

Newsletter

DUNSTABLE & DISTRICT
LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

N°3

February 1995



Chairman's Remarks

By the time you read this, our successful November coffee morning in Bernard Stevens' home, our December Christmas social, the festivities and thanksgiving of Christmas itself, the family gatherings, and the week-end of New Year will be but memories and we shall be well into 1995.

In all probability, unless you read this third issue of our Newsletter immediately, the Old Trades of Dunstable evening will also be past. At the time of writing this and over the last few weeks, a lot of gathering together of information and material and a lot of planning has been going on. It is fascinating how much wealth of knowledge and detail is tucked away with the elderly folk of Dunstable, those who were born in the town and/or have lived locally nearly all their lives. They tell a rich story and to sit and listen and ask the odd question or two brings forth all sorts of stories and anecdotes and remembrances of people and places. Will our children and grandchildren, I wonder, be able to do the same in years to come? And will there be those who want to find out? The answer to those questions can lie with us, as individuals and as a history society; to ensure that our history is passed on and not pushed aside in the pressure and speed of modern-day living.

Talking of this, our Town Clerk, Richard Walden, who is a member of our Society and gave that memorable talk in the Council Chamber of Grove House in September, to start our current winter session, is intending to bring out a booklet in connection with the 130th anniversary of the *Dunstable Gazette*, of Dunstable road names - their origins, their history, their meanings, etc. Those of us who take the *Dunstable Gazette* will know that in 1992 Mr. Walden started a series relating to the street names of Dunstable, which proved very popular. This booklet is planned to expand on that, to include anecdotes, events that have taken place in a road (e.g. special street parties) and a photograph of each road. He would very much welcome our member's help with this, so if you have a story or an item, or a photograph, would you please contact Richard at his office - phone 607895, or see him personally.

C.E.B.

The logo of the Society represents the arms of the town as shown on the shield held by a figure in the Priory Church roof. The figures were placed in the 15th century roof and probably represent members of the Fraternity of St John the Baptist. The Fraternity had possibly organised and financed the restoration of the roof in c.1470. These ancient figures were retained when the roof was rebuilt in 1876. (see *Beds Mag.* Vol 24, N°186. p.67-71)

Putting the Record Straight

Henry VIII and Katherine of Aragon were NOT divorced. Their marriage in 1509, the year of his accession, was ultimately declared null and void, in other words, illegal, and therefore they had never been officially married. This had the effect of making their only surviving child, Mary, a bastard.

On his death in 1547 Henry was succeeded by Edward, his son from his marriage to Jane Seymour, when he was only nine years old. He was a sickly boy and only reigned six years until 1553.

Next in line of succession was Mary, the only surviving offspring of Katherine. She had been legitimized by the statute of January 1534, but her rights were restored by the Third Act of succession in January 1543, that is, still in the reign of her father Henry.

Henry was not allowed, by the canon law of the church, to marry his brother's wife, except by special dispensation of the Pope which was granted. The *Table of Kindred and Affinity* at the back of the *Book of Common Prayer* as recently as the middle of this century listed this prohibition.

J.L.

Lost Streets and Street Names in the S-W. Quadrant of Dunstable

Between the years 1960 and 1970 a large number of houses have been demolished in Dunstable's south-west quadrant. Some complete streets have disappeared. Some of them had already a long history of name changes.

The oldest street in that area was *Holliwick Street*. It is mentioned in old documents as *le Hallwicke* in the 13th century and as *le Holliwyke* in 1317 and 1339¹. In the Rent List of 1542² the following spellings are found in the same document: *Halywykelane*, *Havewyke lane*, *Hakewykelane*. In a sale catalogue of 1897³, the licensed beer-house, *The Forresters*, is said to be in *Hollowick Lane*. *The Forresters Arms* was n° 17, *Chapel Walk*. It was demolished in 1973.

The indenture for the building of the Old Ebenezer Baptist Chapel in 1708 indicates that the site was at the upper end of *Tile Kiln Close* abutting North upon a piece of land called *Butts Lane*, and South on a piece or parcel of land called *Saint Mary Overs*.

This seems to indicate that *Holliwick Street* was later named *Tile Kiln Close*, and after the chapel was built, *Chapel Walk*. The *Tithe map*, surveyed in 1822 (published in 1840), shows clearly that it was a Close (see opposite page). The first O.S. Map of 1880 shows it to continue to *Bull Pond Lane* and that the first three houses of *Prosperous Row* were already built. This was later to be the row of houses in *Chapel Walk*, n° 37-71⁴.

