

A brief history of Garveston, Thuxton & Reymerston



Late Neolithic & Bronze Age 2800 BC-700 BC

In the Bronze age people in this area cleared forests for fuel & farming, mined flint, kept animals, grew crops (spelt wheat, barley, flax, horse-beans, linseed) made pottery & metalwork & built henges (Arminghall is the nearest known).

There is some evidence of early settlements in Garveston, Thuxton & Reymerston, where flints, axe-heads, axe-hammers, polstave, ring-ditches & barrows have been found. Nearby there is evidence of other early settlements in Grimes Graves & but also unexcavated sites at Great Melton, Ringland & Carleton Forehoe.

Iron Age 700 BC - 50 AD

Iron Age pottery has been found in Garveston, Thuxton & Reymerston, providing more evidence of early settlement in our villages. Wymondham & Caistor St Edmund had large settlements, known as Oppida. At this time local people still made their own pottery but there has also been finds of pottery imported from Europe. The first coins began to be used in the area from about 100BC.

The iron-age tribe in Norfolk & North Suffolk was the Iceni which had different coinage & decorations to the other main tribes in East Anglia. About this time enclosed forts appear on the Norfolk landscape. Throughout Norfolk there has been many finds of iron age jewellery, weapons & coins, such as the the Snettisham Hoard, now in the British museum, but also findings at Whinburgh in 2011 and Thuxton in the 1960s.

Roman Period 43 BC - 410 AD

After the first Roman invasion of Britain under Julius Caesar, Roman influence increased throughout the land, with Britons trading with Romans in slaves, wine & grain. In 43AD, the Romans conquered the Britons in the South East of England and gradually increased their territory and by 48AD the Romans occupied the southern half of Britain, including East Anglia.

The Iceni tribe collaborated with the Romans and managed to hold on to most of their land, until the death of their King, in 61AD, when the Romans extended their authority into Norfolk & North Suffolk. The King's wife Boudicca successfully rebelled against the Roman takeover and her armies captured the big Roman centres at London, Colchester & St.Albans before being crushed by Roman Army reinforcements. Boudicca died shortly afterwards and in the following years East Anglia suffered oppression under the Romans, worsened by famine. The Romans strengthened Caister St Edmund (Venta Icenorum) to prevent further rebellion and it became the most important Roman centre in northern East Anglia.

There is evidence of Roman settlement in Garveston, Thuxton & Reymerston, where Roman coins, pottery, brooches & part of a quern have been found. During the Roman occupation people began to speak Latin as well as their native Celtic. Locally other fortified villages (burgh's) may have been taken over by the Romans as forts (Whinburgh & Southburgh). A Roman villa was discovered at Wood Rising some years ago & Roman artefacts have been discovered at Whinburgh & Cranworth.

The population increased across Britain to 4 million with the influx of Roman soldiers & their families, and the demand for more food was met through the Romans driving improvements in food production with more efficient farming, increasing crops, introducing grain stores & sheep to add to the cattle, creating mills driven by water or donkeys and making better roads to improve transport. The two nearest confirmed Roman roads are in nearby Shipdham.

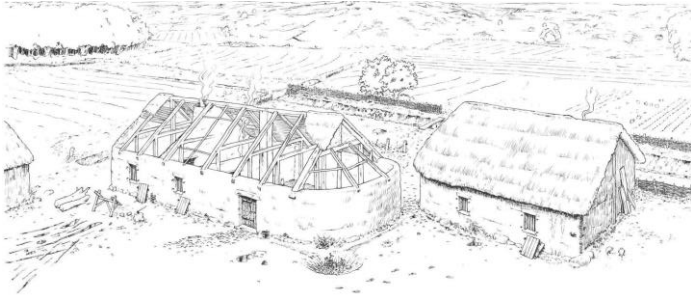
The Romans faced opposition in the north of Britannia and in 155AD Emperor Hadrian built a wall to keep out the northern peoples (the Picts), but by 250AD, attacks were increasing from the North but also from across the North Sea with invasions by Saxons, Angles & Jutes from Germany & Scandinavia.

