

# NEWSLETTER

Dunstable & District Local History Society  
No. 34 August 2010



## Chairman's Notes

**M**embers of our society attended the annual conference of Bedfordshire history societies, hosted this year by Potton History Society whose chairman, George Howe, well remembers giving a talk to us about railways back in 2006.

The theme at Potton was how to develop local history websites. Well, of course, our own Dunstable site is up and running (its new domain name is [www.dunstablehistory.co.uk](http://www.dunstablehistory.co.uk)) but we came away from the conference full of enthusiasm and ideas for improvements. David Turner is in the process of converting all our past newsletters so that they can be read, or even downloaded, from our site. And we have decided to install a complete history timeline of the town's great events. Rita Swift is creating this.

It's a chastening thought, but the society has more details on record about what happened in Victorian times than about the events of the last 20 years. Factories have opened and closed, new estates have been built, landmarks have been demolished... and we will now have to plough through back copies of the Gazette to try to bring the data up to date. But the help of society members would be welcomed. Everyone must have at least one date of when their workplace began, ended, or changed its name, or when there were significant changes in their neighbourhood. The continuing arrivals and departures of businesses at the Woodside industrial estate are an example.

Let us know.

- My mum and dad had a much-played record of the Australian baritone, Peter Dawson, singing the Cobbler's Song from the musical Chu Chin Chow, which ran for many years in London in the 1920s.

Memories of this were stirred when Joan Curran and Rita Swift were hunting for photos of the show as part of the society's History Day display in Priory Gardens. And then, almost at the same time, came the sad news of the death of Mona Norris, the Dunstable Rep



*Doug Darby in his heyday as a saxophonist*

actor who, you will remember, gave a talk to this society last year. Mona's mum, Marion Brown, had appeared in that same production of Chu Chin Chow whose photographs we had been scanning. A sad coincidence.

Mona came to Dunstable as an evacuee during the war. Her elder sister, Peggy, was a teacher at a London school which was transferred into Dunstable during the blitz. Mona came too, and stayed.

- The other sad news during June was the death, aged 94, of Doug Darby, such an active member of our society. His clear enunciation when asking questions at a meeting meant that he never had need of a microphone. Doug had been looking forward very much to going on the society's trip to Bletchley Park and news of his death came as a shock.

Doug was a fount of knowledge about Dunstable. Earlier this year I had asked him if he could identify a photo of an old operatic society musical at the Palace Theatre. The picture of the cast on stage included a jockey astride a real horse. Doug not only knew that the show was *The Arcadians*, but he could remember, verse by verse, the jockey's hit number from the show. Doug proceeded to sing it to me in his room at the care home in West Street. Most of the other residents would have heard it too!

- The Dunstable History Day, mentioned above, was a great success, and the society played a significant part. Thank-you to everyone who helped, but in particular to Joan and Rita. I know they worked many days and late into a number of evenings to complete the work involved.

- This newsletter is always brimful of fascinating articles, but I have been particularly excited by David Turner's discoveries, after all these centuries, about the origins of Dunstable, Massachusetts. I think our American cousins are going to be particularly interested.

**John Buckledee**

# A History of Dunstable, Massachusetts

The society was recently handed a copy of *A History of Dunstable Massachusetts* written by the Rev. Elias Nason, dated 1877. It was written to celebrate the bi-centenary of incorporation of the town in 1673.



View of Dunstable Centre, Massachusetts in 1873

The book was passed on to Rex Sanders, one of our members, by a relative, Mrs Pamela Sanders Langston of Rock Island, Illinois, who had acquired it while researching the history of the family and, after finishing with it, felt that it ought to go to a good home.

Dunstable Massachusetts is a rural town in Middlesex County, with a population of about 3,000 people, and is situated about 30 miles north-west of Boston. It was named after Dunstable, Beds. by the Tyng or Ting family, but more of them later.

Referring to its Bedfordshire namesake, the author says 'the old English town from which the early settlers came (which) is pleasantly situated at the base of the Chiltern Hills in Bedfordshire, and with its green fields and neatly trimmed hedge-rows, its ancient stone church and brick dwelling-houses makes a very picturesque appearance'. It refers to Henry I founding a priory here and how the town probably derived its name from 'dun' meaning a hilly place and 'staple' meaning a 'mart or emporium' and not from a notorious robber.

The book lists the early English settlements along the shore of Massachusetts Bay as Plymouth 1620, Salem 1626, Boston 1630 and Newbury 1633 and gradually extended into the 'wilderness then infested with wild beasts and tribes of wandering savages who justly held themselves to be the rightful owners of the soil'.

In 1629 a royal charter of a grant of land in New England was granted to Sir Henry Rosewell and others with favourable terms opening the door for the tide of immigration.

