

# Newsletter

DUNSTABLE & DISTRICT  
LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

N°16

September 2001



## *From the Chairman*

It was in August 1991 that I received a letter, jointly written by John Lunn and Joan Curran, recalling that the 'Dunstable Historical Society' had flourished between 1961 and 1964 but had petered out when the 'prime movers' left the area. The letter invited all interested parties to attend a meeting at Dunstable Library on 20th September. The aim was to inaugurate the 'Dunstable and District Historical Society', if sufficient support were forthcoming. We are approaching the tenth anniversary of this meeting, which was attended by 32 people, including me. Our guest speaker was Martin Lawrence of the Harlington Heritage Trust who gave a very interesting talk about the lessons they had learnt about organising a local history group. There then followed a short debate about forming a similar group in Dunstable. I had the honour to second Barry Horne's proposal that this should indeed happen and this was carried unanimously by the people present.

John Lunn proposed that we agree on a steering committee until we held our inaugural AGM 'early in 1992'. The steering committee consisted of: -

Chairman	Colin Bourne
Secretary	Joan Curran
Treasurer	Bernard Stevens
Membership Secretary	Omer Roucoux
Programme Secretary	John Lunn

The post of Publicity Officer was left vacant. The membership fee was £2. Further discussion emphasised that the society should encompass the interests of the surrounding villages but left it up to the Steering Committee to finalise the details of the society's name. John Lunn announced that the next meeting would be on 19th November, at the Library, when Richard Walden, Town Clerk of Dunstable, would talk about the Town Council's role in preserving Dunstable's heritage.

The Steering Committee met on 11<sup>th</sup> November and settled on the current title of our society. It decided that the financial year should run from January to December; that there should be monthly meetings 'except in August and December' and that there would be 'outside visits and activities' in June and July. Even at that early stage it was decided that 'Alternative venues to the Library should be investigated (e.g. the Town Hall Chamber, Cordova and the Methodist Church Halls'. The initial membership list, dated January 1992, contains 48 names. The Steering Committee put together a draft constitution for consideration at the inaugural meeting, on 3rd March 1992. Our AGM has been part of the March meeting ever since.

At this point, I find myself in danger of writing the definitive history of our society, rather than celebrating the events of ten years ago. In future Newsletters, I will attempt to recall what we were up to a decade in the past; the move to the Methodist Church Parlour and then into the School Hall. It seems appropriate that, ten years on, we are on the move again, this time to the Salvation Army Citadel.

To conclude my Chairman's report, it is only right that I say 'Thank you' once again to Joan Curran, our wonderful Secretary for keeping us all in order and making sure that everything is well organised; to Ron Frith for finding speakers and working out our itineraries during the summer months; to Cynthia Turvey for keeping us financially on the straight and narrow; to Omer Roucoux for the marvellous work he does on this Newsletter; to Lydia Raby for all the time she spends on distributing information and organising rotas; to Peter Boatwright for keeping us in touch with local Councils and to Bernard Stevens as ever for his wise counsel.

*Hugh Garrod*

## A Policeman's lot in Dunstable around 1950

*Mr. Norman King was a policeman in Dunstable from 1947 to 1951. His wife recounts some of her memories of that time.*

Norman came to Dunstable as a young policeman in October 1947 and we were married in June 1948. There was still an acute shortage of housing in those post-war years and police houses were in short supply, so we had to live in rented rooms for three years.

The job of a policeman was very different then from what it is now. The traffic, of course, was not so bad then, although the Watling Street was always very busy, and crime was not so prevalent in those days. Young policemen were often sent to Dunstable as a good training ground, dealing with fatal accidents on the road, etc. Often the traffic lights at the crossroads would break down and then a policeman would have to put on his white gloves and direct the traffic, standing in the middle of the road.

There were crimes of all kinds, including brawls, drunkenness and violence, though the police were not allowed to interfere in domestic disputes. There were no drug offences in the four years we were in Dunstable and no trouble from 'travellers', either. A few gypsies from the Totternhoe area used to push prams and barrows around the streets, but there were no caravans.

