

Newsletter

DUNSTABLE & DISTRICT
LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

Nº5

March 1996



Priority reveals a hidden secret - its mediaeval wall paintings

That was the big title on page 15 of the Dunstable Gazette of 20 December 1995. Members may have been curious to know details of the paintings mentioned. Here is a potted history of the East Wall of the present Dunstable Priory Church to help solve the mystery.

The east end wall has suffered many vicissitudes since the Reformation -

- In monastic times the lower part of the present east wall was a stone screen dividing the canons' area from that used by the parish.

- c.1541 - Some time after the closure of the Priory this tick stone screen was built up to the rafters to the same thickness. This served to seal off the building from the part previously reserved for the canons, which was left to decay.

- 1723 - A large canvas painting of the Last Supper by Sir James Thornhill was purchased by Frances Ashton and Jane Cart to hang against the bare east wall. (see fig. right)

- 1867 - The restoration of the body of the Church (nave) was commenced by Mr. G. Somers Clarke. The roof was removed and ultimately replaced by a new one. The painted canvas was irreparably damaged. The 14th century wooden screen was removed from the west end of the Church to stand against the wall behind the altar at the east end. The wall behind the screen was roughly made up and smoothed over.

- 1890 - Mr. G.F. Bodley was appointed Architect to re-order the area in the vicinity of the altar (the sanctuary and the chancel). He moved the wooden screen from behind the altar to the chancel step where it had been originally. The thickness of the east end wall was such that it cut into the top windows covering the attractive carvings surrounding their frames. This thickness was removed at both ends to reveal these carvings. He designed a large painted and gilded rood (Crucifix) which was fixed to the wall high up in the centre. Beneath it a curtain was arranged behind the altar. The bareness of the wall on either side of the rood was relieved by painted stencils pattern work. **It is this decorative pattern work which is being exposed by the flaking of the plaster.**

- 1962 - Thanks to a generous donation, the Rood was

The above logo is a reproduction of the oldest example of the town arms that has been discovered to date. It can be seen, with difficulty, carved on the shield held by the wooden figure in the roof of Priory Church directly above the pulpit. The *stake* signifies a market, the *staple* is a pun on the town's name and the *ring* it secures suggests royal protection. The date of the figure is the latter half of the 15th century. A similar example can be seen in the illuminated border of the *Dunstable Fraternity Register* for the year 1522 in the Luton Museum (no longer on public display).



The large canvas painting of the Last Supper by Sir James Thornhill was irretrievably damaged in 1867, but according to contemporary descriptions, it must have been very similar to the above which can be seen in Weymouth Parish Church.

removed and replaced by two east windows, the figure of Christ in Majesty and the Angel Gabriel in the northern and the Blessed Virgin Mary in the southern niches, both of which were repaired; at the head of the southern one was a crowned "M". The backing wall was given a coating of lime wash.

From the above it will be seen that the likelihood of any mediaeval early painting to have survived is extremely remote.

How grateful we should be to those who have gone before us recording all these changes. Are we making our contribution in similar ways for the benefit of future generations?

John Lunn

The Society's activities 1994 / 95

[The list of activities for 1992 / 93 was published in Issue n°1, p.2]

1994

Roman Dunstable : Joan Schneider
19th c. Census Returns - a workshop : Joan Curran & Barry Horne
History of Luton & Dunstable Hospital : Margaret Currie
Straw Plaiting : Veronica Main

Evening visit to Elstow, the Moot Hall, the Church and the Cottages
Evening visit to the Swiss Garden, Old Warden
Afternoon trip to the Chiltern Open Air Museum

The Dunstable Mayoralty, Origins and History : Richard Walden
A Bird's Eye View of Bedfordshire : Stephen Coleman
Dagnall through the Years : Geoff Spencer

1995

A Touch of the Past : Ken Cooper
Old Trades of Dunstable : Colin Bourne, Cliff Evans
The Historic Churches of Two Counties : Patrick Lepper
Medieval Dunstable : Joan Schneider

Pitstone Windmill and Ford End Watermill
Coach Tour of North Bedfordshire
An afternoon trip to Ashwell

The River Ouse from its Sources to Bedford : Philip Lepper
Luton Hoo : Bryan Milton
Of Shops and Markets and Whiting Works :
Colin Bourne, Fred Moore, Don Kemp, Joan Curran

Old Hats

The AGM of the Bedfordshire Local History Association will be held on Saturday 11 May 1996 at 2.15 pm. at the John Dony Centre, Hancock Drive, Luton.

