

Newsletter

DUNSTABLE & DISTRICT
LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

N°11

March 1999



Chairman's Comments

I hope very much that you enjoyed the meetings this session and that you have felt yourself to be part of the Society. Ahead, after the May meeting, there are the Summer outings and we look forward to seeing many of you on these occasions.

By the time you read this and as most of you know, Joy and I will have moved from Dunstable to our new home in Blandford Forum, where our son and family live. It will seem very strange at first, after all these years in Dunstable, Joy since 1944, myself from birth, where we have taken part in so many activities, but family ties are strong. We do not intend to cut ourselves off and will be back for several events, and we shall be very pleased to see any members of the Society so we do hope that you will drop in at some point. Our address is : 'Holm Oak', 38 Larksmead, Blandford Forum, Dorset, DT11 7LU. The house is so named because of a large holm oak (a type of evergreen oak) in the back garden.

The AGM in March brought some changes. John Lunn relinquished his position as Vice-Chairman and committee member since the Society's inception, and we are very pleased to have made him our first Vice-President. It was John who really started the idea of this Local History Society and we owe him a great deal for all his interest and wise counsel. Hugh Garrod has been appointed Vice-Chairman. We also lost in January Stanley Knowles, so here were two positions vacant. These have been filled by Peter Boatwright and Cynthia Turvey.

Peter was born in Norwich and came to the town in 1970. He worked for British Gas at Potters Bar until retiring in 1988. Peter was Mayor of Dunstable for 1994-95 (following in the steps of his wife, Brenda, six years earlier, the only husband and wife to have held this high office in the town's history) and belongs to a number of organisations. Cynthia Turvey who, with her husband, Trevor, were early members of the Society, came to Dunstable at the end of the '30s from Derbyshire and has lived in the area ever since. She worked for A.C. Delco for 32 years, is a keen golfer and bowls player and has an interest in the National Trust, RSPB and similar organisations.

I was nominated as your chairman and will be pleased

Landscaping at Valence End

The editor has asked me to bring you up-to-date with the restoration of chalk grassland at Valence End, part of Whipsnade Wild Animal Park below Bison Hill.

Members will recall my brief account of this project in the last *Newsletter* (page 53). The present position is that all the ground work has virtually been completed; work on the last small section by the access gate was prevented by the atrocious wet weather which turned the chalk into a quagmire which bogged down the heavy machinery. The contractor expects to complete his work early in March and, weather permitting, seeding with chalkland grass will be finished by the end of the month.

I understand that unfortunately the Wild Animal Park has not yet responded to the draft 15-years Restoration Management Plan drawn up by English Nature, although they were asked to comment some months ago by the County Council Minerals Planning Section. It is to be hoped that the Park will not jeopardise the ultimate success of this project by delaying implementation of the Management Plan.

David Lindsey

to carry on until the autumn to tide the Society over the next four months

Colin Bourne

Society's officers and committee members

Chairman : Colin Bourne

Vice-Chairman : Hugh Garrod

Honorary Secretary : Joan Curran

Treasurer : Bernard Stevens

Committee Members : Peter Boatwright, Ron Frith,

Lydia Raby, Omer Roucoux, Cynthia Turvey

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The Airships at Cardington

by Ron Angus

Members who were present in September at our opening meeting of the present session will recall a most interesting address given by Group Captain P.A. Garth (Retd.) on Airships and, in particular, the R101.

After the meeting Mr Ron Angus, one of our very early members, came up to me and said that his father was one of the workers at Cardington, with the airships and that he had vivid memories of the place. I asked him if he would like to write an article for our Newsletter, which he has been pleased to do. Here is the story that Ron tells, a story that can be told because of personal, close recollections. C.B.

Let me try to get a clearer view of the salient facts as I knew them. The first is that only the R101 was built at Cardington. R100 was on the other hand built on the South Yorkshire moors at a place called Howden. This came about because when the government decided that the future of air transport was not in aeroplanes, but in solid frame airships, which were known as 'Dirigibles' it was decided that the first two should be made by different designers. One, to be known as R101, was to be built at the old and vacant aerodrome at Cardington under the auspices of the Air Ministry. The other, the R100, would be built by Vickers and designed by a young engineer, Barnes Wallis, who is more popularly known as the bouncing bomb inventor in World War II.

