

NEWSLETTER

Dunstable & District Local History Society
No. 33 February 2010



Chairman's Notes

Members heard with great regret in September that Colin Bourne, founder chairman of this society, had decided to resign as our president because of his failing health.

Colin travelled from his home in Dorset with his wife Joy to attend the meeting addressed by Zena Dickinson, of Luton Hoo, and that gave us the opportunity to make a small presentation.

Colin is still a member of the society and keeps up with Dunstable news through his weekly copy of the Gazette.

● Incidentally, Colin's son David has published a sequel to his successful first novel. It's called *The Camel of Soloma* and is again set in Cornwall. It can be ordered from the Book Castle.

● Our vice president, Bernard Stevens, celebrated his 99th birthday in November. David Turner, editor of this newsletter, used his computer expertise to produce a special birthday card showing various scenes of old Dunstable with Bernard, rather miraculously, appearing in all of them.

● The society's committee members are now wearing name badges at our monthly meetings. This is to help newer members to get to know us and not (as someone unkindly suggested) in case the chairman becomes lost on his way home! We might offer name badges to every member, to make it easier for us all to make new friends. But, I promise, it won't be compulsory!

● Membership of this society can lead you along many interesting and unexpected byways.

For instance, we were asked by the council to provide old photos for the town's annual calendar, and were happy to oblige. But Beverley from the council then had the concept of printing, alongside these, some modern, colour photos of the same scenes. A good idea, but then the adventures began. Obtaining a new view down the chalk cutting is now quite difficult, with just a narrow, overgrown ridge of chalk between the quarry and the Watling Street. And one old photo had been taken from the top of the Priory Church tower, which provided a perfect excuse to ask the captain of the bell tower, Alan Shepherd, to allow access up the church's narrow stairways and ladders. Very exciting!



● Among the many more-mundane queries sent to our website was a request for information about a highwayman hanged at Dunstable which I'm sure our members will find fascinating.

Rob Merrills, of Mayfield in Sussex, is writing an article about Gabriel Tompkins, leader of a band of highwaymen, who robbed the Chester Mail coach near Hockliffe in 1746.

He was executed in March 1750 and his body hung in irons from a gibbet near Chalk Hill as a deterrent to potential future criminals.

Rob has heard that although the body was displayed there, Tompkins might actually have been executed at Gallows Corner in

Biddenham and the body then brought to Dunstable.

You can see the result of Rob's researches so far on the internet at www.mayfieldbonfire.co.uk, under the "smugglers" section.

● There are various references to the gallows at Dunstable in old history books. *Dunstablelogia* by Charles Lamborn (1859) reports that a man from Sewell, having robbed the mailcoach upon the highway between Dunstable and Chalk Hill, was hung in chains at the corner of "that close called Gib Close". After the flesh and skins had wasted off and nothing remained but the bones, a pair of starlings built the nest in the skull and hatched their young. The brood was kept as pets by a local man. Lamborn does not give a date for this.

The (gibbet) post was destroyed "by a party of wild Irish recruits" in 1803.

One of our history society members, Omer Roucoux, has written a very detailed account of the Watling Street, but he tells me that he has not been able to discover the exact location of the gibbet.

It was certainly just north of Dunstable, on the road to Hockliffe, near the chalk cutting.

There is a sketch map produced by the local historian, Worthington Smith, in 1904 which marks the "site of gibbet" and "gib arch" roughly midway between Puddle Hill and Thorn Turn on the Watling Street - just a short distance north of the chalk cutting. Puddle Hill has now virtually disappeared as a result of quarrying, and the large roundabout at the end of Leighton bypass has been built about 150 yards from Thorn Turn. If the Worthington Smith map is right, it means the gallows stood at the foot of the chalk hill rather than on its crest.

John Buckledee

The Architect and building of Ashton Grammar School

It soon came to realise when researching Ashton Grammar School, Dunstable, that the interesting but unwritten part of the school's history is the building itself.

It reflects the eclectic style of the Victorian architecture of the late 19th century. From the outside it can be seen how one section of the school was designed with the Queen Anne revival of gables and dormers to house the administration and domestic staff, while the Gothic revival of parapet, turrets and large windows illustrated the educational section of the school.



A photograph of Dunstable Grammar School taken in 1888

The Belfast News-Letter of 1890 advertised Dunstable as one of the healthiest towns in England. This attractive description was given to entice pupils to the newly built Ashton Grammar School. The establishment of the school in 1888 was made possible through the 18th century will of Mrs. Frances Ashton who had bequeathed funds to many charitable projects in the Dunstable area.

