

# *A step back in time for Thurlestone School Children*

*Written by Dian Williams*

Children from All Saints Thurlestone School took a step back in time earlier this month completing an historic trail around the village to find out about our local heritage. Children aged 5-8 years braved wet and windy conditions to follow the trail taking in points of interest such as The Thurlestone Pump House, The Cannon, The War Memorial, the Cobbled Road, the Phone Box and Water Troughs. The idea is to inspire the children to think about local history in the area; to give them some appreciation of how people used to live and to promote a sense of place and connection to the area they live in.



*Charlie aged 6 talking about The Pump House said, 'I liked the bit where we went into the water hut. They covered the well up and I liked hearing about how you had to wind up the well bucket with a handle and a rope.'*

*Jack aged 8 said: 'I like the pump. It used to be a well, then a pump, then it was in pieces, then they were rebuilt. Now it is the Pump House'*

West Buckland residents, Kay Barry and Carey Ryan-Carter compiled the trail using information from archived sources such as the late Peter Hurrell's book *Memories of a Country Boy's Life in Buckland* and Kendall McDonald's book *The Story of Thurlestone, Bantham and West Buckland*, as well as talking to local people. The children were also asked to complete a question and answer sheet to get them thinking about how the area has changed, both environmentally and socially. Along the journey they were asked to look out for the thatched roofs, the 'yoke' in the pump house, the granary above the steps outside the Village Inn, the plaque on the cannon and also some of the local names on the war memorial. These, the children were able to later identify in the graveyard, in particular 'Luscombe', 'Ellis', 'Dyer', 'Moore' and 'Edgecombe'. Two sisters pointed out that their grandparents lived in 'Edgecombe House' so clearly a prominent family.



*Daisy aged 7 said: 'I learned that there used to be a Granary at the Village Inn and the window used to be a little door. The Granary was used for storing wheat and corn to make bread. It was high up so the rats and mice and rodents couldn't eat it. I liked the history about The Cannon. I like how it said 'loads of years later a local diver found The Cannon near the Thurlestone rock'. I like how The Cannon sunk in 1772 and it was still buried in 1989 and found by a local diver. I liked the stories about it, about the smugglers and how they sometimes shone lights to put boats off course. '*



The children certainly enjoyed their morning out of the classroom and seemed most impressed with The Cannon and stories of shipwrecks and smugglers! Some of the children commented on The Cannon and that; "it's been on a massive journey, all the way across the ocean from Grenada, to the bottom of the ocean and then here to Thurlestone." One pupil offered; "it feels like we've been on a bit of an investigation." and "like we've gone back in time." Another was interested in the steps outside the Village Inn and simply liked, "the little steps and the tiny door to the granary."

*Tom aged 6 said, 'I liked the War Memorial because you can see all the people who have died. You can see how they died. They died in action. In war. I like the graveyard because you can see what you've heard about and they are under your feet.'*  
*Jack aged 8 said, 'They were local people. They risked their lives in the war. The War Memorial is to remind us about the people and not forget them.'*



The Red Phone Box prompted much discussion about life before mobile phones which some children found hard to imagine. Some of this came as quite a revelation to the youngsters who couldn't believe that people would sometimes have to queue outside to wait their turn and then put coins in a machine to make a call! They liked the fact that the door was very thick so people could have a conversation inside without those outside knowing their business! Many thanks to the Thurlestone Phone Box Committee who are providing funds for two Kendall McDonald history books for the school library.



*Hana aged 7 said, 'I liked the Phone Box because it's changed. It's a book swap now because we have mobile phones.'*  
*Hana also said about The War Memorial, 'If it was built today it would be built with a crane. In those days they did it by hand and cart and ropes.'*



There was plenty of action along the way with children miming out the pumping of the water at The Pumphouse, using a two man saw and carrying the buckets on a yoke which helped bring it all to life for them.

The trail will form part of the Parish Neighbourhood Plan's evidence base of the heritage assets in the parish with a view to protecting and conserving them for future generations. Similar trails are also being put together for Buckland and Bantham and will be used as a teaching resource for the school covering aspects of the Literacy, History and Geography curriculum.

*James aged 7 said, 'I liked the cobbled road because it's bumpy, not smooth like other roads. I like that the cars still go on the cobbled road. It must be really strong.'*



*Brynn aged 7 said: 'The rock would be slate on the stile. You don't need to use the gate. If there's animals in the field they can't get over the stile.'*

*Daisy aged 7 said, 'You can climb over it instead of going through a boring gate.'*  
*Iona said, 'I think it was a good idea to have the water trough at the top of the hill for the horses so they didn't get really thirsty.'*