At no time did either ship belong to the R.A.F. or was either manned by servicé airmen. The crews were all civilian employees of the Air Ministry, quite a different thing.

The employees at Cardington worked together and demarcation did not exist to any great extent. Probably this was largely due to the necessity for all to work together to take the leviathans in and out of the giant sheds. This was done by 'walking' them, that is all of the staff holding on to long ropes dropped from the gondolas and slowly walking out, whilst being directed by a coxswain. The airship could not move in or out under its own power as the

hangar was quite a close fit, neither could it be brought in and out unless there was no appreciable wind blowing.

We are still told how superior R100 was, being built by private enterprise, but nobody ever recalls that it was in great danger of not being finished until a long time after its projected completion date, because the engineers could not tension the outer cover properly and they had to come cap in hand to Cardington seeking aid. My father and 19 other picked men went to Yorkshire to train them in the way to do it. I think they were at Howden for a month.

Another thing glossed over was a 'slight' incident that occurred when the R100 was crossing the Atlantic. What happened was that in a storm it didn't answer the helm until it was almost in the sea. At the last moment the nose lifted, but the tail struck the water causing extensive damage. Had the tail entered the water it would never have got up again. Some 'slight' incident!

The German airship the Graf Zeppelin nearly came to grief several times. Once when it came to Cardington, it could not land on the mooring mast because it had a different 'Dewdrop' from ours. The dewdrop was an "L" shaped projection from the nose which was slid into a clamp on the masthead and then clamped in. The whole of the clamping gear could rotate a full

360 degrees thus allowing the moored craft to always face its nose into the wind. Two hundred men were waiting to grasp the ropes as they were dropped from the Zeppelin. Graf von Eckner emerged safely for his visit. After a while a gust of wind suddenly lifted the tail high in the air and about 20 men who were still clinging to the ropes went up with it. The wind stopped as suddenly as it had started and the guard of honour and others ran forward and grasped the dangling end of the tail rope and pulled it down to earth. Had the wind continued longer than a few seconds the ship, along with the men clinging to the ropes, would probably have smashed into the giant hangar.

I was fortunate, for just after R100 came back to Cardington from its Transatlantic flight my father managed to get passes on a Sunday, when both ships were in their hangars side by side, and gave us a conducted tour of both of them.

The main difference between the two airships was that the passenger accommodation of the R100 was in a



gondola fixed from the bottom of the ship and consequently space was much more restricted. In the R101 this accommodation was inside the envelope. This was a complete innovation in airship technology ; certainly it was commodious and was like a high class hotel with a large dining room which was planned to double as a ballroom.

The fact that not enough trial and test time after the radical operation * on the R101 had been allowed is common knowledge, and must have been a major cause of the crash.

Sunday 29th October 1930, the date of the inaugural flight to India, arrived. It had been drizzly, but the weather had cleared up in the late afternoon. At 6.36 p.m. R101 took off from its base and travelled in the direction of Hitchin, prior to turning and making a circuit of Bedford, as though to say farewell.

At the sound of its engines almost the whole population of the town came out to see it off. One thing that caused much comment was that nobody had ever seen the airship flying so low. It appeared as if it was less than 100 ft. above the rooftops.

My father was being trained to take over masthead duties at Karachi if the flight was successful, and was on duty that night at Cardington in case the airship came back during the night or early Sunday morning. He came home about 4.00 a.m. I heard him come in and my mother called downstairs to ask him what was wrong, and all he could say were two words "She's down". We knew what he meant !

Just after 2.00 a.m. on Sunday the 4th. the cryptic message came through to the mooring mast that she had come down near Beauvais in France with no known survivors.

At 3.00 a.m. confirmation came through that there were six survivors of the crew of 42 plus 12 passengers. The mooring mast crew stood down, there was nothing to wait for.

My father was a strong character who had served 4 years in the mud of Flanders, and it was the only time that I ever saw him in tears. For a couple of days he was a broken man mourning for the friends that had been lost in the funeral pyre of the R101. It was characteristic of the team work at the base that between courses on navigation etc. the crew were frequently around the plant taking a keen interest on what was going on, and talking to the workers.

