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From the Editor

For our Autumn issue we have been lucky enough to obtain an article by Stuart Antrobus arising out of his work on the postcard collection at Bedford Library which he has completed: arranging it into six albums and for which he has written captions. We have advertised this collection in our Notes and News section in previous issues and this article enables you to peek into the collection in more detail to see Bedford in the past. We are grateful to Stuart and the Editor of *Bedford Local History Magazine* for allowing us to reproduce it here.

We also have a report on our 2016 AGM and Conference which, as usual, was an excellent day with stimulating and interesting talks and some pre-lunch activities which gave delegates an appetite for the very good lunch which followed.

In the Summer issue I reported that my stock of previously unpublished articles was now exhausted and that future issues will have to rely on material previously published by others or items I have found or written myself. So, as before, please, send in your society’s research and news so it can be seen by other societies in Bedfordshire and to allow this journal to cover all aspects of the county’s history and the activities of its local societies. Remember they will be available on the Society’s website soon after publication in HIB.

TED MARTIN

The 2016 Conference in session
AGM: At the AGM the present BLHA Committee was re-elected en bloc and the Resolution for the alteration of the Constitution item 4(h) to ‘No Officer shall serve more than five consecutive years unless co-opted by the majority of the committee on an annual basis’ was adopted after a vote. This was to remedy a situation where replacements for retiring committee officers who have served their five-year term are not forthcoming at an AGM. The committee proposed that the five-year rule may be overridden by co-opting the officer to remain on the committee until a replacement can be found. This required the amendment of the appropriate constitution item 4 (h) which stated that: ‘No Officer shall serve more than five consecutive years. On expiration of this period two further years must elapse before any former Officer shall be eligible for election or re-election to any office.’

Annual Conference. A Welcome to the Conference by June Barnes, Chair of the Sharnbrook Local History Group followed the AGM. She pointed out that, when asked to stage a Conference three years ago they had decided to ask to do it in their 10th anniversary year of 2016 to mark the progress of their Group in those 10 years and show what had been achieved by the Sharnbrook Group.

The keynote speaker, Professor Carenza Lewis, then gave a stimulating talk on Researching our Local Heritage which showed how involvement in community archaeology and local history can improve the lives not just of ordinary participants but those who are marginalised or who have other issues and how local history societies and groups can obtain funding for such activities. She also showed how people can be engaged, how these programmes and activities can be embedded and sustained, how to plan for succession, and also research, training and assessing the impact of the work.

Professor Lewis gave several examples from Bedfordshire (including Sharnbrook which was a pioneer in this field), Hertfordshire and Suffolk where
local research, test-pit digging, field walking and other activities had led to analysis of the results which helped to show more about the effects of the Black Death, occupation of still occupied sites over the centuries and determining the location and use of buildings and structures.

June Barnes then spoke on **Discovering Sharnbrook’s Medieval Story** which recounted how the Sharnbrook Group’s work had resulted in much greater knowledge of their village. The excavations at Castle Close, which were an integral part of this, are ongoing. Castle Close is a 12th century moated earthwork situated in woodland. Sixty-eight test pits were dug in which the whole community was involved including school students. Pottery from the Roman to Medieval periods was discovered. This was helped by Heritage Lottery funding and the overgrown earthwork at Castle Close had to be cleared of vegetation and they had to obtain consent to proceed as it was a scheduled monument. In addition to pottery, horseshoe nails, a D-shaped buckle and pin, limestone pads were also discovered and there was reason to believe this was a moderately high status site, but probably a moated manor house rather than a castle, because ovens had been excavated (indicated by charred grains and blackened earth) which were kept separate from the main buildings because of fire risk.

After this talk delegates were given the option of a visit to Castle Close, with a chance to try field surveying or shovel pit-digging, or to have a walk around the Sharnbrook Heritage Trail to see some of the interesting buildings in the village.

Following an excellent buffet lunch the Conference resumed with a talk by Dorothy Jamieson on **Bedfordshire in 1670: evidence from the Hearth Tax Returns**. Continuing adroitly in spite of projector failures, Dorothy managed to show how the returns could be used to build a picture of Bedfordshire in the 1670s with regard to population, prosperity and even literacy, over the Hundreds of Bedfordshire and also in regard to her own village of Willington.