After the AGM, Marian Nichols (Principal Keeper, Luton Museum Service) will give a short presentation on the
Social History of the Hat Industry.

This will be followed by a talk on the
Building of the Hat Industry in Luton
by **Dr. David Bevan**
(Historic Buildings Team Leader, Beds County Planning Dept.)

Many members of our society will certainly be interested and we are all invited to attend.

1996 Bedfordshire Local History Conference

22 June - 9.45 to 4.30 p.m.
In the Trinity Methodist Church, Shortmead Steet,
Biggleswade

Joel Carr : The Kingfisher Way
Drew Shottliff : The Stratton Excavations
Eve McLaughlin : Surnames

All our members are cordially invited

Chairman's Jottings

At the time of writing, mid-February, membership stands at 148. Back in January 1992, at the early days of the Society, the treasurer reported that he had received 35 subscriptions.

In November 1995, at the second of our *Old Trades of Dunstable* evenings, we estimated that 150 members and visitors were present. We were very pleased to see our President, Mr. Nicholas Bagshawe, with us. Driving down from a meeting in London, he journeyed back to his home in Meopham, Kent, after the meeting. At a subsequent telephone call to our Vice-Chairman, he stated that he was delighted to have come and that the visit was well worth-while.

At our January meeting with the talk on Ashridge we had some 100 people attending.

In the last *Newsletter* we gave a sketch and a reference to a wall panel in the pub *The Swan* in Pimlico, near Leverstock Green, which advertised "*The Dunstable Wagon Co.*" Prop. N. Moss, Established since 1807. and showed a semi-relief model of a covered wagon. In spite of research through Trade Directories and other sources, we can find no traces of such a company or of a Mr. N. Moss.

The American Museum in Britain, at Bath, to whom we had written, said that the wagon was almost certainly a *Conestoga Wagon* and enclosed a post card of the one they have on show. The *Conestoga* was made in Pennsylvania and particularly in Lancaster County. It so happens that my daughter-in-law comes from Lancaster and her parents live there. At my request her father, who is a member of the Lancaster County Historical Society, did some research from the information given him. He writes : "Our wagons look to be very much like the one made in the photograph. Of course most of our settlers came from Germany back in the 18th century and from England came William Penn, who had a large land grant. In Lancaster County the *Conestoga* River flows through much of the area. *Conestoga* wagons were made here in Lancaster County and were similar to those used in Germany, England, etc. Being near the east coast of U.S.A. and near the embarkation port of Philadelphia it was of great importance, and a good business, for use in shipping goods and for people to use in the migration westwards. Some sources say that the name came from *Conestoga* township, rather than from the river, but nevertheless many were made here and served as the main means for hauling goods . . .".

All of which is very interesting, but where does *Dunstable* come in ? There are no records in museums or societies. We are left, at present with four other possibilities;

1. The *Dunstable Wagon Co.* was not situated in *Dunstable*. This would explain the absence of it in the Trade Directories.
2. A "*Dunstable Wagon*" is a type of wagon which could have been made anywhere. This is a very doubtful conjecture.
3. *Dunstable* is not the town in England, but the one in Massachusetts, U.S.A. This is also quite unlikely; the note on the advertisement "*as supplied to the Colonies*" would seem misplaced if it was built "in the Colonies". Even

more so as the "Colonies" ceased to be such in 1776.

4. The panel is a fake, possibly made to decorate pubs, but not recently. More details in this direction could be obtained if we were able to find some information on the back of the panel such as the maker's name or a date. The curator of the *Museum of Transport* in Glasgow reckons that this is the best interpretation for the panel.

We will keep things rolling and let you know of any development.

In the column to the right you can read an extract from an 1859 issue of *The Dunstable Chronicle*. "*The Dunstable Chronicle and Advertiser for Beds. Bucks. & Herts.*" to give its full name, was started in January 1856 by James Tibbett and was the first weekly Dunstable newspaper. It followed the initial James Tibbett's paper, a monthly which ran for seven months from June 1855 and had the lengthy title of "*The Dunstable Chronicle and Monthly Local Reporter*". The *Chronicle* was followed by the "*Dunstable Borough Gazette*" founded in 1865 by Daniel Tibbett, the son of James. The latter had a sub-title: "*Luton Herald*". There was also a "*Luton Times and Dunstable Herald*".

Other publications in the last century, short lived or otherwise, included "*The Dunstable Reformer*", "*The Dunstable Illustrated Magazine*" and "*The Dunstable Advertiser & Weekly Reporter*".

