

NOTES FROM THORNHAM

On Wednesday 12th December 1849 the first public trains ran between Norwich and Ipswich. At first they used Victoria Station in Norwich, but in 1851 the line to Thorpe was complete and that station with better connections to other lines has been used ever since. This is from a detailed account of the new route to Ipswich printed in the *Norwich Journal* of 10th November 1849:

“ From Mellis to Finningham the same flat country prevails on either side, and the Line is so straight that the eye can almost reach to the latter station. The engine drivers state that the signals at night between both are perfectly



Victoria Station, Norwich stood on the corner of Queen's and St Stephen's Roads until 1966. Brazen Gate Sainsbury's is built on its coal yard.

discernible. On the left lie the woods and groves of Thornham Hall, the seat of Lord Henniker, late M.P. for the eastern division of Suffolk. The Hall cannot be discerned, embedded in the fine umbrage of elm and oak. Here may be seen a lofty scaffolding of timber, raised for the purpose of constructing a tower in the grounds of Thornham. The building we understood, had been carried to the height of 60 to 70 feet a few weeks since, when it fell. ”

This is the only reference I know to a collapsing tower, presumably the water tower at the Hall.

I have been told that there was a private halt serving the Hall, but it is not mentioned in this report or in print or maps elsewhere. Apparently a flag was raised to stop the train if anyone wished to travel. The story goes that the concession was withdrawn due to the railway company's frustration at their trains being kept waiting while a boy was sent to the Hall to fetch Lord Henniker.

MAY EVENTS IN THE THORNHAMS ● **Thurs 2nd:** District election ● **Wed 8th:** Magna Village Meeting, Parish Hall, 7.30 ● **Sun 12th:** Parish Hall dog show, 2pm ● **Sun 12th:** Walled Garden blossom day, 11-3, free ● **Fri 17th:** Parish Hall Film, *Stan and Ollie*, £5, booking essential 07858 934440