The next talk, **Queens Park Lives**: by Neslyn Pearson assisted by Jim Hull gave information on an oral history project undertaken in the Queens Park area of Bedford to gather the memories of local residents of their lives in the area. The project involved one-to-one interviews with volunteers and well-supported meetings with the results published in a series of magazines.

Colin Watt then presented **Clophill & Sharnbrook – a comparative study using census data** showing that, by comparing the returns under the various headings of the census summary form between the two villages, analysis could be made of the condition and lives of the occupants at the times of the 19th century censuses. He was also able to show the distribution of surnames in the British Isles against those occurring in the two villages thus showing possible inward migration to them.
The final talk of the afternoon was by Des Hoar based on his new book *Beats, Boots & Poachers* (see page 6). This covered the history of the establishment of a police force in North Bedfordshire and the types of poachers who were apprehended by that force. These moved on from the local man poaching for the pot to feed his family to organised gangs coming out from Luton and also continual offenders.

The day was summed up by Martin Lawrence, MBE, Vice-President of the BLHA, who thanked the Sharnbrook Group on behalf of the delegates for a stimulating and interesting day and an excellent lunch.

**Pictures from the Conference**

Clive Makin (Sec), Mollie Foster (Chair), Mike Brown (Treasurer), Colin West at the AGM

June Barnes welcoming the delegates

Dorothy Jamieson speaking on Bedfordshire in 1670: evidence from the hearth tax returns

George Howe (Potton) tries surveying

Prof Carenza Lewis giving the Keynote talk
Notes and news

BLHA sponsored workshops at the Record Office. The Association is sponsoring Workshops to be held by Bedfordshire Archives and they are free to BLHA members. Anyone who is a member of an affiliated society is also a member of BLHA. Because BLHA membership is only £10 per year for Societies and £5 for individuals, here is another great reason to join BLHA. Non-BLHA members will have to pay £5 per person per session. The sessions will run from 10am to 12 noon at the Record Office. (If a session is oversubscribed there will be a repeat session in the afternoon, 1 to 3pm.)

Bedfordshire Archives stated: ‘We are very pleased to be able to offer these practical workshops in association with the Bedfordshire Local History Association—the umbrella organisation for local history in the county. The workshops are aimed at local history groups, parish councillors, churchwardens, societies and organisations who may have or be considering collecting historical material and making it available to others.’

Anyone can attend the sessions but priority will be given to members of BLHA. You may book for all or just one of the workshops but it is recommended that societies try to have at least one member attend each of the workshops to get the overall picture of current legislation and ideas, whether your society wishes to pursue collecting actively or just has some stuff it does not know what to do with!

The sessions

13 Oct – Keep or bin? Collecting, appraising and cataloguing basics.
27 Oct – It doesn’t matter that it’s old! – copyright and other intellectual property rights you shouldn’t ignore.
10 Nov – Put yourself in their shoes – data protection issues.
24 Nov – So you want to digitise – things to think about.
8 Dec – Recording communities.

Poachers, Thugs and Thieves. This is the second book on Policing produced by the Sharnbrook Local History Group and written by Des Hoar. The study was inspired by the completion of the Bedfordshire Archive project called ‘Paths to Crime’ where 19th century Quarter Session records were comprehensively indexed.

This new book, price £10, examines cases from the lower court (the Petty Sessions Court) for each census year from 1841 to 1911 and looks at the prevailing political and social issues of the day. The research looks at both court records and police records and compares them with the Bedford Gaol database.
and local newspaper reports. The census data gives an opportunity to examine the family life of the defendants.

The goal was to determine what types of crime were prevalent: did we have repeat offenders?; who were the plaintiffs?; what range of outcomes was possible?; and did the sentence fit the crime?

The analysis done shows the patterns of crime across the study period. Particular attention is given to the Game Laws and to the sentencing of poachers. Also highlighted is the harsher sentencing given to those convicted of the theft of items/tools by which a person earns their wage. The theft of boots or shoes is surprisingly common.

