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The Legacy of the 1951 Festival of Britain in Bedfordshire*

Summer 2021 was the seventieth anniversary of the Festival of Britain, a nationwide celebration of British achievement held in 1951 to cheer up the nation during the dark days of austerity following the Second World War. Ask anyone aged in their late-70s or more and they may have memories of the Festival. If they were lucky, parents or schools took them to see the ground-breaking exhibition (half a million schoolchildren visited) situated on the South Bank of the River Thames in London, near to where the London Eye 'big wheel' is today. Most people remember the iconic Skylon and Dome of Discovery structures. (Bedford-born Philip Powell, son of Bedford Modern School headmaster Arnold Powell, was the co-designer of the Skylon.) Some may remember the associated Battersea Park funfair, which stayed for many years after the Festival year. The Royal Festival Hall, alone, remains in London to remind us of the celebrations.

Many arts, sports and community events took place locally all around Britain in the summer of 1951 (Luton Town Football Club played at home to Ayr United from Scotland on 12 May and won 4–2, and Bedford Town Football Club beat Ayr 1–0 on 14 May), all aimed at putting a smile on people's faces and raising morale with promises of a brighter future ahead. All around the country, in cities, towns and villages, communities devised their own 'festivals' and held events where they could celebrate having survived the war and could look to the future.

What remains in Bedfordshire to remind us of the Festival? In Bedford, the only lasting reminder of the borough's contribution is the attractively-presented history publication *A Picture Book of Bedford* (1951) which you can view at Bedford Central Library or Bedfordshire Archives, or, if you are lucky, you may have a copy at home. Elsewhere, in Bedfordshire's towns there are just a few remaining indications of the nationwide celebration. In Leighton Buzzard a choir was set up for the Festival which continues to this day – the Festival Singers.[1] You may know of remaining indications of the event in other Bedfordshire towns. At 39 Upper Shelton Road, Marston Moretaine – the public-house, 'The Exhibition', used to have the Festival symbol as its pub sign, but no longer.

Bedfordshire, as its contribution to the nationwide events through the County Council, which took up the Government's challenge to respond with on-going projects, chose mainly to look to the past and its

preservation for the future. Stevington Windmill, by a then rare redundant post-mill, reminding us of a previous industrial technology, was purchased by Bedfordshire County Council and restored, in order to preserve it for future generations to see.[2] Similarly, following a generous donation by Simon Whitbread to the County Council, Elstow's medieval Moot Hall was restored, to be preserved for years to come, and horse chestnut trees planted around its village green.[3]

The County Council also planned to plant exactly 1,951 trees along major trunk roads – A1, A6, A507, A600, A6001 – and some other 'B' roads – around the county to enhance the journey of travellers, but they actually planted more.[4] There are still two existing examples of the large metal 1951 tree-planting signs outside Riseley[5] and in Henlow,[6] out of 13 originally planned signs.

Local children planting trees in Henlow to commemorate the Festival of Britain in 1951. Photo by Bedfordshire Times. *Courtesy of Ampthill Images.*

Festival of Britain tree planting sign, Henlow. Photo supplied by Stephen Coleman from Central Bedfordshire Historic Environment Record.

The initiative which has provided the greatest impact of the Festival of Britain in our county was that of the erection of, initially, 138 attractively uniform road-side signs announcing the names of villages and hamlets,[7]

paid for by Bedfordshire County Council. These places were previously, often, mere anonymous settlements from the point of view of travellers between towns before the erection of these signs. Now, from 1951, these locations were suddenly heralded. In fact, there were more than 150 in total, since certain parishes wished to have extra signs and were willing to pay for them. None were provided for the boroughs of Bedford, Dunstable and Luton.

Elstow village sign. Scores of 1951 distinctive village signs like this can be found all over Bedfordshire.

The iconic logo design for the 1951 Festival of Britain, designed by Abram Games, was used on the Bedfordshire village signs to illustrate the occasion when they were erected. This is a restored example from the year 2000.

The original signs were wooden, erected between two concrete posts, with small circular die-cast plaques at either side of the painted place name. The plaque on the right hand side was the 'new' County Council coat of arms (previous to 1951 the County Council had only an insignia[8]) and on the left-hand side was the Festival of Britain logo, in colour – red, white and blue.[9] They make Bedfordshire unique in this respect: no other counties have such Festival of Britain mementoes.