A survey of the area was made by Captains Simon Willard and Edward Johnson in 1652. It was the policy of the General Court to expand the settlements and, as the value of the land was very low, extensive tracts of land were readily acquired. Captain Thomas Brattle, a noted citizen of Boston, acquired 1,650 acres in 1671 from a native Indian called Cuttah-huno-a-muck, the original owner of the land which later became Dunstable.

## THE TYNG FAMILY

At this point, it might be worth mentioning that our research leads us to believe that William Tyng and his brother Edward emigrated from Dunstable, Beds. around 1636 apparently on the ship 'New Surry'. American sources consistently state that Edward was born in 1610 in Dunstable, Beds., although no record exists in the Parish records in England, though that is not unusual for that period in time. He became a brewer and merchant in Boston apparently holding high office in the Suffolk regiment and in 1638, married Mary Sears, whose family owned property in Leighton Buzzard. A book entitled 'The Memoirs of Edward Tyng, Esquire', published in 1808 by Rev. Timothy Alden, states that he married Miss Sears in England, but she died shortly after arriving in Boston. He subsequently married his second wife Mary. This would appear

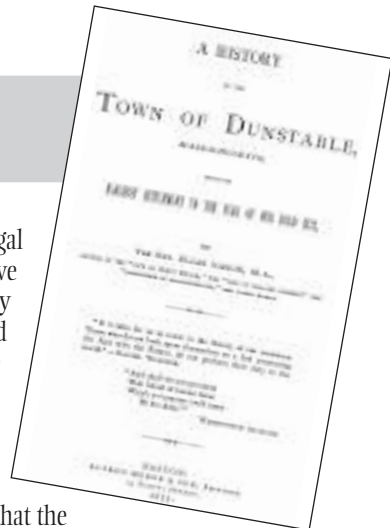
to be inaccurate because I found a legal document on the Bedfordshire Archive Office web site dated 1698, listing Mary Ting, the daughter of Francis Seare (*sic*), and her son, Jonathan, selling the Yard of the Cross Keys Public House, Leighton Buzzard, in 1698. They had five children, and Jonathan became a prominent citizen and land owner in Dunstable Massachusetts. It is generally accepted that the town was named in honour of Mary, and although there is no hard evidence that she actually came from Dunstable, Beds. she certainly came from the area. I did find more information about Edward on the internet, but sadly, none of it can be verified and much of it is conflicting.

## THE INDIAN WARS

In the early days things were extremely tough, with Dunstable being exposed on the outlying frontier. In the spring of 1675 the Indian warrior Philip of Pokanoket commenced hostilities. Originally called Metacomet, he was a war chief or sachem of the Wampanoag Indians. He adopted the European name of Philip, and bought his clothes in Boston, until he reacted with violence to the encroachment of his territory. By the time Philip was shot in August, 1676, he had been responsible for the destruction of 13 towns and the deaths of 600 colonists. Jonathan Tyng alone held the fort and is known as being the first permanent settler of Dunstable. The house of Jonathan Tyng stood on the right bank of the Merrimack River.

At the time the book was published, 'the house had long gone and nothing but the cellar-hole remained', but prior to its demolition it had been popularly known as the 'Haunted House' but the author doesn't say why. After the war one family after another returned to their deserted homes, town officers were chosen and Jonathan Tyng was made a 'selectman'. The first birth listed in the town records under the heading 'Lambs born in Dunstable' was William, son of Jonathan and Sarah Tyng, born April 22nd 1679.

In 1688 William and Mary came to the throne leading to war with France. Encouraged by the French Jesuits, the Indians set out on the war-path again. In September, 1691, five inhabitants of Dunstable were murdered and another two later in the month. By 1696, nearly two thirds of the original 'brave and hardy' settlers had abandoned Dunstable and the State made a £50 allowance to the town and a grant of £30 to help with the cost of supporting the minister. In April, 1697, a formidable lady by the name of Mrs Hannah Duston with Mary Neff together with a boy, had taken the scalps of ten Indians. The war ended with the treaty of Ryswick in 1698 and a brief period of peace ensued. Hostilities re-commenced in 1702 in the colonies. Known as Queen Anne's War, it continued for ten years with the Indians 'as usual' taking the side of the French. A party of 270 Mohawk Indians assaulted a garrison house in the town in July, 1706, in which a certain Captain Pearson and 20 of his troopers were posted. The company were taken by surprise as the door had been left open for Mr and Mrs Cummings who had gone out milking. The Indians shot dead Mrs Cummings and wounded and captured her husband. They then rushed into the house and were amazed to find it filled with soldiers who, in turn, were astonished to find themselves in the fight of their lives. After a bloody battle, leaving several of Captain Pearson's men dead or wounded, the Indians retreated, attacking several other homes. The total number of inhabitants slain was said to be nine. During this long and exhausting war, the few families of Dunstable lived in garrison houses, described as 'being surrounded with palisades, with a wall of stone or timber rising to the roof with a gate made of plank secured by iron bolts'. By 1711 the total number of people living in Dunstable had been reduced to 86, living in seven fortified houses, one of which was Jonathan Tyng's. The war came to an end in 1713 and the town again rapidly expanded.





