

Newsletter

*Dunstable & District
Local History Society*

N°21

February 2004



The Chairman's Report

I would like to begin this report by thanking, on your behalf, all the other committee members, who work so enthusiastically to make our Society the success that it undoubtedly is. We work as a team with humour and mutual respect.

When I stand up to start a meeting, it is heartening to see a full hall with a mixture of familiar faces and newcomers. It is both a pleasure and a privilege to be chairman of our Society and is an experience I would not have missed for anything. The most daunting time of any meeting is the period before the speaker actually arrives. After that, I can relax a bit. We have been blessed with excellent talks recently.

Denis Bidwell got the winter programme off to a flying start with his entertaining discourse on 'Bedfordshire Privvies and Loos'.

Steven Coleman gave a detailed, informative and well illustrated talk in October on 'Bedfordshire War-time Defences'.

In November we heard from Janet Munro about the past uses of Dunstable Downs and of the National Trust's exciting plans for the future.

Our Christmas Social took a different form this year. It was again at the Methodist church. I would like to thank everyone who provided and served the seasonal refreshments. Hugh Granger gave a most entertaining talk, based on a stagecoach journey from London to York in 1820.

2004 began with Tony Woodhouse showing us some of his conjectural drawing of Dunstable and its Priory during the past centuries. He shared with us his expert knowledge on the subject.

An old friend of the Society, Elizabeth Adey, gave a talk in February on 'Pub and Pulpit'. This was an enthralling account of the conflict in Luton between the Temperance movement and the thriving public houses.

In October 2003, The Book Castle published Joan Curran's excellent 'Straw Hats & Bonnets'. This is number 5 in the Society's 'Old Trades of Dunstable' series. I would like to thank Joan and all the other people who worked so enthusiastically on

this title for producing such an informative, thorough and readable book. I would urge members who have not yet bought a copy to do so. At a mere £4.99, it is good value for money.

At the end of November we celebrated Tudor Day. As this, was the 400th anniversary of the death of Elizabeth I, the event did not focus solely on Henry VIII. Vivienne Evans produced an excellent book, 'Elizabeth I in Dunstable & District'. The weather was foul but all the indoor events were well supported.

At the time of writing, we are still waiting for news on the town's bid to buy Priory House. The signs are encouraging, but we shall just have to wait and see. It will be a great asset to the town and to this society if the bid is successful. I am grateful to Richard Walden for his regular updates on the situation, which we can read in the Gazette.

On December 23rd, I made the mistake of going to Grove House for what was supposed to be a concert to celebrate John Dunstable. This eminent musician died on Christmas Eve in 1453 and wrote the most sublime music for unaccompanied voices. For further details, please see Omer Roucoux's article in No. 6 of this Newsletter and the follow up in No. 15. I have a CD of John Dunstable music and was very much looking forward to the concert at Grove House. What we were subjected to was a plodding transposition for string and wind instruments, which completely failed to capture the spirit of the original. This was the same group who played so tunelessly in Priory House last History Week while Veronica Main was gamely demonstrating straw plaiting within earshot. I understand that this group, which has 'Dunstable' in its title, receives 'generous financial support from Dunstable Town Council, South Bedfordshire District Council and the Bedfordshire County Council Community Fund'. As a Council Tax payer, I think we ought to ask for our money back.

John Lunn's family would like to thank all his friends who visit him in Capwell Grange Nursing Home or who sent him Christmas or birthday cards.

Hugh Garrod.

CHAUVINISM OR CHIVALRY ?

Extract from an article which appeared in the Bucks Chronicle of April 5th 1856. It was written in response to views expressed by Mr Bennett, a watch-maker from Cheapside, London, who had called attention to the destitute state of a number of London women and pointed out that there were opportunities for them to work for wages. A number could actually be employed in his own trade of watch making. The writer of the article is not in favour of women working, and this extract includes his criticism of the hat trade and the effect it has on women.

