

# NEWSLETTER

Dunstable & District Local History Society  
No. 60 February 2022



## Chairman's Notes

**The annual general meeting of the Dunstable Local History Society will be held at 7.45 pm on Tuesday, March 8, at the Methodist Church Hall.**

I mention this right at the start of my notes, because we need to notify all members formally that the meeting is due to be held. By including this as part of the newsletter we are saving the society the expense of posting the details separately.

Last year, we held the agm through the Zoom internet connection, when the following were elected: Chairman John Buckledee, Vice-Chairman Hugh Garrod, Treasurer Pat Larkman, Membership Secretary David Underwood, Committee Rita Swift, Jenny Dilnot, Liz Bentley and Chris Charman.

Our President is Paul Bowes, Philip Gillam has kindly agreed to be our honorary auditor, and David Turner expertly continues to edit this newsletter.

Nominations for next year's officers and committee are invited. Send them to me on [www.johnrbuckledee@hotmail.com](mailto:www.johnrbuckledee@hotmail.com) tel 01582 703107 (answerphone) or to any other members of the committee listed above. As always, we welcome comments, suggestions and further nominations as well as contributors to this newsletter.

### JOAN CURRAN'S COLLECTION OF PHOTOS

Our meeting next month, which includes the agm, will be a rather poignant event, because we will be screening some of the vast collection of photos of Totternhoe assembled by the late Joan Curran. She had placed them, together with detailed captions, into two large scrapbooks which she had loaned out and which had then been overlooked. Rita Swift traced them a couple of years ago and Joan was going to use them as the basis for a history society meeting. My wife Lynn and I scanned all the photos for a Powerpoint presentation but, alas, Joan became unwell, the Covid virus arrived and then, most unexpectedly, Joan died.

So, her photos will be introduced at next month's meeting

by Ross Martin, who has lived in Totternhoe all his life and is chairman of the Totternhoe Memorial Hall committee, which includes a very active social club where Ross often serves behind the bar. He has a wealth of anecdotes about Totternhoe, so don't miss hearing him and seeing the display.

The annual meeting is required to receive a report from the chairman, but to save time then I will print it here and take it as read on March 8.

### A PANDEMIC CURTAILED PROGRAMME

In 2021 the pandemic continued to curtail many of our regular meetings, so we waived our usual membership fees and asked for donations instead. It was most encouraging to find that nearly everyone contributed, with many members sending us a little extra. It meant we had sufficient funds to produce and post an extra edition of the newsletter. Our thanks to David Turner for tackling the extra editorial work, to David Underwood for overcoming the computer problems when producing the address labels, and to Jenny Dilnot for arranging postage and distribution.

We spent some time searching for an alternative meeting place when the Methodist Church put up the price for its hall. We very seriously considered moving to the United Services Club where we would have been made most welcome, and the Rector even offered to discuss using the Priory Church. Eventually, we moved to the Priory's church hall where we had some very successful meetings, but it was obviously going to be too small if things returned to normal. Then, happily, the Methodist Church had a rethink about its charges and we have been able to return to the place where we have been so happy over the years. In these uncertain times, booking speakers has been tricky and

some have had to cancel in recent months. Nevertheless, all our scheduled meetings have gone ahead regardless.

### QUEENSWAY HALL OF FAME

The society has taken an active part in events arranged by the town council, particularly the Queensway Hall of Fame which led to the first attempt at an authoritative list of all the bands which performed at the hall.



Queensway Hall of Fame at Grove House Gardens

*continued on next page*



*The Leading Ladies exhibition opened at Priory House in June*

### LEADING LADIES EXHIBITION

Our long-delayed exhibition about the town's Leading Ladies was put on display at Priory House and our gazebo at the archaeological day was particularly busy.

Our research rooms in Grove House have been rather quiet because of Covid, but work there is starting to pick up and Rita is very much hoping that some more volunteers will come forward to help.

### THE CULTURAL CONSORTIUM

Your society is part of the 'Cultural Consortium' set up as part of Dunstable's High Street Action Zone to encourage interest in the town's history. The quieter time during lockdown meant there were extra opportunities to research and write scripts for



*Archaeological Day at Grove House Gardens*

the QR code project. The idea of this is that people with mobile phones will be able to connect with a series of plaques and listen to recordings about interesting buildings in the town centre. A basis for a plaque design has been created, and work is now starting on agreeing with landlords about where the plaques are to be positioned. Some of our members are working on a book called 'They Came To The Crossroads', about people over the centuries who have come here to live, and I have nearly completed an illustrated book for all ages about the great tournaments held in Dunstable in medieval times.