## LOVEWELL'S POND

In 1724, after a period of peace, hostilities renewed, instigated by the French governor of Canada and on 4th September a party of French soldiers and Mohawk Indians came to Dunstable and carried off Nathan Cross and Thomas Blanchard. A small band of townsmen, including an Indian hunter by the name of Josiah Farwell, set off in pursuit but, with the exception of Farwell, most of these were killed or captured. Nathan Cross and Thomas Blanchard were eventually released having spent some time in captivity in Canada. In November, the General Court granted an allowance of two shillings and sixpence per day each and also £100 for each male scalp to Josiah Farwell and two other Indian hunters, John Lovewell and Jonathan Robbins. Lovewell, with a company of 30 men, managed to scalp one Indian and capture a boy of about 15, for which they received £200.

Encouraged by this success, Lovewell raised another large company of men and set off on another expedition, and returned with the scalps of ten Indians to claim the bounty. Lovewell, Farwell and Robbins then left Dunstable with a well-armed band of 47 men with the intention of attacking the Pequawket Indians. On 8th May, 1725 at a beautiful stretch of water, now known as Lovewell's Pond, Lovewell and eight of his men were killed together with 60 Pequawkets. Farwell and Robbins were badly wounded and Robbins, unable to proceed, was left with his loaded gun, intent of 'killing one more Indian before they scalped him'. The company retreated a mile and a half before Josiah Farwell and three others asked to be left behind, Farwell died, but a much depleted company made it back to Dunstable on 15th May. Eleazer Tyng, (the son of Jonathan Tyng) and a party of fellow citizens returned to the scene of the battle to bury the dead.



Lovewell's Pond today

## SLAVERY

It was the custom in Dunstable in those days for a few slaves to be held and a paper dated September, 1756, records the sale of a girl named Dinah, about five years old of a healthy sound constitution and free of any disease, being sold to a Mr John Abbott by Robert Blood, for fourteen pounds, thirteen shillings and two pence. Apparently Robert Blood was known for his peculiarities. After suffering a case of sickness, he is said to have called on an Indian doctor, but fearing that the prescribed medicine might contain poison he gave some to his slave boy who died from its effects. The place of burial is still called Negro Hill.

## THE AMERICAN WAR OF INDEPENDENCE

By 1768 relations between the colonies and Britain had deteriorated with 'armed oppression being met with armed resistance' and Dunstable chose the Hon. John Tyng Esq. (grandson of Jonathan) to act as a delegate at a convention in Boston to 'deliberate on constitutional measures'. James Tyng and John Tyng were chosen as representatives to the Provisional Congress and in March 1775, 28 men volunteered from Dunstable for military duty and to hold themselves in readiness to march at short notice. Late in April news arrived that blood had been shed at Lexington and Concord, but the affair was over by the time the men from Dunstable arrived on the scene. On 27th May a 50 strong Dunstable company participated in the memorable

battle of Bunker Hill and apparently acquitted themselves with valour, leaving the field only when their ammunition was exhausted with many of the men wounded. A number of letters are included from the serving soldiers, one of which was written to his parents, by James Cummings, aged 16 and is reproduced here:

TICONDEROGA, OCT. 15, 1776.

*Honored farther & mother after my Dutey To you & Love to my Brothers and Sister I have Taken this oppertunity to Let you now that I am Well at present and Blessed be god for it & hope these Linds will find you the Sam I shant Rite much at present only the Raglars have drove Our flet Back hear we have sustaned Lors of Men & Vessels & the Enemis armye is at Crown point or near their & we expect them hear Quick. Phillip Butterfield is got Better Jeass Butterfield Is pooley yet Rember me to all Inquirin friends So I Remain your Dutiful Son*

JAMES CUMMINGS.

James Cummings survived the war and died on 6th September 1840 aged 80.

The War of Independence terminated in 1781 with the defeat and capture of British forces at Yorktown and it is estimated to have cost the colonies at least \$135,000,000 with many lives lost. Massachusetts bore about a quarter and, of this, Dunstable is said to have 'stood its full share'.

## TYNGSBOROUGH

In 1789 Mrs Sarah Winslow, a descendant of Edward Tyng, made Dunstable an offer of a considerable sum of money to support a minister and a grammar school with the condition that the western part of the town be incorporated as a separate district. This was supported on the 22nd June and what is now known as the town of Tyngsborough came into being, now a town of around 11,000 people.

