

NEWSLETTER

Dunstable & District Local History Society
No. 30 August 2008



Chairman's Notes August 2008

Joan Curran's new book, *The History of Priory House*, has just been published by the society. You can buy a copy at Priory House, or at the society's next meeting.

I was really impressed by the efficiency with which the book was produced. Joan heard that visitors to the house were often asking for a souvenir booklet about the building. She delved into the records and uncovered many fascinating facts – did you know, for instance, that one owner of the house ran a home for lunatics next door?

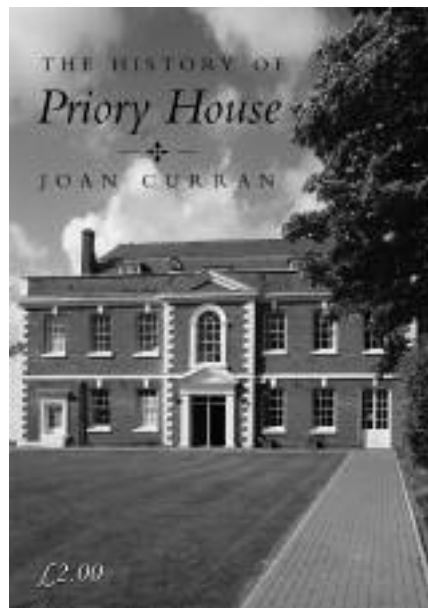
Joan completed her draft manuscript in the Spring and the pressure was on for it to be published in double-quick time, ready for the town's Festival of Living History on July 5 and 6.

Your committee agreed to underwrite the costs – such an effort is surely what the society's funds are for – and David Turner used his computer and design expertise to produce printer-ready pages.

Within a few short weeks the book was on sale – a remarkably quick turn-around. It costs £2 and I hope every society member will buy a copy. We need to sell a few hundred to recover our outlay and make funds available for future enterprises like this.

The Festival of Living History was a huge event, and your society made every effort to give it our full support. Joan Curran and Rita Swift spent many days preparing a special exhibition for Priory House, and many members gave up their time at the week-end to look after the exhibits and run a film show of old Dunstable photos. Let's mention in particular Guy Henley, Gordon Ivinson, Una Basham, Joan MacKinnon, Pat Bird, David and Sue Turner, Mary Davies and Tony Woodhouse. There were a few problems – our gazebo had to be abandoned because of the high winds on Saturday, Queen Elizabeth and her court took refuge amongst part of our display on the soggy Sunday, and the crowds were not so large as expected – but at least we tried!

Our monthly speakers continue to set very high standards. It was particularly pleasing to see so many visitors enjoying the story of Luton Girls Choir as told by Margaret Hale-Owens and members of the Pasque Harmony. It was your society's idea to invite the Pasque Harmony to illustrate the talk with a live performance, rather than recordings, and the girls were thrilled by the reception



they received. They raised £234.70 for hospice funds during the evening.

It was so sad to hear of the death of Pauline Keen, so soon after the death of her father Fred Moore. Just before she died she sent the society some of Fred's history treasures, including a printed booklet containing a poem about workers in the Dunstable hat trade "of 20 years ago" by William Collier. The booklet is undated but it is dedicated to Arthur Langridge, who was Mayor of Dunstable between 1894 and 1896. Hopefully, we can have more about this in the next newsletter.

Gordon Ivinson went to a huge amount of trouble to arrange the society's very successful trip to the Houses of Parliament. Some ladies told me afterwards how impressed they were with Andrew Selous, the South-West Beds MP who hosted our visit.

Mr Selous is (very) tall, dark and handsome...he's clearly gained a few extra votes.