A policeman's working week was 48 hours, with half an hour off each day for lunch. There was no canteen at the police station, only a small rest room with a small gas ring provided. One day off each week was allowed, and each week the rest day was one day later. When the day off was a Saturday, the last day of the week, it was followed by a Sunday off, the first day of the next week. It was the only time the men had two days off together.

There were about 12 men posted at Dunstable then, headed by Chief Inspector Sandal, plus about three C.I.D. men. Mr Sandal eventually retired to Canada where he lived to a ripe old age, frequently returning for a holiday in Britain. The head of Division 'D' was at Leighton Buzzard, where there was a superintendent and a Sergeant called Loveridge.

There was one police car available, mostly for the Superintendent's use, and one motor bike, which was

kept at Houghton Regis by Robin Smith.

Most policemen were on foot patrol, with no means of communication - no mobile phones- except when they manned a point at a telephone kiosk or police box. These boxes were often provided in the towns instead of telephone kiosks and were painted blue, like the Tardis in Dr. Who. In rural areas policemen rode a bicycle. They had a schedule to meet and had to be at a telephone kiosk at a certain time and ring in to Headquarters to see if they were wanted anywhere in particular. If the contact time from the 'points' was not promptly met, the sergeant would be out to know the reason why! By the way, in rural police houses wives had to provide free telephone and door answering service at all times!

One well known jovial character in the Dunstable police force was Jack Stanley, a temporary war reserve constable who stayed on for a while after the war. He could always be found, when off duty, in a certain pub, the Union Club. Every week, when he was paid in cash, he would put his pay packet in his pocket to join many others, unopened!

Another well known character was 'Coal Black Charlie'. He wandered up and down the A5 and the A50, always polite, never giving any trouble. Norman still vividly remembers being out in the early morning and smelling Coal Black Charlie's breakfast. Charlie would be cooking a kipper - a lovely odour on the morning air which made him feel hungry!

It was against the law for anyone to be found on the road at night and tramps had to go to the nearest doss house. The nearest two were St.Margaret's, Luton, and one at Peckham, in south-east London. If a tramp was found too far away for him to get to either of these he was given a free railway warrant.

After his time in Dunstable Norman was moved to Ampthill for two years and then to Aspley Guise, where he had to meet three points in the night and had to cycle between The Bell in Aspley Guise and points at Woburn and Woburn Sands. Policemen were moved frequently at that time and in the year that our last child was born we actually had to move three times! We returned to Dunstable again for a few months in 1957, and Norman finally finished his career as a policeman in Luton.

*Sheila King*



## 13th century Dunstable Market in the Annals of the Priory

Omer ROUCOUX

The Annals of Dunstable are a valuable source of information for many events of the Middle Ages. Written originally in Latin and covering the years from 1201 to 1297, they describe events in Europe and other parts of the British Isles as well as local happenings which concerned the Priory and the Town. In their pages we find many references to Dunstable market, which give us some interesting glimpses into the local life of the time.

For instance, in the five years between 1253 and 1258, the price of wheat rose by 260%. Before the autumn of 1253 it sold for the equivalent of 25 pence a quarter (or 8 bushels, or 64 gallons). Five years later the price was equal to 67 modern pence. In Northamptonshire it was even more expensive, and cost one pound per quarter. The writer of the Annals says that in 1258 the Priory spent over £80 on bread, drink and provisions.

The King's Marshal, whose standards were supposed to be used in the market, frequently came to check the weights and measures being used by the stallholders. An inspection on the 12th July 1274 revealed that every one of the bushel measures being used in the town was defective, and the town - that is the town's burgesses - was fined 4 marks (£2.66).

The tradesmen were given new standard measures but at the end of the year they were again inspected and fined because there were still some short measures being used.

The following year the brewers were in trouble, either for using short measures, producing poor quality ale or charging excessive prices. This time the town was fined £2.00, but the author of the Annals was pleased to report 'nothing wrong with the bushels this time'. It wasn't the last time a fine was imposed, though, and a few years later the King's Marshal again found false measures in use, probably in the Christmas market.