These are exciting times for the society and for everyone interested in the town's history.

**John Buckledee**

## Elinor Brent-Dyer

**The History Society has been heavily involved in producing the 'Dunstable Leading Ladies Exhibition', which opened at Priory House in July 2021.**

One of the ladies was Elinor Brent-Dyer, a famous author who taught in Dunstable in the 1920s and we reproduce her story here.



*Elinor Brent-Dyer*

### CHALET SCHOOL SERIES

Elinor Brent-Dyer, who died in 1969 aged 75, was the author of the famous Chalet School series of books which began appearing in 1925. It is very likely that she wrote the first book in the series, 'The School at the Chalet', while she was working as a teacher at Moreton House School for Girls in West Street, Dunstable.

Elinor Brent-Dyer was born Gladys Eleanor May Dyer in South Shields on 6 April 1894, the only daughter of Eleanor (Nelly) Watson Rutherford and Charles Morris Brent-Dyer. In the early 1920s she adopted the name Elinor Mary Brent-Dyer.



*Moreton House School where Elinor Brent-Dyer came to teach in 1923*



*The garden at Moreton House School*



*Elinor Brent-Dyer's first published novel was published in 1922*



*The first Chalet School book, was published in 1925*

Miss Brent-Dyer's tales, set in an imaginary school in Switzerland, became hugely popular and she eventually wrote about 60 books about the adventures of the girls there. The stories, described by one critic as 'puzzling, silly, repetitious, unintentionally funny, pious, charming, peculiar...' are still in print.

### MORETON HOUSE SCHOOL

Moreton House School for Girls was opened by Mrs Annie Bennett in West Street, Dunstable, in 1864.

By 1923, the school's principals were the Misses Everest and Taylor who advertised in the Dunstable Year Book that it was conducted on 'thoroughly modern principles' with classes for tennis, hockey, calisthenics and dancing. Miss Taylor left in around 1923 and was succeeded by Miss Harman.

The school relocated to Watford in 1925 and there is now a modern office building on the site, almost opposite the police station.

Miss Brent-Dyer was already a published author when she came to Dunstable as an English teacher in 1923. Her first book, *Gerry Goes To School*, appeared in 1922.

### SCHOOL MAGAZINE

She clearly made a considerable impact here. She edited the school's magazine, *The Moretonian*, in 1924 and struck up a particular friendship with the school's music teacher, Miss Russell, for whom she was accompanist to the choral class and allowed the use of her gramophone.

She and Miss Russell coached the girls at tennis, provided the school's new reference library with books, and supervised a production by pupils of scenes from *Little Women*.

### A SCHOOL PLAY

During the Autumn term of 1923 the school staff performed a play, 'A Desperate Convict', written and produced by Miss Brent-Dyer, and in the summer term she offered two prizes in the elocution classes.

There were two Shakespearean evenings during the year. In the Autumn term there was a reading of 'Much Ado About Nothing', when Miss Russell and Miss Brent-Dyer gave 'delightful renderings' of Beatrice and Benedict.

### LADY MACBETH

In the Spring term they read 'Macbeth' where the 'heaviest' part, Lady Macbeth, fell to Miss Brent-Dyer. She also offered a prize for the best and strongest flowers in a gardening bulb competition.

During the Spring term of 1924 the school made a birthday presentation to Miss Harman, the headmistress, of a watercolour of Devon, as Miss Brent-Dyer had succeeded in finding out at the end of the previous term that this was what the head wanted.

On April 7 Miss Brent-Dyer invited pupils to her own Surprise Birthday Party which created great excitement and anticipation, particularly when the girls learned that this was to be a Fancy Dress event, with prizes for originality, prettiness and ingenuity. There were all kinds of interesting games and dancing from 6.30 to 7.30, and supper followed. Afterwards the party continued with games until 9.15 when the girls were presented with words, composed by Miss Brent-Dyer, for songs set to some familiar tunes.