The architect involved in the design of the school was Edward Robert Robson whose training and interest crossed the Queen Anne/Gothic revival styles in architecture. Robson was a fellow of the Royal Institute of British Architects and also the Surveyors Institution. Between 1858 – 1861 Robson worked with Sir George Gilbert Scott, the prominent Gothic revival architect, as a draughtsman on the restoration of Durham cathedral tower. During this period Robson also travelled in Europe and was influenced like many others by the architecture of the Flemish domestic buildings he saw. Later Robson became architect and surveyor to the city of Liverpool. In 1871 he took up the post of surveyor to the London School Board and within twelve months he was promoted to architect.

The work of the school boards was designed to establish schools nationwide in line with the Elementary Education Act of 1870. The idea of the educational act was to supplement not replace the schools already there. Robson spent much of his time working with the school board in the slums of London. He worked extensively on creating light and airy schools to benefit and encourage the children to learn. Robson continued as consulting architect to the Education Department after leaving the London School Board in 1884. His rules for school buildings were issued annually between 1884 and 1904 influencing designs throughout the country well into the twentieth century

After leaving the school board Robson was able to choose the projects in which he became involved in. Among his many projects were the People's Palace (now the Queen's building), Queen Mary University of London (1886) and Cheltenham Ladies' College (1896).

How Robson became involved with the building of the school at Dunstable is unclear. Perhaps friends of Robson who had escaped the overcrowded conditions of London for the cleaner healthier atmosphere of Dunstable invited him to become involved with the project.



Dunstable Grammar School today

The foundation stone of the Ashton Grammar School was laid in 1887. The builder of the school was Sam J Jerrard. The working partnership of Jerrard and Robson may have begun with school projects in London. Jerrard was involved in the building of the Lewisham Grammar school for girls (1889) and could have possibly worked with Robson on earlier school projects in the area. Jerrard and Robson later worked together on the extension to the Ashton Grammar school's dining hall in 1892 and the extra hall, class rooms and dormitories of 1893

Neither Sam Jerrard nor Edward Robson were involved in the building of the school's gymnasium in 1891. Perhaps a gymnasium needed specialist treatment or maybe both were involved on other projects at the time. The work on the gymnasium was undertaken by J R Brown and Son, a local firm of architects in the Luton/Dunstable area, who had also worked on St Saviour's Mission Church, the Children's Sick and Convalescent Home in London Road and St Andrew's Church, Flamstead. The builder J Cumberland and Sons was also local to the area and had worked on the new development in Hibbert Street in Luton in 1883, the Kimpton Brewery in 1892 and St Andrew's Church, Biggleswade, 1913. Other local architects and builders were involved in the alterations and improvements to the school classrooms, cycle shed, offices, cricket pavilion and the swimming pool dressing rooms over the years.

The steep tiled roofs of the school were designed to allow the rain to run off, while the overhang on the Queen Anne section of the school shelters the body of the building. The more-Gothic part of the school roof is hidden behind a parapet with the spire giving height and a focal point that could be seen from afar. The exposed patterned brickwork of the building became fashionable after the repeal of the Brick Tax in 1850 and the easier transportation of bricks by rail. The Flemish-inspired Queen Anne timbered gables and dormer

windows were not only added for decoration they also added height to the attic space and provided accommodation for the live-in staff. The more austere effect of the Gothic-rendered gables of the school has been lightened with a fluted design edging. The wide bay windows below the gables and the large ecclesiastical semi-circled headed windows were designed to provide maximum light in the more important rooms of the school.

The very handsome new buildings were equipped with every modern improvement and comfort. The 1904 Homelands

Handbook of Dunstable states that the fees for a day boy were £7.10s per annum and a boarder with tuition in School House as £50 per annum. For the boys who boarded in Ashton Lodge the fees with tuition and separate bedrooms were £60 per annum. The school grounds and playing field were upwards of 13 acres but only six acres were actually attached to the school. The cricket and football ground and golf links were three minutes walk away on "the highest and healthiest part of the town".

Jean Cheshire

An Exercise Book from Moreton House School

One of the items donated to the Archive Room in Priory House is an Exercise Book from Moreton House School, Principal Mrs Bennett.

The poetry book belonged to Trottie Barton April - June 1883. Beautifully written with pen and ink, margins drawn, pages numbered and not a blot in sight, many of the subjects are religious including Tell me the Old Old Story, Grandmother's Lesson and Burial of Moses.

