



**Bedfordshire
Family History Society
Journal**

Vol 24 No 7 Sep 2024



Yeoman's dwelling in Odell

BEDFORDSHIRE
FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY
A member of the Family History Federation
Founded 1977
Registered Charity No. 281677

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**BEDFORDSHIRE
FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY
JOURNAL**



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JOURNAL SURNAME INDEX

Below is the Surname Index for this *Journal*, providing you with a rapid way of finding a Surname within this *Journal*. Note that Members' Surname Interests are not indexed. The Surname Index for *Journals* on the BFHS website will be updated in due course.

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Membership Subscriptions

If you are intending to pay your **2024** membership by Standing Order or Bank Transfer, please drop an email to treasurer@bfhs.org.uk to advise your name, post code, payment method and membership type. Your help would be appreciated.

We have recently opened a new account with Barclays to enable us to operate an account with dual authorisation online banking. This will simplify paying many of our society expenses. In the meantime, we will continue to maintain our NatWest bank account. Full details were given in the Renewal Notice that accompanied the December 2023 issue of the *Journal* or contact the Treasurer for details.

Please use the new Barclays bank details for bank transfers. When convenient, please change any standing order from NatWest to Barclays and please remember to cancel your standing order to our NatWest account.

BFHS VOLUNTEER VACANCIES

Our society cannot exist without its committee members who volunteer their time to support the functions of the society. Paul Woodcraft has indicated that he would like to step down from his roles as Journal Distribution Manager, and Funeral Directors Project Leader, and we are also seeking a Monumental Inscription Publications Coordinator.

The committee usually meets on the third Friday of each month via Zoom at 7 pm. Meetings usually last less than 2 hours and involve the dealing of business to run the society. Please feel free to come along and observe a meeting, under no obligation, and see how the committee works. Copies of Microsoft 365 will be provided to committee members if required.

Below is a list of areas where we need help. If you have any queries regarding any of these roles, or wish to offer help, please contact the Chairman, Mark Tresidder or Secretary, Jo Richardson, via email at **chairman@bfhs.org.uk** or **secretary@bfhs.org.uk**, alternatively you can talk to us at meetings.

Journal Distribution Manager



Due to the pending retirement of the incumbent, the above position will be coming vacant shortly and we are therefore looking for a person or persons to take on this duty.

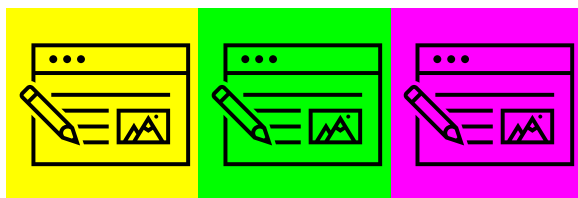
A full role description is available, but the basic duties are as follows:

- Collect or receive the journals from the printers.
- Print labels to send journals to members.
- Send emails with PDF copy of journal to those who have elected to receive them by PDF.
- Send emails with PDF copy to Swap Societies.
- Receive and record Swap journals and send on to Webmaster.
- Receive, check, and record requests for access to our Members' Portal then send on to Webmaster to issue a password.

At present, assembly of labels, journals, stamps, and envelopes for postal distribution is done by a second person.

You will require a computer/laptop with a printer and an internet connection. Time involved is a few hours each month.

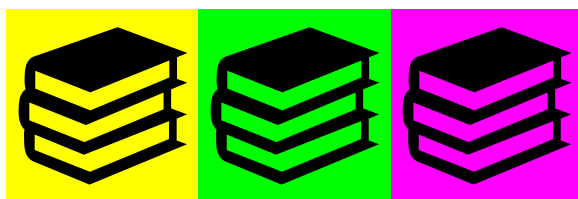
Funeral Directors' Records Project Leader



We are also looking for someone to lead our small team working on Funeral Directors' Records. The project involves research into the Funeral Directors of Bedfordshire both past and present, and arranging digitisation, transcription, and indexing of their records to put on our Members Only part of our website.

You will require a computer/laptop and an internet connection. Scanning equipment will be provided by the Society. Time required can be as little or as much as you can give with no set targets.

Monumental Inscription Publications Coordinator



We are looking for someone who can lead a team to coordinate the publication of Monumental Inscription transcripts that the Society has taken. The role involves management of our MS Access database of Monumental Inscriptions, coordination of volunteers to input and check transcriptions to the database and preparation of booklets for publication for the completed transcriptions.

Vice Chairman



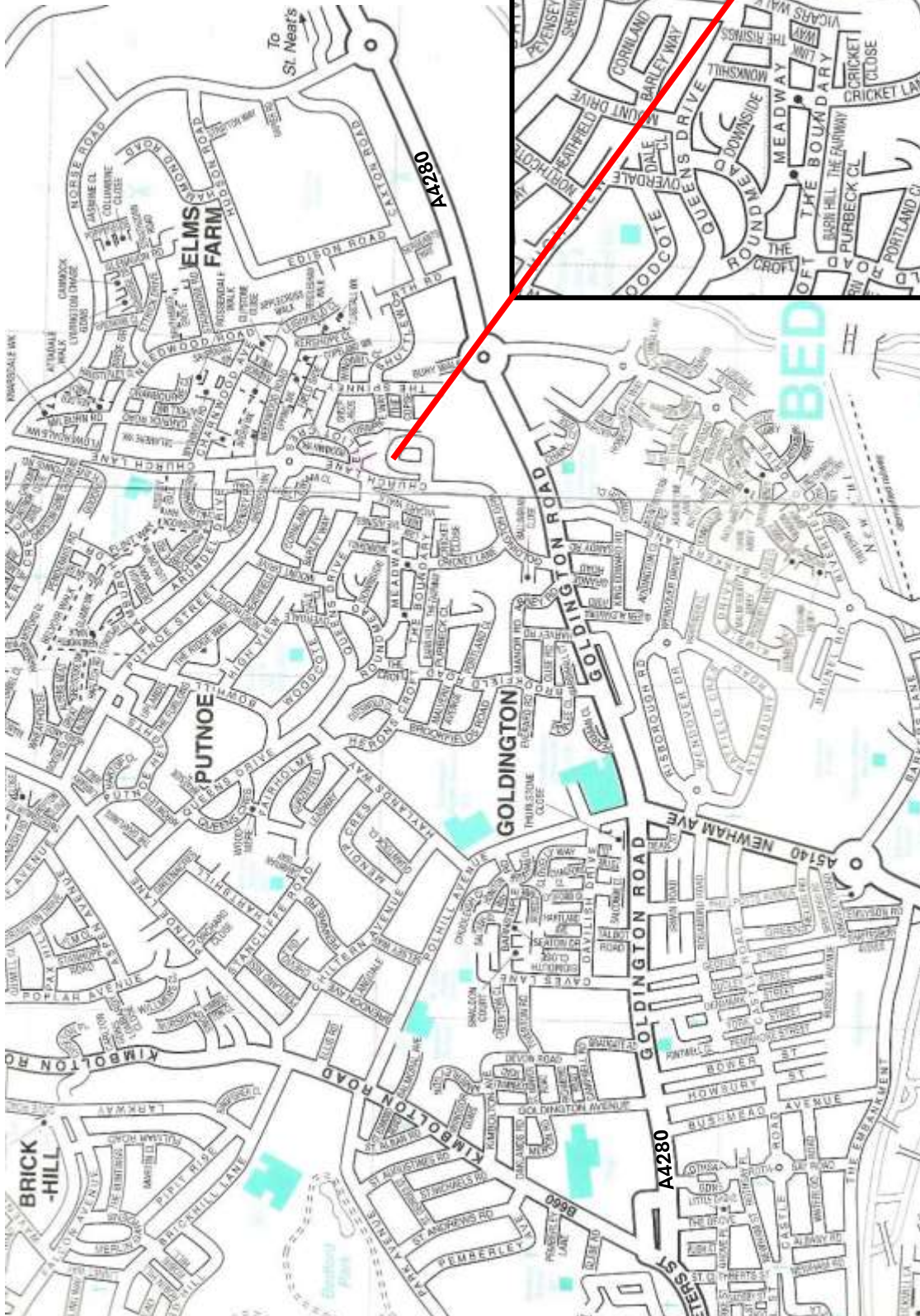
This role is currently vacant and is required to support the Chairman's activities in running the society.

RELOCATION FROM MARK RUTHERFORD SCHOOL

Following our announcement earlier in the year that we were unable to continue to use the facilities at Mark Rutherford School, your committee have been exploring options for relocating our members meetings.

We are pleased to announce that from January 2025 our members meetings will be held at St Mary's Church Hall, Church Lane, Goldington, Bedford. MK40 0AP, pictured below with map. Further details will be provided in the December Journal.





St Mary's Church Hall, Church Lane,
Goldington, Bedford. MK40 0AP

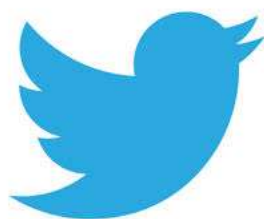
RESEARCH CENTRE

Coming Soon

We have also been exploring options for relocating the contents of our storeroom at the school and are planning to open a research centre located in the Community Voluntary Service offices in Bromham Road, pictured below.

We hope to be able to open the centre in the next few months and will communicate further details via our website and social media channels when the facility is available.

In the meantime, we are looking for donations of office furniture to help us set up the centre such as bookcases (similar to IKEA Billy bookcases), office chairs and lockable filing cabinets. If you are able to help with a donation, please contact Mark Tresidder by email at chairman@bfhs.org.uk.



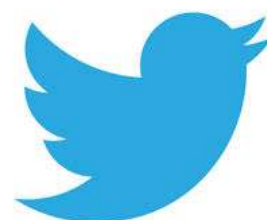
We're on Twitter!

Come and say hello.

We take part in #ancestryhour each

Tuesday evening, 7-8 pm

www.twitter.com/BedsFHS





TALK PROGRAMME

All talks are hybrid meetings taking place physically (currently at Mark Rutherford School) and virtually via Zoom.

Doors at the school open at 7 pm with the talks starting at 7.30 pm.

Our monthly Friday night meetings offer members instructive, interesting, and often amusing talks on subjects that fascinate all interested in history and genealogy in general and are usually particularly relevant to those with a Bedfordshire heritage. We look forward to seeing you in person.

Where possible, talks held at the school will be live streamed (Zoom log-in details are shown in the members' portal) or made available later as a video recording on the website in the members' portal, subject to approval by the speaker.

The address of the current venue is Mark Rutherford School, Wentworth Drive, Bedford, Bedfordshire MK41 8PX.



