

NEWSLETTER

Dunstable & District Local History Society
No. 36 September 2011



Chairman's Notes

As most of you will know, Colin Bourne – who did so much to establish this society – died earlier this year.

He had been unwell for some time but he did manage to make one last visit to Dunstable from his retirement home in Dorset. He came to a society meeting with his wife, Joy, when we were able to present him with what, unhappily, turned out to be some farewell gifts.

Colin did so much for Dunstable. I remember him as a notable cricketer for the town, a badminton player, an Old Dunstablian, a Rotarian and a director of ABC Travel Guides in Church Street.

As an author, he produced that affectionate feast of nostalgia, *Bourne and Bred*, where he recalled the Dunstable of his boyhood. There was also the history of the Dunstable Methodist Circuit, and some of the Old Trades guides published by this society.

Our condolences to Joy and his family.

It was a very real shock to hear of the death of David Sewell in an aircraft crash in Nigeria.

David, who in earlier years was the catering manager at Whipsnade Zoo, was one of our most active members. Nothing was too much trouble for him. He stacked chairs, served tea and helped with the washing up.

He was one of our members who volunteered to assist with last year's Poppy Appeal in Dunstable. For this he made his house available night after night to open the collecting boxes and count the cash. Around £24,000 in small change takes a lot of counting! When that was done, he enthralled us with tales of his latter-day career as a pilot in Africa. He was preparing a talk to the society about his work for the multi-national organisation based in Nigeria which is producing disease-resistant crops for Africa.

Cynthia, Judith and myself, representing the society, were among the hundreds from all over the world who attended his memorial service at the Priory Church where we heard numerous anecdotes about his adventurous life. For him, flying across the Sahara was routine!

BOOK CASTLE

More bad news came with the sudden announcement of the closure of the Book Castle shop in Church Street. This had been one of the jewels of Dunstable for around 31 years and its owner Paul Bowes (still one of our members) has probably done more than anyone else to promote interest in the history of Dunstable.

Through his publishing company, which remains active despite the closure of the bookshop, he has produced hundreds of history titles throughout the region,



Colin Bourne



David Sewell

ranging locally from Vivienne Evans' histories of Dunstable to Diane Ilka's memories of the California Ballroom.

I know, perhaps better than anyone, that some of the manuscripts (however well-researched) needed a huge amount of editorial work to make them fit for publication. Paul refused to be deterred and it is thanks to him that there is now a vast amount of historic material readily available for our bookshelves.

Book Castle titles are still on sale at Priory House and the new Mittal's Supermarket in the old Woolworth's building in High Street South.

MEDIEVAL DUNSTABLE

Thanks to the initiative of Jean Yates, the former town centre manager, the town has secured a lottery grant of nearly £50,000 to fund various projects to celebrate (in 2013) the 800th anniversary of the consecration of the Priory.

The history society is very much involved in this, especially in researching the host of medieval knightly tournaments which were held on the downs around Dunstable. Why were they based here, which kings and noblemen attended, what problems or benefits did they bring? That's what we will be trying to find out.

Other projects include the translation and publication of the Annals of the Priory, that yearly record of local and national life written (in Latin) by the Priors, and the erection of a memorial in the church to commemorate the annulment there of Henry VIII's marriage to Catherine of Aragon. There will also be a physic garden planted in Priory Gardens and some kind of permanent marking over Priory Meadow to denote the extent of the old monastery buildings whose foundations still lie under the turf.

It's going to be a lot of work but all very exciting – just what this society exists to do.

Your committee is hoping very much that more of our members will take part in the society's research activities – there's so much more possible than just attending the monthly talks. Here are some suggestions:

GAMES THEME

The town's annual History Day always features an exhibition provided by the history society. Up until now most of the work for this has been produced by Joan Curran and Rita Swift. But they are now involved in the research for the medieval project so new volunteers are needed.

Dunstable Council tells us that the theme next year will be Games (not just the Olympics!) so we are looking for members who have an enthusiasm for that wide-ranging subject. Sue Turner has already agreed to lead the project, which

continued overleaf

perhaps could incorporate anything from the origins of hopscotch to the intricacies of bar billiards. Interested?

NEW MICROFILM VIEWER

The timeline on our website has some noticeable gaps in recent years. There's a simple way to complete these, which is to go through the microfilms of the Dunstable Gazette held at Dunstable Library.

Until now, this has not been an easy task but (hooray!) the library has just bought a new microfilm viewer which has reduced the eyestrain considerably. There are probably only five or six town-changing events worth recording each year but you have to skim through a lot of pages to find them. The suggestion is that a group of members might volunteer to cover just one or two years each – that should take about one afternoon.

Dunstable Town Council is anxious to promote its links with various crucial local voluntary organisations, and I am pleased to report that the history society is regarded as one of these.

The council has asked us to agree formally to become the town's research and advisory service relating to all aspects of Dunstable's heritage and history, and we have signed up for this.

In practice, it means that when someone writes to the council querying, for instance, the date when Gary Cooper left Dunstable, the letter gets passed on to us. We are already answering scores of questions at Priory House and on our website, so it's nothing particularly new.

