

# 1. Thelveton Parish

The name “Thelveton” derives from the Viking “þjalfi” and the Saxon “tūn”, which suggests a 9<sup>th</sup> century origin, when Danish families were coming to settle down among the Saxons, rather than to raid and plunder.

It appears in the Domesday Book as Teluetuna. In 1183 it appeared as Thelueston in the Great Roll of the Exchequer (Pipe roll), and as Telvetune in 1198 in the Feet of Fines for the County of Norfolk.

The first church was planted here in 1308, probably by an acolyte from neighbouring Dickleburgh.

In 1848 Thelveton (St. Andrew) was a parish, in the union of Depwade, in the hundred of Diss. It had 169 inhabitants. It was intersected by the road from London to Norwich, by way of Scole. This road is of Roman origin and was once a toll road, being the main route to London. The parish was 1200 acres in area, of which about one-third was pasture, with a number of coverts still used for breeding pheasants. The living at the time was a discharged rectory, valued in the king’s books at £9, and in the patronage of the Crown: the tithes had been commuted for £290, and there were 8½ acres of glebe. The church is situated in the grounds of the Thelveton Estate near the hall, hidden from the house by woodland.

Originally the settlement at Thelveton was about a mile to the west of the Roman Road, which explains why the church and the old rectory are now a long way down a winding lane. The lane is called New Road. It was new in the late 19th century when many of the houses on the main road were built, mostly for workers on the Thelveton Estate. At the junction of New Road and the old Roman road stands a bungalow which was originally built as an alcohol-free meeting place for the men of Thelveton following their return from the Great War.

Before the building of New Road the road from Thelveton joined the trunk road at Dickleburgh, and the only way through from the old village to the new houses on the main road was on the private road past the Hall. The road through Thelveton village centre was on the route from Dickleburgh to Diss via the ford at Frenze.

Richard Emms, now of Pulham Market, remembers, “My grandparents, Will and Annie Farrington, lived at Grange Farm in Thelveton. My early memories are of farming during the Second World War using both tractors and farm horses. Earlier my parents, Ernest George Emms and Trudy Anne Farrington were married in Thelveton church on 4th June 1930. My mother played the organ here and at Frenze in the 1920s.”

Thelveton main road was on the flight path for Thorpe Abbots airfield during the war. One light on a pole was in the garden of Tollgate cottage, and one at the manor house.

The present main road through the village was first built by the Romans. In the late 18th century it was a toll road, hence: “Tollgate Farm” and “Tollgate House” which can be seen on the 1892 map. Until quite recently it was the main route from Norwich to the south and part of the very busy A140.

The village is now bypassed and the old toll road is no longer the main road to London. Since the building of the bypass it has grown much quieter. Once again Thelveton is not on the route to anywhere. It is settling into a quiet country backwater.



**The Boudicca Way** runs from Frenze through Thelveton's old village centre, past Grange Farm and across the field to the churchyard. Leaving the churchyard by a stile in the east side it runs in an easterly direction past an old gravel pit, and passes to the north of Thelveton Hall then turns north towards Tivetshall. This route gives one of the best views of Thelveton Hall, which is a fine Tudor mansion. Despite its name the Boudicca Way is not an old right



of way but a modern creation which joins traditional footpaths to make a long-distance-walk. It is probably fanciful to imagine that Boudicca (Boadicea of my youth!) ever used it in its present form, but her tribe certainly lived around here. She was an Iceni queen who, when her husband was killed by the Roman invaders, turned into a fierce warrior, and was said to have been directly responsible for the burning of Colchester.

## 2. Thelveton Hall

**Thelveton Hall** was described in “A Topographical Dictionary of England (1848)” as “an ancient mansion, in the Elizabethan style, attached to which is a neat Roman Catholic chapel.” It was built in Elizabethan times, and first lived in by the Havers, who built the hall with money gifted to them for building dykes. After the reformation, the Havers family kept to the Old Religion, hence the private chapel. Nevertheless the floor in the chancel of the Thelveton Church is paved with memorials to the family, now covered by carpet.



In the 19th century the hall was bought by the brewer, Thomas Mann. He and one of his partners in the brewery moved to Thelveton. The Paulins bought the Manor House and the Manns bought the Hall. They set about remodelling the village and the estate, building workers' cottages on the main London Road, and also providing a school. There is a fine memorial to Thomas Mann in the church, which tells of his good works for the village. Sadly he died, still in his prime, after a fall from his horse. In the last century, in the time of Sir John and Clare, Lady Mann, the lawns were covered in daffodils in the spring. Visitors from all over the county came to enjoy the “Daffodil Days” and tea at the hall. The hall stands overlooking parkland half way along a private drive between two gate houses.

The hall is now owned by Sir Rupert Mann, a nephew of Sir John. His main residence is in Billington. When he first inherited the estate the hall stood empty for some time. It is now let.

