

# Down Your Way

Pictures: Richard Besent C223422-DB05



■ **MAIN ROUTE:** The busy A419 Stroud to Cirencester road slices through the village of Thrupp.

Taste of the  
23-8-02  
heavens in  
the high life

**T**O MANY people travelling along the London road on their way from Stroud to Cirencester, Thrupp is no more than a collection of mills and industrial estates.

But perched on the hillside beyond the main road is a settlement which dates back hundreds of years.

The parish stretches as far as Nether Lypiatt Manor, the home of Prince and Princess Michael of Kent, and some way into Brimscombe.

Two theories for the name Thrupp have been put forward. One suggests the name is derived from the Icelandic Throp or Thrup, meaning a hill or elevated spot, while another points to the Danish word for a collection of men or houses.

In his *Notes and Recollections on Stroud*, the 19th Century writer Paul Hawkins Fisher recorded that the village philosophy was: "Nothing put down, nothing take up, say the boys of The Thrupp."

Thrupp once rang with the sound of industry. In the last century alone the list of products manufactured along the valley bottom included carpets at Ham Mills and caravans at Hope Mills. During the Second World War Griffin Mill was used for the manufacture of wooden wings for Mosquito aircraft.

Bailey Paints took over the mill in 1965 and during its heyday the com-

pany used the whole of the site.

The family-run business, which has been in the Stroud Valleys since 1895, now employs 12 people.

Bailey's makes and distributes industrial paints as well as selling decorative materials to professionals and do-it-yourself enthusiasts.

Managing director Richard Townsend said the company supplied a variety of businesses in the West Country.

"We supply paint for a number of engineering companies such as those that make agricultural implements, commercial vehicles and handling equipment," he said.

The Phoenix Iron Works were in operation for more than 150 years and it was there that in 1830 John Ferrabee manufactured the first lawnmower to the designs of Edward Budding.

Budding also invented an adjustable spanner. The foundry was taken over by George Waller and Co from London in 1866 and predominantly made products for the gas industry. Phoenix Mill, once part of the foundry, is now home to Sutton Publishing.

The company, which prints history books, was set up in Gloucester in 1978 and moved to Thrupp in March 1990. It employs 40 people and publishes more than 200 new titles a year on subjects ranging from architecture to transport.

One person who well remembers the days when Phoenix Mill was a foundry

is Thrupp's oldest resident, 96-year-old Edna Langford, whose husband Robert worked for Wallers for more than 40 years.

The mother-of-three, who was born at Pontardawe near Swansea, moved to Thrupp after she was married. She can remember how three double-decker buses used to bring men into Thrupp to work at the factories and mills every day. "The valley was a busy place," she said.

Edna, who has been in Thrupp for 70 years, sang for many years in the choir at the blue corrugated iron All Saints' Church on the edge of the Ham Mills site. The last church service was held there during the 1980s and afterwards the building was used by the Willow Club, an organisation for senior citizens, for a number of years.

"We used to get quite big congregations at the tin church," said Edna. "We had a Mothers' Union there and we used to parade on various occasions."

Edna can remember the days when Thrupp was served by a rail car to Stroud and when it had a bakery as well as two butchers, a grocers and a post office. Nowadays all that remains is a primary school and a pub, the Waggon and Horses, which has been run by Ken Cox for the past eight years.

A previous landlord, John Cousins, set a local record after running from the pub to the church gates at Minchinhampton in 16.5 minutes.