The bodies were brought back by ship to lie in state in London for a couple of days, then the coffins were taken in a procession to Euston Station and taken by train to St. John's Station, Bedford. The engine had a large wreath on the front of the boiler, in tribute to its grim cargo.

It was a day I'll always remember. There were 24 open lorries each carrying two flag-draped coffins covered with wreaths sent from all over the country. There was a file of airmen from Henlow slow

marching on either side of each lorry. At the head of the procession a military band played 'The Dead March' until it reached the Bedford boundary.

All the workmen, wearing bowlers as a mark of respect, lined the last part of the route from Cardington Cross to the cemetery, where the 48 coffins were laid in a communal grave. Only 14 of the 48 coffins were named, their funeral pyre was so fierce that nothing was left that was recognisable. So all the relatives agreed that as they were all friends in life they should remain together in death.

A table type tomb was later placed over the grave, and the partly burned flag was put in a place of honour in the Church across the road.

In 1944 I was in a column chasing the remnants of the German army that had escaped from the Falaise Gap, when as dusk was approaching we pulled into a field to laager for the night. While food was being prepared my curiosity was roused by something white across the field by a small wood. Imagine my surprise, on drawing near, to find that it was a full size replica of the tomb in Cardington. It was marking the spot where the crash had taken place. It was of course a Cenotaph and the people whom it commemorated were sleeping beneath the trees in a small cemetery in rural Bedfordshire.

The R101 disaster brought to an end the days when nearly every boy in Bedford was proud to be an airship enthusiast, but I am no romantic wishing for a resurrection. I realise that if the elements really try they will always win against the huge dinosaurs.

* *The radical operation* which the R101 underwent was required after its last round trip in November to Edinburgh and Dublin. It was put back into the giant shed, cut in two, and a new bay inserted in the middle to give it more 'lift'. To accommodate the large size of the airship, the shed at Cardington had to be extended to 800 ft long and its height was raised to 157 ft ; even so, the airship filled the shed to within a few inches of its ceiling. It was brought out again in January 1930, but attempts to fly it on two successive days resulted in major tears in its covering.

Later there was still a major problem with its fabric which crumpled like scorched brown paper, but Lord Thomson's pressure caused the repairs to be hurried and the fabric was patched using a rubber solution.

There was a test flight on the 1st October. At 777 ft long it was the largest airship in the world, and was an impressive spectacle.

(from *The tragedy of the R101 in Tales of Old Bedfordshire* by Adrian Gray, p. 31 - 32, from where the illustration is also taken)

Omer Roucoux

Bernard Stevens found the following article in an old 1950's issue of the Leighton Buzzard Observer. It was written some 20 years before decimalisation and today, perhaps at the eve of the introduction of the Euro, we could dream of the old £.s.d. system . . . But let us read about the nostalgia of 50-years ago.

Money Slang Romance by a Countryman

In London recently I bought a newspaper from an old fellow in the street.

"Got change for a *downer*?" Why, I hadn't heard that word for many a long year. They call them *tanners* now. Both names come from the Romany tongue in which *tawno* means "a little one."

When I was young we used to have a lot of words for coins and various sorts of money that seem to have disappeared nowadays.

Does the drapery trade still recollect *spiffs*, I wonder? They provided tobacco and outing money for many a young shop assistant in the bad old days before the esteem of the public was considered of greater value than a few extra shillings in the till, obtained by sharp practice. *Spiffs* was the name given to the percentage allowed to the shopmen for managing to sell to a customer old-fashioned or defective stock.

Sixpenny bits were sometime called *sows' babies*, or *fiddlers' money*. A five pound note we called a *horse*. A *gray* was a halfpenny provided with two heads or two tails, an obvious advantage when tossing up to decide a point; there used to be such numbers of them that a good many got into general circulation.

A *mag* was a genuine halfpenny, and when anyone suggested tossing up he would exclaim: "Let's fly the mags!" *Dandyprats* were before my time, but I remember my father telling me that that was what, in his time, half-farthings were called. A *gig* was a farthing in those days; and anything priced in a shop window at *one-and-a-penny-ha'penny* used to cause ribald passers-by to call out: "Look yonder - *hangman's wages*!". Apparently that was the hangman's fee in the not so far distant days when hanging for a wide variety of peccadilloes, which nowadays would not necessarily entail a brief term of imprisonment, were rife. And when they had fourpenny-bits they used to call them *flags*.