It featured in the film “Vanity Fair”, and in one of the episodes of the Miss Marple series on television. Villagers report that false hedges were put all the way down the drive for Miss Marple.

### - Pheasants

The pheasant is a large, long-tailed game bird. Males have rich chestnut, golden-brown and black markings on body and tail, with a dark green head and red face wattling. Females are mottled with paler brown and black.

They were introduced to the UK long ago and more recent introductions have brought in a variety of races and breeds for sport shooting. They can be seen across most of the UK, apart from the far north and west of Scotland. They are least common in upland and urban areas. They are usually seen all year round in the open countryside near woodland edges, copses and hedgerows. They eat seeds, grain and shoots.

There are about 1.9 million breeding pairs in the UK.

Thelveton Estate has pleasant woodland coverts for breeding and rearing pheasants. There were extensive game coverts on the estate marked on the earliest maps, and shoots are still a regular feature of the estate activities. Pheasants in their bright plumage are regular visitors to the churchyard where, generally, they are safe from the guns.

- **Rave at the Hall:**

In 2007 one of our parishioners, Harry Moore, died. He and his wife, Joan, had not long moved to Thelveton. Before they came they were leading lights in promoting the Thundersley Brass Band. When arranging Harry's funeral, Joan asked if some of the band could play. In fact no-one in the band was willing to be left out and the whole band came up to play for the funeral, filling the entire chancel area. They later came to play for a charity concert in aid of the East Anglia Children's Hospices. In 2008 they came back – "Return by popular demand," says the poster, "Thundersley Brass Band An open air performance at St Andrew's Church, Thelveton on Sunday 14th September at 5.30pm; Tickets are £8; Teas and coffees are available, or bring your own alcohol and picnic; Under cover if the weather is unkind. Tickets are now available. Please ask at the tent." They have been back each year since then to perform a "Last night of the Proms" in the church.

Before that, in 2005, the music at Thelveton was a jazz concert. The tickets read: "DIXIE JAZZ BANDITS Saturday 25th June 7.30 pm Thelveton church field by kind permission of Sir Rupert and Lady Mann. BAR AVAILABLE BRING A SEAT, CUSHION, OR GROUND SHEET. TICKETS £5.00. Proceeds to Thelveton Church. Admit one"

Following a blazing hot week, the Saturday was cold and overcast, but a brave few wrapped up warm and enjoyed the concert.

Eight years before that there was another concert which was not so welcome, and ended with much controversy! The papers of the time reported: "November 1997, Norfolk: Police bust squat party at Thelveton Hall, an unoccupied country house in Norfolk, seizing the Brighton-based Innerfield Sound System and carrying out intimate body searches. The house belongs to Sir Rupert Mann, but had been empty for seven years."

# 3. Thelveton church

Thelveton Church was established in the 14th century, and is dedicated to St Andrew the Apostle. The first patron of the Living was the prior and convent of St Mary Overy in Southwark, but it was probably an acolyte from the “college” church in Dickleburgh that was sent to look after the new parish. It seems likely that there was a wooden building here in 1308, and this would have been replaced by a stone building nearly a century later. The nave is 14th century, and the roof seems to be largely original. There is evidence of there having been a crypt. A set of steps on the outside of the north wall leads down to what was a boiler room, but is now empty. By the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century the chancel was in a state of disrepair. The present chancel is a 19th century remodelling and a rood screen was probably removed at that time. The organ loft was added at the same time and the roof construction is similar on both the loft and the chancel.

The building is grade 2 listed.

## A tour of the outside

### - To the North

The present approach to the church is from the north side up a track from Church Road. There are fine oak trees to the west, on the right as you approach the church. The old graveyard is to the left and a large part of it is now used as a car park. A rubbish bin is provided for the use of picnickers. On the east side of this graveyard are a large chestnut tree, and another oak tree which overshadows the stile where the Boudicca Way enters the churchyard from the adjoining field. Two new oak trees have been planted on the northern boundary in recent years. In the spring the centre of this graveyard has a succession of flowering bulbs, beginning with a display of snowdrops, then aconites, followed by daffodils and bluebells.

On the north wall of the church there is evidence of an old doorway in the 15<sup>th</sup> Century wall. The 19<sup>th</sup> century organ loft projects into the churchyard on this side, notice the interesting pattern of the roof beams of this loft. A set of steps leads down to an old boiler room built under the organ loft. These steps are steep and slippery and are now locked behind a grill. The vestry is also a 19<sup>th</sup> century addition as a lean to against the organ loft. Beyond the organ loft is a wooden shed first constructed in the 1940s and since renovated to house a composting toilet. This is kept unlocked and is available to walkers, picnickers, worshippers, and those who visit graves. A reinforced grass path gives access along the north side of the church to both the vestry and the toilet.

