



ABBEY SCHOOL
presents
The Sealed Knot

Royalists v. Roundheads

Scenes from the Civil War—glimpses of 17th Century Fair

ON ELSTOW GREEN

SATURDAY 15th JULY, 2.30 p.m.

X 1978 X

Adults 50p, Children 30p Admission by Programme



ABBEY SCHOOL

Ad Coronam per Crucem

FOREWORD

Abbey School has invited The Sealed Knot, The Society of Cavaliers and Roundheads, to play a part in its celebrations in connection with the Pilgrim's Progress Tercentenary.

John Bunyan was a product of his time. He grew up in an age which saw the emergence and witnessed the struggles of British Nonconformism. His own character was forged from the hell-fire of Puritan theology; the bitter struggles undergone by those rejecting the ways of the Established Church until they found themselves in direct opposition to their king, was a part of his own personal experience.

An understanding of his background is an essential part of understanding the man and in asking the Society of the Sealed Knot to re-enact scenes from those turbulent years, we aim to lift the 17th century from the pages of history books and thus enliven it in the minds of our pupils. We hope that you too will enjoy sharing this experience with us.

We are deeply indebted to our P.T.A. committee and all those people, too numerous to mention personally, who have given their help on this occasion and would like to express our grateful thanks for their support.

A. CHAPMAN
Headmaster

The following causes will benefit from the proceeds: *Cancer Research, St. John Ambulance Brigade, KIDS Holiday Centre for deprived and handicapped children and Abbey Church Restoration Fund.*

THE SEALED KNOT LIMITED

The Society of Cavaliers and Roundheads

The Society of Cavaliers and Roundheads, called "The Sealed Knot", came into being with six members in February, 1968. Its main object being to arouse interest in the causes and conduct of the Civil Wars between King Charles I and Parliament, a formative period in our history. It takes its name from a Royalist Secret Society which worked to bring about the restoration of the Monarchy, under Charles II. Its emblem was doubtless taken from the great chain of the Order of the Garter, in which Sealed Knots alternate with Tudor Roses. To fulfil its historical aim, the Society has re-enacted the great battles of the wars, Edgehill, Newbury I and II, Cropredy Bridge, Marston Moor and Naseby, as well as numerous sieges and skirmishes.

In addition to its displays of Seventeenth Century warfare, the Society is also dedicated to raising money for charities and has, since 1968, been involved in raising over £350,000 for various causes.

The present Society is organised on the lines of a Seventeenth Century army, with a Staff, Horse, Foote, Dragoones and a Trayne of Artillery. The Agitant Generall is L. J. Parker, 17 Brookway, Burgess Hill, West Sussex RH15 0LL. The membership of the Society is over 3,000. The local Royalist Regiment is the Earl of Northampton's Regiment of Foote, who are fortunate to have the Marquis of Northampton as its Patron. His ancestor, the second Earl of Northampton, raised a Regiment in the Civil Wars which bore the same name. This Unit was in garrison at Banbury Castle until its surrender to Parliament in 1646. The Agitant today is A. Pope, 21 Logwell Court, Standens Barn, Northampton.

The Society is fortunate to have as its founder and Captaine Generall, Brigadier Peter Young, D.S.O., M.C., F.R.Hist.S. His qualifications both as a scholar and a soldier are well known and he has long been accepted as a leading authority on the military aspects of the Civil War. His works include "Edgehill 1642", "Cropredy Bridge 1644", written in conjunction with Margaret Toynbee, and "Marston Moor 1644" amongst other works. As a soldier he fought with distinction in the Second World War and commanded the First Commando Brigade. From 1953 to 1956 he commanded the Ninth Regiment of the Arab Legion. He was for ten years Reader in Military History at the Royal Military Academy, Sandhurst.

