

NEWSLETTER

Dunstable & District Local History Society
No. 59 September 2021



Chairman's Notes

It is 30 years since a group of local people decided to form the Dunstable and District Local History Society.

We are marking the anniversary with this 30th anniversary edition of our newsletter, containing an article about the society by founder-member Hugh Garrod.

It's an interesting time for this commemoration because we are the beginning of a new era, after all the trauma of the Covid pandemic.

RESUMED MONTHLY MEETINGS & NEW VENUE

If all has gone well, you will be receiving this newsletter after we have held the first of our resumed monthly meetings.

This was at a new venue for us, and we were sad to leave the Methodist Church hall where we had been made so very welcome for many years.

I need to tell you why we moved to the Priory parish hall, because we will be wanting your views about what has been happening.

When it first looked as though it would be possible to resume our monthly meetings, the first thought was, of course, to return to the Methodist hall. Our initial information was that numbers would have to be limited to less than 50, to comply with social distancing requirements. But we half-expected that our members would be so pleased to be back to normal that they might all want to turn up. So our thought was that, if too many people arrived, we would transfer to the main church where there is plenty of room. We had done this a number of times previously for a whole variety of reasons, most notably when we found a Blood Transfusion unit already ensconced in the hall on the Tuesday night!

But times have changed. The costs of maintaining and heating the building, particularly the church, have increased and the hire charges have had to be raised. Your committee took the view that probably the number of members attending our first few meetings would be lower than normal, and therefore we should seek a smaller and less-expensive hall.



Councillor Gloria Martin, Dunstable town mayor, opening the Leading Ladies Exhibition

We looked, very seriously, at moving to the United Services Club in High Street South which has modern and comfortable facilities, with attractive rooms to which we could adjourn afterwards for coffee or something stronger. This would have been less expensive than the Methodist hall although we would have had to change our regular meeting nights to Thursdays. In the event,

we opted for the parish hall, which is even cheaper, but much smaller. By the time you read this, we will know whether this was a success.

QUEENSWAY HALL OF FAME

In the meantime, during the lockdown, the society has continued to be very active. On two Saturdays we have supported Dunstable council's initiatives on The Square by providing history exhibitions there. We have also spent two Saturdays in Grove House Gardens with a set of photographs for the Queensway Hall of Fame events. We also prepared an archaeological display for Priory Gardens. All five of these events were badly affected by the weather (one was postponed because of dire warnings about thunderstorms). Our members who manned the stalls remained remarkably cheerful despite the rain and I must thank them and everyone else who turned up in support.

ARCHAEOLOGY DAY

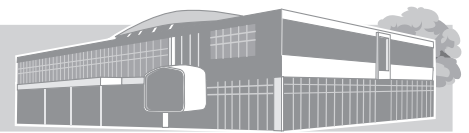
The postponed archaeological display, incidentally, has been rearranged for Saturday, September 18.

DUNSTABLE LEADING LADIES EXHIBITION

We have also seen the opening of the Dunstable Leading Ladies exhibition in Priory House. This has been a huge undertaking and has taken several years to complete. The Lord Lieutenant of Bedfordshire, Helen Nellis, had a preview of the display when she visited Dunstable for the NHS Day on July 5. She was particularly interested in the panel about Elinor Brent-Dyer whose books she read as a youngster. The exhibition was officially opened by the Mayor of Dunstable, Councillor Gloria Martin, on July 30.

John Buckledee

Memories of the Queensway Hall



No-one has yet produced a definitive list of the vast number of performers who appeared on stage at the late-lamented Queensway Hall in Dunstable.

But here on these pages is the history society's attempt to fill the gap. It may seem to be outside our normal comfort zone, but for many people worldwide Dunstable is most famous for being the venue for the David Bowie/Ziggy Stardust concert at the Queensway. Scenes from this have been watched by millions of people on You Tube. So there is more to our history than King Henry VIII and his marriage annulment at the Priory!

Dunstable Council this summer had the idea of arranging a couple of Queensway Hall of Fame events at Grove House Gardens. People were invited to bring a picnic and listen over the bandstand's loudspeaker system to music as recorded by bands who had appeared at the hall.