### - To the East

The east wall of the church is quite close to the edge of the graveyard. The stile and its attendant oak tree are followed by a rather neglected area of elder and nettles which is mostly used as a compost heap. In the summer time it is often alive with butterflies. A way can be found through to the graveyard on the south side.

### - To the South

Coming out into the south side the nearer graves are a reminder of the importance of the Mann family in the life and history of Thelveton Church. On the far side of the

graveyard is an ivy covered wall with a gate leading into the new graveyard beyond. This new graveyard was opened in 1938. To the right is a pretty example of a lichgate. The Boudicca Way continues through this gate and across the adjoining field. This was the original approach to the church from the old village. Near this gate is another oak. Beyond the gate and the wall, the new graveyard is surrounded by a beech hedge, and fine example of a copper beech, much loved by those who arrange flowers in the church, stands just outside the lichgate. *In 2012 the wall was cleared and the beech hedge surrounding the new graveyard was cut back to the level at which it was maintained up to the 1970s.*

Turning to face the south wall of the church there is an interesting little Tudor porch over the main entrance. This seems to be contemporary with the building of Thelveton Hall.

#### - **To the West**

Here stands another huge copper beech shading the west wall of the church. The west wall was rebuilt following the collapse of the original spire, and then remodelled in the 1950s. Above this wall there is now only a single bell in a little bell cote.

#### - **Thelveton's bells.**

When this church building was first erected it had a steeple, and two bells.

In March 1757 the steeple fell down, and the two bells which it contained were damaged. They were sold and the proceeds used to erect a small bell-cote and to purchase a small chiming bell. The faculty for this work is dated 1761.

One of the original bells was eventually donated to the church of St Paul's in Calgary, Canada where it is still used. Their website says: "*St. Paul's, the oldest Anglican Church in Calgary, was built in 1885 and originally was known as St. Paul's Fish Creek. It was built by parishioners and modelled after the original Anglican Church in the parish of Calgary in Scotland. The first service was on September 27th of that year and the first permanent minister was Rev'd E. Smith, who served the growing congregation until 1888. The first Holy Eucharist was celebrated in the church on January*



*10th, 1886 and the Parish of St. Paul's was formally established on December 19th, 1893. The bell is thought to be among the oldest in Canada. Made in the time of Henry VIII, it was one of two in Thelveton Church in England. It was sold by the congregation to raise funds for repairs and eventually was donated to St. Paul's. The province declared the original chapel a historic site in 1977 and the congregation has actively restored the interior and exterior, following stringent government guidelines."*

It is not known what became of the other bell.

The bell which currently hangs in the bell-cote is not the original chiming bell, but a 19th century replacement.

## Inside the Church

### - The War Memorials

Entering through the porch the war memorial lists all those who served in the Great War. Originally those who died were in red, while those who survived were in black. The colouring had deteriorated and the restoration of this memorial was completed in 2009 using money raised at the 2008 Flower Festival which celebrated 700 years of the Church in Thelveton.

Inside the church, on the South wall of the nave to the right of the door is the war memorial which lists all those who died in the Great War. No names have been added for the Second World War, so the presumption is that no men were lost in that war.

### - Charles 1st ~ Royal Arms

Over the main door, inside the church, hangs a framed wooden construction on which is painted the royal coat of arms of King Charles I. The circle surrounding the arms says HONI SOIT QUI MAL Y PENSE (Evil be to him who evil thinks), which is the motto of the sovereigns of Great Britain. On either side are a lion (with royal crown) and a unicorn, both rampant. Above is a crowned helm and the English lion passant. Underneath are the words DIEU ET MON DROIT signifying that kings rule by divine right.

At the Reformation, Henry VIII decreed that all churches would display the Royal Arms to show that the king was now head of the church. Mostly churches ignored this, but there are a few early examples, such as this one. It was, probably, originally placed above a rood screen separating the chancel from the nave, and moved to its present position in the nineteenth century remodelling.

King Charles was crowned in 1625, but his reign came to an abrupt end when he was beheaded following a civil war between the king's forces (the Cavaliers) and Oliver Cromwell's fighting men (the Roundheads). Oliver Cromwell became the Lord Protector and ruled until his death. Cromwell was a strict Puritan and during his protectorate much damage was done to decorations and works of art within our churches, though no damage is evident in Thelveton Church. Even the fifteenth century font is delightfully intact. The Havers family who owned Thelveton Hall were Catholics and, almost certainly, Royalists. They probably made arrangements for the treasures to be hidden in some way.

At the restoration of the monarchy in 1660, Charles II enforced the Henroviaan decree more strictly, and examples of later Arms are more common.

### - The Font

Baptism is often called "Christening". The font, still used for baptisms, is at the back of the church near the main door. This is because baptism is the "doorway" into the fellowship of Christ.