Programme Notes

BEDFORDSHIRE AND THE CIVIL WAR

In the 1640s England was torn by civil war between King Charles I and his Parliament. In Bedfordshire it may be said to have begun in July 1642 when the royalist Sir Lewis Dyve of Bromham Hall had 5,000 bullets cast in Bedford and, riding into the town said, "Now you Roundheads, I have provided for you". In the previous month it was reported to the House of Lords that there were 500 trained bands in Bedfordshire and a similar number of volunteers—both forces were expected to support Parliament.

Bedfordshire also raised a regiment of dragoons but these were defeated at Chinnor in Oxfordshire in June 1643 by the royalists who killed 50 of them and took 120 prisoners. October 1643 was a month of military activity in Bedfordshire. Four hundred royalist cavalry under Sir Lewis Dyve (of Bromham) and Sir John Digby (of Gayhurst, Bucks.) entered the county, surprised the Parliamentary Committee meeting at Amptill and seized horses in the neighbourhood. The royalist force then moved to Bedford which was defended by Sir John Norwich (or Norris) and 18 men who alone of the 500 trained bands of the county answered his call for assistance. The royalists surprised Norwich and his officers in an alehouse and there was some skirmishing at and around Bedford bridge. Later the royalists left for Newport Pagnell.

In June 1644 royalist detachments ravaged south-west Bedfordshire, particularly Leighton Buzzard and Dunstable. The landlord of the Red Lion at Dunstable refused to supply them with horses and was shot. Royalist troopers entered Dunstable Priory church during service time and discharged three pistols at the minister before dragging him out of the building.

Relations between civilians and the military were not always happy. In May 1645 the Bedfordshire Parliamentary Committee reported to Sir Samuel Luke (of Cople), Parliamentary Governor of Newport Pagnell, that at Elstow Fair there had been "distempers and violences" between the county and soldiers of Major Ennis of the Newport Pagnell Parliamentary garrison, and that the soldiers were incensed against the town of Elstow. In June 1645 the battle of Naseby (a royalist defeat) was fought in Northamptonshire. A few days before the battle Oliver Cromwell was at Bedford with 600 horses and dragoons from Cambridgeshire: 500 Norfolk Cavalry arrived in the town shortly afterwards. These events are reflected in the Churchwardens' accounts of St. John's Church, Bedford, which record an expense of 2s. 6d. "for making cleane the church when the camp was heare".

In August 1645 King Charles I passed through Bedfordshire with an army of several thousand men. Three hundred royalist horse mustered on the Ouse meadows at Great Barford on the 25th. There was fighting at Goldington and at Bedford which the king and his army entered on the 26th only to leave a few hours later on the way to Woburn. Part of this royalist army was defeated at Luton by Hertfordshire Parliamentary forces. A royalist force again plundered Woburn in November 1645.

In Bedford town Parliament had a garrison of 100 men in a fort on the site of the castle keep, the mound of which is still to be seen in the gardens of the Cecil Higgins Art Gallery. Throughout 1644 and the early part of 1645 there was argument over a proposal to demolish the fort, but it was not until after the battle of Naseby (June 1645) that the fort's garrison was evacuated and sent to Leicester.

JOHN BUNYAN AND THE CIVIL WAR

Born in 1628 John Bunyan, author of *The Pilgrim's Progress*, was 14 years of age when the civil war began. In his spiritual autobiography *Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners* (1666) Bunyan gave the only reference to his military service. He wrote, "When I was a soldier I, with others, were drawn out to go to such a place to besiege it: but when I was just ready to go, one of the company desired to go in my room, to which, when I had consented, he took my place: and coming to the siege, as he stood sentinel, he was shot in the head with a musket bullet and died".

This reference is too vague for us to identify the side (royalist or Parliamentary) on which Bunyan served. Both sides resorted to conscription and the armies of both sides were in the county from time to time. The discovery in 1898 in the Public Record Office of the name "John Bunyan" on several muster rolls for the Newport Pagnell Parliamentary garrison was thought to settle the matter. But Bunyan was not an uncommon surname and John is not an uncommon Christian name. There were several Bunyan families in Bedfordshire and Buckinghamshire, but in addition to those counties all the counties of East Anglia sent in quotas of conscripts to Newport Pagnell and these counties too had Bunyan families. Moreover the discovery in 1950 in the Public Records Office of a Thomas Bunyan on the 1644 muster roll of the King's artillery train shows that at least one member of a Bunyan family served with the royalists.