HISTORY DAY

Dunstable's History Day was, again, very well attended, and the society's display of Stuart and Jacobean material was thronged with people throughout the day.

Our thanks to Joan, Rita and Alan who spent an enormous amount of time in our research room preparing the panels. This year these have been laminated so they can be used elsewhere in the future and can be added to what is already an impressive stock of display material.

The society's tent was advertised this year by a very striking banner produced for us by the town council.

Incidentally, we shared the tent with the Manshead Archaeological Society who displayed various Stuart and Jacobean artefacts excavated from various sites in Dunstable, including the old Ellis barber shop which once stood in West Street.

I was equally intrigued to discover that the Manshead still had spare end-reels of newsprint donated by the old Dunstable Gazette printing works in Castle Street, Luton, which the archaeologists are using to cover their trestle tables. Not quite Jacobean, but still pretty ancient!

COFFEE MORNING AND TRIP TO THE GLIDING CLUB

Bernard Stevens generously hosted a coffee morning for the history society in his beautiful garden. The event raised funds for the society and, equally important, members enjoyed a very pleasant social occasion.

The weather was kind for Bernard's event and even more so for our visit to the gliding club at Dunstable Downs. It rained the day before and the day after, but the sun shone for the society, providing what the club described as the best gliding day of the year. There were around 100 gliders active so there was plenty to see, in addition to a talk and Powerpoint presentation about the history of the club. The speaker, Adrian Hobbs, was particularly delighted to discover that his audience included Trevor Turvey, whose uncle was the farmer who provided the club with its first local base in a barn at Totternhoe.

THE VISIT TO TRING MUSEUM

The Natural History Museum at Tring was opened especially for us for an evening tour and talk during which we learned that the museum's founder, Walter Rothschild, actually took some kiwis with him to Cambridge during his university studies. That's something which only a very rich student could organise! Walter kept a flock of cassowaries at Tring Park until these large and aggressive birds attacked his father's horse and such pets were banned.

NEW SCULPTURES GROVE HOUSE GARDENS

The society helped with Nicola Dailey's research for the attractive sculptures with Dunstable themes which she has produced for Grove House Gardens. They were unveiled by the Mayor at the recent Party In The Park, when the society was presented with a framed and signed photograph of one of the art works. The explanatory display board alongside the sculptures was designed and produced by the society's vice-chairman David Turner, who is the editor of this newsletter.

John Buckledee

JABEZ INWARDS (23 APRIL 1817 - 21 DECEMBER 1880)

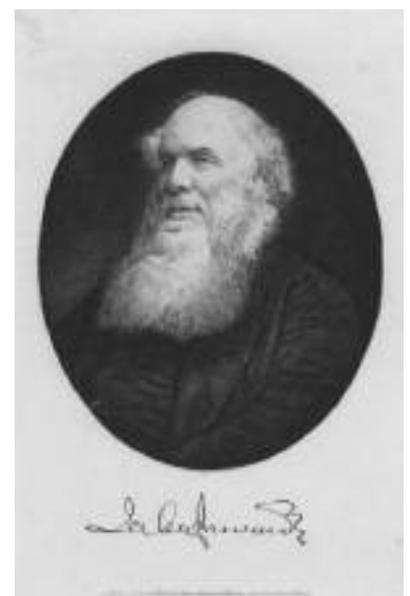
The first rule of research is "Don't get side-tracked", but one I find impossible to keep. Therefore when my attention was caught by the following headline in the Borough Gazette 'The Late Mr. Jabez Inwards of Dunstable – Erection of a Memorial Fountain' I could not ignore it. Who was this man to merit such a memorial and why is there no mention of him in the local the Dunstable books?

MEMORIAL FOUNTAIN

According to the article a memorial fountain was unveiled in London, at the junction of Great College Street and Kentish-town Road, to Jabez Inwards who was a distinguished temperance advocate, preacher and lecturer. The unveiling ceremony was attended by at least 8,000 persons, including distinguished

politicians, philanthropists, city magnates, celebrated preachers, journalists, other gentlemen of high social position and influence and various members of the Inwards family. The unveiling took place in 1886, 5 years after his death. His widow, Mrs. Jabez Inwards, performed the ceremony and had the first drink of water. The churchwardens and members of the Vestry of St. Pancras had generously donated the ground and the design had been furnished by the Metropolitan Drinking Fountain Association. The drinking fountain stood 13ft. 6in. high and the width at base was 10ft. 4in., and was surmounted with an urn of granite marble. The inscription ran:

**Erected by the Friends of Temperance to the memory of Jabez Inwards,
Born April 23, 1817; died at Kentish Town,
December 21, 1880.**



Jabez Inwards by Charles William Sherborn - etching, published 1881

JABEZ INWARDS was born in Houghton Regis, the son of pious parents and during his life time became a very well known and respected temperance preacher. He liked to explain that he had a teetotal wedding only because his brother was devoted to the temperance cause. Soon after, though, both he and his wife resolved to abstain from drink and signed the pledge.