A shilling, in my young days, was often called a *deaner*, and money of any sort was called *sugar*. Cabmen used a curious money slang called "*time*." *Half past three* meant three-and-sixpence. A *quarter-to-eleven* meant ten-and-ninepence, and so forth. *Oil of palms* was another way of alluding to money.

How few people who declare to-day: "I don't care a rap!" realise that a *rap* used to be what poor folks called a ha'penny? A sovereign was a *yellow boy*, a *twelver* was a shilling and a *sprat* was a sixpenny bit. The actors never used the word money; money to them was *ducats*.

Yet to-day our once rich money slang has dwindled to a *quid*, half-a-dollar, a *bob* and a *tanner*.

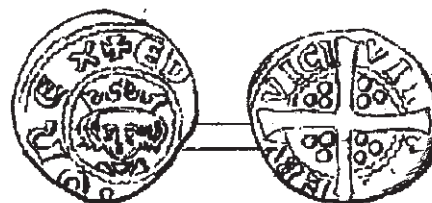
Money Matters

For the younger generation ...

... it may be helpful to recall the coins which were in use before decimalisation in 1971. The pound (£) was divided into 20 shillings (s), each worth 12 pence (d). So there were 240 d in the £.

There were £1 and 10 shilling notes and the following coins: the crown (5s. but only commemorative); the half-crown (2s 6d) the florin (2s.); the shilling (s) or *bob*; the sixpence or *tanner* (worth half a shilling still used until 1980 for slot machines); the threepenny bit (12-sided nickel brass) which replaced the old silver coin or *joey*; the old penny (d) and the half penny (½d). The *d* comes from *denarius* an old Roman coin.

The farthing lasted in Britain for more than 700 years until it ceased to be legal tender in 1960. Its name indicated that it was a '*fourth-ing*' that is a quarter of a penny.



A farthing of Edward I, coined around 1300. Previously pennies were cut into four quarters and used as farthings. Silver—Diameter ½ in. or 13mm—Weight 5.5 grains or 2 grams. It is probably the longest lasting coin value in Britain.

Did you know that . . . ?

- The florin (one tenth of a pound or 2 shillings) struck in 1849 was the first attempt at decimalisation.
- To date four heads of Queen Elizabeth II have been used on coinage – the first with a laurel wreath on pre-decimal issues, the next with a tiara, on the first decimal coins, the 3rd with a crown from 1985 and lastly with a tiara again. This last one shows a more realistic ageing Queen and appeared for the first time in 1998. You can look through your loose change to compare these last three last heads.
- Many pre-decimal coins ceased to be legal tender before 1971 and others continued to be in circulation after 1971. Here are the dates when some coins ceased to be used:

- 1969 Pre-decimal halfpenny (½d)
- 1969 the 10 shilling note went and was replaced by the 50p coin (decimal).
- 1970 Half-crown (2s 6d)
- 1971 Threepence (3d)
- 1971 Pre-decimal penny (1d)
- 1980 Sixpence (6d = 2½p)
- 1984 Decimal halfpenny (½p)
- 1990 Pre-decimal 1 and 2 s, large decimal 5p, 10p
- 1998 Large 50p coins replaced by smaller ones

Omer Roucoux

A Century of Music in Dunstable

by TONY WARD

Tony Ward, one of our early members, is a born and bred Dunstablian. He was educated here and continues to live in the town. Early on he became keen on music and plays the keyboard, clarinet and saxophone. He has played a considerable part in the popular Wayfarer Jazz Band. Tony had a financial career in local government, but having taken early retirement he is now free to follow his musical recording interests. C.B.

I am looking into the history of orchestras, brass bands, and other music in Dunstable and district, mainly covering the period 1865 - 1965.

The main focus of the project, at present, is on the Bible Class Orchestra (The Square), the Dunstable Excelsior Silver Prize Band (originally founded about 1865 as the Dunstable Temperance band), and Franklin's Band (also known as the 'Borough Band' and the 'Beer and Baccy Band'). I am also interested in other groups in the period, however.

My interest in the project arises not simply from my own musical interest, but also from the fact that I had an uncle in the Bible Class Orchestra at one time (Mr Percy Trory), and another uncle who was a stalwart of the Excelsior Band (Mr Dick Janes).