At the back, in pencil, is a draft of a letter from Great Northern

House, 14 October 1884 to Dear Ella. She hopes that Ella's arm is better and sorry she cannot visit but there is to be a ball the following week and hopes Ella can attend. The writer went to "a lecture last Friday entitled The Pilgrims Progress which was very interesting and the gentleman described it beautifully I could have sat all night listening to him but pleasures will end".

However the section I found most interesting was an easy way to remember the books of the New Testament, author unknown. There was a similar section for the Old Testament but unfortunately a page had been neatly cut out. **Rita Swift**

THE NEW TESTAMENT

First **Matthew** tells of Jesus birth –
As King of Jews he came to earth
And **Mark** how patiently he bore,
The yoke of service, which he wore.
Physician **Luke** then sounds his praise
In all his human acts and ways
And **John** the one whom Jesus loved
His heavenly birth and being proved
The **Acts** record the Spirit given
And Christ ascended into heaven
The **Romans** written by Saint Paul
Shows all have sinned – yet Christ for all
Corinthians First the Church with gifts
Forgets its grace and pride uplifts
Corinthians Second where the Lord
Had dealt in judgment grace restored.
Galatians when the law had failed
Tells how that faith through Christ prevailed
Ephesians – Christ our head above
His members here must walk in love
Phillipians – joy and oneness too
Will make poor sinners know 'tis true
Colossians – we, Christ's members here
Must show his love to us so dear
The **First of Thessalonians** paints
The hope of dead and living Saints
And **Second Thessalonians**, when
The judgment fall on sinful men



First **Timothy**, young, good and just
Had much committed to his trust
The **Second Timothy** Paul writes
The soldier never flees but fights
So **Titus** then: Be sounds in speech
Hold fast the faithful word and teach
Philemon to his erring slave
At Paul's entreaty all forgave
Then **Hebrews** shows the shadows fled
And Christ, the substance, came instead
Then **James** in order next succeeds
Now show your faith in real by deeds
And **Peter** in experience versed
Says, Glory then suffering first
For **Peter's** second letter see
What holy persons we should be
The **First of John** we read therein
The blood of Jesus cleaneth sin
Second a lady is addressed
Who with her children, Christ confessed
And **Third** he writes to Gaius then
And longs for more than ink and pen
Next **Judge** [Jude] in his epistle tells
Of raging waves and empty wells
Last **Revelations** judgment shows
But Christ comes quickly at the close

Dancing Master Thomas Wilson



When one of the sheltered young heroines or the dashing heroes of the Jane Austen era attends their first ball and contend with its rigid social etiquette and complicated dance steps, how do they accomplish this? Was it possible that a Dunstable man provided the solution?

One of the keys to social success in the early 19th century was supplied by Thomas Wilson, who published a series of best-selling books describing, in precise detail, how each dance should be performed. His manuals included a wide variety of dances, ranging from quadrilles to waltzes and were assiduously studied by young ladies before they ventured into the ballroom.

Thomas Wilson was a dancing master, arranging balls and assemblies and running private dancing schools in London. People went to dancing masters to brush up on their steps, to learn new dances and also to learn 'the latest' dance figures. But who was Thomas Wilson? He was at the height of his fame and influence in the early 1800s, disappearing from public view in around 1825. His books, full of enthusiasm for dancing and opinions about social etiquette, provide little personal detail.

Perhaps there is a clue in the Gentleman's Magazine, which published numerous articles about English towns and villages during its heyday. It was Dunstable's turn in 1845, when J.D. Parry provided a survey of the town at that time..."The town is fairly, though not handsomely built, and consists principally of one street, about half a mile long. The footways have some flag pavement, but are principally broad ones, of pebbles."

Parry mentions some famous Dunstable personalities, including Elkanah Settle, the poet, and continues: "there is now in London another respectable and kind-hearted septuagenarian "artist" in his way, and of copious historical and antiquarian lore to boot, who has celebrated his native place in one or two of his poetical "placards", which everybody has seen, whom the writer knew, with his most beautiful and innocent assistant, Miss Margaret M-----, fifteen years ago, being no less renowned a personage than "Dancing Master Wilson".

A search of the Dunstable Parish Register has identified one Thomas Wilson, the son of Thomas and Mary Wilson baptised 16 April 1774. Though the date would be about right there is nothing to indicate whether he became the illustrious dancing master.



