsh 2/3½; Henrico Pach 6¼d; Stephano de Hule 12¼d; Stephano Payn 20d; Isabella de Coggeshale 5/¼d; Ranulpho le Killere 2/ 7; Waltero Randulf 2/ 2; Johanne Phillipe 2/ 6; Roberto Swift 23d; Sarra de Resley 2/ 2; Johanne atte Wardhous 12d and Johanne le Dryvere 12¼d.²³ In 1372, Thorrington had three mariners recorded by order of Edward III and from 1377 the Poll Tax was collected from 77 villagers.²⁴

The rural area around Colchester was depopulated by the early fifteenth century with ruined or abandoned houses recorded in many villages. In 1401, Thorrington had three houses in ruins, and in 1437 five tenants were ordered to repair their homes.²⁵ This is around 50% of the estimated population of seventeen households recorded in Domesday.

There is a circular cropmark south-east of Thorrington Cross (**TM08772015**) that potentially is the remains of a medieval windmill with cross trees.²⁶

1. Collins C (2018) *Archaeological Test Pit Excavations in Thorrington, Essex, 2006 & 2007* p50
2. Lewis, C. 2014. 'The Power of Pits: Archaeology, outreach and research in living landscapes' in Boyle, K., Rabett, R. and Hunt, C (Eds.) *Living in the Landscape*. Cambridge p321-338
3. Ibid
4. Collins C (2018) *Archaeological Test Pit Excavations in Thorrington, Essex, 2006 & 2007* p50
5. Ibid
6. Britnell, RH "Occupation of the Land: Eastern England" Miller E, Thirsk J (1991) *The Agrarian History of England and Wales: Volume 3, 1348-1500* p.56-7
7. Furber EC (1953) *Essex Sessions of the Peace 1351, 1377-79* p.109 A83 (*Margin transgressio*). p.110-1 A87 (*Margin transgressio*).
8. Barker J (2014) *1381 The Year of the Peasants' Revolt* p64, 74; Dyer C *Everyday Life in Medieval England* (2003) p.205, p.213; Hilton RH, Aston TH (1987) *The year of the Peasant's Revolt* p.16, 25, 35
9. 23 EDWARD I (1291/i-1295) 588
10. 23 EDWARD I (1291/i-1295) 598
11. 15 EDWARD II (1312-1322) 896
12. 14 EDWARD III (1341) 535
13. 14 EDWARD III (1341) 536
14. 18 EDWARD III (1344) 693
15. 28 EDWARD III (1355) 1064
16. 49 EDWARD III (1375) 1802. Mich.; 48 Edward III (1374) Easter
17. 51 EDWARD III (1377) 1832. Trin.
18. 14 EDWARD III 560. Eas. and Trin.
19. ERO 146/10232
20. 23 HENRY VI. 241 Trin. (1444/5)
21. Fowler RC (1927) *An Early Essex Subsidy* in *Transactions of the Essex Archaeological Society* new series xix p.27, 29; *Exchequer* (1893) *Lancashire Lay Subsidies i (1216-1307)* p.52
22. Ward JC (1983) *The Medieval Essex Community: The lay Subsidy of 1327* p. iii; <https://www.fairfordhistory.org.uk/the-1327-lay-subsidy/#:~:text=The%20Lay%20Subsidy%20of%201327,those%20in%20the%20major%20towns.>
23. Ibid p.14
24. Ayton A, Lambert C (2017) *Shipping the Troops and fighting at sea: Essex ports and mariners in England's Wars, 1337-89* in Thornton C, Ward J & Wiffen N (2074) *The Fighting Essex Soldier* p128, p126
25. ERO T/A 167/1 Other places mentioned include Wivenhoe, Tollesbury, Langham, Witham and Earls Colne.
26. Ingle, CJ, Strachan, D, Tyler, S and Saunders, H, 1993-2012, *NMP Cropmark Plot - 1:10,000 (Map)*. SEX22419

Highways and bridges

The villagers of Thorrington were responsible for mending the roads that crossed the land, clean any ditches and also to repair the bridges that crossed over the *Barflytt* to Brightlingsea and Frating Brook (Tenpenny) to Alresford. For many years, they were expected to spend at least six days per annum on such tasks. Failure to comply led to fines at the Quarter Sessions. In 1271, the bridge of *Britesling* was damaged and Baldwin Wake was expected to repair it. In 1548, the Church and bridges were again mended from the King's Subsidy of £30 8/6.¹

*The Barflytt Bridge was in great decay*² and at Michaelmas 1610, *the inhabitants of Bentley and Thorrington were fined 6d.*³ They were instructed to repair it⁴ by the Judges Sir William Aylofffe, Sir Henry Maxey and Thomas. Peryent esq. and further fined 12d.

At the Quarter Sessions of Michaelmas 1664, the Surveyors, *Wliss and Wyet*, awarded the villagers a Certificate for fixing the roads since the default: *John Crane, John Smith, William Browne, John March, Thomas Inman, Robert Hare of Maketman, Robert Hatén. Joseph Day, John Turner, James Tomilin, Rich, Turner, George Blackshal, James Barnard, Matthew Hearnés, Thomas Simons, Vitel Begebe, William Person, John Palmer, William Adams and William Simon.*⁵ The following year, another certificate was issued. *These have done their work in the highways since the default, and presentment by the surveyors of Thorrington- Marths Hearnés widow, William Person, "Vitel" Begsbie, Joseph Deye, Thomas Isman, Robert Hatén, Robert Herre or Marketman, Richard Fruen, John March, James Bernard, John Smith, James Tomlin, John Turner, William Adames, William Simens, WM. Browne, John Crane, Thomas Simons and George Blackshall.*⁶

*Rich. Baker of Frating, was summonsed for not accouring a ditch in his ground (in Thorrington) which is an annoyance to the church path and market path from Thorrington to "Alsford".*⁷

At Epiphany 1686 a Certificate was again awarded *by the undersigned justices that they have viewed the highways of Thorrington leading from Colchester towards "Chitch St. Osith" and find them to be very good in repair.*

*Signatures of: William Mott, Ralph Creffield.*⁸

1. Sharpe R (1995) A Short History of Thorrington p.10; Oxley JE (1965) The Reformation in Essex to the death of Mary p.8/6
2. Essex Records Office Q/SR 190/62 EASTER 1610 19 April, 1610
3. ERO Q/SR 192/73 MICHAELMAS 1610
4. ERO Q/SR 192/127 MICHAELMAS 1610
5. ERO Q/SR 402/17 MICHAELMAS 1664
6. ERO Q/SR 403/29 EPIPHANY 1665
7. ERO Q/SR 413/73 MIDSUMMER 1667
8. ERO Q/SR 453/67 EPIPHANY 1687

Post-Medieval Crime

Quarter Sessions, with Juries for non-capital crimes, started in 1344¹ in Essex and continuous records exist from 1556.² In 1562, John Coke of Thorrington was one of the two Parish constables appointed at Vestry Meeting of St Mary Magdalene's.³ Their responsibilities were to detain those who had a warrant against them, hold them in the Village Cage and transport them to Court in either Mistley for the Quarter Sessions; or Chelmsford or Brentwood for the Assizes. There were also two Constables of Tendring Hundred. The Quarter Sessions could fine, whip or put people in the stocks. The Assizes could fine, brand, transport or execute the guilty.

On January 21st 1565, *John Braye yeoman, and John Busshe labourer, both of Thorton broke into the house of Agnes Rockeley widow, at Colchester, about 8 o'clock at night on January 21st, and stole from her 20/- in money, a "carcher" (kerchief) worth 12d and two "table napkyns" worth 2d.* Both plead not guilty; but were found guilty and handed over to the clerks.⁴

At Michaelmas 1565 and Epiphany 1566, Thomas Cowper of Thorrington, labourer, was summonsed.⁵

At the Assizes held at Brentwood on 17 March 1580 *Indictment of John Burlye of Thorrington, labourer there, stole thirteen "yerdes and a halphe of stammell clothe" worth £6.15s., and four yards of cloth worth 9s. belonging to John Smythe.* He Plead not guilty; but was found guilty and handed over to the clerk.⁶

At the Assizes held at Chelmsford, on 2 August 1582: *Indictment of Robert Upkinson of Thorrington, labourer there, was found not guilty ... of stealing a bay gelding worth 3, belonging to John Bover of Alersford, husbandman*⁷

At Michaelmas 1573, for not being retained in service, Richard Roger of Thorrington, weaver was summonsed.⁸ John Kyndge of Thorrington, labourer, was summonsed several times in 1577, 1578 and 1580 probably for being unemployed.⁹

Richard Roger of Thorrington and many others from Essex were *called and outlawed* during the mid-1570s.¹⁰

1. Emmison FG (1946) *Guide to the Quarter Sessions* p. i
2. *ibid* p iv Capital Crimes were dealt with by the County Assizes at Chelmsford and minor crimes in front of a JP or Manor Court without a Jury.
3. ERO Q/SR 4/24 EPIPHANY 1562
4. ERO T/A 418/8/25 (ASS 35/7/2) (ASS 35/7/2/25) 21 January 1565
5. ERO Q/SR 16/66 MICHAELMAS 1565; Q/SR 17/34 Epiphany 1566
6. ERO T/A 418/33/10 [ASS 35/22/H]. [ASS 35/22/H/10]
7. ERO T/A 418/38/8 (Ass 35/24/T/8)
8. ERO Q/SR 42/1 (1572); Q/SR 41/21 MICHAELMAS 1572 Q/SR 44/15 Q/SR Q45/18
9. ERO Q/SR 61/55,56, (1577) 74,75 (Michaelmas 1578) 82 (Epiphany 1578) Q/SR 74/56 (1580)
10. ERO Q/SR 48/86, 87 Q/SR 49/22 last digit of the date is illegible

On 3 March 1575, John Coole, miller, appeared at the Assizes with Thomas Gladwyn of Lexden, miller, *being common engrossers, buyers and carriers of corn, before and since 1 January 17 Eliz., got into their possession oats, barley, butter, cheese and herrings which John Lone carried beyond the seas contrary to other Statute.* Their names were added to a list to be transported and they were forewarned by the Bailiff of the Hundred. In Midsummer 1578, John Cole was again summonsed, but did not appear and was fined 6d. He was again summonsed in 1579.¹¹

Men from Thorrington were also expected to serve on the Juries that heard the trials at the Quarter Sessions for Lexden and Tendring. These included: John Smyth in Michaelmas 1586; Stephen Kingston and William Smythe at Easter 1588; William Bulvan and William Hollingway at Epiphany 1593.¹²

At the Quarter Sessions of Michaelmas 1597, William Brigges, husbandman, failed to appear before JP John Ive.¹³ Adam Tarver the elder of Brightlingsea, husbandman, was to answer upon suspicion of felony laid to his charge by Richard Wryghte alies Campyon of Thorrington in Michaelmas 1601.¹⁴

*On 25 February 1609, there was an Examination of Philip Subbs, gent., and Thomas Bannyng, yeoman, both of Little Clacton, for John Clerke of Thorrington, yeoman, to keep the peace towards Robert Went of Great Bentley, husbandman. Before John Argall, esq.*¹⁵

On August 20th 1612, John Clarke of Thorrington labourer was accused of ... *stole eleven "chickens" (gallinas) worth 11d., belonging to John Butter.* He plead not guilty at the Assizes held at Chelmsford on 15 March 1613. He was found guilty, fined 11d and whipped.¹⁶

At the Assizes held at Chelmsford 24 July 1615 William Rise of Thorrington ... *there stole a piece of chees (illegible) "a loofe of bread" worth 4d. belonging to Tho. Goodale.* He confessed and was whipped.¹⁷

At EPIPHANY 1629, an INQUISITION was taken at Colchester ..., who say that Richard Byshopp of Thorrington yeoman, (one of ten – six unknown), *forcibly entered the dwellinghouse of John Kynderly at Brightlingsea, 29 Sept., between 9 and 10 o'clock in the forenoon, and stole a mill stone (lapidem molarem) worth £8 and carried it away; He was fined 26s. 8d. (Fines to be estreated.)*¹⁸

11. T/A 418/25/6 [ASS 35/17/2] T/A 418/25/55 [ASS 35/17/2] [ASS 35/17/2/55] Q/SR 67/63 MIDSUMMER 1578, Q/SR 69/62,63,64 EPIPHANY 1579 ; Emission FG (1991) Elizabethan life: Home, Work and Land p.181

12. ERO Q/SR 98/9; Q/SR 104/2, 9, 21; Q/SR 123/13, 24

13. ERO Q/SR 139/23 MICHAELMAS 1597

14. ERO Q/SR 155/48 MICHAELMAS 1601

15. ERO Q/SR 187/85 EASTER 1609

16. ERO T/A 418/84/44 [ASS 35/55/1] [ASS 35/55/1/44]

17. ERO T/A 418/87/34 [ASS 35/57/2] [ASS 35/57/2/34]

18. ERO Q/SR 264/21 EPIPHANY 1629

At the Assizes held at Chelmsford 13 July 1629, William Aylward, labourer, 1 March 4 Chas. I was found guilty of stealing eight white ewes each worth 5s., belonging to William Gyles. Found guilty; read and was branded.¹⁹

At the Quarter Sessions of Easter 1637: *Indictment of William Hewbard thacher, ... together with divers other unknown illdoers and disturbers of the King's peace at Great Clacton, foreibly entered a messuage and 40 acres of land in Little Clacton being the free tenement of Thomas Earl Ryvars in the tenure of Fyz. Corbold his tenant and in the occupation of Daniel Payne, and diseised and have continued to do so to the present date' viz. 18 April. Witnesses; Corbald, Payne. Let restitution be made and attach them, by the court.*²⁰

At the Chelmsford Assizes of 26 June 1638 George Samford of Thorrington, yeomen, "*did not repaire*" to any church &c. for 3 months, from 1 March 13 Chas. I. Proclamation made; estreated.²¹

Hearne, carpenter, was to keep the peace to Henry Sympson at the Midsummer Quarter Sessions of 1642.²²

Tho. Webb was committed by Sir Thomas Bowes, for stealing a wether sheep from Edmd. Curling *which seems to be treu because of some mutton found in his house in Midsummer 1644.*²³

Leonard Bromwell, yeoman, and Amy his wife was to keep the peace to Wm. Mosses of Great Bentley on 9 Nov. 1657.²⁴

An Inquisition was held at Thorrington on 30 November 1658, before the Coroner Thomas Talcott, *upon the view of the body of Sara Barnes, aged 10 years, apprentice of John Fiser of the same, labourer. The jurors say that Gmrissell wife of the said John Fisher, on 27 Nov., assaulted the said Sarah and with her hands broke her neck, wereby she died instantly.* Gmrissell was tried at the Assizes held at Chelmsford 1 August 1659.²⁴

On June 26th 1665, Robert Pettit, clerk, was arrested by the bailiffs Philip Stubbs sen., hatter, Robert Muttit, weaver, and Jonathan Wheeler, brasier, all of Colchester, who *took upon themselves to "intermedle" at Thorrington as bailiff in the execution of his warrant to them founded on a writ returnable at Westminster in Trinity term against him at the suit of Thomas Hull and Mary his wife on a plea of debt.* However, they had not previously sworn their oaths, so Pettit indicted them.²⁵

19. ERO T/A 418/105/27 [ASS 35/71/3] [ASS 35/71/3/27]

20. ERO Q/SR 296/19, 30 EASTER 1637

21. ERO T/A 418/116/23 [ASS 35/80/3] ASS 35/80/3/23)

22. ERO Q/SR 317/44 MIDSUMMER 1642, Q/SR 321/23

23. ERO Q/SR 321/95, 119

24. Q/SR 374/34 EPIPHANY 1658 T/A 418/152/5 [ASS 35/100/2] [ASS 35/100/2/5]

25. Q/SR 405/80 MIDSUMMER 1665

At the Assizes held at Brentwood on 2 August 1669, William Perison of Thorrington, blacksmith, was one of nine "petty constables" of the several vills in the Hundred of Tendring, summonsed for not returning any presentments.²⁶

An INQUISITION was taken at Thorrington, on 22 February 27 Charles II, before Henry Cunsted coroner, upon view of the body of Elizabeth w. of William Browne of Thorrington labourer. The jurors say that the said William 15 February there assaulted the said Elizabeth (who was with 2 unborn children) with his hands and knees and kicked her on the head, stomach, chest, etc., of which she died on 19 February following. At the Assizes held at Chelmsford on 1 March 1675 he plead not guilty, and was found *not guilty, she died by an act of God.*²⁷

Abraham aham Chaplin, was indicted at the Sessions of 9 March 1685, of on 22 June 36 Charles II and for the 2 Sundays following, did not go to church.²⁸ Henry Vintner, labourer, was indicted Easter 1688 Before and since 10 April, was and is a common swearer and disturber of the peace. Return: True bill²⁹

At Easter 1704, John Clark of Thorrington, husbandman, indicted *Peter Hayward, farmer, for assaulting him.*³⁰ At Easter 1709, John Baker of Little Clacton yeoman and Joanna his wife were found guilty of beating and abusing of Sarah Johnson.³¹

At Easter 1711, Blyth Ashley, butcher, was found not guilty of *riotous assembly and* assault of Adam Risby, Constable of Elmstead ..so that his life was despaired of,.. and rescued the latter's prisoner John Hoy from his custody.³²

26. ERO T/A 418/169/34; ASS 35/110/2, 4; ASS 35/110/4/8, ASS 35/110/2/18

27. ERO T/A 418/179/65; Ass 35/116/1; Ass 35/116/1/65

28. ERO T/A 418/196/11; ASS 35/126/2, ASS 35/126/2/11 [Faded in pars.]

29. ERO Q/SR 458/50 1688

30. ERO Q/SR 519/1, 11, 73 EASTER 1704 26 February 1704

31. ERO Q/SR 539/28 EASTER 1709

32. ERO Q/SR 547/30, 48 7 April 1711

Licensed Ale-house keepers

The earliest licensed alehouses in Thorrington were run by John Sherman and Edmund Paynter in 1604.¹ In Easter² and Michaelmas 1605,³ John Shareman again paid a Victuallers Surety. In Michaelmas 1606,⁴ and Easter 1607,⁵ this was paid by his widow, Joan. By Easter 1608, William Scarfe of Frating was landlord.⁶

In Easter 1620, the alehouse keeper was John Tunmer who was summoned by *Edward Marvin, John Kingstone and John Butter of Thorrington yeoman, for disorder in his alehouse.*⁷ At the Easter sessions of 1631, Edw. Fyske of Thorrington, was summonsed for disorder in his alehouse.⁸ At Michaelmas 1713, Henry Buley and Margaret Lark were fined 3/ 4 for keeping false measures.⁹

At Epiphany 1629, Edward Peake victualler, was required to *keep the true easier of bread and beer and maintain good order in his house, and shall not suffer within his house, yard or garden, and unlawful game and shall not dress or eat any flesh during lent or any other prohibited days.*¹⁰

In 1769, Henry Ames of the *King's Arms*, Thorrington was licensed at the Alehouse Recognizances.¹¹

In 1839, the *Red Lion* was managed by Thomas Wade, a wheelwright. Later licensees were: Samuel Warren (1848); Peter Pudney (1862); Henry Gosling (1870); Charles Albert Hall (1886); George Gibson (1894); Bertie Lambert (1911); Hubert John Waller (1925); Alfred Gibson (1929); and Richard Jones (1937).¹¹

In 1862, the *Plough & Ship* opened opposite the site of the Thorrington Railway Station with William Bacon, a Beer Retailer, Saddler & Harness Maker, as licensee. Later landlords were Thomas Westlake (1899); a Retired Police Sergeant William Peacock (1901); Mrs. Susan Alice Hase (1908); Frederick Edward Potter (1910); Ben Dyer (1911); Alfred Gibson (1925) and Ernest H. Baker (1929).¹¹ In 1930, it successfully applied for a Wine License.¹² In 1946, Harry James became landlord and stayed until the owners *Ind Coope* closed the Inn in 1970. He had seen a sketch of the inn dated 1713.¹³ The Inn was demolished when the junction was altered.