In addition to its trained bands, volunteers and regiment of dragoons, Bedfordshire was called on to supply additionally for the Parliamentary military machine 340 men in 1642, 425 in 1643, 600 in 1644, 680 in 1645 and 150 in 1646. The conscripts often deserted and as Colonel Venn, Parliamentary Governor of Northampton commented, "Most counties press the Scum of all their Inhabitants... Men taken out of Prison, Tinkers, Pedlars and vagrants that have no dwelling, and such of whom no account can be given: it is no marvel if such run away".

It is unlikely that we shall now discover any firm evidence to indicate on which side Bunyan served, but the balance of probability is with service in the Parliamentary garrison at Newport Pagnell under Sir Samuel Luke. If so he had an exciting but possibly uncomfortable time for in his letters the Governor wrote that he was so short of beds that his men were forced to sleep three in a bed. On another occasion he complained that two men in his company of foot had but one pair of breeches between them so that when one was up the other had to stay in bed. Immorality was rife in the town and the Governor complained that many young women in Newport Pagnell found themselves pregnant by soldiers but did not know who were the fathers of their children. Moreover there was a smallpox epidemic in the town in the spring of 1644. Bunyan's book *The Holy War*, with its use of military terms, clearly owes something to the military experience of its author.

H. G. TIBBUTT

Note on Sealed Knot Re-enactment of a Civil War Battle

ELSTOW GREEN, JULY 1978

Although no major battle was fought in Bedfordshire in the Civil War the county was the scene of several minor engagements and saw the presence of comparatively large detachments from both royalist and Parliamentary armies.

In October 1643, royalist soldiers entered Ampthill and then fought their way into Bedford but later left when large Parliamentary forces entered the county. In June 1644 royalist detachments ravaged south-west Bedfordshire, particularly Dunstable and Leighton Buzzard. Oliver Cromwell was at Bedford in June 1645 with 1,100 Parliamentary cavalry before setting out for the battle of Naseby in Northamptonshire. Two months later, in August 1645, King Charles I with an army of several thousand men marched from Huntingdon to Bedford. 300 royalist horse mustered on the Ouse meadows at Great Barford on the 25th. Next day there was fighting at Goldington and Bedford and the royalist army occupied Bedford for a few hours before going on to Woburn. A part of this royalist force was defeated at Luton by a Parliamentary force from Hertfordshire.

In this Civil War the royalists were unable to maintain any continuing presence in Bedfordshire, and Parliament was able, in theory at least, to rely on the trained bands of the county which in June 1642 were stated to be 500 in number. Although the trained bands of London were reasonably well trained, those of the counties were largely untrained and, as the Parliamentary commander Sir William Waller said of the trained bands of Essex and Hertfordshire, they were "mutinous and uncommandable" when ordered to active service and indeed were "only fit for a gallows here and a hell hereafter". In October 1643 only 18 of Bedfordshire's trained bands answered a call to Bedford to assist its Parliamentary commander.

In addition to the unreliable trained bands, Bedfordshire had to rely on conscripts. These were raised by demands from the Parliamentary Committee on the various towns and villages. Bedfordshire was called on to supply for the Parliamentary machine 340 men in 1642, 425 in 1643, 600 in 1644, 680 in 1645 and 150 in 1646. Men under the age of 60 were eligible for this conscription.

Complaints about Bedfordshire's failure to raise its various quotas of men (e.g. from the Speakers of both Houses of Parliament) were not uncommon, and desertions from those raised were not unusual. Of 150 raised in Bedfordshire early in 1646 and destined for the Newport Pagnell Parliamentary garrison, 80 ran away "before they were clothed and armed".