The school celebrated its Diamond Jubilee in 1924. The Dunstable Borough Gazette on June 11 reported on the event, mentioning that the school's Pageant was written by Miss Brent-Dyer, who had also written the special Jubilee song.

### HER OWN SCHOOL

In 1938, she opened her own school in Hereford, the Margaret Roper School, but it closed in 1948 and she then dedicated all of her time to writing.

### John Buckledee



*Elinor Brent-Dyer as a young girl*

*Below: The Chalet School books*



# QR Code Panels



A large number of scripts are being written giving brief details about the interesting histories of various buildings in the town centre. They are due to be recorded so that anyone with a mobile phone can click on to QR codes on the side of the buildings and then listen to the commentaries. Here's a couple of samples of the work now in progress.

## MUSIC CENTRE

### THE PLACE TO HEAR THE LATEST HITS

Farmer's music shop was the place where generations of pop-lovers could listen to new records before deciding which to buy. Its building, remarkably unchanged today, was left as the corner shop after the entrance to Church Street was widened in 1963. In more recent years it has been the home of Bradshawe's estate agents and then Swinton's.

Farmer and Co had moved to Church Street by at least 1933 from their previous music shop (now a pharmacy) which had been in West Street since at least 1903. The business was founded by Albert Farmer and local musical prodigy Fred Gostelow, who had been appointed organist at Dunstable Congregational Church when he was only 13. He was organist and choirmaster at St Mary's Church, Luton, from 1888 until his death in 1942.

Next door to Farmer's in Church Street was the Gibbs and Dandy hardware store, which had deceptively large L-shaped premises. Customers could walk through various showrooms and emerge in High Street South, in the shop now occupied by Herington's, the chemist. Before the arrival of Gibbs and Dandy, the premises had been the drapery and furnishing business of Lockhart and Son, founded in 1840 and probably the largest shop in Dunstable at the time.

The original Herington's shop, founded by Frank Herington in 1887, was further down High Street South, at number 29 next to today's Vantage Indian restaurant.



Church Street, before widening, with Farmer's music shop next to Gibbs and Dandy

## DISASTROUS FIRE 1841 BLAZE RAGED OUT OF CONTROL

The corner of Church Street and High Street South, once the site of a pub called the Wheatsheaf, was the scene of a disastrous fire which destroyed around 20 houses in June 1841.

It began in a bakehouse belonging to Mr T. Fossey whose family was awakened by the blaze and escaped with great difficulty.

There was great confusion in the town as the fire spread. Dunstable's fire engine was brought to the spot but was so dilapidated that it didn't work. An express message asking for help was dispatched to Luton. An hour and a quarter passed by before the Luton fire engine arrived. By that time the blaze was threatening to engulf the whole town.

Eight houses were destroyed in the high street, seven more in Church Street, and six houses in a narrow courtyard leading from Church Street to the high street. They included a chemist's shop, a grocer's and a cabinet maker.

The area was rebuilt and by 1911 a well-known local personality, Percy W. Ashwell, was running a shop on the corner selling ladies' wear. Later the site was occupied by the Home and Colonial grocery shop with a highly polished brass frontage and sawdust on the floor. Next door was the Freeman Hardy and Willis shoe shop.

Both these buildings were demolished in 1963 when Church Street was widened, leaving the corner as it looks today. Foster Brothers became the corner business in High Street South with the Gibbs and Dandy hardware shop next door. This was a large walk-through store which extended to another entrance in Church Street.

A later business on the corner was a pet shop which suffered a disastrous fire in 1971 when many animals were killed.

**John Buckledee**



The original Dunstable fire engine which attended the fire in 1841 and proved ineffective at tackling the blaze. Now restored, it can be seen in the London Museum

## Sad Farewell



We are very sorry to announce the sad loss of  
**Derrick Bonfield Dorothy Harman Phyllis Luckman**

## Greeting New Members



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

<b>Graham Ashby</b>	<b>Michele Aylard</b>	<b>Wendy Cooke</b>
<b>Carolyn Cooper</b>	<b>Thomas Edgal</b>	<b>Cynthia Gresham</b>
<b>John Gurney</b>	<b>Kenson Gurney</b>	<b>Lesley Ruan Wyatt</b>

