

The Landscape History of Wickhambrook

We had a beautiful evening for our walk around the Thorns area of the village with Michelle Bullivant, a landscape archaeologist. Starting at the WI Hall, we walked across the recreation ground and along the bank to the school, past the Methodist Chapel and back to the hall but in that short journey we learned so much.

None of us had ever noticed the graffiti on the school wall, at child height, near the back entrance, some of which must date back more than a hundred years. This could be a lovely project, to match initials to individual children from the school roll.



The Harp field, opposite Thorns and towards Attleton Green was pointed out as a typical Green from medieval times when cottages faced a triangular field so animals could be watched and kept safe.

The dark bricks in a star shape on Mill Cottage, next to the shop, are a sign of wealth, rather than a religious symbol. Millers were prosperous people!

There is a plaque on the wall of the chapel, near the back door, almost illegible, but we could make out the word 'Circuit'. Something else to research!



Back in the hall, Michelle showed us more intriguing facts through maps, aerial photographs and newspaper cuttings.

At one time, the church of All Saints would have been the centre of the village and there are records of shops, pub, blacksmith etc at what would have been an important crossroads at the former Plumbers Arms. There was probably a watermill on the Denston side of the road.

Aerial photographs of Ashfield Green show ancient crop marks and other signs of Roman habitation. The shape of the green suggests it might have been a market.

Thorns, Upper and Lower on old maps, could possibly have been named after William Thorne, whose name is on the Parish Register and who was born in 1614.

There was so much to learn from Michelle, an enthusiastic and engaging speaker. We hope she will return to tell us more about our interesting village.