Fortunately, most but not all of these signs have survived – some have deteriorated, some were restored or replaced by their parish councils for the Millennium celebrations, in 2000. Further signs have also been restored since 2000. During the Covid-19 pandemic 'lockdown' in March 2020, one Bedfordshire man, Marian Biskupski, cycled well over 1,000 miles as a personal project to photograph what are left of these unique signs in the county's villages and to see what condition they are in.[10]

These distinctive signs remain as both useful markers and also reminders of an event in the post-war life of this county which cheered

people up and brought some colour to an otherwise drab and dreary period, the 1950s.

Notes

*An earlier shorter version of this article was first published in *Bedfordshire Family History Journal*, December 2011, pp 10–12. Acknowledgement: the author is most grateful to Stephen Coleman for generously contributing his own research findings regarding Festival of Britain initiatives in Bedfordshire and proofreading this article.

1. For more about Leighton Buzzard Festival Singers, see online: https://www.lbfs.org.uk/about-us.html

2. See *Bedfordshire Times*, 5 October 1951, p 7, regarding the 3 October re-opening after restoration. See also articles in *Bedfordshire Magazine*: Autumn 1950, p 201; Spring 1951, p 297; Summer 1951, p 5; Winter 1951/52, p 129; Summer 1952, p 200. For more on the windmill, see the reference copy in Bedford Central Library of Stuart Antrobus, *Stevington Windmill: Chronology from 1900 & Historical Sources*.

3. For more on Moot Hall, Elstow: https://moothall.weebly.com/

4. Research by Stephen Coleman in Bedfordshire County Council minutes.

5. A 1951 Festival of Britain metal tree-planting marker can be found on the left-hand roadside verge, on the way from Riseley to Swineshead, just before Mill Farm Nurseries. Some of the original 'Pink May' hawthorn trees are still there to see.

6. Photo of local children planting trees in Henlow to commemorate the Festival of Britain, 1951:
https://ampthillimages.com/Media/Henlow-Gall/pages/1951%20Tree%20Planting%2001.html

7. For photos of 'Festival of Britain village signs in Bedfordshire': enter that heading in Google Images 'Search' online.

8. The Bedfordshire County Council coat of arms (now, in itself, a relic of the past, since the County Council was disbanded on 1 April 2009) still survives as the original shield (banner of arms) and now forms the basis of the Bedfordshire county flag. This design was adopted as the flag of the historic county in September 2014, with the support of the High Sheriff.

9. Naomi Games, *A Symbol for the Festival: Abram Games and the Festival of Britain* (2011).

10. Bedford Independent online:
https://www.bedfordindependent.co.uk/lockdown-cyclist-covers-1000miles-to-catalogue-countys-remaining-festival-of-britain-signs by Erica Roffe. 22 November 2020. [Accessed 28 August 2021.]

Stuart Antrobus

My Memories of the Festival of Britain

I was 12 at the time and an uncle and aunt took me and my brother to the main site and the Festival's centre in London on the South Bank of the Thames. There were also events in Poplar (Architecture), Battersea (the Festival Pleasure Gardens), and other areas of London. Festival celebrations took place in other parts of the country as Stuart has stated above and there were also touring exhibitions.

The Dome of Discovery

I was captivated by the Dome of Discovery: a main memory being the latest BR standard class steam engine, in green, and displayed leaning backwards at an angle so that its wheels and motion were easily visible. Of course, at that time steam traction was being phased out in other parts of the world but we had to continue as we had coal, but oil had to be imported. But just 17 years later steam had almost gone from Britain's railways.

A general view of the site

Other memories were: the Skylon which was an unusual cigar-shaped aluminium-clad steel tower supported by cables: the 'Vertical Feature' that became a symbol of the Festival. The base was nearly 15 metres (50ft) from the ground, with the top nearly 90 metres (300ft) high, pointing skywards.

I also remember the shot tower, which was original to the site, and had been used for making lead shot, by rolling it down from the top of the tower.