The current Baptism register dates from 1813 when Charlotte, daughter of John and Pleasance Hanton, was baptized by the curate, George Walker. At the time of writing the most recent baptism was on July 26th 2008 when Teddy Vernon Kenneth was baptized by our rector, Janice Scott. In the front of the baptism book, written on the fly-leaf, is the following account:

*On Friday June 18th 1897 the Diamond Jubilee of Her Gracious Majesty Queen Victoria was celebrated in the Parish of Thelveton.*

*To mark the sense of importance of the occasion, and in thankfulness to Almighty God for the many benefits bestowed on our country during the past sixty years a Dinner*

*was given in Mr George Symonds' barn to all the employees of the Thelveton and Walcott Green estates above 15 years of age, residing in the Parishes of Thelveton, Scole, Dickleburgh, Walcott Green and Shimpling, together with their wives, also a Tea to all the same persons, and all the children within the Parish of Thelveton. To the Dinner some 150 people sat down and to the Tea about 235. At the former meal the Queen's health was drunk with enthusiasm as was also the case with regard to the Prince & Princess of Wales & the rest of the Royal Family.*

*The health of the Squire, Edward Mann Esquire & his family, of the Rector, the Rev'd Marcus E.W. Johnson and Mrs Johnson and of Mr & Mrs George Symonds, & of Robert Talbot (late Parish Clerk) were also drunk.. Distributions were made of Jubilee Medallions, Books & Jubilee Tumblers presented by Edward Mann Esq, W. T. Paulin Esquire & the Rev'd Marcus Johnson.*

*The weather proved inclement during the latter part of the afternoon and evening, interrupting the sports which had been cancelled. But a very enjoyable time was spent by young and old, & the celebration of Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee will be long remembered in Thelveton.*

*The special service of Thanksgiving held on the following Sunday June 20th was very well attended.*

*At this time the Parish Deed Chest in the Vestry was kindly presented by Edward Mann Esquire.*

*Marcus E.W. Johnson, Rector*

At the back of the same book there is a similar account of the Coronation of King George V.

Thelveton's octagonal font dates from the fifteenth century. The four gospel writers alternate with the Tudor rose and a lion on the outside of the bowl. It is held up by bishops (possibly apostles), one of whom appears to be wearing a bowler hat!

#### **- First Memorial**

To the left of the door, a faded marble relief states:

“In a grave near the outside of this wall are deposited the remains of ABIGAIL  
“MOSS Wife of THOMAS FARROW of Diss. She died on the 13th day of Oct<sup>er</sup> 1842  
“Aged 46 Years, leaving Five Children by her former Husband ANDREW HART  
“MUSKETT with whom she lived several years in this Parish beloved and respected.

There is a clime where sorrows never blight,  
There is a world where sever'd hearts unite,  
There may'st thou meet, departed Spirit! There  
Husband and Children, in that hallowed sphere;  
A few fleet years and their tried hearts must brave,  
Like thine the damp oblivion of the grave;  
When ripe for heaven, may resignation close  
Life's final scene and gladden their repose.”

Carved under the west window are the words:

TO THE GLORY OF GOD THIS WINDOW WAS ERECTED AND THE WEST  
END OF THE CHURCH REPAIRED IN LOVING MEMORY OF EDWARD  
MANN BARONET AND HIS WIFE ANNA JANE BY THEIR FAMILY AD 1953

#### **- Sunday school**

Usually at the back of the church, there are two beautiful oak tables set at right angles and covered in oil cloth to preserve them. These were originally one large table used by the Sunday School, and covered in the grime of ages. As it was impossible to lift

the table without six strong men, it was altered by a local cabinet maker, David J. Paddison, to make two long tables which are much more convenient for the present needs of the church, and make a fine addition to the furniture of the church. Until the advent of education for all in 1871 most ordinary people were not able to read or write. The Sunday school movement began in the 1774, mainly to teach the children of the poor how to read the Bible. Before the 1871 Education Act schools were mostly paid for by the parents. There were some philanthropists who set up free schools, but most people simply could not take the time out from work to attend. So the Sunday school movement grew up, as that was a day when most people could find some free time. The Sunday school could be for adults as well as children. With the coming of the State Education System, the Sunday School became a place for teaching children their catechism and Bible stories, and for providing a more child-friendly environment for worship. In our present age Sunday tends to be Family Visiting Time so modern "Sunday" Schools often take place on weekdays, often in the local school, along with discussion groups for adults, and clubs for teenagers. Family Services and Celebration Services provide child-friendly worship in the church building on Sundays.

Thelveton had an active Sunday school around the oak table until the 1990s. During the middle of the twentieth century the Sunday School was very active, and many visitors to the 2008 Flower Festival had memories of the kindness of Sir John Mann, and the good times the Sunday School children had. Many transferred to the choir as they grew older. If anyone was missing one week they would receive a visit from the hall, or from the Paulin family to see if they were alright. Many times children were picked up by the estate chauffeur, or in one of the carts.