The Cherry Tree Inn opened on Colchester Road against clergy objections. In 1878, Barnabas Harper was the licensee and tenant; followed by William Ford (1886); Albert Hart (1890); John Puxley (1894); George Harvey (1898) and Alfred Broom (1906).¹⁴ After the Licensing Act of 1904, It was closed in 1907, being deemed non-necessary by the Police as there were already two Inns in the village, and £326 10/- compensation was paid to its owners Daniell and Sons' Breweries Ltd and £9 10/- to its tenant.¹⁵ It is now the site of Bamburgh Cottage.¹⁶

1. ERO Q/SR 166/89-126 EASTER 1604.
2. ERO Q/SR 171/78 Easter 1605
3. ERO Q/SR 173/127 MICHAELMAS 1605
4. ERO Q/SR 177/127 MICHAELMAS 1606
5. ERO Q/SR 179/89 EASTER 1607
6. ERO Q/SR 183/84 EASTER 1608
7. ERO Q/SR 228/33, 96 EASTER 1620 similar offenses in the Tendring Hundred led to three days in gaol
8. ERO Q/SR 274/12 EASTER 1631
9. ERO Q/SR 557/4, 5 MICHAELMAS 1713
10. ERO Q/SR 264/52 EPIPHANY 1629 similar offenses in Colchester led to three weeks in gaol – this included playing bowls instead of going to Church
11. https://pubwiki.co.uk/EssexPubs/Thorrington/index.shtml_drawing_on_trade_directories.
12. *PETTY SESSIONS Chelmsford Chronicle* Friday 14 March 1930
13. Facebook – Thorrington History Group “Harry pulls his last pint” (1970) undated newspaper article
14. <https://pubwiki.co.uk/EssexPubs/Thorrington/cherry.shtml>
15. *TNA PS 1/14/1; THE LICENSING ACT, 1904. Chelmsford Chronicle* Friday 17 May 1907, Friday 14 June 1907, Friday 18 October 1907 *Essex Newsmen* Saturday 12 October 1907 compensation was paid from the collected license fees in order to reduce the number of public houses in small villages
16. Sharpe R (1995) p22

Post-Medieval Charity and Parish Relief

The Will of Richard Boiler of Great Bentley in 1571 refers to his almshouse in Thorrington.¹ In 1572, the Rev George Lawson left money for the poor of Alresford, Elmstead, Thorrington and Brightlingsea.² In July 1586, William Colman left *to the poor of Thorrington 20/- and to every poor widow 3/ 4.*³

From 1601, the Parish was responsible for overseeing the Poor with two representatives annually elected at the Vestry Council. In 1777, Thorrington maintained three *Poor House cottages* built from second-hand bricks, *wooden-framed and plastered with mud* next to Glebe Farm.³ Those not living in the cottages could ask for other relief including between 1825-35: one yard of calico to make night hats; Mrs Baker getting a saucepan; John Grimsey a shirt and smock; Mrs Grimsey some calico; Thomas Baker received £1 towards establishing a blacksmiths shop. Poor or orphan girls were expected to work for Mr Jennings for food. Mr Smith, the surgeon, received 18/- pa to care for them.⁴

The introduction of threshing machines led to mass unemployment in Tendring. By 1827, 14 agricultural labourers were unemployed in Thorrington and totally dependent on parish relief.⁵ In 1836, Thorrington joined the Tendring Union, with one central Workhouse for the 30 Parishes, constructed on the old Moot Hill at Tendring Heath.⁶ On 18th December 1838, the three cottages and one acre of field were sold to Mr Smith of Brightlingsea.⁷ The Tithe Map of 1843, shows Workhouse Pightle (248) and Workhouse Field (199).⁸

1. TNA PROB 11/54/540 p.1 Will of George Lawson, Clerk, Parson
2. Emmison FG *Essex Wills* iii 28 March 1571 (597) p253
3. Emmisson FG (1578) *Elizabethan Life: Wills of Essex Gentry* p.185 [30/65]
4. Sharpe R (1995) p14; Drury J (2006) *Essex Workhouses* p.294
5. *Ibid* p12
6. *Chelmsford Chronicle* 23rd February 1827. 634 in total in Tendring - Alresford (8), Brightlingsea (20), Elmstead (33), Frating (11), Great Bentley (37)
7. <http://www.workhouses.org.uk/Tendring/> This led to savings of around 50% on individual Parishes
8. Sharpe R (1995) p14
9. Tithe Map of 1843

Post-medieval archaeology

68 sherds of post medieval pottery (AD 1540-1799) were excavated from 14 of the 18 test pits.

Tudor and Stuart Thorrington (1485-1714)

During the Tudor period many properties in Essex changed hands to merchants and investors from London and the Home Counties, sometimes for only a brief period of time as bankruptcy or plague led to a further change. Reasons are not given in the deeds or Feet of Fines when properties are transferred, but the sheer scale of them compared to the earlier medieval age, means that inheritance to a child is rarely occurring.

In 1529, *John Gurdon, John Brashey, clerk, John Coote, Giles Elys and Robert Crodokk bought from Robert Botye and Agnes his wife, 1 messuage, 2 tofts, 70 acres of land, 6 acres of meadow. 40 acres of pasture, 24 acres of wood and 2s. rent in Bentley magna, Fratyng and Thoryngton. Def. quitclaimed to pl. and the heirs of John Brashey. Cons. £80.*¹ Between 1532 and 1538, *John Chaundeler, citizen and goldsmith of London sued John Cowper because of the Detention of deeds relating to messuages and land in Thorrington. Essex.*²

In 1544, George Annesley purchased from *William Strachy and Margaret his wife, 1 messuage, 1 dovecote, 1 water-mill, 200 acres of land, 20 acres of meadow, 40 acres of pasture and 10 acres of wood in Thorrington. ... William and his heirs to hold of the chief lords.*³ In 1553, Princess Mary granted land to Edward VI in Thorrington.⁴

In 1581, Edmd. Wythepoll, esq., bought from *Geo. Knightley, esq. and wife Kath., Manor of Whelers, 2 messuages, 3 tofts, 1 dovecote, 3 gardens, 160 acres arable, 30 acres meadow, 100 acres pasture, 30 acres wood and 2/- rent in Gt. Bentley, Frating and Thorrington. Worth £480.*⁵

By 1584, Edward, the 17th Earl of Oxford (1550-1604), was the biggest land-owner in North-East Essex but heavily in debt to his creditors due to his flamboyant lifestyle, but also to Queen Elizabeth I.⁶ He sold to Roger Townsende, esq., *the Manors of Wivenhoe, Battleswick & Great Bentley, 100 messuages, 100 cottages, 30 tofts, 4 mills, 3 dovecotes, 200 gardens, 1,000 acres arable, 100 acres meadow, 2,000 acres pasture, 300 acres wood, 500 acres furze & heath, 100 acres moor, 40 acres land, 200 acres fresh marsh, 300 acres salt marsh, 40 acres alder, £20 rent & common of pasture in Wivenhoe, East & West Donyland, Colchester, Old Hythe, Greenstead, Elmstead, Frating, Alresford, Great & Little Bentley, Thorrington & Weeley, & view of frank pledge in Wivenhoe, Bentley & Donyland. Warranty against the heirs of John, earl of Oxford, deed. £1,000.*⁷ Townsende also agreed to pay the Earl's debts to the Queen in instalments.⁸

1. 20-21 HENRY VIII (1529-30) EASTER 31 a toft was an inhabited buildings

2. TNA C1/766/13

3. 36 HENRY VIII (1544) MICHAELMAS 6

4. TNA E326/11862 (1553)

5. CP25(2)/ 13 I / I 683 MICHAELMAS, 23-24 ELIZABETH (1581) 37 p.7 Watson (1877) Tendring p.118 identified this as Frating Abbey

6. Pearson, D (2005), *Edward de Vere (1550-1604): The Crisis and Consequences of Wardship* p294

Also in 1584, Percy Butter, purchased from George Sayer, esq. & wife Rose & Charles Cardynall, gent. & wife Elizabeth, 1 toft, 40 acres arable, 10 acres meadow, 30 acres pasture & 8 acres wood in Thorrington for 130 marks.⁹

And John Rede, esq., bought from *Geo. Knightley, esq. & wife Kath. & Edmund Clare, gent. & wife Dorothy, 2 messuages, 2 barns, 2 gardens, 1 orchard, 100 acres arable, 40 acres pasture, 16 acres wood & 24 acres marsh in Thorrington to be held to Edmd. & Dorothy & their heirs of the chieflords; if they die without heirs, to remain to the right heirs of Edmd. likewise. £80.*¹⁰

In 1586, *John Audley, gent.*, sold to *Thomas Henneage, kt. & wife Anne, Mich. Henneage, gent. & William Poyntz, gent.*, the Manor of Brightlingsea, 15 messuages, 10 gardens, 10 orchards, 500 acres arable, 100 acres meadow, 500 acres marsh & 40/- rent in Brightlingsea & Thorrington. Worth £500.¹¹

In 1589, Henry Smythe, gent. & w. Anne, sold to *George Knightley, esq. & wife. Kath. and Edmd. Clare, gent. &: wife Dorothy, 3 messuages, 2 barns, 1 mill, 1 dovecote, 2 gardens., 1 orchard, 1 00 acres arable, 40 acres pasture, 16 acres wood & 30 acres marsh in Thorrington. Valued at £140.*¹²

In 1594, Edward Eliot, esq. and wife Jane purchased from Henry Smythe, esq. & wife Anne, 3 messuages, 2 barns, 1 watermill, 1 dovecote, 2 gardens, 1 orchard, 100 acres arable, 40 acres pasture, 16 acres wood & 30 acres marsh in Thorrington. Worth £400.¹³

In 1594, *Drogo Drewry, kt., Wm. Bowes, kt., Jn. Poyntz, kt., Edw. Bacon, esq. & Wm. Twysden, esq.*, acquired from *Moyle Finche, kt. & w. Eliz.*, the Manor of Brightlingsea, 15 messuages, 10 gardens, 10 orchards, 500 acres arable, 100 acres meadow, 500 acres marsh, 40/- rent & free warren in Brightlingsea & Thorrington. [Consideration illegible.]¹⁴

John Beriffe, gent., received from *John Curd & wife Grace, 1 messuage, 20 acres arable, 4 acres meadow, 20 acres pasture. & 6 acres wood in Alresford, Frating & Thorrington. Warranty against the heirs of John Hunwicke, deed. Worth £41.*¹⁵

7. CP25(2)/132/1 693 EASTER, 26 ELIZABETH 1584 51.
8. Pearson, D (2005), p35, 193
9. CP25(2)/1 32/1 695 MICHAELMAS, 26-27 ELIZABETH 1584 28
10. CP25(2)/1 32/1 695 MICHAELMAS, 26-27 ELIZABETH 1584
11. CP25(2)/133/1 700 HILARY, 28 ELIZABETH 1586 30
12. CP25(2)/134/1 713 EASTER, 31 ELIZABETH 1589 21
13. CP25(2)/1 S6/1 7S2 HILARY, S6 ELIZABETH 1594 23
14. CP25(2)/137/1 742 Trinity, 38 ELIZABETH 1596 19
15. CP25(2)/138/1748 EASTER, 40 ELIZABETH 1598 31. p.146

In 1598, *Edmund Wythepole, esq. & Anthony Parker, gent.*, acquired from *Edward Wythepole, Peter Wythepole & Benjamin Wythepole, gents.*, 1 messuage, 1 garden, 1 orchard, 100 acres arable, 20 acres meadow, 100 acres pasture & 10 acres wood in Frating, Gt. Bentley & Thorrington. Worth £240.¹⁶ These were quickly transferred to Robert Honywood, esq. & Richard Rasell, for a profit of £80 as the lands were then worth £320.¹⁷

In 1599, Henry Hobart, esq., William Beryffe, gent. & Henry Lannam, gent., acquired from *Sir John Payton, & wife Dorothy & Thomas Berwick, gent. & wife Margaret, the Manors of Alresforde & East Hall, 20 messuages, 1 watermill, 20 gardens, 1,000 acres arable, 80 acres meadow, 200 acres pasture, 300 acres wood, 200 acres furze & heath, 60 acres marsh, 30/- rent, free warren, several fishery in the water called Alresford Ford & view of frankpledge in Alresford, Wivenhoe, Frating & Thorrington, & advowson of church of Alresford, & moiety of 1 watermill in Alresford & Thorrington. £600.*¹⁸

In 1602, the Alresford Creek watermill again changed hands as Henry Rande, received from *Thomas Malloves, gent.*, 60 acres arable & 20 acres wood, & a moiety of 1 watermill in Thorrington, Alresford & Elmstead. Worth £80.¹⁹

In 1602, *William Beryffe, gent. & John Gent*, acquired from *John Hubben & wife Margery, 1 messuage, 20 acres arable & 3 acres wood in Thorrington. £50.*²⁰

In 1602, the Manor of Alresford and all of its lands, including those in the Parish of Thorrington changed hands –the water-mill and neighbouring farms– but the value had dropped from £600 to £400 in three years. *Henry and William Reade, acquiring them from Sir John Parson wife Dorothy & Thomas Berwick, gent. & wife Margaret.*²¹

In 1561, Rev John Pullen after his return from exile in Geneva was resident. A certificate from the Bishop of London stated “.. he lyeth at Thurrington.”²² A Ports survey of 1565 found that Thorrington had *one lading place, the mill* but had no Deputies – these were at Alresford.²³

In 1573, George Forest in his will left “..all my tools except an axe to cut wood, a hammer, and a pair of pinsons..” This was one of only two Tudor Wills in Essex that mentioned leaving a craftsmans tools.²⁴

16. CP25(2)/138/1 749 TRINITY, 40 ELIZABETH 1598 24

17. CP25(2)/138/1 750 MICHAELMAS, 40-41 ELIZABETH (2files) 1598 78

18. CP25(2)/138/1 753 TRINITY, 41 ELIZABETH 1599 39

19. CP25(2)/140/J 765 TRINITY, 44 ELIZABETH 1602 1

20. CP25(2)/140/J 765 TRINITY, 44 ELIZABETH 1602 14

21. CP25(2)/140/J 765 TRINITY, 44 ELIZABETH 1602 30

22. [Higgs LM](#) · (1998) *Godliness and Governance in Tudor Colchester* p.191 He also became a freeman of Colchester in 1559

23. [Dickin EP](#) (1926) *Notes on the coast, shipping, and sea-borne trade of Essex, from 1565 to 1577* Transactions of the Essex Archaeological Society new series xvii p156

24. [Emmison FG](#) (1991) *Elizabethan Life: Home, Work and Land* p183

Thorrington paid £1.12/11 in 1327 in Royal Taxes; and this had risen to £ 4.2/10 by 1524. (250% increase).²⁵ During the reign of Charles I, Thorrington was assessed at £7 for Ship Money (1635-1641).²⁶

Between 1662 and 1689, the King raised finances via the annual Hearth Tax. 2/- was paid for each hearth in a property in two instalments at Lady's Day (March 25th) and Michaelmas (September 29th).²⁷ There were exemptions for the poor. The returns still exist for *Thorrington* in 1670 collected by John Maschall (Royal Collector) and Richard Browne (Constable).²⁸

	Hearths		Hearths	The following persons are discharged by certificate	
Richardus Brown	04	Ricardus Fruen	03	Johannes Wilkin	01
Robertus Minter	04	Johannes Scott	03	Willelmus Browne	01
Robertus Thacker	02	Maria Boggs	04	Edwardus Curling	01
Thomas Cason	04	Elizabetha Pettitt	03	Smith vid	01
Edwardus Gosling	01	Jacobus Barnard	01	Robertus Sayers	01
Robertus Goodger	02	Willelmus Simons	03	Franc Hawkins	01
Ives vid vac	01	Thomas Carter	04	Stephanus Dixe	01
Vitill Bicksby	02	Stephanus Siday	03	Maria Stubbs	02
Xpoferus Inman	02	Johannes Clarke	06	Johannes Clarke	01
Willelmus Peirson	03	Willelmus Willis	08		
Mr Damsell vac	01	Willelmus Willis vac	02		
Thomas Simons	01	Thomas Beacon vac	01		
Johannes Gryme	01	Josephus Day	01		
Carolus Benson	02				

Colchester Museum received some artefacts from Thorrington for this period. Two tokens of "*Richard Boyse of Colchester, 1668*" were found at Thorrington by Mr. George Andrews **(367.53)** and Mr. Snow **(108.52)**. An old leather shoe found at Thorrington Hall. **(407.37)**²⁹

In 1594, John Norden's *Description of Essex* mentioned Thorrington and local heaths. "*..The most barren heathy grounds yield the most finest wool..*"³⁰

The villagers were also beneficiaries from Wills. On October 30th 1559, Jasper Clerke of Maldon bequeathed *To Joan my wife my lands, tenements, wares (weirs) and fishing, free and copy in Thorrington and Maldon.*³¹

In 1564 by his will, John Close was to be buried in the church and his Manor of Thorrington was to be disposed of.³² On November 23rd 1568, Thomas Hene of Peldon husbandman made his brother-in-law Thomas of Thorrington seaman his executor.³³

25. Galloway JA (1986) Colchester and its region, 1310-1560: WEALTH, INDUSTRY AND RURAL-URBAN MOBILITY IN A MEDIEVAL SOCIETY p.46

26. Sharpe R (1995) p.11

27. [https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/England_Hearth_Tax_1662_to_1689_\(National_Institute\)](https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/England_Hearth_Tax_1662_to_1689_(National_Institute))

