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From the Editor

Unusually in this issue we are opening with news of two of our contributors, some good, some sad. First, there is the extremely good news of the award to Stuart Antrobus from the Trustees of the British Association for Local History (BALH) of its certificate for 'An Outstanding Individual Contribution to Local History for 2023', as to which see below.

Sadly, we also have the news of the passing of Mike Pratt, for many years a mainstay of local history in Carlton and a valued contributor to HIB.

Born in 1937 in Hitchin, Hertfordshire, Mike was educated at Hitchin Boys' Grammar School and then went to St John's College, Oxford, to read Physics. After Oxford, he pursued a further degree in Aeronautics at the College of Aeronautics, Cranfield. The College then employed him to teach Mathematics to postgraduate students, where he eventually became Head of Department. He gained his PhD from Cranfield and was awarded a Personal Chair in Computer-Aided Engineering – in which he became an internationally recognised authority, co-authoring a number of books on that subject and mathematics.

He went to America in 1992 as a Research Fellow for the National Institute for Standards and Technology in Graithersburg, Maryland.

When Mike retired to Carlton, he became very interested in its local history and genealogy. He joined the Carlton & Chellington Historical Society committee in 2003 and contributed articles on family history to its *Newsletter* from 2004, becoming *Newsletter* editor from 2005. He was vice-chairman in 2006 and then chairman from 2008–2017. Sadly, the Carlton & Chellington Society finished at the end of 2019, which must have been a blow to Mike who had invested so much time and effort into it.

Mike earliest contribution to HIB concerned Stayesmore Manor in Carlton. His article, which covered the period from about 1700 onwards, appeared in issues 5.5 and 5.6, Autumn and Winter 2010. In issues 5.9 and 5.10 (Autumn and Winter 2011), with Ann Cooper, he told us of 'Augustus Henry Orlebar and the Schneider Trophy'. The former priory at Harrold was the subject of a very interesting article in issue 8.8, Autumn 2019 (see below). Mike's final contribution for us was 'The Brown family of Carlton and the Bunyan Connection', in issue 8.11, Summer 2020. This was, I think, his *magnum opus,* with a level of detailed painstaking research that was admirable. All these articles had appeared previously in the Carlton &

Chellington *Newsletter*, which Mike sent to me as each issue was published and was extremely helpful in converting them for a wider audience in HIB. All these articles may be read again on the HIB website and as a tribute to Mike we are reprinting his article on Harrold Priory in this issue.

The local history fraternity will greatly miss him and I have lost a friendly and helpful contributor. His meticulous research methods applied to all his work and BLHA, HIB and Bedfordshire Archives* are fortunate that he has left such a tremendous legacy of scholarly work.

Mike died on 18 February 2023 and leaving a wife, two sons and two grandchildren.

* I am grateful to Bedfordshire Archives for the details of Mike's career which appeared in their *Newsletter*, Spring 2023.

Ted Martin

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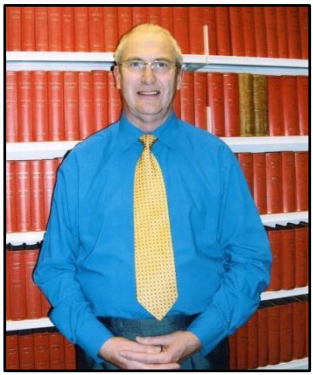
Stuart Antrobus gains National Award

Stuart Antrobus, local historian and author and regular contributor to HIB, has been chosen by the Trustees of the British Association for Local History (BALH) to receive its certificate for An Outstanding Individual Contribution to Local History for 2023:



Right: Stuart Antrobus

The purpose of this award is to honour publicly local historians who have made outstanding and significant voluntary contributions to the subject in their own areas and more widely. Such contributions include raising awareness of the subject and developing innovative ways of collecting and disseminating research into local history.

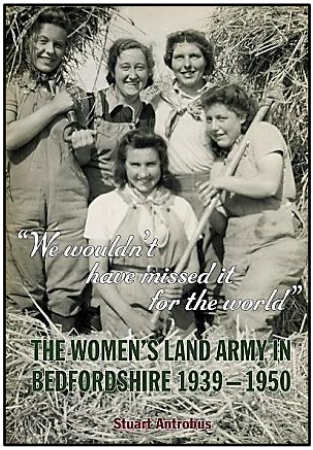
It recognises their enthusiasm for local history and their ability and inclination to share this with others.

The BALH Awards Panel, made up of experienced local historians, both professional and amateur, wrote of Stuart's 'extensive and long-standing voluntary work in local history' including a 20-year period of research, publications and educational activities relating to the Women's Land Army in Bedfordshire. This includes a major oral history project with former Land Girls, extensive archival research to discover the

records of over 3,300 young women who served in the county and the creation of an award-winning website, in conjunction with Bedfordshire Virtual Library.

His publications include his detailed, illustrated book, *We wouldn't have missed it for the world: Bedfordshire Women's Land Army, 1939-1950* (Book Castle Publishing, 2008) and *Life in Bedford during the Second World War* (BAALHS, 2021). To view his website, just Google 'Bedfordshire Women's Land Army'. He also contributes to the national website:

https://www.womenslandarmy.co.uk/



Stuart commented on the Award, which he will receive on 13 September in Bedford, 'I'm naturally delighted to receive this accolade'.

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Harrold Priory

The former priory at Harrold has long since vanished, but it has left behind some interesting records. Regarding the priory buildings, they were once thought to lie near the river Great Ouse in the central Mowhills area of the village, but recent findings have shown that they were in fact close to Harrold Hall and the church of St. Peter.

The standard sources of historical information for the local area are:

The History and Antiquities of the Hundred of Willey in the County of Bedford, by William Marsh Harvey, published by Nicholls of London, 1872–1878,

The Victoria County History of Bedfordshire, Vol 3, published by Constable in 1912, and

History of Bedfordshire, by Joyce Godber, published by Bedfordshire County Council in 1969.

The first two of these make reference to an earlier work, *Magna Britannia*, written by the brothers Daniel and Samuel Lyson. Their intention was to cover, in separate volumes, the history and antiquities of all the counties of England, Scotland, Wales and Ireland. They started with England, and we are fortunate in that Bedfordshire comes first alphabetically among the English counties; it is therefore covered in their

Volume 1, dated 1806. By 1819 they had got as far as completing the volume covering Devonshire, but then Samuel Lyson died and the grand project came to an end.

At the time when the Lyson brothers' account of Harrold was being compiled for their first volume, part of what was then thought to be the former priory was still standing – it was not demolished until about 1840, before the other standard references mentioned above were written. The Lysons stated that: 'The only part of the conventual building which remains is the refectory, now a barn, and known by the name of Hall-barn.' There exists an engraving of that edifice, dated 1730, which is reproduced below. I am indebted to John and Jane Tusting of Carlton for permission to photograph their copy of it.

***Figure 1**: Engraving, dated 1730, by Samuel and Nathaniel Buck, purporting to depict 'Harwood Nunnery'. (Harwood was one of many variants of the name of Harrold.) The inscription notes that the owner of 'these remains' was Henry, Duke of Kent, who also owned Wrest Park. Among his numerous other titles he was Earl of Harrold, though that short-lived earldom went extinct on his death in 1740.*

There has been much discussion over what this building actually was. Certainly, the water shown behind it bears the inscription 'R Ouse', which is consistent with a location in Harrold, but informed opinion is that it is not the Priory refectory that survived to 1830, but a building associated with Harrold Manor. By 1278 this manor was held by the de Grey family, but it was occupied by Ralph Morin or Moryn. There was a chapel associated with the manor house, and a document from 1291 contains (in modern English) the following wording[1]:

To Ralph Moryn of Harrold, giving him licence to re-open the private chapel

granted by Bishop Gravesend to his mother, Maud Moryn, on account of the distance of his manor from the parish church, the fact that the intervening road was often flooded in winter, and the poor health and devout temperament of the said Ralph.

