



THORNCOMBE VILLAGE TRUST NEWS

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THORNCOMBE VILLAGE TRUST

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Secretary To be appointed
Treasurer Lynn Kinsey
Newsletter Lynn Kinsey
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MEMBERS PROGRAMME OF EVENTS

The TVT committee are introducing a few changes to the Members Programme for this year. Although we will still be hosting some evening illustrated talks, we are hoping to have a few different events. Eg Guided Walks, Visits to local places of interest. Some of these events will be held either during the day, early evenings or weekends to enable more families to attend. This will mean that the printed events programme may be subject to change or addition. Please check our website www.thorncombe-village-trust.co.uk regularly and look out for posters and adverts in the Parish Magazine and Marshwood Vale Magazine for up to date information.

FORDE ABBEY (A Brief History)

Between 1133-36, a wealthy nobleman Richard de Brioniis built a priory on his land at Brightley in Devon and invited Gilbert, Abbot of Waverley in Surrey, to send 12 monks to form a new Cistercian community there. One story is that the agricultural land surrounding the new priory was insufficiently fertile, forcing the monks to consider returning to the mother house in 1141. However, Adelicia de Brioniis, the sister of Richard and successor to his estate, offered them an alternative site close to the River Axe in the manor of Thorncombe. Here, between 1141-48, they built a new priory which came to be known as "Ford" due to its proximity to an old river crossing.

Forde Abbey flourished as a monastery for four hundred years and became renowned as a seat of learning. The third abbot, Abbot Baldwin, became Archbishop of Canterbury before dying on the crusades and his successor, John Devenius, was confessor to King John and reputedly one of the most learned men of his time. It also became a wealthy foundation and by the 14th century owned some 30,000 acres. Each land transaction was recorded in the Cartulary which belongs to the Abbey to this day. Abbot Chard, the last abbot, succeeded in 1521 and applied his substantial learning and imagination to a comprehensive restructuring of the fabric of the building. However, his work was interrupted in 1539 by the dissolution of the larger monasteries. Chard decided that discretion was the better part of valour and handed Forde Abbey quietly over to the Crown, becoming vicar of Thorncombe until his death in 1543.

For the next 100 years Forde Abbey was owned by a succession of absentee landlords, with the building plundered for its stone. However, in 1649 it was purchased by Edmund Prideaux, Member of Parliament for Lyme Regis, fervent supporter of the parliamentary cause, and later, Oliver Cromwell's Attorney General. He made a fortune practising law and running the Parliamentary postal service. Having purchased the property he converted the buildings into his private home.

The house remained largely unchanged during the 18th century, though the gardens were created during this period. In 1815, the house was rented to the philosopher Jeremy Bentham. During the 19th century the house was owned by a succession of owners, some of whom neglected the house while others attempted to renovate it. In 1905, the cousin of the last owner inherited the house and moved in with her husband Freeman Roper, whose descendants still own and occupy the house and estates.

We would like to welcome the following new members who have joined since Nov 2011

Jane and Tony Winlow from Hawkchurch
James and Rod from Chard Street, Thorncombe
The Williams family from Stonelake

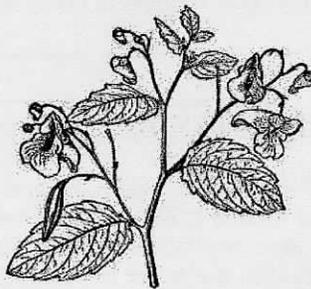
TVT WEBSITE

The Thorncombe Village Trust website was initially set up as a way of communicating information about The Trust and its calendar of events. Recently it has been expanded to include information and photographs on the history of Thorncombe parish and village.

We have also been contacted by various people who wish to pass on their stories and memories of living in Thorncombe. One example is Louise May Silver who was evacuated to Thorncombe in 1942 when she was 10. She recently got in touch with Thorncombe Village Trust when she saw the pages on Wilfred Potter on the Trust website, as she had been friends with him as a child. She has a very clear recollection of events from 73 years ago and her memories are strong and vivid, as she considered her time in Thorncombe to be very special. Please check out our website for details of her fascinating stories, and we would like to thank her for sharing these memories.

If you have any recollections or photos of Thorncombe as it used to be – it doesn't have to be from very long ago, please do get in touch with Rachael Whitbread (contact details overleaf).

HIMALAYAN BALSAM



Himalayan balsam (*Impatiens glandulifera*) is a relative of the Busy Lizzie, and is reputed to be the tallest annual plant in the United Kingdom. Other common names are Indian balsam, jumping jack, and policeman's helmet.

Introduced to Kew Gardens as a greenhouse plant in 1839, Himalayan balsam is now a naturalised plant, found especially on riverbanks and in waste places where it has become a problem weed. It now out-competes many native British plants, colonising whole watercourses. The plants leave watercourses vulnerable to erosion when river levels rise in winter, increasing incidences of flooding.

Himalayan balsam spreads rapidly due to its exceptional seed distribution system. Between June and October it produces clusters of purplish pink (or rarely white) helmet-shaped flowers. The flowers are followed by seedpods that burst explosively when ripe. Each plant can produce up to 800 seeds. These are dispersed widely as the ripe seedpods shoot their seeds up to 7m (22ft) away. Once established in the catchments of a river, the seeds, which can remain viable for two years, are transported further afield by the water. Plants can then grow up to three metres in height in three months.

Dorset Wildlife Trust is working with landowners and volunteers to remove this alien from our rivers. In west Dorset, DWT's volunteers have been busy hand-pulling the plants, working downstream on the Hooke and wider Frome catchment, and funding has been applied for to control this plant on the Char. The 'Return of the Natives' project, led by Dorset Wildlife Trust and funded by Natural England, DEFRA and the Environment Agency, is in its third year of working to remove Himalayan balsam from the Frome, the Bere Stream and the Moors River and their tributaries, and to examine the extent of the threat from other alien plants. Advice and practical help is on hand for landowners. If you would like to volunteer or would like help with controlling Himalayan balsam, please visit www.dorsetwildlifetrust.org.uk/volunteering or ring Dorset Wildlife Trust's West Dorset Team on 01300 321329.