Later our whole family, us, uncles and aunts and cousins, visited the Battersea Pleasure Gardens to delight in the Guinness clock and Rowland Emett's crazy miniature railway which ran for 500 yards along the south of the gardens.

It is good that there is a permanent reminder of the Festival, as many villages in Bedfordshire have 'Festival of Britain' village signs (complete with the festival logo), first erected in 1951 and renewed regularly since.

With thanks to Margaret Brooks for the first two photographs above which were taken by her family at the South Bank site.

Ted Martin

The Saxon Coin Hoard Find in Langford

Imagine finding buried treasure! Not on a desert, pirate, island but in Langford! Metal detecting is a hobby which can turn up some interesting finds. This requires the landowner's permission and any significant or potentially valuable finds must be declared and reported. Under the stipulations of the Treasure Act 1996 the Langford hoard qualified as Treasure.

In 2016 a slightly dispersed, but closely grouped, hoard of 20 early medieval silver coins dating c AD 880–923 were found to the west of the River Ivel in the parish of Langford. Subsequently these coins were examined by the British Museum. Examination, storage and conservation has taken until 2021. Were they dropped and lost or were they buried for safe keeping but never retrieved?

All of the coins are variants of the type introduced by Alfred of Wessex (871–899) about 879–880. Coins were issued in the name of Alfred himself, and, following a tradition dating back to the 8th century, Plegmund, Archbishop of Canterbury (890–923) who was originally from Mercia and first chosen by Alfred to translate Latin texts before his selection as Archbishop. Of the coins in Alfred's name, some also carry the inscription DORO, short for *Dorovernia* (Canterbury). Of the 19 coins with legible inscriptions, there are five literate coins in the name of Archbishop Plegmund, and nine in the name of Alfred with a Canterbury mint signature. 75% of the coins in the hoard were minted in Canterbury. This strongly suggests that the hoard probably came from Kent, perhaps the property of a merchant.

The location of the hoard is interesting, given its date and character. A surviving treaty between Alfred and Guthrum, the Viking ruler of East Anglia, set the boundary between their respective territories. The treaty was probably agreed between c 879 and the death of Guthrum in 890. The coins of Plegmund provide an earliest possible date of 890 for the hoard, which thus probably postdates the death of Guthrum, However, there is no evidence to suggest that the political situation changed radically following the death of Guthrum, with East Anglia retaining its independence, apparently still under rulers of Viking origins. The treaty

may thus still have been current at the time that the hoard was lost or deposited. The treaty specifies that the boundary runs up on the Thames, and then up on the Lea unto its source near Leagrave, then straight to Bedford, then up the Ouse to Watling Street. This would place the location of the hoard in Viking territory rather than Alfred's (although quite close to the border). The hoard is predominantly Anglo-Saxon rather than Viking. The treaty makes explicit reference to trade across the border between the two kingdoms, and this may explain the presence of a hoard of Anglo-Saxon character on the Viking side of the border at this time.

The coins contain at least 10% precious metal. None of the coins in the hoard have the visible 'peck' marks characteristic of coins which have passed through Viking hands, indicating that they have been tested with knives to establish that they were good silver. However, the coins have not yet been fully conserved, and it is possible that peck marks may be currently be hidden beneath surface corrosion on some of the coins. Three examples from the 20 coins recovered are shown below.

Guthrum was King of East Anglia in the late 9th century. Originally a native of what is now Denmark, he was one of the leaders of the Great Summer Army that arrived in Reading during April 871 to join forces with the Great Heathen Army, whose intentions were to conquer the kingdoms of Anglo-Saxon England. The combined armies were successful in conquering the kingdoms of East Anglia, Mercia and Northumbria, and overran Alfred the Great's Wessex, but were ultimately defeated by Alfred at the Battle of Edington in 878. The Danes retreated to their stronghold, where Alfred laid siege and eventually Guthrum surrendered.

Under the terms of his surrender, Guthrum was obliged to be baptised as a Christian and then leave Wessex. The subsequent Treaty of Alfred and Guthrum set out the boundaries between Alfred and Guthrum's territories, as well as agreements on peaceful trade. This treaty is seen as the foundation of the Danelaw. Guthrum ruled East Anglia under his baptismal name of Athelstan until his death.