It was the receipt of a programme for a Town Hall concert by the Excelsior Band in 1949, sent to me by my cousin David Janes (now living in Taunton), which incorporated a photograph showing twenty-nine uniformed members of the band, that started my interest, when I realised that within a relatively short period of time the band had become defunct, after nearly a hundred year of existence.

Some members may recall an episode of the 'Tonight' programme on BBC TV, when the presenter, Derek Hart, came to Dunstable, and televised interviews with Dick Janes and the few others left, hoping to rekindle local interest in the band, but to no avail. I would guess this was about 1960 - perhaps someone can recall the actual date?

Some musicians did move on to successor groups in the mid 1960s, but it is a sad fact that by about that time the original groups were no longer in existence. It is noticeable that when the Dunstable Pageant was produced in 1963, the producers looked to the Heath Excelsior Silver Band to provide music for part of the production. The demise of our local groups appears to be in some contrast to neighbouring towns, such as Luton, Heath and Reach, and Ampthill.

During the period of the project, it is clear that many musicians played in two (or perhaps more) of the bands above, together with performing in dance bands and other ensembles. The same names keep appearing all the time, in particular the Dolman family of Burr Street and the Franklin family.

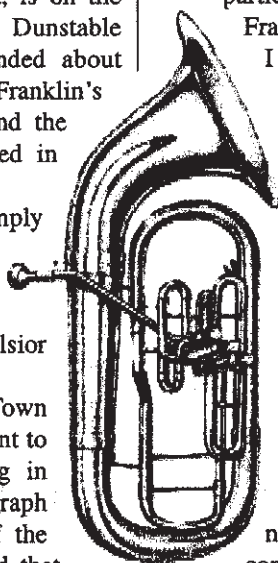
I am indebted to Mary Dolman and Douglas Darby, two members of our Society, for providing a substantial amount of material for the project so far, including some live recordings of the Bible Class Orchestra made in the early '60s by Doug Darby. In addition, I hope to be able to interview other members associated with these organisations later on, as well as pursuing other avenues.

I haven't forgotten, of course, the Salvation Army Band, which, in my youth, was always to be heard on a Sunday morning in various parts of Dunstable, playing on street corners and marching through the town. Many elderly Dunstablians will remember this with great nostalgia, and no review of that period would be complete without mentioning the 'Sally Ann'. At

present, however, I do not have much information as to the band's history and personnel in Dunstable during the project period.

If any members have recollections, memorabilia, photos etc., relating to the project, I would be interested to hear from them —
Tony Ward, 129, Chiltern Road, Dunstable, LU6 1ET

Help!



HARPENDEN RAILWAY MUSEUM 1979 - 1999

Geoff & Susan Woodward

From a few items on a shelf and one working signal, this privately owned museum has grown into a fine collection of local and countrywide relics of railway heritage - some 10,000 pieces in all !! Rescue and restoration, often to full working order, have become part of our family life, together with research, maintenance and display projects. In 1998 we were rewarded by features on two T.V. channels, local radio interviews and a half-page article in 'The Times'. We also acted as a location for BBC TV Director Training videos and our garden, which complements beautifully the graceful signals, atmospheric signal boxes and many static exhibits was a winner in the 'Harpenden in Bloom' competition. As a result many hundred of feet explored our pathways and

'station garden settings' before finally arriving at the Museum Room - which is packed with lamps, signalling equipment, notices, name boards, catering items, and several constantly changing displays on specific areas of railway interest. You will not find rolling stock here, but we are 'hands-on' in that you can operate a signal or colour light - or you can just sit on a garden seat and soak up the nostalgia all around.

Come and see for yourself during our 1999 Open Days,
2nd / 3rd May, 6th June, 4th July, 1st, 28th, 29th, 30th
August. Adults 50p - Children 20p

235 Luton Road, HARPENDEN

Priory Church Restoration in the 19th Century

by John Lunn

In 1845 the Rev. Frederick Hose was appointed Rector on the death of his predecessor the Rev. Salomon Piggot who had held the position for 20 years. This change of Rector coincided with the revived interest in the liturgy of the church which was sweeping through the country as a result of the Oxford Movement.