28. ERO Q/RTh 5

29. REPORT OF COLCHESTER AND ESSEX MUSEUM FOR THE PERIOD APRIL 1st, 1937 TO MARCH 31st, 1944 p.37 and p.65

30. Emmison FG (1993) Essex Wills: The Bishop of London's Commissary Court, 1558-1569 p.70 (Will 315)

On June 9th 1578 Alice Cony, .. *to be buried in Thorrington. To {blank} a flockbed, a ewe and a lamb.*³⁴ On May 3rd 1579, William Ryding of Thorrington husbandman bequeathed *To Susan my daughter £5 at 21 or marriage. If she die before, 20/-, each to my sister's children, viz Joseph, Simon, Judith, Mary and Hester Hutton. To my cousins Judith Hutton 10/-, and Simeon Hutten and Mary Hutten each 10/- at 21 or marriage. I will Kath, my wife to pay William Butler of Thorrington the 30/- and to keep it until then. The residue of my goods to my wife whom I make ex'er.*³⁵ On November 3rd 1580, John Colman of Bradwell-juxte-Mare left for *William Colman of Thorrington all my goods, on condition that he bring up my son John in the fear of God and see that he have meat, drink and necessaries until he be able to get his living. I ordain William executor to see John be put to prentice.*³⁶ c.1585, Richard Underwood was left 20/- by John Golding of Oakley, husbandmen from his holdings in Walton.³⁷

In July 1586 the former Church Warden William Colman left in his Will money to the poor of Thorrington. *To my beloved wife Anne an annuity of £10 out of my farm of Thorrington Hall... to my brother-in-law Richard Symnell .. twenty years lease of Thorrington Hall... with the profits for my four daughters Jane, Elizabeth, Martha and Joan. Each £8 per annum until 18.* Jane was to receive her mother's marrying ring; Elizabeth the brass cobirons in Thorrington Hall and Richard Symnell the lease to Thorrington Hall. He also made grants to his servants: Anne Lane received 58/; Henry Coke 26/8; Rand 13/4; Helen 2/6 and nurse Lawrence 20/. *To Sluith the sheep-milker there 3 loads of brush.. John Cole 4 loads of brush and Greenleaf 2 loads of brush. The Masters and Fellows of St John's College were to buy a piece of plate..*³⁸

c.1588, Margaret Harrys of Thorrington servant with *Nekhouldes* received from her uncle Mr Heres *my houses and land in Brightlingsea and Holland.*³⁹ On May 8th 1589, John Hunt of Thorrington left for *Richard my younger son my customary house and land in Ardleigh holden of the Manor of Pycetes purchased of Henry Walle.*⁴⁰

On December 13th 1593, Thomas Sair of Thorrington bequeathed to *My son's son John Sair all my customary lands and tenements called Alldrechtes and a parcel of land with a customary cottage called Annewens (4 acres) holden by copy of the lords of the manor of Thorrington, a free grove in Frating (2 acres) and £7. To him and my*

31. Emmison FG (1991) Elizabethan Life: Home, work and Land p34

32. Emmison FG (1973) Elizabethan Life: Essex Gentry Wills p.322 [7/12]

33. Emmison FG (1993) Essex Wills: The Bishop of London's Commissary Court, 1558-1569 p207 (Will 964) parchment torn at location of his surname

34. Emmison FG (1982) Essex Wills (England): 1577-1584 p132 [Will 597]

35. Emmison FG (1982) Essex Wills (England): 1577-1584 p162 (Will 721)

36. Emmison FG (1982) Essex Wills (England): 1577-1584 P45 (Will 191)

37. Emmison FG (1982) Essex Wills (England): 1583-1592 p304 (Will 1145) date torn

38. Emmison FG (1973) Elizabethan Life: Essex Gentry Wills p.185 [30/63]

39. Emmison FG (1998) Essex Wills The Bishop of London's Commissary Court, 1587-1599 p117

*daughter Joan Hoberd all my household stuff to be equally divided by goodmen Kengston and Collmane. To my godsons William and Thomas Hoberd each £10 and Grace and Elizabeth Hoberd each 20 nobles at 20. To the churchwardens towards the reparation of Thorrington church 20/- To the poor 13/4 at my burying...*⁴¹

In August 1599, Pearce Butter left to his son John his house and lands in Thorrington, free and copy, in occupation of John Hubbert at 21.⁴² By his Will proven in May 1626, John Butter was to be buried in Thorrington Churchyard, left his lands to his wife Margaret for her life and they were then to be sold by the bothers Pearce.⁴³

On May 8th 1688, Thomas Macro jun of Bury S. Edmund's, druggist and Susan his wife, sole daughter and heiress of John Cox of Risby, clerk, deceased, and Grace Cox his widow sell to Joseph Thurston of Colchester, gent .. message or farm called Casers with etc., in Thorrington.⁴⁴

In the 1690s St John's College were forced to pay fines for rents at Thorrington as a contribution to William III's wars against France.⁴⁵

40. Emmison FG (1998) Essex Wills The Bishop of London's Commissary Court, 1587-1599 p.119 (Will 620)

41. Emmison FG (1998) Essex Wills The Bishop of London's Commissary Court, 1587-1599 p243 (Will 1225)

42. Emmison FG (1973) Elizabethan Life: Essex Gentry Wills p.271 [44/68]; Collinson P, Craig J, Usher B (ed) (2003) *The Texts Conferences and Combination Lectures in the Elizabethan Church 1582-90*, p127 note 365

43. Essex Institute (1904) Historical Collections of the Essex Institute -XXXX p. 310

44. The Essex Review (1943) LII p106 #11

45. Linehan P (2011) St John's College Cambridge, a history p152

Georgian

The Cook family were at Thorrington Hall and other neighbouring farms from 1679, with a lease signed on September 28th 1694. The Terrier of 1736 records John Cook (1716-92) as tenant.¹ In September 1759, Benjamin Cook (1691-59), gent, was tenant of Frating Hall when he died. His will was proved on September 10th 1759 and he left his estates to his daughters Esther and Ann; including land at Thorrington Cross, *ffingringhoe, and Gt Bentley*.²

John Cook of Thorrington Hall inherited the Manor of Wenham Parva, Suffolk from Robert Freeman from his father-in-law.³ He complained in 1765 that *“persons have of late destroyed the Game upon the Manor”* and promised legal action would be taken.⁴ In 1778 and 1785, fines recorded that the leases were renewed every seven years.⁵ After his death, the *Valuable and desirable ESTATE* sold⁶ at the Red Lion in December 1795. This included the unexpired land leases⁷ of six-years to Samuel and Robert Baker at rent of £265 per annum. The deeds show the estate was 498 acres (roughly four hides) included a farm-house; *sufficient accommodation for a genteel family in the mansion house on a four acre plot of land leased at £48 per annum with 13 acres of land, 4 acres of underbrush, 220 acres of woodland, two cottages and manorial rights of hunting and common. The situation of this Estate is very desirable, and particularly to a Gentleman attached to field sports, there being a Manor affixed to it of at least 400 acres, abundantly flocked with game.*⁸

In 1768 the *electors for the knights of the shire* were :- John Cook, John Skinner;⁹ Daniel Clapton (resident in Colchester);¹⁰ John Evans (resident in Great Clacton)¹¹ and Philip Roberts (resident in West Bergholt.)¹²

In 1778-82, soldiers were camped during Summer on Tenpenny Heath.¹³

In 1810, Mr Harvey introduced an act of Parliament to enclose 120 acres of unprofitable waste land at Thorrington. Lands within the boundary of Thorrington Cross to the Red Lion; Frating Road to the junction of the Cross and Bentley Green Road; back to the Cross; and the adjoining Tenpenny Heath and behind the Red Lion. The formal notice was pinned to the Church door for three Sundays in February and March with meetings held at the Red Lion, owned by Joseph Ladbrook. On June 12th, thirteen parishioners attended. At the next meeting in July, Rev Warburton, Daniel Poole (miller) and James Burr were instructed to claim their land or be excluded.

In August, a meeting at the Three Cups in Colchester laid out the route of the public roads and listened to any objections. Micaiah Bacon claimed for three houses with three acres. He was awarded only one house and 2 acres, 2 roods. Elizabeth Rashbrook's claim for her house was disallowed as she lacked any documentation. On

August 29th, a notice was pinned to the Church door. There were 29 houses allowed on the surveyed 543 acres, 2 roods of copyhold land. The main land-owners were John Lay (190 acres), Sarah Roberts (70 acres) and Sarah Pearson (30 acres.) Any objections had to be submitted with evidence.

On February 11th 1811, the surveyor Abraham Cass produced his plan. On April 2nd, the lots were sold raising £1182, with expenses of £766 19/9. Any straying animals were to be kept in the village pound, in the grounds of Thorrington Hall. Compensation was paid to owners of tofts or messuages, even if not still standing. Allotments of one acre were given to each copyhold owner. On Tuesday 3rd March 1812, John Richardson was appointed as Parish Surveyor; and 2 acres, 9 perches on the north side of Tenpenny Heath Road allotted as a quarry from which to pave the roads.

Four thirty foot wide public roads were built:-

- (1) Tenpenny Heath Road – from Tenpenny Bridge to Thorrington Cross;
- (2) Great Heath Road – from the Cross eastwards to the St Osyth Road;
- (3) Frating Road – from the Red Lion north-west to the Frating old road;
- (4) Cross Road – present day Station Road.

The first five allotments of land were given to St John's College, totalling 23 acres, 2 roods and 3 perches. Twenty-five villagers are named as copyhold tenants, with twenty-nine perches given to the poor. Quit rents were 6d pa for the Great Heath and 3d pa for Tenpenny. The lands were also subject to the annual tithe and were inherited by custom. This was *Borough English*, which meant the youngest inherited.¹⁴

From 1815, meetings of the *Elmstead & Thorrington Association* (for prosecuting felons) at the Great Bentley Lion were attended by three land-owners from Thorrington.¹⁵

On Friday 9th April 1819, Mr Burgess and his wife were returning to Thorrington, via East Hill, Colchester when they were thrown from their cart when the horse was startled was by the *premature explosion of gunpowder employed to blow up a tree-root*.¹⁶

The population of Thorrington almost doubled in the first forty years of the nineteenth century. At the first Census of 1801 it was 271, but it climbed to 531 by 1841.¹⁷ The number of houses almost doubled from 53 to 103.¹⁸ A sample of fourteen houses (108 inhabitants) from the 1811 Census showed fourteen families were involved in agriculture; five in *Trade, Manufacturing or Handicraft*; none in *Other occupations*. Two houses were shared between three families; one between two. Large families had ten members (Newstead and Ladbrook) with a mean average of five. Families mentioned were:- Aldham, Andrews(2), Appleby, Barber, Barker, Cooper, Death, Gunfield, Kettle, Ladbrook(2), Newstead, Potter, Roberson, Seamons, Simons, Smith, Woods and Young.¹⁹

Villagers were still expected to mend any roads under the direction of the Parish Surveyor. They could pay via the rates, volunteer labour or give money instead of the later. Between 1825 and 1841: Nathaniel Cole was paid 7/6d for five days gravelling: Wade was paid 6d for clearing the snow; Cole was paid 6/- for painting the Guide Post at the Cross and 9d to post a letter.²⁰

In December 1832, a Thorrington farm *near the mill* was offered at auction complete with Live and Dead stock: *8 horses and clots, 3 fat beasts, 4 yearling heifers, 2 cows, and a bull, late the property of John Thompson, deceased; waggons, tumbrels, carts, ploughs.*²¹

1. St John's College Cambridge MSS, MAB History of Frating file 1
2. ERO D/ABW 99/3/63 Will of Benjamin Cook 1759
3. Copinger WA (1910) *The Manors of Suffolk: notes on their history and devolution* p117-8 Wenham Parva is south-west of Ipswich. It remained in the Cook Family until 1826 when it was sold for £3,000.
4. *The Ipswich Journal* Saturday 14 August 1762 p3, 4
5. St John's College Cambridge MSS, MAB History of Frating file 1
6. *The Ipswich Journal* Saturday 28 February 1795 p1
7. *The Suffolk Chronicle; or Weekly General Advertiser & County Express* Saturday 19 December 1835 p1
8. ERO D/DEI 536, *Sales By Auction The Times* Tuesday March 3 1795
9. Clay RL (1768) *The Poll for the Knights of the Shire to Represent the County of Essex* p133
10. *Ibid* p.105
11. *Ibid* p.127
12. *Ibid* p.99
13. ERO T/Z 438/3 soldiers camping at Tenpenny
14. *Journals of the House of Commons* (1810) LXV p89; ERO D/CT 353A Thorrington Closure Award; D/CT 353B Thorrington Closure Map; D/DMb/E25 Q/Rdc Thorrington Enclosure Award; D/DMb/E26 Thorrington Commissioner's Minute Book; STMM has copies
15. Brown AFJ (1996) *Prosperity and Poverty: Rural Essex 1700-1815* p52
16. *Cambridge Chronicle and Journal* Friday 09 April 1819 P.1; *The Suffolk Chronicle; or Weekly General Advertiser & County Express* Saturday 10 April 1819 P.3
17. https://www.visionofbritain.org.uk/unit/10247561/cube/TOT_POP
18. <https://www.visionofbritain.org.uk/unit/10247561/cube/HOUSES>
19. Eureka Partnership (2021) *Essex Pre-1841 Census Returns Group 2* p42
20. Sharpe R (1995) p.13
21. *Essex Standard* Saturday 15 December 1832

The Mills

The earliest water mill in Thorrington was mentioned In the Domesday Book – it's location is unclear. In c1245, Richard d'Escot gave land near Killer's Hythe to the Abbot of St John's Priory, Colchester. This involved a swamp being filled in and a track constructed to meet the Colchester to St Osyth Road; positioning this mill at the eastern end of the Parish close to Marsh Farm.¹ Borefleet Mill was mentioned in 1565 in a Survey of ports,² the Manor rent roll of 1708 and the Manorial map of 1797.³

The mills on Alresford Creek and Tenpenny Brook date from at least the late sixteenth century when frequent transfers were made.⁴ Mill buildings existed on both sides of the Creek grinding flour. In 1565, *a lading place* at the mill is mentioned as part of the port of Brightlingsea.⁵ In 1675, Rev John Cox and in 1688, Joseph Thurston of Colchester sold the mill – occupied by James Brand on both occasions.⁶ Between 1718 and 1739, the Mill and a nearby wood were part of the Gillingham estates that included the manors of Great Holland and East Donyland.⁷ In 1740, William Walker was owner.⁸ In 1757, Daniel Clapton was proprietor and in 1778-1810, his son John leased the land to Daniel Poole. In 1810, *a very valuable freehold estate ... in Thorrington in the centre of very productive corn country, surrounded by good markets now in the occupation of Mr Daniel Poole, comprising a powerful and complete tide-water mill with two pairs of excellent French stones, to drive with spur gears four flour mills, convenient stage, new water-wheel and all other necessary machinery, with a consistent supply of fresh water. Also a well-built windmill with two good pair of French stones, one flourmill and other machinery. The two mills together are capable of manufacturing 100 quarters per week. Also a well-built mansion & c.* The mill was purchased by William Eve and his son. From 1820 cement was ground and transported by barge.⁹

On August 6th 1830, *A Tidal Water Corn Mill, Wharf, Wind Mill, capital Residence, Ornamental Cottages and Land* was offered for auction at the Red Lion. Both the water mill and wind mill contained two pairs of stones – with the latter producing seven or eight loads of Grist per week. The mill pond extended over four acres. *The Wharf is remarkably well situate for shipping and unloading all descriptions of merchandise, and it is presumed a most excellent situation for a Malting.* The farm had 12 acres of arable and pasture land.¹⁰



Figure 8 – Postcard of Thorrington Tide Mill

The current mill (EHER 34312, HEW 1579) was constructed in 1831¹¹ and uses tide water to fill the reservoir, then the sluice is opened, and the 16' wheel with fifty paddles drives three 4' French burr millstones. A hoist is also water-powered to raise sacks to the top of the mill-house and a 'reel' (rotary sieve) to remove bran from the flour.¹²

At this time, the land was owned by Rev Smythies of St Mary-on-the-Wall,¹³ whose daughter married William Warwick Hawkins – chairman of the Tendring Hundred Railway Company that built the railway and leasee of Alresford Hall. In the next hundred years there were 27 deeds of ownership and tenancy before Guy Cobbold of Alresford Hall sold the mill in 1941 to Thomas Glover, a local farmer.¹⁴

For much of this time, the Cooper Family (1841-1912) were associated with the mill. In August 1869, the farm and mills was sold. *A modern-built WATER-MILL, having an abundant supply of water, driving three pairs of stones, with stowage for 250 quarters of Corn..*¹⁵ During the early twentieth century, a portable steam engine was installed to assist the water-powered grinding, but in 1926 the millstones broke.¹⁶

The Glover family used it for the next thirty years to separate flower seeds grown on the Alresford bank. The tidal mill was listed in 1952 at Grade II*.¹⁷ From 1977, Essex County Council renovated the mill back to full working condition¹⁸ with assistance from the National Rivers Authority who used steel piling to protect the underpinning of the foundations. The total cost was £207,000 – with a grant of c.£42,000 from English Heritage. On May 10th 1990, the restored millwheel turned for the first time in over 60 years.¹⁹

In 2019, Mark and Polly Baine opened a Vineyard on the Alresford bank with a mixture of Pinot Noir, Chardonnay and Bacchus plants. Twelve Shropshire sheep grazed on the dam. In October 2021, the first grapes were harvested and sent to Hattingley Valley Wines in Hampshire. British Pedigree Saddleback boars were also bred.²⁰

There was also a windmill slightly west of the tidal mill on Coopers Hill, built around 1740 by William Walker. On January 5th 1857, *On Monday morning, during the violent gale which then prevailed, the sails of Thorrington Mill were blown off. Three of them were smashed to pieces and the shaft broken. The damage is stated to be £120.*²¹ In

August 1869, the repaired windmill was sold. *A substantial well-arranged WINDMILL, standing on elevated ground, possessing stowage for 590 quarters of Corn, fitted with patent sails, which drive two pairs of French stones..* but later that year the windmill became derelict after another storm.²² The complex in total consisted of a four-storey tidal mill, a wind-mill, granaries, house, farmland, and a wharf for shipping flour, cement, coal, wood and chalk to London.²³

From c.1860-c.1906, the Harper family owned the Tenpenny Brickworks (**SMR 15494**).²⁴ At Brick Kiln Lane, four brickmakers and their labourers made red bricks working from 5.30am to 7pm. Around 2000 could be made each day and the brickmakers were paid 5/- a thousand in the late nineteenth century.²⁵ A second brickworks was north of the Mill and east of the dam. By the 1870's Henry Chopping rented Thorrington Water Mill and the Brick Works (**SMR 15495**) from the Cooper family. He removed clay off the surrounding land for brickmaking.²⁶ Often a common load for barges was 20,000 bricks from Thorrington; and 100 bags of flour from St Osyth and Walton mills.²⁷ In March 1875, Frederick Cooper, of Thorrington Mill, offered *For Sale 150,000 red bricks; convient for Carriage by Road, or for Shipping*.²⁸ In 1892, the barges *Greta* and *Millie* were built at Brightlingsea for Jervis & Hibbs to transport these bricks.²⁹