Athelstan was also the name of the son of King Edward the Elder and his first wife, Ecgwynn. Modern historians regard him as the first King of England (reigned 924–939) and one of the 'greatest Anglo-Saxon kings'. He never married and had no children. He was succeeded by his half-brother, Edmund I (939–946).

For further information on these items visit the Portable Antiquities Scheme on the internet. The record for the hoard is now publicly available at: https://finds.org.uk/database/artefacts/record/id/803144

Left: A penny of Plegmund, Archbishop of Canterbury, AD 890–923.
Right: The obverse side of a silver penny of Alfred (AD 871–899).

A silver penny of Alfred (AD 871–899).

Information supplied by Central Bedfordshire Council Portable Antiquities Scheme and Wikipedia. Images courtesy of The Higgins Art Gallery and Museum, Bedford.

John Shipman

Life as a Land Girl, Pt 2

Although born in Leeds, Stella Limon was brought up from the age of four in Luton. After leaving school in July 1940, she worked as a clerk for the Prudential Assurance Company locally. Here, in her own words, she recalls her Land Army experiences.[1]

Unpleasant job causes a bit of a stink

I remember very vividly being sent to a farm with another girl. Neither the farmer nor his wife was what you would call pleasant. Our first job was to clean out some cow sheds. Heaven knows when they had last been touched, but calves had been removed as the manure almost reached the height of the top swing door of the shed a good two and a half feet thick and the calves were in danger of falling out. What a job. We both caught ringworm working in those sheds.

The next job we were given was to clean out the pig sty and the yard in front of the sty. It was more than two feet in muck packed down hard and it was obviously many months since it had been touched. The job would have been daunting in any case, but weeks before the farmer's wife had lost her potato peeler and had decided it must have been accidentally thrown into the pig yard with the peelings. We therefore had to carefully sift through every shovelful until we found the blessed thing. We did find it eventually and we never got a word of thanks (not that I would have fancied using it again). The farmer had booked us for so many days and we finished with half a day to spare so he set us digging up a patch of horse radish that was very overgrown. That made a perfect end to a truly dreadful time. The ground was iron hard and the horse radish roots went down over a foot. One farm we hoped never to visit again.

Poultry

Another farm was half way down Bidwell Hill between Houghton Regis and Toddington. Like most farms it had suffered from a lack of workers and the first job we were given was to collect the eggs from the hen house. It had been weeks since they'd been collected and neither of us had ever had anything to do with poultry. Evidently there's a real knack of lifting hens to retrieve eggs underneath. Well, what with our inexperience and the fact that the hens had not been disturbed for weeks, I don't know who was most stressed at the end of it. The hens were also alive with red mites. Then we had the job of putting the eggs in a bucket of water to see which ones were still edible. I need say no more than some of the stalest eggs had very fragile shells.

This farm also specialised in breeding Aylesbury ducks. There was a large shed that housed a big hopper and a big vat with a machine to mix up the food. We didn't have anything to do with this mixing but we were told that the Farmer had committed suicide in the shed a few years back and on the very anniversary of the events the machinery would start up of its own accord. To this day I don't know if someone was playing tricks on us but, early on the said morning, we were alone in the yard and, sure enough, the machinery started again. Whether they'd rigged it I don't know as everyone else was out in the fields.

Working with a horse

Most of the work was done using horses and we learnt how to harness this huge cart horse and put it in the cart. He was a really patient animal and managed not to tread on our toes as we struggled to back him into the shafts. It was a nice job carting muck to the fields down the road and putting it in piles to be spread later. It was autumn and glorious weather. However, one day we were busy when the farmer's son came over and said he had a job for me. It was to take the horse to the smithy in Toddington to be shod.

Before I'd realised quite what was happening they had put a sack on the horses back and a rope round his neck and slung me up on to his back. Setting off I had to go down the hill and I kept slipping up on to the

horse's head and as I couldn't grip with my legs as they were out almost at right angles I just had to cling on to his mane. Then going up on the other side I kept slipping down to his tail. Eventually we reached the blacksmith's and there I had to sit while people outside there really had a good laugh at my expense – there was no way I could get down from that animal's back.