We can trace *Chapel Walk* from the entrance of the car park in *Bull Pond Lane*, in a straight line through the appropriately named *Chapel Walk Car Park*, up to *Ashton Square*, where it goes between the entrance to the Wilkinson shop and the Methodist Church. There was a terrace of houses on the north side and this can be seen on the old engraving showing the former Methodist church before it was burnt down on September 14th, 1908.⁵



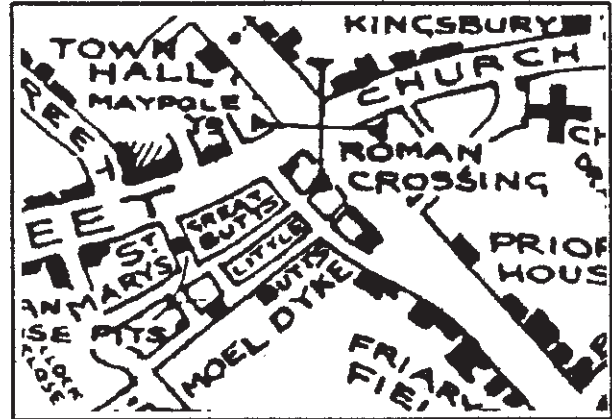
Recently the *Holliwick Road* name has been reused for a road parallel to *Hadrian Avenue*.

The *Victoria County History of Bedford*⁶, says that *Holliwick Street* ran parallel to *West Street* at the south of it and connected with *South Street* by another street called *Ponchon Lane*, this is mentioned in documents of the 14th to the 16th century. This could be the same as *Pothyn Lane* mentioned in the *1542 Rent Lists*² This lane seems to have been what became later *Butts Lane* and later again *St. Mary's Street*.

Worthington Smith writes in *Man the Primeval Savage* (p.341) published in 1894: «When I was a boy, fifty years ago (c. 1844) there were two narrow streets which ran parallel with the south side of *Icknield Way* (*West Street*) on the west side of the *High Street*, *Dunstable*. »

He describes these two Streets as *Big Butts* and *Little Butts*. In 1903 he published a *Map of Dunstable and Neighbourhood showing Old and New Roads, Lanes, etc.* He indicates that *Great Butts* has become *St Mary's Street*, and is the northernmost of the two little streets.

This is difficult to reconcile with what we have said above. *Vivienne Evans* thinks that *Great Butts* and *Little Butts* are paddocks rather than streets. These names could refer to the targets used in archery practice which possibly took place in that area. It would be easy to



understand the name *Butts Lane*, for the lane between the two *Butts*. *St. Mary's Street* went in a straight line from *Icknield Street* (just opposite *Burr Street*), to *Ashton Street*. Its track now passes along the North side of the *Salvation Army* building, then in front of the *Baptist Chapel* (onto part of the roundabout), then under the *Wilkinson* store to what is now *Ashton Square*. It joined it where the *Hospice Shop* now stands.

Back Street is the old name of *Ashton Square* until the end of the 19th century⁷. The name was changed sometimes after the building of *Ashton House* in 1715, at the corner of *West Street*, exactly where the shoe shop is now and where the whipping post used to be in the *Middle Ages*.

The third, southernmost street mentioned in the *Rent List of 1542*², is called *Taylor's Lane*. It is shown on the *Tithe Map* but not on *W.G. Smith's map*. It was still on the *O.S. map of 1968* but without name. It was always a farm track leading from *Bull Pond Lane* to two farms named *Outlying Farm* and the *Snoxell's Farm* on the 1880 *O.S. Map*. This track has disappeared and should be now at the end of the back gardens of the new houses of *Friary Field* (n° 1 - 6) just alongside the car park fence.

St. Mary's Street and *Chapel Walk* were linked by two short streets, the oldest and easternmost was called *South Place*. In 1924 there were still four houses left of the old *St. Mary's Terrace* of the 1880 *O.S. Map*.

Between *West Street* and *St Mary's Street* was *Cross Street West*. It corresponds exactly to what is now called *St Mary's Gate*, from *West street* to the roundabout in front of the *Baptist Chapel*. [*Cross Street North* is between *Chiltern Road* and *Beale Street*].

There are more streets of *Dunstable* which have changed name and / or have disappeared. They will be the subject of another study. O.R.