TALK PROGRAMME (cont'd)

Using Bedfordshire Archive for your family history research

Natasha Kikas

Friday 6 September 2024



Natasha Kikas joined the Bedfordshire Archive team as a part time archivist in April 2022 on the retirement of the previous post holder, Kathryn Faulkner. This is her first role since qualifying as an archivist. Prior to this appointment and during lockdown, Natasha began remote volunteering with transcription projects which kept up her palaeography skills. Natasha has also completed a diploma in Family History. She will talk about using the archives for family history research.

History of your ancestral home

Dr Nick Barratt

Friday 4 October 2024



Dr Nick Barratt is an author, broadcaster and historian best known for his work on BBC's *Who Do You Think You Are?* He is an honorary associate professor of public history at the University of Nottingham, the Director of Senate House Library (University of London), a teaching fellow at the University of Dundee and a fellow of the Royal Historical Society. His latest publication, *The Restless Kings*, explores the reigns of Henry II, Richard I and John.

This guide to researching the history of a house, old or new, is for anyone who is interested in historical properties, from their own house to stately homes. It explains how to explore the many sources of information available to the amateur house detective, including the three great land surveys of the 19th and early 20th centuries, the records of the Land Registry, and conveyancing documents. For the more advanced researcher, tax and manorial documents provide records of properties dating back to the medieval period. More modern dwellings can be studied through building plans, local directories, electoral lists and rate books. Use this guide to put together the fascinating story of your home, including who built it and when, details of previous occupants and even clues to their choice of interior decoration!

TALK PROGRAMME (cont'd)

Discovering Robert Keable, Utterly Immoral WW1 Chaplain and writer Simon Keable-Elliott

Friday 8 November 2024 (note date)



Educated at Sherborne School and Durham University, Simon first worked in Fleet Street - as a barman - before managing restaurants in Mayfair, Hampstead and Putney. He owned and ran a café-bar-restaurant in West Norwood for 8 years before re-training as a teacher, spending 25 years as Head of Politics at a secondary school in Croydon. He has written articles for *Genealogy Today*, *The Church Times*, *The History News Network*, *The Beresford Family Society Magazine*, and *The Journal of the Society for Army Historical Research*. He is an accredited lecturer for the Arts Society and also a regular speaker at events run by Western Front Associations, U3As and Family History Societies. In his talk Simon discusses the

life and work of the 1920s novelist Robert KEABLE, a well-respected writer and priest before and during the First World War who wrote the bestselling scandalous novel *Simon Called Peter*. The novel is featured in *The Great Gatsby* and was turned into a Broadway play and the sequel into a Hollywood movie. The success of the novel allowed Keable to run away to live in Tahiti writing six more novels and eventually marrying a Tahitian princess.

Gypsy Bride

Martin Rose

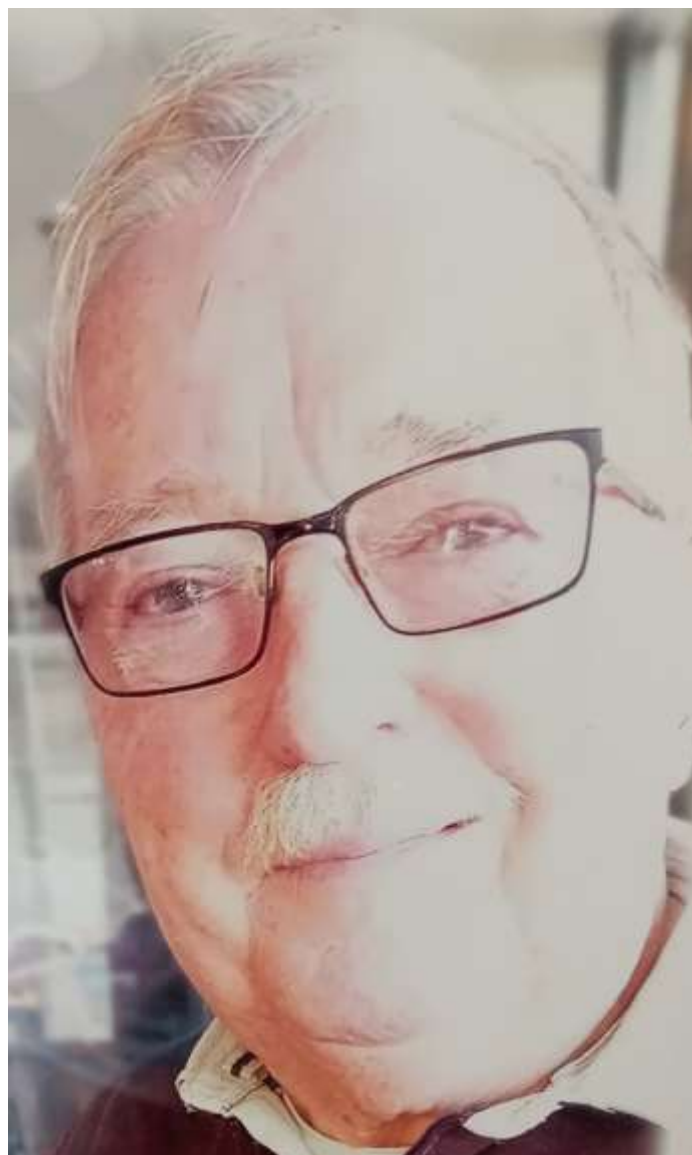
Friday 6 December 2024



I am delighted to speak about Sarah Anne SHAW, a gypsy from Stotfold. Hers is an extraordinary story, well worth the telling. I have recently published a small book about her marriage and its consequences called '*Nehemiah PERRY & His Gypsy Bride*' which I launched recently at Saffron Waldon Historical Society. The story is interesting in itself, but also in demonstrating the use of sources. I was extraordinarily lucky in that there are several archival sources (including the complete divorce file with all its evidence verbatim), none of which had previously been used. Every time I thought 'There can't be any more to find', there was, so that makes for quite an interesting journey of discovery. Gypsy genealogy is itself interesting

because I had no idea how much I could discover, but it turned out to be quite a lot. Sarah came from one of the most distinguished 'black-blooded' Gypsy families of Eastern England, fiddlers to a man and woman, who played at every village feast in the region, and I think I have managed to construct a pretty good family tree.

IN MEMORY OF JOHN PARTRIDGE



It was briefly mentioned in last month's *Journal* that we lost John. He passed away very peacefully on the 19 December 2023, at home in Lowestoft. As his widow Liz said, it was not the coastal retirement that they had planned for.

On leaving school, John worked for Bedford Council in administration. Later he branched out into the exciting new world of computers. He then worked in various companies in their IT departments finishing up in Northampton where he worked as a Systems Analyst, before retiring to indulge more fully in his love of Family History.

John always enjoyed helping as many people as he possibly could with their Family History. Initially he achieved that answering queries and researching for people on *Rootschat*. He also liked to join fellow researchers when we attended the various FHS Fairs. Later he ran our Facebook page and during lockdown he was the Face of the Society. Alongside all of this, for several years John did a fantastic job as our Librarian.

When he could find the time John and his wife liked to enjoy holidays in the UK and abroad and especially cruising. Other pastimes were listening live to various rock bands.

MEET OUR NEW SECRETARY

Jo RICHARDSON



I was born and brought up in Bedford, as were my parents, grandparents and most of my ancestors, at least as far back as the mid-1800s. I have lived in the area for almost all my adult life, apart from the four years I spent in London in the mid-1980s whilst doing my nurse training and have worked at Bedford Hospital for 34 years in operating theatres. I have two children and two stepchildren, all grown up and am now owned by our five-year-old rescue poodle.

I have always been interested in history and was lucky to spend a lot of time with my mum's parents as a child, being told tales of old Bedford such as there being 13 pubs in Cauldwell Street between Black Diamond corner and St Johns Street! My history teacher at middle school was Richard WILDMAN, local historian and publisher of

several books of historic photos, so maybe that helped start my interest in local and family history; I later found out that we were distantly related. I also studied history at A level and more recently as part of my OU degree.

Researching my family history started back in the days when the internet was a dial-up connection, so I was lucky to have the county archives on my doorstep. Many a happy hour was spent either at County Hall or the Central Library, flicking through the microfiche, bound copies of the local newspapers, the Bedford Directory and the vast collection of old photos. Once the kids arrived, research took a back step, and it was only during the pandemic that I restarted my research in earnest and rejoined BFHS. I am yet to find a pirate or a knight of the realm in the family, but legend has it that I have a connection to Tarzan - my dad's uncle emigrated to America in his youth and became Johnny Weissmuller's pace swimmer when he was training for the Olympics!

I have belonged to various committees over the years and now I work part time, I am able to get more involved with community activities. Besides BFHS secretary and helping with the funeral directors' records project, I am a leader in training for a local Rainbows group (girl Guides aged five to seven), belong to two WIs and recently organised a 40-year reunion of my nursing set, managing to locate all 20 of them across the world with a bit of help from my family history research skills. I hope to do the role of secretary justice, although my predecessor Lynn has set the bar very high.

SOLDIER, POLICEMAN AND BIGAMIST

Jan Darts

Until recently, I never knew I had a great-uncle Amos DARTS who, like my father, was in the police force, albeit the Bedfordshire Force rather than my father's Hertfordshire Force. Apart from my father and mother, I now know more about the life of Amos than any other relative, mainly through frequent reports in local newspapers of the time¹.

Early life

Amos Darts was born 2 Apr 1881², Wrestlingworth, Bedfordshire to Henry and Amy Darts (nee NEWELL)³. On 19 Jul 1886 he enters Wrestlingworth C of E school⁴. No departure date is known.

He was living in Putnoe, Goldington, Bedfordshire at the time of 1891 Census with his parents and siblings: Annie (b 1864), William (b 1879), Joshua (b 1884) my grandfather, Arthur (b 1886), and Frederick (b 1891). At the taking of the Census, Ernest Darts (b 1891) a grandson and Jacob Newell (b 1869) a nephew were also present⁵.

Athlete

His athletic prowess attracted the attention of local papers:

*The Bedfordshire Times and Independent*⁶, Saturday 15 August 1891: *Goldington. Village Fete* - On the 6th inst the Green presented an unusually lively appearance on the occasion of the first annual fete and sports organised in this village. At the conclusion of the sports the prizes were distributed by the Schoolmaster, Mr FISHER, as follows...Consolation race (boys) 1. F FOX: 2. **A Darts**: 3. G HERMON.