His first speech in his village about the dangers of strong drink was so impressive he was invited to speak again. An imposing figure of six feet with a large frame to match, quick wit, fluency of speech in proclaiming and defending total abstinence, the neighbouring towns and villages also sought his services. An entry in a diary records a speech made in the house of his friend Mr. W. Willis, who resided at Dunstable. *“The worthy host called on me to give an address. At once I began to make an excuse, but neither he nor the friends would hear of it. I pleaded again that I could not, that I knew not what to say, and I hoped that they would not press me to make me look ridiculous. Still they all persisted in requesting me to say just a few words, and so I thought that the best thing I could do, would be most firmly to say no. When I had thus resolved, my host got up and said, ‘Then I shall lock the door for we do not intend that you shall go before you have made a speech, however short that speech may be.’ Thus I felt myself obliged to say a few words, and this was the first speech I ever made.”*

In 1855 the family came to London where his services were much requested at temperance gatherings and also delivering lectures on astronomy, phrenology, and similar subjects, besides preaching the Gospel on Sunday. During the last 30 years of his active life he delivered many lectures on life assurance as the travelling agent of the British Equitable Assurance Society, but never ceased during that time to do all in his power for the promotion of temperance. It appears from his diaries that he must have delivered an average of at least 4 addresses per week. He also found time to write several books some of which are still available.

He was described as large hearted, earnest, tender, cheerful, humorous and having a profound pity for the evil-doer, whether the seller of the drink or the drunkard, with a rich, hearty, ringing laugh which sometimes seemed strong enough to shake a room. It was a laugh that never made an enemy, and often converted a foe into a friend. But Jabez never forgot his home town returning on several occasions to preach.

During the summer of 1871 the annual gala of the Dunstable Temperance Society was held at Dunstable Park. The local paper recorded the event which included this small extract:

The meeting was addressed by Jabez Inwards, Esq.; etc.
Few could have listened to the logical and eloquent speech of Jabez Inwards, Esq. without being convinced of the evil of moderation, the difficulty of its definition, and the danger of its practice. In a very affecting manner did the speaker review the two parts of his past life in the prospective lights of death and eternity. He asked *“which would give him most comfort and joy in the dying hour—the thought of 22 years spent as a moderate drinker, or 33 years as a total abstainer?”* in which thousands had been benefited by his speech and example.

A Poem also recording the event included the lines

*‘Next Mr Jabez Inwards rose
He did the moderate drinkers pose,
By proving they would not agree
As to the proper quantity,
For some might take three pints a day
And two might take one’s sense away.’*

The Wellingborough News in 1879 reported - On Monday afternoon the village was paraded by the Band of Hope, headed by the Temperance Brass Band, in their new uniform. Numerous flags, banners, &c., enlivened the procession, which halted at intervals for the band to play and the children to sing selections of music. After the procession tea was provided in the Temperance Hall, which was twice filled with the members of the Band of Hope, and twice afterwards by the public. In the evening a public meeting was held in the same place, which was crowded to hear a lecture from Mr. Inwards, subject, *“Forty years of my experience as a temperance lecturer,”* with amusing anecdotes. The lecturer was greeted with frequent rounds of applause.

A FATAL HEART ATTACK

Jabez Inwards had been ill for several weeks with congestion of the lungs but appeared to be making a good recovery when he suffered a fatal heart attack. The Temperance world sustained a great loss in the death of one of its greatest advocates. The funeral cortege left from his home at 20 Bartholomew Villas, Kentish Town, consisting of a hearse, four mourning coaches, and a number of private carriages and preceded to Highgate Cemetery. On arriving at the cemetery it was wisely determined to hold the service in the chapel. As soon as the mourners had alighted from their carriages and seated themselves in the chapel, the other friends were admitted as far as the building would accommodate them with many having to stand. The coffin was of polished oak and covered with wreaths, immortelles, and other floral designs. Several hundred persons attended and amongst those present at the funeral were the relatives of the deceased, representatives from the Life Assurance Society, the National Temperance League, the Band of Hope Union, the United Kingdom Alliance, the Lambeth Bath meetings, the Great Central Hall and many more societies.

Rita Swift

Greeting New Members

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

Mrs N Turton



Sad Farewell



We are very sorry to announce the sad loss of

Colin Bourne

David Sewell

Very valued members of the society.

Wigs and Models

When I gave my talk on April 12th about 'Chew's House And Schools' two of the pictures aroused particular interest. The first was the model of the Priory Church circa 1839.

THE SCREEN

The model shows the positions of the screen, organ slave clock and pulpit. The screen is currently in its original position at the East end of the church, by the Chancel steps. The Priory Church has been restored several time during its history. As part of the Georgian restoration in the 1730s, Jane Cart had the screen placed between the two westernmost pillars. A gallery was then erected with its front edge resting on the screen and its back edge against the west wall. If you look carefully at the west wall, you can just see the marks it left. The gallery housed the organ, the slave-clock and the pews where the boys from Chew's Charity school sat. When the congregation entered through the west doors they came into the church below the gallery. In the Victorian restoration of the 1870s, Frederick Hose moved the screen back to its original position. The gallery was dismantled, the organ was installed at the east end of the church and the boys sat at the west end.