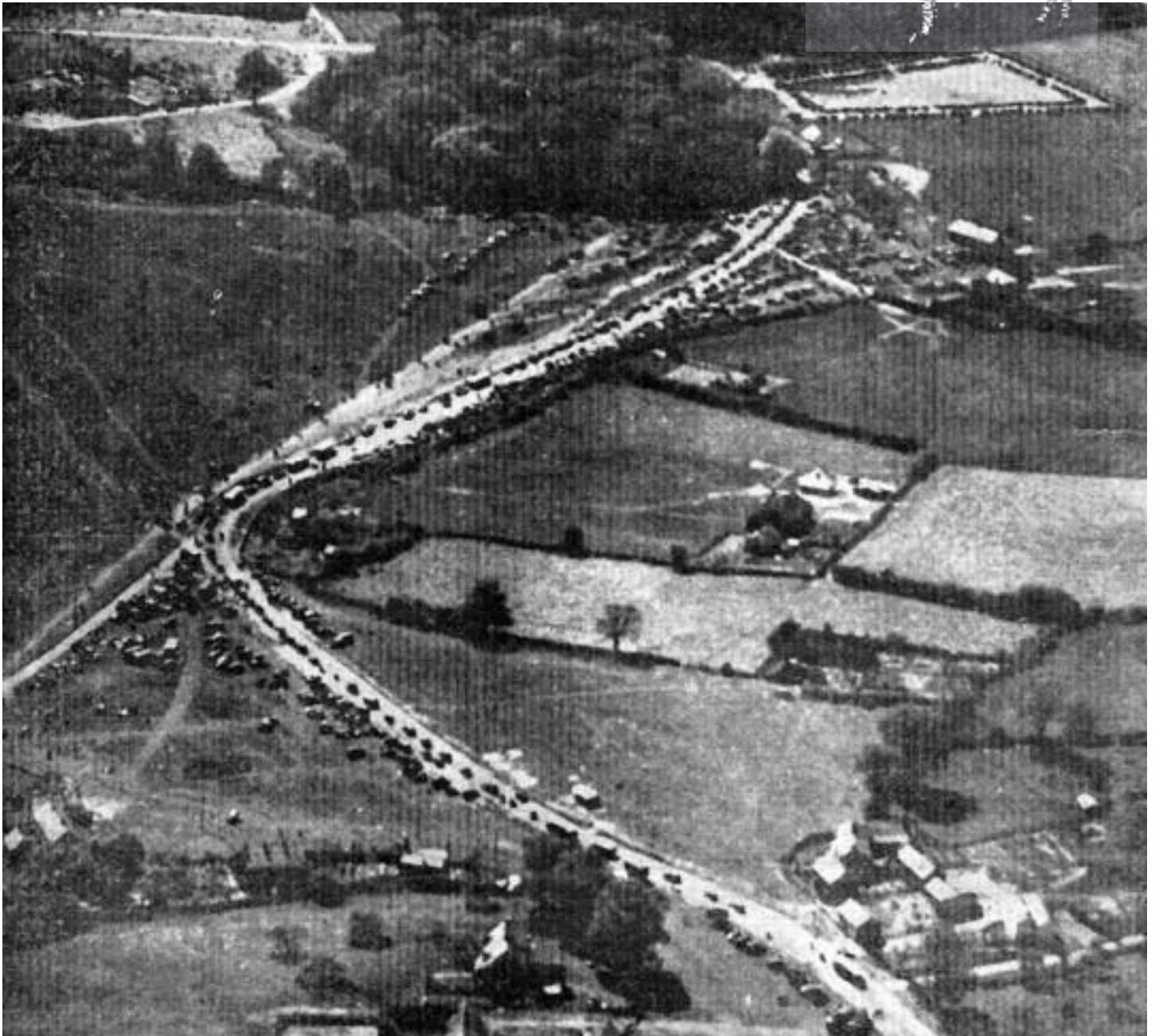
The outing to Ingestone Hall nearly had to be called off because not enough members bought tickets. In the end we invited members from other societies to make up the numbers. Perhaps there are too many "stately home" outings on offer, or perhaps the costs are becoming too high. It's something we will be discussing next year.

The society's web site is up and running and receiving a lot of "hits", judging by the amount of correspondence it is provoking. In particular, there's been interesting information arriving about the Harris family, who ran a butcher's shop on the corner of Wood Street, and the Willis family who had a cycle shop at Flinte House in High Street North. We'll be adding a lot more material to the site when time permits, but there's already plenty to view. You can find it via the Dunstable Book Castle web site, or simply type in "Dunstable Local History Society" on the Google search engine.