The Bedfordshire Times and Independent, Saturday 6 August 1892: *Goldington. Goldington School v Old Warden School* - This return match was played at Old Warden Friday week. A well contested victory was gained by Goldington by 4 runs. [For Goldington: **A Darts** (not out) 11 out of a total of 33]

The Bedfordshire Times and Independent, Saturday 13 June 1896: *Goldington. Races on the Green* - A 100 yards [unreadable] for boys and girls attending the Board Schools took place on Tuesday, on the Green, and some good racing was witnessed. Results: Boys First heat: 1 C MARSHALL (2 yds), 2 **A Darts** (11 yds)...

¹ See the article *Using newspapers in family history research* in this *Journal* for guidance.

² 1939 Register courtesy of Ancestry, [ancestry.co.uk](https://www.ancestry.co.uk).

³ 1891 Census courtesy of Ancestry, [ancestry.co.uk](https://www.ancestry.co.uk).

⁴ Bedfordshire Archives, Ref SDWrestlingworth1/1, Wrestlingworth C of E school log book.

⁵ 1891 Census *Ibid*.

⁶ All newspaper quotations courtesy of The Genealogist, [thegenealogist.co.uk](https://www.thegenealogist.co.uk), unless otherwise stated.

Soldier

On 16 March 1898, Amos signed his Attestation for Short Service for 12 years as a Private with 2nd Battalion Grenadier Guards, Regimental Number 7334. He gave his age as 18 years 11 months whereas he was just shy of 17 years! He served briefly at home until 12 July 1898, then at Gibraltar until 3 October 1899, at home again until 7 March 1900, then in South Africa until 3 August 1902⁷, finally returning to home service until 8 September 1902. He was then in reserve until his discharge on 15 March 1910⁸.

He was entitled to the South Africa medal and Wittebergen, Cape Colony and Transvaal clasps⁹. He was also entitled to the King's South Africa medal and South Africa 1901 and 1902 clasps¹⁰, examples below:



Policeman

After completion of his Army service, he appears not to have been keen to join the multitude of the Darts family who were agricultural labourers and joined Bedfordshire Constabulary.

*The Bedfordshire Mercury*¹¹, Friday 30 October 1903. *Beds Standing Joint Committee. The County Police Force.* The report of the Chief Constable (Colonel JOSSELYN) contained the following passages: I have to report that I have appointed Superintendent H QUENBY of the Bedfordshire Division to be Deputy

⁷ No entries in the 1901 Census for the troops in South Africa, webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk

⁸ uk.forceswarrecords.com/file/588723689/darts-amos-page-4-uk-royal-hospital-chelsea-pensionersservice-records-1760-1925

⁹ Roll of individuals entitled to the South Africa medal and clasps, under the Army Order granting the medal, issued 1 April 1901. Signed Lt Col Francis Lloyd, commanding 2nd Battalion Grenadier Guards dated 21 July 1901, Harrismith, South Africa. Courtesy of Ancestry.co.uk.

¹⁰ Roll of individuals entitled to the King's South Africa medal and clasps, under the Army Order 232 granting the medal issued 1 October 1902. Signed Lt Col Francis Lloyd, commanding 2nd Battalion Grenadier Guards dated 27 Oct 1902, Chelsea Barracks SW. Courtesy of Ancestry.co.uk.

¹¹ Courtesy of Ancestry, ancestry.co.uk.

Chief Constable, Inspector T WOODS has been promoted Superintendent, and has succeeded Superintendent JAMES [who retired], in the charge of Amphill Division. Sergt C PANTER has been promoted Inspector; and PC 15 F J UNDERWOOD has been promoted to Sergeant. Recruit No 31, **Amos Darts** has joined the Force.

The prospect of regular employment may have prompted his marriage to Dorothy Emily WYNNE (b c1884) although at the time of his marriage, 14 March 1903, he was recorded as 'of no occupation'. Daughters Dorothy Maud born 1904, Hilda May 1905, and Frances 1916 would follow.

His police career can be followed through newspaper reports of his court appearances. Some examples follow:

The Bedfordshire Advertiser, Friday 12 August 1904: *Leighton Petty Sessions Tuesday 9 August 1904*. 'Generally three parts gone'. Amos KEEP summoned for being drunk in charge of a horse and cart. PC PAPWORTH deposed that the defendant left his premises with a pony and cart. Having previously noticed the defendant's condition, while in the market, witness declined to let Keep proceed. Witness had stopped defendant from going into a certain public house. **PC Darts** gave similar evidence. A fine of 15s and 6d including costs was imposed. Defendant said he could not pay. He would go to Bedford prison as a ratepayer, (more laughter). Eventually he said he should pay; he had £100 in his pocket, (renewed laughter).

The Bedfordshire Advertiser, 21 July 1905. *Leighton Buzzard*. *Rescued just in time*. On Friday morning, **PC Darts** whilst on duty in North Street, about 2.15, saw smoke issuing from a window in a third storey room of the house occupied by Dr WORTS. He raised an alarm and calling PC GOODWIN, entry was gained to the house through an unfastened lower window...The very prompt action of the two constables no doubt averted a calamity.

The Reporter, Friday 27 April 1906. *The Beds Police*. *The Chief Constable's Report*. *Former Slip End Officer's Smartness*. A report was received from Leighton Urban Council commending the manner in which **PC A Darts** and PS CHESHIRE (formerly of Slip End) detected and worked up a case in which a butcher had some diseased meat in his possession. The Chief Constable recommended a reward of £1 10s to PS Cheshire and £1 to **PC Darts**. In referring to the recommendations of Leighton Buzzard Urban Council, Mr CROOCH said he thought it was the easiest thing in the world to trace the carcass of a dead cow. The force was well paid already. Mr R RICHMOND said the merits of the case were in the prevention of the sale of the meat. The grants were made.

The Reporter, Friday 22 June 1906. *Leighton Buzzard*. *Alleged assault on a Police Constable*. On Monday morning, at the Magistrates' Clerk's Office, before Dr SQUARE, Chas COSBY, a labourer, a young man belonging to Leighton, was brought up in custody, charged with having assaulted **PC Darts** while the latter was engaged in the execution of his duty, on Saturday last. The officer it appears

was remonstrating with a man who was making use of foul language in St Andrew's Street, when the defendant, it is alleged, interposed, and on being told to go away, committed the assault. He was remanded to the next Petty Sessions on Tuesday and released on bail.

The Reporter, Friday 22 June 1906. *Leighton Buzzard. Policeman's Helmet as a Football.* An exciting scene was witnessed in the neighbourhood of the police station on Saturday evening. **PC Darts** had taken a man into custody and reached the police station with his charge, but losing his hold for a moment to open the gate, the prisoner took advantage of the opportunity to make a bold dash for freedom. **Darts** and PC PEGG went off in pursuit, but the man managed to [pace] up Hockliffe Road and through Beaudesert, with an increasing crowd at his heels, before he was again captured. One of the constables dropped his helmet in the flight, and certain of the bystanders seized the opportunity to have a little football practice therewith.

The Reporter, Friday 29 June 1906 and *The Bedfordshire Advertiser and Luton Times*, Friday 29 June 1906. *Leighton Petty Sessions. Tuesday 24 October 1905. Assaulting a Leighton Policeman. Ex-Army man's escapade. Smart penalty.* Charles Cosby, labourer, Leighton, surrendered to his bail to answer a charge of assaulting **PC Darts** whilst in the execution of his duty at Leighton on June 14th. Mr C ROBERTS defended, accused pleaded not guilty. **PC Darts**, the principal witness for the police, told how that being on duty in St Andrew's Street at 11 [unreadable] making use of foul language. [There are three columns of newsprint covering the testimonies and cross examination of the witnesses.] Mr Roberts submitted that **PC Darts** was to blame because he pushed the defendant first and it seemed strange that the police had not brought any independent witnesses to support their case. The Chairman said there was no reason to doubt the straight forward evidence of the constable. Defendant was fined 50s, including costs or one month's imprisonment.

The Bedfordshire Advertiser and Luton Times, 3 May 1907 and *The Bedfordshire Mercury*, Friday 27 October 1905. *Shillington. Game Laws.* At Biggleswade Sessions, Albert and Alfred HYDE, both of Shillington, were charged with using a snare for the purpose of taking game on land in the occupation of George WARREN, at Meppershall, on 9 April. **PC Darts** stated that he saw the defendants at the snare. It was set high, attached to the hedge. There was a hare run there. Defendants denied that they set the snares. The bench convicted, and fined each defendant 10s and costs.

The Bedfordshire Mercury, Friday 4 October 1907. *Henlow. Suicide on the railway.* Mr G J M WHYLEY, Deputy Coroner, held an enquiry at the Woolpack, Stotford, yesterday afternoon concerning the death of Thomas ODELL, 68 years of age, employed on the Midland Railway at Henlow Station as plate layer. Odell lived at Meppershall. Mr T Fisher was appointed foreman of the jury. [A statement of facts is given by the Coroner followed by a health report by Dr TEMPLE. A juror interjected that he did not think Odell was suffering from