# Russ Sainty 1936 - 2021



**T**he death of Russ Sainty has brought back for some of us many distant memories.

Carnaby Street, Mary Quant, the Mini Skirt, Mods and Rockers, the Moon Landing, Twiggy, Woodstock, England's World Cup, Hippies, the First Heart Transplant, the Mini Cooper and so much more. Musically, the revolutionary Swinging Sixties brought the country noisily out of its sombre post-war mood and ushered in the era of pop music. Russ Sainty was one of rock 'n roll's founding fathers, officially commemorated as such in 2006 at the unveiling of a plaque on the site of the 2i's coffee bar in London which also launched careers such as Cliff Richard's, Wee Willie Harris's, Vince Eager's and so many others from 1956 to 1970.

## CALIFORNIA BALLROOM

But by 1960 Russ had moved on to the location for which he will always be remembered - Dunstable's iconic California Ballroom. The founder Edwin Green's granddaughter Diane Ilka's meticulous history, The 'Cali' Album, still the Book Castle's most cherished publication, contains hundreds of photographs of virtually every musical act of the time because they all performed there. The Rolling Stones, the Bee Gees, the Hollies, the Dave Clark Five, the Who, the Kinks, the Animals, the Walker Brothers, the Searchers, Lulu, Kathy Kirby, Brenda Lee, Sandie Shaw, Dusty Springfield, Tom Jones, Craig Douglas, Marty Wilde, Billy Fury, Gerry and the Pacemakers, the list goes on and on. Many a local person met their 'squeeze' of the day in that heady atmosphere, and hundreds of them subsequently married. And all those famous performers shared the bill with the Cali's resident singer, Russ Sainty, and his supporting group, the Nu-Notes (whose Rhet Stoller composed, wrote and performed the Match of the Day theme!).

## HE NEVER HAD A HUGE HIT RECORD

Incredibly popular, Russ starred there no less than 338 times... why, oh why, did he never have a giant number one hit record, despite releasing dozens for EMI, plus 'cover' albums,

and appearing on all the popular TV (Six Five Special etc) and radio programmes. He subsequently starred in musicals, cabaret, even pantomime, enjoying a solo music career ever after, right up to his death on November 29th 2021.

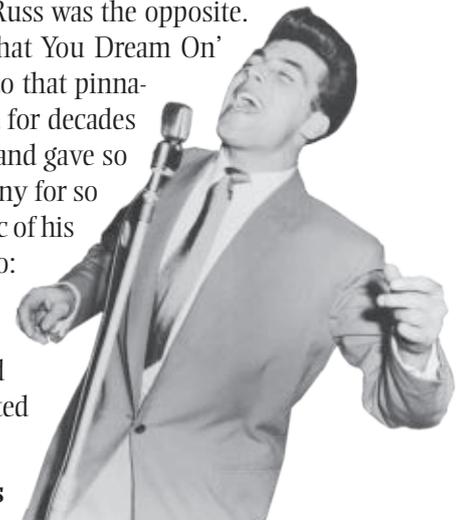
## KING OF THE CALI

The excitement is all covered in another lavishly illustrated Book Castle title, King of the Cali, recounting his roller-coaster life. Born in the East End of London, he was evacuated in wartime with his parents to Woughton on the Green, to a cottage later taken over by Bletchley Park decoders, little knowing that his fame and fortune would be made just ten miles or so down the road in Dunstable.

## AN AUTOBIOGRAPHY IN 2008

A lovely, happy, fulfilled and generous man, he was proud to return there in 2008 to launch the autobiography with an evening performing dozens of his favourite numbers at the United Services Club for those of us privileged to hear once again the voice of a consummate professional. Many pop stars were one hit wonders. Russ was the opposite.

'Send Me The Pillow That You Dream On' was the nearest he got to that pinnacle, but he was admired for decades by all his fellow artists and gave so much pleasure to so many for so long. There's a triple disc of his songs available 'Radio: Play That Song Again'. Dunstable can be proud to have embraced and enjoyed him as an adopted 'son' in his heyday.