Coming later : **BAGSHAWE'S**

At our next Trades evening, in next winter's session, we plan to talk about the engineering firm of Bagshawe, who had their works at the bottom of Church Street, and the family background to the company.

There are many people in the Dunstable area who were employed there. Please will Society members pass on any names of people they know of and any anecdotes, details, events that they are aware of regarding this firm, which was very much part of Dunstable. Information as soon as you like to the Chairman or any members of the Committee.

Also anything to do with BENNETTS BREWERY.

Thank you.

SOME RECENT PRIVATE AND SOCIETY PUBLICATIONS

Southill and the Whitbreads 1795-1995, edited by Patricia Bell. Obtainable from the Book Castle or from Mr.S.C.Whitbread, Southill Park, Biggleswade SG18 9LL. £8.50.

Tracing ancestors in Bedfordshire by Colin Chapman. Obtainable from the County Record Office. £5 (incl. p&p.)

Inventories of Bedfordshire country houses 1714-1830, edited by James Collett-White. Pub. by Bedfordshire Historical Records Society. Obtainable from BHRS, c/o 10 Kimbolton Avenue, Bedford MK40 3AD. £15 (incl. p&p.) or from booksellers.

Memories of Methodism. by Maurice Sanders. [Methodism in Eaton Bray]. Obtainable from Mr.W.Farmer, 4 Summerleys, Eaton Bray.

137 years ago

The Dunstable Chronicle

Nov 5th 1859

AN EXCITING MORNING.- On Friday morning a noble stag, belonging to Baron Rothschild, was uncarted against the "Traveller's Friend," on the Dagnall Road. After the hounds had chased him well over hill and dale, he betook himself to Dunstable, where his presence was signalled by the shouting of boys, men running, and the world and his wife at both doors, & windows, he came full gallop across the church-yard, up Church-street, down the High-street, and up Albion-road, the hounds still at his heels, and men and boys in hot pursuit, he suddenly altered his course and was compelled to seek shelter in the yard of Mr. Robinson, builder, here he seemed completely hemmed in by a wall of human beings, who almost defied the animal to move; but as it moved so they made way, and for a change he jumped over into Mr. Cornelius Home's garden, taking the walls at an easy bound; from thence he jumped into Mr. Kirk's garden, over the walls back again into Mr. Robinson's yard, from here he again made his exit, and sought shelter between a pile of bricks and a wagon, where Mr. C. Johnson, seeing the favourable opportunity, jumped into the wagon and seized him by the horns; plenty of help being promptly given he was secured and safely housed in the stable of our worthy and much respected Doctor, Mr. Joseph Farr, who seemed both proud and pleased with his guest.-

A Correspondent.

Notes:

- This article has been spotted by Bill Smith in the Dunstable Library microfilms.
- The "Traveller's Friend" is now the "Traveller's Rest" at the crossing of the Dagnall and the Tring Roads
- Note the extreme economy of full stops!

Did you know that the houses in many of the streets of Dunstable were renumbered in 1920-21? In the early days houses had been numbered consecutively up one side of the street and down the other. This created problems when a road was extended and so the system was changed. Thereafter the numbering started at one end of the street with odd numbers on one side and even on the other, in the way that we are familiar with now. So if you are looking up your family in the census returns, or even in the old street directories, remember that the house, if it still exists, may well not have the same number now.

Omer Roucoux has done a great job working out corresponding old and new numbers. So have a chat with him if you have any queries about this. J.C.

A WARTIME MEMORY OF HEATH AND REACH BY MR RON FRITH OF DUNSTABLE

In the late summer of 1939 the authorities in London made plans to evacuate mothers and children from the London area to the comparative safety of the surrounding countryside. After the systematic destruction by the German army and air force of the towns and cities on the continent it was assumed that the same would happen here as soon as war was declared. Schools and communities were to organise the children into groups, baggage ready packed, labels round their necks so that as soon as hostilities commenced, trains could whisk them away from danger as quickly as possible. And so in September 1939, my mother, my brother Derek (aged 2) and myself (aged 6) found ourselves boarding a train at Willesden Junction to head North, we knew not where, to be evacuated to the country. The trains were specially chartered and full of evacuees, some excited at the prospect of new adventures, some, particularly the young ones, bewildered and tearful. Some were sad and fearful for the future for the outlook seemed bleak.