The female portion of the population are to be turned into labourers, and great interest is felt in the new proposition. If we did believe that the best way to remove the miseries of life was to make the women toilers, we should be as warm in our applause as many writers have been. Woman's place is home, and her mission of that soft and elevating character that, to make her a toiler for wages, is only to unfit her for the higher and holier purposes of life.

At this point the writer highlights the Lancashire cotton mills where thousands of young women are employed from an early age for long hours and therefore - do not know how to make a pudding, mend a stocking or stitch a shirt. Continuing to work after marriage, and with the coming of children, the comforts of home are neglected so the husband seeks the alehouse, and the once smart factory girl becomes the grumbling, hardworking, dissatisfied wife.

Straw-bonnet sewing, or as it is vulgarly called, "skull-thatching", is the employment of thousands of young women. In the part of the country where it is the staple trade, no sooner can little children use the needle, than they are set to stitching straw. They stitch and stitch from early childhood to girlhood; and on and on to womanhood. The stitching capabilities are taxed to the highest point; and it has become almost a proverb, that a bonnet-sewer will not make a good housewife. Hundreds of homes in the immediate neighbourhood of Luton, Dunstable and Leighton, would afford ample testimony of the truth of this assertion. The work of the house is generally badly done. The regular toil of stitching, weaving, or rag-picking, has assumed a dry mechanism, which triumphs over the love of a neat and well-kept home. For the woman to be educated properly for her duties as a wife and mother, she needs almost all the time that intervenes from her cradle to her marriage.

Bonnet-sewing wives, taken from the "room" to a place where they cannot find employment, their whole souls having been pent up by stitching, they are ignorant of the higher duties of women, and become fretful and discontented. In many instances, they continue to go to the workroom after they are married. The state of such homes is so well known, that we need not describe them. There are trades which women can follow, and seem more at home with than men. We do not plead that a young girl should not be allowed to follow a daily calling for wage. The only things we say is that while she is struggling all her time at the mechanical employment, her culture must be neglected, and her heart in a measure grow callous. The evil has grown to such an alarming extent, that we are not prepared with a remedy. It is fashionable, in this part of the county, to send daughters to Luton or Dunstable at the ages of fifteen or sixteen years; and we have finely dressed dolls, calling themselves women. When the first blush of matrimonial life has passed away, how often do men, who have been caught with fine feathers, wish that the women had been taught how to manage a home, as well as they can make a bonnet.

If Mr Bennett's proposition can reduce poverty by all means let it be carried into execution. The experience of women following trades has not been very productive of good wives and mothers, and we had rather welcome a scheme which would give noble mothers, than one which turns the female into a working animal. Industry in a woman is always praiseworthy. The ignorance of domestic life can never be compensated by the gains of toil by a female in her younger years. When a woman assumes the command of a home, it will find greater grace in the sight of her husband if good management is observed than even if the wife knew how to partly make a watch or stitch a bonnet. If she follows her calling after marriage, the home must be neglected. The wages of the man in a well regulated state of society, should be sufficient to provide for home without the wife having to toil, except in the keeping of her house in order.

With a moderate call on the females to labour, we see no reason why they should not make good wives. They may stitch books, sew bonnets, work at steel pens or buttons, japan with their smooth hands, weave calico or pick rags, make lace, or work at the watch trade, but let not the long hour or severe toil take away the time which should be

spent in teaching them the higher duties of their sex.

The article prompted this letter to the editor of the Dunstable Chronicle - 19 April 1856

Dear Sir, - I had laid my pen aside without any intention to resume it at the present, but an article in the 'Bucks Chronicle' of April 5th, on the "Employment of Women", in which the most insulting language is used towards the hard-working and respectable class of Bonnet Sewers in Dunstable and Luton, has induced me to make a few remarks. I must say that I was somewhat surprised that such remarks should have come from a town like Aylesbury, as "skull thatching" and "finely-dressed dolls calling themselves women". I am disposed to believe that there will be found amongst the bonnet sewers of this neighbourhood, as fine a specimen of female character as can be found in any part of the country; and at least as much intellectual power and fitness for the higher duties of life as you will find in Aylesbury, on any of its Annual Hiring days, when very much



after the manner of the American Slave Market, the young women of Aylesbury and neighbourhood are examined in muscle and limb to test their ability, for the higher duties of life in drudgery of the coming year. I do not believe on the one hand that there is

anything in the manufacture of bonnets, that would prove an obstacle to matrimonial happiness, or moral progress; neither do I see anything in the annual exhibition, or yearly drudgery of the Aylesbury females to prepare them for the higher duties of life.'