The building depicted in the engraving may be this chapel, since it is now known that it was not the priory but rather Harrold Manor which lay in the Mowhills area of Harrold, close to the present site of the school.[2] A drawing by Thomas Fisher shows the interior of this possible manorial chapel.

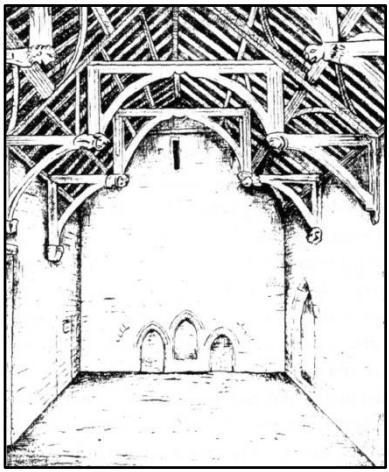

***Figure 2**: The interior of the building shown earlier, taken from Thomas Fisher's* Sketches of Bedfordshire *(1823). The original (but misleading) caption was 'Interior of Ye Nunne's Hall, Harewold'.*[3]

The history of Harrold Priory is reviewed on the Bedfordshire Community Archives website at bedsarchives.bedford.gov.uk/CommunityArchives/Harrold.

I will briefly summarise that history, and then move on to some of its aspects that are not covered in detail there.

Harrold Priory was established in the first half of the 12th century, probably in the 1130s. Its site, together with the churches of St Peter at Harrold and St Mary at Cold Brayfield, Buckinghamshire, was granted originally to Gervase, the Abbot of St Nicholas of Arrouaise in Normandy, so that he could establish some nuns of his order there. The site of the Abbey of Arrouaise is not now known for sure, but one of its principal functions was to provide services for travellers through a great forest that then covered a large area of northern France.

The Arrouasians belonged to a form of the Augustinian order which had additionally adopted the more austere philosophy of the Cistercians, though the distinction between Arrouaisians and Augustinians faded as time passed, and eventually the occupants of Harrold Priory were referred to simply as Augustinians, often anglicised as 'Austins'.

The nuns at Harrold were initially governed by a male prior, with a few 'canons regular' (clerics who had renounced private wealth), to protect them from the outer world, to provide religious guidance and to celebrate the divine offices, which women were forbidden to do. The first prior was

Guy, a brother of Gervase of Arrouaise, mentioned above.

Shortly after the priory was founded the church at Stevington was added to its assets and in 1416 it acquired a further church in Shakerstone, Leicestershire, to augment its income. The nuns petitioned for this on the grounds that they found it very hard to make ends meet. They had to bear the heavy cost of accommodating and feeding many travellers who passed along the major highway from London to Oakham, which passed over nearby Harrold Bridge. Additionally, being close to the Great Ouse, the priory was not infrequently flooded and in need of expensive reparations.

Over the years the priory managed to free itself from subjection to the Abbot of Arrouaise. In 1177 Arrouaise ceded control of the priory to its affiliated abbey at Great Missenden, Buckinghamshire. However, Harrold Priory objected to this new arrangement and negotiations with Pope Alexander III led to the matter being brought to trial. After several years, judgment was finally given in 1188 by Robert de Bedford, Precentor of Lincoln Cathedral, and the priory became self-governing, though it had to make a yearly payment to Missenden Abbey in compensation.

Other changes also took place over the years. The prior eventually vanished, along with the canons. Their function was taken over by a master or warden and a small number of chaplains, most of whom held livings elsewhere, while internally the priory was ruled by a prioress and a sub-prioress. St Peter's church at Harrold, while close to the priory, did not serve as its conventual chapel. However, at least in the early 13th century the vicar of St Peter's was considered a member of the priory community. At the ordination of the office of vicar by Bishop Hugh de Welles of Lincoln in about 1225 it was written that 'the vicar shall have his food honourably at the table of the prioress', and the priory was required to provide him with accommodation 'within or without the priory as the Bishop shall decide'. It also had to pay his stipend and various expenses of his office, including the employment of a servant and a deacon. The prioress also had to provide the bread and wine for communion in both the parish church and the chapel of the priory.

The priory was originally founded by Sampson le Fort on land he held of the Scottish kings as part of the Honour of Huntingdon, an extensive collection of manors which included Harrold. Samson was not of a Bedfordshire family himself, but he held the manor as a life-tenant through his wife Albreda de Blosseville; he was eventually succeeded by her son. He founded the priory at the suggestion of his kinsman Hilbert de Pelice, a canon of Arrouaise Abbey, mentioned earlier, which is why the foundation was initially Arrouaisian.

Because of its connection with the Honour of Huntingdon, Sampson le Fort's foundation charter for the priory was confirmed at various times by some very eminent persons. These included: King David I of Scotland; David's son Henry, Earl of Huntingdon; Henry's son in turn, the short-lived Malcolm IV of Scotland; William the Lion (Malcolm's long-lived brother who succeeded him); and Robert Bruce. More local 12th-century patrons, who donated property on which the priory could raise income, included the de Braoses, the de Blossevilles and Ralph Morin.

The cartulary of Harrold Priory is preserved in the British Museum; it is a list of the deeds to all the properties owned by the priory which provided its income. Most of the deeds recorded were not fully transcribed, but a summary of their principal content was given. This document was translated by Dr Herbert Fowler, founder of the Bedfordshire Archives, and his translation was published in 1935 by the Bedfordshire Historical Record Society. The original document was written in the 15th century, and the earliest deed it records dates from 1136. Interestingly, the cartulary mentions gifts made to the priory in the late 14th and early 15th centuries, at which time such gifts to religious houses were infrequent. It may be that Harrold Priory was truly so impoverished, as the nuns claimed (see above), that donors were more inclined to give aid to it than to more self-sufficient foundations.

Another interesting surviving document from Harrold Priory is a set of accounts for the year dated 1401–1402. This, together with a similar document from Newnham Priory for the year 1519–1520, was found among the records of the Boteler family, which obtained some of the property after the closure of both priories following the dissolution of the monasteries. These manuscripts were translated and published in 1970 by the Bedfordshire Historical Record Society.[4] Unfortunately the Harrold accounts are damaged; in particular, the heading section is missing and a small proportion of the rest of the document is also either missing or illegible. What remains contains much interesting detail, however.

In this year the accounts indicate that the priory made a loss of about £2, about 2½% of its income of around £40. However, G D Gilmore, who translated and edited the accounts, notes several accounting errors which, when corrected, turn that loss into a small profit. The accounts consist of four parts. First, are rents received from properties owned by the priory, for example:

Rent of a tenement in Little Odell, and three acres of land in the fields, demised to Walter Frysshe . . . 5s 0d.

Next there are items of income from farming activities on land owned by the priory, eg:

For 12 quarters of malt sold to Emma Dalehow at 7s 6d . . . £4 10s 0d.