## MR SILAS JOHNSON

On 8th October 1814, Mr Silas Johnson was killed after he fell from a tree and the sad event is recorded on his headstone in the town cemetery:

*Alas, how distant was the thought  
When I the tree ascended,  
That I should to the ground be brought,  
And there my life be ended.*

## THE AMERICAN CIVIL WAR

At the outbreak of the American Civil War in 1861, Dunstable supported the interests of the Union. As many as 64 men volunteered as soldiers and the 'ladies also bore a conspicuous part in a patriotic duty to sustain the government'. However, it seems that the town was not greatly affected by the war in any materialistic way and life appeared to go on as usual.

## BI-CENTENARY CELEBRATIONS

There was a great celebration on 17th September, 1873, to celebrate the bi-centenary of incorporation of the town. At 10am a procession was formed at the railway station, with the Dunstable Cornet Band leading. A 'beautiful stand' had been erected for speeches on Dunstable Common with flags flying in every direction and it was estimated that as many as 3,000 people attended. After the services a banquet was held in a mammoth tent erected on the lawns of the Common.

It is here that the book ends its history of Dunstable, Massachusetts. It runs on with transcripts of the speeches and poems by eminent citizens at the celebrations, together with many inscriptions from the cemeteries and other paraphernalia. I think it's a fascinating story and we're very grateful to Pamela Langston Sanders for sending it to us.

David Turner



An Engraving of the Bi-Centenary celebrations

## Greeting New Members

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

Mrs A Heywood	Mrs P Heywood
Mrs L Gilbey	Mrs B Grace
Mr & Mrs W Jefford	Mrs A Ledger
Dr D Marchant	Mrs R Sanders
Miss C Scott	Mr & Mrs W Wall

## PUNCH DRUNK



A number of people have asked for the recipe for the punch we serve at our Christmas evenings, so here it is, well in time for next Christmas. The quantities given make enough for about 60-70 people (depending on how much they drink!), so you may need to scale them down according to the number in the party. The amount of sugar and spices can be varied according to taste.

4 litres apple juice	12 whole cloves
1 litre red grape juice	Pack of cinnamon sticks (approx. 10-12)
2 pints water	Pinch or two of ground nutmeg
10 ozs. sugar	Slices of orange to be added during warming
2 pints lemonade (you can add more to make the punch go further)	

Warm all ingredients together over gentle heat until hot and ready to drink.

Happy Christmas!

Joan Curran

## Visiting the Barrier



History society members cross the Thames Barrier after a journey downriver from Westminster during our August outing. We were treated to a talk about the building of the barrier at its information centre. The July outing was to Bletchley Park where we had our own guide for a day-long tour.



## Sad Farewell



We are very sorry to announce the sad loss of  
**Mr D Darby**  
A very valued member of the society.

[www.dunstablehistory.co.uk](http://www.dunstablehistory.co.uk)

We have been working hard over a period of time to develop our website and it is now at the stage where it is a very useful aid for existing members of the Society or for anyone wishing to learn about the history of Dunstable. For anyone who has not yet looked at the site, it can be accessed by typing the web address as per the heading above. The site has an extensive gallery of over 300 images as well as pdfs of the past newsletters ready to be downloaded. All the club's events are listed to assist existing members and hopefully to attract new members.

### DUNSTABLE TIMELINE

A Dunstable timeline has also been compiled by Rita Swift listing significant events in the town's history. Rita would welcome any feedback you can give her, particularly regarding the past 50 years, in order to help maintain and develop the timeline. Rita can be reached by telephone on 01582 527790 or by email at [rita.swift1@ntlworld.com](mailto:rita.swift1@ntlworld.com)

Some of the dates and facts listed in the timeline are shown below.

#### 1954

Bell from cemetery chapel sold for £22  
5 bus shelters erected in town at cost of £336  
Chade Razor Blade Co in High Street South closes down  
Dunstable Young People's Club opens using the premises of the Pioneer Boys Club  
Meat rationing ended

#### 1955

Cattle Market on the Square closes  
300 chairs destroyed by fire at Grove House  
Tornado hits Dunstable but no damage sustained  
Road beneath the railway bridge at High Street North lowered by 14½ inches  
Orange Rolling revived  
Cross Paperware factory almost gutted by fire but work carried on

#### 1956

Duke of Edinburgh opens Ludun Works in Liscombe Road  
First Premium Bond issued in Dunstable  
First open air service in the Tree Cathedral, Whipsnade

#### 1957

Sixth century Saxon burial ground unearthed at Marina Drive by Manshead Archaeological Society

#### 1958

Vauxhall Motors present the Mayor of Dunstable with the Mayoral car  
New Eight Bells opens in Westfield Road after the old Eight Bells had been demolished in Ashton Street  
Six schoolboys go to Buckingham Palace to collect gold awards from the Duke of Edinburgh

**Please contact us if you can add further facts you feel should be included.**

David Turner



# THE MYSTERY OF THE RED LION



**E**arlier this year there was an exhibition at Luton Museum of paintings of Bedfordshire by two early 19th century artists, George Shepherd and Thomas Fisher. One of the paintings by Thomas Fisher was entitled 'The Red Lion, Dunstable'.