In June 1279 the Bedford justices came to enquire about the clipping of coins, a practice sometimes punishable by death. Coin clipping was the removal of small slivers of the precious metal from the edges. Very small amounts of gold or silver taken from a large number of coins could represent large sums of money. The practice of coin clipping and of making false money must have been quite common at the time; in the same year a new coinage was introduced by the king to be exchanged for the old forged and clipped money.

In the same year the Prior and the Town removed the wooden sheds erected by the butchers over the benches where they were selling meat, because they were fixed to the ground. Later the butchers were allowed to cover the benches with foliage as long as it was not set in the ground.

In the reign of Edward I a survey of the whole country was carried out, known as the *Quo Warranto*, and all landowners were summoned to show by what right they claimed possession of their estates. The Prior of Dunstable, William de Wederhore, was summoned by the King's justice in Bedford to prove his claim to his privileges in Dunstable and elsewhere. He answered that

'the town of Dunstable was his fief which he obtained by a charter of Edward I, the present king'. This continued the charters granted by Henry I, Edward's ancestor, and confirmed by Henry III in the first year of his reign, in 1277. Amongst other things there were questions about the rights of markets and fairs, to which the Prior set out the following rulings:

(i) a market to be held on Wednesday and Saturday each week, and a fair to be held on August 1st.

(ii) a fair lasting three days was held on May 10th (St. Fremund's Day) and the two following days, which had been authorised by King John, grandfather of the present king, in 1203.

The Prior was completely exonerated of any blame and the court was fined 40 marks (£13.66) for false judgement. The expenses for the Prior's trip to Bedford were £18 and 1 mark (£18.66) and in Dunstable £14.7s.3d. (£14.36).

It was in 1290 that Edward I's queen, Eleanor, died and her body rested one night at the Priory as the funeral cortege passed through on its way to London. The cross commemorating this stood at the crossroads in the centre of the town until it was destroyed in the Civil War, but Queen Eleanor's name is still perpetuated in the town and we have a modern statue to replace the original cross.

But royal visitors were expensive and the chronicler of the Dunstable Annals tells us that, in 1294, the markets of Dunstable and other towns in the area suffered very much from the visit of Prince Edward - son of Edward I - to St. Albans and Langley. Two hundred meals a day were not enough for his kitchen and he paid for nothing. His

servants took all the provisions brought to market and even the cheese and eggs and any other merchandise in people's houses. They left hardly anything. They took bread and beer from the bakers and brewers and forced those who did not have any to bake and brew. The price of wheat in Dunstable rose to 16s.8d. (87p) a quarter (or 64 gallons, 291 litres).

The next year there was an exceptionally bad harvest and bakers were charging such a high price for bread that, at the request of the townsfolk, the Prior had his bailiffs put the situation right and severely punished the bakers.

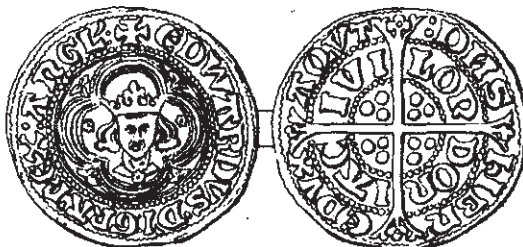
In 1296 the chronicler ceased to make regular entries in the Annals and thus this source of information comes to an end.

### Note about the value of money

Although the essential of this story is to compare the prices from one year to the next, it might interest the more curious readers to compare the prices with those of today.

The pound sterling was the value of one pound weight of silver. It was divided into 240 small pieces of one penny each. Three marks were £2. So one mark was  $\frac{2}{3}$  of a pound sterling or 13 shillings and 4 pence, or in the present money between 66 and 67p.

It is difficult to make a valid comparison with the present day because the social and economic structures of the Middle Ages were so different. In the 13th century an unskilled labourer was earning  $\frac{1}{2}$ p a day, a skilled carpenter made  $1\frac{1}{2}$ p, a freeman could live on £4 a year. So to have an idea of the real value of the money we have to multiply the figures quoted by a factor of 1000 with the possibility of making mistakes from half to twice the value!