The Priory Church was in a pretty dilapidated state at the time, partly through the absence of a lord of the manor who would have provided the necessary leadership and financial help to keep the building in good order.

The new Rector immediately set to work with a will not only to repair the church but to refurbish it. As a 'Prayer Book Church' the nave was cluttered with box pews all centred on the three-decker pulpit.

Mr G. Somers Clarke was appointed as architect and drew up plans for the work. By 1848 Mr Hose was giving details of the changes to the Bedfordshire Archaeological & Architectural Society and assuring members that the aim was "to restore, not to destroy anything"!

The main change proposed to the outside was the addition of spirelets to the little towers on either side of the west front and a crocketed spire (with projecting decorations) to the main tower. Charles Smy, a local photographer, reproduced the illustration for these proposed changes, with the caption "*Priory Church, Dunstable. In the year 1100.*" Smy's postcards occasionally turn up to this day and cause considerable confusion and misunderstanding. Fortunately the cost of these changes proved prohibitive.

A start was made in September 1851 on the south aisle. The drawing by Dr. Thomas Charles in Maidstone Museum gives some idea what the interior of this aisle was like in 1838. The whole of the south wall was rebuilt, the vaulted roof, which previously only covered the first three bays, was copied to extend the full length and the aisle was extended by one bay to make it finish more or less flush with the west end. A new window was inserted at the east end; the old west end window was removed as was the blocking up between the first two pillars on the south side of the west end of the nave. The western end of the aisle was finished in red bricks due to the shortage of money.

Soon after the work started the Rector's health gave out necessitating a period on the Continent to recover. When he returned he was given the assistance of a Curate. It must be remembered that the Rector was not only involved in the material changes to the Church, but was also heavily committed with the spiritual changes that were

taking place with the religious revival.

It is difficult to say how long the work to the south aisle took; but one report says it was completed by April 1852. This seems remarkably little time for such an undertaking. The same stone from the Totternhoe quarries was used for the rebuilding as had been used originally some 700 years earlier.

Soon after the south aisle was completed, work started on the nave. This involved new stone on the outside of both north and south side at the triforium level. Lysons engraving in his *Magna Britannia*, published in 1896, shows the triforium windows from the interior at this time and the string course restored. The arches, pier capitals and bases were also restored. The Early English gallery at the west end of the church was unblocked and restored to its original state, windows being inserted in the previously blocked up niches.

It must have been difficult maintaining services while the work was in progress. In 1867 a temporary corrugated iron church was erected in Church Close while the work was progressing and the roof was being replaced (1870-71) with a copy of the original 15th century roof.

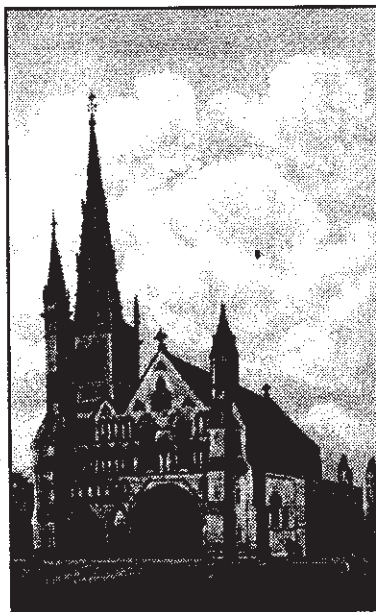
The original bosses and figures of the Apostles were retained. The congregation returned to the Church for worship in 1872. The temporary structure was dismantled and re-erected in Union Street, as the forerunner of Christ Church. Probably the recorded sermon of the Dean of Westminster on 25 July 1872, marked the occasion.

Meanwhile the north aisle was in such a serious condition that scaffolding was necessary to avoid the walls collapsing.

This restoration began in 1876. It involved demolishing the north wall and in doing so the original 12th century Norman door was revealed where previously there had been a window. The aisle was extended one bay to the east so that it finished flush with the chancel. The original west end wall and window were allowed to remain and can still be seen in the choir vestry. The whole was reconstructed in the Perpendicular style. There is some doubt as to whether or not the roof of this aisle was ever vaulted.