Third, outgoings: purchases, wages paid to casual workmen and to people associated with the priory, eg:

Dom John the priest, by the year . . . 40s 0d.

This was presumably the stipend of the vicar of Harrold. The accounts concluded with a valuation of farm stock and produce in store.

On 16 January 1442/3 there was a 'visitation' of Harrold Priory by William Alnwick, Bishop of Lincoln, whose diocese included the priory at that time, a detailed account of which survives.[5] With the prioress and nuns assembled, the proceedings began with a sermon, preached 'in the vulgar tongue' (ie, English rather than Latin) by Thomas Twyere, MA, a member of the Bishop's entourage. Then the prioress exhibited to the Bishop the foundation charter of the priory and the certificate of her election as prioress, signed by the Archbishop of Canterbury. Then she 'sware fealty and obedience' to the Bishop 'in the form accustomed'. After these preliminaries there followed an interrogation of the prioress and each of the nuns.

The prioress, Dame Alice Watyr, said that the priory had an income of about £40 per year (which such an establishment would be expected to spend on charitable causes). She also mentioned that she was joined at her meals by a gentlewoman who was married. This last was a black mark against her, because the nuns were encouraged to have as little contact as possible with 'worldly' people, who should have been entertained in the priory's hospice, apart from the nuns.

The sub-prioress, Dame Emma Welde, said that the priory was 20 marks in debt. At that time the mark was an accounting unit worth two-thirds of a pound sterling, ie, 13s 4d – the debt was therefore rather more than £13. At that time (according to The National Archives) £1 sterling would purchase one horse, or two cows, or about 44 kg of unspun wool, or would cover the wages of a skilled tradesman for 33 days. Dame Emma mentioned also that the accounts of the priory were not tallied yearly, as they should have been. Further, that a 'corrody' had been sold for 20 marks – this probably implies that a benefactor had purchased for that sum the right of free board and lodging at the priory for his or her lifetime. Such a short-term method of raising cash constituted another black mark against the establishment.

A third nun, Dame Alice Decun, confirmed that the priory's accounts were not prepared and submitted annually for approval by the community of the priory, and she raised some new issues. She said 'they all wear their veils spread up to the top of their foreheads', and that silence was not observed in the priory. Both of these violated the rules of their Augustinian order. She also noted that two small girls, aged six or seven years, slept in the nuns' dormitory (more on this later). Finally, she requested that the hour for the nuns' supper be kept between 5 and 6 o'clock. Dame Agnes Tyryngham corroborated these concerns.

Next, Dame Agnes Grene asked that, since 'she was stricken in years and feeble' she might be discharged from singing in the choir at services.

Dame Thomasine Courtney introduced several new complaints. She said that a laundress was employed to wash the nuns' clothes just four times per year, and that for the rest of the time they were compelled to do it themselves on the banks of the 'public river'. She also claimed that when the prioress bought any necessities for the priory a price was agreed but no contract of sale was recorded, so that after some time had passed the merchants concerned came and demanded double the price. Regarding corrodies, mentioned earlier, she said that two people held them; one such arrangement had been agreed by the present prioress and another by a previous prioress. She confirmed that, because no annual accounts were prepared and presented, the nuns had no idea of the financial status of the priory. Finally, she expressed concern that woodland belonging to the priory was being sold.

Two further nuns, Dames Grace Melton and Elizabeth Cotyngham, said that as far as they were concerned 'all things are well'.

Just two days after the bishop's visitation at Harrold, by which time he had moved on to Newnham Priory near Bedford, he wrote a letter to the prioress and nuns in Harrold. In it he said that his visit to them had revealed certain shortcomings in the conduct of the priory's affairs, which he then listed, ordering remedial measures to be taken, with specified penalties for non-compliance:

we send yowe thise our iniunccyons, commaundementes and ordynaunces here benethe writene to be kepped by yow and your successours vnder the peynes benethe folowying.

First, he ordered that the rule of silence of the Augustinian order should be strictly observed, and that the prioress and her deputy should punish transgressors in a manner calculated to deter others from following their example. Next, he ordered that the nuns' veils should be worn so as

to come down to their eyes or their brows, 'vnder peyne of cursing'(!).

He directed that, under the same penalty, no sojourners, particularly married ones, be allowed to dwell among the nuns, nor children, specifically boys aged more than 11 and girls aged more than 12, without special leave granted by the bishop. Additionally, no secular persons, neither women nor children, were to be permitted to sleep in the nuns' dormitory.

Addressing the prioress directly, he then required her to prepare annual accounts of the financial state of the priory, to be presented to the members of her community, or to persons nominated by them. This was to happen yearly in winter, between the feasts of St Michael and St Martin. The penalty for non-compliance was suspension from her position.

Next, the prioress was instructed, subject to a similar penalty, not to sell, grant or give any corrody, pension or annuity to any person whatsoever without the consent of a majority of her nuns and permission from the bishop.

Further, he required her to make written agreements when purchasing goods for the priory to avoid payment of excessive charges.

Even the topic of laundry was not beneath the bishop's notice. He enjoined the prioress to make arrangements for a laundress to visit the priory and wash the nuns' clothes once every two weeks between Whitsun and Michaelmas, and during the cooler remainder of the year once every three weeks.

Next the prioress was ordered not to sell or give away any wood from the priory lands unless permission was obtained from the bishop, and to fell timber from them only when necessary to make repairs to the priory itself or any of the properties it owned. Finally, she was told that as far as possible the time of supper for herself and the nuns should be fixed at 'the halfe houre betwyx fyve and six'.

Clearly the bishop had taken into account all the concerns raised by the nuns with the possible exception of the one concerning the sale of woodland. In that case he addressed a slightly different issue, but that was possibly as a result of further discussion with the nuns or the prioress.

Bishop William's visitation took place in 1442/3, but less than 100 years later there was a much more malign visitation, not by a bishop but by the notorious Dr Richard Layton, a henchman of Thomas Cromwell and King Henry VIII, in the matter of the Dissolution of the Monasteries. Layton was an ordained priest, a lawyer and a diplomat, who made it his business to find reasons why abbeys, priories, convents and friaries should be closed down throughout England, Wales and Ireland. The King was then

able to appropriate their income and their valuables, while making some provision for the sustenance of their former members. It is more than likely that Layton diverted some of the proceeds of the Dissolution into his own pocket. In his later life he was Dean of York and after his death in 1544 it was found that he had pawned some valuable silverware owned by the chapter of York Minster, which had to pay to redeem it.

It was in the autumn of 1535 that Layton visited religious establishments in Bedfordshire, including Harrold Priory. If the accusations contained in his subsequent report to Thomas Cromwell were true, the priory had ceased to be in any real sense a religious house by this time.[2] He declared that he found there a prioress and four or five supposedly chaste nuns, of whom one had 'two fair children' and another 'one child and no more'; he also describes how Lord Mordaunt of Turvey, at that time the patron of the priory, had induced the prioress and her 'foolish young flock' to break open the coffer containing the charters of the priory and to seal a document written in Latin of which they did not understand a word. There is no evidence either for or against these accusations, but it has been pointed out that the story concerning Lord Mordaunt is entirely credible. The patron of such a small and impoverished establishment would be in a position to take a very high hand with its affairs for his own benefit or convenience, especially since one or two of the nuns may very well have been members of his own family.

After Layton's visit to Harrold the outcome was inevitable: the priory was closed down. Its site was sold, and Harrold Hall was later built on its former farmyard. The prioress, Eleanor Warren, was discharged from her office with an annual pension of £7 and in 1554 she was still living in Harrold, unmarried.