The book can be ordered via the group’s website at www.slhg.org.uk or tel: 01234 782717

Society for Clay Pipe Research Conference, 24–25 September 2016, Wrest Park, Silsoe, The 32nd annual SCPR conference will be held in the Education Room at Wrest Park, Silsoe. The Saturday lectures will focus on the South Midlands clay tobacco pipe industries and will be complemented by displays, including collections held by English Heritage from Tilbury Fort and Westminster. In the evening there will be a three-course Conference Dinner (optional) at a local Italian restaurant (£25 per person). A guided tour of Bedford will follow on Sunday morning (£3 per person). There will be a small charge to cover the cost of the meeting (£17.50 per person, including tea and coffee and a buffet lunch). Non-members of the Society will be very welcome to attend on either day but are asked to contact the conference organiser in advance to book a place. Further information is available on the Society website (http://scpbr.co) or from Chris Jarrett (cjarrett@pre-construct.com). Chris can also be contacted should you be interested in giving a 20-minute talk or bringing tobacco pipes or other pipe clay objects for display at the conference.
Scenes of Bedford
A dip into the historic postcard/photograph collection at Bedford Central Library

In 2015 I completed the task of writing captions for a large collection – over 1,200 – of postcard photographs [1] of a wide range of subjects and illustrating a range of locations from across the historic county of Bedfordshire, including Luton. They have now been placed in six large albums in the Bedfordshire Heritage Library room, using specially-designed transparent leaves enabling researchers to see both the front and reverse of each postcard without having to handle the actual postcards. They are in alphabetical order of subject – in most cases a place name (town, village or location), but also covering a few special topics ranging from airships to Whipsnade Zoo.

The heyday of postcards as a way of corresponding with friends and family was 1902–1914. [2] In those days telephones were only affordable by businesses and the few affluent individuals. Given a frequent and reliable postal service in Britain with up to five collections and deliveries in some urban centres on weekdays in the early 1900s for only a halfpenny postage stamp, postcards were the cheapest and most effective means of ‘speaking’ to loved ones. It was quite possible to post a card in the morning in a city or large town, saying that you would be calling round for afternoon tea to someone in the same town, and that it would have been delivered by early afternoon on the same day and the recipient would be expecting you. Inland mail to elsewhere in the country would arrive the next day.

As a result of their cheapness and widespread use, there were small and large private firms, some national and many local, regularly producing ‘views’ of local interest and photographs of other subject-matter, which on the back allowed for writing the address to which they were to be posted, with an allocated space for a postage stamp, and room for a brief message. Today, they provide historians, and others, with images of places or events at particular times, some of them unique records of subjects not recorded elsewhere in visual form.

In this article I have chosen to look at just a few representative postcard images of Bedford only (from several hundred) and to discuss the type of information which they offer us. They cover a range of images from around 1900 onwards – from a century of images – but mainly from the early and mid-1900s when they were most prolifically used and have come down to us, some used but most un-posted, via collectors and donors.

Not surprisingly photographers were most often drawn to the picturesque view, which in the case of Bedford was of the River Great Ouse and its many features – The Embankment, the Suspension Bridge, the Town Bridge, rowing,
punting and cruising boats, the weir or boat slide. They also feature the significant buildings along its length in the town centre – the Swan Hotel, the Town and County Club, the boathouses, the Picturedrome Cinema, The Embankment Hotel and so on. The small steam boats on which generations of Bedford families cruised the river are recorded, all beginning with the letter ‘L’: Lore, Lodore, Lorna Doone and Lady Lena.

Other subjects covered most include the Harpur Trust schools, Bunyan Meeting Chapel, the John Bunyan statue and the other town centre statues, St Paul’s Church and other churches, the various parks and gardens and the High Street/Harpur Street Arcade. Perhaps most important for the local historian are the photographs of buildings or features which are no longer present in the town. In addition to some already mentioned are the Bridge Hotel on St Mary’s Street, the Abbey Hotel and St Mary’s Abbey (a seventeenth/eighteenth century house) in Cardington Road, the Bank Building on the High Street and the George Inn (and, later, Merkett Motors) formerly adjacent to the Swan Hotel, a print of the Bedford Infirmary and Fever Hospital in Ampthill Road and one of the Chapel of Hearne (once in the SW corner of St Paul’s Square, where the 1960s town hall stood until it, too, was recently demolished), Castle Close gardens (now replaced with a mosaic in front of Castle Mound), Bedford Middle Class School (County School) in Ampthill Road, and prints of the Old Town Bridge. There is even a political postcard, produced by BAND (Bedford Against Nuclear Dumping) which successfully campaigned (1986–87) against the siting of a proposed NIREX nuclear waste facility at Elstow Storage Depot.