Paul Bowes



Russ Sainty pictured with Cliff Richard at the site of the the 2i's Coffee Bar, Old Compton Street in Soho, which was commemorated with a green plaque in September 2006



Russ Sainty (2nd right) with the Nu Notes

# Police Constable Henry Tofield



**First became interested in Pc Henry Tofield when delving into the Victorian files of the Dunstable Gazette. His name cropped up almost every week, arresting a culprit, giving evidence or involved in some act in keeping the town safe. In fact he appeared to be a 24/7 one-man police officer.**



*Icknield Street Police Station*

## **DUNSTABLE BOROUGH POLICE FORCE**

Dunstable Borough Police Force was established on September 16, 1865, when the town council appointed just two men to keep law and order in the town. They were Head Constable Benjamin George, (later Superintendent) and a Pc Addington (promoted to sergeant in 1870). They were issued with uniforms consisting of 'one great coat and cape every two years and every year one body coat, two pairs of trousers, two pairs of boots and one hat' Mr Burr gave the council a piece of land, 'Butt's Field' in Icknield Street on which the police station was built costing £425. It opened in December when a second constable William Prior was appointed during the illness of Head Constable George. The following year Pc Prior was considered too old for the job and replaced by Henry Tofield.

Henry Tofield was born in Beale Street, Houghton Regis, in 1835. His father was Benjamin Tofield and his mother Sarah (nee Parrott). He married Mary Ann Osborn in 1858 and their first child Sarah Ann Tofield was born in 1860 but survived for only about a year. According to the 1861 census Henry Tofield was a straw hat maker, Mary Ann was a straw hat sewer, Sarah Ann was still alive and they had a second child Henry who is just one month old. Four more children are born between 1863 and 1869.

Wages were not automatically increased, so police officers had to apply for a raise. In 1870 Police Sergeant Addington's wages were increased to 24 shillings per week and Pc Tofield to 19 shillings.

## **LARGE FAMILY**

Three years later Pc Tofield applied for a pay increase because he now had six children under the age of 11 and living expenses had increased. Although the councillors agreed to 24 shillings per week they did not think having a large family was a good enough reason for an increase. Later that year another daughter Minnie Tofield is born.

Like all families the children had their share of accidents. Frederick Osborne fell while playing with friends and broke his collar bone. When Minnie was about three years old her mother had left her for just a few moments and in that short time she reached up to the mantle and fell on to the fire. Fortunately, due to the quick thinking of her six-year-old sister Caroline Sarah and a low fire, she made a good recovery although badly burnt on the chin and arms.

The family increased by another daughter, Rosa Elizabeth, in 1876. The following year Superintendent George put in an application for a pay increase for the three officers but the Watch Committee was reminded of the easy duties of the police and considered the constables were paid a fair price for their services. Eventually an increase of one shilling per week was agreed.

The 1881 census showed that the family had moved to 121 Victoria Street. Harry, the oldest son was a valet, Mary Jane a straw hat sewer, Murray was apprenticed to a carpenter and Annie apprenticed to a dressmaker. The four younger children were all scholars.

## **BODY FOUND ON RAILWAY LINE**

Five years later the Gazette carried the distressing news of a young man's mutilated body found on the railway line between Dunstable and Luton. In the pocket of the deceased was a season ticket bearing the name F. Tofield and it was soon identified as that of the son of Pc Tofield of Dunstable. The young man had been apprenticed to the Reporter Office in Luton but dismissed for stealing. His employer did not press charges but sent him home to tell his father. Frederick never made it home as the disgrace must have been too much for him, especially having to confess to his father. An inquest was held in Bedford which was possibly to spare the feelings of a serving police officer.

Police officers faced danger and assault in their line of duty but a journey in a horse and cart can also be dangerous as the Tofields found out. Their horse jumped to one side, startled by rustling in the hedge, and both the occupants were thrown out. Pc Tofield was shaken, but Mrs. Tofield was entangled in the legs of the horse, resulting in a bad scalp wound and several other painful injuries.

## **FALL LED TO A CUT IN WAGES**

During the course of his duty Pc Tofield had a fall which resulted in him breaking one of his ribs and spraining an ankle. As he was unable to work Special Constable James Markham was appointed but Henry had a portion of his pay cut. Another year he asked for some remuneration for the extra duty caused by the indisposition of Ps Addington. Superintendent George explained the circumstances and the council unanimously voted a gratuity of £1.