King's Theatre Opera House as it looked in Thomas Wilson's time

A legal document dated 1801, in relationship to a conveyance, was drawn up by a Dunstable solicitor and lists a 'Thos. Wilson of Old Street, London, watchmaker, and son of Mary White and Thos. Wilson, her former husband, deceased'. This would appear to be the same Thomas Wilson as the one baptised in 1774 and although it is showing a London address, by 1801 he would have been working as a dancing master and not a watchmaker. Despite following many lines of enquiry no other evidence has materialised to link him with Dunstable and we have certainly been unable to locate any of the 'poetical placards' J.D. Parry refers to in his survey.

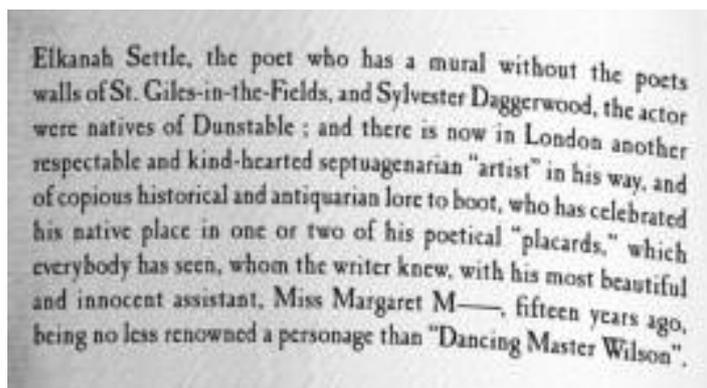
What we do know of Dancing Master Thomas Wilson is that he probably began his career at the King's Theatre Opera House and one of his books is dedicated to Madame Deshayes, a principal ballerina there. By the early 1800s he had formed his own dancing academy, sometime located at Bedford Row, Ludgate Hill and Hatton Garden, where he was assisted by his wife and enough staff to form sets for the popular social dances of the day.

Thomas Wilson produced at least 12 books, some of which he personally published and, as many were reprinted a number of times, they must have proved popular with London's 'high society'.

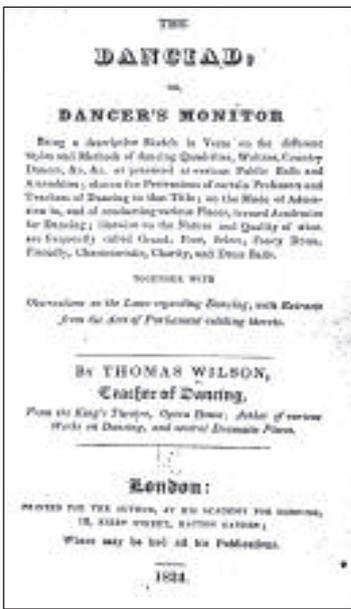
Wilson's first book is 'An Analysis of Country Dancing', first published in 1808, followed by the 'Treasures of Terpsichore', or, 'A Companion for the Ballroom' in 1809. In 1815 he published 'The Quadrille Instructor' and in 1816 'A Companion to the Ballroom' and also 'A Description of the Correct Method of French and German Waltzing' – following the scandalous appearance of a new dance at the Prince Regent's ball on 13 July 1816. The Celebrated and Fashionable Dance 'La Batteuse' was published in 1817.

The 'Ecossoise Instructor', was published in 1818, which Wilson called "a new species of dancing", stating its popularity at the Russian court. Following the growing popularity of the quadrille (the quadrille gradually replaced the cotillion, after the French Revolution), Wilson's 'Quadrille and Cotillion Panorama' was published in 1818. He published 'Plot Against Plot' in 1821, being a comedy which was performed at his private performances.

The 'Danciad' or Dancer's Monitor, published in 1824, is written in verse and must have been a major undertaking. It is a descriptive sketch on the different styles and methods of dancing quadrilles,



Part of the 1845 article in the Gentleman's Magazine by J.D. Parry



The Danciad title page

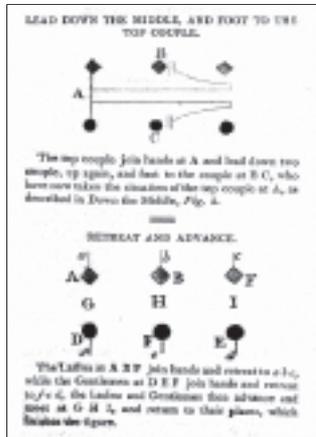
waltzes, country dances, together with observations on the laws regarding dancing, with extracts from the Acts of Parliament relating to illegal dancing. Because the Danciad is in verse, it was thought there might be a link to Parry's 'Poetic Placards' but unfortunately it contains no reference to Dunstable whatever.