Although these postcards often show the same central subject, and may at first appear almost identical, what does change, particularly if you look closely, are the secondary figures and features in the photos. The types of clothes and costumes, as fashions change from decade to decade and generation to generation, are just one example. The same applies to modes of transport seen in the photos – cycles, handcarts, horse-drawn vehicles, early motor-cars and lorries, even airships! You might notice the lack of traffic on roads on some photographs and, at times, the phenomenon of people casually walking in the middle of a road – the proverbial ‘man in the street’. They show, across the range of postcards, the changing scene in Bedford as the century progresses.

By looking carefully at photos of near identical views from different periods, you can adduce the changes to that scene as buildings, features or businesses come and go. The longer you look and the more carefully you scrutinise a photograph, ideally with a magnifying glass to assist, the more you will notice and can learn from the evidence it offers to us as social or urban historians.

Here in Figure 1 we see a fascinating range of onlookers on the rustic footbridge, each wearing their ‘Sunday best’ outfit, watching the activity on the boat slide – now no longer a feature on the river, on Mill Meadows, facilitating
the movement of small boats between the Embankment section of the river and the natural course of the river beyond. [9]

Figure 1: Spectators above the Boat-Slide in Mill Meadows watch as rowers transfer their small boats from the lower to the upper level (or vice-versa) of the River Great Ouse. Undated. Unknown photographer and publisher. Postcard 431.

Figure 2: View from St Peter's/Broadway crossroad, Bedford, towards De Parys Avenue. Hand-tinted photo. Published by 'JV' [Valentine series, 47121]. Posted 8 November 1909. Postcard 101.
Figure 2, one of the many street scenes in the collection, which was taken at the top of the High Street, shows the St Peter’s Street/Broadway crossroad and De Parys Avenue, beyond, in the age of horse-drawn traffic. The taxi rank and cabmen’s hut, centre, show a rank of horse-drawn Hansom cabs lined up awaiting customers. A horse pulling a tradesman’s canvas-covered delivery vehicle trots towards us.

![UNVEILING SOLDIERS’ MEMORIAL, BEDFORD, JUNE 2nd, 1904.](image)

Figure 3: Bedford's memorial to those men of Bedfordshire who lost their lives in the South Africa War, unveiled on 2 June 1904, in front of the Swan Hotel, High Street. Blake & Edgar, photographers, Bedford. Postcard 145.

Postcards were also published featuring photographs of noteworthy contemporary events. In Figure 3 we see an enormous crowd in front of the Swan Hotel witnessing the unveiling of the ‘Soldier’s Memorial’ on 2 June 1904. This South Africa War memorial records the name of 237 soldiers who died in the conflict and also features a striking sculpture in bronze by Leon Chavalliaud of a British soldier in the new khaki camouflage uniform with a pith helmet on to shield him from the fierce African sun. The whole memorial was paid for by public subscription, following the devastating war of 1899 to 1902 against the Boers in South Africa. [10]

Natural disasters are not neglected by the contemporary postcard publisher. In Figure 4 we see the effect of a flood of the River Great Ouse on Bedford’s railway lines after a sudden heavy snowfall over 100 years ago. A train, photographed running on the Bedford–Hitchin line, passes through Bedford on 30 April 1908. Water has risen right up to the ‘running boards’ of the train. [11]
Figure 4: A flooded railway line in Bedford, on 30 April 1908, following heavy snowfalls and the subsequent thaw. Published by G H Stonebridge. Posted 13 May 1908. Postcard 1291.

Other postcards in the collection record events such as a column of Seaforth Highlanders troops marching down De Parys Avenue and past the John Bunyan statue, in late August/early September 1914, at the beginning of the First World War [12] and, from a similar date, scores of women workers thought to be at W H Allen’s Queens Engineering Works, demonstrating the revolution in the role of women in industry during war. [13]

Figure 5: Bedford Town Band [?] playing on the river, on a pontoon, to entertain hundreds of people enjoying the social side of Bedford Rowing Regatta in the early 1900s. Undated. Unknown photographer and publisher. Postcard 432.
The River Festival has, since 1978, been a major social event in Bedford, every two years. In Figure 5 we see the other older, regular annual river event, Bedford Regatta (founded in 1853 as an amateur rowing competition but always having a strong social element). We can see the local town band actually playing on the water, on a specially constructed pontoon, to the assembled crowds on both banks of the river, and those in leisure boats around them, one July day, early in the 1900s.