The landholdings of Harrold Priory were never very extensive – in fact in 1291 Pope Nicholas did not even bother to include the priory in his taxation of the church. In the Hundred Rolls of 1274–1279 it is recorded as owning 410 acres of land, though by 1340 this had fallen to about 360 acres. When the foundation was dissolved it was stated to have an income of £57 10s. Of this, £31 came from the four rectories mentioned earlier (Harrold, Cold Brayfield, Stevington and Shakerstone), £13 18s from additional land in Harrold and £12 12s from small rents in 17 different villages.

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Mike Pratt*

*Reprinted from the Carlton and Chellington History Society *Newsletter,* Vol 16, No 4, December, 2018, by kind permission of the late Mike Pratt, then author and editor.

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The Tacchi Family, Part 1

[HIB is pleased to publish this exhaustive research by Linda Ayres which shows how the progeny of an Italian immigrant to Bedford enhanced the trade and arts of not just Bedford, but London and as far away as Australia, Singapore, the US and Madagascar.]

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During the Napoleonic Wars (1803–1815) the Italian Republic, whose president was Napoleon Bonaparte, imposed conscription on all single men from the age of 18 to 30 years to fight in Napoleon Bonaparte's Grande Armée. Enforced conscription caused many men to flee before arriving at their depots. To punish this, the authorities sent their parents and close relatives to prison until the deserters returned to their depots. When captured, the deserters paid a fine of 1,500 lire.

On 17 March 1805 the Italian Republic became the Kingdom of Italy. Napoleon Bonaparte was declared King of Italy and crowned himself using the Iron Crown of Lombardy.

During this time, a number of Italian men left their homes in Lombardy and came to England for a better life and to escape conscription. Most of those men were skilled gilders, wood carvers, picture-frame makers, instrument-makers and were especially known for making barometers. Many of these Italians settled in Holborn, London, and made 'banjo' barometers. This area of London soon became known as 'Little Italy'.

ANTONIO TACCHI

Antonio Tacchi was born in 1784 at Bellagio on Lake Como, Lombardy, Northern Italy. He was probably one of the many Italians who migrated

to England in the early 1800s. Antonio settled in Bedford and set up his business as a carver, gilder and barometer maker. He was the first person with the surname Tacchi to live in Bedford and soon after his arrival in England he changed his Christian name to Anthony.

On 24 April 1811 Anthony married Ann Butcher by licence at the Church of St John the Baptist in Eversholt. At the time of their marriage Anthony lived in St Paul's parish, Bedford. Ann was born in 1790 at Eversholt and was the youngest of the seven children of John Butcher and Elizabeth (née Hawkins).

The *Dictionary of British and Irish Furniture Makers*, records that from 1830 to 1839 Anthony was a carver, gilder and paperhanger trading in High Street, Bedford, and in 1839 he was trading in St John's. On 26 October 1835, Anthony leased two messuages (two houses with outbuildings and adjacent land) at St John's Street, Bedford. The lease was for 40 years. Anthony also carried out work in buildings around the town. In 1853 he did repair work for the sum of 8s 6d at the Bedford Asylum in Ampthill Road.

Today barometers made by Anthony Tacchi occasionally come up for auction. A mid-19th-century mahogany barometer made by Anthony Tacchi reached £395 in 2022.

Anthony Tacchi met Garibaldi. Garibaldi was considered to be one of the greatest masters of guerrilla warfare during the 19th century. In 1859 Garibaldi with his 5,000-strong volunteer army freed Lombardy from the Austrians. The following year he helped unify various states of the Italian peninsula under one monarchy.

On 15 April 1864, General Giuseppe Garibaldi visited the Britannia Works at Bedford to inspect the process of ploughing by steam. During his visit he planted a *Wellingtonia gigantea* tree on the lawn outside the works. Anthony was among the many people there that day to be introduced to Garibaldi and it probably came as a surprise to Garibaldi to meet one of his fellow countrymen.

Ann Tacchi died on 1 January 1868 aged 77 years at 32 St John's Street, Bedford. Her burial took place at Foster Hill Road Cemetery (*Grave Ref F3 209*). Two months later, on 8 March 1868, Anthony died aged 83 years. He was buried in the grave next to Ann (*Grave Ref F3 203*).

THE CHILDREN OF ANTHONY AND ANN

Ann and Anthony had five daughters and seven sons: Sarah (1812–1835), Joseph (1815–1872), Elizabeth (1816–1895), Ann (1818–1907), George (1820–1890), John (1821–1882), Mary (1823–1900), Anthony (1825–1913), Thomas

(1827–1885), Eleanor (1829–1897), Peter (1832–1900) and Richard (1836–1910).

Sarah, the eldest daughter and first child of Anthony and Ann, was born in 1812 at Bedford. Sarah died aged 23 years in 1835 at Bedford.

Joseph Tacchi, the eldest son and the second child of Anthony and Ann

Joseph was born in 1815 at Bedford. On leaving school Joseph became a house painter. On 10 July 1836 Joseph married Elizabeth Aychurch Osborn at St Sepulchre, Newgate, London. Elizabeth was born on 16 December 1811 at Diddington, Huntingdonshire, and was one of the four children of Mary and Martin Rawling Osborn. Her father owned farmland at Hemingford Grey, Huntingdonshire. After their marriage Joseph and Elizabeth moved to Chandos Street, Bedford. They later moved to 53 Wellington Street, Bedford.

Joseph died on 4 January 1872 at the house of his brother John, at 11 Wellington Street. His burial took place at Foster Hill Road Cemetery (*Grave Ref E11 26*). Elizabeth died on 14 November 1899 at 41 Dame Alice Street, Bedford, aged 87 years. Elizabeth's burial took place in the grave next to that of Joseph (*Grave Ref E11 56*).

THE CHILDREN OF JOSEPH AND ELIZABETH

Joseph and Elizabeth had 10 children, five daughters and five sons: Sarah (1836–1916), Elizabeth (1838–1925), Joseph Jr (1839–1890), Ann (1840–1848), George (1842–1918), John (1845–1932), Anthony (1847–1915), Thomas (1849–1920), Mary (1851–1896) and Ellen (1853–1855).

Ann and Ellen sadly died in childhood. Ann died aged 8. Her burial took place on 2 October 1848 in St Peter's Churchyard. Ellen died on 2 June 1855, aged 2 years and 2 months. Ellen's burial, on 5 June 1855, was the first to take place at Foster Hill Road Cemetery (*Grave Ref. E11 36*).

Sarah Tacchi, the eldest daughter and first child of Joseph and Elizabeth

Sarah was born in 1836 at Bedford. Sarah and her sisters Elizabeth and Ann, were Christened on 6 December 1840 at St Peter's Church, Bedford. In 1860 Sarah married William Whiting at Axbridge, Somerset. William was born in 1841 at Lympsham, Somerset, and was one of the eight children of John and Elizabeth Whiting.

William was a coal miner and in 1871 Sarah and William were living at Mountain Ash, Glamorganshire, in Wales. Two years later Sarah and

William were living at Bagillt, Flintshire, also in Wales. The 1881 census records William and Sarah living at 5 Elm Street, Prescot, Lancashire. At that time they had four children: Arthur aged 10 years, Alice and Mary aged 8 years and William aged 3 years. The 1891 census records William and Sarah living at Hall Lane, Huyton and Roby, Lancashire. By then William had given up working in the coal mines and was a self-employed shoemaker. Sarah died in 1916 at 7 Victoria Place, Prescot, Liverpool. There is no death record of William.