The train drew into Leighton Buzzard station and we were instructed to get out. We had some refreshments and the nurses examined everyone for head lice, fleas etc. Then we boarded buses to be sent to our destinations in the surrounding villages. It was thus that we ended up in Heath and Reach, billeted with Mr and Mrs Eaton of Lanes End. It was obligatory for householders with spare rooms to take in evacuees and so neither party had much say in the matter. However, we were made welcome and felt a bit more at home when we found out that Mrs Eaton hailed from Shepherd's Bush, not far from our home in Willesden. They had a lovely home, nicely furnished but Mrs Eaton was not used to lively and energetic children for they had no children as yet. We were to be on our best behaviour and not drip on the carpet when we came in from the rain and always to take our shoes off indoors and keep quiet etc.

After war had been declared nothing much had happened. The expected bombing and strafing had not occurred, the weather was lovely and the war in Europe seemed a long way off. This period became known as the phoney war. We were all rather homesick and my father had been left in London working on important items for the war effort. He said everything was quiet at home so after only a couple of weeks we returned home and resumed our normal lives.

All through the remainder of 1939 and the first half of 1940, London remained largely unscathed. Hitler was consolidating his position on the continent and hoping to persuade our government to join him or at least remain neutral. The Dunkirk miracle came and went and one or two token raids had been made on London and Berlin. In September things started to 'hot up' and the fight for air supremacy in the "Battle of Britain" was on. Daily we saw the vapour trails high in the sky in glorious weather as our airmen battled it out to keep the Luftwaffe away. To most people it seemed only a matter of time before Germany would invade and London befall the same fate as Warsaw and Rotterdam. Once again my parents contacted Mr and Mrs Eaton

and we were invited back to Heath and Reach, but this time my cousin Oliver was with us. Oliver's mother, my aunt, was a widow living near us in Willesden and she was engaged in essential war work in Park Royal and therefore could not leave and so my mother brought Oliver (aged 10) along with us.

They were idyllic days in the Autumn of 1940. The countryside was lovely and I enjoyed every minute of it. Oliver and I went to the village school down near the allotments, a small cosy place, unlike the huge council school in Willesden. There we met the local lads who took us on to the heath and into King's Wood and showed us how to make bows and arrows and eat Haws (Hawthorn berries) and 'Bread and Cheese' (Hawthorn leaves). One of the boys - the village policeman's son - was later killed by a butterfly bomb (German anti-personnel mine) which he found on the heath. The hedgerows were laden with blackberries and we often had blackberry pie or tart and loads of jam. Also Mrs Eaton had several fruit trees and vegetables so we lived fairly well.



On one occasion we went to Leighton Buzzard to the pictures to see Pinocchio and we missed the bus back, so we started to walk along the road to Heath and Reach, when a horse and cart pulled up and the driver offered us a lift. My mother was a bit wary of this character as it looked as though his last load had been manure but us boys soon climbed on the cart and so we set off. At every public house along the way the horse automatically stopped and the driver went into the pub for a drink or some other business. After 10 minutes or so we would resume our journey, the horse becoming more in control, until we arrived outside Mrs Eaton's house. We thanked the driver, who by now was rather inebriated and off he went. Mr Eaton said that the cart driver was indeed a well-known local character and dealer who often came back from Leighton market having had 'one over the eight'. The horse knew every pub and could find his way back to his stable on his own while his owner quietly napped on the cart.

With the three boys and one thing and another my mother found things very difficult at Mrs Eaton's. My father used to cycle to Heath and Reach to see us on a Saturday and back on a Sunday - 40 miles each way. Mrs Eaton wouldn't allow him to stay in her home so he used to get bed and breakfast at Mrs Turvey's house on the other side of the green. Mr Turvey used to repair shoes and I remember, there was always a blazing fire to greet you in his house. My mother decided to move billets and we went to Mr and Mrs Arnold's in Sylvester Street.

Next to Mrs Turvey's was the village shop and then the Duke's Head, I used to love going into the shop. As you opened the door a bell used to tinkle and inside a most wonderful aroma engulfed you; it was a mixture of fresh bread, sweets, tobacco, groceries - everything. It was glorious. Whenever I enter a similar shop the smell reminds me of this particular shop years ago in Heath and Reach.