In 1825 possibly his last book was published, the 'Analysis of the London Ball-Room', of quadrilles, waltzes and a selection of music, although it is not absolutely certain that it was Wilson's own work.

At the theatre, Wilson would have helped to train many of the opera dancers, together with his teaching and writing activities, having a direct impact on the style and performance of social dancing. He was by nature a traditionalist, preferring the allemande or German style of waltz, where the dancers arms were 'intertwined', to that of the 'close hold' that the aristocracy came to favour and which was scandalising certain sections of society.

Instruction is given in Wilson's manuals through text, tables, and diagrams, showing step by step, the position of each foot and some with suitable music to accompany the dance. The correct style and manner of performance is explained, emphasising the correct ballroom etiquette expected of both sexes. Wilson went to great lengths to instruct his readers on this, worrying that standards of dancing would be 'perverted into a chaos of riot and confusion' if left to decline further.

Thomas Wilson's unique 'system', was like a computer program. The topmost lady in a set selected the tune and set figures to it; she could pick a figure from column A and one or two from column B in order to create her own dance or she could adapt one along Thomas Wilson's lines. He was also unique in having 'long' and 'short' versions of a dance.



Dance steps instructions from 'An Analysis of Country Dancing'

By 1822 Wilson was apparently becoming rather crotchety, beginning his eighty-ninth public ball, with a scathing attack on the standards of dance teaching of the day, "to caution the public against some impostors, those self-named "Professors" yclept* Dancing Masters". He denounced those he considered charlatans, threatening to name those he felt should be exposed if they continued teaching. This was followed by a descriptive sketch in verse which was later developed and published as The 'Danciad'. Whether there was much time left for actually dancing is open to question.

*called by the name of

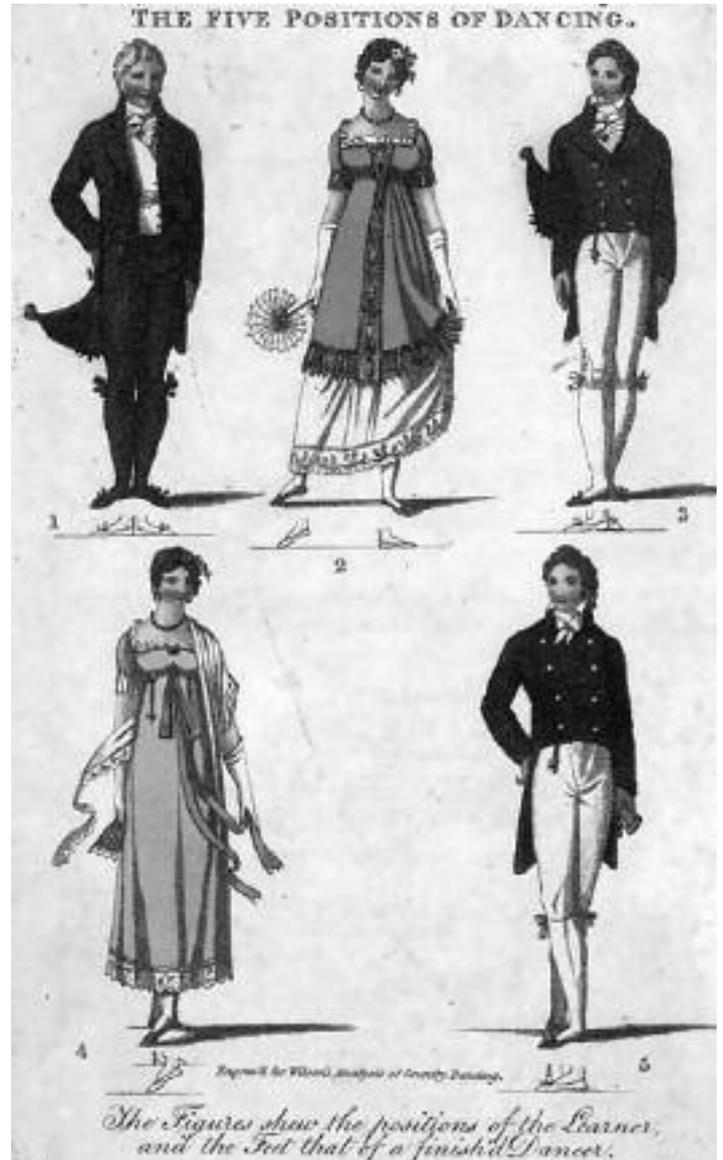
As public assemblies declined in popularity in the early 1800s, and as the dancing master declined with them, the profession, in London at least, was threatened. It is possible that Wilson's increasing bad temper was because he was losing business.