Elizabeth Tacchi, the second eldest daughter and the second child of Joseph and Elizabeth

Elizabeth was born in 1838 at Bedford. On 2 July 1863, Elizabeth was one of the 10 poor women of Bedford to draw her £20 marriage portion from the Bedford Charity.[1] Elizabeth received hers on the day she married Josiah Howe on 6 July 1863 at Biggleswade.

Josiah was born in 1833 at Blunham, Bedfordshire, and was one of the five children of Elizabeth and Joseph Howe. Josiah was a bootmaker by trade. The 1911 census records Josiah and Elizabeth living at Church Street, Gamlingay. Josiah died in 1913 and Elizabeth died in 1925. Their burials took place in Gamlingay Cemetery.

Elizabeth and Josiah had three children: Anthony (1865–1944), who was a bricklayer by trade. Ill-health forced him to retire. He died at his home at Church Street, Gamlingay. His burial took place in Gamlingay Cemetery. Harry (1867–1939), ran his own hairdressing business at Gamlingay. He died at his home in Church Street, Gamlingay. His burial took place at Gamlingay Cemetery. Frederick Reuben was born in 1883. He served with the Royal Engineers 106th Field Coy, service number 166362. He died during the Third Battle of Ypres, in Flanders, also known as the Battle of Passchendaele, on 4 October 1917. He is commemorated on the Arras Memorial, Bay 1.

Joseph Tacchi, Jr, the eldest son and third child of Joseph and Elizabeth

Joseph, Jr, was born in 1839 at Bedford. At the age of 13 years, he began his apprenticeship with George Small who owned a plumbing firm. George Small lived at 6 St Peters Green, Bedford. Joseph was one of the 15 men employed by George Small. After Joseph had completed his seven-year apprenticeship, he continued to work for George.

George Small died on 30 November 1878 aged 62 years. His burial took place with his wife Jane at Foster Hill Road Cemetery (*Grave Ref E3. 138*).

In 1865 Joseph, Jr, started up his own firm as a plumber, glazier, and painter, at 2 Wellington Street, Bedford. On 14 May 1866 Joseph married Ruth Lett at the Wesleyan Chapel, Bedford. Ruth received her £20 marriage portion from the Bedford Charity. Before her marriage Ruth worked as a bonnet-maker.

Ruth was one of the nine children of Ann and John Lett. In 1851 the family lived in Harpur Street where John Lett ran a grocery business. The family subsequently moved to 9 St John's Street, where John ran a beer house as well as his greengrocery business. Then they moved to the Garibaldi Arms, 36 Mill Street, Bedford. The Garibaldi Arms was on the corner of Mill Street and Gadsby Street, and it closed in May 1898. Ann and John Lett died at the Garibaldi Arms. Ann in 1868 aged 57 years. Her burial took place at Foster Hill Road Cemetery (*Grave Ref C7 163*). John died aged 66 years on 17 October 1870. His burial took place beside Ann (*Grave Ref C7 173*). After Ann and John died, their son George became the licensee of the Garibaldi Arms.

In 1870 Joseph became the licensee of the Anchor Inn at 2 Dame Alice Street. At the same time, he continued to run his plumbing business. He appeared in court for selling beer after 11pm on 30 May 1872. Joseph stated that it was his wife's birthday and he was entertaining a few friends. The court found him guilty and fined him 10 shillings with 7 shillings costs. In 1872 Joseph took charge of the St Peter's fire engine room.[2]

Joseph died aged 52 years on 15 April 1890 at Dame Alice Street, Bedford. His burial took place at Foster Hill Road Cemetery (*Grave Ref F2 19*). After Joseph died Ruth took over as the licensee of the Anchor Inn.

On 7 October 1891 Ruth married her second husband Edward Payne Underwood at St Paul's Church, Bedford. At the time of their marriage Ruth lived at 6 Dame Alice Street. Edward was in partnership with his uncle, John Alexander Banks. The firm known as Underwood and Banks were clothiers, tailors and general outfitters at 41 High Street, Bedford. Edward ran the firm when his uncle died in 1885. Before his marriage, Edward lived above the shop. After their marriage they moved to 40 St Leonards Avenue, Bedford.

Edward had been unwell for three years before he died at the age of 54 on 30 November 1910. His burial took place close to other members of his family at Pavenham Churchyard. Ruth died aged 77 years on 5 April 1919 at 21 Pembroke Street, Bedford. Her burial took place at Foster Hill Road Cemetery (*Grave Ref D5 214*).

Joseph Tacchi, the son of Joseph and Ruth

Joseph, the only child of Joseph and Ruth, was born in 1867 at Bedford. On leaving school he became a house painter. On 10 May 1887 Joseph joined the Coldstream Guards in London. After serving seven years, he left the Coldstreams.

In 1895 Joseph married Fanny Sharp Stokes at Holborn, London. Fanny was born in 1867 at Bedford and was one of the four children of Sarah Stokes, a washerwoman. Fanny had lived with her family at 20 Gravel Lane, Bedford, before she moved into lodgings at 3 River Street, Bedford. She was a laundress. After their marriage Joseph and Fanny moved into 4 James Street, Bedford.

Joseph was employed with the Electric Lighting Company. On 15 May 1896 Joseph and his foreman, Charles English, and Albert Edward Christmas, a labourer, went to St Mary's substation to inspect the terminals in the transformer. Charles took the switches out and he then held up all the cables away from the box, and told Joseph and Albert to lift the box. When they lifted the cables up about eight inches from the box, Joseph and Albert got an electric shock from one of the wires and they both fell to the ground. A few minutes later Joseph came to and managed to climb the ladder and get out of the substation. Unfortunately, Albert died at the scene.

Albert was born in 1877 at Bedford. His Christening took place at St Paul's Church, on 10 August 1879. He was the son of Eliza Christmas of Tower Court, Bedford. At the time of his death Albert lived in Bower Street, Bedford. Albert's funeral took place on 19 May 1896 at Foster Hill Road Cemetery (*Grave Ref. G5.73*).

Dr Prior the Borough Coroner held the inquest at the Corn Exchange. In his summing-up he said that it was clear the cause of the accident was a flaw in the cable and it might have been avoided if India rubber mats and gloves were supplied.

After the accident, Joseph returned to his previous job as a house painter. The accident had a long-term effect on Joseph's mental health. On 17 May 1912 Joseph, who had not worked for a couple of weeks, seemed troubled, but not too ill to call the doctor. His wife had gone out and, when she returned home, she discovered that he had tragically taken his own life. Three days later the inquest jury returned a verdict that there was not sufficient evidence to say what state of mind Joseph was in.

Joseph's burial took place on 21 May 1912 at Foster Hill Road Cemetery (*Grave Ref H5 231*). Fanny died aged 68 years in 1935 at 1 Short Street,

Bedford. Her burial took place in the grave next to Joseph (*Grave Ref H5 222*).

Joseph Tacchi, the son of Joseph and Fanny
Joseph was born on 14 July 1896 at Bedford. On leaving school Joseph worked as a commercial clerk. On 29 December 1920 Joseph married Rose Annie Bliss at All Saints Church, Bedford. Rose was one of the five children of Frances and Richard Bliss of 15 Honey Hill Road, Bedford. At the time of her marriage Rose was a children's nurse. After their marriage they moved in with Rose's parents at Honey Hill Road. In 1924 their only child, Joseph R Tacchi was born.