Other changes that were made by Somers Clarke, in this phase of the restoration, involved:

1. The removal of the galleries at the west end of the nave and, in the south aisle, the three-decker pulpit and the box pews.
2. Re-pewing the Church with seating facing the altar.
3. Fitting the 14th century screen, that had supported the west end gallery, against the east end wall as a sort of



Postcard published by Chas. Smy, local photographer, based on the c.1850 renovation proposals of Mr. Somers Clarke, architect.

The postcard bears the caption:
*Priory Church Dunstable
In the year 1100*

reredos. The painting of the Last Supper by Sir James Thornhill which had previously hung against the east end wall, having been damaged by the builders and the weather, was removed and left to rot away beneath the tower.

4. Restoring and moving the organ to the extended section of the north aisle.

5. Providing the present marble pulpit and brass lectern.

6. Fragments of the old Norman font were found when the blocking of the south western arch of the nave was removed. These were reconstructed to make a new font to be sited at the east end of the nave, to replace the 15th century font that stood at the west end of the north aisle.

7. The removal of many mural monuments and brasses from their original positions.

It would seem that the Rector was largely responsible for ordering the changes as the Faculty of application bears little relation to the work actually done. In the absence of records it is difficult to be precise about certain changes.

In 1890 Mr. G. F. Bodley was commissioned to reorganise and refurbish the whole of the chancel area. His work included :

1. Moving the 19th century screen forward, to its original 14th century position, its present position.
2. Paving the sanctuary with black and white marble slabs.
3. Providing a new altar on a raised dais.
4. Rearranging choir and clergy stalls.
5. Taking down the upper part of the inner portion of the east wall to expose the hidden shafts and capitals on the north and south side at the triforium level.

The blank east end wall behind the altar was given very special attention by Mr. Bodley. He exposed the two doorways on either side of the altar which in monastic days had led through the rood screen. He also revealed the two niches now occupied by figures representing the Archangel Gabriel and Mary. Upon the centre part of the wall above the altar he fixed a great painted and gilded Rood with tabernacled panelling on either side containing a series of angels, three each side, bearing the instruments of our Lord's Passion behind the altar itself was placed a tall dossal with riddels (side curtains).

During this period the opportunity was taken to improve the lighting of the Church by replacing the lamps and candles with gas jets. These were fitted to a pipe which ran right round the church under the string course beneath the triforium windows. When in use they had to be

lit by the verger using a lighted taper at the end of a very long cane ! Gas burners were attached to the pillars and two brass gas standards with many branching lights stood on either side of the altar. The sealed off ends of the gas pipes can still be seen protruding through the Church floor in various places.

In 1903 Mr. Bodley was responsible for restoring the west front. The gallery had to be entirely renewed as it was so decayed. The great doorway was not touched except that the shafts which were missing, were also replaced.

So, in the second half in the 19th century, the townsfolk of Dunstable had made good the neglect of the previous four centuries and found the money to pay for it. The Reverend Frederick Hose well deserves the words recorded on his commemorative brass in the north aisle of the Church :



South aisle looking east
drawn by T. Charles in 1838

To the Glory of God in Memory of the
Reverend Frederick HOSE M.A.
Rector of Dunstable from 1843 to 1883, Rural Dean
This tablet is erected to record his labours for the
restoration of the Fabric of the Church, and his long
and faithful service as Rector of this Parish.

For your Diary

Next season's meetings will be held at 7.45 p.m.
on the second Tuesday of the month,

1999

September 14, October 12, November 9, December 14
2000

January 11, February 8, March 8, April 11, May 9

A Mystery Solved !



On page 57 of our last issue John Lunn described a pump we discovered in Cockayne Hatley which was carrying the mysterious name plate :

THE SAFETY WATER ELEVATOR CO., DUNSTABLE

The mystery was solved when Miss Christina Scott told John : " What a good idea to write about my grandfather's pump ! "

Miss Scott will research the archives of her grandfather and we will report the full history in the next issue of this Newsletter in September.

William Scott is mentioned in Kelly's Directory for Dunstable in 1894 as : Sheet metal worker and general mechanic, High Street South. And in 1914 : Scott and Sons, motor engineers, 20, 21 & 22 High Street South. Many of us still remember Scott's Garage.