The council asked people on Facebook to nominate the band they would most like to hear, and a playlist was assembled of bands with the most votes.

The history society became involved when we were asked to create a photo display of the bands.

The problem has always been that there is no reliable list of Queensway Hall bands and some of the suggestions on Facebook seemed most unlikely. Unlike the California ballroom, where the owners arranged the bookings, the Queensway would be hired out by Dunstable Borough Council to various promoters.

So long as the bills were paid, the council did not take a particular note about which performers had been booked.

Luckily, Dunstable's former town clerk Richard Walden took an above-average interest and his behind-the-scenes memories of some of the bands were the subject of a talk to the history society. A report of his talk is on our website.

Some of the concerts were advertised in the Dunstable Borough Gazette, which is an invaluable source of information. But some promoters relied on leaflets and posters and the information these contained has now been almost lost. Some of these 'flyers' are now collectors' items and when they appear on e-bay we have evidence of another 'name' to add to the list.

This summer the history society took the Facebook lists and other material to a group of music fans headed by Denis O'Donoghue. They spent what appears to have been a very happy evening at the United Services Club going through source material to produce a long list of definite appearances, plus a shorter list of 'maybes'.

This list became a talking point in the history society's gazebo at the two Queensway Hall of Fame events, and visitors (who included some music professionals as well as fans) were able to add numerous extra names. Some fans were adamant that they saw the very famous groups Herman's Hermits and Gerry and the Pacemakers at the Queensway but we think that perhaps memories are playing tricks. We've seen ticket stubs for the Hermits and these are marked California Ballroom. And Gerry Marsden is listed as appearing with his group in Dunstable on February 19 1966...at the California.

Anyway, we have promised to publish the list, so here it is – firstly in this newsletter which then appears on our website.

This summer's events concentrated on rock bands, but there was a much-wider range of entertainment at the Queensway than that. It was fascinating to hear the memories of a musician who backed the famous pop star Alma Cogan when she appeared at the Queensway on a Monday night to promote her new record. The Ryan Twins (children of another famous pop star Marion Ryan) were there too.



A selection of adverts and posters for acts who performed at the Queensway Hall



Local fundraiser Mary Biswell persuaded local stars Bob Monkhouse and Frank Ifield to star in some charity variety shows and they in turn brought along show-biz friends like Ted Rogers.

Local organisations like the Rotary Club held dinner-dances, with some well-known bands to provide the music, and they often booked celebrity performers for a cabaret. A list of all the stars who appeared at these private functions is still to be tackled, and some of these once well-known performers are now almost forgotten. I can remember, with delight, seeing comedian Harold Berens in cabaret at the Queensway, but who else now remembers his hit radio show Ignorance Is Bliss? But those of us who manned the gazebo at Grove House Gardens were made well aware of the fleeting nature of fame, when many of the youngsters who glanced at our display had not heard of any of the 'stars' we featured and then asked the council's DJ to play something by Beyonce.

THE WHO

One interesting sideline to our research was a request for help from a student in California who is writing a university thesis on how The Who and other rock groups were first promoted. He knew that one of The Who's earliest performances was in Dunstable on May 24, 1965. We discovered that the group played at the Queensway at a Rag Week Ball organised by students of Dunstable College of Further Education and shared the stage with a group called The Diddley Daddies.

The event was publicised with an advert on the Gazette's front page and its cost was donated to the students by AC-Delco, the local sparking plug manufacturer.

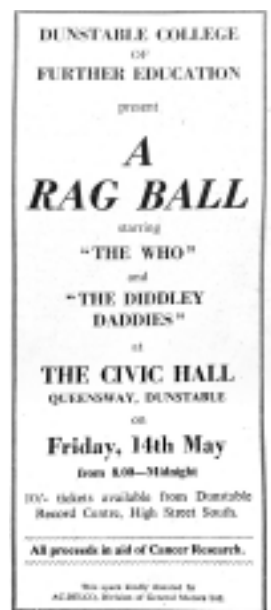
Alas, the Gazette, in an otherwise very-detailed coverage of Rag Week events, failed to mention The Who and no photos were taken.