JOHN GRESHAM



John Gresham

John Gresham was the fifth Master of Chew's Charity School, from 1789 to 1812. He is the only master of whom we have a picture. A few years ago, some of his descendants visited Dunstable from their home in New Zealand. They met Ray Barlow at Chew's House and he introduced them to me. They said they had an oil painting of John Gresham at home. I gave them my email address and they emailed me a photo of the painting. He was born in Swanbourne and was a renowned musician.

He is also listed as a peruke maker. Close examination of the picture suggests that he is wearing one of his own creations. In 1791 John Gresham wrote a 'Schedule of what things belong to the Charity School at Dunstable'. The two main doors were oak, the rest were deal as were all the window shutters. Only the parlour had wallpaper. There were five chimney-pieces, a few dressers and cupboards, some shelving and an iron chest. The wooden sink was lined with lead. There is mention of a 'Chamber' and a 'Maid's room' but neither contained a bed. Presumably the Masters brought their own furniture. The cistern was in the yard, next to the stable. The School Room contained 'a Master's desk, three rows of pins to hang the boys' caps on, ten forms for the boys to sit on, nine desks for the boys to write at, a small closet in one corner to lay books in, the Orders of the School in a Black Frame with glass before it.' There is



no mention of a blackboard. John's son, William, was organist at the Priory for many years. He was concerned that the congregation was reluctant to join in singing the psalms. As a consequence, he wrote an Improved Psalmody to 'promote general singing in Public Worship.'

During the interval of my talk, one member of the audience, who had been a choir-boy in the Priory Church, could not accept that the screen had been in any position other than its current one. So convinced was he of this that he queried whether I had ever been inside the Priory Church. Omer Roucoux and I tried to explain the picture of the model to him, but he would not accept anything we said about it. This was quite an unsettling experience and did not help me relax into the second part of the talk. When I show that slide again, I will explain about the screen, even though it is not central to the story of Chew's Charity School.



Model of the Priory Church circa 1839

Hugh Garrod

Be a Sport!

The Dunstable History Day was very successful this year and we had a constant stream of visitors looking at our display on the Tudors and Stuarts. Plans are already being discussed for next year's History Day, but this time the theme chosen is very different. In 2012 we shall be doing a display with a different slant on history: instead of Kings and Queens the subject will be the history of sports and games through the ages.

We shall need help researching the history of games of all kinds, indoor and outdoor, from tiddlywinks to toxophily, from ping-pong to polo – in fact, any games you can think of. We don't need detailed histories of them, just general information of interest, plus lots of illustrations (historical, preferably) and descriptions to go with them.

If you are willing to help please talk to Rita Swift (01525 527790), Joan Curran (01525 221963) or Sue Turner (01582 600475).

Come on, be a sport!

ABC Travel Guides

The society was contacted earlier this year by OAG who publish the ABC Travel Guides with a view to finding a home for their archives of the travel guides as they were moving from their premises in Church Street to Capability Green in Luton.

When we visited OAG, we were shown a vast array of guides dating back to 1859. It quickly became apparent that this was way beyond our capabilities to look after a collection as extensive as this and eventually, after being turned down by the Railway Museum at York, a home was found for them at the London Transport Museum. We did however borrow two of the earliest volumes to study and we include some information here.

The first ABC Railway guide was published in September 1853 by William Tweedie of 337 Strand London and printed by W. Clowes & Sons of Stamford Street and Charing Cross. The earliest one that we found was dated April 1859 (No. 67). It comprised a total of 132 pages, a front and back cover, 5 pages of useful information, 100 pages being timetables (all handset in 5 point type), and had 23 pages of adverts.

OSCAR WILDE

From the outset, the alphabetical guide was warmly praised for its 'simplicity and clarity' and Oscar Wilde is reputed to have said while watching friends poring over a timetable that 'he would sooner lose a train by the ABC than catch it by Bradshaw'.

The original owners were Tom Walter Green and Edwin Augustus William Taylor of Birmingham. In 1874 John Hutton, jun (later Sir John) became the owner. At his death in 1903, Lady Hutton and her two sons, Ernest and Montague, carried on the publication. In August, 1937 Ernest Hutton sold the copyright to Thomas Skinner & Co. (Publishers) Ltd.

INDEX PRINTERS

James Tibbett established a printing business in 1840, where Moore's shop used to be in High Street South. He was succeeded by his son James Tibbett Jnr. in about 1869 and by 1880 the printing business was being carried out at the rear of what used to be the Victoria Bun Shop at no. 19, currently Hairs & Graces hairdressers. James' son Alfred took over the business after his death in 1921 and it was expanded by his son Cyril at new larger premises in Church Walk, to the rear of Albion Buildings and Moore's. Known as the Albion Press, the business eventually became Index Printers.