1. Garwood A (2008) WATER & STEAMMILLS IN ESSEX COMPARATIVE SURVEY OF MODERN & INDUSTRIAL SITES and MONUMENTS No. 18 p.351
2. Dickin EP (1926) *Notes on the coast, shipping, and sea-borne trade of Essex, from 1565 to 1577* Transactions of the Essex Archaeological Society new series xvii p156;
3. Wood G (2003) Thorrington Tide Mill p5
4. CP25(2)/137/I 742 Trinity, 38 ELIZABETH 1596 #22; CP25(2)/138/I 7 53 TRINITY, 41 ELIZABETH 1599 #39; CP25(2)/140/J 765 TRINITY, 44 ELIZABETH 1602 #1 & 30
5. Dickin EP (1926) *Notes on the coast, shipping, and sea-borne trade of Essex, from 1565 to 1577* Transactions of the Essex Archaeological Society new series xvii p156; Emmison FG (1998) *Essex Wills : The Bishop of London's Commissary Court: 1587-1599* pXI, Dickin EP (1913) *History of Brightlingsea* p116
6. Wood G (2003) *ibid*
7. ERO T/A 540/5
8. Wood G (2003) *ibid* p6
9. *The Ipswich Journal* Saturday July 31 1830
10. Collins C (2018) *Archaeological Test Pits Excavations in Thorrington, Essex, 2006 & 2007* p.20
11. Haskell T (2008) *Caring for the built heritage* p94-5, Labrum EA (1994) *Civil Engineering Heritage: Eastern and Central England* p155
12. ERO T/B 355/1
13. ERO T/B 363/1
14. *Essex Standard* - Friday 13 August 1869
15. Haskell T (2008) *Caring for the built heritage* p94-5
16. Garwood A (2008) WATER & STEAM MILLS IN ESSEX COMPARATIVE SURVEY OF MODERN & INDUSTRIAL SITES and MONUMENTS No. 18 p.351
17. <https://thorringontidemill.org/2019/10/06/a-history-of-thorrington-tide-mill/>
18. Haskell T (2008) *Caring for the built heritage* p94-5
19. <https://www.thorringtonmill.co.uk/our-story/> ; <https://www.facebook.com/thorringtonmill/>
20. *Essex Standard* Friday 09 January 1857
21. *Essex Standard* - Friday 13 August 1869
22. Chapman and Andre Map 1777; Sharpe (1995) p29-30; Wood G (2003) *ibid* p5-7
23. Brown AFJ (1968) *Essex at Work 1700-1815* p.58-9
24. Corder-Birch, A (1997) *Survey of Brickworks in Essex*
25. Sharpe R (1995) p.58
26. https://www.heritagegateway.org.uk/Gateway/Results_Single.aspx?uid=MEX1037151&resourceID=1001
27. Brown AFJ (1968) *Essex at Work 1700-1815* p.58-9
28. *Essex Standard* Friday 19 March 1875
29. *Sea Breezes* (2008 LXXXII) p172

Victorian

After the 1836 Tithe Commutation Act,¹ Thorrington was surveyed for the new payment method at a scale of 13.3 to one mile. The Thorrington Tithe Award² from 1843, was for a rent-charge of £498 8/ 7 ¾ d, payable by the land-owners to the Church Vestry. The Rector also had a glebe worth £22 8/ 7 ¾ d. Thorrington Parish measured 1950 acres, 3 roods, 13 perches including:

Arable	1364 acres	3 roods	17 perches
Meadow and pasture	261 acres		7 perches
Wood	188 acres	2 roods	19 perches
Buildings	29 acres	3 roods	35 perches
Saltings	37 acres	1 rood	1 perch
Road and waste (Exempt)	48 acres	5 roods	14 perches
Glebe	64 acres		15 perches ³

From the rent-charge the Vestry would pay for any poor, roads, detention of offenders and other responsibilities.

In the year ended March 25th 1837, £237 was levied on Thorrington; £144 Expended for the relief of the poor etc; £12 expected in removal of Paupers, Law Charges etc; £24 paid towards the County Rate; £5 expended for all other purposes; resulting in a Total Parochial Rates expended of £185.⁴

In Victorian Times, the population fell from the 1841 number of 531, to 366 by 1881. It then stayed around this until 1921.⁵ The number of houses also fell in 1891 to only 87, before recovering at the end of Victorian's reign to 97.⁶

In the 1831 Census, only the men were questioned. There were 10 farmers employing labourers, 90 agricultural labourers and 21 involved in retail and handicrafts.⁷ By 1881 both men and women were questioned. The occupations in Thorrington had diversified. There were 74 involved in agriculture, 10 in trades using *various mineral substances*, 9 in domestic service, 6 professionals, 1 in local government, 2 in transport, 5 in food and lodging, 3 in carriages and harnesses, 4 in dress-making, 4 in general commodities, 3 without a specified occupation and 62 with an unknown occupation.⁸

The vast majority of the pottery excavated from the Thorrington test pits was nineteenth century 'Victorian' wares, with 428 sherds recorded from all but one test pit (**TTN/07/7**), and accounts for 81% of all the pottery excavated. Both the 18th and 19th century maps of Thorrington illustrate a very sparsely occupied settlement, the

road network likely based on the original medieval and post medieval routeway through the heathland, as well as leading to the various farmsteads that have likely been in existence for centuries.

A possible, partial cobbled surface was identified (**TTN/07/7**) immediately east of the church and as it was found at quite a shallow depth (0.2m), it may relate to a post medieval or later surface or path next to the Lynch Gate. The presence of a number of likely burnt bricks also recorded at **TTN/07/8** at Pound Farm close to the church, suggest that there may have been a kiln on or close to site, or that an earlier structure here may have been in a fire.⁹

William Hawkins purchased Poundhouse Farm from the late Benjamin Smith, Wivenhoe Surgeon (1771-1843), for £4,500 in 1843.¹⁰

White's Directory of Essex 1848 described the area. THORRINGTON is a village and parish containing 531 souls, and 1930 acres of land, 8 miles South East by South of Colchester, and 2½ miles North of Brightlingsea. The village is on a commanding eminence, and the parish is bounded on the east by a rivulet which runs southward to Brightlingsea creek.

At the Conquest, the manor was given to Odo, Bishop of Bayeaux, and it afterwards passed to the Anesty, Valence, Hastings, and other families. In 1521, it was sold, with about one-third of the soil of the whole parish, to the Executors of Margaret, Countess of Richmond, for the use of St. John's College, Cambridge, to which it still belongs.

The other principal landowners are W. W. Hawkins, Esq., W. Anston, Esq., Miss Borthwick, Miss Reeve, and several smaller owners, partly copyholders, subject to arbitrary fines.

The Church (St. Mary Magdalen,) has a nave, chancel, and north aisle, and a tower built of brick and stone, and containing five bells. It was rebuilt or extensively repaired in 1477. The rectory is consolidated with that of Frating, as noticed. The glebe here is 22A. 8R. 7½P., and the tithes have been commuted for £484 per annum. The glebe house is a small cottage. Here is a small Wesleyan Chapel; and a house and garden belonging to the poor, but the donor is unknown.¹¹

In October 1842, a cattle dealer from Thorrington raced his horse in harness for fifty miles in four hours for a bet of £10. The mare was taken to the Swan Inn after the race and died. The owner was fined for his cruelty.¹²

In 1856, Tendring was broken into eleven medical districts, and each was to have a doctor. In District 6, were the Parishes of Great and Little Bentley, Frating, Thorrington and Alresford with a total population of 2424 and a

salary of £40. This was *exclusive of fees for vaccinations, quarterly visits to the on insane paupers, fractures, midwifery, etc.*¹³

In September 1857, Mr WS Frost of Thorrington Hall and many local landowners attended a meeting at the Cups hotel, Colchester planning to establish the North-Essex Photeinos Chemical Manure Company Ltd. In return for £25,000 in £5 shares they planned to produce and use 1000 tons per annum of their chemical manure.¹⁴ At that year's Christmas meat Market in Ipswich, Frost sold *some good shorthorns*.¹⁵

*In the year ending March 1864, Thorrington was Tendring (Census District 203) with an acreage of 1930; a population of 424 paying a gross rent-charge of £3,171. The rates were 8 ¼ d to the £ towards the relief of the poor; with an average of 0.22 persons per acre, paying £7 9/-7 each.*¹⁶

*On the evening of Tuesday 15th November 1858, as a servant of Mr WS Frost, of Thorrington hall, was driving home with his master's horse, he was run into by the cart of a fish dealer, residing in Magdalen Street, in the road at Elmstead, so as to completely sever the axletree and wheels from Mr Frost's vehicle, The horse was in its fright started off, dragging the back of the cart, and so injured itself that it has been necessary to kill it. It is said to have been worth £50.*¹⁷

*During the evening of Saturday 20th February 1862, some person entered the farm-yard of Mr Frost .. and stole three ducks and a valuable cock turkey, for which he had given £2 2/- in Colchester market a few weeks previously. A reward has been offered, but at present no clue to the offender has been offered.*¹⁸

At Mr Sexton's Christmas Stock Sale of December 1863, at the New Cattle Market, Colchester Mr WS Frost sold *10 famous runts .. averaged 30 guineas each*.¹⁹ The following week he sold six black-faced sheep at the Colchester Christmas Meat Show to Mr Dennis, butcher in the High Street.²⁰

In August 1865, concerns about *the Cattle plague* locally led to a meeting organised by JG Rebow esq. MP in the Serious Court, Colchester Town Hall. This was attended by WS & F Frost.²¹ Within weeks, five animals were infected at Myland.

On Friday 6th October 1865, sparks from a steam-threshing machine caused a fire in some of the agricultural buildings at Gatehouse Farm, owned by Captain Cooper of Ramsgate and tenanted by Mr Charles Porter of St Osyth. A mounted messenger was sent to Colchester to get the engine of the Essex and Suffolk Fire Office. Damage of over

£1000 included two wheat stacks, a barley stack, a stover, and a hay stack, a double barn, three stables, two horse-sheds, three bullock-sheds, a gig-shed, and a cart-lodge. Mr Porter was insured.²²

On Thursday 12th September 1867, an accident happened during harvesting. Benjamin Hollier, 19, was riding around the stacks when the horse slipped. *A portion fo the horse's harness struck him in the breast inflicting serious injuries, and although no bones were broken, the poor man was much bruised. He has since been attended by Mr Meadowcroft, surgeon, and is slowly progressing towards recovery.*²³

In January 1869, *On Monday night or early on Tuesday morning a valuable sheep, the property of WS Frost .. was slaughtered in one of the neighbouring fields. The thief left the skin and entrails in the field. Information was given to Inspector Scott, of Thorpe, as soon as possible, and the police are now actively investigating this matter.*²⁴

In 1871, the first Sheep Sale for forty years was held in Great Bentley, outside the Lion Inn, by Messer's Sexton and Grimwade. *Mr WS Frost of Thorrington Hall sent 200 half-bred lambs and 200 ewes that bred the lambs. The former fetched from 27/- to 35/- per head; and the ewes from 40/- to 44/- per head. Among the purchasers were Mr C Page., Mr W Cater (Colchester), Mr Woodward (Stanway), Mr Prentice, Mr Riggs, Mr Higgs, Mr R Partridge, Mr Isaac Page, and Mr Welham. Mr Frost also sent several horses. A bay riding mare by "Tom," 4 years old, broken to saddle and harness, was knocked down to Mr F Grimwade, at 35 guineas; a five-year-old gelding and a three-year-old filly to Mr Cross, at 21 and 22 guineas respectively; and another filly to Mr Fiske (Ipswich), at 161 guineas.*²⁵

In Autumn 1871, Inspector Lennon reported to the Magistrates that Thorrington farms were infected with foot and mouth disease. On October 4th, *Mr WS Frost of The Hall, Thorrington, 32 bullocks.*²⁶ On November 1st, he lost a further 10 bullocks.²⁷

By the following summer, it was safe to transport over 1000 sheep for sale in Great Bentley. *Mr WS Frost, Thorrington Hall, sent 200 half-bred lambs and several breeding ewes. The lambs were sold, ewe and wether, just as they grew, and, it was generally considered from Cotswold tups. Mr W Cater, Colchester, brought the first two score at 53/6 and 52/6 per head respectively, while prices ranged from these down to 45/6. Fat ewes made from 62/ to 69/: and a lot of these were bought by Mt Bush at 50/6... Mr Frost also offered some handsome horses, the first of which fetched £15 (bought by Mr Chisnell); another, four-year old, just ready to go to work, was sold to Mr Cresswell (Goldhanger) at £20; and roan ditto to Mr cross for £15.*²⁸

On October 7th 1872, Inspector Lennon again reported that Thorrington farms were infected. Jonathan Lord had lost one cow and seven calves; Charles Porter of *Thorrington Farm* had lost 16 bullocks.²⁹

In January 1874, George Lambert, a painter, was prosecuted at the Ipswich Quarter Sessions for *obtaining various from Frances Fairington by false pretences*.³⁰

In July 1876, the sixth annual sale of lambs was held in Great Bentley. . *An adjournment was made to the ring, and Mr Sexton having ascended the wagon, at once commenced to offer the lots for all of which there was brisk competition and good prices were realised ...The purchasers included WS Frost (Thorrington Hall) ... The beasts fetched the following prices:- Mr WS Frost's, 6 beasts from £18 5/- to £22 10/-*.³¹

In September 1877, Rev Mayor and Mr WS Frost wrote letters and spoke at the Magistrates court about their concerns for a fourth public house license being granted to Mr Wright for Thorrington – a village then of 446.³²

In 1878, the Overseers of the Poor were James Bacon and Francis Cooper. The Surveyors of the Highways were William Strutter Frost and William Philip Boghurst.³³ In 1887, the Overseers of the Poor were Charles Porter and Jonathan Lord. The Surveyors of the Highways were Francis Frost and Charles Porter.³⁴

At the 1879 Bentley Lamb Sales Mr WS Frost (Thorrington Hall) sold *120 black-faced ewes by Woodgate's tups, of Waldringfield, 53/6 to 50/-*.³⁵

Due to the agricultural depression, to cover the church costs in 1880 the Rector gave a donation of £11 16/3 and in April 1881 three guineas.³⁶

Like many local villages, Thorrington was affected by foot and mouth outbreaks in 1883 leading to a Quarantine Zone being established. *No. 8 Mr Francis Frost's, Glebe Farm, Thorrington, from south corner of Kiln field, turn to right along the fence through Marrow field, cross the road by Radwell's House, turn to right through 1 acres, cross the road by Low's Farm, leading from railway station to Thorrington Street, by Mr Porter's on the right through 10 acres, turn to right by Mr Boghurst's field, turn to right by Bacon's Farm on the right, cross the road leading from Thorrington Street to Salt Water Bridge, along the chase by the Wood, Thorrington Hall and premises on the right, along the top of 18 acres to the south corner of Kiln field*.³⁷

In November 1883, F. Frost of Thorrington Hall sold LOT No.23 a roan gelding yearling for 29 guineas and LOT No.24 a grey gelding yearling for 31 guineas at Messer's Sexton and Grimwade's Sale of Horses at Colchester.³⁸ In December 1883, *A score of black faced sheep from Mr. F. Frost, Thorrington Hall, realised from 73/6 to 70/6*.³⁹

In July 1884, at Messer's Sexton and Grimwade's Annual Bentley Green Lamb Sale *Four fifties of half-bred lambs sent from Thorrington Hall by Mr Francis Frost, were sold at the respective prices of 31/6, Mr William Johnson; 32/6, Mr John Fenner; 28/- Mr J Cross; and 27/- to the same purchaser – an average of 30/3. A flock of 72 half-bred ewes and 75 mixed lambs were sold for the lump sum of £202 10/-.* ⁴⁰ In September 1884, at Messer's Sexton and Grimwade's Sale of Horses at Colchester Mr. J. Frost of Thorrington Hall sold a Bay yearling gelding, sire *Sir John Falstaff* for 20 guineas.⁴¹

In 1884, each member of the Tendring Board of Guardians was asked to report on the poor state of agriculture in their parish. *In this part crops are about the same, with the exception of Mr J Frost, of Thorrington Hall, who has a very good crop of wheat and barley. All other crops are light, ad several fields and barley are not more than 14 inches high. Oats are very light. Peas and beans are very fair in this part. Potatoes small and scarce.*⁴²

In July 1885, at Messer's Sexton and Grimwade's fifteenth annual lamb sale at Great Bentley Green a record 6,600 lambs were sold for a total of £8,338 7/6. Prices were slightly depressed compared to recent sales. Mr F Frost of Thorrington Hall *sent 300 half-bred lambs, which made 27/- to 18/-; 70 black-faced shearling ewes, 57/6 to 55/6. C. Porter, Thorrington sent 36 half-bred shearling couples, which made 52/- a piece.* He also sold some beasts. Purchasers included Mr. Bacon of Thorrington.⁴³

In 1887, Frost reported that *Wheat is estimated to yield about 6 or 7 coombs per acre, Barley about 6 coombs, and oats about 8 or 9 coombs. On the light land the Wheat has died off too soon, and the kernel is quite shrivelled. The Barley on the light land is quite burnt up, and will not yield in some case 4 coombs. Oats the same. The worst crop I have ever known. Very little Barley will be fit for the maltsters. The soil here is generally light. Beans and Peas very light. Mangel, perhaps, an average crop, but Turnips nearly a failure. Clover, a fair cut in the first crop, but no second crop. Where the Barleys are cut there does not appear to be any young Clover for another year, or only here and there. The young layers will have to be filled up with Trifolium or something of that sort.*⁴⁴

Edward Jennings, labourer of *Thorington*, was charged with riding a cart drawn by two horses without reins, without proper control on 14th November 1887. He worked for Mr Harper, brickmaker of Tenpenny Brickworks, Thorrington. He was observed by PC Joyce and reported to the Court. He plead guilty and was fined 1/- with 7/- costs.⁴⁵

The *live and dead stock* at Thorrington Hall were sold in 1888.⁴⁶

In 1891, Mr T Girling of Thorrington Hall went to Messer's Sexton and Grimwade's Sale of Horses at the Stud Farm, Mirfield where over 60 horses were sold. He sold *Mirfield Superior, a bay foaled in 1887, sire Charlatan* for 62 guineas.⁴⁷

In 1894, the Local Government Act was passed; Vestry Meetings that had run the Parish for hundreds of years was replaced by an elected Civil Parish Council. In Thorrington, this first met on December 4th and 13th 1894 in the National Schoolroom. John Girling was voted as Chairman, Charles Porter as Overseer of the Poor and James Mayer as unpaid Clerk. The footpath across Crocky Field and marshes to Brightlingsea needed repairing and would cost £4 9/8.⁴⁸ High Elms Farm (144 acres) and Hockley Farms were let by St John's College in 1894.⁴⁹

Also that year, Jessie Girling married FH Squire MRCS, IRCP, LSA of Pudesy, Yorkshire.⁵⁰

As well as farming the Thorrington Hall estate also coppiced Hall Wood, Rook Wood and Crockey Farm. The woods were divided into eleven sections cut in rotation. Chestnut poles were used for hurdles and fencing; Hazel for thatching and residual wood was gathered into bundles called *Bavans* and sold for firewood. Every year, forty oak trees were felled, stripped of their bark which was then dried and sent to tanners.⁵¹ *In April 1890, this forestry produced 6350 bavins, 60 bundles of fork stakes, 12 bundles of hurdle stakes, 3940 poles and seconds, 340 bundles of birch, 60 bundles of pea sticks, 429 bundles of thatching rods; also 17 oak trees of excellent quality and good dimensions, 9 bundles of linen props.*⁵² They also regularly grew primroses for sale in London on Primrose Day.⁵³