A silver Groat (fourpenny-piece) from Edward I

# VISIT TO WEST WYCOMBE - JULY 18TH 2001

We boarded the coach in Bull Pond Lane under skies that threatened rain which came heavily upon us when we reached the area of Ivinghoe Beacon. A gentle journey through Wendover and Princes Risborough took us to the National Trust Village of West Wycombe and up a horrendously narrow lane to the church on the hill – well done our driver!!

The Church of St. Lawrence is a well known landmark, distinguished by the golden ball on the top of the tower. Originally the site of an Iron Age fortification it became the village church in the early 13<sup>th</sup> Century but as it was on top of a steep hill the villagers found it too great an effort to walk up the hill after a day's work, and so gradually the village relocated to its present lower level.



golden ball, together with the renovation of the chancel.

When today's visitors enter the church through the tower they come in to the vast open space of the nave with its magnificent painted ceiling said to be one of the finest in the country. The centre piece of this is a sun ray pattern surrounded by painted ornamental panels which, although on a flat surface, have been given a 3D effect by the skill of the artist. The interior of the nave is somewhat austere, caused by the green painted, hard and uncomfortable pews originally installed for the use of the villagers. There are however, several priceless items of great antiquity and beauty in the nave, including a clergy stall, a lectern and a pulpit, all being made of magnificent mahogany and thought to be the work of Chippendale.

The walls have 16 giant attached columns of imitation porphyry which in its natural state is a hard rock anciently quarried in Egypt. The floor of the nave is of beautiful



marble paving with a central sunburst effect reflecting that of the ceiling, it takes us through to the chancel where again the ceiling is the predominant feature. It has a flat surface on which is a striking painting of The Last Supper by the Milanese artist Giovanni Borghini. A warm effect is given by the rich panelled woodwork and the pink-amber walls. The altar, the reredos and the communion rail are all from the 18<sup>th</sup> Century, and behind them the east window contains Flemish painted medallions depicting biblical scenes. There are many other items of note in the chancel especially the Italian style font with doves and a climbing serpent ; one's eye is also taken by the private pews for the Dashwood family and again by the 3D painted effect of the flat walls depicting small columns and window surrounds.

We re-embarked on the coach for another tortuous journey – this time downhill to the village which has been on this site for 1,000 years – although most of the present timber framed buildings date from the 16<sup>th</sup> to the 18<sup>th</sup> Century. Our party split into groups to have a closer look at the buildings and then we all assembled for tea and biscuits in the building called the *Church Loft* which is the gem of the village. Built originally in the 15<sup>th</sup> Century its upper story is corbelled over the pavement and it was in this first floor room that medieval travellers from Oxford to London were able to rest as guests of the church. In one corner of the tiled roof is a bell turret of the 17<sup>th</sup> Century and a quaint clock overhangs the pavement. The ground floor room in which we partook of our refreshment was in 1780 divided into 4 tiny rooms, each with its own front door to the outside. These rooms were for the use of farmhands' widows after they had left their farm cottage on their husbands' deaths. At the rear of the *Church Loft* is Church Lane climbing steeply upwards. Among the properties here are cottages built in the 1700's and a haunted vicarage.

We must commend our host and guide, Mr. Varney, who gave up his evening to enlighten us in a friendly and humorous way on the history of the church and village, which he described at the end, with tongue in cheek, as "Varney's Blarney".

*Pam and Philip Buckle.*

*Left*

*The back of the Church Loft seen from the climbing Church Lane.*

# Strike up the Band !

In the *Newsletter* of Jan / Mar 1999, I wrote an article entitled 'A Century of Music in Dunstable', in which I informed members that I was looking into the history of Brass Bands, Orchestras and other music in Dunstable and district, mainly covering the period 1865-1965. I asked that anyone who may have any photos, memorabilia etc. might get in touch with me. Apparently it is not unusual for such requests to meet with a low response (actually nil), and my experience was no exception !

However I had already been in contact with two of our members, Mary Dolman and Douglas Darby, who continued to be in touch with much information especially in connection with the Excelsior Silver Prize Band and the Bible Class Orchestra, the Square.