But one of the visitors to our Grove House display remembered the Rag Ball very well and described the group's visit to Dunstable as a bit of a coup for the students. They had contacted them, before they became really famous, when they were known as The Detours. The change of name and their first hit record came soon after, but the group honoured the Dunstable booking.

It was an extraordinary week of entertainment in Dunstable. On the same night, music at Dunstable's California Ballroom was provided by The Hollies, a leading pop group at the time. And the previous night there was a concert at the Methodist Church by the world-famous Luton Girls Choir.

John Buckledee

Images courtesy of Nigel Clark



The Who Rag Ball advert



The Who

Bands & Performers at the Queensway Hall



AC/DC	Fastway	Magnum	Taste (featuring Rory Gallagher)
Alan Bown	Fat Mattress	Man	Tears For Fears
Alma Cogan	Faust	Manfred Mann	Ten Years After
Amen Corner	Fleetwood Mac	Marillion	Terraplane
America	Foundations	Marmalade	The Addicts
Angelo Six	Freddie McGregor	Martha and the Vandellas	The Alarm
Anti-Nowhere League	Free	Metallica	The Beat
Aynsley Dunbar's Blue Whale	Fruupp	Mick Abrahams Band	The Brothers Johnson
Babe Ruth	Fuzzbox	Mink DeVille	The Chords
Bad Manners	Gary Moore Band	Motorhead	The Christians
Barclay James Harvest	Genesis	Mott the Hoople	The Clash
Bebop Deluxe	Georgie Fame	Mud	The Crusaders
Beck, Bogart & Appice	Giant Kinetic Wardrobe	Mungo Jerry	The Damned
Bees Make Honey	Girlschool	Nazareth	The Danse Society
Bernie Marsden	Golden Earring	New Model Army	The Drifters
Big Country	Gong	Nutz	The Enid
Black Sabbath	Good Habit	Pallas	The Equals
Black Widow	Graham Bond	Paul Young	The Faces
Blackfoot	Greg Lake	Pentangle	The Fall
Blancmange	Groundhogs	Percy Sledge	The Flirtations
Blodwyn Pig	Gwen Dickey	Peter Tosh	The Four Pennies
Blondie	Hanoi Rocks	Philip Goodhand-Tait	The Jam
Blow Monkeys	Hardin & York	Pink Floyd	The James Gang
Blue Oysters Cult	Hawklords	Plastic Penny	The Kinks
(as Soft White Underbelly)	Hawkwind	Praying Mantis	The Meteors
Boomtown Rats *(cancelled)	Hazel O'Connor	Pretenders	The Misunderstood
Budgie	Heatwave	Principal Edwards	The Move
Camel	Hedgehoppers Anonymous	Magic Theatre	The Nice
Canned Heat	Henry Cow	Procol Harum	The Pete Best Band
Capability Brown	Herbie Hancock	Queen	The Real Thing
Caravan	Humble Pie	Quintessence	The Revillos
Chapman Whitney	Ian Dury & The Blockheads	R.E.M.	The Ruts
Street Walkers	Ian Gillan Band	Ralph McTell	The Ryan Twins
Chapter III	In Excelsis	Renaissance	The Selector
Chicken Shack	Iron Maiden	Roger Ruskin-Spears	The Skids
China Crisis	Jan Dukes de-Gray	Ronettes	The Stranglers
City Boy	Jigsaw	Ronnie Lane's Slim Chance	The Strawbs
Clannad	Jimmy Ruffin	Roxy Music	The Supremes
Clientelle	Jo'burg Hawk	Sad Cafe	The Sweet
Climax Blues Band	Joan Armatrading	Samson	The Syd Lawrence Orchestra
Cockney Rebel	JoBoxers	Saxon	The Who
Colosseum	John Martyn	Sensational Alex Harvey Band	Thin Lizzy
Curtis Mayfield	John Miles	Sex Pistols	Third Ear Band
Curved Air	John Otway & Wild	Shakatak	Timebox
David Bowie	Willy Barrett	Showaddywaddy	Toad The Wet Sprocket
David Essex	Jon Hiseman's Colosseum	Sigue Sigue Sputnik	Tom Paxton
Deep Purple	Jon Roth	Simon Dupree & The Big Sound	Toyah
Def Leppard	Jonathan Kelly	Slade	Trust
Dexy's Midnight Runners	Judas Priest	Snaps	Turner
Dire Straits	Judie Tzuke	Snowy White	Twisted Sister
Doctor and the Medics	Juicy Lucy	Soft Machine	Tygers Of Pan
Doctors of Madness	Junior's Eyes	Soft White Underbelly	UB40
Don't Fear The Reaper	King Crimson	Spirit	UFO
Dr Feelgood	King Kurt	Squeeze (Jules Holland)	Uli
East Of Eden	Kingdom Come	Stackridge	Uriah Heep
Eclection	Krokus	Status Quo	Valhalla
Edgar Broughton Band	Lee Aaron	Steeleye Span	Van der Graaf Generator
Edwin Starr	Lene Lovich	Steve Hackett	Vinegar Joe
Eire Apparent	Leo Sayer	Steve Hillage	William Bell
ELO	Level 42	Stone The Crows	Wishbone Ash
Emerson, Lake & Palmer	Linda Lewis	Stray	Wizzard
Energy	Lindisfarne	String Driven Thing	Woolly Wolstenholme's
Eno and the Winkies	Little Richard	Sutherland Brothers & Quiver	Maestoso
Fairport Convention	Lou Reed	Sweet Slag	XTC
Family	Love Affair	T Rex	Yellowman
Fanny	Love Madness	Tang	Yes
Farm			