1. The Tithe Commutation Act 1836 **6 & 7 Will 4 c 71**
2. **ERO D/CT 353a**
3. **Wild W (2013) Placenames of Thorrington p.5**
4. **House of Lords (1838) Reports from Commissioners xliv**
5. https://www.visionofbritain.org.uk/unit/10247561/cube/TOT_POP
6. <https://www.visionofbritain.org.uk/unit/10247561/cube/HOUSES>
7. https://www.visionofbritain.org.uk/unit/10247561/cube/OCC_PAR1831
8. https://www.visionofbritain.org.uk/unit/10247561/cube/OCC_ORDER1881
9. **Collins C (2018) Archaeological Test Pit Excavations in Thorrington, Essex, 2006 & 2007 p51**
10. **TNA Probate 11/1983/126 (proved July 9th 1843)**
11. **White W (1848) Directory of Essex**
12. **Essex Standard** October 21st 1842
13. **The Lancet London (1856) A Journal of British and Foreign Medicine, Surgery, Obstetrics, Physiology, Chemistry, Pharmacology, Public Health and News i p.248**
14. **Essex Standard** Friday September 18 1859; **Essex Standard** Friday July 15 1859 the Company was established by 19 & 20 Vict, cap 47 with a capital of £20,000.
15. **The Ipswich Journal** Saturday December 19 1857
16. **House of Lords · (1868) Accounts and Papers xviii p.124-5**
17. **Essex Standard** Wednesday November 16 1859
18. **Essex Standard** Friday Feb 28 1862
19. **Essex Standard** Wednesday December 16th 1863.
20. **COLCHESTER CHRISTMAS MEAT SHOW Essex Standard** Wednesday December 23 1863
21. **Meeting at Colchester Essex Standard** Wednesday August 23rd 1865
22. **Essex Standard** Friday October 13 1865
23. **Essex Standard** Wednesday 18th September 1867
24. **Essex Standard** Friday January 15 1869
25. **GREAT BENTLEY Essex Standard** Friday, June 30, 1871; **The Ipswich Journal** Saturday 1st July 1871
26. **Essex Standard** Friday October 13 1871
27. **Essex Standard** Friday November 10 1871
28. **GREAT BENTLEY Essex Standard** Friday July 12 1872

29. **Essex Standard** Friday Oct. 11 1872
30. **Essex Standard** Friday 09 January 1874 p.5
31. *Bentley Green Lamb Sale* **Essex Standard** Friday July 7 1876
32. *TENDRING HUNDRED PETTY SESSION (MISTLEY DIVISION), SEPT. 17* **Essex Standard** Friday, Sept. 21, 1877
33. **Essex Standard** Friday Apr. 5 1878
34. **Essex Standard** Saturday Apr. 9 1887
35. *AGRICULTURE* **Essex Standard** Saturday, July 12, 1879
36. **ERO D/DP 293/8/2**
37. **Essex Standard** Saturday November 3 1883
38. *AGRICULTURE* **Essex Standard** Saturday November 17 1883; **The Ipswich Journal** Saturday November 17 1883
39. *Sale of Fat Stock at Colchester* **Essex Standard** Saturday December 22 1883
40. *Messer's Sexton and Grimwade's Annual Bentley Green Lamb Sale* **Essex Standard** Saturday July 12 1884
41. **Essex Standard** Saturday 27th 1884
42. *OUR Harvest Reports* **Essex Standard** Saturday, Aug. 16, 1884
43. **Essex Standard** Saturday July 11 1885
44. **ERO D/DEI E26**
45. **Essex Standard** Saturday August 20 1887 a coomb is an east Anglian measure, worth 4 bushels. A coomb was 16 stone (100 kg) for barley and 18 stone (110 kg) for wheat. It was used whilst grains were sold in bags.
46. **Essex Standard** Saturday 10th December 1887
47. *Important sale of horses in Yorkshire* **The Ipswich Journal** Saturday February 14 1891
48. **Sharpe R (1995) p63**
49. **Suffolk and Essex Free Press** Wednesday 21 March 1894 p.4
50. **The Lancet** October 6th 1894 p.833
51. **Sharpe R (1995) p58-9; Essex Standard** Friday March 19 1852 and then every Spring annually
52. **Essex Standard** Saturday April 12th 1890
53. St. John's College, Cambridge **MSs., Senior Bursar's diary, SB1.20** (1888)

The National School

In 1812 and 1815, there were 16 boys and girls attending school.¹ In 1818, there was a *Sunday school, in which 43 boys and girls are taught; and a daily school, kept by the wife of the clerk of the parish, containing 22 boys and girls. The poor are desirous of having the means of education.*² In 1819, there were 10 boys and 12 girls attending the Sunday School.³

In 1833, there was *one Daily School, wherein are 11 males and 22 females, of these 6 males and 10 females, are paid for by the Rev Richard Duffield, the remainder are instructed at the expense of their parents. Two Sunday Schools, in one whereof (commenced 1832) are 30 males and 29 females (including the children in the above Daily School), this School is supported by the Rev Richard Duffield; in the other School, 5 males and 7 females are instructed gratuitously by Wesleyans.*" These Dame Schools cost each child 2d per week to attend.⁴

In 1865, St John's College gave a 2400 square yards of land (Tithe Map #134) to Rev Mayor to build a village school for "*.. the labouring and poorer classes in the Parish of Thorrington ... in the principles of the National Church.*"⁵ In the year ending March 1864, the school received a grant from Parliament, had accommodation for 76 (ten square feet per pupil) with an average attendance of 49 day and 26 night school pupils.⁶ In 1867, at the reopening of the Church St John's College gave a further £200.⁷

The school was small. The Infants classroom was 15' by 15' for twenty-five pupils and the Junior Classroom (up to age 12) was 18' x 42' for eighty-four pupils.⁸ The Headmaster was William Thomas Beaumont until 1911.⁹ In 1874, the Council on Education reported that Thorrington Mixed School was in Census District 194 and had received no Parliamentary grants in the preceding year for building enlargements. One group had an average attendance of 83 pupils, receiving grants of £54 4/-5. The other had 14 pupils, received £5 17/-1 and was due to be inspected in March.¹⁰ In 1894, the school had room for 128 scholars with an average attendance of 72. The annual grant was £63 3/0.¹¹ The log-books from this period cannot be located.

In 1907, the newly appointed Managers built a cloakroom outside for the Infants and a fire-place inside. HMI inspections were critical of the conditions in the school. In 1912– the girls cloakroom was judged to be cramped with pegs in four rows; the rooms were cold in winter; no cloakroom was very light and in the Junior classroom only four high windows opened. From 1920, moves were made to move pupils to other schools.¹² After WW1, a memorial was unveiled outside the school.¹³

In 1943, the School Repairs Fund received £20 0/ 9 from the Headmistress' Appeal, and a whist drive raised £9 11/5.¹⁴ By 1946/7, only the larger room was in use. The Teachers were Miss Heath and Miss Bagley. Mr Smith was Caretaker and had a house to the right of the school. There was a red brick air raid shelter with a flat roof built during WW2 that the pupils played in.¹⁵

Numbers continued to decline. Controlled status was granted in 1956 when there were only seventeen pupils in the Infant Class; but at Easter 1960 the school closed. The site was later used as a garage, petrol station and car sales room before being demolished and used for housing.¹⁶



Figure 9 – Thorrington School (1890) and the class School Photograph (1960)¹⁷

1. National Society for Promoting the Education of the Poor in the Principles of the Established Church Throughout England and Wales (1812) Annual Report iii p.65; *ibid* (1815) Report p.65
2. Digest of Parochial Returns. Select Committee on Education of the Poor, 1818 -similar language is used for Alresford
3. National Society for Promoting the Education of the Poor ... (1815) Eighth Annual Report p.79
4. House of Commons papers, Volume 41. Abstract of Education Returns 1833
5. Sharpe (1995) p.15-6
6. House of Lords · (1868) Accounts and Papers xviii p123
7. Essex Standard, Friday April 26 1867; Wednesday, May 1, 1867
8. Sharpe (1995) p18
9. Essex County Standard June 15th 1984
10. Council on Education (1874) Report of the Committee of Council on Education (England and Wales) p323
11. Council on Education (1894) Report of the Committee of Council on Education (England and Wales) p820
12. Sharpe (1995) p18
13. <https://www.iwm.org.uk/memorials/item/memorial/22933>
14. STMM Reports 1 1940-47 - 1943
15. Marian Butcher's memories 15/08/2021; 26/09/2021
16. Sharpe R (1995) p16-20
17. Facebook - Thorrington History Group

Wesley Methodist Chapel

In 1811, Methodism started in Thorrington with meetings at a cottage. On April 17th 1817, Rev Solomon Whitworth was granted permission by the Bishop to hold services in his home.¹ The first Wesleyan Methodist Baptism for a Thorrington villager was for Lucy Ruffell and held at Great Bentley chapel on August 12th 1821.² Micaich Bacon gave part of a field for the new chapel at a cost of £10 in fees³ and the first chapel was built in 1823 for 34 members. Thorrington First Class were:- *J^{no} Lee, Rob^t Hinds, Sam^l Cockerill, Thos Dixon, Jos Kettle, Jos Howard, Jeffry Ruffel, J^{no} Fisher, Tho^s Went, Rob^t Scurrill, John Hinds, J^{no} Grimzey, Rich^d Harris, Tho^s Almond, Joⁿ Howard, Ja^s Dines, Sam^l Andrews*. The Second Class were:- *Maria Harris L^r, Sarah Goodrum, Judith Lee, Ann Scurrill, Mar^a Scurrill, Elizth Boyden, Susⁿ Howard, Sarah Ruffell, Mary Hearn, Mar^a Dines, Susⁿ Simmonds, Mary Jennings, Martha Child, Susan Warden, Mary Smith, Sarah Almond, Mary Grimzey*.⁴ There were 17 members in 1834.⁵

In 1840, permission was granted for worship in a barn. Richard Jones donated an adjacent plot of land and a tin chapel was constructed.⁶ There were 53 members in September 1841 and 40 in March 1843.⁷ At the 1851 Census, there were 31 in the morning Congregation and 71 attended the evening. There were also 40 Sunday Scholars.⁸

In 1905, David Carter (d.1943) rebuilt the chapel at a cost of \$449 18/8 to seat 75 *hearers*. It was opened by Mrs Fieldgate who was presented with a Methodist Hymn Book. In 1928, a new kitchen was fitted.⁹



Figure 10

On Sunday 3rd October 1938, a Guild Festival was held attended by over 70. Miss Sorrell played the organ, Mr West sang *Galilee* and Sunday School superintendent C Mitchell took the bible study.¹⁰ Bombing during World War Two destroyed the coloured glass, which was replaced with plain.¹¹



Figure 11 – Photographs from the Sale Brochure (2001)

The final Service was held at 3pm on September 2nd 2001.¹² Thorington Chapel was auctioned on April 18th 2002 at the New Connaught Rooms, London at a guide price of £120,000. The Main Chapel measured 5.55m x 9.3m (18'2" x 30'5"); the school room 4.72m x 5.05m (15'5" x 16'5") and a *separate kitchen structure approx. 10m²* The Chapel is being sold with a standard Methodist Church Covenant on all disused burial grounds. There are no tended graves and the exact location of the burials are unknown. There are a few gravestones, the most recent is dated 1878.¹³

1. STMM undated *Tale of Three Churches – newspaper article*
2. The Eureka Partnership (accessed March 2022) Colchester Wesleyan Methodist Circuit Volume 1 p17
3. STMM undated *Tale of Three Churches – newspaper article*
4. The Eureka Partnership (accessed March 2022) Colchester Wesleyan Methodist Circuit Volume 1 p47
5. Ibid p51-2
6. STMM undated *Tale of Three Churches – newspaper article*; STMM Countrywide Surveyors Details of Auction Lot p1 1840
7. The Eureka Partnership (accessed March 2022) Colchester Wesleyan Methodist Circuit Volume 1 p54
8. TNA HO 129/203/1 p.9 1851
9. STMM Record II 1940-47 1943 ; STMM undated *Tale of Three Churches – newspaper article*
10. STMM Records I Sunday 3rd October 1938.
11. STMM undated *Tale of Three Churches – newspaper article*
12. STMM Order of Service
13. ERO A14552 Box 4, STMM Countrywide Surveyors Details of Auction Lot p1

Thorrington Railway Station

The Tendring Hundred Railway opened on March 2nd 1866: with trains running between Weeley and Colchester St Botolph's Stations on a single-track – then onto London and Norwich. The line east to Walton opened on May 17th 1867 and to Clacton on July 4th 1882. A station with level crossing was constructed on the road to Great Bentley slightly NW of the Vicarage.¹ Comparing the route to the Tithe Map of 1843² shows that it crossed over twelve pieces of land belonging to Caius College at Hockley Farm, WW Hawkins of Alresford Hall at Pondhouse Farm, James Dawson at Bentley Field and Jane Inglis at Goldacre Farm.³

FROM	WEEK DAYS						FROM	WEEK DAYS					
	Exp. Party		1 & 2		3			Party		1 & 2		3	
	1 & 2	1 & 2	1 & 2	1 & 2	1 & 2	1 & 2		1 & 2	1 & 2	1 & 2	1 & 2	1 & 2	
Wesleydep.	7 55	---	12 35	3 35	---	7 15	Londondep.	---	7 15	10 0	11 42	---	4 25
Bentley Green... "	8 1	---	12 41	3 41	---	7 23	Chelmsford "	---	8 55	---	12 40	---	5 13
Thorrington..... "	8 6	---	12 46	3 46	---	7 33	Colchesterarr.	---	10 4	11 15	1 32	---	5 26
Alresford "	8 11	---	12 51	3 51	---	7 43	Yarmouthdep.	5 20	---	10 45	---	---	---
Wivenhoe "	8 17	10 35	12 57	3 57	5 25	8 0	Lowestoft "	5 30	---	10 55	---	---	---
Hythe "	8 25	10 43	1 5	4 1	5 38	8 20	Norwich "	5 50	---	11 15	2 20	---	---
St. Botolph's .. "	8 35	10 53	1 15	4 15	5 43	---	Ipwich "	8 30	---	1 25	4 0	---	---
Colchesterarr.	8 45	11 3	1 25	4 25	5 53	8 30	Colchesterdep.	9 17	---	2 5	4 50	---	---
Colchesterdep.	10 12	11 19	1 37	---	5 59	---	St. Botolph'sarr.	9 30	11 22	2 15	4 40	6 3	---
Ipwicharr.	11 10	11 52	2 20	---	6 35	---	Hythe "	9 43	11 37	2 26	4 58	6 16	---
Norwich "	2 10	1 29	4 35	---	8 50	---	Wivenhoe "	9 48	11 42	2 35	4 58	6 21	---
Lowestoft "	2 20	2 29	4 45	---	9 5	---	Alresford "	9 55	11 50	2 40	5 5	6 28	---
Yarmouth "	2 35	2 35	4 50	---	9 15	---	Thorrington "	---	12 0	2 50	---	6 38	---
Colchesterdep.	8 50	9 25	---	2 14	4 30	---	Bentley Green... "	---	12 5	2 57	---	6 43	---
Chelmsfordarr.	9 38	10 42	---	3 5	5 26	---	Wesleyarr.	---	12 10	3 4	---	6 50	---
London "	10 30	12 10	---	4 0	6 30	---							

G This 7.15 p.m. Train from Weeley to Colchester is a Goods Train, with Carriages attached for Passengers.

Figure 12 – March 1866⁴

Trains left Thorrington at 8_6, 12 46, 3 46 and 7 33, which were labelled as Morning(am) or Evening(pm).

Returns from St Botolph's left at 11 27, 2 15 and 6 16. The fastest trains could reach London in less than 2 ½ hours.⁴

By November 1873, the station was being poorly used and the timetable was captioned *Will call when required to take up or set down passengers.*⁵

In 1876, James Harman, a board member of the Great Eastern Railway proposed extending the railway from Thorrington to the newly opened Clacton-on-Sea. This would have meant around eight miles of new track and a few bridges being constructed. JY Watson, the farmer who had sold the land Clacton was built on to Peter Bruff, opposed this plans, bought up £12,000 of Tendring Hundred Railway stock and instead in 1877 the accepted route was a short spur from Thorpe-le-Soken.⁶

The station gained a second-line in 1898; a single goods siding for agricultural traffic and a twenty-lever signal box (1885-1958).⁷ In 1885, Charles Porter, the Parish Surveyor of the Highways prosecuted the Great Eastern Railway for replacing the existing gates with ones that were not a legal size. Instead of thirty feet, the crossing has been reduced to twenty-eight and twenty-seven feet. Witnesses explained that there were serious safety concerns

about travelling between the new gates at night. The GER was ordered to *make good and sufficient gates, giving not less than a 30 feet public roadway between the gates, within a fortnight, under the penalty of £5 per day.*⁸



Figure 13

In April 1902, *While Mr. Henry Harper, farmer and brickmaker, of Thorington, was crossing the line near Thorington Station, on Friday, he was knocked and killed (by) a last train from Clacton-sea.*⁹ On Monday 2nd March 1908, *Fred Aldridge, railway signalman, was charged with stealing piece of coal, weighing 59 lbs., at Thorington Station, the property of the GER Co. —P.c. Drage said stopped defendant at 5.45 a.m. and asked him what he had in the bag..... he took from under the signal-box. The defendant pleaded guilty and said he picked the coal off the line. The Rector of Thorington gave the defendant a good character, and stated that he had been in the employ of the G.E.R. for nearly 50 years. The Bench fined him 10/-...*¹⁰

The line stayed open after the Beeching Cuts, but passenger trains ceased to stop at Thorington Station on November 4th 1957 and goods traffic on February 13th 1961.¹¹ The last passenger was Ted Aldridge.¹²

The level crossing stayed and since 2009 has been remotely operated. There are 106 trains per day passing through at up to 75mph. The crossing is used by an average of 120 pedestrians and 5859 vehicles.¹³

1. Mitchell V (2011) *Branch lines to Clacton and Walton* p.iii, 55&6
2. Wild W (2013) *The Place-names of Thorington*
3. ERO D/ CT 353a
4. *Essex Standard* March 2nd 1866
5. *Essex Herald* Tuesday 25 November 1873
6. Skudder JM (1984/5) *The Seaside Resort as a Business Venture (Clacton-on-Sea, 1864-1901)* *Transactions of the Essex Society of Archaeology and History* iii 16 p.75
7. Mitchell V (2011) *Branch lines to Clacton and Walton* p.55-6
8. *Essex Standard* Saturday May 23rd 1885
9. *Great Eastern Railway Society Journal* 111 page 24 S Jenkins
10. *Essex Farmer Killed* *Essex Newsman* Saturday 26 April 1902
11. *CHARGE AGAINST A SIGNALMAN* *Chelmsford Chronicle* Friday 06 March 1908 *Essex Newsman* Saturday 07 March 1908
12. Mitchell V (2011) p55-6
13. Sharpe R (1995) p55
14. <https://abcrailwayguide.uk/thorington-public-level-crossing-essex#.Ym-0odqZPDc> ; <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lhsjiH1s9uw>

