



ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING.

The Trust's first A.G.M. took place on Wednesday 13 May 1987 in the Village Hall, Thorncombe. The Chairman gave a report on the years activities which included participation in the 'Parish Needs Survey', the result of which was a clear indication that houses to rent for young people was the priority for Thorncombe. The completion of a survey of plant species on the roadside verges and hedgerows between Thorncombe Thorn and Birdsmoorgate, which resulted in the Trust pressing for designation for this stretch and also Horseshoe Lane and the stock ponds. A bi-monthly Newsletter has been issued throughout the year, in addition to 5 well attended slide shows and 2 coffee mornings. A pictorial history of Thorncombe is taking shape, more help is needed. Efforts continue in support of the Parish Council in the upkeep of footpaths and bridleways. A successful one day Seminar was organised in Thorncombe by the Trust and 12 other parishes attended to discuss rural planning. The Trust spoke and showed slides at the Annual Conference of the Dorset Amenities Society at Weymouth. Our year has been dominated by building and its problems; it is hoped that this will be resolved in the near future and the Trust may then pursue its wider objectives.

The Secretary then reported that some 79 letters had been sent and 52 replies received on a wide range of subjects. Many visits had been made to the planning departments in both Bridport and Dorchester. Over 25 committee meetings took place during the year and 37 separate items relating to the village have appeared in local newspapers. Membership of the Trust exceeded 100.

The Treasurer reported that although a considerable amount of money had been spent during the year on administration and printing, he was pleased to confirm that the account was in credit at the closing of the years accounts. A Chairman, Officers and Committee were agreed for the coming year. Refreshments were served and over 50 people remained for:-

THORNCOMBE IN THE MID 19th. CENTURY.

Following the Annual General Meeting on 13 May 1987, Mr Tony Smith of Holyrood School, and a resident in our parish, gave a well attended talk illustrated with slides and documents, on the history of the village. Commenting that present day researchers are particularly fortunate in the numerous sources of information available to them, Mr Smith outlined the formation of the settlement in its somewhat unique geographic position bounded by rivers on three sides. The Romans who built the Fosse Way by-passed the area, and the village in its present situation was established in Saxon times, with the first manor probably in the Sadborrow locality.

Domesday Book shows that the Parish then had an area of 5000 acres. In the 12th. Century Forde Abbey was founded and hunting parks are known to have existed. Holditch had a "frontier" position and the remains of the fortified manor are of considerable importance. Thorncombe was served by two turnpikes, one running East and West, the other North and South; of the two toll houses, that near Venn Chapel has disappeared.

The population of the village grew steadily until about 1850, when it reached its peak of about 1500 inhabitants. The advent of clothmaking in the 1720's had a major impact and the Trenchard family had considerable influence as mill owners. A school for 6 children was started in 1720 and remained the only school until the advent of the National Schools in the 19th. century. The production of Tithe maps around 1840 was a major step in showing in fine detail local land boundaries with reference numbers from which ownership and much other information can be traced. Thorncombe's tithe map and a contemporary census have been preserved in good order in Exeter, together with other records predating the area's transfer to the County of Dorset.

With the decline of cloth-making, life in Thorncombe became very hard, both unemployment and low pay leading to many families leaving the area in the second half of the 19th. century. Small groups of houses in such places as Shedrick and Maudlin were depopulated and the buildings of thatch and cob rotted and disappeared.

Mr Smith is keen to encourage the Trust to carry out further research and has arranged to meet a nucleus of members to show them how their efforts may be directed with most effect.

TREE PLANTING.

Following the planting of an Oak tree adjacent to the playing field, the Trust have now planted a further 5 Native Beech trees at Paynes Down. It is hoped that more trees may be planted within the parish and if anyone has a suitable site please contact R D J Hawkes - Winsham 359

PARISH WALK.

The Trust hope to arrange a Parish Walk on a week-end in July. This will be routed along public footpaths around the village and will be suitable for all ages. There will be a picnic tea along the route and lifts back to the village for those in need. More details in next months Parish Magazine.

MEMBERSHIP TO THE TRUST FOR 1987/8 IS NOW DUE.

THORNCOMBE VILLAGE TRUST - MEMBERSHIP FORM

Block capitals please

Please tick

NAME _____

Individual £ 2.00

ADDRESS _____

Family £ 3.00

O.A.P. £ 1.00

16's - 18's £ 1.00

TELEPHONE _____

SIGNATURE _____

DATE _____

Please make cheques payable to Thorncombe Village Trust and return to:
The Membership Secretary, John Whitbread, The Bungalow, Wittey's Lane,
Thorncombe, Chard, Somerset. TA20 4PG.