

NOTES FROM THORNHAM

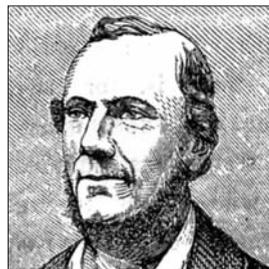
Having ourselves experienced an unusually warm July it is interesting to read about a hot July day in 1873 recorded by two eminent local Victorians. The first was John Perkins, head gardener at Thornham Hall (top picture), known for his gardening skills and for developing the Lady Henniker apple. His letter was printed in the *Ipswich Journal* of 14th July 1873:

“Sir,—As many of your readers are interested in the weather, I beg to inform you that a thermometer (Nagretti and Zambra’s) hanging on a post four feet from the ground, in the kitchen garden here, registered on Friday the 10th inst, at 2 p.m. 128 degrees of heat, being 30 degrees higher than blood heat ... I wonder what my friend Mr. Whistlecraft and other observers registered on that day, which must have been one of the hottest, if not the very hottest, on record.”



128°F equals 53°C. To show this alarming reading the thermometer was surely hanging in direct sunlight.

The Mr Whistlecraft (bottom picture), referred to in the letter, wrote weekly weather notes for the *Ipswich Journal* and his account of 10th July appeared in the same issue as the letter from Mt Perkins:



“Sultry, hazy and electric morning, with a sky finely dappled with curdled cirrocumuli clouds; clearer after 8 a.m., but still hazy more or less, and the wind veered after 9 a.m. from S.E. to S.W.; chiefly bright from 11 a.m. and the thermometer again reached 89½° as yesterday ... Some distant lightning in S.W. at 10 p.m.; close and hazy night, but continued fine.”

The exotically named Orlando Whistlecraft, the “weather prophet”, lived in Thwaite just a few miles down the Ipswich road from Thornham. He is famous as an early meteorologist, writing articles and books on the subject and was a respected and long-standing member of the network of recorders sending their observations and readings to the Met Office.

His thermometer was doubtless in a normal shaded position and we can safely trust his reading of 89½°F, 32°C rather than that of Mr Perkins.

SEPTEMBER EVENTS IN THE THORNHAMS ● **Sunday 2nd, Friday 21st, Thursday 27th and Sunday 30th:** Concerts, 01379 788130 or Music at Thornham website ● **Saturday 8th:** Village Hall jumble sale, 2-4pm ● **Friday 14th:** Village Hall Film, 7.30pm, *The Post*