

NOTES FROM THORNHAM

Before the Second World War our local water authority, Hartismere Rural District Council, had done little more than sink deep boreholes for hand pumps to serve some of the worst of the locations that had previously been supplied by contaminated and unreliable wells, ditches and ponds.

On 21st February 1945 the M.P. for Eye, Edgar Granville, spoke in the Commons, citing Mendlesham and Thorndon as particularly deprived villages.

At the next meeting of the R.D.C. the chairman Canon K.E. Shaw said he was extremely annoyed by Mr Granville's "foolish and wrong account".

Mr Granville retaliated by publishing his source, a letter from the Mendlesham W.I. I have found no response from Canon Shaw. Here are parts of that letter:



The pump outside Mendlesham Royal Oak, c1900

"There are 238 houses in Mendlesham of which 224 share the public pumps and 228 of these fetch their water more than 200 feet, some as much as a mile. ... The public supply has frequently failed during the past year ... At a function on the 17th tea had to be made with the drippings collected from the roof of the public lavatory ... Lavatory pail sewage is almost universally dug into the back yard a few inches down. We are very apprehensive an outbreak of disease as a result of having to drink this fouled and stagnant surface water ... The school and school canteen which caters for some 130 children, depends entirely on this supply ... A public piped supply actually reaches the Mendlesham boundary and arrangements were made for the piped supply to be continued throughout Mendlesham. The Area Engineer reported that it was quite easy for him to extend this system to include Mendlesham and that his existing water facilities were ample for this extension. It now appears that the expected scheme has been turned down ... We are much perturbed by the apparent indifference shown by the Authority which cancelled the scheme for the amelioration of these morbid conditions."

✳ All Notes from Thornham are now on www.thornhams.org

NOVEMBER EVENTS IN THE THORNHAMS ● Saturday 9th: Parish Hall Christmas Fayre ● Friday 15th: Friends of Thornham Magna church, talk on stained glass ● Friday 22nd: Parish Hall film, *Yesterday*, £5, please book, 07858 934440 ● Saturday 30th: Walled Garden, Christmas Market