EVENTS

A Day at Carlton

This year's Bedfordshire Local History Conference takes place at Carlton on 5th June and starts with a visit to St. Mary's Church there. Later there will be a visit to the Carlton Baptist Meeting (built 1760) and a walk round to see some of the 16th and 17th century houses in the village. In the afternoon societies will be invited to share news of their current activities and projects. Lunch is not provided but packed lunches can be eaten in the village hall and drinks will be provided, or alternatively a snack or full lunch can be obtained in one of the village pubs. Fee for the conference is £3.00 (including refreshments on arrival, lunchtime drinks and afternoon cup of tea)

Toddington discovery day

Saturday 8th May

A day for visitors to go on guided walks round Old Toddington, to join a countryside ramble in the surrounding area or to see an exhibition of old photographs and documents. Snacks will be available all day at the village hall. Guided rambles will leave the village hall at 10.15am (4 miles) and 10.30am (2½ miles) and guided tours of the village (cost £1) will leave from 2.00pm onwards. Further information on 01525 873825

Bedfordshire Festival

This will be a three day event held over the August Bank Holiday weekend (28th, 29th and 30th) at Shuttleworth. As in 1997, there will be many displays and a continuous programme of events. Local history displays will be on view in the Russell Hall in the main building and we shall be putting on a display based on our Old Trades evenings. We shall be needing some stewards for the weekend and will be looking for some volunteers. Entry to the Festival is free for all stewards, so it's one way of seeing everything without having to pay! Volunteers please give names to the Secretary.

Bedfordshire Local History Association AGM

The venue this year is St. Swithun's Church Hall, Sandy, and the date is Saturday 8th May. The business meeting will, we hope, be brief and will be followed by James Collett-White speaking on 'Bedfordshire Settlements - contrast of experiences during the past millennium'. Some of you will already know James from visits to the Record Office or from a course on researching local history. The meeting begins at 2.15pm (the lecture starts at 3.00pm.) and is open to all members of the Society.

Cardington Airship Museum

Both the visits to the Museum are fully booked and we have a waiting list at present. We hope to be able to book a further visit later in the year and will try to make it on a Saturday if possible. An announcement will be made at the May meeting.

*For more information about events
please see the Secretary.*

NEW BOOKS

A Bedfordshire Quiz Book by Eric Meadows.

S.B. Pubns. £4.99.

A collection of quizzes on the county, grouped by themes, with photographs taken by the author, whose pictures are well-known to readers of the Bedfordshire Magazine. Guaranteed to make you realise what a lot you don't know about your county. (Available at the Book Castle)

Bedfordshire Magazine

Those of you who subscribed to the Magazine know that the last issue has just been published. There are, however, various plans in hand to ensure that, in some form or another, a Bedfordshire magazine, possibly with another title, will continue to be published. What prospective publishers need to know is what readers actually want to read in such a publication. Former subscribers will have had a questionnaire in their last issue, but it would still be helpful to know what other people would like to read and what might persuade them to buy the magazine in the future.

Which of the following are you interested in ?

Gardening	Countryside issues	Archaeology
Rambling	Natural History	Transport

Responses to the secretary.

DO YOU KNOW?

From time to time we receive requests for information about families, buildings, events, etc. relating to the area. We have had two such requests recently and are still looking for more facts about these subjects.

Help!

Lime Works at Skimpot.

The Blows Downs Conservation group is looking for any information about the works. What is known is that they were started in the late 1800s and closed down before the last war. Though they only advertised themselves as lime works they appear to have made some whiting as a subsidiary product and the name of the firm as given in 1927 was B.J. Forder Ltd. A poor photograph of a shed on the site appeared as a 'Yesteryear' picture in the Dunstable Gazette in 1993. Has anyone any more information to offer?

Incidentally the Countryside Commission and the County Council have produced some good leaflets on walks around that area.

World War I Camp.

A Flitwick resident who is a collector of postcards has come across several of Houghton Regis which were sent by men stationed at an army camp there during World War I. Among them is a picture of a hall which was the YMCA at the time and later became the British Legion Hall. The site of the camp is now commemorated by the street name Camp Drive. If anyone has more information, or would like to see photocopies of the postcards, please see the Secretary.

A comprehensive alphabetical index of the first 11 issues of this Newsletter is available from the Editor Omer Roucoux, cost 50p.

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