

NOTES FROM THORNHAM

ON THE A140

☪ North of Thwaite where the hitherto flat road makes a descent, is in local parlance, “Thwaite Low House,” not so called on account of any disreputable character it may once have earned, but from its situation. The name obviously entails the existence of a “High House,” which was, like the other, a coaching and posting inn. The Last named, now a farmstead, was in those days the “Cock,” the other the “Queen’s Head.” While the “Low



“THWAITE LOW HOUSE.”

House” has fallen upon times so irremediably evil that it has been long untenanted and is now a veritable scarecrow of a house, with gaping holes in the walls and windows battened up, the “Cock,” save that its sign is gone still remains much as it was, to show a later generation what manner of place the roadside inn was in days of yore. ☪

The picture and quotation above are from *The Norwich Road*, published in 1901. Surprisingly, the story didn’t end with the building’s collapse and ruin. In 1910 it was bought by an American architect named Isaac Newton Phelps Stokes who had seen it advertised in *Country Life*. It was dismantled, packed in 688 crates and shipped from Tilbury to New York. English builders then used it to add a wing to his Tudor-style house on a hill overlooking Long Island Sound near Greenwich, Connecticut. It was renamed “High Low House”.

Isaac and his wife Edith were an interesting couple who had come to London in 1897 to have their portrait painted by John Singer Sargent. It now hangs in the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Among many other things, Isaac campaigned tirelessly for the Tenement House Act, which reformed American low-income housing. But a later obsession, compiling the six volume *Iconography of Manhattan Island*, a visual history of New York, turned tragic and along with the effect of the Crash, exhausted Isaac’s fortune, health and grip on sanity. Sadly the house was torn down after his death in 1944.

MARCH EVENTS

Friday 11th: Village Hall Quiz

Friday 18th: 7.30pm, Village Hall film, *Brooklyn*, booking essential, £5, Priscilla 01379 672903

Sunday 20th: Amici choir at Thornham Parva church, Music at Thornham, 01379 788130

Sunday 20th: Magna litter pick, Ben Hall, 01379 672949

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