Thorrington at the turn of the century

As part of the celebration of the accession of King Edward VII, Thorrington *Beat the Bounds... round Marsh Farm, Hall Farm, Gate House Farm, and eight o'clock the circle of some nine miles was completed by arrival at Thorrington Mill. Great fun was made by ducking whipping the boys at the different points the boundary. It should be mentioned that* .¹

In 1904, during a thunderstorm on May thunderbolt fell in a field at the rear of the Post-office at Thorrington.² On Sunday 4th March, a fire broke out in Mr. W. Pattison's tobacco shop, and serious damage was done to the stock and fittings. The fire brigade, under Mr. J Osborne, worked hard to cope with the outbreak, damage is covered by insurance. ...³

In 1907, FD Girling of Thorrington Hall won a reserve prize for Suffolk sheep; *flock exceeding ewes which has never won a cup*.⁴

In 1908, Fred Cooper, miller, was fined 5/- for not having control a horse and cart, at Thorrington. April 3.⁵ In August 1908 Alexander, of Brightlingsea. was taking his wife and family for a drive, when the trap suddenly overturned at the top of Thorrington-hill. The occupants sustained cuts and bruises, and were severely shaken.⁶

In January 1909, five persons were accidentally shot at a pigeon shooting match held Thorrington Saturday. Fortunately the wounds were not dangerous, one spectator was hit in the face.⁷ Later that year, ... endeavouring to pass a motor and a horse and trap, Mr. E. Minter, stationer, Brightlingsea, while cycling at the bottom of Thorrington-hill, had the misfortune to run into the fence and be thrown several feet, receiving a severe shaking.⁸ In October, For being drunk and disorderly, at Thorrington, Walter Andrews was fined 5/- and costs.⁹

In 1911, Thorrington was still largely agricultural with 64 employed on farms. There were 23 domestic servants, 17 retired, 10 involved in transport, 4 sailors, 6 teachers and 4 shop-workers. The most frequent surnames were Alexander and Andrews in five households; Bacon, King and Burling appeared three times.¹⁰

1. *BEATING THE BOUNDS* Essex Newsman Saturday 18 May 1901
14. STORY OF THE WEEK_Essex Newsman_Saturday 04 June 1904
15. THORRINGTON Chelmsford Chronicle Friday 09 March 1906
16. SUCCESS OF ESSEX FLOCK OWNERS Chelmsford Chronicle_Friday 08 November 1907
17. PETTY SESSIONS Essex Newsman Saturday 18 April 1908
18. STORY OF THE WEEK Essex Newsman Saturday 01 August 1908
19. STORY OF THE WEEK : Essex Newsman Saturday 02 January 1909
20. BRIGHTLINGSEA Chelmsford Chronicle Friday 06 August 1909 Essex Newsman Saturday 07 August 1909
21. PETTY SESSIONS Essex Newsman Saturday 09 October 1909
22. The National Archives Census 1911 197/5/19

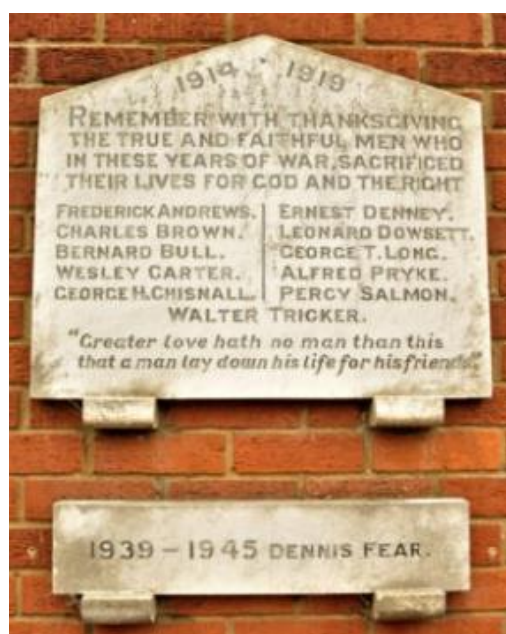
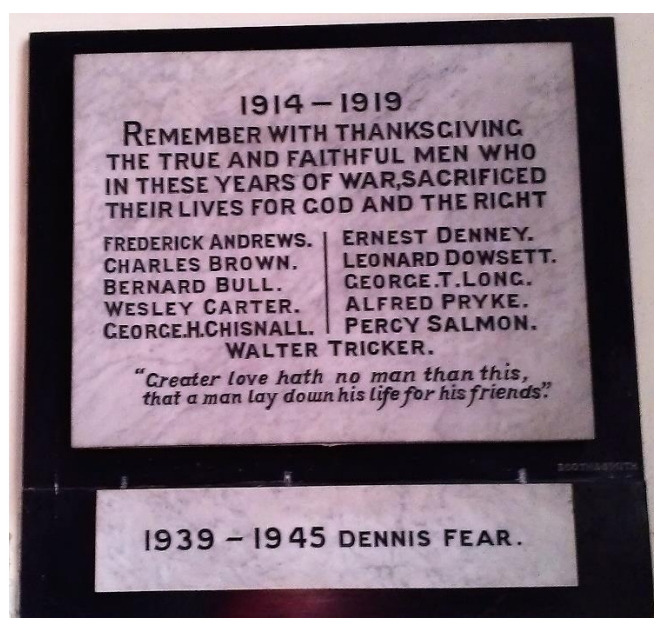


Figure 14 - Extracts from the Ordnance Survey 6 inch to 1 mile Old Map (1888-1913) showing how few buildings existed.

World War One and the War Memorials

During World War One, Australian soldiers were billeted at St Osyth and named Kangaroo Hill, near to Saltwater Point.¹ The school pupils were given a day off by the Ministry of Food to collect blackberries.² On Thursday 29 October 1915, the annual prize-giving and entertainment raised funds for *The Princess of Wales' War Relief Fund*.³ In 1916, the children celebrated Empire Day on the anniversary of Queen Victoria's birthday.⁴ Victory was celebrated with two additional days holidays in 1919.⁵

After the War, a memorial was placed inside St Mary Magdalene's Chancel **Figure 15**; outside Thorrington School⁶ (later moved to the Methodist Chapel, then the Village Hall⁷) commemorating eleven men from Thorrington who did not return from the sea, Flanders, Gallipoli or Baghdad:



Private Frederick Andrews (34081 A Coy 9th Battalion Essex Regt); Rifleman *William* Charles Brown (#312981 Essex Regt; 41310 Royal Irish Rifles); Able Seaman Bernard Bull (#214140 *HMS Hogue*); Corporal Wesley Carter (#250831 2nd Battalion Essex Regt); Lieutenant George Chisnall of Frating Abbey (Royal Army Medical Corps); Private Ernest Denney (#9418 1st Battalion Essex Regt); Private Leonard Dowsett (#3/1945 2nd Battalion Essex Regt); Private George T Long (#326600 2/9 Battalion Durham Light); Private Alfred Pryke (#G/8862 8th Battalion The Buffs (Royal Kent) ; Serjeant Percy Salmon (#863 2nd Battalion Rifles Brigade) and Private Walter Tricker (#19312 7th Battalion Suffolk Regt.)⁸

Some were not recoded on the Thorrington War Memorials. Private Albert Rouse Almond (#G/6578 The Buffs (East Kent Reg^t.) had a mother in living at the Bungalow, Station Road, who wrote to him after he had been

killed in action. Private Ernest Andrews (#55801 14th Light Armoured Battery, Machine Gun Corps (Motors) was killed in Baghdad. He was the son of Alfred and Sarah Andrews, of Thorrington, but served under the surname Taylor. Engineman Arthur Beales (#U926 RNR *HM Trawler Corinetes*) was born in Thorrington. Lieutenant Charles Alain Chisnall (Royal Air Force) was the youngest brother of George and died in a flying accident in Yorkshire. Corporal John Marrington Goff (#C/83 16th Battalion King's Royal Rifle Corps) was the son of the late Captain William Goff; and husband of Alice of Mill View.



Two are buried at St Mary Magdalene's but are not on the War Memorials. Gunner George Ernest Burgess (#870984 Riding Establishment (Woolwich) RHA) was the son of John and Mary Ann of Station Road. Second Corporal James Waldon (#55545 Railway Troops Depot, RE) was the son of Patrick and Mary; and husband of Minnie of Mill Cottage.⁹

Figure 16 - Graves of Gunner George Burgess and 2nd Corporal James Waldon in St Mary Magdalene's churchyard

Men who did return to Thorrington included: Walter James Burling (#K14085 Royal Navy) and Lancelot Rose (Merchant Marine).¹⁰ Private E Aldridge (#19094 Essex Regiment) was wounded on July 13th 1917 and January 11th 1918.¹¹

Some men applied for exemption from military service on the grounds of ill-health, age, hardship or being in a Reserved Occupation. In May 1916, a *Thorrington horseman, who had been previously granted temporary exemption, was applied for by employer, who said if the man went would have to give the farm up. The military representative intimated that he would appeal if the man was exempted. The farmer wanted to keep two young men on thirty acres of land. Exemption allowed on condition that applicant let the other man go.*¹² In July 1916, a *Thorrington farm labourer appealed grounds hardship. He supported his mother, who was practically blind, and his sister, who was an invalid. The employer said the man was doing useful work, and the Tribunal allowed conditional exemption on the man remaining in his present employment.*¹³ In September 1916, *H. G. Alexander, married, 37, fruit grower, etc., and his brother, Septimus Alexander, 38, also a market gardener, of Thorrington, were refused, but granted month's grace. Bernard Cordy, married, 40, auctioneer and estate agent, Thorrington, was granted*

conditional exemption.¹⁴ Ten months later, *Horace George Alexander, married, 37, market gardener, Thorrington, secured exemption on the ground of domestic hardship.*¹⁵

In Thorrington, rural life continued. The first week of the War saw FD Girling sell Suffolk Sheep at the Ipswich Show averaging 104/2, with a top ten prize of 110/.¹⁶ In September, a serious gale blew down trees at Wivenhoe Park, forcing the Thorrington Postman to return via Elmstead.¹⁷ In November, *Arthur Littlewood, Thorrington, was summoned for cycling without a rear light, was fined 5/- with 17s 2d. cost for three special constables.*¹⁸ In June 1915, *Thomas Rawlings, carrier and coal merchant, Brightlingsea was fined 10s. inclusive for having been drunk charge a horse and van at Thorrington.*¹⁹

In December 1916, *Ernest Linnet, labourer Thorrington and Albert German, labourer Blue Barn, Elmstead, pleaded guilty to having unshaded lights on bicycles. and were each fined 7/ 6.*²⁰ In July 1917, Alice Jones of Stroud was accused of stealing a suitcase from Chelmsford Railway Station cloakroom belonging to Mrs Campion, an ECC travelling teacher arrived from Thorrington. The contents were valued at £4 and were found in Jones' hotel room.²¹

In April 1918, *Arthur Littlewood, farmer and furniture dealer Thorrington. was summoned for assaulting William King, blacksmith, Thorrington. Complainant said he was cycling through Alresford when defendant came out of a field and hit him on the back of the head. Littlewood claimed self-defence but was found guilty and fined £5.*²²

In August 1918, at the Suffolk Sheep Show in Ipswich, *Mr. F. D. Girling, Thorrington, received £8/5. for ten shearlings.*²³ In September he was a judge at the Essex Agricultural Show for farms in category 1 and 3.²⁴

1. Sharpe (1995) p.38
2. <https://www.alresford.essex.sch.uk/about-us/history>
3. Sharpe (1995) p.18
4. <https://www.historic-uk.com/HistoryUK/HistoryofBritain/Empire-Day/> <http://www.felhs.org.uk/WW1/37.%20EMPIRE%20DAY.pdf>
5. Sharpe (1995) p19
6. <https://www.iwm.org.uk/memorials/item/memorial/22933> now outside the Village Hall
7. Rita Sharpe's memories 26/09/2021; STMM Countrywide Surveyors Methodist Chapel April 18th 2002 Details of Auction Lot p1
8. Commonwealth War Graves Commission
9. Ibid, IWM <https://livesofthefirstworldwar.iwm.org.uk/searchlives/Thorrington/filter/type%3Dagent>
10. <https://livesofthefirstworldwar.iwm.org.uk/searchlives/Thorrington/filter/type%3Dagent>
11. Essex Newsmen Saturday 09 September 1916
12. Chelmsford Chronicle Friday 26 May 1916
13. COUNTY TRIBUNALS Chelmsford Chronicle Friday 07 July 1916 p6
14. Chelmsford Chronicle July 13th 1917; January 11th 1918
15. COUNTY TRIBUNALS Chelmsford Chronicle Friday 06 October 1916 p6
16. PEDIGREE SUFFOLK SHEEP Chelmsford Chronicle Friday 07 August 1914 p4
17. GALE DAMAGE NEAR COLCHESTER Chelmsford Chronicle Friday 18 September 1914 p6
18. LEXDEN & WINSTREE, Oct. 30 Chelmsford Chronicle Friday 05 November 1915 Page: 4
19. POLICE-COURTS Chelmsford Chronicle Friday 23 June 1916 p2
20. POLICE-COURTS Chelmsford Chronicle Friday 15 December 1916 p2
21. Police Courts Chelmsford Chronicle Friday 26 April 1918 p3
22. ESSEX POLICE COURTS Chelmsford Chronicle Friday 26 April 1918 p3
23. SALES OF PROPERTY. Chelmsford Chronicle Friday 16 August 1918
24. ESSEX AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY Chelmsford Chronicle Friday 06 September 1918 p1

Between the Wars

Many houses were built between the wars. Plans were lodged with Tendring District Council for 54 bungalows, 23 house, 7 sets of cottages (two or more), four additions to buildings and twelve other buildings. These included a petrol station on the St Osyth Road,¹ re-erection of the blacksmith's shop² and construction of the Essex County Council Depot.³ In 1927, the Council, *decided to apply for leave to borrow £2,450 for six houses Thorrington.*⁴ Later that year, Essex County Council agreed to pay *£1,000 for the Thorrington to Brightlingsea road improvement.*⁵ In 1927, Gatehouse Farm and 73 acres sold for £2000.⁶ During the 1920's, the old quarry was exhausted.

In 1926, the late Dr John Girling left legacies which paid for the upkeep of the churchyard and for the *sick, aged and infirm of the Parish* at Christmas.⁷

In 1929, *The tender of Mr. J. S. Norton, of £1,614/18/6 for the reconstruction of Saltwater Bridge, on the Thorrington-Clacton road, was accepted.*⁸ A cast iron signpost with three arms was erected at Thorrington Cross.⁹ In 1934, The Cross was considered to be a *dangerous corner .. obscuring the view* so two buildings and the farmhouse were pulled down.¹⁰

In 1932, Rev Henry Wilcox was invested as the new Rector. During World War One, he was chaplain of the 17th/ 18th London Battalions, mentioned in dispatches was awarded the title of Hon. C.F. Detailed records of the Parish were then commenced until 1947; and are now stored in a chest at St Mary Magdalene's.¹¹

In June 1932, Victor and *Robert Wain, Walthamstow, were summoned for inflicting grievous bodily harm upon Ernest Wilfred Farrow, with a weapon, at Thorrington Garage, July 24. Ernest Farrow was also summoned for assaulting Victor Wain on the same date.* They had attempted to drive off a motor vehicle without paying the 7/6 hire charge, so Farrow challenged them and was hit by Victor Wain with a tyre iron. *The Bench dismissed the charges against Farrow; fined Victor Wain £5 and reduced the charge against Robert wain and fined him £1. Defendants also had to pay costs amounting to £13 14/4.*¹²

In September 1932, *F. D. Girling, of Thorrington Hall, presented a playing field of two and a half acres to the Parish Council. The field is being laid out and equipped, and application for grant is being considered by the National Playing Fields Association.*¹³ At Christmas 1934, over £40 from *the late Dr John Girling's Poor Fund* was donated to about twenty *aged of the Parish*. In 1935, £4 6/4¼ was raised for the British Cancer Campaign. The Church Fete was

attended by the Alresford Silver Band and raised £46 11/11; and the Lay Reader, TM Millatt, published his book *A Short History of St Mary Magdalene's Church Thorrington*.¹⁴

Celebrations were held on May 6th, 1935, for King George V's Silver Jubilee at the Recreation Ground. At 2pm there was a short Church Service with prayers by Bishop Chapman. At 3pm sports commenced to the sound of the bells ringing. Tea for the under-fifteens was taken in the Church Rooms. Each child received a mug or cup and saucer. Mr Burrill of Thorrington Hall donated an orange to each. Pensioners received tea or tobacco. Sports then resumed until 8pm when the village gathered to listen to the King's Speech on a wireless acquired by Mr E Farrow.¹⁵

On May 12th 1937, Thorrington again gathered for the Coronation of King George VI. There was an open air service at 2pm but bad weather led to the postponement of the sports until the following Saturday. Each child was presented with a commemorative beaker and the pensioners again received gifts of tea or tobacco.¹⁶

On 1938, a commemorative seat to King George V was installed round the chestnut tree planted to commemorate his Coronation in 1910. At the entrance to the at the children's Playing Fields. This site was formerly the village *Round House*. A carved tablet depicting wheat-ears, oak-leaves and monogram of King George V was designed by AL Champreys and carved in Burma Teak by Messers H and K Mabbit.¹⁷

In 1938, Colchester Scouts establishing a camping ground in Tenpenny Plantation¹⁸ with plans for Windyridge dormitory and free-standing latrines lodged the following year.¹⁹ In 1993, Alpha House was opened.²⁰

Windyridge was used for camping by men *as a farm colony and hostel qualifying as 'conditional residence' for those serving probation orders* from Whitechapel, London. This was under the supervision of the Methodist Superintendent, and qualified Probation Officer, Rev James E Thorp – with the blessing of Mr and Mrs Atterton, the land-owners, who sold the land.²¹

1. ERO D/RT Pb1/5814
2. ERO D/RT Pb1/2365
3. ERO D/RT Pb1/2330, 2542
4. *ESSEX GUARDIANS AND RURAL COUNCILS Chelmsford Chronicle* Friday 25 February 1927
5. *ESSEX COUNTY COUNCIL Chelmsford Chronicle* Friday 08 July 1927
6. *The Times* Tuesday Feb 15th 1927
7. Millatt, JB Sharpe R (2009) p.13
8. *ESSEX COUNTY COUNCIL Chelmsford Chronicle* Friday 04 October 1929
9. Nicholls JV (2005) *Essex survey of cast iron signposts 2002-2005* – the top arm which is now missing pointed to Thorrington station, Frating Green and Ipswich (SMR 40803)
10. STMM Records Book 1 1932-1939
11. *STRUGGLE AT GARAGE Chelmsford Chronicle* Friday 12 August 1932
12. *THORRINGTON Chelmsford Chronicle* Friday 25 September 1931, Friday 22 April 1932, Friday 22 July 1932 *Essex Newsman* Saturday 23 April 1932
13. ERO A6930 Box 76;
14. STMM Records Book 1 1932-1939
15. Sharpe (1995) p.51, STMM Records Book 1 1932-1939
16. *ibid*
17. *ibid*
18. Sharpe (1995) p.53, STMM Records Book 1 1932-1939

19. ERO D/RT Pb1/5916, 5954, 5938, 6002, 60006
20. ERO D/Z 357/4/2/1
21. <http://www.stgitehistory.org.uk/media/dissenters3.html>

World War Two -

Preparations for war started in Autumn 1938 during *The Crisis*. Gas masks were distributed by willing helpers under the direction of Mr T. Miller (Rural District Councillor) and Capt W. Gorham, and several assisted in the assembling of the masks. Careful preparations for the possible billeting of London school children, evacuated from London in an emergency were made by Mr & Mrs Gosnell. The good news of the peace settlement brought unanimous expressions of relief, and a special service of Thanksgiving was held in the Parish Church on Sunday morning, October 3rd.¹

Before the German invasion of Poland, on August 27th 1939, an *Intercessions for peace* service was held at St Mary Magdalene's. The first seventeen evacuees from Bow, London arrived on 1st September, 2nd September (mothers and young children) and two groups on the 3rd. They were allocated a family to stay with by Mrs Gosnell, the Billeting Officer. A First Aid point was set up in the Church Rooms by Mrs J Culley and Mrs H Burrell. The Senior Air Raid Precautions Wardens (ARP) were Thomas Miller (until 1942) and E Farrow. Other members of the civil defence teams were:- Stanley Dawes (ARP Ambulance); Sybil Bagley (ARP First Aid); Charles Evans, Herbert Berry, Cyril Gosnell, Evelyn Baker, Arthur Almond, Robert Green, Samuel Smith, Cyril Fitch, James Burling, Bertie Andrews, Philip Marsh (ARP); Charles Leggett (ARP Decontamination); Bertie Mitchell (ARP Stretcher Bearer) and illegible (ARP Master for the Station.) William Fieldgate was a Special Constable. Air raid shelters were built.² The village was surveyed as part of the National Survey of England and Wales on 29th September 1939. This helped with the distribution of identity cards, ration books from January 1940 and gas masks.³

First aid meetings for pupils from Frating, Thorrington and Great Bentley were held in the School rooms led by Dr Frank Atthill and WJ Stammers on Fridays' 8th, 15th and 22nd September. The black-outs prevented the week-night evening Harvest Festival – it was held in day-time on Sunday instead. October 1st saw a National Day of Prayer that started a *Week of Prayer and Self-Denial*. On November 7th, December 8th and 15th treatment for gas courses were held in the school rooms.