References: ¹ *Catalogue of Ancient Deeds*, P.R.O.

² BHRS vol.64: *Court of Augmentation Accourus for Bedfordshire*, p. 115-119

³ C.R.O. X 195/314

⁴ see photo in *Old Dunstable, A Collection of Photographs*, p.26

⁵ Charles Lamborn: *Dunstableologia*, 1859, p. 169

⁶ V.C.H., *Bedfordshire* p. 350

⁷ W.H. Derbyshire: *A History of Dunstable*, 1872, p. 73.

Finding the facts

Have you ever wanted to find out something about local or family history and not known where to look?

If you haven't come across these books and documents you might be surprised to learn how much you can find out without going very far from home.

Victoria County Histories

This series was written over the last few years of the 19th century and the early part of this one and is still regarded as a basic starting point for research.

There are three or four large volumes for each county and they cover history, geography, flora and fauna, architecture and industries, as well as a separate history of each parish in the county.

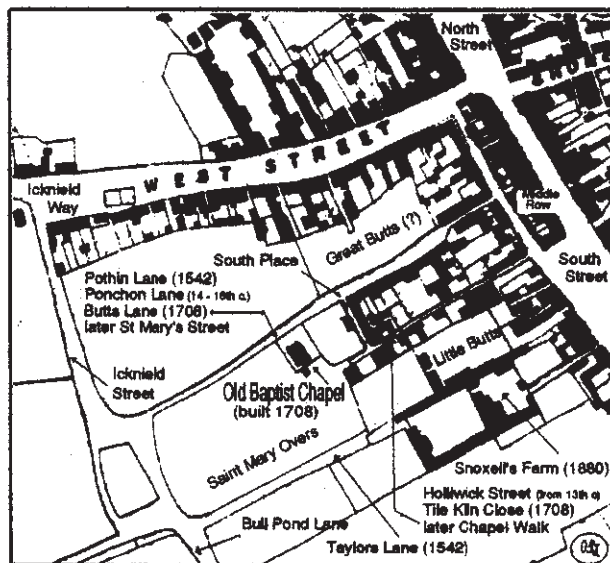
Dunstable Library has the volumes for Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire, Leighton Buzzard Library holds them for Bedfordshire and Buckinghamshire and Luton Library has them for all the English counties.

BHRS Publications

The Bedfordshire Historical Record Society was started in 1912 to publish, in book form, documents of all kinds, from all periods, relating to Bedfordshire (translated or transcribed where necessary). Many are accompanied by explanatory text and they include, for example, early tax lists, wills, inventories, correspondence and 19th century records such as the ecclesiastical census and reports on education and schools. Fully indexed, they are available at all the local libraries.

Bedfordshire Magazine

If you don't know it, this is a quarterly publication with very readable articles about people and places in Bedfordshire, both historical and contemporary. Each bound volume is indexed, each issue contains lots of illustrations and photographs (some by O.R.).



Extract from the Tithe Map of Dunstable published in 1840 (surveyed in 1822). The names of streets and places have been added with the dates of the documents.

A comprehensive index exists for volumes 1 - 20 (1947-1987). There are sets in all the local libraries and you can always go along to the *Book Castle* and buy the current issues, of course!

Census Returns

Dunstable Library holds a full set (1841-91) for the town and for a number of villages round about. Leighton Buzzard holds those for its locality and Luton Library has a good coverage of all South Bedfordshire. These are on microfilm and all libraries have now readers which enable you to take printed copies of any pages you require. The *Family History Society* has compiled an index of the 1851 census for the whole of Bedfordshire, which is available in Leighton Buzzard and Luton and a national index to the 1881 census is being produced. The index to Bedfordshire is already available at the *County Record Office* and may be there will be a copy available at Luton later.

Parish Registers

All the local libraries have transcripts of the Parish Registers of Bedfordshire from the earliest dates to 1812, which saves you the trouble of working through pages of badly written manuscripts and, to help you even more, all the registers are indexed. The registers from 1812 onwards are also available on microfiche, though the holdings of these are patchy and you may have to go to Bedford for a full set of them. Local libraries also have copies of the baptism registers of their local Methodist Circuit churches and of the International Genealogical Index (I.G.I.).