Despite the protestations of his own good standing, Wilson's works were not always met with the approval of his contemporaries. A certain James Cassidy states in his 1810 manual that the 'Treasures of Terpsichore' 'should be universally exploded as unintelligible and useless.'

Today, some modern writers hold the view that Wilson's figure descriptions can be difficult to follow, and that the more complicated, balletic steps which he described were within the capability of only a few extremely accomplished dancers. Despite Wilson's traditional and conservative standpoint, we are today indebted to him for a comprehensive record of the most popular social dances of Regency period.

Whether he originated from Dunstable or not is at present unclear, but he remains, historically speaking, a fascinating and important character.

David Turner



The five "Positions of Dancing" from Thomas Wilson's 'An Analysis of Country Dancing' (1811)

HOUGHTON REGIS ANCESTORS



Tokens issued by William Fossey in 1667

The recent talk to the history society on numismatics and coins inspired John Pratt to recall some of his distant family living in the area about the time when Fossey Tokens could be found among the small change of Dunstable and Houghton Regis traders in the 17th century...

EDMUND FOSSEY and MARGARET (buried Houghton Regis 1613) were the parents of James who was baptised in Houghton Regis about May 1562. This was quite early in the time of Elizabeth I, before the Spanish armada. James went on to marry Joan Robyns at Houghton in 1586. There were nine children, all baptised in Houghton Regis, the eldest being William Fossey.

William went on to marry Prudence Crawley in Barton le Clay in May 1618. Although she was a Barton girl they lived at first in Houghton and had about seven children. The eldest son Edward is recorded as being christened in 1622. William and Prudence moved to Chalgrave where after a long life they were buried. Prudence died in Hockliffe where she was probably living with her daughter Susan. The wills of William, Prudence and James show they were well off.

There being insufficient regal coinage circulating in the 17th century it was sometimes necessary for businesses to make and advertise on their own token currency. From 1648 copper tokens were of small change value and useful only within the locality of

their issue such as one issued by Daniell Fossey. On the obverse was the wording 'Of Dunstable 1668 = His Halfe penny'. Central are the initials D.E.F this being his



1668 tokens issued by Daniell Fossey

initials with the initial of his wife, Elizabeth.

On its face was a Greyhound and Hare between crossed pipes and a tobacco roll. This suggests that he may have been a publican running, for example, a pub called 'The Greyhound'. He may also have been a coffee shop proprietor or a tobacconist dealing in the recently imported Tobacco. Pipe tobacco was shipped over from America or transported from Turkey. It was a luxury item available to a few.

A different token issued was by William Fossey. His token bears his name on the obverse with the design of a swan stanant. The reverse reads 'In Dunstable 1667' with three roses entwined and nowed between his initials W.F. This again may relate to a pub perhaps called The Swan. Forgery was rife which is why tokens such as these ceased use after 1672.

In Houghton Regis the eldest son Edward Fossey had a lot of land and was a 'gentleman'. He was churchwarden between 1682-3. His wife was called Sarah. There is no evidence of their marriage due to the civil war which resulted in poor record keeping. Sarah died in 1689, Edward in 1697. Had Edward fought in the civil war he would probably have been a Roundhead. During their life there were nine children including William born before 1662.

William Fossey went on to marry Mary Samm who came from Clifton. Their marriage in June 1683 was at Haynes, although they continued living in Houghton Regis. Five children were born there including twins but only two survived. Elizabeth Fossey was baptised at Houghton in 1684. She went on to marry Richard Hawkins at Lower Gravenhurst in 1706 and lived in Streatley. Both being poor they died fairly young.

John Pratt

Coffee Morning



A coffee morning was held on Saturday 17th October at Bernard Stevens' house. It was a very successful and well attended event



and raised £92 for the society's funds. Our sincere thanks go to Bernard for his hospitality.



Sad Farewell



We are very sorry to announce the sad loss of

Mr P Crawley

Mr R Cutler

Mr Tony Horn

All valued members of the society.