Henry and Mary must have been very proud when their son Murray Tofield joined the Bedfordshire Constabulary in November only for him to resign in May the following year. A few years later daughter Annie Tofield married George Kelly, a serving police constable.

Wife Mary Ann died in 1890 but Henry remained living at 121 Victoria Street, Dunstable. With him were his four daughters and grandson Victor Day, two years old, the son of Mary Jane who was married to Arthur Day a straw hat manufacturer.

### RETIREMENT

In 1895 Henry, still a police constable, gave notice of his intention to claim his pension as through age and infirmity he was incapable of doing his duty. With a good character his pension would amount to £37. 14s. 4d. per annum. That same year he married Mary Ann Smith, a widow, at Islington. Sadly, the next reference in the paper is his admission, five years later, to an Asylum in Bedfordshire where he died after a few months.

Unfortunately there does not appear to be any photographs of Dunstable police officers. Even Kempston Police Museum only has a uniform button.



*The uniform button at Kempston Police Museum*

### SOME OF THE COURT CASES INVOLVING PC TOFIELD:

Samuel Green, landlord Horse and Groom, charged with committing a nuisance against Mr. Scott's shop window.

Several fights took place at the Foresters Fete and the police were kept busy. Hiram Simpson fought violently when spring snaps were put on his wrist.

While trying to break up another fight Pc Tofield was assaulted and his helmet smashed.

Pc Tofield and J Robinson of White Swan go after men who stole three bagatelle balls worth 5/- each. At Little Brickhill they see a house on fire and raise the alarm. The eight people inside were unaware of the raging fire downstairs and would have been burnt in their beds but for Pc Tofield whom it was hoped would be well rewarded.

Together with Ps Addington the two police constables arrested David Dumpleton in 1875 for the murder of his wife. Dumpleton was later charged with manslaughter.

James Weatherhead was summoned for leaving in High Street North the carcasses of two dead horses. The stench from these animals caused persons passing by to put their handkerchiefs to their noses.

Emma Cook, a poor old woman living alone at Manchester Place, committed suicide by jumping down a well 70ft. deep. She was receiving relief but unable to earn a living lately was very frightened of being sent to the workhouse which she considered a disgrace. Pc Tofield was present when her body was recovered and at the inquest stated that the deceased's uncle committed suicide by jumping down a well 16 years previously and he had helped to draw him out.

Rita Swift

## Memories of old Dunstable



**H**istory Society members came up with a series of suggestions when asked to help with the name for a new road being built off Tavistock Street.

### SIDINGS WAY

One of these was The Sidings, remembering the times when there was a railway in the area. That's found some favour, and the road has been christened Sidings Way.

The railway sidings feature in many a tale about the town's old cattle market, which we have been researching for the Gazette's Yesteryear series.

The market on The Square once had special sales of horses three times a year, in May, August and November, when a large number of prospective buyers would arrive in town. The growing popularity of the motorcar brought the horse sales to an end in the 1920s.

Famously, the sales had included auctions of wild ponies which were rounded up on Exmoor and sent by train to the sidings at Tavistock Street.

Don Kemp, who worked for the local auctioneer Charles Allcorn, wrote a booklet for the history society giving his memories of the sales. The ponies, usually in a herd of about two dozen, would be run from the railway sidings along High Street North and then up through the back streets via Bull Pond Lane to a meadow at the top of Garden Road. They would stay there for a day or two before being trotted down Friars Walk to the market where they would be purchased by riding schools or trained to work between the shafts of small carriages.

Dunstable folk, pre-war, were used to the sight of market animals. A regular event on a Sunday evening in summer was a herd

of more than 200 cattle walking steadily along the A5 from Trinity Farm in Hockliffe, through the chalk cutting, to Dunstable's railway sidings. Police would stop north-bound traffic in Dunstable, and south-bound traffic would have to follow the herd, which was skillfully controlled by drovers. The animals would then be taken by cattle train to the wholesale market at Smithfield.

### GEORGE HOLT

The search for details about the railways in Dunstable led to a story about the death in August 1934 of George Holt, whose horse and wagonette were well-known at the station in Church Street, where George would pick up passengers and take them on to their destinations.



*George Holt of Totternhoe*

George, aged 81, was the last of the horse-drawn taxi drivers in Dunstable, whose business faced increasing competition from the newly invented motor buses.