Yours truly,

An Admirer of the Female Sex

31 July 1869

ALLEGED HARSH TREATMENT

Rev. H F Smyth called the attention of the Board to the case of a little orphan girl who some months ago had been removed from the Guardians by a Plait Mistress at Dunstable, who undertook that she should do the housework and a little sewing. Last week a person told him that they went to the plait school and he found the mistress beating the little girl because she had not been able to do the proper amount of plaiting, although the child had been in the habit of doing 35 yards of plait in addition to the whole of the housework. The girl did not complain of the food or general treatment but only of being beaten. Proceedings had been instituted against the mistress of the plait school and the case would be heard at Dunstable on Wednesday. He therefore suggested that a legal gentleman should be engaged to watch the case on behalf of the friendless girl. It was finally agreed by the Board that Mr Shepherd, solicitor of Luton should be engaged.

7 August 1869

A WARNING

Mrs Hutchins, a plait school keeper was charged with beating Mary Brimley aged 14 years, with a stick. The defendant pleaded guilty and expressed her sorrow for having done wrong. Mr Shepherd of Luton appeared in support of the charge. He said that the child, who was an inmate of the Luton Union, had been placed by the Board of Guardians with Mrs Hutchins, her duty being to do the housework and to plait. It appeared the child did the first part of housework, after which she was required to do 35 yards of plait. She had not completed her plaiting at eight o'clock on the evening in question, the consequence of which was Mrs Hutchins stuck her three times with a stick. The last time striking her in the face. The proceedings were taken by the Guardians, not simply to punish Mrs Hutchins but to show the public that they could not punish children with impunity, nor take the law into their own hands. The child was an orphan and he thought every child should receive the care and attention of those to whom they were committed, but especially those who had neither father nor mother to protect them. He did not press for a heavy fine, as the expenses would be considerable. The Mayor expressed a hope that the Press would take notice of the sentiments advanced by Mr Shepherd and that the case would be a warning to those to whom children were entrusted. The Bench inflicted a fine of 4s, which with expenses £1.16s. made a total of £2 and in default to be imprisoned for one month. Time was allowed for payment of the money.

DUNSTABLE'S TUB FIRE ENGINE

Borough Gazette's Special Wednesday 16 January 1929 8 pages 2 pence

Oldest Appliance in Existence Now Resting in British Museum

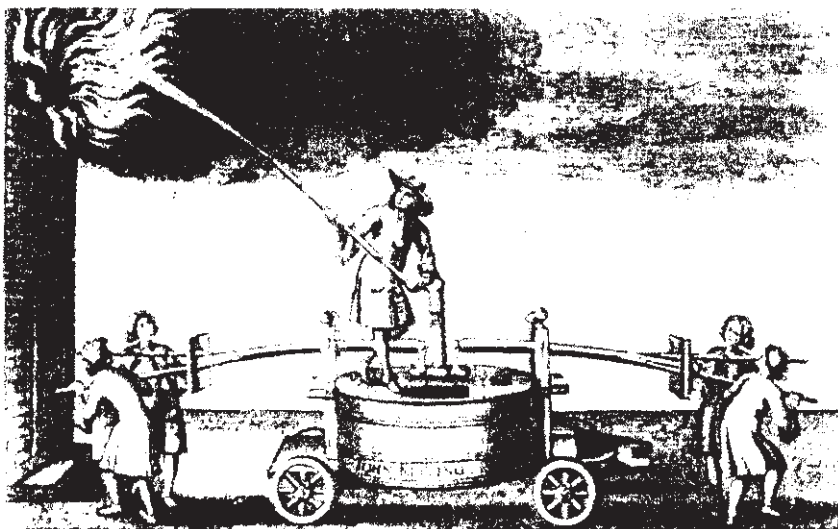
A Dunstable fire "engine" has just achieved fame in that it has found a home at the British Museum. It is the oldest known fire engine in England, and the illustration shows what a quaint appliance it is. It originally consisted of a large oval wooden tub resting on a carriage with solid wooden wheels, but the wheels have disappeared.