Dunstable Leading Ladies Exhibition



The Dunstable Leading Ladies exhibition, now open at Priory House, was the brainchild of Helen Walker-Sygrove when she was manager of the heritage centre.

SUFFRAGETTE MOVEMENT

Her original idea was that it should be centred around Dunstable's part in the Suffragette movement, and she asked some history society members (John Buckledee, David Turner, Rita Swift and Joan Curran) to investigate the idea.

In the event, we could not find any record of Suffragette activity in the town, but the idea evolved into a celebration of Dunstable's pioneering women: the ladies who had been the first in their profession or who had made an extra-special impact in the town.

It proved an enormous challenge to gather information together and there are many, many gaps. Some obvious candidates, still very active, did not want to be singled out in this way. Others we could not trace. For instance, we have never been able to discover anything about the town's first girl guide captain, other than that her name was Miss N Wright. We traced a granddaughter who had kept a mass of memorabilia but, alas, it turned out that this was about a guide captain from another town.

Anyway, here are a few excerpts from the exhibition, whose opening was delayed by the Covid lockdowns, which will perhaps persuade you to visit Priory House.



Gwen Elwell

GWEN ELWELL

Gwen Elwell was a botanist who was an expert on Dunstable's flora and the inspiration for the town's Garden Club. She ran the Noah's Ark Tearooms on the Square and the exhibition includes her special recipe for Maid of Honour pastries.

ELINOR BRENT-DYER

Elinor Brent-Dyer was a popular teacher at Moreton House School for Girls in West Street. She began writing the Chalet School series of stories in 1925 and they became best-sellers. There is still a society of Chalet School fans who were quite excited to hear that Elinor was to be featured in Dunstable.



Elinor Brent-Dyer

FAYE TOZER

Faye Tozer is the Northfields School girl who became famous as a singer with Steps and went on to star in a number of musicals. When the Leading Ladies exhibition was being written, in the time before Covid, she had just become even-more famous by winning tv's Strictly Come Dancing.



Faye Tozer

LUCY DALES

Lucy Dales was Dunstable's first Lady Mayor. But she was much more than a local politician. Her fascinating career included a clandestine visit to Russia after the Bolshevik revolution to rescue her cousin, who was an agent for the British government.



Lucy Dales

EILEEN MORDEN

Eileen Morden was secretary to a derring-do aristocrat, the Earl of Suffolk, who was a scientist and became an expert in defusing unexploded bombs in the Second World War. He would be driven to the bomb site in his Rolls Royce and Miss Morden would stand close by taking notes as he went to work. She was killed, along with Lord Suffolk and his chauffeur, when a booby-trapped bomb exploded in 1941.