One of those children, Yvonne Foreman, remembers, "We used to walk to Sunday School, and if Sir John passed us he would tell us to get in his motor. He was so kind. Clare was a bit fierce, strict, but if we were passing the hall to get the milk Sir John would beckon us over and say "Come in, have some lemonade." I remember being in Sunday School when the Home Guard marched in for church service. It was quite a sight. We sang in the choir. The boys sat on the right and the girls on the left. We kept looking at Thomas Mann (*the marble memorial*)."

As the estate became more mechanised the families moved away, though a small number of children from the village continued to gather every Sunday at 10 o'clock for Bible stories, art work, and the acting out of plays for an hour before the 11 o'clock Sunday Service.

When the last Sunday school teacher, Julia Farmer, moved away in the 1990s there was no-one to take her place, and the lessons ceased. The parish now has very few children living in it.

#### - **The Chairs**

Early in the 1970s the old pews were removed and replaced by oak chairs which are dedicated to different parishioners who were in Thelveton at the time, or came to the parish later. The priest's stall and the pulpit were made at the same time. The priest's stall has a kneeler decorated with carpentry tools, which is dedicated to the estate carpenter.

#### - **Mother's Union**

The banner of the Thelveton Branch of the Mother's Union is laid up in the church. Their website states,

“Mothers’ Union is a Christian organisation with more than 3.6 million members in 78 countries worldwide. The backbone of Mothers' Union is its worldwide network of grassroots volunteers. Whatever their individual backgrounds, members are united in their commitment to supporting marriage and family life. They give their time to generously help others, whether by running local projects, supporting international campaigns, or fundraising.

“Mothers’ Union also employs over 300 paid workers around the world. These are women drawn from local dioceses, so they speak the language, understand the culture and customs and have first-hand experience of the problems their neighbours face. Mothers’ Union workers provide vital leadership for efforts in the community. They enable people to gain essential skills, develop and encourage sustainable self-help projects, and run training seminars for local Mothers' Union members and the wider community.

“Workers also run the Literacy and Development Programme in Malawi, Sudan and Burundi. This programme enables learners to become literate and numerate as well as gaining skills in health, hygiene, HIV/AIDS and poverty alleviation.

Mothers’ Union is also involved in campaigning and lobbying on a number of worldwide issues such as parental rights, international debt relief and child poverty. We are happy to be working in partnership with various organisations, including the United Nations and other ecumenical groups.”

For more information visit: [www.themothersunion.org](http://www.themothersunion.org)

Sadly the Thelveton Mothers’ Union is no longer active, and the banner has been laid up in church for many years.

#### - **Jean Alexander**

Jean was the youngest daughter of artists R.G.D. Alexander and Effie Alexander, and sister of Clare, Lady Mann. Jean was born in 1911 at Priest’s Cottage, Shenfield, Essex. Jean’s artistic influence stemmed from her parents and their circle of artist friends, including Mark Fisher, H.B. Brabazon, Sir George Clausen and Horace Mummery. Jean was educated at Queen Anne’s School, Caversham, and studied art at Chelmsford Art School (1928-1931). Subsequently Jean won a scholarship to the Slade School of Art (1931-1935) and obtained the Slade Diploma in 1934. Jean taught Art at Brentwood County High School for thirty-four years (1936-1970). At one time she was captain of Essex County ladies’ hockey team.

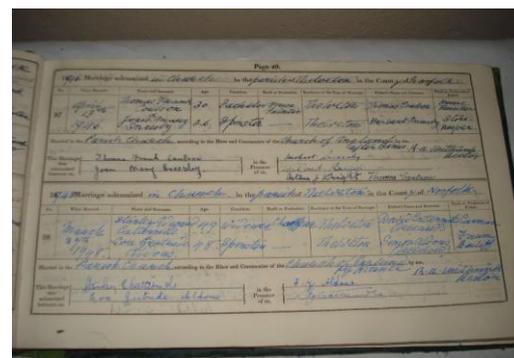
She travelled widely around the world and settled in New Zealand for four years (1970-1974). In 1974 Jean moved to The Old School in Thelveton where she founded the Thelveton Art Group. She remained in Norfolk until she died in 1994.

During her artistic career Jean exhibited at various galleries, most notably: The Royal Academy, The new English Art Club, The Society of Women Artists, and The Whitechapel Art Gallery.

A small picture of a farm wagon, painted by Jean, hangs in the church. Sadly, it is not one of her best works.

#### - **Parish Chest**

The Parish Document Chest was donated by Edward Mann Esquire on the occasion of the Diamond Jubilee of Queen Victoria. In it are housed the current church registers and the most commonly used church plate. Prior to that, the church plate had been kept in a



lockable wooden box, which is now kept inside the chest.

