# Wheathampstead History Society

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## News and events

- **Our next meeting** is on **19 April** when Mike Smith will present ***Wheathampstead in 12 photos*** and lead a discussion about how it may be possible to date old photos from the buildings, the scenes and the people in them.
- **HALH's Spring Meeting** is on Saturday 13 May in Barley. The keynote talk is ***Commons and Common Rights***. Their **Annual Symposium** with the theme ***Rebels, Traitors and Eccentrics*** is on Saturday 14 October at Katharine Warington School. www.halh.org.uk

## The Thrale family




These initials and the date (1893), which can be seen on the east-facing wall of the mill, are those of Norman Thrale (1832-1900). They are mentioned in '*A Newer Thraliana: A Chronicle of the Thrale Family of Hertfordshire*' by Richard Thrale (2005).* Norman's great-great-nephew Bill Thrale was born in 1898, lived in Necton Road all his life, and died in 1980.

The Chronicle shows that the earliest record of the Thrales is in the 1309 Subsidy Rolls of Bedfordshire and that "for centuries the family centred itself on the hamlet of Thrales End" (a turning off the A1081 just north of Harpenden).

From the 16th to the 19th century, members of the family owned or rented farms in and around Sandridge, including Astwick Manor, Nomansland Farm, Batchwood, Hammonds, Fairfolds, Marshalswick, Pound, Childwickbury and Sandridgebury.

The link with Wheathampstead begins with Ralph Thrale (1766-1830), a colourful figure known in the family as a "spendthrift sportsman". In 1792, he was accused of being a highwayman but his accuser later dropped the charge via an announcement in the press which described him as "of Wheathampstead Mill". His son Thomas was also a miller but died young and, in 1841 we find Ralph's widow Abigail living in Wheathampstead with two of her three grandsons, William (12) and Norman (10). A third grandson, Thomas, appears in the 1851 census as a baker and beerseller at The Boot in the High Street.

In 1864, Norman married Caroline Welch from a family of millers at Codicote, Kimpton, Lemsford and Hertford. Her grandfather had married Mary Titmuss and her uncle George Titmuss acquired Wheathampstead Bridge Mill in 1882.

Norman and Caroline's grandson William married Sophie McCulloch and the Chronicle states that "it is from this union that all the present members of the Thrale family who live in Wheathampstead and Luton are descended".

Norman was at Hertford Mill when it burned down and he moved his family back to Wheathampstead where he worked as a stonemason at Bridge Mill. He is buried at St Helen's. According to the Chronicle, "one generation later, there were over twenty Thrales living in the village, all the various cousins well and truly intermingling".

Norman's son (Ernest) Norman moved to St Albans where his wife Hannah founded a confectionery business which developed into a successful bakery and restaurant business, including the Waterend Barn which was moved from Waterend in 1939. Richard Thrale was his grandson.

The story of Bill Thrale's long walk at the end of the Great War is told in "*Wheathampstead and the Great War*". See page 10 in https://tinyurl.com/3psnz979

*A copy has been generously donated to the Society by Mrs Odile Thrale, widow of the author.