In 306AD Constantine became Emperor of Rome and in 314AD stopped persecution of Christians. Christianity quickly spread across Europe and Britannia through Celtic missionaries from Scotland, down to England, Wales & across to Ireland, though it remained a minority faith.

The attacks from Germany & Scandinavia continued, and as the Romans began to lose their world Empire, they ceased to protect their territory in Britannia as they moved to defend Rome. The Angle & Saxon raiders gained ground in East Anglia, gradually staying & settling. The Romans finally left Britannia in 450AD.

The Angles & the Saxons 410 AD - 867 AD

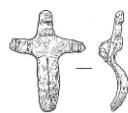
The kingdom of the East Angles was formed in 571AD after the joining together of the North & South folk, uniting with the Saxons under King Wuffa. Old English became the usual language for local people. In 1946 a deserted village was discovered near Thuxton after aerial photographs. It was found to be Turstantuna, a small village higher up the road from the present day Thuxton. Excavations in the 1960s revealed many Anglo-Saxon artefacts, jewellery & pottery as well as houses lining a long street.



Evidence of early Anglo-Saxon settlement has also been found at Garvestone & Reymerton. The names of the villages end in *-ton*, '*tun*' is an Anglo-Saxon word meaning village or settlement.

In 597AD, Augustine arrived in Kent to bring Christianity to the people of the land and King Æthelberht of Kent became the first Anglo-Saxon King to become a Christian. He gave Augustine land at Canterbury to build a church, near the site of the present Cathedral. In East Anglia, King Sigebehrt became a Christian, the first Christian King of the Angles, &

founded large churches at Dunwich & North Elmham. Christianity spread across the country, with churches built in many settlements. St Paul's church in Thuxton has Saxon origin and one of the items found in Turstantuna was a cruciform brooch, evidence of Christianity in the area going back over a thousand years.



Danes (Vikings) 793 AD - 1066 AD

In 793AD, warriors from Scandinavia began raids across the country, destroying many of the churches and monasteries. The Vikings set up a winter base in Thetford and in 867AD at a battle in Hoxne, killed King Edmund of the Angles. In 886AD, King Alfred, the Anglo-Saxon King in the West, agreed to give the Vikings the East of England, to stop further attacks on his territory. The Viking King was Guthrum, also called Athelsan, and he also became a Christian towards the end of his life.

In 918AD the Vikings were defeated by King Edward of Mercia & East Anglia was united with Wessex, in the first stage of joining the country together as Engle-land. Over time, the Vikings made peace and were integrated into the villages, inter-marrying and working together with the Anglo-Saxons, though many peasants were slaves to their lords. Most descendants of the people from East Anglia have Viking ancestry. The local village names are a mix of the Anglo-Saxon *-ton* and possibly a Viking Lord's name: Gaerwulf's *-ton*, Thure's *-ton*, Raimer's *-ton*. Over time, these names were shortened into the names used today. The earliest settlement in Garveston seem to have been in Tanner's Green.

Norman Britain & the Middle Ages 1066 AD - 1485 AD

William the conqueror became King of England in 1066 after his victory at Hastings and moved quickly to establish his authority. As the victor, he divided up the land to reward many of the Norman Barons who supported him in the invasion. William ordered a survey of his realm, recorded in the Domesday Book in 1086. This recorded the owners of estates and land value to raise tax. It also counted the population, the livestock and property. The entries for our villages are:

Garveston, Gerolfestuna

Total population: 27 households (quite large).

Total tax assessed: 2.5 geld units (quite small).

Taxable units: Taxable value 5.0 geld units. 16.5 villtax.

Value: Value to lord in 1066 £7. Value to lord in 1086 £9.8.