Bedford Park has been the pride and joy of residents since it was first opened in 1888. In Figure 6 we see the children’s play area, under the supervision of the uniformed Borough Park Keeper, clearly a man of authority. The location of the photo is that of today’s children’s play area, not far from the East entrance and East Gate Lodge. Note the perambulator or baby carriage in the foreground containing a toddler wearing a sun bonnet. The playing children are carefully posed for effect and to prevent any blur caused by a possibly long exposure of the plate camera.

Grand houses are frequently featured on postcards but in Figure 7 we see an apparently informal view of Landsdowne House, Bedford (still there at 3 Linden Road) and its rear garden – the sort of home owned by someone from the more affluent middle class. See the two ladies sitting together, as though they are judging the net calls during a game of tennis. This card is dated as having been sent on 12 February 1905, so that photo may have been taken in the summer of
1904, or an earlier year. It is thought to have been, at that time, a boarding house for young ladies studying at Bedford’s women’s physical training college.

*Figure 7:* Lansdowne House, 3 Linden Road, Bedford. Thought to be a boarding house for lady students at the Bedford Physical Education College. View from rear garden. Published by The Scientific Press. Posted from the house 13 March 1905. Postcard 985. The house is now occupied by Bedford Daycare Hospice.

*Figure 8:* Entrance hall of St John's Rectory, 34 St John's Street, Bedford, home of Rev Albert Cheney and his wife. Dated 1928. Unknown photographer and publisher. Postcard 961.
Most surprising is Figure 8 giving an interior shot, taken through the open front door of the rectory of St John's Church, 34 St John's Street, Bedford in 1928. We can only conjecture as to why it was taken and made into a postcard. Perhaps it had recently been refurbished and the proud owners or tenants wanted to show off their furnishings. There appears to have been a glazed conservatory beyond the hall with, presumably, the main reception rooms to either side on the ground floor and a curved staircase to the first floor landing, just visible. Another postcard photo, not shown here, is of the Reverend Albert Cheney and his wife, sitting in the Rectory garden.

The presence of the enormous airship sheds at Cardington, just outside town, by the end of the First World War, and the trial flights of the various airships which were made or housed there in the 1920s – Britain’s Royal Navy R38, and the R100 and R101 of the civilian Imperial Airship Programme [15] – led to a number of photographs being taken with airships in the sky, as background features to the townscape. Here in Figure 9, showing the R31 airship cruising above the river in Bedford, the new technology of the skies is in contrast with the small steam pleasure launch, Lodore, which is returning the public from a joy-ride on the Ouse.

Figure 9: Airship R31 cruises above Bedford, as pleasure steam cruiser Lodore returns its river passengers to its landing stage on The Embankment near the town bridge. Town and County Club building in on the left. Posted 14 January 1919. Unknown photographer and publisher. Postcard 1312.

Figure 10 is one of the rare postcards which features the behind-the-scenes workers – the engineers and riggers – of the airship R101, relaxing on the Promenade deck, clearly before the airship took on passengers. The photograph
takes on a real poignancy when one reflects that almost all of the crew of this airship were to die within perhaps weeks or even days later, when the R101 crashed and burst into flames in a field in France on 5 October 1930.

Figure 10: Some of the engineers or riggers of airship R101, relaxing on the airship’s Promenade deck while moored at its Cardington mast, before taking on passengers and crew for its final tragic flight of 4 October 1930. Undated. Unknown photographer. Postcard 1458.

On a lighter note, to end, we see in Figure 11 Mr J Sayer, smartly dressed and with his bowler hat on, on top of the tower of St Paul’s Church in the centre of town, proudly displaying the metal ‘cockerel’ weather vane he is about to attach to the spire. Perhaps we should look up and remember him the next time we pass the church, 100 or so years later.

Figure 11: Mr J Sayer, on top of the tower of St Paul’s Church, Bedford, proudly displays the weather vane which he is about to re-fix on 2 April 1914. Photo by 'AC'. Unknown publisher. Postcard 1419.
The albums of Historic Postcard Photographs can be consulted in the Bedfordshire Heritage Library each Tuesday at Bedford Central Library, Harpur Street (Floor 2), either to browse through or to look for photos of specific locations and subjects. If seeking a particular subject, ask to see the detailed Card Index which will confirm the postcard reference number/s and location in a particular album (which will save a lot of time!).