Since that article was written however, I have managed to carry out a great deal of research into many more bands and organisations, and have been in contact with a whole number of persons who have been very helpful, in particular Mrs. Jane Stanley, Mrs. Pat Lovering, Mrs. Betty Tarbox and Mr. Jim Bull, while continuing a close contact with Douglas Darby on many matters .

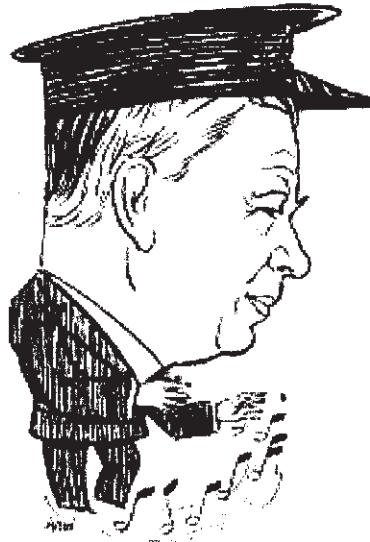
I have also carried out a more general research into the early history of music and musicians generally in the area - some of which by its very nature is somewhat conjectural. The result so far is a computer - based project with over 300 pages of text, photographs and other graphics from which, after discussions with the 'Book Castle', I am hoping to produce a book sometime during next year, featuring mainly the Bands & Orchestras from the mid 19th century to (initially) the mid / late 20th century. ( I should mention that the whole project is very much a 'labour of love' and certainly not a money making venture.)

One great source of information is of course the local Press, starting with the first Dunstable paper the 'Dunstable Chronicle' which began life in 1855 under the ownership and editorship of a noted local Wesleyan lay preacher and Temperance advocate, Mr. James Tibbett. Although the paper ceased publication in 1860, its reports of musical and related matters provided a good deal of information for the project. Later of course the 'Dunstable Gazette', launched in 1865 by Daniel Tibbett, the son of James, came to play its still continuing role in the life of Dunstable and became a prime source of information and of course pictures, from the time when techniques of printing photographs in newsprint enabled this to be done.

I have also been involved with the 'Photo 2000' project which has also provided useful material.

James Tibbet's background was very evident in the style and content of reporting in the 'Chronicle', but of course in those days the Church was very much in the centre of social and educational activities anyway.

An amusing example of the paper's reporting is shown below featuring the Eaton Bray Band on 5th June 1857 in Totternhoe - "*Totternhoe - Members of the 'Cross Keys'*



Mr William Dolman, at various times conductor of the *Dunstable Excelsior Silver Prize Brass Band* and the *Bible Class Orchestra* at The Square among his many activities.

A caricature published in the *Gazette* in April 1930, in a series "*Among the Notables*".

*Benefit Society held their annual feast , when the Brass Band from Eaton Bray was in attendance .After dining, and drinking the landlord's home brewed ale , they marched through the village playing some of their tunes to farmers at their homes, receiving a can of good ale each time. The senior members headed the band , while the younger members followed giving an entertainment by a few good dances and some homely rural songs.*

*As the band was about to leave they were asked to favour members with the National Anthem , at which the leader at once complied, but through taking the wrong key , struck up the 'Old Hundred' tune - he was stopped by the others , and tried again , but struck up 'Rule Britannia' which was performed in good style . He then tried again with better success and gave the National Anthem to the satisfaction of all parties." !*

The paper reports what sounds like a somewhat lively and bucolic event in a rather sanitised way, but with a touch of irony I think.

Many may think the confusion over the National Anthem may have been strongly influenced by the number of 'cans of good ale' consumed during the day, following the 'landlord's brew'- but the editor politely avoids any such comments. The 'homely rural songs' would have been interesting to hear too!

This item incidentally is a prime example of a local band being mentioned historically, but for which I have so far found no other evidence whatever. Another example is the Houghton Regis (village) Band. Perhaps somebody may be able to help (please !).

One of the main purposes of this ongoing project is to show how local musicians and the various bands etc. have played their part in the Town's and District's history and its celebrations over the years, and how this has changed in more recent times. More research continues, with Toddington and its music on the list, with school bands & orchestras, the Dunstable College Orchestra and others to come. If there are members who think they might have something to add to my researches I would be pleased to hear from them - please contact the Editor or myself.