Way back in the dark ages a wedding took place at the church door, not inside, but today a priest in the Church of England is licensed to solemnize marriages so long as the proper returns are made to the Registrar-general.

Our current Register of Marriages dates back to 10th February 1841 when George Hammers and Mary Lord were married by the curate, George Walker. Neither party could write their names, so the curate wrote, and they made their mark. Of the two witnesses, John Lord and Robert Bond, only Robert could write, so he has signed his own name. The latest entry in the book is for 28th June 2008 when Anthony Ronald Buttle and Elaine Marie Chapman were married by the curate, David J. Adlam. Not surprisingly, all signed their own names.

Over the years the church has been given various pieces of plate for use on the altar.

- ☆ The cross and candle sticks on the altar Clare, Lady Mann in memory of her mother Effie Clare Alexander who died 16th April 1952 Age 77
- ☆ White metal chalice, possibly silver, with decorated border but no identifying marks.
- ☆ Hallmarked silver chalice engraved *Thelveton in Norfolk 1722*.
- ☆ Two silver pattens stamped CH & JE. On the back is scratched *Thelveton Dec 1849*.
- ☆ Silver flagon engraved *Thelveton Norfolk 1879*
- ☆ Red leather case with Patten engraved In memory of Fanny Mann St Andrew's Thelveton, presented by Alice Mudge 1897
- ☆ Silver salver engraved IHS
- ☆ Brass collecting plate.
- ☆ Black leather case with silver chalice engraved IHS from Barber & Smith Goldsmith & Jewellers, 36 Corn Hill
- ☆ Copper Salver
- ☆ Silver rose bowl inscribed IN LOVING MEMORY OF CLEMENT (1907 – 1975) AND PHYLLIS (1907 – 1995) MULLENGER

#### - **The organ**

This was made by Bishop and Sons at the end of the nineteenth century. The cabinet is made of oak. Unusually, the high standard of workmanship of the woodwork continues throughout, even out of sight at the back.

Above the doors to the organ manuals is a brass plaque which announces,

“To the Glory of God, this organ was erected by voluntary contributions and the chamber was built by Edward Mann J.P. + AD 1900 Marcus E.W. Johnson, Rector + George Symonds, Churchwarden”

Above this is a smaller plaque which says,

“In memory of Winifred May Neale Organist 1928 – 1982”

Winifred was born in 1901. She was one of three sisters who lived in Thelveton with their mother who was bedridden. She died in 1987. Her grave is in the new churchyard next to her sister.

Her sister, Marjorie, worked in the Broom factory in Diss. She donated the roundels of medieval glass in the south window of the nave. On her death in 2004 she donated a glass medallion which now hangs in the north window. It is modern glass, and is a portrait of her mother, though frequently mistaken for the Virgin Mary.

Originally the organ would have been pumped by hand as the electric lighting and heating was not approved until 1965. "Budd" Foreman used to pump the organ for Miss Neale.

- **The Altar**

At the East end of the church is a simple wooden table, usually covered in a fair linen altar cloth and one of three embroidered frontals. These frontals reflect the church seasons. The white frontal is used during celebrations such as Christmas, Easter, Whitsun and Saints days. The purple frontal is used during the penitential seasons of Advent and Lent. The green frontal is used at all other times. On this table there is a monthly celebration of Holy Communion.

Behind the altar is a fine reredos depicting the Chi Ro, and the Greek letters Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending of the Greek alphabet, which symbolises God as the beginning and the end of all things. On either side of the altar are plaques on which are inscribed the Ten Commandments, The Lord's Prayer and the Creed.

To the right of the altar a brass plaque announces:

TO THE GLORY OF GOD AND IN MEMORY OF JAMES MANN OF  
SAHAM TONEY AND WINFARTING IN THIS COUNTY; AND  
RHODA, HIS WIFE, THE REREDOS IN THIS CHNCEL WAS ERECTED  
BY THOMAS MANN OF THELVETON HALL AND HIS FAMILY, 1879

Above the altar is a stained glass window depicting the Ascension.

To the left of the altar a brass plaque announces:

"To the Glory of GOD, and in affectionate remembrance of  
Thomas Mann, the roof of this Chancel was renewed in 1887, and the  
East Window was erected 1899 in loving memory of both  
Thomas Mann and Fanny his wife, by their children."

On 3rd Feb 1953 the PCC approved candlesticks and a cross for the altar. These were made by Messrs J. Wippel of Exeter in memory of Clare, Lady Mann's mother at a cost of £2=2s=0d.

To the right of the altar, a marble slab states:

"Here Lyeth the body of Mary Inglefyld wife to Tho<sup>s</sup> Havers Esq obyt 27  
Octob. An.D. 1682 requiescat in pace, Elizabeth Englefyld her sister Dedit"

- **Chancel windows**

In the South wall to the right of the altar is a set of stained glass windows, probably made by the same artist as the East window. The windows depict Christ healing, knocking at the door, being the Good Shepherd, and blessing the children.