My tongue-in-cheek example, in the last newsletter, of a possible Dunstable t-shirt motto prompted some further amusing suggestions. The trendiest was: "Dunstable History Society – it's SO last year!" And I've been pointed in the direction of the Hugh Grant film "Music and Lyrics" where the up-to-the-minute young heroine comments: "I don't think about the past – it's too long ago!"

John Buckledee

The Zoo



Reproduced from the Luton News on May 29 1931

This aerial view of Whipsnade was published by the Luton News on May 29 1931 to show the traffic chaos around the Zoo which had opened a few weeks earlier. The original photo is lost so this reproduction is a computer scan from the old paper.

The paper's original caption read: "How absolutely inadequate the narrow Bedfordshire roads are to cope with the Bank Holiday traffic which converges from all points of the compass on the new Zoo in Whipsnade, was shown on Whit Monday when there quickly developed a tremendous influx of visitors. Above is a staff photographer's air picture taken at the height of the crush."

The paper added: "The failure of the buses to return in good time from Whipsnade made a queue necessary at Luton railway station and this grew to nearly a quarter-of-a-mile in length. Trippers from London

were compelled to wait several hours in the queue before they could proceed to Whipsnade."

The photo is looking across Whipsnade Green. The village church would be near the bottom left side of the picture and the zoo is in the distance, with its entrance behind the oval-shaped wood (top centre) which became the park's bird sanctuary.

The paper is among several sent to the history society by Ken Cooper, the Luton historian, who is now living in retirement in Devon.

These include a copy of the Dunstable Borough Gazette dated July 21 1897 which contains a graphic account of "the great storm" which caused widespread flooding in the town. We reproduce the article opposite.

THE STORM



Reproduced from the Gazette, July 21st, 1893

THE STORM.—Yesterday (Tuesday) afternoon a thunder-storm, remarkable for the heavy deluge of rain which accompanied it, broke over Dunstable. The storm appears to have approached us from a northerly direction, and a singular feature was the course it took and the strict line of demarcation of the storm area. For instance, while Dunstable was flooded and the streets turned into swollen torrents, very little rain fell beyond the Half Moon Hill, while Whipsnade, Kensworth and Studham appear to have been untouched. A probable explanation is that the storm approached us, passing over Toddington and Chalgrove, where it is reported that a number of sheep were killed by lightning, and was turned in its course by the Chiltern Hills, swerving around and passing off in the direction of Leighton Buzzard. On all hands it is said that never before has such a deluge of rain been experienced in Dunstable. In an astonishingly short space of time streets became like rivers, while the flood poured over the kerbing and pavements and rapidly filled the cellars up to the level of the ground floor. Near the Grammar School, a remarkable sight was seen. The roadway for some distance was covered with a foot depth of water, while on either side the flood was pouring into the

adjoining houses. A number of children making their way home from the Chiltern Road school, became imprisoned near the Bull Inn, and rescuers were to be seen hard at work, divested of boots and stockings, carrying the youngsters over the flood. Beneath the railway bridge at Upper Houghton the water became so deep that for a short time horses had to literally swim through it. The storm lasted but a very short time, but for hours afterward the members of the Fire Brigade were busy pumping water from the flooded houses. We hear that a boy who was playing around the pumping tackle, got run over, but was not seriously injured, and fortunately, although the lightning had a very vivid and dangerous appearance, no serious damage appears to have been done in this neighbourhood by the storm.

WW1 MEMORABILIA

Does any member have any World War One memorabilia they could lend the society for a display to commemorate the 90th anniversary? If so, could they please contact Joan Curran.

HOUSE RE-NUMBERING 1920



In the previous edition of this Newsletter, I wrote about my researches into old Dunstable Directories.