Tony Ward

# DUNNO'S ORIGINALS

*John Buckledee, Editor of The Dunstable Gazette, describes work in progress on the forthcoming facsimile edition of Dunno's Originals, an early history of Dunstable.*

Strange that a chance piece of research in 1964 should lead me to work on a book in 2001. But that is what has happened.

I have been spending my spare time on the quite absorbing task of editing the first complete edition of Dunno's Originals, an eccentric and intriguing history of Dunstable which first began appearing in the town in 1821.

Paul Bowes, the owner of the Book Castle, had discovered Dunno's five published booklets, collected and bound into one volume, and was so fascinated that he decided to republish them as the first in a series of

handsomely bound reproductions of early books about Dunstable. He asked me, as part of a casual conversation, whether I knew the identity of the mysterious Dunno.

As it happened, not only did I know the answer but I knew of four further editions of the Originals which had never been published.

Paul became even more enthusiastic and enlisted me to transcribe them and write a preface about the real Dunno. It then became clear that a few notes were necessary to explain to modern readers some of Dunno's references, so a glossary has been written too.

This has led down all sorts of byways, seeking the whereabouts of such obscure items as a tree which grew from a stake thrust through a highwayman's heart and the field in Dunstable where Dunno thought jousting tournaments had been held.

All this came about because, when I was first appointed Editor of the Dunstable Borough Gazette in 1964, I was given the task of producing a special souvenir magazine to celebrate (in 1965) the newspaper's centenary.

The owners of the paper thought it would be easy to write a history of the Gazette. In fact, nearly all the records had been destroyed and the story could only be pieced together by interviewing relations of former editors and printers and viewing whatever souvenirs they had collected.

One line of research was through the work of James Tibbett, who had published the town's first newspaper, the Dunstable Chronicle, and whose son Daniel had founded the Dunstable Borough Gazette.

Some of the Tibbett publications - originally produced on a printing press in what is now the Moore's store in High Street South - were in the County Records Office at Bedford. Tibbett had republished the first five booklets of Dunno's history - originally produced by printers in Nottingham - as one volume in 1855. And in that section at the Records Office I was able to read Dunno's handwritten manuscript of parts VI, VII, VIII and IX of the Originals - never published.

When some of the articles in the Gazette's souvenir magazine fell short, I filled the space by quickly typing an extra article about Dunstable's early historians, mentioning Dunno and his missing Originals.

This eventually led to a conversation with the Dunstable historian T.W. Bagshawe, who had earlier been intrigued by the identity of Dunno. Mr Bagshawe, a frequent visitor to the Gazette in the days when the paper's office was on the corner of Albion Street, recounted how a letter he had written to the paper in the 1920s had prompted a response from one of Dunno's relatives. Thanks to this, there is no doubt about Dunno's real name and the detailed answer will be in the edition of the Originals to be published by the Book Castle later this year.

It is a tantalising volume because it describes so many things in pre-Victorian Dunstable which we can still see, although we now have to look very hard. The book should stimulate readers to do just that, and the additional notes and information will guide them towards the detailed works of later historians and archaeologists which correct and amplify many of Dunno's observations.

*John Buckledee*

**DUNNO'S  
ORIGINALS;**  
CONTAINING A SORT OF  
*REAL, TRADITIONAL, AND CONJECTURAL*  
**HISTORY**  
OF THE  
**ANTIQUITIES OF DUNSTABLE,  
AND ITS VICINITY.**

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**PART THE FIRST**

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COMPRISING  
**THE TALE OF DUNN;**  
OR THE  
**ORIGIN OF DUNSTABLE,**  
With cursory Remarks, Observations, &c. &c.

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AND CONTAINING  
"MATERIALS DUG FROM ANCIENT MINES."

You've read the tales of Robin Hood,  
That fam'd outlaw and archer good,  
Of Wallace bold, that Scotsman brave;  
But not of Dunn, his horse, and cave;  
Lo here the very tale you have.