Eileen Morden

MARY BISWELL

Mary Biswell was a fundraiser extraordinaire who had the nerve to persuade the great and the good of the county to gather together to put on a series of charity events.

Year after year these added greatly to the social life of the town as well as raising a great deal of money. Mary was awarded the MBE which locally was translated as

Mary Biswell Everywhere.



Mary Biswell

DR ANNE STANDEN

Dr Anne Standen seems to have been Dunstable's first lady doctor. The history society contacted a number of surgeries before hearing about Dr Standen's appointment by Dr Sam Twivy to join his fast-driving team in his practice in Church Street.



Dr Anne Standen

MARY MUDD

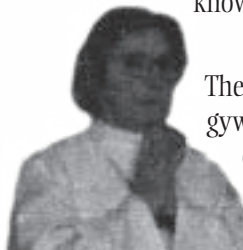
Mary Mudd, not strictly a Dunstable girl but famous for performing with the Mudlarks singing group at numerous local fetes and dances. She and her brothers were spotted by dj David Jacobs, made a best-selling record called Lollipop, and became stars nationwide in the 1950s.



Mary Mudd

MARY ELLIOTT

Mary Elliott was the owner of a hat factory in Dunstable and became known locally as 'the Mother of Straw'.



Rev Stephanie Atkin

REV STEPHANIE ATKIN

The Rev Stephanie Atkin was a pioneering clergywoman at the Priory Church, where she was deaconess from 1978.

MISS E BOYES

Miss E Boyes was appointed headteacher of

Burr Street School in Icknield Street in 1926. On her retirement she arranged for every child at the school to have an ice-cream – a special treat in 1952.



Miss E Boyes

John Buckledee

30 Years On - A Personal Recollection



Peter Boatwright



Colin Bourne



Joan Curran



Hugh Garrod



Barry Horne



John Lunn



Omer Roucoux



Bernard Stevens

A HISTORY OF DUNSTABLE AND DISTRICT LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

On the evening of Friday 20th September 1991, I went to a meeting upstairs in the old Dunstable Library, where the Reference Section was sited.

The purpose was to discuss setting up a history society. I had been told about the meeting by John Lunn, whom I had known for over 20 years, as Headteacher of Beecroft School and as historian of the Priory Church having subsequently taking on this latter role. John was one of the convenors of this meeting, the other being Joan Curran. I had known her for over 10 years; she used to come into Totternhoe School to use our photocopier – I made sure that she paid the going rate! Joan Curran and Barry Horne had been Secretary and Chairman, respectively, of the Dunstable Museum Trust. The Trust was active for a while, publishing Omer Roucoux's book, 'The Roman Watling Street from London to High Cross' in 1984. By the late 1980s the Trust was wound up and Joan felt it would be advantageous to start a new society.

A NEW SOCIETY & COMMITTEE

John and Joan invited Colin Bourne to chair this meeting, which was attended by about 30 people. To begin with, Mark Lawrence, chairman of Harlington Heritage Trust gave us a talk about how his society had been set up and organised. Colin then invited us to ask questions about starting up our own society and he, Mark, Joan and John answered as best they could. One major point was that Joan strongly recommended that, if we agreed, it should include the villages around Dunstable and concentrate on local history.

Barry Horne proposed that we should found Dunstable and District Local History Society and I seconded the motion. This was agreed by a show of hands and a committee was elected; Colin Bourne as Chairman, me as Vice-Chairman, Joan Curran as Secretary, Bernard Stevens as Treasurer, John Lunn as Talks and Outings Organiser and Omer Roucoux and Peter Boatwright as members.

TALKS & TOURS

From the following year, a pattern was established of talks in Autumn, Winter and Spring and outings in June, July and August. Ron Frith organised many talks and outings as well as the audio system. Later on Gordon Ivinson played a vital role planning talks and tours, also Sue Turner and now John Buckledee. The AGM is in March, while December is our Christmas Social, the latter's speciality being Joan and Rita's non-alcoholic punch! Talks were generally well attended, although September tended to be a bit sparse – the first after the summer break. The booking numbers for outings fluctuated over the years. The high point was the August 1997 tour of villages along the River Ouse. So many people signed up for it that we had to run it twice! Recently, we have had to cancel outings due to lack of interest.