This prompted me to produce a chart of the house re-numbering, which happened at the end of 1920. It is usual in the current numbering system that every house has a number and that the odd numbers are on one side of the road and the even ones on the other. Most of the old roads and streets were numbered up one side of the road and then back down the other. This resulted in the highest number being opposite No. 1. Within these roads there were terraces with their own names and usually their own numbering system. Some of the roads which consisted mostly of large houses were completely un-numbered; each house was known only by its name which was usually painted on the glass immediately above the front door. A few of these can still be seen. The change of numbering is referred to in two advertisements which appeared in the Dunstable Borough Gazette.

September 15th 1920: The Council requires the services of two ex-servicemen, to work under the Borough Surveyor, in connection with the re-numbering of houses.

December 2nd 1920: Mr. Wm. Marchant begs to inform the inhabitants of Dunstable that he has just published a new Handbook & Directory of the Borough of Dunstable. The Classified Trades Directory and Private Residents' Directory have been revised in accordance with the recent new numbering of the houses. Price 8d.

Clifton Road, Lovers' Walk, Priory Road and Stuart Street were originally un-numbered as was most of Icknield Street. Blows Road and Borough Road remained un-numbered after the re-organisation.

The following had few alterations, if any:- Albert Street, Ashton Road, Ashton Street, Bigthan Road, Cross Street North, England's Lane, Grove Road, Manchester Place, Park Street, Station Road, Tavistock Street, and Wellington Terrace. Some of these have houses one side of the road only. Matthew Street and Park Road are still numbered under the old system. Streets built from 1909 seem to have the odd/even system from the beginning, eg, Waterlow Road and Capron Road.

Beale Street contained Woburn Cottages (1-7), which became 53 to 65. The odd numbers 1 to 39 were unchanged, the even numbers increased either by 6 or by 10. In Britain Street, 1 to 10 remained unchanged but the last three were re-numbered. In

Capron Road, the odd numbers remained but the evens were changed. The same happened in Chiltern Road; the even houses after 50 were un-numbered. Before 1919 only the odd numbers from 1-19 were numbered. The early numbers in Church Walk were unchanged. The Downs Road numbering consisted originally of 1,3,5,7,9; everything else was un-numbered. The re-organisation of George Street resulted in all the odd numbered houses being changed to even numbers, and vice-versa. In Waterlow Road, the even numbers up to 52 remained the same. All the odd numbers and the rest of the evens increased either by 2 or by 4. In the case of West Parade, the even numbers 4 to 18 were unchanged. The other side had previously been un-numbered.

All the other roads had some version of the 'up one side and down the other' system. This was the case in Albion Street, Alfred Street, Chapel Walk, Cross Street (South) and Garden Road,

Burr Street was un-numbered but Upper Burr Street had numbers. Church Street contained Queen's Terrace (1-8), Walnut Tree Terrace (un-numbered) and Ladies' Lodge (1-6). Edward Street contained Victoria Place (1-3) on the site of Holts Court. In Great Northern Road, the current odd numbers from 1 to 57 were previously 1-27 and those from 89 to 115 were 29-42. Everything else was un-numbered. High Street North numbered from The Nag's Head up to Union Street. At this point it entered Upper Houghton and jumped from 51 to 200. It continued on that side in even numbers up to Houghton Road (314). The opposite side of the road was numbered from Houghton Road (201) in odd numbers up to 303 by the Grammar School. From here, the numbering resumed at 52 and finished on 82 at the Red Lion. Off High Street North was White Hart Yard.

The High Street South numbering started at the corner of Church Street and continued up to 102, just before Borough Road. There were 4 more un-numbered houses further up the hill. On the west side of the road, numbers started at 103 and went back towards the cross roads, ending at 190. High Street South contained the Cart Almshouses (1-6), Flint Cottages (1&2), London Terrace (12 dwellings), Carpenter's Arms Yard (un-numbered), Radwell's Yard (1&2) and South Terrace (1-3). The latter is north of Garden Road. Flint Cottages were near the Dreams bed shop. Radwell's Yard was near the petrol station. London Terrace runs from Britain Street to Lovers' Walk. Early directories give some addresses as Middle Row and The Square.