H. G. TIBBUTT

This note and the preceding one are based on the following by H. G. Tibbutt:

The Life and Letters of Sir Lewis Dyve, 1599-1669, Bedfordshire Historical Record Society, 1948 (pages 35-50 "War in Bedfordshire").

Bedfordshire and the First Civil War, 1956, Elstow Moot Hall.

The Letter Books of Sir Samuel Luke, 1644-45, Parliamentary Governor of Newport Pagnell, Bedfordshire Historical Record Society and Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1963 (740 pages).

JOHN BUNYAN

John Bunyan's formative years were spent here in the village of Elstow. Born in 1628, the son of a tinker, he grew up learning the trade from his father and much of his childhood was spent wandering the surrounding countryside selling and repairing cooking utensils. He was a high spirited young lad and earned a reputation in the village for getting into mischief and using foul language. In his own words he had few equals "in cursing, swearing, lying and blaspheming the Holy name of God". He loved climbing trees, dancing, ringing the bells in the tower adjoining the Abbey and playing tip-cat on the village green. This was the sunny side of his nature. He was highly imaginative and as he plyed his trade would compose poems which he liked to share with his sister Margaret. It was a combination of his rich imagination and the impact of Puritan teachings which resulted in his tremendous burden of self-guilt. He became aware of the need to find a deeper purpose in life. With great difficulty, he relinquished his favourite pastimes.

With the advent of the Civil War he had joined the Parliamentary forces against the King, largely as a means of escaping from an unsatisfactory home life which had developed after the death of his mother. Afterwards, returning to Elstow, he married a local girl and resumed his former trade, living in a cottage at the approach to the village from Bedford. His spiritual progress took a step forward at this time. Through a chance overhearing of conversation in the streets of Bedford he became interested in a small newly-formed independent congregation which met at St. John's Church. He became friends with their pastor, John Gifford, and later was received into the congregation. In 1655 Bunyan moved to St. Cuthbert's Street in Bedford, and it began to be realised that he himself had a gift for preaching.

In 1660, a year after the death of Bunyan's wife, Cromwell's Protectorate came to an end. With the restoration of the monarchy came the belief that national unity could only be achieved by religious uniformity and the State attempted to restrain the developing Independent Congregations by forbidding preaching. Bunyan, now much renowned as a speaker, refused to be silenced and on the 12th November 1660, just after starting a meeting at the hamlet of Samsell, he was arrested. He was sentenced to remain in prison until he should conform.

Bunyan was thirty-two years of age when he was taken to the County Gaol; his second wife, Elizabeth, pleaded with the judges for his release but all in vain. It was not until twelve years later under Charles II's Declaration of Indulgence that he was released. During the course of his imprisonment he began his writings which were to make him one of the world's most widely-read Christian authors.

On his release from prison, he was immediately appointed pastor of the Independent Congregation and he quickly re-established himself as a preacher, but his freedom was short-lived. The Conventicle Act of 1670 was still in force and in 1676 he was arrested again on an ecclesiastical technicality. This period of imprisonment lasted for six months and he was released in June 1677. A year later he published his well-known spiritual allegory *The Pilgrim's Progress*, which was an immediate success.

For the next ten years Bunyan taught unmolested. In that time as well as writing a further forty books, he travelled extensively in Bedfordshire, Hertfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Surrey and London preaching his gospel.

It was in August 1688, that riding to London in the pouring rain, he contracted pneumonia and in a few days had passed away. He is buried in a vault in Bunhill Fields in City Road, London.

PROGRAMME OF EVENTS

- 2.30 p.m. Scenes from 17th Century Fair including Morris Dancing, Wrestling, Country Dancing and a Masque. Orange sellers, criminals in the stock and pillory are all in evidence adding to the flavour of the period.
- 3.00 p.m. Militia Drilling, followed by re-enactment of Press Gang episode as it might have taken place on Elstow Green. The “pressing” of Bunyan. An execution and flogging typical of the period.
- 3.15 p.m. Sealed-Knot re-enactment of a battle – Royalists versus Round-heads. Musketeers, Pikemen, small cannon are all in evidence in this demonstration of 17th Century warfare.
- 4.00 p.m. Battle ends. March off.