Rose died aged 38 years. Her burial took place on 5 August 1931 at Foster Hill Road Cemetery (*Grave Ref Q 517*). Joseph subsequently moved to Luton. In 1934 he married his second wife, Gertrude Richards. Joseph died in Luton in 1960.

George Tacchi, the second eldest son and fifth child of Joseph and Elizabeth
George was born in 1842 at Bedford. George was apprenticed to his uncle George who was a carver and gilder. He lived with his uncle George at 18 Goswell Street, Glasshouse Liberty, London. Glasshouse Liberty, a part of the parish of St Botolph, Aldgate, is situated in Goswell Street and named after an ancient glasshouse.

In 1865 George married Martha Jane Dixon. Martha was born in 1836 in Yorkshire and was the daughter of Sarah and Samuel Dixon who was a printer's compositor by trade. Before her marriage Martha worked as a milliner. She lived with her family at Frederick Street, St Pancras, Marylebone, London.

In 1870 George and Martha's only child, George Henry Tacchi was born in London. The 1881 census records Martha living at Rutland Street, Hanover Square, London, with her son George. At the same time George Senior was staying at Stanfield's Temperance Hotel at York Street, Langfield, Yorkshire. Sadly, George, Jr, died in 1884 aged 13 years. The 1891 census records Martha as a live-in general servant at Lambeth Walk, Surrey. George and Martha were not living together as the census records him visiting Martha.

Martha died in 1900 aged 64 years in London. The 1901 census records George as a pauper inmate in the Chelsea Workhouse, London. It appears that George had given up his occupation as a gilder and carver and became a house painter. George died aged 76 years in 1918 in Chelsea,

London. His burial took place on 2 April 1918 at Brookwood Cemetery, Brookwood, Surrey.

John Tacchi, the third eldest son and sixth child of Joseph and Elizabeth

John was born in 1845 at Bedford. At the age of 14 years, he had drawn his apprentice fees[3] from the Bedford Charity, and served his seven-year apprenticeship as a tinsmith.

In 1867 John joined the army and signed on for 10 years. He served with the 13th Regiment of Foot. John served a few more years with the army than he had originally signed on for. The 1881 census records that John was a private, and stationed with his regiment at Devonport Stoke Damerel, Devon. He subsequently moved with his regiment to Taunton.

In 1887 John married Maria Fudge. Maria was born in 1869 in Somerset, and was the daughter of Henry Jaques Fudge and Judith née Power. After their marriage they lived in married quarters at the barracks. In 1887 John was promoted to corporal, and two years later he was made sergeant. By 1891 John had left the army and he and Maria moved to Pig Market Lane, Taunton. Maria and John had eight children, sadly, two children died in infancy. Maria worked as a collar maker and John was a hotel porter. The family subsequently moved to Victoria Place, Taunton, Somerset.

Maria died in 1913 aged 43 years. John died aged 87 in 1932 at 43 Upper High Street, Taunton. John's funeral with full military honours took place at St Mary's Cemetery, Taunton. John was the last surviving member of the old 13th Regiment of Foot (afterwards the Somerset Light Infantry) and a veteran of the Zulu War and Burmah and Afghan campaigns. The coffin, covered with the Union Jack, was drawn on a gun carriage to St Mary's Cemetery by soldiers from the Somerset Light Infantry, and six sergeants acted as pallbearers. Buglers sounded the Last Post and Reveille at the graveside.

Anthony Tacchi, the fourth eldest son and seventh child of Joseph and Elizabeth

Anthony was born in 1847 at Bedford and drew his apprentice fee from the Bedford Charity. At the end of his seven-year apprenticeship, he became a house painter and glazier.

On 25 December 1870 Anthony married Rebecca Thompson at the Registry Office in St Peter's Street, Bedford. Rebecca was born in 1847 at Marston, Bedfordshire, and was the daughter of Mary and James

Thompson. At the time of her marriage Rebecca lived at Foster Street, Bedford. After their marriage they lived at 19 Cemetery Road, Bedford.

The 1881 census records Anthony living at 7 Peel Street, Bedford. He is a self-employed plumber and glazier, and has one apprentice working for him. In 1909 Anthony painted and regilded the large iron gates to Bedford Park for the sum of £16 10s. Anthony subsequently purchased a double-fronted house with a large two storey workshop at 51 Tavistock Street, Bedford. He also owned a house at 59 Tavistock Street, which he rented out. The house had two sitting rooms, three bedrooms and a kitchen.

Anthony died aged 66 on 27 January 1915. His burial took place at Foster Hill Road Cemetery (*Grave Ref B4 110*). Both his houses in Tavistock Street sold at auction on 18 June 1915 at the Swan Hotel, Bedford. Rebecca moved to 53 Dame Alice Street, where she died aged 81 years in February 1926. Her burial took place in the grave with Anthony. They had no children.

Thomas Tacchi, the fifth eldest son and eighth child of Joseph and Elizabeth

Thomas was born in 1849 at Bedford. Thomas went to the Commercial School (in 1873 the school became known as the Bedford Modern School). Thomas left school at the age of 15 years and drew his apprentice fee from the Bedford Charity. He served his seven-year apprenticeship as an engine fitter. The 1871 census records that Thomas is living at Osborne Street, Colchester, Essex.

In 1874 Thomas married Caroline Elizabeth Wright at Colchester. Caroline was born in Colchester in 1852 and was one of the four children of Mary Ann and James Wright who was a sailor. Caroline lived with her family at Hythe Street, St Leonards, Colchester. Thomas and Caroline subsequently moved to 22 Muswell Road, Bedford. The 1911 census records them living at 27 Manor Road, Luton. Caroline and Thomas had nine children. Caroline and Thomas died at Luton. Thomas died in 1920 aged 71 years, and Caroline died in 1941 aged 89 years.

Mary Tacchi, the fourth eldest daughter and ninth child of Joseph and Elizabeth

Mary was born in 1851 at Bedford and employed as a mantle maker. She made mantles from cotton and soaked them in nitrates and fitted them to gas lamps. In 1881 Mary married Frederick James Brittain. Frederick was born in 1855 at Kempston, Bedfordshire, the eldest of the three children

of Mary and James Brittain. Mary was a dressmaker and James was a wood cutter.

Frederick was employed as a striker at the iron works. His job involved drawing out angle iron from the furnace when ready for forging. The 1891 census records Ann and Frederick living at 18 Regent Street, Kimberworth, Rotherham, Yorkshire. Rotherham was an industrial part of Yorkshire and known for its iron works.

On 7 February 1896 Mary died aged 46 years at Lambeth, London. One of Mary's relatives escorted her coffin from London to her brother Anthony's house at 51 Tavistock Street. Her burial took place at Foster Hill Road Cemetery (*Grave Ref E11.27*). Mary and Frederick had no children.

After Mary died Frederick lived at Fitzalan Street, Lambeth, London. He gave up his job as a striker and became a carpenter and joiner. In 1903 Frederick married Jane Fox. Frederick died aged 58 years in 1913 in Lambeth, London.