It was painted some time round about 1820.



*Thomas Fisher's painting entitled 'The Red Lion, Dunstable'*

As you can see, it does not look remotely like the Red Lion that was demolished in 1963. So who, the organiser of the exhibition wanted to know, had altered or rebuilt it, and when? To which the short answer was 'Sorry. We don't know'.

But since then a few important clues have come to light which help us to provide some probable answers. One of these clues that gives us a starting point is a photograph of High Street North taken in the 1870s, in which we can see that the facade of the inn is by then looking as those of us living here before 1963 remember it.

The name the Red Lion was first mentioned in the early 17th century, in the time of Charles I. It is said that during the Civil War the landlord, John Plott (or Platt), was shot by royalist soldiers commandeering horses for their troops, and the following year, 1645, Charles himself stopped there on his way to Oxford after the Battle of Naseby. Old deeds tell us that three of the landlords in the 18th

century were John Furnes, John Proctor and George Fossey, and it is known that in 1793, George Fossey sold it to a brewer, John Morris, of Amptill. When Thomas Fisher painted his picture it was still owned by the Amptill brewery.

The brewery still owned the Red Lion in 1858, when a combination of the decline in the coaching trade and poor management of the firm forced them to put a number of their inns up for sale, including the Red Lion. On 15th June, 1858, at the inn itself, the 'Freehold Posting and Commercial House' was put up for auction. So it seems unlikely that the Morris brewery would have had either the money or the incentive to embark on any major building projects, and we are probably looking at a date between 1858 and the 1870s for the alterations to have taken place.

Unfortunately no record has been found to tell us who bought the inn, or even if it was sold at all at this time. What does exist, in the Bedfordshire archives, is a sale catalogue with a detailed description of the inn, which appears to confirm that no significant alterations to it had taken place by this time. It came up for sale again twice in the next few years, the second time being in 1872, and this time there was a detailed description in a sale advertisement in the Dunstable Gazette. It is obvious that the accommodation had been extended considerably by then, especially the stabling and provision for coaches. There was stabling for 40 horses instead of 12 and a coach house for six coaches; it now boasted a billiard room and a 'superior' drawing room and instead of nine bedrooms there were now thirteen, plus three more in the Red Lion Tap. There was a regular 'bus' service to the GNR railway station. (In the 1860s there were 36 trains to and from Dunstable daily.)

It seems that the answer to the question 'When did the alterations take place?' must be between 1858 and 1872. The question 'Who did it?' is more difficult to answer. The owners of the Red Lion in the later 19th century were Benskins, of Watford, and since the work must have required a substantial amount of capital it seems very likely that they were responsible. At the moment it has not been possible to find any documentary evidence to prove it, but one day... The Hertfordshire Record office have some of the Benskin archives as yet uncatalogued, which they say I am welcome to trawl through. Unless anyone else would like to go fishing?

Joan Curran

## The Motor-Omnibus



While browsing through the 1906 Dunstable Directory, I came across the following short article. In light of the threatened busway and the conjection on local roads, it makes interesting reading.



'Since the Luton and Dunstable light railway scheme was abandoned, attention has been directed to the motor-omnibus. Recently a number of prominent Dunstablians took a trial trip on cars similar to that in our illustration.'

*(In the column on the left is a picture of the double decker 'bus and passengers outside the Saracen's Head Hotel. The photo is entitled, 'Motor-Omnibus Trip to Luton, June 15th 1905'.)*

'The public have been interested to learn that a syndicate has been formed to run a motor-omnibus service from Edgware to Watford, St Albans, Redbourn, Dunstable, Luton and Harpenden. There is a strong feeling in Luton that a motor-omnibus service would be much more suitable to their narrow streets than the suggested tramway scheme. In the district the motor-omnibus will be welcomed in affording a quick means of transit both to passenger or goods traffic.'

Hugh Garrod

# 1910 TOWN DIRECTORIES



**Two town directories were published in 1910, one by Miles Taylor and the other by James Tibbett. At this time Miles Taylor was the proprietor of the Dunstable Borough Gazette while James Tibbett was a printer and stationer.**

Miles Taylor's publication is called The Dunstable Year Book and Directory for 1910. The other is called James Tibbett's Dunstable Annual Illustrated Almanac and Local Directory for 1910. Both contain articles, information, a directory of residents, photographs, adverts and a calendar at the back. Tibbett's annual has more content and would have been the more useful of the two to residents and visitors.