There is some doubt as to its exact age. In the Dunstable Corporation Year Book in a list of historical events compiled by the late Mr. B George we read that in "1886 the ancient fire engine, 317 years old, was sold to Messrs. Shand and Mason, London. This engine subsequently formed part of the Lord Mayor's procession, London, and was exhibited at the Health Exhibition." It has been shown at many exhibitions since, and its extreme quaintness has led to it being photographed and pictured in leading journals throughout the country. It was last shown in 1903, at the Earl's Court Exhibition, when a writer in "Fire and Water" said of it "Almost the first machine one sees is the Dunstable veteran of 1670, or thereabouts, and which was last used at a fire in the town named in 1841, and, therefore, had a long and probably useful career." Another writer, commenting upon the appearance of the old engine at a Crystal Palace exhibition of fire appliances, said: "It is dated 1670 and is inscribed with the motto 'Justitia omnibus fiet,' which motto must be taken as more descriptive of the aspirations of the people of Dunstable than the uses of the fire engine." Among the authorities at Dunstable the belief firmly obtains that the earlier date is the correct one.

From an ancient print issued by the makers of this old veteran we learn that "These engines which are the best to quench great fires, are by John Keeling, in Black Fryers (after many years experience), who also maketh all other sorts of engines". The print shows how the old manual was used. The engine having been drawn within close proximity to the fire, and the large tub filled with water. A fireman mounts to the boarded top and plies the stream of water from a hydrant connected with the pipe shown in the centre, four pumpers vigorously working the crossbeam pumps meanwhile. The illustration shows quite a powerful jet of water being thrown up. It is stated in "Fire and Water" that this curious old manual "was in use at Dunstable from about 1670 - 1841". The last occasion of its use was at the great fire at Dunstable in the same year as Queen Victoria and Prince Albert halted here on their way to Woburn Abbey. In that extensive conflagration nineteen houses were burned down in High Street and Church Street, and we are afraid that our old friend, however vigorously manned and worked, was inadequate to cope with such an outbreak. A new engine was not, however, purchased until 1857.

The old veteran was sold for a mere song, and when Messrs. Shand and Mason ceased to be in existence, the "engine" passed into the possession of Messrs. Merryweather's, the well-known fireengine constructors, who absorbed the business of the "old tub's" previous owners. It was Messrs. Merryweathers' who, this month, handed the "engine" to the British Museum authorities.

And so after, some 250 or more years, it has found an honoured resting place.



A picture of the Dunstable Tub Fire Engine has been published in an article by John Lunn in our Newsletter n° 8, page 41, of September 1997.

The illustration on the left comes from R.J. Unstead : "Looking at History" (Black - 1966)

WHO MOVED THE SARACEN'S HEAD ?

Joan Curran

At the time of the Crusades the Saracen's Head was a common enough name for an inn, and the list of property in Dunstable seized by Henry VIII after the Dissolution of the Monasteries includes a 'certain inn there called le Sarzenhedd', in South Street. Since the Saracen's Head familiar to us today is known to be an old building, it was easy to assume that it was the original inn. So it came as a surprise to find in an old deed of 1810 a reference to a building 'formerly an inn known as the Saracen's Head'.

The question was, who transferred the name, and when? And where was the first Saracen's Head, and what had the second one been before it took on the name?