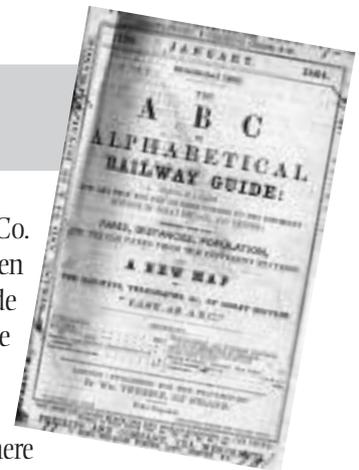
James Tibbett

DUNSTABLE <i>via</i> Leighton,			
from Euston Square, 47½ miles.			
Fares, 10/3rd, 7/6d, 5/6d, 3/11d.			
Pop. 3580.			
Leave	Arrive	Leave	Arrive
London	Dunstbl.	Dunstbl.	London
7.30	10.20	7.35	10.5
9.0	10.20	9.15	11.0
P.M.		P.M.	
11.15	2.0	6.20	8.15
5.45	7.50	-	-
No Sunday Trains.			

May, 1859 timetable for Dunstable

The publisher Thomas Skinner & Co. also operated at this address and when they acquired the ABC Railway Guide in 1937, Index Printers, as timetable specialists, took over the printing.

The company moved to purpose built premises at London Road in 1966 where they continued to print all the guides until they were bought by Ben Johnson in 1991. Whereupon, the factory was closed down and all the work transferred to their operation at York.



AIR GUIDE

In May 1934, for the first time, details of two air services were included, following the rail guide format and by September 1938 there were a number of air routes scattered throughout the alphabetical section. By September 1939 the air section had increased to an 11 page section at the back of the Railway Guide, but it fell dramatically during the war owing to the virtual cessation of public air services. The 145th and last, combined issue of the rail and air guide was in May, 1946 and in June 1946 the separate ABC Air Guide was launched with the issue listed as no. 146.

In 1970 Thomas Skinner was sold to Reed International and operated under the IPC Business Press banner. They moved to new premises in Church Street in 1981 known as the ABC World Timetable Centre. This was visited at its inauguration by Princess Anne on January 26th 1982. Reed acquired rival Official Airline Guides Inc. in 1993 and in August 1996 all products from the combined ABC and OAG businesses were rebranded as OAG. OAG was bought by United Business Media in 2006 and is today, one of several UBM Aviation brands.

The last edition of the ABC Railway Guide was published in October, 2007.

David Turner

HATCHETT'S HOTEL, PICCADILLY & DOVER ST.
Established 100 Years.
GOOD BEDS, good Living, Cleanliness, and Comfort, combined with moderate Charge. Porters up all night. Warm Baths. Servants charged if desired.

WEST END.—J. MOORE, Old York Coffee and Chop House, 21 Swallow Passage, corner of Oxford Street and Regent Circus. Only five minute walk from either of the Parks. Omnibus Office, seat door, to all parts of London. A Private Coffee Room for Ladies or Parties. Good Beds. [74]

THE LONDON COFFEE HOUSE, LUDGATE HILL.
ROBERT CLAUKE, Proprietor.—The Visitors to this spacious Hotel have every advantage of private residence, and all the attendance and luxuries of hotels. The locality is well adapted for the most comfortable quiet after business hours. The Wines are of the best quality, and in the most beautiful order. This Hotel has for half a century secured a patronage of the highest repute, and the Proprietor will deem nothing trifling which may render comfort and convenience to his patrons. Gentlemen from the Continent will meet with ready attention, as the waiters speak the Continental languages. Beds sent by telegraph or post. Baths and washing-rooms conveniently situated.

Adverts in the May, 1859 edition of the guide, with the handwritten price of insertion

A B C RAILWAY GUIDE.

HINTS TO RAILWAY TRAVELLERS.

Before proceeding on your journey, buy a copy of the **ABC Railway Guide**. There you will find that the Railway has already solved for you the mysteries of Railway complications, and has presented the information you require in a clear and concise form.

Your **Luggage** should be securely packed in a strong box, or solid portmanteau, and it is important that your name and address should appear **in full** on every article.

As almost every person is now an occasional traveller, for articles left in the carriages of "waiting-rooms," but such things are deposited in a room, and properly labelled, with the date, train, &c., upon which they are found. They are kept for a period of twelve months, when, if no claimant appears, they are advertised, and sold by auction, the proceeds going to the Company's general account.

For the better security of the property of passengers a "**Check-room**" is provided at the principal stations. Here articles may be left in charge of the Company's servants for a charge.

Hints to Railway travellers

Robert Crouch AKA BOB THE BUTCHER



While searching the internet about the proceedings of the Old Bailey, I came upon this account of the execution at Tyburn, on 20th May, 1728, of 7 women and 22 men, including Robert Crouch, who was born in Dunstable in the early eighteenth century. It was written by the chaplain of Newgate, who was known as the Ordinary of Newgate.

The ORDINARY of NEWGATE his ACCOUNT, Of the Behaviour, Confession, and Dying Words of the Malefactors, who were Executed at Tyburn, on Monday, the Twentieth of this Instant May, 1728.