## THE SANCTUS BELL

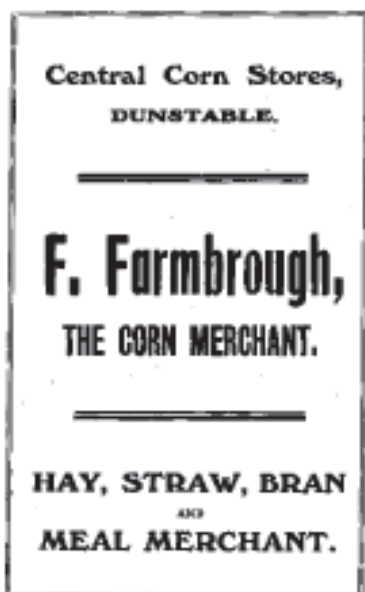


*An advert from Miles Taylor's directory for town crier, G. White of Matthew Street*

The Miles Taylor annual has several articles which have nothing much to do with Dunstable. The first, though, is The Sanctus Bell in Dunstable Church by Worthington G Smith. The bell currently hangs on the south wall of the Priory but in 1910 it hung in the belfry and was difficult to access.

Worthington Smith describes how Alderman Franklin helped him to get close to the bell in order to measure it. He spends much time denigrating other historians who have previously written about the bell and recounting stories about bells in general, which he then dismisses as mere superstition.

The 'Petition of the Ladies of St. Albans to George III' was sent by the Quaker ladies of St. Albans to their new Queen a hundred years previously. What is it doing in this directory? The same question could be asked of 'How I spent Christmas in the Southern Seas', by WH Press, who was currently Editor of the Gazette. There are the words of a Suffragette song called, Spinster! To the Fore! written for the Spinsters' Tea at the Wesley Hall on 11th November 1909 and sung by Miss H Lester to the tune of 'British Grenadiers'. Similar comments can be made about Witch Swimming in Bedfordshire which quotes a 1707 article of how an old lady was accused of being a witch and nearly died in consequence.



*An advert from James Tibbett's directory for F. Farnbrough, Corn Merchant*

Wesleyan Methodism in Dunstable tells how this denomination was brought here by John Darley. He opened his workshop in Church Street on Sundays and, as numbers increased, they moved to the old Quaker meeting house, in West Street. In 1831 they opened their first chapel, which burnt down in 1844. Further details include the opening of the Waterlow Road church and lead up to the fire of 1908 which destroyed the town centre chapel and its school. The Town Hall and other churches were used for services until the present building was complete. Details are given of the Foundation Stones which were laid. Two hermetically sealed bottles were deposited beneath the main stone. The first was found underneath the original Foundation Stone. It contained souvenirs of 1858. The second bottle contained similar items from 1909. The article ends with an account of the 'Opening of the new Church.'

## ROAD PRESERVATION AND DUST-ALLAYING

James Tibbett includes information on the history of Dunstable and its current state. He has an article on Road Preservation and Dust-allaying in which he describes various methods of laying tar macadam on our roads, as a method of reducing the dust created by passing traffic. New Wesleyan Church and Schools gives details of the destruction and rebuilding which took place by The Square and makes an interesting comparison with the Taylor article. Church Lads Brigade tells how the Dunstable company was set up in 1908 and is aimed at teenagers leaving school who might otherwise get into mischief in the evenings.



*W. H. Francis, 'Fashionable Tailor' advert from Miles Taylor's directory*

There is a page dedicated to the activities of the Dunstable Evening School and another to the Church of England Men's Society, which met in Chew's House. This is followed by 15 pages of A Month by Month Retrospect of Local Events and Matters in 1909. This includes, in July, an apology from John Thomas Dales for certain intemperate comments he made in a letter published by the Dunstable Borough Gazette. In November we have the attendance records, with percentages, of all the members of the Town Council. The last Tibbett article is Dunstable's New Industry and details the arrival of Messrs. Cross & Co, Lace Paper Manufacturers. Most of the products and machinery were designed by Mr. F Escott. It was known as the Bigthan Works, Bigthan meaning 'Given By God'. The article states that each day's work started with a five minute service.

## THE INFORMATION SECTIONS

The Information sections include Educational Establishments which mentions The Grammar School, Moreton House, the Ashton Schools in Church Street, the Church of England Infants' School in what is now the Priory Church Hall, the Council Mixed School in Chew's House, Burr Street Infants' School and Chiltern Road Schools. There are eleven Places of Worship and seven Temperance Organisations. There are details of the Borough of



PAY A VISIT TO

# E. T. BUCKLE'S

## GROCERY STORES,

48 VICTORIA STREET  
DUNSTABLE.

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**YOU** will always find a  
Choice : Selection : of  
Goods : at : Lowest : Cash  
Prices : consistent : with  
Quality : which : is : our  
Leading : Feature.

An advert from James Tibbett's directory for E. T. Buckle's Grocery Stores

Sundays and Bank holidays. The Post Office was open from 8am to 8pm. The telephone exchange was in Albion Street and was connected to 40 Dunstable phones. These included the Grammar School, local industry, public houses, utilities, the police station and the two railway stations. There are four private subscribers. Public phones were available in the telephone exchange, the Red Lion, the Sugar Loaf and the Saracen's Head.