THE SOCIETY'S FIRST TALKS IN 1991:

Starting Harlington Heritage Trust	Martin Lawrence
Preserving Dunstable's Heritage	Richard Walden

(A full list of talks and tours can be found on the Society's website)



The 'Old Trades of Dunstable' series of publications

PUBLICATIONS

The Society has, over the years, produced a number of publications. The initial series, 'Old Trades of Dunstable' consisted of: - 'Dale's Dubbin' and 'Flemons' Herbs' Colin Bourne, 1996; 'Shops & Markets' Fred Moore and Don Kemp, 1997; 'The Whiting Works' Joan Curran, 1998; 'Bagshawe's Engineering & Cross Paperware' Colin Bourne, 2000; 'Straw Hats & Bonnets' Joan Curran 2003 and 'The History of Priory House' Joan Curran, 2008. Later came several editions of 'Dunstable Timeline' Rita Swift, the first in 2016; Other publications involving Society members include: - Dunno's Originals' ed John Buckledee, 2001; 'Dunstaplelogia' ed John Buckledee, 2002; 'The Late Victoria History of Dunstable' ed John Buckledee, 2003; 'The Story of Totternhoe Quarries', Joan Curran, 2005; 'Sally the Witch' Rita Swift, 2005; 'Medieval Dunstable' ed Jean Yates 2013 and 'Dunstable Through Time' John Buckledee, 2014.

NEWSLETTERS

The Society's Newsletter was first published in February 1994. Omer Roucoux was the editor until 2007, when David Turner took over. Each edition starts with a piece by the Chairman. Omer also produced the posters for our talks from 1992 until May 2017, when David Turner took this over too.



The Society's first newsletter

VENUES

Our Society has had four main venues. The first seven meetings were upstairs in the Library. This space proved too small for our growing membership, so Colin moved us to the Parlour in the Methodist Church, which hosted 28 meetings. This, also, became too small so that we moved into the School Room. It was about this time that we started serving tea, coffee and biscuits after each talk. The two aims were to raise extra income and to encourage our members to talk to each other. During 1995, we decided that the Methodist Church had raised its rates too much, so we negotiated a move to the Salvation Army, the other side of the car park. This was a much cosier venue, but we could not serve refreshments without hiring the kitchen too and this would cost more than the Methodist Church. However, we still had our Christmas Socials at the Methodist Hall. Between 1995 and 2001, we held 29 meetings at the Salvation Army. We eventually decided that we missed our tea and biscuits, which resulted in our moving back to where we had come from. Seven talks which were expected to attract a large attendance, were held in the Methodist Church. Richard Walden's 1994 talk on the History of the Dunstable Mayoralty took place in the Council Chamber in Grove House. In 2004, Marguerite Patten gave a talk, in the Priory Church, about Food in War Time.

RESEARCH ROOM

Historians are notorious collectors of all sorts of material and for the first 14 years of our existence we had nowhere to bring it all together. In 2005, the Town Council bought and renovated Priory House and, the following year, they were able to offer us a research room upstairs. Our first location was at the back, with wonderful views of the Priory Church and Priory Gardens. We were then asked to move to the front of the building, overlooking High Street South, The Square and the Methodist Church. We began to collect all sorts of written material about the history of Dunstable and District – which took some sorting. We also acquired many photographs, which are a great help when giving talks. I spent many happy hours scanning photographs and slides for our digital collection. Don't Let Dunstable Die regularly raid our store for their annual calendars.



Joan Curran working in the Research Room at Priory House

However, in 2018 the Town Council decided to host weddings upstairs in Priory House and needed our room for the Registrar. We were offered accommodation in Grove House. We had barely moved all our archive, when the pandemic struck and brought all our activities to a halt. The only event since then has been an AGM on Zoom. The Society has a very successful website. This was originally hosted, in 2007, by the Book Castle. We get numerous enquiries from all over the world. John Buckledee answers most of them, but from time to time he contacts me, particularly if it's about the Priory or our Ashton, Cart, Chew and Marshe families.