There were a few clues to the history of the first inn. It was occupied by a Widow Thorpe in 1627 and twenty years later it was owned by Richard and Thomas Smith. In the 18th century it was owned first by William Hatter, then by William Bealey, or Bailey, and was sold in 1851 to John Swindell, who already owned the Angel and Crown in Middle Row and the Duke of Bedford's Arms (now part of Grove House). After his death his heirs sold it to Thomas Warren, who promptly mortgaged it to a wealthy gentleman in St Albans.

Thomas Warren was the last publican there, and in 1785 the wealthy gentleman's son, Mr Joseph Pomfret van der Meulen, took over ownership of the property, which may have been because the mortgage repayments were not kept up, or maybe the two men reached some sort of financial agreement. The former inn was then let to a Mr Brown, later became a hat factory, and was demolished in 1851 to make way for Albion Buildings (William Hill's today). And there the first part of the story ends.

But further along High Street South was a row of three cottages, near to Fryers Pond, which the Crouch family had owned for a number of years and let out to tenants. By the end of 1751 the owner was James Crouch, a bricklayer, who died leaving a young widow and two small daughters, Hannah and Mary, aged 7 and 4. In his will he left the cottages in trust for the children, to be inherited when they reached the age of 21 and to be divided equally between them. The girls grew up and got married and Hannah became Mrs Hannah Cook. Their widowed mother died in 1785 and the records of the next Manor Court say that the property known as the Saracen's Head had 'descended' to John Cook, Hannah's husband, presumably giving his name because Hannah was a married woman. But John Cook also died four years later. Hannah became the landlady in her own right and her descendants were to run the Saracen's Head for about another fifty years.

In the Vestry Minutes for 1892 it is recorded that one meeting, seeking warmer and more comfortable surroundings than the chilly parish church, adjourned, as they discreetly put it, to 'Mrs Cooke's, at the Saracen's Head'. How much of the row of cottages the inn occupied at that time is not clear, but Hannah bought out her sister's share and the whole row was probably gradually incorporated into one building. In 1815 there was a severe fire and the inn had to be largely rebuilt, but its present appearance suggests that the rebuilding retained the size and shape of the original row of cottages.

There is, however, one more puzzle. 150 years ago the building was described in a sale catalogue as 'Brick and timber and slate roofed' Who gave it its pseudo-eighteenth century facade? The answer must be that it was one of the brewers who owned it at one time in the 19th century. It could well have been T. Sworder & Son, a large concern who owned it in the late 1800s, who decided to alter its appearance to make it look like an eighteenth century coaching inn. Whoever it was, the distinctive facade certainly adds interest and character to the High Street today.

Recent research has made this revised and more accurate version of the history of the inn possible.

Photo O. Roucoux Oct 1982



RECOLLECTIONS OF DAGNALL IN THE EARLY 1900s

The general condition of the village was, as I remember, so very different from what we know today. The main roads were little better than cart tracks; tar roads were unknown until the early 1920s. Footways on the roadside, being in the centre of grass verges, became very muddy during the winter months. The iron tyres of farm carts sank into the surface of the road to a depth of four to five inches. Bicycle tyres often received punctures owing to the rough conditions. Motor cars were rarely seen in the village and farmers used horse drawn vehicles to convey them to market.

The doctor came out from Dunstable to attend patients and sometimes this was on horse-back; other times his coachman drove him in a horse-drawn brougham. Medicine was dispensed by the doctor and left to be collected from an open window of his dispensary - this often meant someone traveling in to Dunstable on foot.

There were two bakers in the village and the bread was delivered to the door daily, and to neighbouring villages. Several butchers from other villages delivered meat in their tradesmen's carts. These carts, drawn by horse or pony, were totally enclosed and access to the goods was by lowering the tailboard on chains, and it then became the cutting-up block. Spring-balance scales hung from an arm extended from the top of the cart.

A four-wheeled horse trolley, laden with hardware, paraffin, candles and almost anything you cared to ask for, came round once a week. The draper brought his wares in a horse-drawn tilted cart and from him mothers bought yards of shirting to make shirts for their men folk.