Both directories have a Directory of Dunstable, starting at Albert Street and ending with Winfield Street. Houses were re-numbered just after WWI, so numbers in 1910 do not necessarily match up to those of today.

### PHOTOGRAPHS

There are photographs of people, such as: -T. Gair Ashton MP for South Bedfordshire; G Elliott, the Unionist candidate at the forthcoming election; Councillor A Gutteridge, mayor; Rev WWC Baker, Rector; Rev G Harbottle, Superintendent of the Wesleyan Circuit and Rev H Marchant, Congregational minister. There are short biographical notes on these clergy. Other photographs include; - Dunstable Grammar School, Moreton House School, the Old Anchor Gateway, The Anchorage Hotel, High Street South, the Saracen's Head, the West Street windmill, High Street – Market Day, the Priory Church, the New Wesleyan Church and the laying of the Foundation Stone and Kensworth Church. Two pages show four 'Quaint Passages in Dunstable' and there are accompanying notes. One other photograph with notes is the 'Remarkable Wheel at Kensworth' in which a donkey draws water from a 300 foot deep well. Other photographs are associated with adverts; H Rixson's workshop for antiques' restoration; William Lockhart for coal and coke; Charles Lockhart for house furnishings and removals, SC & R Lester's showrooms, RF Barton the dairyman, EF Sayers the butcher, T Maskall & Co, Robinson & Headey, F Monk – draper, the Lily Bakery and Joseph Andrews, confectioners.



A Remarkable Wheel at Kensworth from Miles Taylor's directory

Dunstable, including elected members and the officers of the council. There are sections on Local Institutions etc. The population is given as 7,625. Details are given about newspapers, banks, church societies, sports clubs, political parties, benevolent societies, uniformed organisations and the town bands. There were ten pillar or wall boxes in the town. Each was emptied once on Sundays and seven times on other days. There were four letter and parcel deliveries from Monday to Saturday and one letter delivery on

**R. F. BARTON,**  
Dairyman,  
Borough Farm,  
Gt. Northern Road,  
DUNSTABLE.

New Milk delivered  
to any part of the town  
twice daily.



R. F. Barton's Dairyman advert from James Tibbett's Guide

### COMMERCIAL AND RETAIL ADVERTS

**F. MONK,**  
CASH DRAPER,  
General & Fancy Drapery, Ladies' &  
Children's Outfitting,  
BERLIN WOOLS & KNITTING YARNS, MEN'S & BOYS' CLOTHING.  
The Best Value Obtainable.  
Branches: LUTON & EDDLESBOROUGH.

An advert from James Tibbett's directory for F. Monk 'Cash Draper'

The adverts reflect the commercial and retail life of Dunstable. Taylor and Tibbett have several which show the diverse nature of their businesses, including stationery, printing, a circulating library a crockery warehouse and a shipping agency to all parts of the world. There are adverts for auctioneers, milliners, fuel merchants, hotels, builders, joiners, plumbers, seed merchants, ironmongers, tailors, undertakers, schools, stationers, motor and mechanical engineers, drapers, grocers, antique dealers, butchers, music teachers, photographers, caterers, assurance and insurance companies, Dales' dubbin and Singer sewing machines. G White, the Town Crier, is the official bill poster. The Grammar School advertises itself as 'Dunstable School, education for the Universities, Navy, Army, Civil Services, Professions and Business.' Places for boarders are £50 per year but £60 in Mr. Apthorp's House. Those for Day Boys are £10 per year. All the facilities of the school are listed, as are the main members of staff. Gibbs and Dandy are only in Luton, as are E Strange & Sons. Scott & Sons sell and build motor cycles, supply all motorists' needs, carry out repairs, are registered by the AA as well as being general household heating engineers.

The calendars at the back of each directory are nationally produced inserts and include adverts for things like 'Fry's Pure Concentrated Cocoa'.

### Hugh Garrod

**DUNSTABLE SCHOOL.**

Education for the Universities,  
Navy, Army, Civil Services, Professions,  
and Business.

**TERMS.**  
Boarders in School House : : : : £50 per annum (inclusive)  
in Mr. Apthorp's House : : : : £60  
Day Boys : : : : £10 per annum inclusive of all subscriptions  
Day Boys can have their meals at the School House.

The School Grounds and Playing Fields are upwards of  
11 or 12 Acres in Extent.

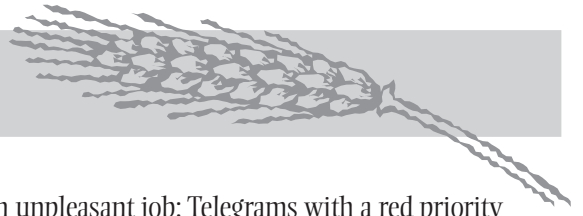
Prospectus and full particulars may be obtained from the  
Headmaster—  
**L. C. R. THRING, M.A.**

The School is fitted with every Modern Appliance and Additional Buildings include:  
A SWIMMING BATH,  
FINES COURT,  
GYMNASIUM,  
CHEMICAL LABORATORY,  
PHYSICAL LABORATORY,  
CARPENTER'S SHOP,  
MORRIS TUBE RANGE.