We must have moved to Sylvester Street when the weather was getting colder for I can remember withered Runner Bean plants on sticks in the garden and frozen milk at school. The school milk came in a third of a pint bottles and when it froze there was a column of iced milk protruding through the neck with the cardboard cap perched on the top. The bottles came in crates and these were arranged round the open fire in the classroom to thaw ready for playtime. The milk at home was brought round by the milkman resplendent in his highly polished boots and gaiters. He had an oval milk can holding a couple of gallons or so and ladled milk into our own jug using half-pint or quarter-pint ladles.

The house in Sylvester Street was two houses knocked into one and a bit rambling. The Arnolds lived there with their son, Les, who was a bachelor in his thirties, although I believe he was courting. They made us welcome and were very easy-going. I am not sure what Mr Arnold did. He was probably retired, but Les worked at a poultry farm somewhere out towards Great Brickhill. Cycling on his way to work, he would lay some snares and on the way home in the evening take these up along with any rabbits that had been caught. We had rabbit to eat every other day and I liked it. Christmas 1940 came and I remember some things starting to get scarce. Oranges and bananas were almost unavailable but there were plenty of apples. Many other foodstuffs were becoming difficult to obtain.

Things in Willesden were grim. My father's letters told of nightly raids lasting all night and of whole streets devastated by land mines - aerial bombs on a parachute that exploded 100 feet in the air. After a long day's work he had to spend most of the night fire-watching from the school roof to direct firefighters to the worst affected areas. In this exposed position on the roof there was not much time to sleep or rest and it was very dangerous. In the morning - a quick wash, a bite to eat and back to the factory until the evening when it all started again. Heath and Reach seemed remote from all that and we hardly heard the air raid siren let alone see any action, although I believe at that time some of the towns like Luton and Dunstable experienced enemy action. Then came Tuesday 21 January 1941. I was at school at the time and it was the morning. There came a tremendous explosion and the building seemed to lift, then fall back. Many of the windows went and the ceiling came down. I don't think anyone was badly injured and apart from being covered in dust and somewhat shocked, we were O.K. I had a piece of plaster dust in my eye which was soon removed with a handkerchief, otherwise I was fine. School disbanded and we all went home. On the way home we saw people surveying the damage to their houses; with slates blown off, windows broken, chimneys down, but otherwise it seemed fairly superficial. I was surprised when I saw Mr Arnold's house - most of the roof had collapsed and inside the upstairs ceilings had fallen onto the beds. The windows at the back were blown in and it seemed as though the house had received the main force of the explosion. There was sand everywhere as the bomb had exploded in the sand pit behind the house. It was dropped by a lone German bomber returning from a raid in the Midlands: No doubt the pilot, finding he still had bombs on board impeding his flight home in daylight, decided to jettison them in what he saw as a quarry. I don't think the sand pit was damaged much but the surrounding houses suffered.

The unusual event of a single bomb being dropped in a sleepy village attracted the Press and soon reporters were around looking for a story. One reporter went to the school and asked if any child was injured and I was pointed out as having a slight eye injury. This appeared next morning in the *Daily Mirror* as "Lone Raider's attack causes eye injury to evacuee - Ronald Frith of Willesden, London N.W." Of course telephones at this time were not available to most people so my father in London had no idea that anything had happened to us. He wasn't on the phone and neither were we and as no one had been seriously injured, the news would be conveyed by letter. However a work colleague of my father's showed him the report in the *Daily Mirror* and they asked the police for information. Eventually the police found that the situation was not urgent and could wait for the weekend.

The situation in the house was chaotic - none of the first floor was usable so we boys were soon sent out to play so that the house could be cleaned up and a start made on the repairs. Joining up with our mates, we decided to look for souvenirs (shrapnel etc.) in the sand pit and to see what effect the bomb had on the pit.

On entering the sand pit site we spread out, running and shouting as boys do. Part of the pit had steep sides and Oliver was near the foot of such a side. I was away from there when I heard a dull flop and saw that a section of the sand face had fallen - Oliver was buried by about eight tons of sand and I could not see him. We called but no answer came so we ran back to the house where workmen and Les Arnold were clearing up and making repairs. I said "Oliver - covered in sand pit.", My mother didn't comprehend what I was saying but Les knew only too well the dangers of loose sand in the pits. He grabbed a shovel, indicated to the others to do the same and ran to the pit. Ten minutes of frantic digging eventually uncovered my buried cousin.