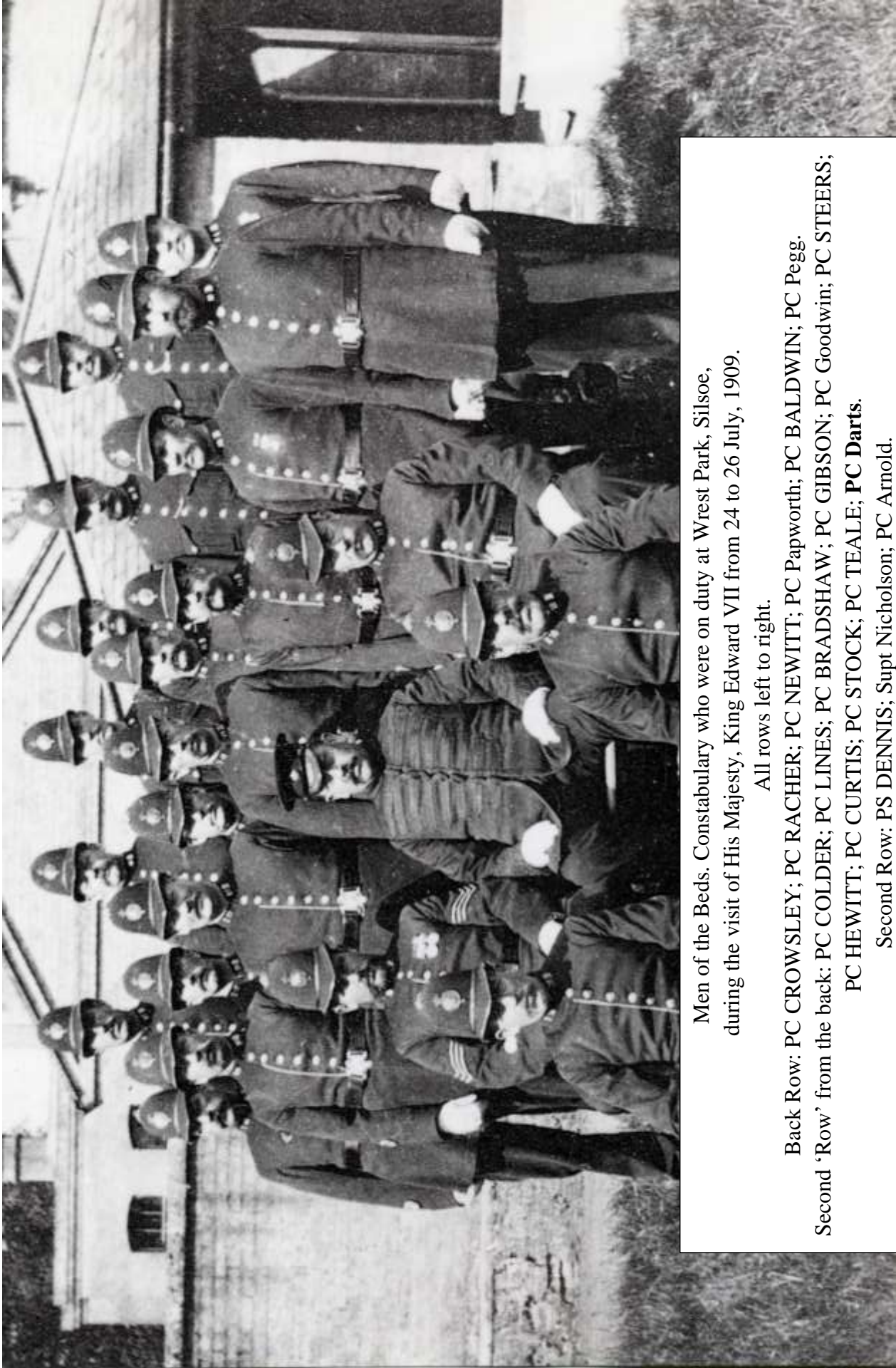
insanity as when he saw him last he was perfectly sane and answered all his questions. Joseph HILL, brick maker, had identified the body who was his father-in-law and when last seen was low-spirited and ‘wrong in the head’. The engine driver Alfred Walter YAPP explained the events leading to the accident and this was corroborated by the fireman William CHAMBERS]. **PC Darts**, Meppershall, deposed to going to the railway line on Tuesday and finding the deceased on the bank quite dead. He found on deceased the outfit of a [unreadable] and 4d in coppers. Deceased’s flesh, blood and brains were scattered along the line for 21 yards. Deceased’s boots were by the side of the line and had evidently been taken off before stepping before the engine. [Thomas MADDAMS gave evidence as Odell’s work-gang leader.] Verdict: Suicide whilst of unstable mind.

The Reporter, Friday 3 April 1908. *Shillington. Youths and girl*. At Biggleswade Petty Sessions on Wednesday 24th, John HOPE and Earnest WESTEN of Shillington and Algernon BRITON of Lower Stondon, youths of 17 and 19 years of age were charged with assaulting Maude CLARKE at Meppershall, on March 15th. Complainant stated that whilst returning from Lower Stondon Chapel, in company of another girl, and young fellow named THOMPSON, the defendants threw stones at her along the road, struck her in the back, tore her fur, put a dog on her back, and hit her with a stick. She met **PC Darts** and informed him. This had occurred several times. Georgina ARNOLD, a laundress, and **PC Darts** also gave evidence. Briton said they only threw stones along the road for the dog to run after. They had no intention of harming the girls. The defendants were each fined 2s and 6d and costs 10s, the Chairman administering a caution as to their future conduct.

King Edward VII visited Wrest Park from 24 to 26 July 1909 as the guest of its tenant, US Ambassador Whitelaw REID¹². *The Bedfordshire Times* of 30th July 1909 reported ‘The policing arrangements were under the direction of Colonel Josselyn, Chief Constable, who, wearing a handsome uniform, moved from point to point in a motor-car. Superintendent NICHOLSON was also present, and assistance in regulating the admissions was courteously rendered by Mr J C DENLEY. There was a numerous body of the King’s Police in the neighbourhood.’ One of the police contingent was PC Darts, pictured¹³ on the next page. It is unfortunate that only one of his medals is visible.

¹² Bedfordshire Archives/CommunityHistories/Silsoe/KingEdwardVIIAtWrestPark, bedsarchives.bedford.gov.uk.

¹³ Bedfordshire Archives, Catalogue Ref Z50/142/335: Four group photographs of Men of the Bedfordshire Constabulary. bedsarchives.bedford.gov.uk.



Men of the Beds. Constabulary who were on duty at Wrest Park, Silsoe, during the visit of His Majesty, King Edward VII from 24 to 26 July, 1909.

All rows left to right.

Back Row: PC CROWSLEY; PC RACHER; PC NEWITT; PC NEWITT; PC Papworth; PC BALDWIN; PC Pegg.
Second 'Row' from the back: PC COLDER; PC LINES; PC BRADSHAW; PC GIBSON; PC Goodwin; PC STEERS;
PC HEWITT; PC CURTIS; PC STOCK; PC TEALE; PC Darts.

Second Row: PS DENNIS; Supt Nicholson; PC Arnold.

Front Row: PC SHARP; PC JAVENS.

From press reports of the time, resignation of Police Constables after serving 8 to 10 years was not unusual and perhaps Amos had had enough of arresting drunks and stone throwing youths:

The Bedfordshire Advertiser and Luton Times, 17 May 1912 and *The Luton Reporter*, Monday 20 May 1912. *Police changes*. PC SIMS, Limbury, and **PC Darts**, Caddington, resigned their positions as Constables on Wednesday...

Barman

Later newspaper entries indicate that after resigning from the police force he moved to London. However, despite his wife hailing from London, she remained in Bedfordshire, and it is most likely that he separated from her in 1912. There is one glimpse of him in 1913 when he gave evidence at an inquest:

*The East End News and London Shipping Chronicle*¹⁴, Friday 7 November 1913. *A Stratford Sensation. Baby's body found on the 'Swan Hotel' Roof*. Mr G E HILLEARY held an inquest on Tuesday on the body of a newly born female child found on the roof of the 'Swan Hotel' the previous afternoon. **Amos Darts**, barman at the 'Swan', said at about mid-day on Monday he walked on the roof 'out of curiosity' and on a lower roof he saw the body of a child. He informed the manager and afterwards fetched the police. In reply to the Coroner, witness said he knew a barmaid Rita COOK, who left on October 22nd. The window of her bedroom did not overlook the roof where the body was discovered. The Coroner: Did you know that Miss Cook was in a certain condition? No, sir. [The report goes on to detail the evidence from the manager of the hotel and a barmaid. Cook was not in a fit condition to be present at the inquest and it would be adjourned. Evidence is received from the doctor who attended Cook previously and the child on the roof.]

Bigamist

By chance, I came across a record¹⁵ that shows that Amos was convicted of Bigamy in 1917. He is recorded as Amos Darts, 36, Hotel Manager, committed for trial at Acton on 19 Sep 1917 for 'marrying Frances Marion JONES, his wife then being alive'. He pleaded guilty on 10 Oct 1917 in front of Judge Atherly Jones and was sentenced to two months (without hard labour) in Wormwood Scrubs and was to be treated as an offender of the Second Division¹⁶.

¹⁴ Courtesy of Ancestry, *Ibid*.

¹⁵ UK, Calendar of Prisoners, 1868-1929, courtesy of Ancestry, [ancestry.co.uk](https://www.ancestry.co.uk)

¹⁶ The second division is intended to provide for the separation of prisoners of previously good character from those of depraved or criminal habits. No prisoners of the latter class are sent to Wormwood Scrubs, which is specially set apart for men of previously good character. parliament.uk/historic-hansard/commons/1933/mar/16/prisoners-second-division.

Luckily, his commitment for trial was captured by [*The Acton*] *Gazette*¹⁷ of Friday 21 September 1917, but no record of the trial has been found so his 'reserved defence' below has been lost to history:

Chiswick man's alleged bigamy. Defendant committed for trial. At Acton Petty Sessions on Tuesday, before Mr G WRIGHT (chairman) and other justices, **Amos Darts** (36), munition worker¹⁸, Grove Park-terrace, Chiswick, was charged on remand with marrying Frances M Jones at Grove Park Church, Chiswick, on Jan 3, 1915, his wife being then and now alive. Mr W FIRTH prosecuted and Mr DADD defended. When arrested by Det-sergt WESTON, defendant said that his intentions towards the second wife were good. The first wife, Emily Darts, of Luton, was called as a witness. She had the option of declining to give evidence against defendant, but she elected to give evidence. She stated that she was married to defendant at a registry office at Bedford. There were two children¹⁹. She last saw her husband at about April 1913. Since then he had not provided for her or the children. Cross examined, she said that she left her husband in 1912. She received an income from a relative after leaving defendant. Frances M Jones of Grove Park-Terrace, Chiswick, said that she became acquainted with the defendant about five years ago at Chiswick. She was a waitress and barmaid. Defendant followed her from one situation to another. At first she would not accept his attentions. He posed as a single man. Later, she decided to become engaged to him, and they were married on Jan 3, 1915. Their married life had been somewhat unhappy. There was a child aged 2 by the marriage. On a further charge against defendant of making false entry in the marriage register at the church, Thos H FARMER, verger at Grove Park Church, gave evidence as to the entry of the marriage between Arthur Darts, described as a bachelor, and Frances M Jones. Fanny E Jones said she was present at the marriage between defendant and her daughter. He described himself as a bachelor. Wm Jones, husband of the last witness, said he saw defendant sign the register, and also signed it himself. Defendant described himself as a bachelor. Frances M Jones was recalled, and said that a birth certificate produced was given to her by defendant as the certificate relating to his birth. It was a long time after he had called himself Arthur. Witness said it came to light when boxes were being turned out. Mr Firth said the certificate referred to defendant's brother. Mr Dadds said the defendant pleaded not guilty, and reserved his defence. Defendant was sent for trial, bail being allowed.

The evidence before the court is plain to see when the marriage register is examined:

¹⁷ Courtesy of Ancestry, *Ibid.*

¹⁸ There is no evidence to suggest Amos was a munition worker during any of his lifetime and as seen from the Calendar of Prisoners, his occupation at this time was recorded as Hotel Manager. Was he trying to curry favour with the bench by showing he was engaged in war work?

¹⁹ Her third child Frances died in 1916 shortly after birth.