Going back it was the same thing in reverse. I think the horse realised that if he spun out the journey he would have no further work to do that day. I was so late getting back that the farmer and one of his workers had come out to look for me. They thought it highly amusing. Any rate I, like the horse, had managed to pass a pleasant afternoon doing no work at all.

Dancing in our spare time

As for leisure time in the 1940s, I have fond memories of ballroom dancing. Before I joined the Land Army I regularly went dancing at the George Hotel, Luton (long gone to make way for the Arndale shopping centre), where they held a dance most Saturdays and I can remember New Year's Eve dances there.

We also went to dances in the Assembly Rooms in Luton. Every winter the indoor pool in Waller Street would be covered and that made one of the best floors to dance on that I ever experienced. At the time it was strictly Victor Sylvester-type (strict tempo) dancing. I don't know whether rock and roll and jive had started in America but it certainly hadn't reached our neck of the woods. I suppose it really changed when the American Forces came over.

Every so often there were dances in the hostel when members of the Air Force stationed near Leighton Buzzard would be invited. They used to be great fun and a welcome break from routine. One drawback would be food. In order to provide refreshments at the dance, the ingredients would be taken from our ordinary rations for about a month beforehand. This, of course, meant even plainer food and no treats. Still, come the night of the dance, and the fight to bag a bath and a place by the wash

basin, plus the chance to wear civvies (non-uniform clothes) we all agreed it was all well worth it. It was quite a novelty to dance to gramophone music as other dance venues always had a live band.

Talking about live bands, a friend and I went to London for the weekend on several occasions. We would leave after work on a Saturday and book into the YWCA hostel which was situated somewhere at the back of Selfridges department store. There we would be allocated a bed in a dormitory, the beds just being curtained off from one another. After changing into glad rags (our best dresses) we would make our way by tube to the Hammersmith Palais where we would dance to the likes of Joe Loss and all the other famous dance bands of that era. After the dance it was a case of finding our way in the blackout to the tube and back to the hostel, sometimes with a male escort, sometimes not. I remember on one occasion we got on a train on the wrong platform and ended up having to go round nearly the whole of the Inner Circle to reach Marble Arch. We had to race at top speed to the hostel and just got there as they were locking the doors.

Second-class service

In the centre of Leighton Buzzard there was a canteen for the armed forces but for the first few weeks we were not allowed in there as we were classed as civilians. When the soldiers and airmen found out there was a huge row and they threatened to boycott the place so the rules were changed. After that we would walk up there once or twice a week for a cup of tea and a bun and a sing- song round the piano. It was at this time I first started to write to my husband-to-be. Vera, his sister, would be writing him a letter and if we were running late I'd write part of the letter while she got ready to go out and eventually I started to write to him myself.

Visiting concert parties entertain

During my time in the hostel we had a couple of visits from an ENSA (Entertainments National Services Association comprised of both professional and amateur performers) group – nobody famous, needless to say. I think there were either three or four in the group and to us they seemed very ancient and certainly they weren't very talented. There was a singer, a comedian and a tap dancer. I suppose we were an ungrateful lot as they did give up their time to come and entertain us but, I've a feeling if it hadn't been compulsory to stay in and listen, numbers would have been very low. We did have a lady who came and played the piano playing songs from musicals of the Twenties. As she had sheet music with her we were able to have some good sing-songs and I did learn all the lyrics.

There are so many random memories that must have got all jumbled up in my mind but here are two of the ones that stand out.

Market garden

A really nice job we were sent to was just along the road from the hostel. It was a herb farm which supplied herbs to a firm in St Albans. The weather while we were there was perfect and we had the job of weeding and hoeing. It wasn't hard work, it was quiet and the gorgeous smells of all the plants made us feel as if we were on holiday. The only drawback was the countless bees that swarmed round the plants but they didn't bother us if we didn't bother them.

It was a lovely assignment that herb farm but, unfortunately, once we'd cleared up the back-log of weeding the old boys working there could manage on their own again.