He was nearly asphyxiated. He was of a blue colour and his leg was broken. It so happened that the Chief Constable of Bedfordshire, Commander W.J.A. Willis R.N., was in the vicinity inspecting the bomb damage. He and another policeman ran to the sand pit and started applying artificial respiration. Mr Eaton, with whom we used to lodge, heard the commotion from his garden which bordered the sand pit and he scrambled down the sand face to assist. Being a St. John Ambulance man he soon got Oliver breathing again and then they carried him back to the house. The doctor said he would be alright and just needed his leg to be set in splints. My mother asked the police to contact Oliver's mother who was at work in Park Royal, which they did. She went home to prepare to travel to Heath and Reach and met my father on his way home from work, having told him the story. And because of the other matter with my eye, they decided to travel down together on the next available train. So they arrived at Mrs Arnold's in the evening to all the commotion and upset and spent the night with us on the living room floor. It was soon evident that the injuries were not life-threatening - certainly

not in my case - so the next day my father and aunt returned to London and it was decided that I should accompany them. My mother, brother and Oliver followed a few days later when Oliver's leg had settled down. I can remember getting



out of the train when we returned to Willesden Junction and it was dark. There were no lights, no destination name-plates and if it wasn't for the porter calling out the destination I don't know how you could tell where you were. We boarded a dimly lit trolley-bus - just enough light to see where the seats were. The windows were covered with a coarse netting to prevent them shattering if blasted. I had returned from evacuation just four months after leaving Willesden and a week later we were all back. We would remain in London for the duration of the war and take our chances. We experienced the rest of the blitz, the V1 doodlebugs and the V2 rockets and saw the end of the war unscathed - thank God.

Ron Frith

BOROUGH of DUNSTABLE.

In compliance with a Memorial received from certain Ratepayers
of the Borough, I Hereby Convene a

PUBLIC MEETING

OF THE RATEPAYERS, TO BE HELD IN THE
TOWN HALL, on WEDNESDAY, Oct. 15,
AT EIGHT O'CLOCK P.M.,

For the purpose of " Considering the means to be adopted for
securing the maintenance of the Public Rights to the use of

Brewer's Hill Road.'

Oct. 11th, 1890. **W. J. HAMBLING, Mayor.**

H. HALLING, PRINTER, DUNSTABLE.

One of our members, Mrs Jane Stanley, is the daughter and grand-daughter of well known Dunstable families. Her father was Edgar Franklin, of Church Street, a local carpenter, builder and undertaker. Her grandfather, Edward Franklin, a carpenter, was also a Councillor (from 1898) and served two periods as Mayor of Dunstable, 1911/12 and 1916-18. One of their attributes was the Borough Band, commonly known as *Franklin's Band*, as six of Edward's brothers were playing in it and another brother was the bandmaster.

But the famous occasion in which Edward was involved, as the instigator and spearhead, started in 1890 and came to be known as **The Battle of Brewers Hill**. It is to this that the notice of a public meeting, reproduced above, refers. This episode was really a series of protest marches, etc. to free Brewers Hill Road as a local highway and away from the restrictions of the railway and of a certain farmer. The campaign involved hundreds of local folk, a great deal of noise and turmoil through processions and bands, and eventually lead to a trial in the law courts of London. Mrs. Stanley has some very interesting material on this and we plan to go into greater detail in the next Newsletter. Watch this space for **The Battle of Brewers Hill!**

Colin Bourne

Great-Grandmamma's Polishing Cloths

One of the minor industries which developed in Dunstable as an offshoot of the whiting industry was the manufacture of plate cloths, or polishing cloths. There were two sorts, yellow for brass and white for silver, and they were made by impregnating cotton material with a mixture of yellow soap and whiting (powdered chalk). Two firms were established in the town, one owned by Mr. William Gostwick Gard, later to be a mayor of the Borough, the other by Messrs. Smith and Dolman. The latter sent much of their output to Amsterdam for use in the jewellery trade.

An advertisement in the Dunstable Gazette of 1882 declared that "Every lady should use Gard & Co.'s plate cloths", which were guaranteed to give "a brilliant polish". A box of three cost one shilling, and six scented jewel cloths "in a pretty box, for the toilet table", were three for sixpence.

The firms were not in existence for very many years and when rival companies produced a superior product Smith and Dolman closed down. Gard & Co. was sold to a firm in London.

A fuller description of the trade is given in Thomas Bagshawe's article which appeared in the *Bedfordshire Magazine*, vol.9 no.72. (Spring 1965).

Joan Curran.



The contributors for this issue are Colin Bourne (Chairman), John Lunn (Vice-chairman), Joan Curran (Hon. Secretary), Ron Frith and Omer Roucoux (Committee members). Typesetting on Impression-Style by O.Rx.