1915. Marriage solemnized at <u>the Parish Church</u> in the <u>Parish</u> of <u>Grove Park West</u> in the County of <u>Middlesex</u>								
No.	When Married.	Name and Surname.	Age.	Condition.	Rank or Profession.	Residence at the time of Marriage.	Father's Name and Profession.	Rank or Profession of Father.
6	21st January 1915	Arthur Darts	25 years	Bachelor	Manager	54 Grove Park Terrace Chiswick	Henry Darts (Deceased)	Fireman
		Frances Maria Jones	23 years	Spinster	—	54 Grove Park Terrace Chiswick	William Jones	Contractor
Married in the <u>Parish Church</u> according to the Rites and Ceremonies of the <u>Established Church</u> or otherwise, by us,								
This Marriage was solemnized between us,		{ <u>Arthur Darts</u> <u>Frances Maria Jones</u> }		in the Presence of us,		{ <u>William Jones</u> <u>J. Plumb</u> }		

Arthur is the brother of Amos who, in July 1915, embarks on his journey to the WW1 battlefields with the 6th Battalion, Beds & Herts Regiment²⁰, so it is most likely that he was already in the military when this ‘marriage’ took place. Arthur is killed in action on 15 July 1916. This subterfuge by Amos meant that, until recently, I could not understand why Arthur’s sister, Rosina JEFFS received his War Gratuity²¹ after his death rather than his ‘wife’, but of course Arthur did not have a wife.

The child mentioned by Frances from the ‘marriage’ is Eunice Evelina Esther, born 18 Sep 1915. At the time of her baptism, the ‘Darts’ family are living at 54 Grove Park Terrace, Chiswick, the home of Frances’s parents. Frances eventually marries Frederick Walter SLADE in 1930 and in the 1939 Register can be found in Lansdowne Road, Leyton, Essex sharing the house with Eunice and her husband of two years, Edward LINSELL²².

According to Emily’s testimony at the committal trial she had ‘left’ her husband in 1912. On this basis, my initial thoughts were that her third child, born 24 June 1916, was fathered by someone else other than Amos, but still registered as Frances Darts as was the normal convention for a child born out of wedlock. However, as a final check on Frances’s status, I obtained her birth and death certificates. Surprisingly, her birth and death had been registered by Amos, showing that the child was born and subsequently died at his place of residence and work - Ealing Park Tavern²³. Most likely Frances was Amos’s child and Emily had been living with Amos. The death certificate records the cause of death as a premature birth of seven months old, so she was conceived in December 1915. Perhaps Amos was trying to have two households and Frances Jones finds out, which is how Amos ended up in court. Emily’s statement that she had left Amos in 1912 is perhaps her trying to hide the bigamous relationship.

Unfortunately, I have been unable to trace Dorothy Emily beyond her appearance in court in 1917. In the 1921 Census²⁴ her two surviving daughters appear to have been

²⁰ British Army World War 1 Medal Rolls Index Cards, 1914-1920, courtesy of Ancestry, *Ibid*

²¹ Army Register of Soldiers’ Effects 1901-1929, courtesy of Ancestry, *Ibid*.

²² 1939 England and Wales Register, courtesy of Ancestry, *Ibid*.

²³ The Tavern still stands on the corner of Carlyle Road and South Ealing Road but is derelict.

²⁴ 1921 Census of England and Wales, Courtesy of Find My Past, findmypast.co.uk.

adopted by Albert and Emily BOWERS (nee Wynne)²⁵. I have a suspicion that this Emily is Amos's first wife Dorothy Emily, but constant obscuration of names, birth dates and places of birth has just produced a fog of loose ends.

Engineering Mechanic

The 1921 Census finds Amos in Vale Grove, Chiswick, a lodger with the Andrews family, working as an Engineering Mechanic for 'Hapur & Sons, Acton'²⁶. His marital status is given as 'married'. It is unclear from these 1921 Census records whether Dorothy Emily is still married to Amos, or is now Emily Bowers, or even alive. Eventually, Amos does marry again to Mildred M A JAMES in 1935, but he had already fathered a child, Eunice, by her in 1925 and then again in 1935, Barbara R. The 1939 Register²⁷ finds Amos (still an Engineering Mechanic) and Mildred residing at Willow Vale, Hammersmith, with no children present.

Amos Darts lived until 1972. Having discovered part of his life story and his gradual estrangement from his Bedfordshire roots and family possibly explains why, until recently, he was an unknown part of my family history. As with most family research, in answering many questions about Amos, I have many more questions to answer regarding Dorothy Emily Darts (nee Wynne).

RECENT TALKS

Were you unable to attend the talk given by Tony Dawson and Denise Bates to the Society on 19 April and 5 July respectively at Mark Rutherford school, or use Zoom to join the live audience, or catch up by viewing Tony's talk through the Members' Portal of our website? If you missed out, Tony and Denise have kindly provided below an extract of their talks, Shefford's Jewish Evacuees and Using Newspapers in Family History Research.

SHEFFORD'S JEWISH EVACUEES

Tony Dawson

In September 1939, as part of the government organised evacuation of children from London, a party of 500 Jewish children and staff from the Jewish Secondary School in Amhurst Park London were evacuated to Shefford. Many of these children were refugees who had recently arrived in Britain from Germany and Austria (as part of the Kindertransport) and did not speak English. The group was led by Dr Judith

²⁵ Currently, I have not unravelled the Wynne family with any certainty because the family appear to use names in a flexible manner, for example Ernest Wynne, brother of Dorothy Emily, was registered as Augustus Edwin Ernest.

²⁶ 1921 Census of England and Wales, *Ibid.*

²⁷ 1939 England and Wales Register, courtesy of Ancestry, *Ibid.*

GRUNFELD, whose book *Shefford - A story of a Jewish school community in evacuation 1939-1945* tells the story of the group's experiences.

The Kindertransport (German for 'children's transport') was an organised rescue effort of children from Nazi-controlled territory that took place during the nine months prior to the outbreak of the Second World War. The UK took in 10,000 Jewish children from Germany, Austria, Czechoslovakia, and Poland. Often, they were the only members of their families to survive the Holocaust. The start of the Second World War brought this to an end.

Operation Pied Piper was put in place on 1 September 1939 to relocate children, mostly from cities, at risk of bombing. It officially relocated 1.5 million people. Further waves of evacuation or re-evacuation took place from south and east coasts where seaborne invasion was expected and from cities after the Blitz began in September 1940.

Arriving In Shefford

Initially the relationship between the two communities was difficult. The people who provided foster homes for the children had no experience of the Jewish community and its laws and customs (especially the dietary laws). So, there was some disappointment when food which had been prepared as a welcome (ie a ham salad tea) was left untouched. However, over time they became familiar with the Jewish traditions and the relationships between the two sides grew stronger. Indeed these 'foster parents' came to consider the children as their 'own' and respected them for remaining loyal to their own religious traditions in a strange environment. As the 'foster parents' became more familiar with Jewish traditions they were able to encourage their evacuees to observe them. Also, the townspeople developed a warm relationship with the teachers and rabbis at the school.

Departure

The children stayed in Shefford until the end of the war, returning to London in August 1945. Before they left, Dr Judith Grunfeld addressed the towns people, and the following is an excerpt of her farewell remarks:

In the hearts of all our children, I can safely say, Shefford will continue to live on. There were about 600 children in the course of the six years who have passed through our school in Shefford. When they have become old and grey, I am sure that they will still talk of you. Wherever former pupils meet, Shefford will be affectionately remembered and to God's throne the story will go. Men and women of Shefford, you can be proud of yourselves. You have added a very wonderful chapter to the annals of humanity...

Years later after meeting one of the children Dr Grunfeld wrote:

Like the seeds of the dandelion - a humble flower of the field - which, blown into the wind, fly away and find their soil elsewhere, so the human kindness of the people of Shefford, as well as of Campton, Clifton, Meppershall and Stotfold is remembered all over the world by those who were the children in this story, and are now men and women rearing their families into the third generation.

Places of interest

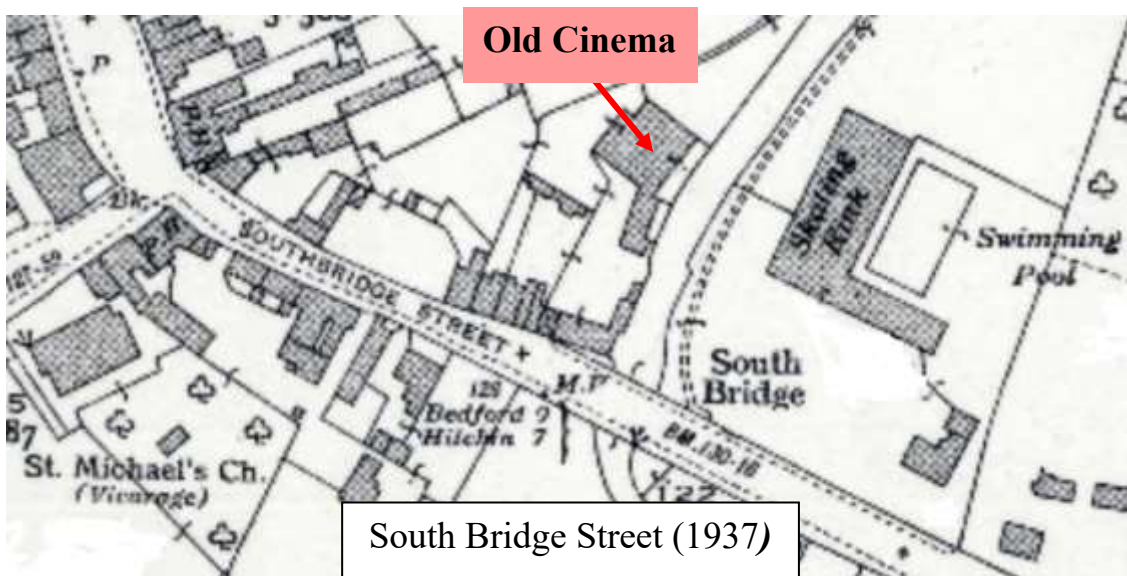
We know that Shefford and its residents play an important part in Jewish history, but until recently the residents of Shefford have not appreciated this. Unfortunately, most of the key buildings in this story do not exist anymore. However, we have identified where they were located, see the map below for the location numbers.



1. *St Michaels Church Hall* has had several names including, the Old School, the Parish Room, the Church Hall and recently the Shefford Community Hall. It was used initially in 1939 to celebrate the Sabbath and to provide kosher meals. It was also used for the daily roll call and assembly. Church Halls in Shefford, Clifton, Stotfold and Meppershall were all used as classrooms with schoolbooks and other equipment having been sent from London.