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SOLD BY W. NICHOLLS,  
IKENILD-ROW, WEST-STREET, DUNSTABLE.  
1821.

# Dunstable - Hundred years ago

Dunstable Borough Gazette,  
September 1901

Our current Dunstable Gazette does an excellent job in showing us old photographs of the town and telling us about incidents which happened fifty and twenty-five years ago. I thought it would be a good idea if the Society's Newsletter gave information about Dunstable a hundred years in the past, so I went into Dunstable Library and consulted the micro-film archive. The paper started in 1865, so in a few year's time we shall be able to look at our town 150 years ago. In September 1901 there were four editions of the local paper, which was styled the 'Dunstable Borough Gazette and Luton Journal. An Advertising Medium For Beds. Bucks. And Herts. It cost one penny and consisted of two sheets folded into eight

pages. There were no photographs and few illustrations, apart from the advertisements, which covered the front page and most of the third page and occurred on most of the other pages as well. Most adverts were for local companies, but a few were for well known products such as 'Beechams Pills.'

The Gazette did not confine itself merely to local news. Being in the days before television, radio and mass circulation national papers, the Gazette reported local, national and international news. The present day Gazette is often accused of including news which is not local to Dunstable and the nearby villages; this is nothing new. The Gazettes of 1901 have much to report on Luton, events in Parliament and the doings of the nobility and foreign royalty. They contain a lot of syndicated material, including stories in serial form, poems and a women's column. The international news includes reports on the Boer War and the way in which several European dukes met their death. There is a whole column of railway time tables for the Great Northern, the London and Northwest and the Midland Railways. The proceedings of the Dunstable and Luton councils are reported in full, as are the local Courts of Session. There are accounts of football matches and the end of season averages for Hertfordshire County Cricket Club are given. Military matters are also recorded in detail.

In among all this, I found an article about the problems which afflicted the proposed Luton and Dunstable tramway scheme. This strikes me as being in the 'nothing new under the sun' category, so it is worth describing in more detail. The title of the piece is 'The Luton to Dunstable Tramways Scheme - Indefinitely Postponed.' In actual fact, the scheme had little to do with Dunstable. The main content is about the argument between Luton Town Council and the banks about the financing of the project and who could lease what to whom. As today, the people of Dunstable were innocent bystanders who had to accept the decisions of others. Luton eventually got its tram system but it didn't get any nearer Dunstable than the top of Beech Hill. The link with Dunstable was unlikely ever to materialise as there was already an adequate rail service in place.

I hope you have found this interesting. If you have any further knowledge of the local tramways, the editor would be pleased to hear from you. I hope to tell you more about Dunstable as reflected in the Borough Gazette a hundred years ago in future editions.

Hugh Garrod

The advertisements on this page and the next are from the *Dunstable Borough Gazette* .... from Wednesday September 29, 1897.

## A WONDERFUL MEDICINE BEECHAM'S PILLS



ARE universally admitted to be worth a Guinea a Box for Bilious and Nervous Disorders such as wind and pain in the Stomach, Sick Headache, Giddiness, Paleness and Swelling after Meals, Dizziness and Drowsiness, Cold Chills, Flushings of Heat, Loss of Appetite, Shortness of Breath, Constipation, Soury and Blotches on the Skin, Disturbed Sleep, Frightful Dreams, and all Nervous and Trembling Sensations, &c. The first dose will give relief in twenty minutes.

Every sufferer is earnestly invited to try one Box of these

Pills and they will be acknowledged to be

### WORTH A GUINEA A BOX.

For females of all ages these Pills are invaluable, as a few doses of them carry off all humours, and bring about all that is required. No female should be without them. There is no Medicine to be found equal to BEECHAM'S PILLS for removing any obstruction or irregularity of the system. If taken according to the directions given with each box, they will soon restore females of all ages to sound and robust health. This has been proved by thousands who have tried them, and found the benefits which are ensured by their use.