Signs of D-Day
Another farm that stood out was one just outside Hockliffe, on the road to Woburn. I'm not sure what we were actually doing, but what stands out is working in the field when suddenly the whole sky was full of planes passing overhead in their hundreds. I suppose they must have come from all the airfields in the area. That lunch time we sat on a bench outside the farm kitchen window (I don't think in all my time in the Land Army that a farmer's wife ever invited us into the house). The radio was on and we listened to the news that D-Day (the Allied forces landing in Northern France) had started.

VIP visit to hostel
Lady Churchill (wife of the wartime Prime Minister) made an official visit to the hostel at Leighton Buzzard one day. Why she picked the middle of the day, I don't know but we had to dash back to the hostel in our half-hour lunch break so that an official picture could be taken.

Land girl drivers
On one occasion Vera and I were picked with four other girls to go on a drivers course in Bedford. Unfortunately, on the Saturday before, someone went down with chickenpox. I had to have a letter from my doctor stating that I had had the illness previously. I couldn't obtain it until the Monday so missed the first day of the course so was disqualified. I've often bitterly regretted that. Learning to drive round the streets of Bedford, where road traffic was very scarce due to the lack of petrol would have been easier. I did go on a tractor driving course, learning to

drive those Ford tractors. They were brutes to start and you needed the strength of a navvy to swing the starting handle. Luckily I was never called upon to use this skill. We practised right at the top of Dunstable Downs. I caused great consternation as I disappeared over the edge and out of sight. The instructor thought I'd plummeted straight down the other side. But I was progressing along the side of the hill but over the horizon.

Unfair treatment & discontent

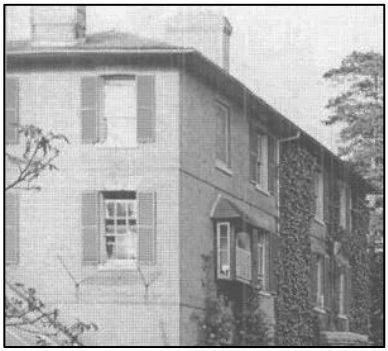
It was shortly after this that I ended up in disgrace. Along with about 10 other girls I caught dysentery – at least that's what they called it, more like gastro-enteritis. We'd been laid up for the best part of the week and I was the last to recover. On the Saturday morning the others had returned to work but I was yet to get the doctor's clearance that day. When I got back from the doctors I was told that as I hadn't been to work on that day I couldn't go home. This struck me as very unfair so I disobeyed the warden and went anyway.

On the Monday I was informed that I was insubordinate and was being transferred to the hostel at Cople. I was really furious about the transfer and immediately sent off for a form to apply for a place in the Emergency Teachers Training Scheme. When I left school I wanted to study as a nursery school teacher but, in those days, while it was a two-year course for an ordinary teacher, a nursery course was three years: so much for some people's idea that when you gained more experience you could get to teach older children. Dad would have to guarantee that he'd pay my fees for the full three years, no grants. He said that with two other children and the start of the war he wouldn't give that commitment.

I had no intention of leaving the Land Army before the transfer. When I joined I had intended to transfer to the Wrens when I was old enough but it was winter and I didn't want people to say that I couldn't take the hardship, then, in the summer, I was having too much fun, what with all

the Air Force personnel helping us with the harvest and so on I never did transfer to the Wrens.

Cople WLA hostel



In Cople we were housed in the manor house, a lovely old building. I remember the beautiful staircase which we weren't allowed to use. We were housed in bunks in bedrooms. I was in a top bunk and can remember being nearly flung out of bed when a V2 rocket landed in a field nearby. It didn't do any damage I don't know whether the Germans were aiming for Cardington or whether it was just a random thing. I really hated those rockets. You'd hear the engine at first and then it would cut out and all you could do was count and sigh with relief if you heard the explosion and you knew you were safe until the next one.

As we were close to Bedford, Vera and I would cycle there in the evening and I can remember coming over a bridge in the blackout, hitting a stone and flying over the handlebars. I badly cut my leg and, for the only time, when I reached the hostel I was allowed to use the main staircase, not quite sure why. The injury must have been worse than I thought (I didn't examine it) but I went to work as usual next morning when I was supposed to have stayed in and rested it.