2. *No 3 New Street* was initially used as headquarters for the teaching staff, post office, parcel depot and information bureau. Later all these activities were moved to the Old Cinema Hall.

3. *Old Cinema Hall* was situated to the North East of Kingsmede. The hall had served as the home to a cinema until 1927. The Old Cinema Hall was used by the evacuees as a



South Bridge Street (1937)



North Bridge Street (1937)

canteen, school office, and a centre for communal activities. Unfortunately, the hall was burnt down in January 1940 after a problem with a stove. However, although some equipment and food were destroyed the Scrolls of Law, the prayer books and the Hebrew bibles were all rescued.

4. *The Olde White House*. After the Old Cinema Hall was destroyed, all activities were transferred to the Olde White House in North Bridge Street. This building provided office and storage space as well as several rooms for schooling. It contained a separate kitchen and dining room which were used to provide breakfasts, dinners, afternoon teas and suppers which fully met the Jewish dietary laws. The Olde White House which stood between 23 and 29 North Bridge Street was demolished in the early 1950s.

5. *Clifton Fields Infants School*, situated at 108 Clifton Road, was opened as a Church School in

1870 and closed in 1931. The building was re-opened in 1940 and used as classrooms.

6. *Shefford House*, No 15 High Street, was used to accommodate some of the children during their stay in Shefford, especially those who had problems. It was known as the 'Dandelion House'.

Memories

Shefford History Group has collected a large amount of material which describe the warmth of the relationships between the two communities and happy memories of those involved.

Peter BEST's Story

Until his death in July 2021, Peter played a significant part in the presentations that were put on for visiting groups of Jewish school children and various other Jewish groups. The children always seemed fascinated of his recollections of the boys his mother 'fostered'. The following is a version Peter's story which was written down after his death.

In September 1939 when the Jewish Children were evacuated to Shefford, Peter's mother already had a 3-year-old daughter. Peter's father was away serving in the RAF. The family were living in a small cottage in Clifton Road. Yet she took on three boys Martin FRIEDMAN, Stanley BERNSTEIN and one other whose name Peter could never remember.

The third boy was only with Mrs Best for a short time. However, Martin and Stanley stayed with Mrs Best until they left Shefford in August 1945. Peter, who was born in October 1939, looked upon the two boys as his brothers. As a baby they both helped to look after him, even changing his nappies.

Once or twice a year, one of the mothers (Peter was not sure which one) used to come from London to visit her son, and she would always bring a bag of bagels. Possibly the first bagels ever seen in Shefford.

After the war Martin kept in touch with Mrs Best and would visit her once or twice a year. Martin visited right up to when Mrs Best died in 1954. Peter always had very fond memories of Martin and Stanley and was very appreciative of the way they treated his mother.

Recent years

In recent years there have been several occasions when the two communities have come together:

Visits from parties of school children.

June 2013 - Attendance at School play.

November 2013 - North Herts Jewish Community provide tea and cakes in the Memorial Hall as part of their Mitzvah Day activities.

June 2014 - the town was visited by a group of Dutch Jews.

January 2022 – Planting of a memorial Oak Tree. The Tree was planted by Bruno FERBER who was one of the children evacuated to Shefford.

Conclusion

After some initial misunderstandings (the ham salad tea) there are many stories, like that of Pete Best's mother, of the two communities establishing very close relationships which carried on after the war. When the children finally left Shefford in August 1945 there was sadness on both sides. I think this is the great lesson from these events in that two sets of people from vastly different backgrounds and cultures were able to establish such fantastic relationships.

USING NEWSPAPERS IN FAMILY HISTORY RESEARCH

Denise Bates

Digitised newspapers are a relatively new resource for research, sometimes containing fascinating detail that is not available elsewhere and opening a window into past times. Like any other resource, the more conversant the user becomes the more likely they are to succeed. As with any resource, there are techniques for getting the best out of old newspapers without wasting valuable time.

Which newspapers are the best for family historians?

Newspapers that were local to where their ancestors lived or worked are the most likely to contain information about them. Occasionally, the fullest report was included in a local paper from a different part of the country, so never dismiss a potential match solely on the grounds of where the newspaper was published.

How can old newspapers be accessed?

Usually by subscription to a provider such as the British Newspaper Archive, though some family history websites include access to newspapers in their membership package. It is worth any user checking which option provides the best value for their money.

Finding Material in Newspapers

Work with suitable equipment, which in the case of newspapers means a good-sized screen. Check the provider's guidance. Knowing what features a provider uses maximises the likelihood of a search being productive.

Wild cards are characters such as a question mark (?), slash (/) or star (*). They replace a letter or series of letters in a search term and are helpful for finding alternative spellings. In newspapers printed before 1830, use a wild card to replace the letter 's'. It used to be written with a character that looks much like the modern lower-case letter 'f' and sometimes it has scanned as 'f' rather than 's'.

Filters are on-screen tools that restrict a search to particular dates, types of news, or geographic locations for example. Filters can be used at the outset of a search but

applying them at a later stage can prevent a relevant match being missed. Try different filter options, especially when trying to corroborate oral history.

Constructing Search Terms

Typing a name into a search box might immediately locate an unexpected gem but a focussed query increases the likelihood of finding information. Paring down a mass of irrelevant matches can take longer than using a good search term.

Name queries often produce many potential matches. If possible, incorporate some additional information, such as a place or occupation. If a conventional spelling produces no results, try spelling names phonetically.

Consider nicknames, initials, abbreviations, and aliases. James Black could be written as its standard abbreviation, Jas. He could be Jamie or Jim or Jimmy Black, Doctor Black, Dr Black, Reverend Black, or Councillor J Black.

Use the terminology of the time. If necessary, browse an old newspaper for clues. In the years before World War 2, the 1914-18 conflict was often referred to as the Great War or the War, not World War 1.

Although it seems counter-intuitive, if an incident is proving elusive, do not use names because oral history can be unreliable.

Is it your ancestor?

Finding matches is often the start of a journey as newspapers do not necessarily have enough information to identify a person. Even in families with a distinctive surname, it was not unusual for forenames to be repeated. In some cases, it will be impossible to be sure whether a report relates to a direct ancestor, a distant cousin or a complete stranger.

Possible discoveries

Newspapers contain plenty of facts. BMD notices can be useful for establishing actual dates. Weddings were sometimes reported at length and include unexpected detail. Obituaries may contain lost information about someone's life and achievements. Comments about their character may be less reliable as negative aspects are usually overlooked around the time of death.

Pictures of ordinary individuals began to appear in newspapers from around 1860, often as an artist's sketch. Pictures of ordinary people become more common from 1914 onwards when photographs of soldiers were regularly included.

An ancestor may have been involved in an incident that was reported in some detail. Whether their role is good or bad, approach it with an open mind, and try to put it in context. Looking at other examples will give insight into the society an ancestor lived in and how typical their experience was.

Always check if other papers covered the story as there may be more information. The same report could be used by several newspapers but edited in different ways to fit the space available, or the editor's viewpoint. Two journalists covering a story independently may have collected different detail.

Newspapers contain soft information that helps to build up a wider picture. A report of someone passing a music exam reveals that they access to an instrument, practice time, probably money for tuition and the persistence of character to achieve competence.

Information about character varies. It is not unusual for a person to appear naive in one account and unprincipled in another, leaving the modern researcher, like the original readers, to form their own judgement.

Drawbacks

Some reports are brief with relevant detail missing. It is always worth looking further but sometimes it is necessary to accept that the missing information, whatever it was, has not survived.

There are errors in some reports. Most will be relatively trivial matters, that can be resolved, so always corroborate any information that is to be relied on. Fake news was not common, but not unknown either.

Some reports contain graphic, distressing detail that would not be printed today.

Shocking News

It is much easier to discover information about ancestors who had a brush or two with the law or defied the social norms of the day than those who lived blameless lives. Always think carefully before sharing shocking news. Even if their name was originally published, the victims of some crimes, juvenile offenders and individuals with spent convictions now have legal anonymity.

With increasing longevity, shocking news from the nineteenth century might still be upsetting for an old person who knew the person involved, especially if they had no idea of the skeleton in the cupboard.

A different type of shocking discovery may be something that challenges a researcher's preconceptions about an aspect of the past. Just as now, situations in the past could be complex. Newspapers can reveal that a history book or textbook did not necessarily contain 'the whole truth', or 'nothing but the truth'.

And finally

I have written a book *Historical Research Using British Newspapers*, published by Pen & Sword Books, about old newspapers and how to use them in different types of research.

THE FRONT COVER ILLUSTRATION

In Odell, a village rich in history and blessed by nature, the old ways and pace of living (which many people think are best) happily persist. It is secluded, but sociable. Its old houses were built for comfort and endurance, and here is a typical yeoman's dwelling of the early seventeenth century - stone and thatch it is, and as snug as on the day its first tenants crossed the threshold. It is Village Farm where Mr H C LAY lived. It is a long building of two storeys, with lofty attics in the steep thatched roof lit by recessed dormers and an end window. There is a bacon rack in the kitchen, a rare relic this! The long attic is divided into two compartments, the larger and furthestmost originally only accessible from the barn, which prolongs the house. The position of this barn affords an example of the survival of the traditional farmhouse in which house and barn were under the same roof.

This illustration and text are taken from *Our Heritage: A Bedfordshire Sketch Book* drawings by G Alan Fortescue, FRIBA, notes by *Touchstone*, published 1943.

THE FRONT COVER ILLUSTRATION AS IT IS TODAY

Paul Woodcraft



In North Bedfordshire sits the village of Odell, with many stone-built cottages and in the High St you will find the subject of the front cover: A Yeoman's Dwelling. Detailed history of this stone built and thatched building can be found on the Bedfordshire Archives Website by clicking on Community Histories then I to P, Odell Pages, and then Village Farm. You will also find most Bedfordshire Villages listed here.

Again, a lovely part of Bedfordshire with the village pub serving lunches and evening meals. I can personally vouch for these having sampled them on a few occasions.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Our Society will attend a variety of Family History Fairs around the country during the autumn and this provides you with an opportunity to meet other members of the Society, discuss any brick walls your family research has encountered, and browse some of the publications we have to help your research.

We plan to exhibit at the following Fairs:

Suffolk Family History Fair, 19 October 24, 10 am to 4 pm at Suffolk Archives, The Hold, 131 Fore Street, Ipswich IP4 1LR.

suffolkfhs.co.uk.

Oxford Family History Fair, 26 October 24, 10 am to 4 pm, at Cherwell School North Site, Marston Ferry Road, Oxford OX2 7EE.

ofhs.uk.