14 villagers. 13 smallholders. 8 slaves. 19 free men.

Ploughland: 4 lord's plough teams. 8 men's plough teams.

Meadow 29 acres. Woodland 110 pigs. 2 mills.

2 churches. 0.1 church lands.

Livestock in 1066: 2 cobs. 11 cattle. 60 goats.

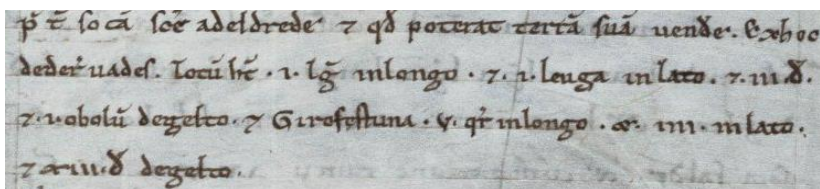
Livestock in 1086: 3 cobs. 11 cattle. 47 pigs. 142 sheep.

Lords in 1066: Thorkil, 19 freemen

Overlord in 1066: Ely (St Etheldreda) Abbey

Lords in 1086: Bordin of Thorpland, Hermer de Ferrers

Tenant-in-chief in 1086: Hermer de Ferrers



Calvely (village south west of Reymerston, now lost)

Total population: 20 households (medium).

Total tax assessed: 1.2 geld units (quite small)

Taxable units: Taxable value 1.2 geld units. 5.0 villtax.

Value: Value to lord in 1086 £1.

Households: 4 villagers. 11 smallholders. 5 freemen.

Ploughland: 1 lord's plough teams.

1 lord's plough teams possible. 0.5 men's plough teams.

Other resources: Meadow 20 acres. Woodland 20 pigs.

Livestock in 1086: 1 cobs. 4 cattle. 5 pigs.

Lord in 1066: Ely (St Etheldreda) Abbey

Lord in 1086: Berner the Bowman

Tenant-in-chief in 1086: Ely (St Etheldreda) Abbey

Reymerston or Raimerstuna

Total population: 5 households (very small).

Total tax assessed: 0.3 geld units (very small).

Taxable units: Taxable value 0.3 geld units.

Value: Value to lord in 1066 £0.5. Value to lord in 1086 £0.3.

Households: 5 free men.

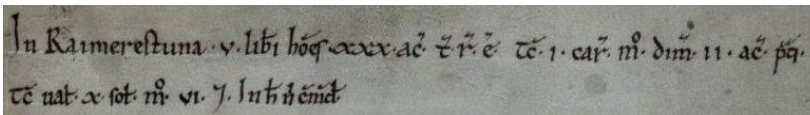
Ploughland: 0.5 men's plough teams.

Other resources: Meadow 2 acres.

Lord in 1066: Free men, five

Lord in 1086: Hermer de Ferrers

Tenant-in-chief in 1086: Hermer de Ferrers



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Thuxton Thursetuna

Total population: 25.8 households (quite large).

Total tax assessed: 2.1 geld units (quite small).

Head of manor: Swathing.

Taxable units: Taxable value 3 geld units. 12.0 villtax.

Value: Value to lord in 1066 £5. Value to lord in 1086 £6.7.

Households: 9 villagers. 11 smallholders. 4 slaves. 13 freemen.

Ploughland: 0.5 lord's plough teams.

1.5 lord's plough teams possible.

4 men's plough teams.

Other resources: Meadow 5 acres. Woodland 40 pigs. 2 mills.

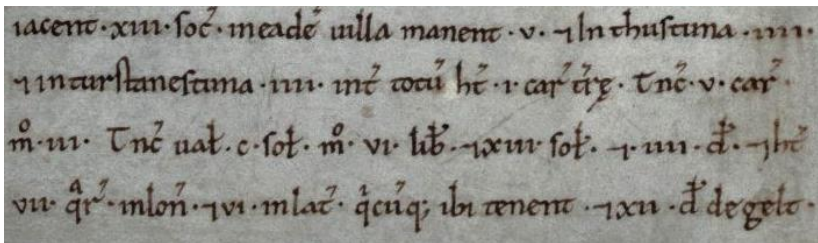
Livestock in 1066: 30 pigs.