The whole School is regularly drilled in Military and Physical Drill.

Grammar School advertising itself as the Dunstable School the James Tibbett Guide

# Memories of old Dunstable



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

## **BILL PRENTICE'S WAR-TIME MEMORIES**

Bill Prentice, formerly of Dunstable but now living in New Zealand, has sent us his childhood memories of war-time Dunstable in the hope that they might be included in any reprint of *Dunstable At War*. Well, I don't know whether that will happen, but in the meantime his manuscript had been deposited in the society's research room at Priory House.

Bill, living in Luton Road, remembers seeing, over the top of Blow's Downs, the glow from the blitz in London. Some relations brought their ten-year-old daughter to Dunstable to get her away from the bombing. That was the day when Dunstable high street was machine-gunned by a German aircraft. Her parents, who had been waiting at the Square for the Green Line bus back to London, rushed to take the girl with them to London, saying: "We may get bombed in London but they don't come down and machine-gun us!" No amount of explaining could convince them that it was the only time the Germans had come near.

One night a raider jettisoned his bombs at Houghton Regis, leaving six neat craters at the back of Houghton Hall. And there was great excitement when an Avro Anson crash-landed at the foot of Dunstable Downs, near where Queen Eleanor's School was built later.



*Troops marching through High Street South, Dunstable during World War II*  
Photo courtesy of The Dunstable Gazette

Lots of troops passed through the town – on one occasion the front of the Home and Colonial Stores was ripped off by a tank trying to turn from the High Street into Church Street.

Bill left school in 1942 and for the next two years was Dunstable's only telegram boy, cycling around Dunstable and the surrounding villages, from Bidwell to Studham and Whipsnade. One day, with ten telegrams to deliver, he rode down Dog Kennel Walk to Houghton Regis, then up Poynters Road to the Halfway House, along Luton Road and Great Northern Road to the Watling Street, then up to the Packhorse pub to Kensworth and Whipsnade and then back across the Downs to Dunstable.

It could be an unpleasant job: Telegrams with a red priority stamp on them usually meant that someone was missing, wounded or killed.

"Once when I called at a house in Garden Road, the woman who answered the door screamed and ran back indoors. I had to tell her that it was only a message from her husband saying he was coming home.

"A much nicer delivery went to a house on Houghton Green. It was a soldier asking his girl to marry him. Much excitement and a return telegram (Yes, Yes, Yes!)"

## **JOAN HAMMOND**

I confused my singers when recording, in the last newsletter, Eric Bullock's memories of an accident backstage at the Queensway Hall. The lady who hit her head on a low doorway there in October 1964 was Joan Hammond, not Joan Sutherland.

Eric still has the concert programme. It records that Joan's recital included Dvorak's *O Silver Moon* and Puccini's *One Fine Day*.

## **DOUGLAS DARBY'S MECCANO**

One of the great hobbies for boys when Douglas Darby was a lad was building Meccano models. Douglas, with Ned Brown, Gabby Brown and Percy Childs, accumulated quite a large set of the Meccano assembly pieces and on one occasion used a Meccano motor and geared it up to see how great a slope it could climb. They managed three-foot slope at an angle of about 45 degrees.

When he was about five Douglas went to a prep school run by Miss Whitworth over the stables behind the old Rectory in West Street, on the corner of Icknield Street. The building was later converted into flats and is now St Mary's Court. The school later moved to Burr Street.

## **MALHERBE FAMILY**

Gordon Reeves is researching the history of the Anglo-Norman family of Malherbe (also spelt Malerbe) which flourished between the 12th and 16th centuries in various English counties. They were particularly prevalent in Bedfordshire, in Carlton, Bromham, Goldington, Kempston, Houghton Conquest, Clophill, Stotford, the Brickhills, Hockliffe, Husborne Crawley and Tingrith. Gordon asks if any historians in Dunstable have information to help him, particularly about the original mill at Bromham on the Ouse which was held by Gilbert Malherbe, the 'miller of Bromham', in 1342.

He mentions the reference in the *Annals of Dunstable* to John Malherbe who was said to be in the wardship of Lord William Muntchensy at the time of a wrestling match opposite the hospital at Hockliffe in 1283, after which there was an altercation in which a man was killed. A translation of parts of the *Annals*, including what was recorded about that bizarre sporting event, is held in our research room at Priory House. Members are welcome to browse through our collection there if they wish. Just ask Joan, Rita or Hugh.

**John Buckledee**

## **CORRECTION**

Jean Cheshire asks us to point out that the Dunstable Grammar School architect featured in her article in our last newsletter was Edward Robert Robson (not Ronson).