Greeting New Members

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

Mr & Mrs M Chapple

Mrs P Childerley

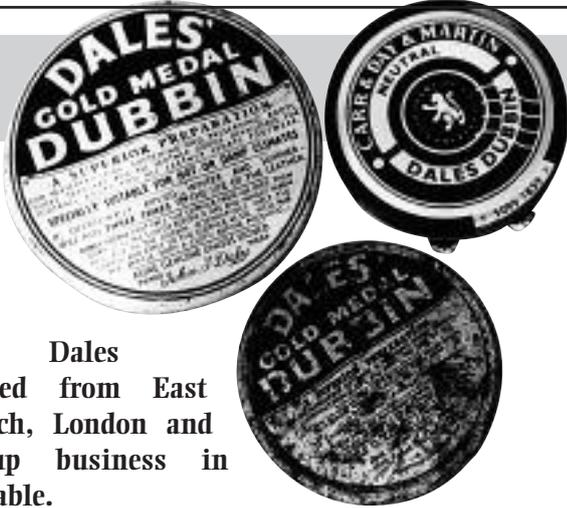
Mr & Mrs A Gregory

Mr & Mrs P Gripton

Miss V Hill

Mrs J Quiram

Mrs M Quiram



John Dales moved from East Dulwich, London and set up business in Dunstable.

His trade mark signature appears both on the actual tins and in his adverts which were often humorous. The following advertisement appeared in The Dunstable Year Book & Directory for 1909.

Dales Dubbin

VOTES FOR WOMEN.

SUFFRAGISTS – together with **Members of Parliament**, and all others **chained up** to the **Man-made Laws** that distinguished the well-dressed from those who get **in conflict with the Police** – will agree that Dales' Boot Polish imparts a brilliancy much more lasting than that of certain **Cabinet Ministers**. Dales' Boot Polish receives, too, more **Votes For Women's** use; because, unlike **Holloway Gaol**, it demands no Taxation of **Women's Labour**; while it concedes **Women's Rights** to Polish, Preserve, and Waterproof her Boots and Shoes. - Dales' well-known Black and Brown Polishes are sold by Bootmakers at 1d., 2d., 3d., or 6d. per tin.



Memories of old Dunstable

John Buckledee is collecting anecdotes about old Dunstable and district and always welcomes contributions. Phone him on 01582 703107.

The day singer Joan Sutherland hit her head at Dunstable's newly opened Civic Hall in Queensway caused another kind of headache for history society member Eric Bullock.

He was working as quantity surveyor for Dunstable Borough Council in 1964 when the singer had the accident, caused when she climbed some steps to a low doorway backstage. She felt groggy afterwards and it was even feared that she would not be able to perform in that evening's concert.

The event went ahead, but Eric's task afterwards was to redesign the doorway so that it was less of a hazard.

GAS SHOWROOMS

Joan Curran's article in the previous newsletter about the old gas showrooms (now Dunstable Community Church Centre) opposite Grove House in High Street North was particularly nostalgic for society member Rex Sanders. He worked for H.C. Janes, the builder, and was involved in erecting an extension to the old post office next door. He remembers particularly admiring some beautiful green slates on the roof of the showrooms. He was told they were Cumberland slates and that fact has stuck in his memory.

WESTWAYS

Talking of slates, Christina Scott (who is a mine of information about Dunstable) tells me that the roof of the Tudor-style house known as Westways in West Street was made from tiles rescued from Fowler's grocery shop, which stood next to the gateway to Priory Gardens. Scotts' garage next door eventually expanded on to the site of the shop.

When the shop was demolished, its roof tiles were taken to Westways which was being built in 1930 for local auctioneer Charles Allcorn, whose well-known business was in High Street North.

To bring the story up-to-date, the KFC fast-food outlet now stands on the Fowler shop site and Westways, now a care home for old people, has recently been renamed Tudor House.

One little anecdote about the grocery shop. Miss Scott remembers that the Fowlers created their own paper bags for groceries by twisting squares of paper into funnels. Blue paper was used for currants and mauve paper for sultanas.

THE DRAPERS

Frank and Ruth Draper called at Priory House when on a nostalgic visit from Canada and had plenty of stories to tell about old Dunstable.

continued overleaf



Mr and Mrs Draper

One of Frank's particularly vivid memories was when he was a pupil at Britain Street School in Dunstable where Mr Richmond, the science master, made a large model steam railway engine and two flatbeds trucks.