GREAT NORTHERN ROAD

37 Scotby House; 61 Hillside Villa;

1919	1	U		9	10	11	12		13	14	15	16	17	U	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27		U	U	U		
1922	1	11	13	15	17	19	21	23		27	29	31	33	35	37	41	43	45	47	49	51	53	55	57	59	61	63	65	67
1922			14	16	18	20	22	24	26	28	30					42	44	46	48	50	52	54	56	58	60	62	64	66	68
1919		U	U	U	U	U	U	U	U	U							U	U	U	U	U	U		62		U	U	U	

16/18 Park Road; 26 Newport Villa; 50/52 Downs Road;

1919	U	U			U		U	U	U		29	30	31	32	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42					
1922	69	71	73	75	77		81	83	85		89	91	93	95	99	101	103	105	107	109	111	113	115	U	U			
1922	70	72	74	76	78	80	82	84	86	88	90				100	102												
1919	U	U	U	U			U	U	U		U					U												

74 Eversley;

A section of the chart showing the 1919 house numbers against the 1922 numbering. The full chart can be viewed at the Society's room in Priory House

Houghton Road had 1-7, 13 and 15 which became 68 to 40. The present even numbers in King Street went from 1-27 and the odds numbered back from 46-67. It contains Fairlight Terrace (4 dwellings). In Kirby Road, the odd side was numbered but the evens were not. The reverse was the case in Park Street. Princes Street was numbered up the odd side from 1-52 and back down the other side from 83-120. Regent Street was numbered from 1-11 and back from 12-17. Richard Street numbered on the current odd side from 28 at England's Lane to 34 at King Street. Most of the rest were un-numbered. In St Mary's Street, 2 to 56 had been 34-61 and 51 to 81 had been 18-33. In St. Peter's Road, the odd numbers to 53 had been 1-20. The rest were un-numbered. Union Street had been numbered in the odd/even system from 1-88 and Upper Union Street similarly 115-173. At re-

organisation, the numbers were unchanged but the word 'Upper' was dropped. Upper Union Street had previously been re-numbered in 1914. Victoria Street was numbered up the odd side from 1-75 and back down from 88-156. Early directories refer to the section between Union Street and Chiltern Road as Upper Victoria Street. West Street was numbered up the current even side from 2 to 164 (1-70) and then back from 147 to the cross roads (74-141). There were several houses further to the west which were un-numbered. West Street contained Oxford Terrace, (1-12) now 84 to 106 west of St. Mary's RC Church. Winfield Street was numbered on the even side from 2 to 30 as 1-13 and on the odd side from 25 to 5 as 16-25. There were a few un-numbered houses further up the hill.

Hugh Garrod

Dunstable and District Chamber of Trade

The history society has been given the chain of office worn by presidents of the old Dunstable and District Chamber of Trade, once such an important and influential organisation in the town.

The chain will be displayed at Priory House, together with biographical notes of the local traders whose names were inscribed on the chain.

Below is the list of presidents, together with some personal details which have been compiled with the help of Philip Buckle and Bernard Stevens. The details are by no means complete – we would welcome additional information from members.

The photos, reproduced by courtesy of the Dunstable Gazette, show two former presidents at town events.

Names on the President's chain of office:

Amos Gray 1927 – 1945

Amos Gray, of Priory Road, was a hat manufacturer whose factory was in Luton

B.J. Scott 1945 – 1946

Ben Scott's garage was in High Street South, opposite the Square, between the Saracen's Head and Priory Gardens. He built 80 High Street South – hence "Scotson Chambers". He was Mayor of Dunstable 1952 – 1954 and a founder member of Dunstable Rotary Club.



Arthur Chattell (with the beard) is seen with television actor Donald Gray ('Mark Sabre') at a Cycles and Wireless exhibition of electrical appliances in Dunstable town hall.

F. Kenworthy 1946 – 1947

Frank Kenworthy had a furniture shop in West Street, where the Yum-Yum café is now. The business was continued by his son Harold.

F.H. Brookes 1947-1948

Mr Brookes was a butcher whose shop was in High Street North, opposite the Grammar School (now Ashton Middle School).