Notes

1. The Bedford Charity Marriage Portions came from Sir William Harpur, founder of the Harpur Trust Charity, Bedford, who owned 13 acres of land in the parish of St Andrew, Holborn, London. Every year, out of the rents and profits of the estates, the Bedford Charity received the sum of £800 for marriage portions. They were drawn in lots of 10, four times a year. To qualify for a marriage portion, all candidates had to be of good character. The eligible ages were from 16 years to 50 years. Their fathers must have lived in the town of Bedford for 10 years and their future husbands must not be vagrants and be of good character. Candidates would not receive their £20 if they did not marry within two months of qualifying for their marriage portion.

2. Bedford Fire Engines:

Engine No 1: George Small, engineer, St Peter's Green. Joseph Tacchi, Jr, apprenticed to George Small. In 1872 Joseph, Jr, took charge of St Peter's Green fire engine room.

Engine No 2: Stephen Shepphard, Engineer, Harpur Street.

Engine No 3: Joseph Tacchi, Sr, Engineer, Wellington Street; a plumber by trade.

Engine No 4: John Wells Barker, Engineer, Cauldwell Street; plumber and inn keeper of the Haycock Beerhouse at 34 Cauldwell Street on the corner of Pilcroft Street, Bedford.

Engines Nos 1 and 3 were only allowed to attend fires in the country.

Source*; Bedfordshire Times and Independent,* 4 January 1868.

3. Apprentice Fees were drawn in lots twice yearly for 15 boys and five girls. The Bedford Charity apprenticed poor children and paid the £10 apprentice fee for

each girl. The girls served a five-year apprenticeship, and to qualify their ages must be from 12 to 15 years. The boys' apprentice fee was £15 and they served a seven-year apprenticeship. To qualify they had to be 13 to 15 years old. To be eligible for the apprentice fees the children's fathers had to have lived in Bedford for 10 years. The Bedford Charity paid half the fee when the children had begun their apprenticeship and paid the second half when they had served their term. The trustees required a certificate from the masters and the mistresses of the apprentices regarding their behaviour.

Linda S Ayres
(To be continued)

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Book Reviews

Colmworth and Neighbours History: Volume 5, March 2023. Published by Colmworth and Neighbours History Society: www.colmworthhistory.org.uk. 44pp including cover, price £6, plus £1.60 p & p from secretary@colmworthhistory.org.uk or Dave Jarrett, 3 Collingwood Road, Eaton Socon, PE19 8JQ.

Once again, the Colmworth Society have produced their journal as an attractive booklet in A4 size with a full colour cover and wire-stitched.

It contain five articles on a variety of subjects ranging from the North-Bedfordshire Pre-Reformation Church to a story of 60 years' residence in Colmworth – how many of us are able to claim 60 years' residence anywhere?

The first article ('The North Bedfordshire Pre-Reformation Church, by John Hutchings, Bill Franklin and the late David Hall) states that two principles governed the design of the medieval church: to provide the infrastructure for the performance of the Mass and to make the church fitting in the eyes of God. The paper includes an outline of the church's architecture containing such built-in features as the piscina, sedilia and squint. They place the architecture in the context of the Mass including evidence from the many beautiful medieval churches in and around North Bedfordshire. They also include documentary evidence mainly from medieval wills from the county. The churches had to be as large and airy as could be afforded, demonstrating the dominance of Saxon then Norman overlords and they also provided places which could be secured and defended in case of attack.

In addition to the architectural details already mentioned, this interesting and well-illustrated article also covers the altar, rood screens,

holy water stones or stoups, icons and paintings, sepulchres, bells, the pyx, the tabernacle, the pax, relics, and sanctuary.

Moving on to a different 'religion' Christopher Walker was surprised to find that there was a great deal of uncertainty as to the location of Bedford Golf Club (now Bedfordshire Golf Club) between 1891 and 1895, prior to its move to Biddenham. 'The Early History of Bedford Golf Club' describes his researches to resolve this issue and how he discovered some interesting facts about golf in the county in the 1890s and also the history of the club. The article has two old photographs and two maps and two Appendices listing extracts from golfing publications and newspapers of the time.

And now back to proper religion: the third article by Stephen Selby (also well illustrated) dilates on 'Colmworth Chapel and Methodism in Colmworth'. The Chapel, which is away from the main road down Chapel Lane, owes its origin to the Primitive Methodists when other chapels in the area owed theirs to the Baptists. The article traces the origins of the Chapel and how it survived closure and sale by the Primitive Methodist Church in 1910 and its rebirth as an independent chapel known as the Colmworth Mission.

Alan Woodward contributes 'Keysoe in Wartime'. Like your Editor he is one of the diminishing band who have memories of the Second World War, Alan being four years old when it started. He has included his own memories and material collected from the *Village Voice* magazine which was launched in 1985 and ran for 35 years.

In his introduction he sets the scene with Keysoe as a poor remote village without electricity or mains water. They had to wait to the 1950s for electricity and the 1980s for mains water. His well-illustrated article covers the evacuees, a descriptive piece on the Home Guard from *Village Voice*, the arrival of the 'Yanks', rationing and the Women's Land Army.

Thelma Marks rounds off this publication with 'Sixty Years in Colmworth' describing her personal history in the village.

The booklet is well produced and printed on good paper with many illustrations and well worth a read. **Ted Martin**

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A History of Some Faith Groups in Bedford. A Special Issue of Bedford Local History Magazine, Edited by Bob Ricketts, CBE. Published by Bedford Architectural, Archaeological and Local History Society. A4, 92pp, price £5 to non-BAALHS members, available from the Eagle Bookshop, 16–20 St Peters Street, Bedford MK40 2NN.

The contents list of this publication reads like a Who's Who of current writers on local history. Bob Ricketts has brought together a sterling band to provide nine articles on this diverse and important subject as follows:
In his Editorial Bob Ricketts writes:

'This special issue of *Bedford Local History Magazine* celebrates the recent history of some religious faith groups in Bedford. We have tried to be as inclusive as possible, with articles ranging from 20th-century-built Anglican churches in Bedford and Kempston, a recent evangelical church, Bunyan Meeting, the Society of Friends, the Salvation Army, the Jews in Bedford, the Moravians, and Roman Catholicism, to the Panacea Society.'

He hopes to include an article on Eastern Religions in Bedford in the Autumn 2023 magazine and possibly others on the local history of faith groups in future editions.

The first article is by Trevor Stewart on 'The Development of Anglican Churches in Bedford & Kempston in the 20th Century'. He tells us that the rapid expansion of Bedford in the 1900s led to the building of seven new Anglican churches, many of which had started as temporary metal structures, known as tabernacles. He covers All Saints, Queens Park, spurred on by the move of W H Allen from London to Bedford; St Leonard's, Victoria Road; St Andrew's, Kimbolton Road; the Church of the Transfiguration, Bedford Road, Kempston; Christ Church, Goldington Road; St Michael and All Angels, Barford Avenue; and St Mark's Church, Calder Rise, Brickhill. Each section is accompanied by a photo of the church in question.

Marcus Roberts with Stuart Antrobus follow with 'The History of the Jews in Bedford'. There was an active medieval Jewish community, which took part in resisting the King at Bedford Castle, but modern Jewry dates from the 18th century. Later a Rabbi created a scandal by converting to Christianity. In the 19th century Morris Lissack fought a one-man battle for Jewish education and emancipation and Bedford became the home of Harold Abrahams, the 1924 Olympic 100 metres champion, the subject of the *Chariots of Fire*, film. The article covers these and other stories with accompanying illustrations.