Livestock in 1086: 30 pigs. 30 sheep. 6 goats.

Lord in 1066: Hagni the reeve

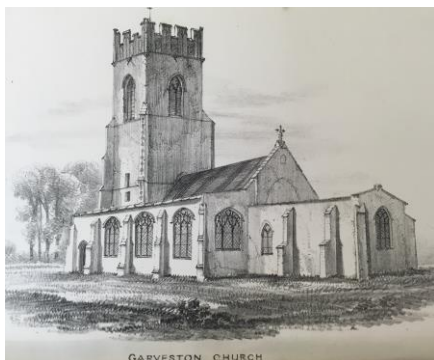
Lord in 1086: King William

Tenant-in-chief in 1086: King William



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The Normans began a huge building programme of castles and churches, with many existing churches demolished and rebuilt in the Norman style. Our churches remain the oldest buildings in each of our villages.



Domesday records a church in Garveston, but St Margaret's Church is of Norman origin, suggesting the existing church was replaced. The Norman Church we see today was completed in the 12th century.

In Reymerston, no church is recorded in Domesday, but St Peter's existed by 1200, when a Rector was appointed by the Abbey in Ely.





St Paul's Thuxton seems to be the oldest of the three churches, with evidence of Saxon origin, rebuilt by the Normans in the 12th century. More medieval churches were built in Norfolk than in any other county in England. Norfolk grew in prosperity under the Normans with Norwich at the centre and by the time of the Middle Ages was the most densely populated and agriculturally productive part of the country, with a strong wool trade. Woodlands were cleared and arable crops grown, mainly barley (to make beer), rye, oats and peas. People operated an open field system in villages, where peasants cultivated strips of land.

The 14th century was a bad time for Norfolk, with poor weather leading to many bad harvests and food shortages, and the Black Death plague in 1349, 1361, 1369 and 1379 where an estimated 30% to 60% of the population died. Farms and open fields were badly affected as families and workers died, leaving fewer people to carry on the work. In villages like ours, whole communities were devastated and villages reduced in size. Some landowners enclosed abandoned farms to increase grazing for flocks, causing further hardship for local people.

Tudors 1485AD - 1603AD

The age of the Reformation brought about change in the church, introducing Protestantism and creating the Church of England instead of the Church of Rome. The Bible was allowed to be read to everyone in English instead of Latin, the Book of Common Prayer was introduced and churches were required to register all births, deaths and marriages from 1538 and keep copies of the registers for inspection. Most of these survive to this day and are stored in Norfolk Record Office. Thuxton church has the oldest records of the three parishes, with records from 1538.

For local people times were hard in the 1540s, with food prices increasing. This was made worse by poor harvests and together with enclosures of land led to local rebellion, led by Robert Kett in the Norfolk Kett's Rebellion of 1549. In the 1560s poor harvests continued and about 6% of the population died in an outbreak of influenza. Under the reign of Elizabeth I, improvements were made to the justice and local government systems, and parishes became responsible for managing poor relief and the upkeep of bridges and roads. Prices of food continued to rise with the growing population, but harvests did not improve and local people became poorer. The Poor Law was introduced in 1601 to manage the high number of vagrants appearing in towns and villages

About this time, one Edward Wright was born in Garveston and grew up to be a skilled mathematician, helping to revolutionise the science of navigation in his published book of 1599.