J.H. Abell 1948 – 1949

Mr Abell's radio and electrical shop was in High Street North about number 131.

W.A. King 1949 – 1950

Alf King owned King's General Clothing store in Church Street. The business occupied what are now two shops next to the Book Castle, on the Luton side. He was a founder member of Dunstable Rotary Club.

J.H. Halsey 1950 – 1951

Joe Halsey was a baker with a shop in High Street North and a bakery in a yard at the back, near what is now the entrance to the Quadrant.

F.J. Monk 1951 – 1952

Fred Monk's haberdashery shop was in High Street North, near what is now the entrance to Eleanor's Cross.



Muriel Beavington is pictured at a Chamber of Trade dinner in what appears to be the Halfway House. On her right is the Mayor of Dunstable, Louis Palmer.

J.B. Stevens 1952–1953

Bernard Stevens' hardware shop was in High Street North with a trade warehouse in Albion Street. Mr Stevens was a magistrate and is a member of Dunstable Rotary Club.

F.H. Brookes 1953–1954

Mr Brookes, the butcher, was also president 1947-48.

H.W. Small 1954–1955

Mr Small had a furniture shop in High Street North on the site of the "modern" Post Office. He had a timber supplies business in Waterlow Road where the yard ran through to Clifton Road.

A.L. Chattell 1955–1956

Arthur Chattell ran Cycles and Wireless at 40 High Street North which is now the Oxfam charity shop. The old Dunstable museum used to be on the floor above the shop with an entrance via a metal staircase from the alleyway alongside. He supported the Pioneer Boys Club and was a tireless worker for charity, particularly the Ampthill Cheshire Home. He lived at "The Vines", Eaton Bray Road, Northall, on his retirement.

J.H. Woodhouse 1956–1957

He traded as "The Hobby Shop" in George Street (the second shop on the left). He lived in Burr Street, nearly opposite Icknield Street.

H.W. Kenworthy 1957–1958

Harold Kenworthy's furniture shop was on the site of what is now the Yum-Yum café in West Street. Mr Kenworthy later branched out into china and baby goods.

R.B. Fernyhough 1958–1960

Brian Fernyhough, of Canesworde Road, was a local bank manager.

M. Beavington 1960–1961

Beavington's Florists was in High Street North, occupying a large double-fronted shop opposite George Street, now a supermarket. It was run by Muriel Beavington whose husband, Ted, was a crack rifle marksman, often shooting at Bisley.

Philip Buckle 1961–1962

Philip owned the high-class gents' outfitters in Middle Row founded by his father.

T.A. Cowper 1962–1963

Tom Cowper's grocery shop, famous for its selection of cheeses, was in High Street North.

N.A. Bates 1963–1964

Norman Bates ran S.A. Bates and Son, funeral directors, of West Street. The business, founded by Norman's father, still trades under that name although owned by a different company.

K.A. Ims 1964–1965

Ken Ims ran Elite Decorations, selling mainly paint and wallpaper, in Albion Street. The shop was next to the Borough Arms public house.

T.B. Headey 1965–1966

Terry Headey owned Chiltern Florists in Middle Row (34 High Street South) and the Cottage Garden Nurseries and shop in Chiltern Road.

W.H. Cheveralls 1966–1967

Mr Cheveralls had a furniture shop in Queensway.

B.F. Stott 1967–1968

Bev Stott's furnishing and removal business was based in Middle Row, at 20 and 22 High Street South.

V. Tilley 1968–1970

Vic Tilley's traditional butcher's shop, with its distinctive fascia, was near the crossroads in Middle Row, at 4 High Street South. He lived at 2 Canesworde Road.

L.B. Coles 1970–1973

Bank manager.

M.F. Leete 1973–1974

Fred Leete was a typewriter retailer with a shop in High Street South next to Lovers Walk.

J. Dandy 1974–1976

Former Dunstable Grammar School boy John Dandy, of Gibbs and Dandy fame, became a High Sheriff of Bedfordshire.

G. Ort 1976–1978

George Ort began a popular bakery business in Leighton Buzzard and expanded into Dunstable, with shops in the Quadrant and Queensway.