Below the "Healing" window a brass plaque announces:

TO THE GLORY OF GOD AND IN LOVING MEMORY OF FANNY  
PAULIN, THE SOUTH WINDOWS IN THIS CHNCEL WERE ERECTED  
BY WILLIAM THOMAS PAULIN AND HIS DAUGHTERS, 1901

Two further brass plaques on the South wall state:

IN LOVING REMEMBRANCE OF GEORGE SYMONDS FOR 11 YEARS  
A RESIDENT IN THIS PARISH BORN MARCH 13<sup>TH</sup> 1846. DIED MAY  
11<sup>TH</sup> 1909

and

IN LOVING REMEMBRANCE OF LUCY BELOVED WIFE OF GEORGE SYMONDS FOR 57 YEARS RESIDENT IN THIS PARISH BORN MARCH 8<sup>TH</sup> 1846, DIED MAY 2<sup>ND</sup> 1925

- **Marble Memorial**

The most impressive memorial is that to Thomas Mann Esq. which is on the South wall of the chancel. Carved in marble, it features a detailed face, though we have no way of knowing if this is a true portrait of the man himself.

In his remodelling of the village he provided a village school, which was in use into the 1950s. However it was eventually turned into a private house and the children transferred to the nearby Dickleburgh School. For some time towards the end of the twentieth century it was lived in by the artist Jean Alexander, who was the sister of Clare, Lady Mann, wife of the second baronet.

Jean Alexander was one of the leading lights of the Thelveton Institute, and taught in the Sunday school towards the end of her life.



- **The South window**

The roundels in the south window look like medieval glass, and may have been fragments salvaged from London churches after the second world war. In that same window is a piece of painted modern glass donated to the church by Corinne Moore, now living at Calver's Farm.

# 4. A Brief History of Thelveton Church

William Patrick John Fair was rector from 1956. During his time here he researched and compiled a list of the Rectors of Thelveton Church, and wrote a brief history of the parish.

The first incumbent was William de Lageford, who was only in minor orders. He was an acolyte, which is next below a sub deacon. He was at Thelveton from 1308 to 1311. He was followed by Francis de Causton, Roger de Soterle (1322), John, son of Walter Jowet of Wynneferthyng (1327), Richard of Ely (1332), and John, son of Thomas Durand (1351). John Jowet, Richard, and John Durand each resigned the living, though in the case of John Durand it is not clear how long he remained in Thelveton. No other rector is recorded until 1409, so he may have remained all that time. If so he would have been the incumbent during the time of the building of the present church.

Walter Arnald of Palgrave became rector in 1409, followed by John Halston of Salisbury Diocese (1425), Thomas Drawesword (1442), and John Hauteyn (1466).

The person presented by the patron to follow John Hauteyn was found to be unfit, so John Penman was presented by the Bishop in 1483. The prior again presented the next rector, John Watts in 1528, but by 1583 Daniel Bowen was presented by the Crown.

Roger Bugge had the living in 1591, and it was in his time that the nearby Thelveton Hall was built by Thomas Havers of Winfarthing. Several members of the Havers family are buried in the chancel.

William Bagley BA followed in 1612. Charles 1 came to the throne in 1625. His coat of arms hangs above the south door. By the time of Edward Cartwright MA (1631) the living was united with Billingford, though that union was later broken.

In 1679 Thomas Wales was presented to the Living, and it was joined with the Living of Frenze. This union is still strong. The small church of Frenze is in a farmyard. It is now redundant and in the care of the Churches Conservation Trust. More details can be found on the Frenze website

In the eighteenth century the rectors were Henry Swetman (1702), Edward Bosworth (1711), John Randall senior (1714), John Randall junior (1728), Thomas Turner MA (1729), Barry Dobson (1750), and Nathaniel Scott, who was also rector of Thorpe Abbots (1774). In Barry Dobson's time the steeple fell down in March 1757, and the two bells which it contained were damaged. They were sold and the proceeds used to erect a small bell-cote and to purchase a small chiming bell. The faculty for this work is dated 1761. One of the original bells was eventually donated to the church of St Paul's Fish Creek in Calgary, Canada where it is still used. It is thought to date from the reign of Henry VIII. It is not known what became of the other bell. The bell which currently hangs in the bell-cote is not the original chiming bell, but a 19th century replacement.

Moses Manners (1813) was the first rector presented in the nineteenth century, followed by William Holmes MA (1842), Robert Anwyl Prichard SCL (1863), and Marcus Ernest W. Johnson TAKCL (1886). By the time of Robert Prichard the building had fallen into disrepair. By this time the Mann family had bought Thelveton

Hall, and the building was partly restored by Thomas Mann Esq. In 1872 the chancel was further renovated by the Mann family in memory of Rev'd R A Prichard.