At Cople we worked for Mark Young who seemed to own most of the land surrounding the village. A lot of time we were pulling sugar beet. Hard work, pulling one in each hand, banging them together to remove the dirt, then slicing the tops off with a machete-type knife. As I said, hard work and a miserable job when the leaves were wet as you'd be soaked after a few minutes.

Another job was pulling rhubarb. Mark Young must have had acres of the stuff. Not a bad job if it wasn't for the toads. There seemed to be dozens of them and they'd be half buried near the plants and covered in dust so that you didn't detect them until you touched them. Ugh! We'd be working away and then there'd be a scream and we knew someone had encountered a toad.

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Stella left the Womens Land Army in 1945 after three years' wartime service, and trained as a teacher in Coventry before taking up her first post at Dallow Road Nursery School in Luton. She married Vera Goldsmith's brother, Ron, in 1947 and in 1986 moved to Australia,. She had three sons, six grandchildren and 10 great-grandchildren and, at the time of writing, lived in Horsley, New South Wales.

Notes

1. This account by Stella Goldsmith née Limon is taken, with his permission, from the Bedfordshire Women's Land Army [WLA] website, created by Stuart Antrobus. Stella Limon (WLA 69083) served in Bedfordshire during the Second World War, from 25 March 1942 to 30 May 1945.

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Notes from the *Beds Mercury*: Agriculture

Duke of Bedford makes further rent remission for his agricultural tenants, 'having regard to the increased difficulties of the times . . .': 18 Nov 1893, p 7, col 3, Woburn.

In the Parish News Report: 'The bazaar . . . will, owing to the great depression in trade and agriculture, be postponed . . .': 9 June 1894, p 7, col 4, Biggleswade.

Reference to: '. . . gleaning not yet completed . . .': 22 Sept 1894, p 7, col 5, Silsoe.

Mr G E Brown of Pillinge '. . . stated before the Royal Commission information on his farm: 8 Dec 1894, p 3, col 1, Marston Moretaine.

'Mr W J Maulden has patented an invention for improvements in machines for planting potatoes and the like . . .': 8 June 1895, p 7, Cardington.

Depression in agriculture – presentation to the Prime Minister: 17 Aug 1895, p 8, col 1.

Market Gardeners ' . . . are passing through a very dull time . . . Although their fields are redundant [*sic*] with most luxuriant crops of all kinds, the markets are so bad and prices so low that it does not pay to gather their produce . . .': 21 Sept 1895, p 8, col 5.

Reference to an accident where Mr Harding falls out of a tree while 'splashing walnuts': 12 Oct 1895, p 3, Kempston.

'Fine raspberries picked' showing 'effects of the remarkably fine weather this Autumn . . .': 19 Oct 1895, p 8, Cranfield.

Apple trees in blossom and raspberries picked: 26 Oct 1895, p 8, col 3, Clophill.

Report from Bletchley Park of third set of apple blossom: 2 Nov 1895, p 5, col 5, 'Trifles'.

Quote from last week's 'Answers': In Bedfordshire 'hundreds of acres' of cucumbers are grown outside. The varieties are ridge and gherkin. Most are sold at Covent Garden. Other crops include pickling onions and marrows: 29 Feb 1895, p 7, col 5.

Report on King's market garden and the onion pickling operation at Broom: 18 July 1896, p 3, under 'County Councillors Horticultural Holiday'.

Oats ' . . . cut at the beginning of last week . . . Wheat cut at Langford last Friday . . . Some being cut at Arlesey on Tuesday . . . The earliest harvest we have had since 1868 when wheat was cut at Moggerhanger on June 30th': 18 July 1896, p 8, col 3, Biggleswade.

'Great progress being made with the harvest . . . Some new wheat was thrashed on Saturday last. It was of a very fine quality and perfect condition and it made 24s 6d per quarter . . .': 1 Aug 1896, p 8, col 3, Biggleswade.

'The harvest in Bedfordshire is one of the earliest that can be remembered and it is said that we have not had such a forward season since 1868 . . .' A Bedfordshire farmer quoting his grandfather's records from 1814 to 1860, gives starting dates as July 11, 1822; July 18, 1826; July 16, 1834; and July 15, 1846. These 'run very close to the starting time this year . . . A grand season for self-binders . . .': 15 Aug 1896, p 8, col 4.