A. Grabham 1978–1980

Albert Grabham, believed to have run a catering business in Kensworth. *(if anyone has any further information about him or any other presidents, please contact us)*

M. Tilley 1980–1983

Mike Tilley ran a butcher's shop in West Street, next to Princes Street (now a chemist's) and later took over the family butcher's shop in Middle Row from his father Vic. Mike Tilley was Mayor of Dunstable in 1990-1991.

I.T.J. Mace 1983–1986

Ian Mace a solicitor with Benning Hoare and Drew.

A. Hickman 1986–1987

Andrew Hickman ran a photography business to the rear of the Star and Garter public house.

Mike Tilley 1987–1989

Mr Tilley was also president from 1980–1983.

Pauline Keen 1989–1992

Pauline took over the management of the Moore's department store in High Street South from her father, Fred Moore.

D. Deller 1992–1995

David Deller's model shop, The Guardroom in West Street, specialised in miniature figurines.

Carol Shaw 1995–1999

Carol Shaw ran the kitchenware shop named Cook's Collection in Middle Row (26 High Street South). The business later moved to Ampthill.

Sad Farewell



We are very sorry to announce the sad loss of **Pauline Keen and Peter Boatwright** both valued members of the society

Greeting New Members

We would like to take this opportunity to welcome the following new members:

Mr A Darby Mrs P Lightfoot

MYLREA'S ICE CREAM



Perhaps you remember the little confectionery shop in High Street North. It was situated between Knight's dairy on the corner of Albion Street, and Fred Monk's draper's shop.

You mounted a couple of steps, with small bay windows on either side, to enter the shop. The home made ice cream counter was at the far end of the shop facing the door. News that a new batch of ice cream had been made quickly got round the town. It was so popular that it sold out very quickly, and was locally famous as being 'the best'.

The shop, originally a greengrocers, was bought during the First World War, by Philip Mylrea. He was an organ builder, having completed his apprenticeship with Hills & Co. in London. The business of Mylrea and Cartwright, Organbuilders, was in Green Lanes, South Tottenham. As part of the war effort, the Government stated that Philip had to stop building organs and start making ammunition boxes. He refused, being a stubborn Manxman. He sold his share of the business, rather than degrade his skills. With his share, he bought the greengrocers shop and moved himself, his wife and the younger children (my mother Florence being one) into the 'country' town of Dunstable. The shop was gradually changed into a sweet and tobacconists, and later on his son Edward (Ted) Mylrea and his family took over the running of the shop.

I am not sure when the home-made ice cream started to be made, but it was certainly sold during the Second World War, despite rationing restrictions. I remember it as a great treat, to go and get one as a small child. The recipe was always kept a secret!

Edward Mylrea eventually sold the shop during the late forties, possibly 1949, and he and his wife retired to Broadstairs in Kent. After her husband Ted's death, Mrs. Mylrea remarried, and still lives locally. God willing, she will be 100 next birthday. Perhaps that's due to eating the home-made ice cream.

Christine Dunn, Granddaughter of Philip Mylrea.



Note: According to the town Directories, this building was originally No. 21 High Street North. After the 1920 re-numbering it became No. 35. Philip Mylrea is listed at this address from 1919 and his son, Edward Clarkson Mylrea until 1949. No. 35 is currently a Nail Bar.

SUMMER OUTINGS 1 AND 2

On Tuesday June 17th, 40 members of the society visited the Palace of Westminster.

Clearing security, the tour began in Westminster Hall, the only surviving building of the great fire. On the steps leading out of the hall towards both Houses of Parliament, are commemorative plaques where William Wallace, King Charles 1st and the exhumed body of Oliver Cromwell stood trial for treason.

The House of Lords was very impressive and totally dwarfed by the Throne, which is covered in gold leaf. To reach the House of Commons we went through the voting lobbies and entered from behind the Speakers Chair. This also was equally impressive. The guide pointed out that the distance between the two front rows was equal to two sword lengths so members on opposite sides could not attack each other.