Our Society has been much involved with Priory House, over the years, in putting on displays in the Exhibition Room upstairs. There was a large Medieval Dunstable timeline in 2013 to mark the 800th anniversary of the dedication of our Augustinian Priory. This was in conjunction with Jean Yates and the 'Medieval Dunstable' project and book. Since then, we have put on many displays including Georgian Dunstable, WWI and Dunstable's Leading Ladies.

These are some of my memories of our Society. No doubt, the Editor would be pleased to hear your reminiscences for future editions of our Newsletter.

Hugh Garrod

Memories of old Dunstable

A young lady named Deliverance Tyng, born in 1645 in Boston, Massachusetts, was married (c1664) to Daniel Searles, one-time governor of Barbados.

The wedding intensely interests Richard Searles, who is researching his ancestry, and he asked Dunstable history society for help. Our local connection is that William Tyng and his brother Edward emigrated to America from Dunstable in around 1636 and helped to found a town about 30 miles north of Boston which they called Dunstable. Deliverance seems to have been Edward's daughter.

The society published a detailed article by David Turner about the Tyng family in our August 2010 newsletter.

A NOTORIOUS BUCCANEER

But all this led us to learn about the adventurous career of Daniel Searles (sometimes spelled Searle) and his brother Robert, who was a notorious buccaneer. Strictly speaking, it's not about Dunstable but it is too interesting not to share it with you.

Daniel Searles was an officer in the so-called Barbados fleet which was sent to the West Indies by Oliver Cromwell in August 1651 to quell a rebellion on the island. The insurrection was put down and Daniel was granted 500 acres of land on the island as a reward. The Cromwell government had sentenced a large number of prisoners from Scotland and Ireland to work on the plantations in Barbados, and they were joined by thousands of African slaves.

Searles was appointed governor of the island in 1653 and instigated a plan to drive the Spanish from the Caribbean using his Scottish and Irish prisoners as a fighting force. This adventure became a huge failure, with many casualties, and by 1660 Searles was forced to resign. He went to live in Boston where, presumably, he met Deliverance Tyng and they had two children.

Daniel's brother Robert was a privateer famous in USA history for a controversial raid on Florida.



Robert had captained a ship which was part of a large buccaneering fleet which raided a Spanish town in Cuba in 1662 and brought a large amount of booty back to Jamaica. It caused an international incident and Searles, by order of King Charles II, was forced to return the treasure to Cuba. But four years later he was in command of one of nine ships which raided two Dutch-owned islands in the Caribbean. The next year he and his privateers pillaged the island of Tobago, near Trinidad, and in 1668 he raided the Spanish-held town of St Augustine in Florida, in personal retaliation for a Spanish attack on a British settlement in the Bahamas. For this, he was arrested on his return to Jamaica but was freed soon afterwards to allow him to take part in Sir Henry Morgan's notorious attack on Panama City, where the Spanish had accumulated large amounts of Inca gold.

HOPELESSLY DRUNK

He captured a number of Spanish ships but unfortunately one of these was carrying a large quantity of wine. He and his crew became so hopelessly drunk that they failed to notice a Spanish treasure ship, laden with gold and jewels, which would have been easy prey. Years later, the Spanish were still boasting about their escape. The memoirs of another famous privateer, William Dampier, mentions the death of Searles, recording that he was killed in a duel in an islet on the coast of Honduras.