Keep up to date with our plans by visiting our web page or Facebook page.

Our Society had a stall at the Family History Federation Really Useful Family History Show held on 20 April 24 at St Ives, Cambridgeshire. Thanks go to Lynn Manning and Mary Wooldridge (pictured below left to right) for staffing the stall.



Bedfordshire Family History Society (BFHS)
Draft Minutes of the 47th Annual General Meeting (AGM)
Held on Friday 7 June 2024 at 7.30 pm
at Mark Rutherford School (MRS) Bedford
and online by Zoom Video Conference

Present

Mark Tresidder

Chairman

Pamela Birch

President of the Society and County Archivist

Committee and Society Members: There were 25 members in attendance at the MRS and 21 online giving an approximate total of 46 members present including the above.

Mark Tresidder introduced the President of the BFHS, Pamela Birch, who then proceeded to chair the meeting and welcomed all members to the meeting.

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were given on behalf of Diane Sutton and Lynn Manning.

2. Acceptance of the 2023 AGM Minutes

The President, Pamela Birch, asked if any member present and online had any corrections to the 2023 AGM minutes. Peter Sharp apologised for stating in last year's AGM that Mr. John Hulance the Honorary Independent Examiner was a past president of the Bedford Lions. This was incorrect. No other corrections were advised.

Cathy Friend proposed acceptance of the minutes and seconded by Mark Tresidder. The minutes were signed as a true copy. The proposal to accept was carried with 24 in the hall, and 18 online. There were two members that abstained, one present and one online.

3. Matters Arising

None were raised.

4. Chairman's Report June 2023 to May 2024

Mark Tresidder stated that his report is published in the AGM booklet for this meeting, and that he would just like to take a moment to highlight a couple of areas.

Earlier this year the society was presented with the challenge of finding a new venue for our members' meetings and storeroom for our library, archives and other assets, after receiving notification in February of this year from MRS that they would no longer be accepting bookings for evening meetings. MRS have agreed to honour our existing bookings for use of the Hall and storeroom to the end of this year.

The committee have been actively searching for new venues and Mark stated that he

was pleased to inform members that we have found a new venue for our members' meetings and plan to relocate to St Mary's Church Hall, Goldington, Bedford, from January 2025.

The committee are still exploring options for relocating the contents of the storeroom. Costs for facilities such as 'Safestore' are proving excessive and restrictive on access times. The committee are currently investigating options to see if there is some small office space that we could rent so that we could set up a small research centre to make the library and other research aids more accessible to our members and the public. Mark asked the members if they are aware of any facilities that may be suitable, to please inform the committee.

Mark stated that he would like to thank all those who volunteered their time to serve on the committee and in other roles for the time they have given to the society over the last year and hoped that he had captured all of their roles in his report. Mark made his apologies to anyone that he may have omitted to mention.

Our volunteers are important, and the society cannot function without them. The society has a number of vacancies listed in the journal for a Journal Distribution Manager and Funeral Directors' Records Project leader.

Paul Woodcraft had indicated earlier in the year that he wished to step down from the committee and hand these roles over, but as no-one has come forward, he is willing to continue until we have a replacement.

Whilst not immediately essential, the society would also like to appoint a Vice Chairman to shadow Mark, and eventually succeed him as Chairman. Mark stated that he was seeking re-election today with the view of standing down in three years' time at the end of the term.

In addition, Jackie Hinton is unable to continue in the role of Monumental Inscriptions coordinator and the society are urgently seeking someone who can help us complete this important work of creating publications from transcripts that have already been created (MS Access skills will be required).

Colin West has coordinated the team that provides refreshments after our meetings and had informed Mark that he will be stepping down from the role at the end of this year, and so we are also looking for someone for Colin to hand over to.

We are also looking for volunteers to help represent the society at fairs and events during the year. These are usually attended by Mary Wooldridge and Lynn Manning, but if you can support them that would be appreciated. We are currently booked to attend the Oxfordshire and Suffolk Fairs in October.

As a committee we meet over Zoom, usually on the third Friday of each month. Mark asked the members if they felt that they can help the society, either on the committee or in fulfilling some of these roles, to please speak to himself or one of the other committee members.

Finally, Mark stated that he would like to thank Pamela for the support she gives to the

society and for chairing today's meeting.

Pamela Birch thanked Mark for his report and for all of his good work over the past three years.

Pamela addressed the members asking for acceptance of the Chairman's report. Acceptance proposed by Kerr Clement and seconded by Cathy Friend. Poll Result: Carried by 42 votes, 24 members in the room, 18 online with 2 abstentions, one in the room and one online.

The Chairman's Report has been posted on the BFHS Website and can be accessed by any member.

5. Treasurer's Report June 2003 to May 2024

5.1. Peter Sharp stated that the Treasurer's Report is available on the BFHS website, Members' Portal, and can be accessed by any member. Hard copies are available in this room tonight.

5.2. Peter gave the following brief summary.

5.3. The full accounts are available in the Members' Portal of our website, with hard copies made available at the meeting.

5.4. With an income of £11,452 and an expenditure of £9,784, the society made a surplus of £1,668 in the financial year ending 31 December 2023.

5.5. Income from publications decreased from £4,362 to £3,710, mainly due to the lower sales of Downloads and CDs of parish registers. The total expenditure decreased from £11,543 in 2022 to £9,784 partly due to a book stock take correction.

5.6. Cash in the bank and in hand increased slightly to a healthy £69,112.

5.7. Income from membership subscriptions and donations for 2023 was slightly less than the previous year at £4,998. This was against the direct costs of membership (journals, postage, meeting/storage rooms, speakers and governance) amounting to £7,357.

5.8. The number of members increased by two to give us 478 full members including 52 new members for 2023.

Peter expressed his thanks to our Independent Financial Examiner, Mr. John Hulance, for his help preparing and approving the society's accounts.

Peter recommended to the members that the 2023 Financial Accounts presented to the members at the AGM are adopted.

Pamela addressed the members asking for acceptance of the Treasurer's report. Acceptance proposed by Kerr Clement and seconded by Dave Daniels. Poll Result: Carried by 46 votes, 25 members in the room, 21 online with no abstentions.

6. Election of Officers and Members of the Executive Committee

The re-election of the Executive Committee and Officers was carried out using both an

online and members present poll. The online poll had been compiled and operated by Peter Sharp.

Chairman Mark Tresidder, Treasurer Peter Sharp, and Secretary Joanne Richardson were re-elected.

Officers Kerr Clement, Kathy Fraser, Cathy & Kevin Friend, Joanna Lang, Brian Payne, Claire Sowah, Paul Woodcraft and Mary Wooldridge were re-elected.

7. Election of Honorary Independent Examiner

John Hulance was presented as the candidate for this position. Pamela addressed the members asking for acceptance of John Hulance. Acceptance proposed by Peter Sharp and seconded by Noel Evans. Poll Result: Carried by 46 votes, 25 members in the room, 21 online with no abstentions.

8. Any Other Business

8.1. Vote of Thanks. Noel Evans proposed a vote of thanks from himself and on behalf of the members to Mark Tresidder for all of his continued good work as Chairman of BFHS.

8.2 With no other business being raised the President, Pamela Birch, closed the 2024 AGM.

DO WE HAVE YOUR CURRENT EMAIL ADDRESS?

We notify our members via email about any zoom/hybrid meetings; however, some get bounced back and for some members we do not have an email address. If you have not been receiving these emails from us it means that we do not have your email address, or the email address we have is incorrect or your mailbox is full.

If you have an email address but are not getting our emails but would like to do so, please send your current email address to **treasurer@bfhs.org.uk**.



Annual Accounts for the Period

Period Start Date Period End Date
From 1 January 2023 **To** 31 December 2023

Statement of Financial Activities

	Current Year 2023 £	Prior Year 2022 £
<u>Incoming Resources</u>		
Incoming Resources from Generated Funds		
Voluntary Income	4,998	5,346
Investment Income	1,460	271
Income from Charitable Activities	4,994	5,450
<u>Total Incoming Resources</u>	11,452	11,067
<u>Resources Expended</u>		
Cost of Charitable Activities	7,469	9,174
Governance Costs	2,315	2,369
<u>Total Resources Expended</u>	9,784	11,543
<u>Net Movement in Funds</u>	1,668	(476)
Total Funds Brought Forward	83,720	84,196
Total Funds Carried Forward	85,338	83,720

Balance Sheet

	Current Year 2023 £	Prior Year 2022 £
Fixed Assets		
Tangible Fixed Assets	15,168	15,168
Total Fixed Assets	15,168	15,168
Current Assets		
Stock of Books and Stamps	959	1,041
Debtors	-	-
Cash at Bank and In Hand	69,869	68,066
Total Current Assets	70,828	69,107
Current Liabilities		
Creditors	608	555
Net Current Liabilities	608	555
Net Current Assets	70,220	68,552
Net Assets	85,388	83,720
Funds		
Unrestricted	85,388	83,720
Restricted	-	-
	85,388	83,720

Signed by

Date of Approval

Chairman



Mark Tresidder

3/5/24

Treasurer



Peter Sharp

03-05-24



Bedfordshire Genealogy, Family and House History

Specialists in genealogy, family and house history research in
Bedfordshire.

Our lead researcher is Vicki Manners a qualified genealogist who is a member of the Register of Qualified Genealogists and an associate member of **AGRA**.

Her qualifications include:

- M.A. in Local History
- P.G. Cert. in Family and Local History
- P.G. Dip. in Archive Management

Vicki has worked for Bedfordshire Archives, The Panacea Museum, and several other heritage organisations in Bedfordshire thus giving her a unique and specialist knowledge of genealogy, family and house history records relating to Bedfordshire.

Vicki also specialises in genetic genealogy. She can therefore advise you on which tests are most suitable for your research aims, as well as help you interpret to your DNA results and matches.

We offer a free, no obligation initial consultation. To find out more telephone: 07976 718624.

bedfordshireresearch.co.uk

WHY NOT WRITE SOMETHING FOR THE JOURNAL?

We are always on the lookout for contributions to the *Journal*, any size, short or long. To give you some idea, a *Journal* page takes around 450 words to fill. We would also welcome items shorter than a page. You might feel more comfortable writing a letter or email on a topic and this would be included in a 'Letters' page in the *Journal*.

No need to worry if you are not used to writing, we are here to help. Seeing your own work in print can feel like a real achievement and others will appreciate your effort. Simply writing down your 'brick wall' can help you see the problem more clearly and, you never know, someone reading it may be able to help you move forward.

A great way to start is to take a small part of your family tree and describe the main characters, where and when they lived and died, and any stumbling blocks you encountered in researching their history, such as name changes or document transcription errors. Photographs of those in your family history add colour to the story as do copies of documents that acted as your source material.