Civil War, Revolution & Restoration 1603AD - 1714AD

In 1611 the English Bible was published as the King James Bible, to help everyone use the same version. It has become the most famous translation of the scriptures and was intended to be the one used in all services. Copies of this Bible exist in all our churches. Each church was expected to display the Royal Arms of the Monarch of the time, so that people would know who the Head of the Church was. Thuxton still displays its Royal Arms, but stopped updating it at the time of Charles I in 1637! The Stuart kings clashed with Parliament and there was a Civil War which led to the defeat of the King Charles I, who was beheaded in 1649, and the Puritan era began.

It was a dangerous time for ministers of the Church of England. A brave Garveston rector Samuel Willan lamented the death of the King on a page in the parish register in 1649. The Puritan officials sacked him and replaced him with a Puritan preacher Robert Purt and the church, not favoured by Puritans, was neglected and the chancel fell into disuse. After the monarchy was restored in 1662, Samuel returned to the church and made another entry in the register declaring Charles II King. In 1685 a local widow Barbara Locke left money in her will to restore the ruined church & also to give money to the poor in perpetuity. This 'Poor Fund', together with other funds donated since, still exists and is managed today. As England prospered after the restoration of the monarchy, great advances were made in agriculture, exploration, science, mathematics, architecture & music.

Pre-Victorian & Victorian 1714AD - 1901AD

John Wesley was a gifted Christian preacher who founded Methodism. He travelled across the country preaching the gospel and saw many come to Christ, reviving the Church and changing the direction of the nation away from the revolutions engulfing Europe. His work is evident in the many Methodist Chapels across the county. Methodists were part of the emerging group of Christians leading in social reform such as the abolition of slavery. In 1831 the first Methodist preacher, Rev Robert Key, came to Garveston and found the inhabitants 'in the deepest, grossest ignorance.....and the devil had all his own way'. His first convert was a farm labourer, Henry Fellow and others soon followed. The Methodist congregation first met in a shed in Garveston until moving to the present Chapel in 1864.

In Reymerston, settlement had been around the common land of Church Green & North Green. Both of these went into private ownership under the Enclosure Act of 1796, as did a large amount of heath towards Shipdham. Open field strip farming vanished as arable farming increased. Enclosure led to growth in the village population as the intense arable farming needed more labour, rising from 200 in 1801 to 340 in 1851. The village had 16 farmers, two pubs, a butcher, a bricklayer, two blacksmiths, two carpenters and a schoolmistress.

In Garveston the parish had 400 inhabitants by the mid-1800s with a grocer, draper, shoemaker, blacksmith, miller, tailor, wheelwright and four pubs.

The standard of living for the agricultural labourer and their families in the villages was poor, as everything depended on the success or failure of the harvests. When the harvests failed people went hungry. After workhouses were introduced in 1834, the nearest was Gressenhall, but people did everything they could to avoid this. The average weekly wage for farm



workers in Norfolk was one of the lowest in the country during the 1800s, at about 10-12 shillings a week (about 50p to 60p) for a man, and less for women and children. Work was not guaranteed and depended on the weather. Most men had an average of 40 weeks work a year and some families had to rely on Parish Relief to help them through the winter. Rent, fuel and candles took up about 20% of income and the rest was spent on food. Things got worse with the agricultural depression from 1870 to the end of the century, as imports of food lowered prices and wages, so many left the land to work in the towns as wages were higher.

CRICKET.

REYMERSTONE v. SHIPDHAM.—A match was played on the Heymerstone Cricket Ground on Tuesday, the 6th ult., between eleven of the Reymerstone Club and eleven of the Shipdham. The morning being wet, the game could not be played out, and ended in a draw.

REYMERSTONE.

Johnson, l b w, b Stubbings	...	...	...	10
Vincent, b Gayton	...	...	...	0
Large, b E. Abbott	...	...	...	16
Norton, b Tash	...	...	...	20
A. Wright, c Hodge, b Tash	...	...	...	8
Taylor, b Tash	...	...	...	0
Newson, run out	...	...	...	19
Ris, b Tash	...	...	...	2
R. Wright, b Stubbings	...	...	...	2
Hight, c Cross, b Stubbings	...	...	...	6
Murrell, not out	...	...	...	0
Byes, &c.	...	...	...	11
Total	...	...	...	103

SHIPDHAM.