SENTENCE OF DEATH

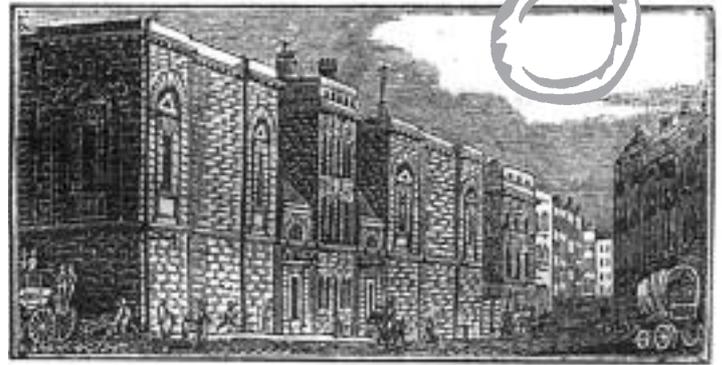
Twenty two Men, viz. Christopher-Thomas Rawlins, Isaac Ashly, alias Aslien, John Rowden, alias John Hulks, Edward Benson, George Gale, Thomas Crowder, William Russel, William Holden, Robert Crouch, James Toon, William Septon, John Hornby, Lawrence Clinsmith, Benjamin Johnson, Richard Nichols, Joseph Johnson, Anthony Beadle, Hether Landel, John Cobbs, Joseph Price, James Smith, and James Perre; and Seven Women, viz. Mary Prince, Susanna Vine, Elizabeth Burden, Elizabeth Lewis, Margaret Pendergrass, Mary Hendron, and Mary Taylor, alias Dennis, were, by the Jury found guilty of Capital Crimes; and received Sentence of Death accordingly.

William Russell, Robert Crouch, and William Holden, of St. Giles's in the Fields, were indicted for assaulting Martha Hyde on the Highway, and taking from her a Broad-Cloth Coat, value 40 s. a Looking-Glass, value 30s. a Gown, Apron, and other Goods, value 30s., on the 8th of December last.

Against these 3 Persons, James Dalton was produc'd an Evidence, who depos'd, That on the 8th of March last, about 9 o'Clock at Night, they overtook the Prosecutor, Martha Hyde, in Fleet-street, and seeing her to have a Bundle with her, they resolv'd to snatch it from her; but not having an Opportunity to do it there, they follow'd her into Lincolns-Inn-Fields, where Crouch alias Bob the Butcher, knock'd her down, and then Russell ran away with the Bundle, in which were contain'd several Aprons, a Woman's Morning Gown, 3 Black Hoods, and a Looking-Glass, which last, in opening the Bundle, fell down and was broke in pieces; all the Remainder was sold to Sarah Watts (one who buys stol'n Goods, and in the Cant of the Society is call'd a Lock;) but not having well examined the Things before the Sale, they were mortified afterwards to hear, there was 40 s. in Specie rap'd up in a Rag in the said Bundle. - Martha Hyde the Prosecutor depos'd to the Purpose aforesaid, That she was knock'd down in Lincolns-Inn-Fields, and the Goods before mentioned taken from her. - Russel Lomew



An 1747 engraving by William Hogarth of the execution at Tyburn of the Idle 'Prentice



Newgate prison in 1780, the year it was destroyed in the Gordon Street Riots

Nichols depos'd, That he saw Russell and Crouch at a Brandy Shop soon after the Transactions before-mentioned, who quarrelling betwixt themselves, Russel said to Crouch, if you meddle with Nichols, I'll cut the Coat off your Back, for it is the Woman's Coat which I knock'd down in Lincolns-Inn-Fields, and I have as much Right to it as you; it appear'd that Crouch pawn'd an old Coat to pay for the Alteration of that he had then on, and that at first, it had on a picked Cape of Cloth, which was taken off, and a Velvet one put on in its stead. - Mr. Willis, who took Russell, depos'd, when he apprehended him, That Russell acknowledg'd the Goods before-mentioned, were Stole & sold for about 1 l. 2 s.; but said, he did not value it, because he should die in the Company of such brave Fellows. Upon the Whole, he was found Guilty.

'BORN AT DUNSTABLE OF HONEST PARENTS'

Robert Crouch, as he said, about 20 Years of Age, Born at Dunstable of Honest Parents, who gave him good Education, and when of Age, bound him to one Widow Thompson in Newgate-Market, with whom he serv'd his Time, but not willing to lead a quiet and settled Life, he apply'd himself to Gaming, which brought him into a sett of the worst of Company, and this prov'd his Ruin. He confess'd the particular Fact, of which he was convicted, and that he had not follow'd the business of Thieving long. The Evidence against him had been one of his chief advisers to Wickedness, and that there was not the least Shadow of occasion for his betaking himself to such wicked Courses, since he wanted nothing, and his Father intended very soon to set him up in his own business, which was a Butcher.

When His Majesty's Proclamation came out for apprehending Street-Robbers*, he foreseeing the danger, agreed to go a four years Voyage to Sea, but upon Dalton's Information he was Apprehended before he could put his design in Execution. He told me, that he had join'd himself to a Society for improvement in religious Principles and Practices; but to this he did not prove an ornament. In the Cell, a Friend desir'd him seriously to prepare for Eternity, and not to entertain any hopes of a Reprieve; he replied, we shall certainly be all Repriev'd on Monday next, about two of the Clock. He behav'd always with abundance of civility, but that he Smil'd too often in the Chapel, which disturb'd some of his Neighbours, this, he said, was a natural Weakness, which he could not help. I represented to him the greatness of his Sin, as committed against much Light and Knowledge. He acknowledged himself among the chief of Sinners, that he was griev'd for betaking himself to such a wicked Life, which had brought him to a shameful Death, that he believ'd in Christ his only Saviour, repenting truly of all his Sins, and dying in Peace with all Mankind.