After lunch the visit culminated in a 40-minute question and answer session with Andrew Selous, our Member of Parliament. Topics such as the proposed Northern By-Pass, the new Health Centre and the traffic problems associated with the Town Centre etc; were discussed. This may well have continued even longer had he not been called to attend the Commons.

Having watched State and other occasions, I was surprised how small both chambers were. Due to the camera lenses used by television this is not portrayed.

Gordon Ivinson



On Saturday July 19th members and friends visited Ingatestone Hall, a 16th century mansion in Essex. The Administrator who gave us a potted history of the house greeted the party.

The mansion is built and still lived in by the Petre family. They restored the house to its original Tudor splendour in 1937, which is evident by the magnificent outside brickwork. For those who watched Bleak House on television, this was the location.

Inside the house, the Sitting Room with its superb fireplace and the adjoining Dining Room with silver tableware were inspiring. The Kitchen is being used as a learning centre for children, with only the massive cooking range area on view. Upstairs there are two bedrooms with dressing rooms fully furnished in the period. In the picture gallery are hung some thirty portraits of the family, from the first Baron Petre to the present owner.

Outside is a walled garden containing many plants we would grow ourselves, and a dewpond with various lilies on display. The visit ended in the café with a cream tea.

Gordon Ivinson

Members' memories



History society members have a host of memories of bygone Dunstable which ought to be written down before they are forgotten.

So here is the fourth in a series of anecdotes told to John Buckledee by the Dunstable folk mentioned below.

If you have similar tales to tell, John will be happy to come to see you. Just leave a message on his answerphone on 01582 703107.

Douglas Darby tells me that when he was about 12 years old he and his friend Percy Childs, who lived at 6 Priory Road, built a land yacht using four pram wheels, a plank, and a ten-foot high mast bearing an old sheet donated by Doug's mum. They took it to the top of Dunstable Downs where it blew along the side of the golf course. Part of the adventure was actually getting the yacht to the downs...they didn't notice that the blind was down outside Mr Keep's newspaper shop on the corner of the crossroads and this became tangled up with the mast.

Bill Dolman, who was a carpenter in Burr Street, used some strong strips of wood to create some wooden stilts for Douglas. Douglas was six feet off the ground when wearing them, so it was a while before he ventured too far from a wall which he could grab if he lost his balance.

Mr Dolman was a musician as well as a carpenter...he was director of the Bible Class Orchestra at the Methodist Church, the Square. The choirmaster at the church was **Arthur Bunker**, who lived at 4 Priory Road. One story was that when he was rehearsing for one Sunday service he sang a really high note to demonstrate to the tenors what was required at a particular moment in the anthem. This injured one of his vocal chords and he never sang with the choir again.

The late **Fred Moore**, sadly missed, gave me a whole series of his memories of Dunstable just before he was taken ill. He was able to remind me about the beautiful little book shop which once stood near Moore's, on the other side of the archway. It was run by Mr Bayliss, who worshipped at the Baptist Church. As a schoolboy I would spend hours in the shop before exchanging a precious book token.

Hawthorn Baker, manufacturers of Cornerstone printing equipment, had a large town centre factory in Nicholas Lane (off High Street North) when this was a narrow lane alongside Charles Allcorn's. Fred remembered that the firm was founded, with a partner, by Jack Thomas. Jack's father had a café in Church Street which stood, approximately, where the card shop is now. Hawthorn Baker eventually moved to purpose-built premises in London Road, on the corner of Southwood Road.

Who was Alex Bridport? That's a question raised by history society member Don Barrett who lives in West Parade near the building which is proudly named "Alex Bridport House". Does anyone know the answer?

What a coincidence that, within a few days of our last newsletter giving members' memories of the skating rink at Half Moon Hill, the Dunstable Gazette should discover in its archives some photos of the opening of the rink in March 1938

The Gazette used some of our newsletter material to help with its Yesteryear captions which you may have seen.

Here, courtesy of the Gazette, is one photo of the occasion in 1938 which has never been published before. It shows the Mayor, Alderman Frederick Keep, making a speech before formally opening the rink.