G. Watling, c A. Wright, b Taylor	...	...	...	23
Hodge, c Taylor, b A. Wright	...	...	...	1
E. Abbott, c Large, b Johnson	...	...	...	10
J. Tash, c Johnson, b A. Wright	...	...	...	19
Gayton, not out	...	...	...	3
Stubbings, b Taylor	...	...	...	1
Watson	...	...	...	0
Abbot, jun.	...	...	...	0
Cross	...	...	...	0
Watling, sen.	...	...	...	0
Tash	...	...	...	0
Byes, &c.	...	...	...	15
Total	...	...	...	52

REYMERSTONE v. SCOULTON.—On Monday, the 12th inst, a match was played on the Heymerstone Ground between eleven of the Heymerstone and eleven of the Scoulton Club, which resulted in an easy victory for the former club.

REYMERSTONE.

E. Abbott, l b w, b Gayton	...	...	...	3
G. Watling, run out	...	...	...	21
Large, b Johnson	...	...	...	2
Turner, b Johnson	...	...	...	4
A. Wright, b Gayton	...	...	...	6
Tash, c Johnson, b Gayton	...	...	...	16
Clarke, c Sayer, b Johnson	...	...	...	2
Hight, c J. Norton, b Gayton	...	...	...	1
Hodge, l b w, b Johnson	...	...	...	1
Lee, not out	...	...	...	3
Hinder, b Gayton	...	...	...	3
Byes, &c.	...	...	...	14
Total	...	...	...	61

SCOULTON.

Partridge, b A. Wright	...	...	...	8
Newson, b A. Wright	...	...	...	2
T. Cocking, b A. Wright	...	...	...	5
Johnson, b Tash	...	...	...	0
Gayton, c Tash, b A. Wright	...	...	...	3
A. Norton, b Tash	...	...	...	0
Borcham, l b w, b A. Wright	...	...	...	2
T. Cocking, jun., not out	...	...	...	5
Sayer, c and b A. Wright	...	...	...	0
Carter, b Tash	...	...	...	7
J. Norton, b Tash	...	...	...	4
Byes, &c.	...	...	...	7
Total	...	...	...	46

There was a gradual decline in population, with younger people moving away to cities and towns, helped by the arrival of the railway, to find better paid work. In the forty years between 1861 and 1911, our villages lost about 30% of their population with Thuxton the worst affected. Reymerston still found enough men to man a successful cricket team though in 1864!



The Dereham-Wymondham Railway opened to passengers in 1848, with stops at Yaxham, Thuxton, Hardingham & Kimberley Park. For the first time people from the villages could travel to the biggest towns and cities more easily, though a ticket to London cost 14s, more than a weeks' wages for a farm worker. The Railway was well used, especially during the wars, but it closed in 1969 as part of national changes. It was reborn as the Mid Norfolk Railway, which continues today



A school education was not available for most people, but free church schools were opened in the mid-1800s. In 1848 the Rev Valpy founded a school in Town Lane for the children of Garveston & Thuxton, and this was much improved with the building of a National Board school in 1878 with Miss Cheyne as the first Schoolmistress.

Garvestone & Thuxton U.D. School Board.

WANTED, by the beginning of October, a **CERTIFICATED MISTRESS** for the new Mixed School at Garvestone, built to accommodate 75 children. Good house provided.

Applications, stating salary required and enclosing testimonials, to be forwarded on or before the 19th of September, addressed,

RICHARD GRIGSON,

Clerk to the Board.

Upper King Street, Norwich.

In Reymerston the Rev Gurdon also built a school for the village children in 1844. In 1880 school attendance became compulsory for children aged five to ten & school fees had to be paid. Many children had to work outside school hours to supplement family income & could not be spared. In 1891 fees were stopped and the age for compulsory education was increased to 11 in 1893 and then 12 in 1899.