Milk was not delivered to the door for a good number of years; skimmed milk was collected direct from the farm and cost about a halfpenny per pint. The cream from this milk was made into butter.

Coal was delivered from the town and cost about £1 per ton. Wood logs were burnt in the open grates as cottagers were allowed in the woods to collect windfalls from the trees. A sub-post office and general shop catered for those needs, and there was also a general shop attached to a six-day only beer licence public house. The postman delivered the mail from Little Gaddesden, either by bicycle or on foot.

Main water supply was not brought to the village for many years, so drinking water had to be raised from wells about fifty feet deep. Rain water from the

house roofs was stored in underground tanks and used for washing, etc. This soft water was of great benefit as 'Tide' [washing powder] had not yet reached the village; long bars of yellow soap were mainly used. Brick built coppers heated by wood fires were used for large quantities of hot water. Food was cooked in the kitchen range and on ironing day the flat irons had to be heated on the top of this.

Main drainage was not even thought of and lavatories were usually situated at the far end of the garden. Sink drains discharged into the dumb wells that allowed the water to soak into the chalk.

Oil lamps that required to be trimmed and filled with paraffin daily during the winter months and a candle to light one to bed were the only means of artificial light. Mains electricity did not reach the village for quite a few years. This was also the case regarding the telephone.

The seven farms surrounding the village, together with nineteen cottages, the Mission Church and the Parsonage, belonged to the Ashridge Estate. Lord Brownlow was responsible for the curate's living. The cottages had large gardens, a barn and a pigsty, which enabled the tenants to rear and fatten a pig to be slaughtered and cured for bacon. There was a building with a baker's oven which was provided for a group of cottagers.

The oven was heated by burning a faggot of wood inside it; the ashes were then drawn out and the bread dough was baked.

All the properties situated between the allotment gardens and the Parsonage, and land stretching back to the Studham Road, were owned by Messrs. Batchelor Brothers. This included a brewery, a malt-house, piggeries, and cottages for those employed at the brewery. Also the property included a small private chapel because of a dispute between the Methodists and the Church of England. The Batchelors' private house was known as The Collyers and was situated at the north-west end of the village. A building near to the entrance gate was called 'The Tramp Ward' and provided one night's shelter for any tramp on his wanderings. The next day he was given a drink of small beer at the brewery before he continued his journey.

The Cross Keys public house also brewed beer for sale in their own house and for customers requiring larger quantities, like 4, 9 and 36 gallon barrels.

The single bell at the Mission Church used to summon the boys and girls to weekday school and the congregation to worship on Sundays, when there was a much longer ding-dong on account of the ladies requiring more time for hat adjustment, etc. One Sunday, when the very deaf churchwarden was tugging away at the bell rope, the clanger parted friends with the bell. Not being too sure if his hearing had deteriorated still further the warden continued his efforts until the village blacksmith entered the church. He asked the blacksmith 'Is the bell ringing, Will?'. A shake of the head from Will confirmed that it was not, and the bell has remained silent to this day.

The majority of Dagnall folk have been Chapel rather than Church and full days used to be spent at the Chapel on Sundays. This resulted in young folk not being quite so interested in religion when they grew older. The Sunday School treat consisted of a ride in a farm wagon drawn by two horses to Wards Coombe, where the day was spent playing games, etc. After tea under the trees and a scrabble for sweets the return journey was made. The Chapel did attain its centenary but after a partial collapse of the building it was demolished and a private house was built on the site.

The Red Lion public house was served by Roberts & Wilson, who brewed at Ivinghoe. It was fully licensed and because of this better patronised than the Golden Rule, which had only a six-day beer licence. 'Bethshan' had been a public house at one time called the Bell.

Perhaps the blacksmith's shop near the Red Lion and the wheelwright's shop a short distance further up the

road should be mentioned, as here was where one of the old saw pits once used to rip trees into planks.

This article was written by Fred Putman and given to Bernard Stevens some years ago.

In his picture of a typical Buckinghamshire village in the early 20th century there is one episode Fred Putman does not mention which set tongues wagging in the neighbourhood.