On Saturday 30th December, sixteen evacuees were taken to the Colchester pantomime. Funds were raised by the Women's Institute and each child given 3d. spending money. The Women's institute also send servicemen from Thorrington cigarettes, chocolate and books. The Sunday school prize-giving was held on January 27th 1940 with 47 children attending, including twelve evacuees.

Following the retreat from Dunkirk many changes happened. The evacuees were sent to Worcestershire on Sunday 2nd June 1940.⁴ On June 13th, the ringing of church bells was banned, so the first Sunday without bells for seven years was a *Day of Prayer for France* on Sunday 16th June. C battery, 53rd Heavy Royal Artillery, of four World War 1 stationary 9.2" heavy siege howitzers were placed in a line between the Church and the Clacton Road. These were manned by Royal Artillerymen who slept in local billets or the school rooms. To supply the guns the concrete road from Clacton Road to the Church and Hall was constructed. During training, the gun nearest to the Church blew



out the west windows.⁵ These had a maximum range of 13,935 yds (8 miles), so could cover any potential landing beaches or the River Colne entrance.

The battery received four 6" howitzers and left Thorrington in 1942. They later served in for Normandy and Belgium.

Figure 17 - BL 9.2-inch howitzer at the Imperial war Museum, London⁶



Figure 18 – C Battery, 53rd Heavy Royal Artillery ⁷

A platoon of the Local Defence Volunteers (LDV) was formed under Lt Lylie (Marsh Farm)⁸ using the barn at Edward's Whitehouse Farm as a drill hall and mess room. Members included the Edwards', Charlie Griggs, Percy Munson, Mr Thorndike, Sgt Jack Aldridge (later Platoon CO), Corporal Charlie Packard, Cpl Barton (worked at the railway), Horace Pickard (*Red Lion*) and Sgt Brooks. Army Cadets acted as runners.⁹ They manned two concrete pill-boxes. One was at the bottom Cooper's Hill and the other was at the bridge that crossed Saltwater Brook, where a road-block was frequently inserted using concertina wire and mines.¹⁰ A sandbagged shelter was built next to the telephone box at the Red Lion.¹¹ Initially, they were armed with their personal weapons – shot-guns firing solid balls, revolvers, sporting rifles and local knowledge. Soon they were equipped with American small-arms, Browning machine-guns and their name changed to the Home Guard. On Thursday 16th January 1941, their social was attended by the Company Commander Colonel Evelyn Waugh.¹²

The Home Guard were issued with a weapon rejected by the regular army – the Northover Projector¹³ (officially "Projector, 2.5 inch"). This fired No. 76 Special Incendiary Grenades up to 275 yds – but were dangerous to the operators as they could jam or prematurely explode. Incidents did happen. One Home Guard member thought the enemy had landed so fired his rifle at the henhouse near to the Red Lion. Another night the organist from St Osyth Church did not stop at the road-block so the Home Guard shot and punctured his tyres.¹⁴



Figure 19 - 1944 Stand down parade of the Great Bentley Home Guard Company¹⁵

Other defensive units were more secretive and officially confirmed. A secret hide was found in the Scout Camp filled with explosives in 1942 and sealed by 1945.¹⁶ Rumours persistent that there was an Auxiliary Unit in the Thorrington, St Osyth and Mersea areas, left behind to sabotage any invading Germans.¹⁷ One patrol based at

Brightlingsea has been identified as Sgt John Girling, Privates Frederick Addison, Arthur Addison, Leonard Barr, Herbert Clifford, Sidney King and Jack Last.¹⁸

Initially, the National School there was no air raid shelter and due to the black-out, fires could not be left burning at night which meant the rooms were cold. Often soldiers slept in the classrooms.¹⁹

On several occasions, Thorrington was bombed. On 15 October 1940 Thorrington, bombs landed on the B1027.²⁰ The wall of the Infant Class-room was cracked from ceiling to floor, so the pupils were taught in the Church Rooms.²¹ On the nights of 4/5 February 1941 and 14/15 April 1943 Thorrington was again bombed.²² On one of these occasions, bombs were dropped on the field above Thorrington Mill leaving a six feet deep crater; 300 yards south of Thorrington Hall Plantation; and a third near Saltwater Brook. The pilot parachuted out and was captured near to Thorrington. His parachute was confiscated by eager villagers.²³

V-1 flying bombs, nicknamed doodlebugs, were launched from occupied Belgium, the Netherlands and aerially launched by Heinkel III's of Kampfgeschwader 3 off the East Coast of England. One was hit by anti-aircraft fire and crashed into trees at Glebe Farm on Wednesday 18/19 October 1944.²⁴ Glebe House, the Red Lion, Mrs Cross' shop and the Post Office were damaged; with the Chapel Schoolroom windows blown out. Altogether twenty houses were severely damaged and forty lightly. Two villagers were slightly injured. A second landed near to Brickfield Cottage. Some V1s were shoot down over-head.²⁵ This was the eighth successive night of rocket attacks.

The villagers' response was to do repairs and fight back by raising funds for the war effort. On July 12th 1941, a sports meeting ended the War Weapons Week which raised £38 2/1.²⁶

On Sunday 4th May 1941, a Parade Service was held for local servicemen.²⁷

On Tuesday 27th January 1942, a cattle truck crashed with a *motor-car* driven by William Diment, 29, of Marsh Farm. He was taken to hospital. For the *Red Cross Agricultural Fund*, Thorrington held dances, whist drives and paid subscriptions totalling £33 1/ 4. Major Hewitt and troops stationed locally had dances that raised £15 1/ 9; a whist drive on February 20th raised £9 0/ 3 and subscriptions of £9.²⁸

The Essex War Agricultural Committee mandated that extra crops were to be grown at many places with Compulsory Cultivation Orders. In 1941-43, this included Thorrington Hall Farm,²⁹ which was subsequently leased for £500 pa in 1942.³⁰ The Burrill family had been resident since 1934, but moved to Mill House. They sold eight horses, 20 *neat stock*, a threshing machine, Case model D 1939 tractor, Fordson 1941 tractor, tractor ploughs, cultivators

and other equipment. The estate comprised seven cottages, 31 acres of grass, 420 of arable, sporting rights over the estate and the sixteenth century hall.³¹

During the Warships of Week of March 1942, the school was set a target of £150, but saved a total of £356 12/6. A personal thank you was sent to Miss Bagley, headmistress, by the Chancellor of the Exchequer³² and a certificate was sent to the Civil Parish by the Admiralty for the adoption of HMS Lagan.³³ In total Thorrington raised £871 of Tendring's £123,259.³⁴ This Group II River Class Frigate was a new style of convoy escort and helped to sink U-89 on 12 May 1942 and U-753 on 13 May 1942. The following year, Lagan was attacked by U-270 and torpedoed in the stern leaving 29 dead. *We were escorting the convoy and were well out towards the middle of the Atlantic when the convoy was attacked by U-boats. The U-boats had just returned to the North Atlantic after their disastrous losses in March 1943 and had been re-equipped with the new acoustic torpedoes. At about 2a.m. on the 21st September we attacked a U-boat, and were very shortly hit by one of the new homing torpedoes. The stern of the ship was blown off and 29 men were lost, and luckily for us the watertight doors held and the following day an ocean going tug came back from the convoy and took us in tow to Liverpool.* HMS Lagan was towed back to port but never sailed again.³⁵

The Wings for Victory Week of 1943 saw on Whitsunday, an united open-air service which raised £10 for the RAF Benevolent Fund. On Whitmonday, a fete was held which helped boost the total collected to £7517.³⁶

In 1943, the Thorrington Fruit Preservation Centre, led by Mrs AE Everett, closed after two years. It had produced 2000lbs of jam and raised £17; with the money allocated to the Thorrington Victory Hall (£7); County Womens' Institute £6 and Thorrington Womens' Institute received £4.³⁷



Figure 20 - Land girls fruit picking at Hockley Farm³⁸

In January 1944, twenty-four wounded soldiers were treated to tea. Sergeant Brown, Private Meredith and Corporal Fry won special prizes. Sergeant H Burrill of the Home Guard was given an award for *good service*.³⁹

Victory in Europe of May 1945 was celebrated with Thanksgiving Services at the Church and Chapel, the Church bells rung were rung, there was a bonfire at the Cross and a Victory Tea Party for 107 children at the *Red Lion*.⁴⁰ The pupils received three days holidays. The western end of the village, Colchester Road to Tenpenny, celebrated on Saturday 22nd September 1945 with a street party at the Scout Camp. In 1946, Victory celebrations were held on 8 June.

Men from Thorrington enlisted including: Second Lieutenant Raymond Bonyface of the Royal Artillery 95/1; John Fieldgate (#11471116) of the 55th Suffolk 219th Anti-Tank Battery; Frederick Howell as Chief Engineer on *RFA Brambleleaf* and Bertram Stocker as CAG (#37929/104Y). Charles Winter was a RN Pensioner (#22765).⁴¹ In October 1943, the promotion of Lieutenant JD Chesswas, Pioneer Corp, to Temporary Captain was announced. Lance-Corporal Frederick E Payne of the Lodge, Thorrington was listed as missing before it was known he was a Prisoner of war in Italy. Private Len Booth of Army Air Corp and 9th Battalion, 6th Airborne (**6029150**) landed in Normandy and listed as missing on June 6th 1944. He became Prisoner of War No. 82360 held at Stalag 4d, Torgau (Elbe) and was released in May 1945.⁴²

Lay Reader Thomas B Millatt enlisted in the Royal Army Ordnance Corp. He returned to Thorrington to get married in November 1942 as Sergeant Millatt, and preached at St Mary Madgalene's in 1944.

Figure 21–⁴³



Aircraftman 1st Class Dennis Fear (#642065) died on 4th April 1941 and is buried at Eastwood St Leonard's and All Saints Church – next to the wartime RAF Rochford (now Southend airport). He was the son of Reginald and Edith Alice Fear.⁴⁴ His name was added to the War Memorials in the village.

Chief Engine Room Artificer John Gibson Buchanan (P/M 21997) died when HM Submarine Triad in the Mediterranean on 20th October 1940 aged 39. He was awarded the Distinguished Service Medal. He was the son of David & Sarah Buchanan; and husband of Mildred Helena Buchanan. He was commemorated on the Portsmouth Naval memorial.⁴⁵

Squadron Leader Ronald George Falconer **DFC** (#145856 of 156 Squadron, Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve) died on 2nd January 1944, when five of sixteen aircraft were lost, and is buried in the Berlin 1939-45 War Cemetery. He was Pilot of Lancaster Mark B3, JB703. This was a Pathfinder unit of 8 Group operating from RAF Warboys that led 16 raids to Berlin that winter. His Distinguished Flying Cross was announced on September 14th 1943 in the *London Gazette* whilst he was a Pilot Officer. He was the son of Major Falconer and Mrs. Stewart; and the husband of Betty Margaret Stewart of Thorrington, Essex.⁴⁶

1. STMM Record I October 3rd 1938
2. Sharpe (1995) p38 ERO E/E 244/8/1 Evacuees recorded in register in red and green ink, STMM Records Folder No. 1;
3. <https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/help-with-your-research/research-guides/1939-register/>; The National Archives DDYO 1939 Register
4. Sharpe (1995) p38
5. Sharpe (1995) p.43-4 Millatt TM, Sharpe R (2009) p12
6. <https://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/30025230>
7. STMM Parish Chest Parade 1941
8. Sharpe (1995) p46
9. Sharpe (1995) p47, Evening Gazette Monday January 21 1965
10. Sharpe (1995) p44
11. Sharpe (1995) p45
12. STMM Records II; Newspaper undated
13. Sharpe (1995) p46
14. Sharpe (1995) p46-7
15. STMM Parish Chest donated by R Kennell Clacton VCH Group
16. https://archaeologydataservice.ac.uk/archives/view/dob/ai_r.cfm?REDSQUIDARCHIVES_8dc60b89-01ec-4a92-be71-30d03bc1ec0b_0
17. https://www.merseamuseum.org.uk/mmresdetails.php?pid=PH01_AUX&ba=mmww2.php
18. <https://www.staybehinds.com/patrol/brightlingsea-patrol>
19. Sharpe (1995) p19
20. ERO C/W 1/2/39
21. Sharpe (1995) p19
22. ERO C/W 1/2/40
23. Sharpe (1995) p39
24. ERO C/W 1/2/41, Essex County Standard quoted in Smith PC (2007) Air-launched doodlebugs: the forgotten campaign
25. Sharpe (1995) p42-3 quoting Essex at War (1945) Essex County Standard
26. Sharpe (1995) p40
27. STMM Records II Sunday 4th May 1941
28. STMM Records II 1942
29. ERO D/DU 746/22
30. ERO D/DU 746/23
31. STMM Records II 1942
32. Sharpe (1995) p.19
33. ERO D/P 293/30/24
34. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/history/ww2peopleswar/stories/59/a4026359.shtml>
35. Sharpe (1995) p40-1
36. Sharpe (1995) p49
37. STMM Records II 1943
38. Facebook Thorrington History Group
39. STMM Records 1944
40. The National Archives 1939 Register DDYO
41. CWGC
42. STMM Records II
43. Facebook -Thorrington History Group Tony Millatt
44. CWGC
45. CWGC
46. CWGC; <http://www.156squadron.com/ORBRAFWarboys.htm>; <http://www.rafcommands.com/database/wardead/details.php?qnum=43446>

The Church Rooms becomes the Victory Hall

In 1910, a small coach-house was used for many of the functions of a village hall. Rev CW Bourne proposed fundraising and building a new one. This failed to gain sufficient support; so, a Mission Room was put up on the Parsonage Paddock in 1911. After fund-raising at a Fete in 1926 this was enlarged, and an iron framed piano acquired.¹ In July 1930, a Fete in aid of the Church Hall and school extension was held in the Parsonage Meadow on Saturday. The Rev. G. Hewitt introduced Mrs. Gibbons, who declared the fete open. Folk dances were given by the pupils of Thorrington School.² In 1933, a kitchen, cloakroom, electric lighting and a bowling green was added.³ In 1934, £17 1/6 was raised to cover these improvements – including £3 from St John's College, £5 from Mrs Gibbons of Great Bentley Lodge and a special collection of £3 2/- on June 2nd at the visit of the Clacton Brotherhood.⁴ In 1938, the Thorrington Social Club paid £2 12/- in hire charges, redecorated for £6 and tuned the piano for 9/6. One hundred and three 1/- subscriptions raised £5 3/- and raffles £14 15/-.⁵ The old wooden hut with a fire place, remained in use for birthday and Sunday School parties for many years.⁶



Figure 22 – Millatt's Wedding Meal 1942 in the Church Rooms⁷



c1956⁸

In 1943, a Victory Hall Fund was established by E Farrow to recognize the services of the members of the parish who were serving with His Majesty's Forces. Aspirations were for a sports and social centre, playing fields and a village hall.⁹ By 1945, £570 was raised¹⁰ which increased to £950 by 1946 when Major R Gibbon took over as Chair.¹¹ John Girling donated land to the east of the Red Lion Inn¹² with the Trust deed dated 14th July 1948.¹² The Victory Hall Fund was registered with the Charity Commissioners (and renewed in 1963).¹³ Planning permission for the Hall was obtained, but funds were insufficient for building to commence, so lapsed. Two later attempts also failed.