*a wanted notice

David Turner

THE HISTORY ROOM



Every year, at the AGM, and occasionally at other times, you will have heard references to our room in Priors House.

We know that very few of you have ever been in and seen what we actually have there and you may have wondered why we have a room there at all. So it seemed that it would be a good idea to tell you about some of the things we have which might be useful if you are doing family history, for instance, or trying to find out the history of your house, or are just interested in the history of Dunstable.

In the 20 years since the Society was formed we have built up a collection of photographs, local directories, books, maps, souvenir programmes and various other memorabilia relating to Dunstable which have been given to us for safe keeping. When the Town Council took over Priors House we were offered the use of a room in which to keep all these items for the use of the townsfolk.

One of our collections is of original photographs, many of them from people's personal collections and never published, kept in acid-free sleeves to prevent them deteriorating. A large number of photographs have also been scanned on to our computer.

Our collection of directories starts with a facsimile of one from 1785, continues with County directories from 1876 to 1934 and an almost complete run of local town directories from 1905 to 1940, when they ceased to be published regularly. There are also a few from the 1950s and 60s.

Most of the books, of course, are about Dunstable, but there are also general books on Bedfordshire and other places in the county, including some of the local villages. (Most of these can be borrowed.)

There are souvenir programmes from coronations and jubilees, cuttings of many articles from the Gazette and periodicals, lots of maps, from the 1881 OS map onwards, and posters announcing auction sales of properties in the town. There are lists of tax payers through the ages - ship tax, hearth tax, land tax, etc. - rate lists from 1898 and 1908 and the 1841 and 1851 census returns. (Other census lists are available in Dunstable Library.) There is also a list of most of the changes in the ownership of property recorded in the Manor Court Records from 1743 to the mid-19th century, and we have a photocopy of all the original minutes of the Vestry Meetings (forerunners of Town Council meetings) from 1750 to 1819, with a typewritten transcript, complete with index. And there is a lot of additional information about local firms which was originally collected for our books on the old trades, including some trades still on the waiting list, looking for an author.

Visitors are always welcome to come and see our 'History Room', and though our usual routine has recently been disrupted by the restoration work at Priors House, Hugh Garrod is normally there on Wednesday mornings and Joan Curran and Rita Swift are there on Thursdays to answer any questions. We hope that things will get back to normal in September and that we might see some of you there some time soon.

Joan Curran

The Swans with the Golden Chains

In 1306 Edward, Prince of Wales, then aged 22, was to be knighted and his Father, Edward I, issued a proclamation that any young men who wished to be knighted with him should come to London and the King would defray the cost.

The Prince was duly knighted by the King in private and then came out and knighted all the young men in Westminster abbey church.

Following the ceremony there was splendid feast when TWO SWANS DECKED WITH GOLD CHAINS were brought out into the hall.

Could there be a connection with the Dunstable swan jewel?



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Joan Curran

Memories of old Dunstable

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

SHEEP RUSTLERS HANGED

Many and varied are the queries which arrive on the history society's website (dunstablehistory.co.uk).

One of the more unusual was from an author seeking the source of Worthington Smith's reference to some sheep rustlers hanged at Dunstable in medieval times.

This could only have originated in the Annals of Dunstable, that yearly record of events great and small kept at Dunstable Priory.

Here's what happened, as recorded in 1264: "Rogues came in the evening into the fields near Sewell, and drove the almoner's sheep towards Leiten (sic); but the alarm being raised at Dunstable, the prior's servants and townsmen went out, and took two with the sheep at Sewell, who were tried and hanged next day at Passecumbe."

Instant justice indeed!

ROMANTIC MEMORIES

Something more modern from society member Pauline Wolsey, who had some romantic memories kindled by the picture of the Empire Rubber Company in our last newsletter.

She writes: "When I started work at the Meteorological Office I had to go into digs and my landlord worked at the Rubber Co.

In November 1953 I went to their Christmas Dance held at the Sugar Loaf. There, a young man bought me a drink, saw me home and I went out with him the following weekend but then didn't see him again for some time.

March 1954 I went to the cinema by myself and that same young man took the only empty single seat in the cinema - next to me.

In June 1954 I went back to London to do my Nursing Training; in October he started his National Service, deferred because of an apprenticeship; and in December 1954 we became engaged.

We were married in April 1958 and have lived in Luton ever since. His

continued overleaf

name – Barry.” Pauline became a councillor in Luton and was Mayor in 1987-8. Barry, members will remember, gave the society that entertaining talk on the HMV dog in October 2008.

NIGHT OF THE DEMON

A query to our website, about scenes for a film being shot on the Dunstable-Leighton Buzzard railway line at Stanbridgeford Railway Station, started quite a debate.

The film was *Night Of The Demon*, directed by Jaques Tourneur and based on a story by M.R. James called *Casting The Runes*. It’s a creepy movie, very highly regarded by film buffs, and has been subject of numerous articles and at least one book.