He lived at 'The Briars' in Church End, Totternhoe, and his wagonette was the preferred mode of transport for travellers wanting to reach the villages or the golf club on the Downs,

In his younger days George had worked in London where he had a delivery round in the City distributing copies of the old Globe newspaper.

### **FRANK DRAPER**

Mrs Ruth Draper telephoned the society from Chatham in Ontario, Canada, with the sad news that her husband, Frank, had died. He was 95.

Mr and Mrs Draper emigrated to Canada from Dunstable in 1957 and came back on a nostalgic visit in 2009 when we interviewed them at the society's research room. Frank had a host of memories about the town which we recorded in the newsletter. You can read this in the PDF of back copies on our website (page 244).

We were quite taken with his stories about Britain Street School, particularly about a large model steam railway engine built by the science master, Mr Richmond. He laid rails around the classrooms, fired up the engine, and pulled children, two at a time, around the school.

There wasn't room in our 2009 issue for all Frank's anecdotes. One of the stories we left out was about the kindness of his junior-school teacher, Miss Gladys Evans, at Seebright School in Markyate. Miss Evans later married Stanley Scott and was the popular head teacher at Kensworth School for many years. She visited Frank in hospital, bearing grapes, when he had to have an operation, and later gave his brothers a lift to school in Markyate every day in her little Austin Seven, after the family moved to Kensworth.

She organised a show in the Iron Room in Markyate where Frank sang a song "Oh where, oh where, has my little dog gone?" whereupon Miss Evans produced a toy in the shape of a black Scotch terrier and Frank would then say "Oh, here it is!"

The boys helped Miss Evans when her car's engine boiled over when she was returning from watching the orange rolling on Dunstable Downs on a Good Friday. They filled a tub from a puddle and poured it into the car's radiator, straining the dirty water through some material.

### **DOROTHY HARMAN**

It was particularly sad to learn of the death of Dorothy Harman, whose cheerful presence will be very much missed at history society meetings.

Dorothy was born in Watford in 1939, but one of the family's favourite days-out was a trip to Dunstable Downs. How wonderful it would be, she thought, to live in Dunstable.

She and her husband eventually found a home at the foot of the Downs, at Wellhead. Later, they



*Dorothy Harman,*

moved to Eaton Bray and then Dunstable. Dorothy's nursing skills led her to work at the Kirby Road doctors' surgery where she became the practice manager.

Dorothy was a very active member of Dunstable Methodist Church and there was a large congregation for her funeral service on September 16. Members of Dunstable Food Bank, which received much support from Dorothy, were among those present.

### **DICK WOULFE**

More information has arrived from Patrick Woulfe, now living in Hamburg, whose father was a builder in Dunstable. Dick Woulfe was once given the job of repainting the exterior of the Grey House in High Street South, and was particularly requested to create three-dimensional images of stonework on the fascia. His handiwork remained a landmark feature of the high street for many years.

In 1952/53 Dick erected a bungalow, 'Downsview', for his family at what is now Lockhart Close in Stipers Hill. It was the first house to be built on the hill there after the development of 50 homes in 1937/38 by the British Land Settlement Association. The original cottages were specially built to provide homes for unemployed workers from depressed areas of the country, mainly the North-East and South Wales.

Stipers Hill was the original field name for the area. But why Stipers? Richard Walden's book *Streets Ahead* provides some fascinating information, courtesy of the Kensworth historians Malcolm and Irene Millest. Apparently the field was well-known for its long-stemmed mushrooms. A stipe is a name for the stalk bearing the cap of a mushroom.



*The bungalow called Downsview that Dick Woulfe built*

### **HALIFAX YARD**

One query to our website has been about the location of Halifax Yard, which no longer exists.

The Dunstable Street Directory for 1933 shows David Hawes living at 1 Halifax Yard, Elizabeth Hawes at 2 Halifax Yard, and Thomas Hawes at 3 Halifax Yard.

Clearly, it was in West Street, Dunstable, approached between No 29 and No 31 West Street.

Today's Yum Yum cafe is at 27-29 West Street. So Halifax Yard must have been on what is now the car park next to the Yum Yum. Disappointingly, none of the old photos in our collection show this particular section of West Street.

**John Buckledee**