In 1960, it was proposed by JEW Farrow to purchase the village school but this failed to get enough interest to proceed. In 1973, the Church Rooms needed a new roof and the Victory Hall Fund were approached for funding. The rules of the trust would not allow this, so the Rector Rev John Ryall allowed a replacement building to be constructed there. The cost of £15,500 was funded by two years of fund-raising (£1000), a grant from the Community Council Essex and a lease agreement with the Church. The Victory Hall was designed by Tony Wigley and opened on May 1st 1976 by Commander Pearson. The Church Rooms were demolished and became land for the car park. A loan from the Parish Council financed the purchase of chairs and further fund-raising balanced the books.¹⁴

After twenty-one years, the lease needed renewing and the Church Commissioners suggested purchasing the site. The Victory Hall Fund still owned the plot of land by the Red Lion Inn. Negotiations with the neighbouring land-owners. the Brooms' and Wilds'. allowed the existing site to be squared up and sold for housing. This became the Victory Hall bungalows. The proceeds allowed the site of the hall to be purchased, facilities improved and maintained.¹⁵ The War Memorial from the Methodist Chapel, was added at its closure in 2001.¹⁶

1. Sharpe R (1995) p.34-5
2. *Thorrington Chelmsford Chronicle* Friday 18 July 1930
3. Sharpe R (1995) p.34-5
4. STMM Records I 1934
5. STMM Records I 1938
6. Marian R's memories 26/09/2021
7. Facebook -Thorrington History Group Tony Millatt
8. Facebook -Thorrington History Group
9. STMM Farrow JE, Thorrington Village Hall, East Essex Gazette May 7th 1976
10. Sharpe R (1995) p.35 quoting Benham H (1945) Essex at War
11. STMM Records II 1946
12. STMM Farrow JE, Thorrington Village Hall
13. <https://register-of-charities.charitycommission.gov.uk/charity-search/-/charity-details/301416/governance>; STMM Farrow JE, Thorrington Village Hall, East Essex Gazette May 7th 1976
14. STMM Farrow JE, Thorrington Village Hall
15. *ibid*
16. Rita Sharpe's memories 26/09/2021; STMM Countrywide Surveyors Details of Auction Lot p1

After the War

During the night of January 25 1947 a heavy snowfall blocked the roads. Fifty people travelling from London to Clacton by coach were sheltered at the Red Lion Inn. For nearly two months, the poor weather affected the village with the Youth Centre closed and church services cancelled or curtailed. On March 16th, severe gales damaged several roofs including St Mary Madgalene's and the Church Rooms.¹ **Later that year, Russell Carter's family purchased Glebe Farm from St John's College for c£2000.**

In 1964, the Thorrington Evening WI was formed to allow younger members to attend. In 1965, representatives from the two Wis attended a Garden Party at Buckingham Palace: Mrs Fieldgate from the WI and Mrs Wigley from the Evening WI. In 1989, a 25th Anniversary Party was held in the Victory Hall, with three course meal and magic by Stephen Powell.²

In c1964/5, three cottages at the Cross were demolished to improve visibility for road users. (Marian Rawlings June 22nd 2022; Russell Carter June 27th 2022)

In 1966, the Bell Brothers of Thorrington Hall Farm came second in Class 11 winning a Silver Medal and diploma of the Brewers Review.³

For the Silver Jubilee of 1977, a street party was held in Chapel Lane. Jubilee mugs were presented to the children. Other events were held on the Playing Field and a dance in the Village Hall.⁴

In 1996, the Old Rectory and one acre were sold.⁵

On Saturday 2nd June 2012, Thorrington celebrated the Diamond Jubilee with an *Essential English Tea Party* at the Village Hall hosted by St Mary Magdalene's. At 6:30pm there was a Peel of Bells – Plain Bob Minor. The ringers were Noel Osman, Ruth Clarke, Roger Cary Smith, Sarah Clarke, Gillian Barling and Steven Clarke (conductor.)⁶

In 2019, houses were built at Lark Drive and Avocet Place, off Clacton Road. The local farmer, David Edwards, opened the new adult equipment at the Playing Field.⁷

1. Sharpe R (1995) p.61
2. STMM - Evening WI Display 1989
3. Brewing Review (1966) Volume 80, Issue 1 - Page 42
4. Sharpe R (1995) p.52
5. ERO SALE B/9084
6. MAB Recorders Spotlight
7. Sharpe R & K (2019) Tendring District Local History Recorders - 2019 Report Parish: Thorrington

Stock-car racing

In the 1960s and 1970s, stock-car racing was held at week-ends in an old quarry site off Station Road.¹ Competitors included Victor Lambert (Red Baron 484) Nicky Hale (396) and Andy Hall.² This venue was closed in 1977, after noise complaints.³ Motor-cycle Trials were held on the site; including by Castle Colchester MCC Ltd at Poplars Chase Farm, Thorrington, CO7 8HZ on Sunday 13th October 2019.⁴

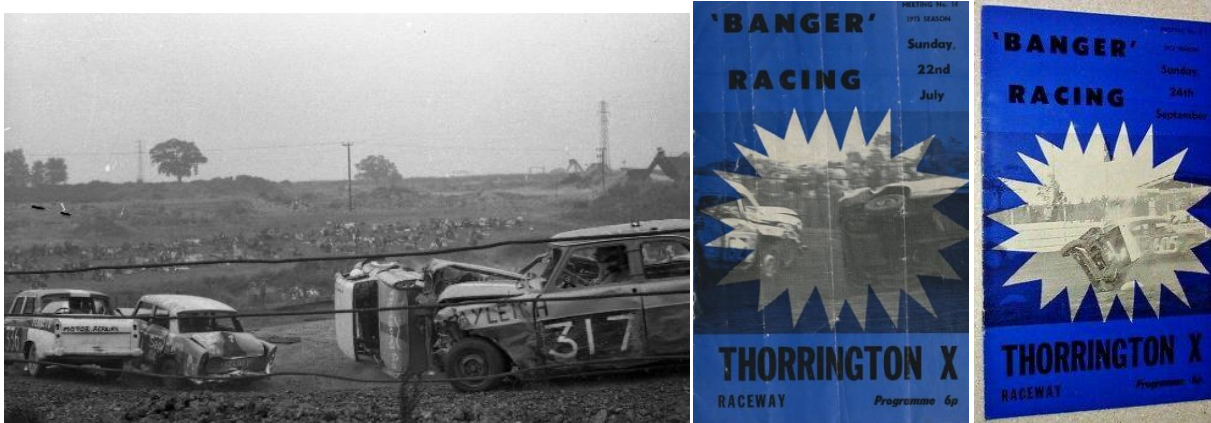


Figure 19- Stock Car Racing at Thorrington Cross

Castle Colchester Sunday 13th October 2019 <i>John Kendall Memorial Trial inc B Class Championship Rd 5</i>		Open Permit TRIAL Thorrington Pit, CO7 8HZ	
Sign On: 9.00am	National Grid Reference: TM 208085	Start: 10.30am	Permit No. ACU 57506
OFFICIALS:-			
Eastern Centre Steward:	tbc	Club Steward(s):	R Eley C Mann
Clerk of the Course:	G Wakely (Licence 99784)		
Child Protection P.o.C.:	G Wakely		
Secretary of the Meeting:	C Eley, 42 Abbotsmead, Heybridge, Essex CM9 4PT Tel: 07770 612854 email: castletrialsentry@gmail.com		
JURISDICTION: Held under the NSC and the Standing Trials Regulations of the ACU and ACU EASTERN, these Supplementary Regulations and any Final Instructions which will have the force of these Regulations. Open to Adult and Youth members of the ACU with an appropriate licence riding solo machines.			
Start / Finish: Poplars Chase Farm, Thorrington, Essex CO7 8HZ		Routes: Multi route	
Classes: All adult solo; Wobblers; Youth - A, B, C & Electric Awards: John Kendall Trophy Best Pre-70			
Entries: Entry for this event is via the ACU online entry system - Go To https://members.acu.org.uk LOGIN or REGISTER then go to 'Search for an Event'; find the event and follow process to enter. As an option, entries may be made on the OFFICIAL ENTRY FORM and sent to the Secretary of the Meeting with a fee of Adult £15.00, Youth £13.00 Include one 9x4 SAE. Cheques to be made payable to Castle Colchester MCC Ltd			
Entries Open: 4th September 2019		Entries Close: 10th October 2019	
No Entries Accepted on the day. All Entrants, Riders or Passengers must be prepared to produce their current Licence/Trials Registration when signing on, N.S.C.7.11			
ENVIRONMENTAL MATS - USE THEM or you may lose your ride			

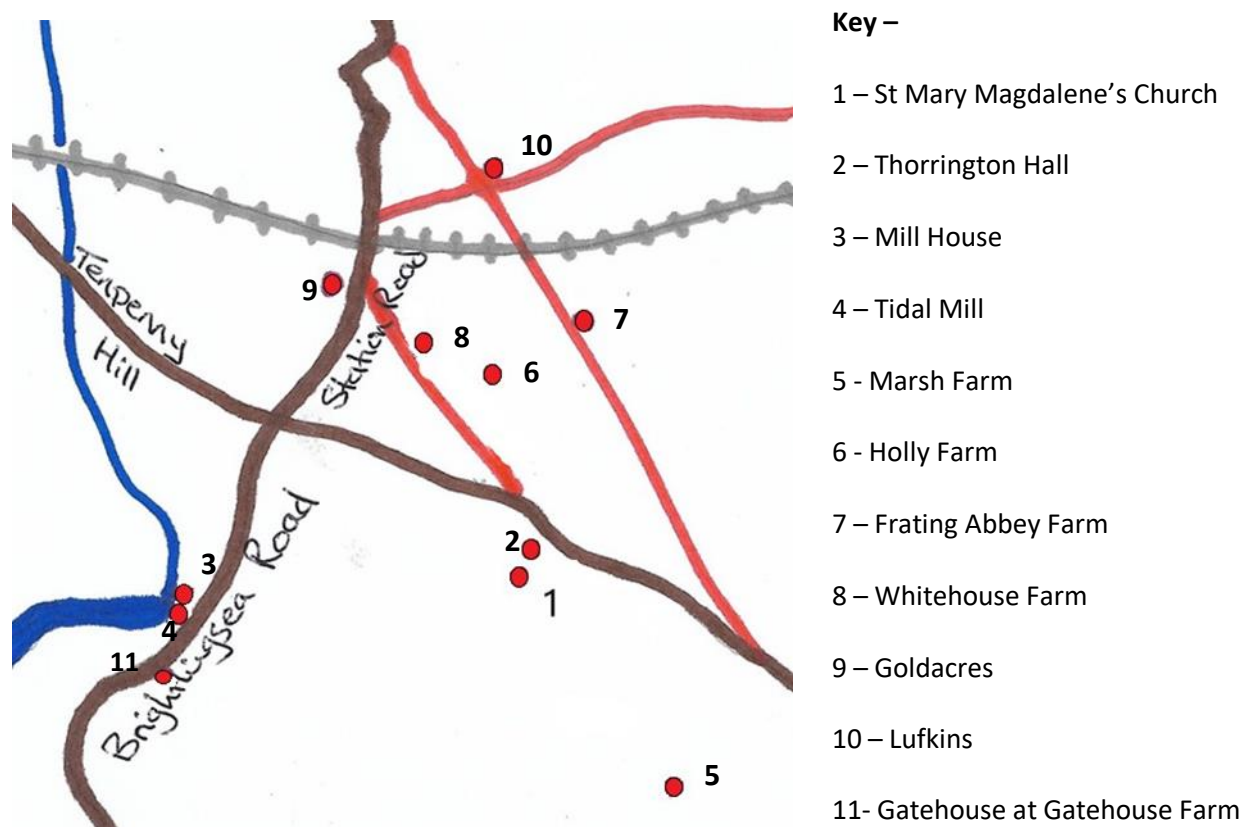
Figure 20 – motor-cycle trials announcement#

1. <https://www.gazette-news.co.uk/news/17825353.banger-racing-old-quarry-captured-alfs-images/#gallery6>
2. <https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=10157439239533949&set=p.10157439239533949&type=3>
3. <http://www.simonlewis.com/sc5.html> Defunct STOCK Car Midget & Banger Tracks Great Britain, Ireland & Europe
4. <https://www.acu.org.uk/events/october-2019/castle-colchester-mcc-ltd/trials/poplars-chase-farm-thorrington-co7-8hz-acu57506.aspx>

Historic Buildings

The Royal Commission on the Historic Monuments of England surveyed the buildings of Essex before the First World War. They were asked to only examine the buildings from pre-1700. Due to wartime delays their report was only published in 1922. One of the archaeologists travelling by train and bicycle from London every day was Mortimer Wheeler.¹

Many of these buildings were listed in October 1987.² The Church (1) and Tidal Mill (4) with attached dam are Grade II*; while listed at Grade II are Frating Abbey Farmhouse (7), Goldacre Farmhouse (9), Great Marsh Farmhouse (5), Lufkins Farmhouse (10), Pear Tree Cottage (6), Thorington Mill House (3), Whitehouse Farmhouse (8) and Willows (6). Others surveyed pre-war, including a three tenement house at the Cross, have not survived.



The survey found that the oldest building in Thorington was the Gateway at Gatehouse Farm(11), which dated from the early sixteenth century *of brick with stone jambs, and four-centred arch of two chamfered orders. It is finished with a moulded and crow-stepped coping of brick and forms part of the garden wall of the house.* Condition—Wall, out of perpendicular. This is still leaning and was surveyed by the Colchester Archaeological Trust, prior to repair in October 2020.³ The original farm-house was the home of John Clare who died in 1564 and was called *Casers*⁴ and had a serious fire in 1865 which destroyed many outbuildings.⁵

Most of the oldest, existent buildings date from the sixteenth or seventeenth centuries and were of *two storeys, timber-framed and plastered or weather-boarded; the roofs are tiled or thatched. Many of the buildings have original chimney-stacks and exposed ceiling-beams.*⁶

Thorrington Hall (2) dates from the sixteenth century, with extensions to the south cross-wing in the seventeenth century and the north in Victorian times. The East front was faced in bricks at about the same time.⁷

Glebe Farm was land farmed to raise funds for the Rector. In Thorrington it was also the site of the workhouse prior to 1838. The farmhouse dates from the sixteenth century, with an addition on the east side in the seventeenth century. *The doorway on the W. side has 17th-century shaped brackets to the hood.*⁸ It was badly damaged by bombs during 1940 and largely rebuilt.⁹

The Red Lion Inn dates from the seventeenth century¹⁰ but has been much altered.¹¹

Goldacre Farm (9) was built probably early in the sixteenth century. *The seventeenth century central chimney-stack has three diagonal shafts. Inside the building some timberframing is exposed.*¹² Goldacre was the name of the family that used to farm here.¹³

Pond House (8) was originally called White House Farm. *It was built in the sixteenth century on an L-shaped plan, with the wings extending towards the North and East. The upper storey projects at the North end and on the South side; at the North end it has an original moulded bressumer. The central chimney-stack has five attached diagonal shafts. Inside the building the roof has an original cambered tie-beam and curved braces.*¹⁴

1. 'Thorrington', in *An Inventory of the Historical Monuments in Essex, iii North East (1922) p 214-216*
2. ERO D/DU 1443/147 - included buildings that were not listed
3. Baister M (October 2020) *Historic building recording of a gateway at Gatehouse Farm, Thorrington, Essex, CO7 8JL CAT project ref.: 2020/10f*
4. Sharpe (1995) p28
5. Essex Standard Friday October. 13, 1865
6. 'Thorrington', in *An Inventory of the Historical Monuments in Essex, iii North East (1922) p 214-216*
7. ibid
8. ibid
9. Sharpe R (1995) p28
10. 'Thorrington', in *An Inventory of the Historical Monuments in Essex, iii North East (1922) p 214-216.*
11. Sharpe R (1995) p28
12. 'Thorrington', in *An Inventory of the Historical Monuments in Essex, iii North East (1922) p 214-216*
13. Sharpe R (1995) p22
14. 'Thorrington', in *An Inventory of the Historical Monuments in Essex, iii North East (1922) p 214-216*

Researcher's Notes

This project was written during Lockdown in 2021-2, after reading the available archaeological reports, journals, newspaper articles, books saved to the web and census returns since 1801. As all libraries, schools and universities were closed due to Lockdown, I attempted to use sources primarily on-line via Essex Library's *free* access

and summaries of documents held by the Essex Record Office. Other on-line sources included the Reports on the Test pits dug in 2006/7, Transactions of the Essex Society for Archaeology & History, Victoria County History of Essex, RCHME surveys, The National Archives, British Library and google books. Then the Parish Chest was looked in ... What started as a brief article for a proposed village cookbook for Alresford Parish, soon grew to a project including all four villages in the Benefice as more history was uncovered.

I also sorted through the previous mentions of Thorrington from Morant (1768) who was one of the first to publish a history of Essex, in a limited printing of 200 copies – but was seen not to be totally accurate by his contemporaries and is not recorded as ever visiting many of the places he wrote about.

All photographs are my own, except where noted.

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- **Mitchell V. (2011) Branch Lines to Clacton and Walton (Brightlingsea Library E.385)**
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- **Savage A (1984) The Anglo-Saxon Chronicles**

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- **(Ed.) Doubleday HA and Page W (1903) *A History of the County of Essex: Volume 1*** <https://archive.org/details/victoriahistoryo01doubuoft/mode/2up>
- **(Ed.) Cooper J and Elrington CR (1994) *A History of the County of Essex: Volume 9, the Borough of Colchester, British History Online*** <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/essex/vol9/> no entries written for Alresford yet, but this includes Colchester and Wivenhoe (Vol. 10)
- **Denney P (2010) *Villages around Colchester through time*** - same photos as in Hedges (2000)
- **Duck R (2015) *On the Edge: Coastlines of Old Britain***
- **Essex Record Office** – summaries of key documents <https://www.essexarchivesonline.co.uk/>
- **Faulty M, Garon J (2004) *The Essex Coastline – then and now***
- Henry III Feet of Fines Project https://finerollshenry3.org.uk/content/search/do_text_search
- Moore T. (2009) The Thorrington Dispute: a case study in Henry III's Judicial Interference <https://finerollshenry3.org.uk/content/month/fm-07-2009.html>
- **Morant P (1768) *The History and Antiquities of the County of Essex*** <https://ia800700.us.archive.org/13/items/b30455583/b30455583.pdf>
- **National Archives** – free document downloads of Wills and Domesday Book entries <https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/search/records>
- **Open Domesday** – free access to the Domesday Book in English, interactive map <https://opendomesday.org/place/TM0620/alresford/>
- **Vision of Britain** – Census analysis for each village 1831/1881/up to 1961– population, social status, housing, employment <https://www.visionofbritain.org.uk/place/6515>

- **Watson JY (1877) *The Tending Hundred in Olden Times*** A JP and contemporary of many of the Victorian land-owners mentioned; rather than a trained historian. He sold fifty acres in Great Clacton to Peter Bruff who created Clacton-on-Sea.

Accessed via Essex Society for Archaeology and History (formed 1852 as Essex Archaeological Society)

- **Transactions** over sixty volumes from 1854 – 2015 <http://esah1852.org.uk/research/transactions>
- **Feet of Fines – Emmison FG** - records of property transactions - six volumes – (1182-1603) <http://esah1852.org.uk/research/wealth-of-resources/feet-of-fines>
- **Newsletters** - <http://esah1852.org.uk/research/newsletters-blog>
- **Essex Industrial Archaeology Group (EIAG)** – seven volumes - <http://esah1852.org.uk/eiag-info/eiag-reports>
- **Essex Journal Spring 2004 – Summer 2021** – two volumes per year <https://www.esah1852.org.uk/publications/essex-journal>
- **Essex Review** 1893, 1985, 1896, 1899, 1904, <https://www.esah1852.org.uk/publications/essex-review>
- **Place-names of Essex** – tithe map and allotment for each village from 1840s showing fields names, usage & acreage; ownership; tenants – with some historical background. Separate texts for each village. **Wild W (2013) *The place-names of Thorrington*** <https://www1.essex.ac.uk/history/esah/essexplacenames/index.asp>
- **1893 Museum Guide** <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=wu.89097137988&view=plaintext&seq=13>