There are several other large collections of postcard photographs which are available for public access in Bedford. Most notable of these are those in Bedfordshire Archives at Borough Hall: the Alex Swain collection – Z1106; the Sandy Crystal collection – Z1306. Bedford Central Library also has reference copies of the range of booklets (now out of print) by Sandy Crystal, showing some of his extensive collection of postcard photographs on a range of topics, in the Yesterday's Bedfordshire series.

Thanks are due to Bob Ricketts, Richard Wildman, Richard Galley and Rosamund Wong, and Den Burchmore and Dr Giles Camplin of the Airship Heritage Trust, for their assistance.

Notes
1. In Britain the Post Office gave permission for private publication of picture postcards for use through the mail with an adhesive postage stamp from 1894. Standard-size postcards (5.5 inches and 3.5 inches) were introduced in 1899. In 1902 the ‘Divided Back’ postcard was introduced, which enabled people to write messages on one half (the left) of the back and an address on the right. On the front would be the picture, usually a photograph but sometimes a reproduction of a painting or print.

2. For a brief history of postcards in Britain, see the Postcard Traders Association website: http://postcard.co.uk/postcard_history.php

3. In the Edwardian period hundreds of thousands of different postcards were produced each year and a million cards went through the postal system every week.

4. The Victorian boat-slide, (not far from the present ‘Butterfly Bridge’ and Harpur Trust schools boathouses) was provided (30 July 1896), to enable punts and rowing boats to transfer from the upper to the lower River Great Ouse and back. In June 2012 a small turbine was commissioned to replace this, to produce hydro-electricity by means of two Archimedean screws.

5. The Swan Hotel replaced the Swan Inn on the High Street, Bedford, in 1794, designed by Henry Holland for the Duke of Bedford.

6. The Town and County Club on the Embankment, 1885–1954 (architect, Henry Cheers), later became the County Library, 1954–1969, but was demolished in 1971. It was roughly on the site of the entrance to the Swan Hotel’s present car park.

7. Chetham Sons and Biffen were boat builders in Bedford from the late 1800s to the early 1900s, operating on both sides of the Town Bridge by the river in Duck Mill Lane and Batt's Ford.

8. The Picturedrome was Bedford’s first purpose-built cinema, opened in 1910 and closed in 1964. For more information, see: http://virtuallibrary.culturalservices.net/webingres/bedfordshire/vlib/0-digitised_resources/cinema_history_picturedrome.htm

8. The Embankment Hotel was built in 1891 by Higgins’ Brewery. It was the only public-house allowed along the Embankment. The Embankment Gardens and a wide Promenade were laid out later.

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9. See Note 3, above.


11. Note the Third Class carriages, denoted by ‘3’ on the doors: a reminder of the rigid class system in place then which also manifest itself in separate seating for the upper, middle and working classes in many public situations, for example, the theatre, where the poorest were only allowed to access ‘the Gods’ (the highest, cheapest seats, furthest away from the stage) by side entrances and steep winding stairs to their places, while the better off entered through the grand entrance foyer to the Stalls or Grand Circle.


14. For more information see:
http://virtuallibrary.culturalservices.net/webingres/bedfordshire/vlib//0.digitised_resources/bedford_parks_bedfordpark_history.htm

15. For more on the airship sheds/hangars at Cardington, see the web pages of the Airship Heritage Trust: http://www.airshipsonline.com/sheds/Cardington.htm

Dr. Giles Camplin of the Airship Heritage Trust, editor of their journal Dirigible, has clarified for me the correct terminology, long a source of dispute, for the buildings which contained the airships at Cardington. Both ‘sheds’ and ‘hangars’ are correct. When they belonged to the Royal Airship Works (RAW) they had airships in Sheds. When the Royal Air Force (RAF) took over in 1936 they became Hangars. Thousands of service men were demobbed at RAF Cardington after the Second World War, so insisting that they are still called ‘sheds’ today is futile, except when talking about that early period pre-1936.

For more on Cardington Aerodrome or Camp:
http://www.shortstownheritage.co.uk/#/the-camp-1916-1938/4544904800

STUART ANTROBUS
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Editor’s Note: This article was first published by Bedford Architectural, Archaeological and Local History Society in the October 2015 edition of Bedford Local History Magazine and we are grateful to the Editor and Stuart for permission to reproduce it here. More can be found on the Bedford to Hitchin Railway and on the R101 disaster on the BLHA website (www.bedfordshire-lha.org.uk) in issue 5.11 of HIB for the railway and issue 7.3 for the R101.