St. Catherine's House Records

These are the indexes to the records of Births, Marriages & Deaths held at St. Catherine's House. If you are willing to go a bit further afield you might like to know that the Local History section of Aylesbury Library is acquiring copies of these indexes on microfiches and plans eventually to have a complete set from 1837 to 1937. At the end of last year they covered the years up to about 1870. It's certainly a lot easier to use the microfiches than manhandle those great tomes off and on the shelves at St. Catherine's House. You cannot actually order copies of original certificates at Aylesbury, of course, but if you just want to trace an entry and perhaps trace a date or place of birth, it is very useful.

Newspapers

The libraries at Dunstable, Leighton Buzzard & Luton all have files of their local newspapers on microfilm and, as with census returns, printed copies of pages can be obtained.

Good hunting!

J.C.

Is Sir Walter Raleigh pictured on the Dunstable Wall paintings?

In 1954, wall paintings were discovered on the first floor of Charlie Cole's Bicycle shop in High Street North. This building is now a branch of the Nationwide Building Society. The shop was practically completely rebuilt in 1985 but was based on a very old timber framed building dating from the 16th century.

The main paintings are now displayed on the ground floor. Other parts are on the wall facing the entrance of the public library.

The most striking feature of this wall painting is a man dressed in Tudor clothes, smoking a clay pipe, which has been dated from about 1580 (illustrated above).



Who is it? Obviously it could be anybody dressed in Tudor clothes, but I suggest that it is meant to be the man who has been credited with the introduction of tobacco to the English, Sir Walter Raleigh.



We can compare the wall painting with a contemporary engraving (left).

The position of the hand, the ruffe around the neck, the top of the sleeves and the buttoned jacket show such striking similarities that we must accept an influence.

But where did the Dunstable painter see the engraving? That is another question!

O.R.

The articles in this issue have been prepared by Colin Bourne (C.E.B.), John Lunn (J.L.), Joan Curran (J.C.), and Omer Roucoux (O.R.)

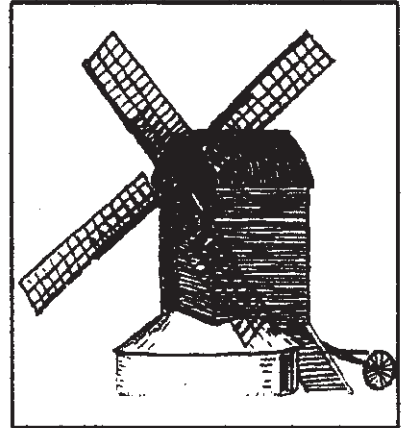
Typesetting by O.R. using the *Impression Style* software of Computer Concept.

Summer Outings

Two summer outings have been arranged. A third one, in July, is in the course of preparation.

On June 13th we will have an evening outing by coach to Pitstone Mill and Ford End Water Mill, Ivinghoe.

We will be guided by David Lindsey who knows everything about these mills. The coach will transport us between the mills and the evening will end with the customary refreshments.



Ivinghoe post mill, probably the oldest in the country, dating back at least to 1627.

On Saturday 5th August we will have an afternoon coach outing to the village of Ashwell in North Hertfordshire. The village is famous for its church which contains many interesting graffiti: inscriptions about the plague (1350) and the most famous one, made around 1650, of St Paul's cathedral in London before it was destroyed by fire in 1666.

We will also visit the museum, located in a house dating from the middle ages, and walk through the very picturesque village, visiting the 7 springs of the river Cam. The visit will end with tea in the Church Hall.

O.R.

YOU TRY

You try Dales' Dubbin
Splendid thing, My eye!
Is Dales' Dubbin.
New Boots? With Dales' Dubbin!
Corn shoots? Not at all!
Use Dales' Dubbin.
Shoes cracked? With Dales' Dubbin?
No fear, good thing! Fact,
Is Dales' Dubbin.
Feet wet? with Dales' Dubbin?
Should think not, You bet!
Use Dales' Dubbin.
Stitches rip? Better rub in,
My advice, Straight tip!
Dales' Dubbin.
Leather dry? Use Dales' Dubbin
Eh! Never say die
With Dales' Dubbin.
Will soften anything, from an old
boot to the conscience of a Town
Councillor
Sold in tins 3d., 6d., 9d. & 1/6d. by
Bootmakers, Saddlers, Ironmongers, etc.
Manufactory—Dunstable, Beds.

"TAKE THIS TIP"

Advertisement for Dales' Dubbin published in the 1924 *Dunstable Official Guide and Directory*, p. 63. Designed, printed and published by The British Publishing Company Ltd. Crypt House Press, Gloucester

Errata to the **Newsletter** of DDLHS
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