If you need ideas to get you going or would like to discuss your ideas, please send an email to journal@bfhs.org.uk.

BEDFORDSHIRE

Buckinghamshire, Northamptonshire, Huntingdonshire

Family and Local History Research (including Probate Transcriptions)
undertaken by

COLIN DAVISON

66 Sudeley Walk, BEDFORD

Bedfordshire MK41 8JH

England

Tel: (01234) 364956

Email: colinndavison@gmail.com

*Member of the
Association of Genealogists & Researchers in Archives*

Professional Service Offered. All Enquiries Welcome

Bedfordshire Heritage



John Bunyan
born Elstow 1628
Preacher and author of
'The Pilgrim's Progress'
The John Bunyan Trail



Stevington Mill
Rushden

Banks of Yidden
Romans c.100 AD
Yidden



Wymington
Bedington
Bromham Mill



Sunnyshead
Risleley
Kyesoe

Bushmead Priory
Eaton Socon

'Black Tom'
Thurmal Whitman
Highamham
born Bedford 1723



Sharnbrook
Harrold

Turleigh
Bletsoe

Wyboston
Bolnhurst



Stoughton
Turrey
Bromham

Stagsden
Wootton

Bedford
Great Barkford

Tempsford
Sandy

Pottton



Woburn Abbey

Stewartby
Houghton Conquest

Willington
Willington

Cardington

Wreslingworth



Woburn Abbey

Flitwick
Maulden

Broom
Shefford

Old Warden

Biggleswade



Leighton Buzzard

Leagrave

Shillington

Wrest Park

Stotfold



Whipsnade

Luton Zoo

Luton Zoo

Luton Zoo

Glenn Miller's AEF Band
was stationed at Bedford
July 1944. His fatal
flight left from
Milton Ernest Dec. 1944.



Luton Zoo

© 2007 Bedford Borough Council

Drawn by Bob Sherman 0155 960 7028

BEDFORDSHIRE HERITAGE TEA TOWELS

The Society has had a supply of Bedfordshire Heritage tea towels printed and these are now being sold to raise funds. These tea towels are really too nice to use for drying up; they are beautifully colour printed with some famous Bedfordshire landmarks forming a border for the County map. Even if you do not have any Bedfordshire ancestors, they make ideal gifts.

They are 100% cotton and at £4.50 each can be obtained from the bookstall at members' meetings, by email to secretary@bfhs.org.uk, or by post to Lynn Manning at 38 Risborough Road, Bedford, MK41 9QW, Tel. 01234 306482. For UK orders please add **postage and packing** as follows:

Up to 2 tea towels add £2.00

3 to 6 tea towels add £3.00

For orders from outside the UK please enquire before ordering. Cheques should be made payable to Bedfordshire Family History Society.

REMINDER

The CLOSING DATE for articles to be published in the
December 2024 *Journal* is **31 October 2024.**

(Articles submitted near the closing date may not
be published until the following *Journal*)



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Facebook

Bedfordshire Family History Society has a presence
on Facebook for news and discussions:

facebook.com/BedfordshireFamilyHistorySociety

BEDFORDSHIRE PARISH REGISTERS

Many new computers do not have CD drives, so we are pleased to announce that all our CDs are now available for sale as downloads from Parish Chest and Genfair.

The available downloads include all 128 Bedfordshire Parish Registers, Bedfordshire Nonconformist Registers, Marriage Licences, Poor Law papers, BFHS back Journals Vol 1-19 with an index to surnames and subjects, and the four Bedfordshire Will books. BFHS Journals volumes 20-24 are available free in the Members' Portal of the BFHS website.

To access the stores directly please visit **parishchest.com** or **genfair.co.uk**, although the simplest way of accessing a BFHS download is to visit our website bfhs.org.uk then select 'Online Stores'. If you then select Parish Chest the majority of the downloads are to be found in the 'Downloads' folder, but Poor Law, Journals and Wills book are listed under the appropriate folder located down the left-hand side of the screen. If you select Genfair, the downloads are listed alongside the CDs in the relevant section. Both stores have a search feature, and the content of each product is given. Downloads are the same price as the CDs.

BFHS has produced a resource to help in finding your missing relations. If they were baptised or buried before 1852 or married before 1837 (and in some cases later) in Bedfordshire and appear in the Parish Registers, then they will appear on our Surnames CD, available as a free download on the home page of **bfhs.org.uk**. Alternatively, the CD is available for only £10 including UK P&P, from Sales, Bedfordshire Family History Society, PO Box 214, Bedford MK41 8WB, enquiries to **bookstall@bfhs.org.uk**.

CDs for all 128 ancient Bedfordshire parishes listed below are available from:

Sales, Bedfordshire Family History Society, PO Box 214, Bedford MK41 8WB, or
bookstall@bfhs.org.uk

Each CD or download contains, for one parish:

All Parish Register transcripts up to 1812 and searchable Indexes to the Parish Registers for:

Baptisms at least 1813-1851 (some parishes all up to 1851)

Marriages up to 1885; and all Burials to 1851

The relevant 1851 Census Index for Bedfordshire

CDs marked † also contain Monumental Inscriptions (MIs) from a graveyard in the

parish (church, chapel or cemetery). Those marked * contain records from the registers or graveyards of Nonconformist chapels in the parish, photographs, and other records are included as available.

‡ Holwell: MIs and Burials only, not Registers (now in Herts).

Prices include UK or overseas post and packing. The cost of a full set of Parish CDs is £1,250.

Any recently revised CDs are indicated by the issue number in bold. **Please note that CDs will no longer be updated** whereas downloads will be updated when more indexes and any new MI listings become available.

Parish	Price	Issue	Parish	Price	Issue
Amphill † *	£15	2	Dunton †	£15	2
Arlesey	£20	2	Eaton Bray	£20	2
Aspley Guise †	£15	4	Eaton Socon † *	£25	2
Astwick †	£10	2	Edworth †	£10	2
Barton	£15	3	Elstow †	£15	2
Battlesden	£10	2	Eversholt †	£15	2
Bedford St Cuthbert †*	£15	2	Everton	£10	2
Bedford St John *	£15	2	Eyeworth	£10	2
Bedford St Mary † *	£15	2	Farndish †	£10	1
Bedford St Paul † *	£25	2	Felmersham † *	£10	2
Bedford St Peter *	£10	2	Flitton *	£15	4
Biddenham †	£10	2	Flitwick	£10	2
Biggleswade † *	£15	2	Goldington	£10	2
Billington †	£10	2	Great Barford †	£15	3
Bletsoe	£10	2	Harlington †	£10	2
Blunham † *	£15	3	Harrold *	£10	2
Bolnhurst	£10	2	Haynes †	£20	2
Bromham †	£10	3	Henlow †	£10	2
Caddington †	£15	2	Higham Gobion	£10	2
Campton & Shefford † *	£20	2	Hockliffe † *	£10	3
Cardington † *	£15	2	Holwell † ‡	£5	1
Carlton † *	£10	2	Houghton Conquest † *	£15	2
Chalgrave	£15	2	Houghton Regis *	£15	2
Chellington	£15	2	Hulcote †	£10	2
Clapham †	£10	3	Husborne Crawley †	£20	2
Clifton	£20	3	Kempston	£15	3
Clophill †	£15	3	Kensworth †	£15	2
Cockayne Hatley	£10	2	Keysoe † *	£15	2
Colmworth †	£10	2	Knotting	£10	2
Cople †	£10	2	Langford	£15	2
Cranfield † *	£15	2	Leighton Buzzard † *	£20	6
Dean † *	£15	1	Lidlington †	£10	2
Dunstable † *	£15	2	Little Barford †	£10	1

Parish	Price	Issue	Parish	Price	Issue
Little Staughton † *	£10	2	Southill † *	£20	2
Lower Gravenhurst †	£10	2	Stagsden †	£15	2
Luton † *	£30	3	Stanbridge *	£10	2
Marston Moretaine †	£15	3	Steppingley †	£10	2
Maulden † *	£15	2	Stevington † *	£10	2
Melchbourne †	£10	2	Stotfold † *	£10	2
Meppershall †	£10	1	Streatley †	£10	2
Millbrook	£15	2	Studham	£15	2
Milton Bryan †	£10	2	Sundon †	£10	1
Milton Ernest †	£10	2	Sutton	£15	2
Northill †	£15	2	Swineshead †	£10	2
Oakley †	£10	2	Tempsford †	£10	2
Odell †	£10	2	Thurleigh	£10	2
Old Warden †	£15	2	Tilbrook	£10	2
Pavenham	£10	3	Tilsworth † *	£10	2
Pertenhall	£15	1	Tingrith †	£10	2
Podington	£15	1	Toddington † *	£15	2
Potsgrove †	£10	2	Totternhoe *	£15	2
Potton † *	£20	3	Turvey † *	£20	2
Pulloxhill	£10	2	Upper Gravenhurst	£10	2
Ravensden †	£10	2	Upper Stondon	£10	2
Renhold	£10	2	Westoning †	£10	3
Ridgmont † *	£15	2	Whipsnade †	£10	2
Riseley	£10	2	Wilden †	£15	2
Roxton † *	£10	2	Willington †	£10	2
Salford †	£10	2	Wilstead †	£20	2
Sandy † *	£15	1	Woburn † *	£20	2
Sharnbrook	£10	2	Wootton	£15	2
Shelton †	£10	2	Wrestlingworth †	£15	3
Shillington †	£15	2	Wymington	£10	1
Souldrop †	£10	2	Yelden †	£10	2

Your committee is continually looking for ways to improve what is offered to members. So, to encourage more feedback from members at meetings we now have a suggestion

box. For members who are not able to use the suggestion box we invite you to email us at **bfhs@bfhs.org.uk**.



Your committee appreciates any help, ideas or suggestions that you may have regarding any aspect of the BFHS organisation.

WHERE TO FIND US

Correspondence for the Executive Committee should be addressed to the appropriate person and sent to:

Bedfordshire Family History Society

PO Box 214 BEDFORD MK41 8WB	Internet: bfhs.org.uk Email: bfhs@bfhs.org.uk Web Sales: parishchest.com genfair.co.uk
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The following email addresses are also available:

chairman@bfhs.org.uk	Society Chairman
secretary@bfhs.org.uk	Society Secretary
treasurer@bfhs.org.uk	Society Treasurer
journal@bfhs.org.uk	Journal Co-ordinator
librarian@bfhs.org.uk	Society Librarian
membership@bfhs.org.uk	Membership Secretary
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(1 January - 31 December)

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