The 'Moravians in Bedford' are the subject of the next piece by Stuart Antrobus who explains that they were a Protestant minority in Bohemia and Moravia (now the Czech Republic) suffering persecution who eventually came to Bedford in the 18th century awakening a spiritual revival in the town in spite of hostility towards them from other non-conformists. Here they created a settlement where they lived as a

community until joining with the United Reformed Church. There are illustrations showing the Moravian Chapel, St Peter's Moravian Settlement, the St Peter's Street Moravian Chapel, later St Luke's Church, now the Quarry Theatre, and Queen's Park Moravian Church, still open for worship

Linda Ayres in 'A Brief History of the Salvation Army in Bedford', starts with the story of William and Catherine Booth, founders of the Salvation Army whose impetus came from dissatisfaction with the Methodist New Connection and the lack of care for the poor shown by other religions. The Salvation Army arose out of their Christian Mission in 1877. Linda describes the founding of the *War Cry* magazine and the coming of the uniform which soldiers had to buy to show loyalty to the cause. William Booth was denied permission to preach in Bedford in 1882 because of the fear of riots from the antipathy to Salvationists, as people disapproved of their brass bands and marches.

In 1888 the Army came to Bedford and quickly flourished because it was attractive to people from poor backgrounds because they understood them. It formed the First Congress Band in 1890 to play around the town and a linked Scout troop. The Sunday School and work in the Second World War are covered as well as help with the East Coast floods in 1953. A new Congress Hall was opened in 1977. They still continue their work in the community. The article is fully illustrated.

'The Rev John Priestley Wormoll and the Revival of Roman Catholicism in Bedford' is contributed by Dr Peter Doyle. It was difficult to establish a Catholic presence in the town. Wormoll was a converted Anglican who in 1863 became the first resident Catholic priest in Bedford since the 16th century, hoping to open a Catholic church. He set about raising funds writing regular begging letters to the Catholic press. This went on for 10 years, against anti-Catholic sentiment in the town, and was eventually achieved in 1874.

'A Brief History of Bunyan Meeting' by the Rev Christopher Damp, records that it owes its existence to John Gifford, who, in 1650, with eleven others formed themselves into an independent church. The author chronicles the problems coming from the restoration of Charles II in 1660 and the loss of St John's Church to the Meeting and the imprisonment of John Bunyan in that year. He tells of the church's efforts to keep a meeting place and eventually to rebuild it and the ministers involved in those tasks.

The Panacea Society has always been of interest nationally and internationally and Zara Matthews' piece on the 'History of the Panacea Society' is also rewarding. It was a Christian Sect founded in 1919 by a

group of women living in Bedford. Following the teachings of Joanna Southcott and their leader 'Octavia' (Mabel Barltrop), it was active through 1920s and 30s but closed in 2012. The story encompasses 'faith, mental health crises and long-term illness, end of life, world wars, Empire, tragic loss, prejudice, fear and utter conviction' and is well told with appropriate illustrations.

Bob Ricketts contributes the last two papers in this collection. His first is on 'The Miracle Church of God in Christ, Bedford', described as 'a multi-cultural, multi-generational church to meet the spiritual and emotional needs of recent immigrants to Bedford', emanating from a group of six believers in September 1961 and leading to the church today in Alexandra Road.

Bob's final contribution is on 'The Religious Society of Friends in Bedford'. The centre of Quaker activity in the county was Ampthill with meetings in several villages in the 18th century but the Friends in Bedford started slowly in the early 20th century and did not have their own premises till 1955. The article relates the people and activities leading up to this.

So BAALHS have again produced a significant contribution to the history of Bedford, with the promise of more to come. The A4 book is nicely produced with a glossy cover and well-illustrated throughout. I'm not a fan of sans serif type (or the general use of bold type) for easy reading but that is the house style they have established, so we can't complain (too much!) and it is good value for £5. **Ted Martin**

Society Bookshelf

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

A History of Some Faith Groups in Bedford. A Special Issue of Bedford Local History Magazine, Edited by Bob Ricketts, CBE. Published by Bedford Architectural, Archaeological and Local History Society. A4, 92pp, price £5 to non-BAALHS members, available from the Eagle Bookshop, 16–20 St Peter's Street, Bedford MK40 2NN.

At the Long Ford: A History of Langford, by Michael Rutt; Ed, Ted Martin. Paperback, 172 pp incl indexes. Price £7 (£10 by post). Langford & District History Society, 2021. Copies obtainable through the Editor.

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.

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.

Bedford Town Centre Statues, by Stuart Antrobus, £5, on sale only at the John Bunyan Museum shop, Mill Street, Bedford, MK40 3EU**.** Tel 01234 270303. Tuesday to Saturday 11am to 4pm.

*Clophill in the Great War: Those who Died and those who Survived***,** by Colin Watt. Hardback, A5 landscape, 169 pp, £12.50 + £2.50 p& p. For purchase details see: website bit.ly/307uLMM or phone 01525 860922.

Colmworth and Neighbours History: Volume 5, March 2023. Published by Colmworth and Neighbours History Society: www.colmworthhistory.org.uk. 44pp including cover, price £6, plus £1.60 p & p from secretary@colmworthhistory.org.uk or Dave Jarrett, 3 Collingwood Road, Eaton Socon, PE19 8JQ.

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. 48 pp 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.

Life in Bedford during the Second World War, by Stuart Antrobus. Published by Bedford Architectural, Archaeological and Local History Society, 2021. A4 paperback, 102 pp, incl Appendices 18 pp, Indexes, 13 pp, 85 illustrations. Price £11, from the Eagle Bookshop, 16–20 St Peter's Street, Bedford MK40 2NN or £13, incl postage, from BAALHS (cheque payable to BAALHS), Bob Ricketts, 68 Mendip Crescent, Bedford, MK41 9EP.

Willington in the First World War by Robert Bollington. Gostwick Press. 2018. 96 pp, £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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Final Offa?

Around the church at Repton the remains of ninth-century Mercian nobles, the kind of men who formed Offa's entourage, have been found in elaborate iron-bound coffins. But neither at Lichfield nor Repton is there any tradition that they are the place of Offa's burial. We might therefore prefer to follow the opinion of the monks of St Albans, who had good cause to remember, for to their chagrin they failed to secure the body of their great benefactor. They said that Offa was buried at Bedford, where after his death Queen Cynethryth was the patron. The two great churches in Bedford – St Peter and St Paul – both go back to the Old English period, and either would be a burial place fit for a king; but the tradition in St Albans was that his tomb was in a small chapel which by the thirteenth century had been swept away by the river Great Ouse. Why Bedford was chosen is a mystery, but there is one strange pointer. In a text known as *The Resting Places of the English Saints* first compiled in the late ninth century, Bedford is listed as sharing with Hereford the relics of King Ethelbert of the East Angles, the man Offa had killed. So, had Offa chosen to be buried there in expiation of his sins?

In Wessex, Kent and East Anglia it is unlikely that Offa was mourned, for he had incurred much hatred. While recognising his achievements, the verdict of modern historians has been harsh - seeing him as a man driven by a lust for power, not a vision of English unity; a man who left no legacy.

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From, Michael Wood, *In Search of the Dark Ages: A History of Anglo-Saxon England*, 40th Anniversary Edition (BBC Books, 2022), and highly recommended. Offa reigned from c757–796 originally as the King of Mercia (which included Bedfordshire) one of the most important kingdoms of the 8th century. Apart from building the eponymous dyke he subdued most of the rest of England to his rule by the 780s.

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