John Batchelor, one of the brewers mentioned, lived with his sister, Dorcas, in the big house now called Colliers. When his sister died, round about 1900, John had her buried in his garden. And it is said that when he had to have his leg amputated he brought it home and buried that in the garden, too!

On September 4th 1911 John himself died and the executors were faced with the problem of what to do about the coffin in the garden. A licence to exhume the body had to be hurriedly obtained from the Home Secretary and on the evening of the 6th September the workmen started to dig. But, as one young lady wrote, 'everything fell to pieces'; the cheap coffin had rotted and they had to send to Dunstable for a new one. It was 'all too terrible to describe', though that didn't stop the Daily Mail from printing the story. After the exhumation had been carried out John and Dorcas Batchelor were finally buried at New Mills Baptist Chapel in Hemel Hempstead.

Joan Curran

Newsletter anniversary

Our first Newsletter saw the light of day in February 1994. Having read through my back-copies, I am amazed and delighted by the wide variety of the subjects covered and by the attention to detail which they show. I am sure all readers will join with me in congratulating our Editor, Omer Roucoux, on ten years at the helm of our excellent publication. Our Society is the richer for its existence. I would also like to thank all the people who have contributed to the Newsletter in the last ten years. I hope that they, and others, will continue to provide our Newsletter with a wide variety of informative and entertaining articles.

Hugh Garrod

Dunstable Local History Week

DUNSTABLE AT WAR

**From Boudica to World War II
Exhibitions, re-enactments and archaeological digs,
etc.
3rd to 9th June 2004**

Ford End Mill Opening Times 2004

12 April * 3 May* 9 May* 23 May 31 May*
13 June 27 June 11 July 27 July
8 August 22 August 30 August* 12 September 26 September

Open afternoons 2.30 - 5.30

Milling on the dates marked, when stone ground wholemeal flour will be on sale

DOOLITTLE MILL, TOTTERNHOE



Above Still working in 1858
On the right:
Photo by D.Lindsey Dec.03
Below Photo ORx in 1987



In the 'Newsletter' three years ago (No. 14, page 84) I outlined the plans Mr. Alan Harman the new owner had for this combined wind and watermill which, along with the mill house, is grade II* listed building. Doolittle is one of only six combined wind and watermills in Britain.

I called on him to find out how he was getting on. The answer is simple - very well indeed. He has completed all he set out to do in the first phase.

The converted and refurbished grain barn has adapted successfully for his publishing business and the mill house has been made habitable and comfortable although there is still damp in one corner. The large tree which overhung it threateningly, has been cut back.

The curtilage of the house and mill has been tidied up and, to ensure privacy, a new two rail fence has been erected to separate the buildings from the road. The fence does not detract from the view of the mill from the front in any way.

More importantly the mill building has been made weather tight by fitting a new lead cap to the tower to seal it and by completely renovating the brickwork following advice from English Heritage, the planning authority and others. Nearly 3000 reclaimed bricks were used to match and replace the badly weathered and cracked ones. All the brickwork was then repointed

with a lime based mortar, again as advised by English Heritage. New windows and a door to match the originals have been fitted.

Inside, the mill has been cleared of all rubbish, the waterwheel channel and the pit wheel pit have been cleaned out. Any artefacts, pieces of equipment have been salvaged and stacked ready for identification and cleaning with a view to possible reuse in the future.

Outside, the rear of the mill has been tidied up and lawns created stretching from the mill to the millpond.

Mr Harman has borne all the expense himself which included hiring scaffolding for six months.

Next he plans to improve the appearance of the outbuildings by coating the old and replacement corrugated iron with bitumen and fixing weather boarding over the unsightly concrete block walls.

Doolittle now looks cared for again, and once the brickwork has weathered and mellowed, it will be a pleasing sight. However, on a personal note, one does miss the tree growing from the top of the tower and which has characterised the mill for so many years!

David Lindsey

NOTE: A brief history of the mill and a photograph can be found in 'Newsletter' No. 9, pages 49-50.