In 1879 Thomas Mann erected a reredos of alabaster, marble, and mosaics to the memory of James Mann of Saham Toney and Winfarthing, and his wife. The reredos consists of three mosaic panels representing Alpha, Omega (*the beginning and the end – Revelation 1 v 8*), and Chi-Ro (*the first letters of the Greek CHRISTOS*).

The East window, which depicts the Ascension, was presented in 1899 in memory of Thomas Mann and his wife, Fanny, by their children. The organ was erected in 1900 in a chamber especially built for it by Sir Edward Mann Bt.

20th century incumbents were Ralph Arthur Unthank MA (1924), Arthur William Holton (1953), William Patrick Fair (1956), Joseph W. Edmonds (1966), Simon John Overington Spikin (1981), Benjamin John Sasada MA (1996), and Janice Beasant Scott (1999).

In 1953 the West window was erected and the west end of the church was repaired by the Mann family in memory of Edward Mann Bt, and his wife, Anna Jane. Some time in the 1970s the pews and pulpit were removed and replaced by oak chairs, pulpit and priest's stall. The faculty to replace the pews is dated 11th March 1970. The chairs are dedicated to parishioners, past and present.

William Fair and Joe Edmonds were rectors of Dickleburgh and Priest-in-charge of Thelveton with Frenze. The two parishes were united into a single benefice during the time of Joe Edmonds. During the incumbency of Janice Scott, Thelveton became part of a benefice of six parishes: Dickleburgh with Langmere and Shimpling, Pulham Market, Pulham St Mary, Rushall, Starston, and Thelveton with Frenze. In 2008 Janice Scott was made honorary canon of Norwich Cathedral.

In 2010, James Roskelly was appointed to the living, and so Thelveton Church enters its 8<sup>th</sup> century of witness to the Christian Faith.

# 5. Frenze

Frenze is a tiny hamlet in the ecclesiastical parish of Thelveton with Frenze. The road from Thelveton winds through a complex of quiet lanes, but the original route to Frenze was much more direct, via a footpath and cart track which are now part of the Boudicca Way.

The Church, which is now in the care of the Churches Conservation Trust, is a small barn-like structure set in a farmyard. The first record of a church here is in the 13<sup>th</sup> century. The 14<sup>th</sup> century nave is built of rubble and flint. The 16<sup>th</sup> century porch is of brick. Inside is a gem, with rare brasses and old English oak furniture. The brasses commemorate members of the Blennerhasset family, who were connected with the parish until 1636. The Fine pulpit and Squire's pew were made about that time, but we don't know if they were provided by the Blennerhassets, or by Richard Nixon who followed them as owner of the estate. The Nixon connection seems more likely.



The original chancel was pulled down in 1827 as it was in disrepair. In Victorian times the estate was owned by the Betts family, who made their money from the brickworks which stood the other side of the stream. Betts bricks can still be seen in some buildings and walls in Diss. The Obelisk style tombstone to the west of the church records the many sad deaths of that family. When the Betts family died out the estate was bought by Thomas Gaze who founded Gaze's Auctions and the Estate Agent in Diss. At the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century it was farmed by the Alston Family, who looked after the church when it became redundant and began the tradition of a regular summer service and picnic. Both Gaze and Alston tombstones can be seen in the churchyard. The farmland is now owned by the Thelveton Estate.

Frenze has never been a large settlement, though in 1736 it was reported to have six houses, and a total of sixty residents.

On the other side of the track from the church stands a residence which is known as Frenze Hall. The original hall stood across the river south of the present railway station. It was pulled down at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The present building began life as the Home Farm.

The derelict barns which stand nearby were originally the packing sheds for an extensive market gardening business. During the nineteenth century the whole area was given over to growing vegetables for the London markets. Produce was harvested in the fields, and a network of narrow gauge railways brought the produce to the sheds where it was packed and placed on another train to be taken to Diss Railway Station where it was loaded onto wagons bound for London. Once emptied of their vegetables the wagons were brought back full of horse manure which was laid on the fields to encourage the new crop.

Signs of the railway network litter the countryside around Frenze.

The Diss Business centre was once the engine sheds, though during the Great War it was used to billet horses. The names of some of these horses can still be seen inside.

The ford at Frenze was, until the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the main route in to Diss from Scole, Brockdish and Thelveton. When the main line railway arrived the Victoria Road was built on the marshy ground down in the valley, and this is now the main easterly route in to Diss via Scole. The old route is part of the Boudicca Way, and a new footbridge makes it easier to cross the river.

The Old Rectory is a pretty cottage on a tight bend on the road to Thelveton. It is now a private residence as the hamlet of Frenze is part of the parish of Thelveton within the benefice of Dickleburgh and The Pulhams.

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