For a Weak Stomach, Impaired Digestion, and all Disorders of the Liver, they act like magic, and a few doses will be found to work wonders on the most important organs in the human machine. They strengthen the whole muscular system, restore the long lost complexion, bring back the keen edge of appetite, and arouse into action with the roebuck of health the whole physical energy of the human frame. These are Facts testified continually by members of all classes of society, and one of the best guarantees to the Nervous and debilitated is BEECHAM'S PILLS have the Largest Sale of any Patent Medicine in the World.

### Beecham's Magic Cough Pills.

As a remedy for Coughs in General, Asthma, Bronchitis, Affections, Hoarseness, Shortness of Breath, Tightness and Oppression of the Chest, Wheezing, &c., these Pills stand unrivalled. They are the best ever offered to the public, and will speedily remove that sense of oppression and difficulty of Breathing, which nightly deprives the patient of rest. Let any person give BEECHAM'S COUGH PILLS a trial, and the most violent cough will in a short time be removed.

Prepared only, and Sold Wholesale and Retail, by the Proprietor, Thomas Beecham, St. Helens, Lancashire, in Boxes 9d, 1s. 1d, and 2s. 6d. each.

Sold by all Druggists and Patent Medicine Dealers every where.

N.B.—Full directions are given with each Box.

## Help!

### Are you related to the Cooks or the Fields?

We have had a request from someone researching the history of her family, who came from Dunstable and Houghton Regis. Her parents' surnames were Cook and Field, but also connected were the names Summerfield, Pearce, Webb, Denton, King, Squire and Lake.

The lady has a number of old pictures and would like to make contact with anyone interested in these families, particularly before 1800.

If you can help, please contact Joan Curran.

## Town is bringing its history to life.

DUNSTABLE will be taking a major part in Local History Week, to be held nationwide from May 4 to 12 next year.

Already a group of interested organisations have met in Dunstable to form the Initial plans.

Efforts are being made to stage a Roman army re-enactment on one weekend and a demonstration of a Civil War skirmish on another.

The week should see the launch of a heritage trail in Dunstable which will include a pavement plaque commemorating King Henry outside the old Anchor archway in High Street North.

During the week the art work being donated to the town by Asda should be ready for unveiling.

On the Monday the annual Dunstable carnival may have a town history theme. This will again be centred on Bennett's Rec, where the funfair may stay for a longer period next year.

Many of Dunstable's public houses have asked for a framed history of their premises to be provided. Research for this is being undertaken by Dunstable historian Vivienne Evans, and the aim is to have the "pub trail" ready for the Local History Week.

A marquee will be erected in Priory Gardens to

provide space for various exhibitions and the plan is to hold a series of history lectures. Dunstable Manshead Archaeological Society will open its headquarters to visitors and is hoping to conduct an excavation in the town which the public can watch or even take part in.

The library in Vernon Place will be holding a family history fair that week, and Dunstable and District Local History Society will make available its display on the Second World War.

The Priory Church is aiming to have a display possibly on Dunstable characters and legends connected with the church and monastery, and there will be various demonstrations of living crafts, such as straw plaiting.

The Book Castle, in Church Street, Dunstable, will be launching some local history publications, and local traders and shopkeepers are being asked to provide special window displays.

Jean Yates, Dunstable's town centre promotions manager who is co-ordinating the efforts, is trying to provide a stage coach and horses plus some vintage buses to travel between the various displays.

*from Dunstable Gazette, August 8, 2001*

*Watling Lower School  
40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary*



On 1<sup>st</sup> May 2002 Watling Lower School will celebrate its 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Could anybody with any stories, memories, anecdotes, photographs or memorabilia from the early days of the School, who would like to share these, get in touch. Also, anyone who is in contact with any former members of staff, please get in touch.

Mrs Elisabeth Pynn, working Party Co-ordinator, can be contacted at *Watling Lower School, Bull Pond Lane Dunstable LU6 3BP. Telephone 01582 662232.*

## Dunstable Football Club.

THE ORIGINAL

# BRITISH LADIES' FOOTBALL TEAM

WILL VISIT

## DUNSTABLE

ON

## Saturday, October 2nd.

SEE SPECIAL BILLS.



*from the Dunstable Borough Gazette 19 September 1897*

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