"He fired it up in the classroom and laid the rails and pulled two children at a time around the classrooms," said Frank. "Definitely one of the highlights."

Frank was born at 67 London Road, Markyate, on April 13 1926. He first went to school at Seebright School at Markyate where one of the teachers was Miss Evans. She later married Stanley Scott and became at a teacher (later headmistress) at Kensworth.

The Draper family moved to 110 Common Road, Kensworth, in February 1935 and Frank transferred to Kensworth village school. Teachers there were Mrs Jasper, Mrs Slade and Mrs Goodman.

When he was 11 he transferred to Britain Street where he stayed until the outbreak of war in 1939.

"I was among the first pupils at the school which had just been built," he said. "We used to go to the extension to Chew's School for lunch because the kitchen at the school itself hadn't been finished. When the kitchen was fixed, the Chew's building became available. The town library, which had been above Cycles and Wireless in High Street North, then transferred to the Chew's extension. It's now the Little Theatre."

Teachers at Britain Street included Mr "Gaffer" Dean (headmaster), Mr Richmond (science master), Mr Ireland (maths and PT), Mr Howe (arts), Mrs Bandy (biology), Miss Pearce (history), Miss Ellis (cookery) and Mrs Graham (geography).

Mr Howe, the arts master, a strict disciplinarian, had a poem made up about him by his disrespectful pupils.

*Mr How
Was a cow,
He went to church on Sundays.
He prayed to God
To give him strength,
To clout the kids on Mondays.*

"Mrs Bandy dissected a rabbit for the class and showed us the intestines. It was very interesting.

"We came to and from Kensworth in a double-decker school bus which went around Whipsnade, Studham, Dagnall and Kensworth. When war broke out we were kept in Kensworth to save petrol and had to go to the Women's Institute hut by the recreation ground where classes were held. Miss Ellis taught classes there with a Mr Haye."

Frank has memories of taking out a girl from Blake Hall Orphanage, (before he was married!). Blake Hall was near Kensworth recreation ground. They went to see John Clements in the Four Feathers at the Union Cinema in Dunstable and then had tea (toast and jam) in the tearooms above the Redrup and Starkings baker's shop in High Street South.

Frank met his wife Ruth in August 1948 outside Luton's Corn Exchange. They were in a crowd listening to a soapbox speaker at Market Hill.

Ruth worked at the Rubber Company at Dunstable and Frank was at Vauxhall, Luton, and then the firm's Dunstable factory.

Ruth changed jobs and was at Waterlow's for six years. She worked on the embossing printing machine, making prestigious letter headings for companies.

The couple moved into rooms in a house owned by Mr and Mrs Lightfoot at 138 High Street North in February 1951. Mr Lightfoot had a jeweller's shop at 136 High Street North.

'There was no running water upstairs so on Fridays, when the Lightfoots were out, we had Amami night'

"There was no running water upstairs so on Fridays, when the Lightfoots were out, we had Amami night, (bath night, so called after Amami shampoo!). We used to get a five-gallon drum on to Mrs Lightfoot's cooker, fill it with water, heat it and do our weekly wash. Then we filled the drum up again. Then we got a galvanised bath from the barn and brought it into her living

room and filled it with fresh boiling water. We surrounded the bath with a clothes horse with our fresh clothes on the horse. They steamed in the heat! Ruth would have the bath first (she was cleaner than me!) and then we'd get some more water and then I would get in. Ruth would read the paper while I had my bath. Then we would carry the bath of water through the scullery and tip the water down the drain. One time a floorboard gave way in the living room as we carried out the water but luckily we didn't upset the bath."

Mr Lightfoot used to wind up the clock at the Priory Church. Frank remembers helping him.. They climbed up a ladder into the belfry and wound up the clock with a cranking handle.

Mr Lightfoot also used to work at the Union Cinema selling tickets at the kiosk. He was a very short man and had to stand on a crate to see over the counter.

While Frank was at Vauxhall workers were put on short time and to earn some extra money he started a jewellery and novelties stall at Dunstable market on Saturdays, outside the old town hall, under the name Fraru (Frank and Ruth). "We walked down the high street with an old barrow full of jewellery.

"The stall cost us a shilling a foot and we had an eight-foot stall. We didn't really make a profit."

Frank was secretary and treasurer of Dunstable Rabbit and Poultry Club in 1952 and 1953. He and his wife emigrated to Canada in 1957.