Bedford Wool Fair: ' . . . utter indifference . . .': 4 July 1902.

'Dan Albone is to show a new agricultural motor he has invented . . .': 18 July 1902, p 5, col 2, 'Trifles'.
Report on above: '. . . very successful . . .': 25 July 1902, p 5, col 1.

Submitted by Alan Hunter with thanks to Bedfordshire Archives

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Society Bookshelf

Books published by our history societies: contact the Editor if you wish your Society's books to be included

At the Long Ford: A History of Langford, by Michael Rutt; Ed, Ted Martin. Paperback, 172pp incl indexes. Price £5 (£8 by post). Langford & District History Society, 2021. Copies obtainable from the Editor.

Bedford History Timeline, by Alan Crawley and Bob Ricketts. Bedford Architectural, Archaeological and Local History Society. 2019, Paperback,

94pp, 119 illustrations. Price £8, from the Eagle Bookshop, 16–20 St Peter's Street, Bedford MK40 2NN or £10 incl postage from Bob Ricketts, 68 Mendip Crescent, Bedford, MK41 9EP.

Beats, Boots and Thieves – A History of Policing in North Bedfordshire, By Des Hoar and Richard Handscomb. Sharnbrook Local History Group. 2013. Paperback, 146 pp, £10 from 24 Loring Road, Sharnbrook, Bedford MK44 1JZ.

Colmworth and Neighbouring Villages: Then and Now, by Colmworth and Neighbours History Society. 2018. Paperback, 46pp, 100+ illustrations, £5 + £2 postage from Dave Jarrett, 3 Collingwood Road, Eaton Socon, PE19 8JQ.

Henry John Sylvester Stannard with notes on his daughter Theresa Sylvester Stannard, by Richard Morgan. Bedfordshire Local History Association, 2018. 48pp incl index. Available via the BLHA website http://www.bedfordshire-lha.org.uk, £5 + p&p.

*Langford Then and Now 2006***.** Langford & District History Society, 2006. Paperback, 40 pp, 80+ photos, £4 from Rowena Wolfe by phone or email: 01767 312556 or rowena.wolfe@btinternet.com.

Langford through the Lens Volume 1. Langford & District History Society, reprinted with amendments 2021 to include *Langford: A Village Walk*. Paperback, 138 pp, 70 photos, £7, from Rowena Wolfe by phone or email: 01767 312556 or rowena.wolfe@btinternet.com.

Langford through the Lens, Volume 2. Langford & District History Society. 1992. Paperback**,** 80 pp, 80+ photos, £3, from Rowena Wolfe by phone or email: 01767 312556 or rowena.wolfe@btinternet.com.

Willington in the First World War by Robert Bollington. Gostwick Press. 2018. 96pp, £6 from Willington Local History Group (cheque to be payable to them) c/o Rob Bollington, 2 Beauchamp Place, Willington MK44 3QA.

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Publication Received

Bedford Local History Magazine**,** Autumn 2021. Published by Bedford Architectural, Archaeological & Local History Society, 48pp + cover. Price £4, obtainable from the Eagle Bookshop, 16–20 St Peter's Street, Bedford MK40 2NN or £6 by post from the Editor, Bob Ricketts, 68 Mendip Crescent, Bedford, MK41 9EP.

Articles: Bob Ricketts, 'The execution of William Bull'; James Collett-White, 'The *Bedfordshire Times* Tells of the Early Struggles in Bedford of Women to Get the Vote, 1873–1894; Bob Ricketts: 'Henry Bacchus (1857–1932) – ironmonger, engineer & townsman'; 'Joe Clough (1877–1977) – Bedford's first black bus and taxi-driver'; 'Bedford's early buses'; Stuart Antrobus, 'John Bunyan's Dream Sculptured Mural at Bedford Central Library'; Bob Ricketts, What happened in 1977?

Reviews by Bob Ricketts: Mike Osborne: *Defending Bedfordshire The Military Landscape from Pre-History to the Present;* Des Hoar: *The Making of the Sharnbrook Landscape;* Robert Whapples: *Sharnbrook Village during World War Two.*