The Reymerston school closed in 1933 and the children from Reymerston travelled to Garveston school for their education.

The Twentieth Century 1901AD - 2000AD

The two World Wars led to many men leaving these villages to fight abroad. Some never returned. After the Wars the villagers raised money to put up memorials in their honour

and every year on Remembrance Day, services are held to remember them.

Roll of Honour Garvestone, Thuxton & Reymerston WW I & II

**Algernon Easlea
Percy Howard
Sidney Jowlings
Harry Newson
Willie Read
George Stocking
Jesse Ward
Colin Whitehand
Robert Frost
Ernest Greenwood
James Mann
George Richardson
George Softley
Herbert Brown
Sydney Gray
John Greenwood
Isaac Hawes
Albert Long
Percy Norton
Reginald Norton
Albert Saunders
Arthur Saunders
Ernest Smith
Frederick Claxton
Geoffrey Jubby**

The Garveston Twelve

On June 4th 1944, two days before D-Day, a young Garveston boy witnessed a US Bomber crash in a field in Garveston shortly after take-off, killing all crew and two of the fireman from Shipdham airfield who came to help. Fifty eight years later that young boy, now a respected member of the Parish Council, led a village project to commemorate those US servicemen, before it was lost from living memory, and the Garveston 12 Memorial was created and remains in the village today, in a field near the new Village Hall.

Village Communities

Communities were close with social activities to lighten the daily work, such as village trips to the seaside, village fetes & dances, WI, Sunday school and clubs like Seascouts & Guides. The villages had their own shops & pubs until the late 20th century, when one by one they closed.



The shops were run by the same families over several generations. Two sisters Marion Shirras & Kathleen Kiddle managed the Reymerston & Garveston shops for more than 110 years between them and were each awarded MBEs for services to the communities.



In Thuxton a village shop was opened next to the Railway station, in one of a row of cottages once part of Wace's Manor, run by Mrs Softley until the 1970s. Thuxton also had a shoemaker who doubled as the Signyman and a dressmaker Mrs Bird. Farmers used the train from Thuxton to transport their animals and produce, especially turkeys, for which the village is renowned. Thuxton is the home of the famous Norfolk Black Turkey, a rare breed revived after the Great War by the Peele family of Rookery Farm.

Throughout the centuries, the bells in our churches have rung out in service, in times of peril and in celebration and bell-

ringing continues today with a group of dedicated, talented ringers working together across the Churches. They will ring out a peal over the villages to celebrate the centenary of the end of the First World War in November 2018.

This brief history is incomplete as so much remains to be recorded by the people from our villages as our history continues to be made. We thank God for our villages, for the people who went before us to build them, and for the people here now, the new history makers.

THIS SHORT HISTORY WAS COMPILED FROM A NUMBER OF SOURCES. IF ANY INACCURACIES ARE FOUND, OR YOU CAN ADD TO IT, PLEASE GET IN TOUCH. THANKS ARE DUE TO ALL WHO HAVE HELPED & CONTRIBUTED, KNOWN & UNKNOWN, BUT ESPECIALLY:

JUDITH DOBSON

ANDREW DURRANT

TOM GARLAND (NORFOLK FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY)

MIKE & CAROL GARROD & FAMILY

PATRICIA GRAHAM

ANNE PERFECT & THE PERFECT FAMILY

ANGELA SHIRRAS

ALAN & LINDA STEPHENSON

BARRY & ANNE TAYLOR

KEITH & GILL TINSEY & THE REYMERSTON RINGERS

ROGER & JULIE WALPOLE

GARVESTONE SCHOOL

GARVESTONE, THUXTON & REYMERSTON PARISH COUNCIL

THE REYMERSTON VILLAGE HALL COMMITTEE

August 2017