A clip from 'Night of the Demon' believed to have been filmed at Stanbridge station

Railwayman Paul Williams, based with Virgin Trains at Euston, was friendly with an engine driver named Charlie Caines, of Bletchley, who used to tell a story about taking part in the film. The climax involves a man leaping off a train and being chased in the darkness along the line by another engine which he thinks is a demon. There’s a brief shot in the film of an engine driver and his fireman hard at work. One is recognisably Charlie Caine, who died last year aged 88.

But Paul’s information has been pooh-poohed by film experts, who are convinced that all the railway scenes were filmed near St Albans. Not necessarily. The St Albans line was quite busy and the quieter line near Dunstable could have been closed at night and would have been more suitable for these particular shots.

Jim Knight of Totternhoe remembers cycling past the station late one night and seeing the place all lit up. He peered over the fence and saw film crews there. There was a steam engine and someone jumping off the train.

Eric Holmes also remembers the filming, in 1956. He watched for some time. They were photographing someone running along the railway line in front of a train and diving out of the way just as it reached him. There were some houses nearby which they didn’t want in the shot, so they had clouds of black smoke blowing across to conceal them. In the station sidings were dressing rooms and a canteen. One local lady was recruited to work in the canteen.

Unfortunately, neither Jim nor Eric ever found out the name of the film. But the scenes described correspond to the final scenes in *Night Of The Demon*.

With the debate continuing, Paul visited former railwayman Jake Milburn who was based at the Leighton Buzzard and then Bletchley depots. According to Jake filming took place on the Leighton Buzzard to Dunstable line in the down direction from Leighton. The exact location was the plain track just before Stanbridgeford station and the train crew was driver Charlie Caines and a fireman known simply as Yorkie .

According to Jake the actors ate at the Cross Keys pub.

Paul started work on the railway in 1977 at Bletchley and remembers well the men who worked on the Leighton Buzzard-Dunstable line. They included Maurice Conquest, Len Doughty, Brian Fensome, Ben Hyde, Fred Moore, Ambrose Birchett, Bert Crossley and Sandy Dewhurst .

AMERICAN TV FILM

Our investigations into *Night Of The Demon* have stirred members’ memories about other films in the Totternhoe area, particularly some spectacular battle scenes shot in the Totternhoe quarries in the late 1980S early 1990s. But, alas, no-one so far has come forward with the name of the film, which was made for American TV.

THE AVENGERS

Diana Rigg was in Totternhoe to make scenes for an episode of *The Avengers*. She stopped at the Cross Keys in the village during the filming. For one scene they built a ramp along one of the steep entrances to the Green Lanes down which they launched some old cars. The cars exploded when they reached the bottom.

THE BRITANNIA INN

Georgina Phillips wrote to our website about the Britannia Inn which was in High Street South, Dunstable. According to a family prayer book, Roger Charles Edwards (her husband’s maternal grandfather) was born there on August 8, 1873.

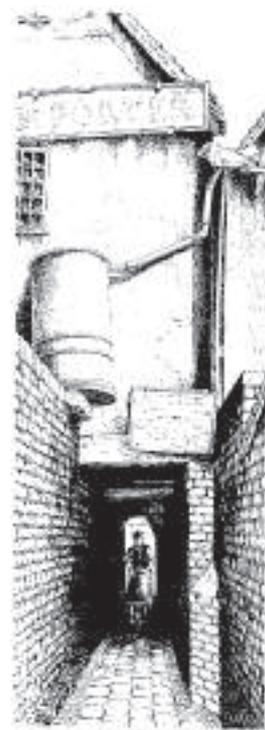
His birth certificate omits the name of the inn, just giving the address as High Street South and stating that his father, Robert, was a publican. If so, Robert (born in Ireland) can only have been there briefly, as in 1871 he was a coachman in Kensington and died in Reigate in 1876.

The Britannia pub was in Middle Row alongside the old passageway linking High Street South with Ashton Square. It burned down near the end of the 19th century and there’s a shop on the site now, but it’s remembered in Worthington Smith’s famous old drawing of the alleyway, made in 1887, which shows the back of the pub, on the left. It has a sign advertising “porter” beer.

Incidentally, the licensee of the Britannia in 1874 was someone called Charles Mottram, who appealed to magistrates in that year to have his wife bound over the keep the peace towards him. She had thrown a jug and two tumblers at him and threatened to “smash and murder him”. Magistrates decided that it was HIS drinking that was mainly to blame, and threw out the case.

FAMILY HISTORY

Many of the queries to the website are from people researching their family history and, regrettably, we cannot do ALL the work for them! But it was interesting to hear from Chris Matthew whose ancestor Charles Emery moved from Witham, Essex, to Beale Street, Houghton Regis, with his second wife Mary Cheshire, who came from Dunstable. He was a shoemaker and Mary was straw bonnet maker. Charles is in the 1861 census and died at Houghton in 1880. Houghton Council has been helpful in locating Charles’ grave.



Worthington Smith’s famous old drawing of the alleyway, between High Street South and Ashton Square made in 1887

John Buckledee