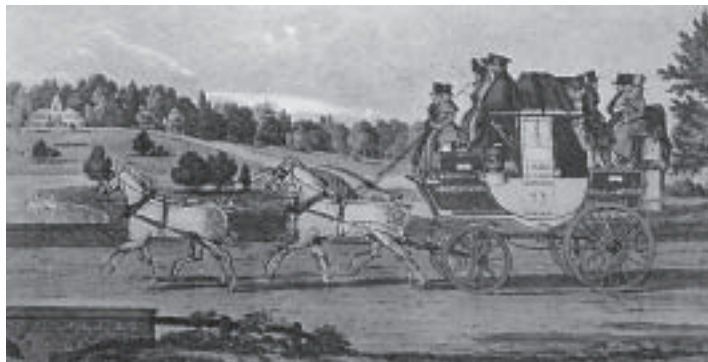
THE WONDER

In December 2020 we wrote about the efforts being made by Joe Patton to cycle along the route of the famous stagecoach The Wonder in the early 1800s. One of the stopping-points along the route was The Swan With Two Necks and Joe had asked us where this was. No problem about answering this one. The inn stood at what is now the Ladbroke's betting office in Middle Row. It's the larger of Ladbroke's expanded premises, next to the archway. The inn, once called the Lion and the Lamb, closed in 1913.

The story of Joe's adventures, together with details and photos about the various inns on the route, is now on-line on www.harlechjoe.wordpress.com

It includes excerpts from books like the Pickwick Papers which have many references to the stagecoach days. There's not much about Dunstable, but we were intrigued by the names of the coaches which changed horses at the Swan With Two Necks. They include the Stag, the Nimrod, the Union, the Times, the Independent Tally-ho, the Red Beaver, the Royal Defiance, the Northampton, the Umpire, the Express, the Greyhound, the Courier, the Empress, the Economist, the Hope, the Albion, the Royal Bruce and the Beehive.

What a busy town!



The Wonder Stagecoach

Sad Farewell



We are very sorry to announce the sad loss of
Keith Blackburn **David Cheshire**

UNA STUBBS

Just after the Dunstable's Leading Ladies exhibition opened at Priory House came the announcement that Una Stubbs had died. I was particularly sad to hear the news. When I was a very young reporter on the Dunstable Gazette I heard 'on the grapevine' that Una, then a young dancer on the tv show Cool For Cats, was a Dunstable girl and that she'd landed a role in a new West End musical, Grab Me A Gondola. I saw the show and called 'on spec' at her family home in Markham Crescent. Her proud mum welcomed me in and showed me a photo album of Una's early work. Una had left home by then to live in London and my story about a fairly unknown chorus girl was relegated to a paragraph in the Gazette's gossip column. Una's face and infectious voice were soon to become known everywhere as the 'Dairy Box Chocs' girl on tv and posters.



Una Stubbs

HOUSTONE

Nice to see that the new Houghton Regis school at Kingsland is to be called Houstone, which is how the name of the village was spelled in the Domesday Book. Central Beds Council chose the name after posting a questionnaire on their internet site.

One suggestion was Buckwood, because someone had read that this was the old name for that section of Houghton. We didn't think that was correct. King Henry I, who owned the land after the Norman conquest, gave Houghton villagers the right to use Buckwood at Markyate as recompense for using their land to create his new town of Dunstable. A remnant of the trackway which connected Buckwood with Houghton is still in existence, called Wood Lane near the Saracen's Head.

Before the Normans, the settlement was called Saelig Houghton, which apparently means holy or fortunate. This was the basis for a common local joke about 'Silly Houghton', which has now been almost forgotten.

Houghton Regis, of course, means 'Royal Houghton' with reference to its Norman ownership.

YESTERYEAR

I am still continuing to compile a weekly Yesteryear feature for the Dunstable Gazette. I made a mistake a few months ago describing a photo of the town's first Tesco store as being taken in the 1950s even though the picture showed a Ford Corsair which wasn't produced until 1963. Some readers wrote to the Editor pointing out the error, which at least proves that the paper is still being read! Meanwhile, appeals to find a photo of 'the tin tabernacle' which once stood in Upper Union Street have so far been unsuccessful.

PENS AWAY

Denis O'Donoghue, recording the death of Peter Bennett, a former Dunstable Grammar School boy, received a rather memorable anecdote about the school from Peter's wife, Kate, who said he would fondly quote one master's instruction at the end of a test: Pens away, where neither moth nor rust do corrupt.

John Buckledee

Greeting New Members



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

Rosemary Bennett **Neil Scoggins** **Lynne Spain**