

Historical Facts

Special thanks to Joan Gardam, Spelthorne Archeology and local history group for their contribution towards the historical facts along the various routes.

Church Lammas and Staines Moor

- Staines Moor is an open tract of 289 acres of common land with the River Colne running through it, which has been designated a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) because of its diversity of flora and fauna. It has been used by commoners to graze cattle and horses since the reign of Edward the Confessor in 1065, and has never been farmed.
- The word 'Lammas' is a derivation of the two words 'Loaf Mass', and refers to land owned by the church, from which a loaf made from the first grain of harvest was taken to the church to be blessed.
- There is a stained glass window in St. Mary's Church dedicated to remember the lives of 118 passengers and crew who were killed in an aircraft disaster on 18 June 1972.



Commemorative stained glass window in St. Mary's Church

Stanwell Village

- The name Stanwell comes from the Anglo-Saxon word for a stony stream or spring.
- Sir Thomas Knyvett is well known in Stanwell and on the morning of 5th November 1605, a small group of men who worked under him arrested Guido Fawkes in the cellars under the Houses of Parliament.
- St. Mary the Virgin Church dates from Norman times. The 55ft tower is of flint and Kentish rag chequerwork and the 138ft spire is distinctive as it leans 6ft from the perpendicular. There are six bells in the tower and the roof of the nave has carved figures of bats, grotesques and acrobats.

Stanwell Moor and Hithermoor Stream

- The Upper Mill on Horton Road has been used as both a paper mill and a corn mill. In the late 19th century it was powered by steam as well as water, but after 1950 was converted to electrical power only. Part of the old building was damaged by bombs during World War Two.
- Hithermoor Road was just a cart track as late as 1920, or even later. It was then called Stream Lane as there were streams on both sides and each cottage had a couple of planks across as access. In 1964 the present road was built. There was a large pond at the bottom of Hithermoor Road where Hithermoor Road and Hawes Lane met in 1870, which ten years later had become smaller and more of a marsh.

Shepperton Towpath and Dumsey Meadow

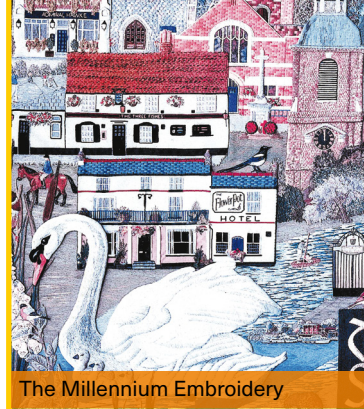
- Dumsey Meadow is a SSSI and is the only piece of undeveloped water meadow remaining on the River Thames. It is home to a variety of rare plants and insects.



- When Saxon invaders reached the most southerly point of the Thames in Middlesex, the community they found inspired them to call the area 'Scepertone', meaning 'habitation of shepherds'.

Sunbury-on-Thames Orchard Meadow including Walled Garden

- The Walled Garden is home to The Millennium Embroidery, created by over 140 local embroiderers and depicts local churches, public houses, domestic architecture and local scenes. Also in the garden is the 'Lendy Lion', a statue commemorating the loss of two brothers.
- Orchard Meadow (adjacent to the Walled Garden) was formerly part of the manor estate.
- St. Mary the Virgin parish church originated as a medieval church constructed in flint which was a rarity in the area. Charles Dickens in 'Oliver Twist' mentioned a yew tree in the churchyard.



The Millennium Embroidery

Laleham Riverside and Penton Hook

- Laleham Abbey was built as the country seat of Richard Bingham, 2nd Earl of Lucan in 1803 and its parkland stretched for 83 acres some of which is the present Laleham Park. Divided into flats in 1981 the house is in the neo-classical style with a Greek Doric porch.
- In Christmas 1884, Spelthorne saw one of the last recorded incidents of a bare fisted prize fight. After a tip off, the Metropolitan Police were summoned to Penton Hook Island where a group of 50 people 'well known in pugilistic circles' had congregated. This was an ideal location for the gathering as the only access is across the lock gates. The crowd scattered with the arrival of the police.
- Penton Hook Island was one of the last resting place of plague victims.

Fordbridge Park via Bronzefield

- Spelthorne was one of the ancient Saxon Hundreds of Middlesex, and its name is derived from the words 'Spiel Thorn' which indicated a tree where people met to discuss issues of importance.
- Annual fairs were held from 1228 that were colourful and popular events. They included the trading of horses, sheep and cattle and continued until 1890. Vestiges of this tradition remained until the end of the 20th Century in the annual July funfair on Shortwood Common.

If you are interested in finding out about history in Spelthorne visit www.spelthornemuseum.org.uk