Display of rural crafts and other attractions throughout the afternoon.
Visitors are invited to look round the Abbey, the Moot Hall and Bunyan's Mead during their afternoon in Elstow.

ELSTOW CHURCH

Elstow Church is an unusual and interesting building, which is well worth paying a visit, both for its beauty and historical associations.

The Saxons had a church on this site and an extensive burial ground, but the present church was founded exactly nine hundred years ago by a niece of William the Conqueror. She founded the Benedictine Abbey of Elstow to atone for having betrayed her husband's part in a plot against William, thus causing her husband's execution. Over the centuries the Abbey grew rapidly in size and power. The Church was extended and improved several times, and the Abbey owned lands in many counties in England. The Abbey was constantly involved in lawsuits and getting into trouble with Bishops, however. In 1530 the Bishop ordered the Lady Abbess to ensure that the nuns stopped wearing "voided shoes and that their gowns and kirtles do close afore and are not so deep voided at the breast". Apparently the pleasures of life had not been entirely forsaken by the good nuns of Elstow!

The Abbey was surrendered to the Crown in 1539, and at first it was proposed that the Church become a cathedral for Bedfordshire, but in 1580 all but the nave of the once huge Church was demolished and it became the parish church for the village of Elstow.

Less than a hundred years later an event took place which gave Elstow Church another claim to fame. In 1628 John Bunyan was brought from a nearby hamlet where he was born, to be christened at Elstow. John Bunyan grew up in the village, played on the village green, worshipped at the Church and rang the bells. When he wrote his books he used local scenes for inspiration. The Church Tower is thought to have given him the idea for the Tower of Beelzebub and the small West Door of the Church was the Wicket Gate in *Pilgrim's Progress*. The Church is welcoming many extra visitors in the Tercentenary Year of the publication of John Bunyan's great book.

Elstow Church is not, though, just a beautiful building with historical association—it is still, as it was in Bunyan's day, a parish church where people come to worship, to get married, to bring babies to be christened, and at the end of their lives to be laid to rest in the churchyard. It is a big responsibility, as well as a great privilege, to have such a beautiful and famous church in the village. The building needs to be kept in good condition, and this year we have to find £40,000 for repairing the stonework—a big challenge for a small parish!

Do come and look round our Church, it is a history in stone of 900 years of Elstow, an important part of our country's heritage, but also a living part of our community today.

MICHAEL NORTON (Vicar)

THE PILGRIM'S PROGRESS

No religious book except the Bible has had greater influence on the minds of men than *The Pilgrim's Progress*. Written in simple, straightforward English, by a straightforward man, this immortal story is at the present time translated into over two hundred languages.

The story is told as an allegory, illustrating the trials that beset a Christian on his way through life, but it is better than most allegories because the characters introduced into the story are so human. We have met them ourselves on our own travels through life and as we read, we can share with Christian the perplexities and difficulties which confront him when he meets them. On his journey to the Celestial City as many as seventy individuals cross his path and all of them fail to keep to the strait and narrow way but their chief fault in Bunyan's mind is their loss of integrity by conforming to the world while simultaneously soothing their consciences with high-sounding excuses. It is his skilful treatment of these "thumb-nail" sketches that lifts *The Pilgrim's Progress* into the realms of literature. To mention only a few—Talkative, Worldly Wiseman and By Ends are three characters finely and amusingly drawn. Viz:

Extracts from "The Pilgrim's Progress"

Talkative

Faith: Do you know him then?

Chr.: Know him? Yes, better than he knows himself.

Faith: Pray what is he?

Chr.: His name is Talkative; he dwelleth in our Town. I wonder that you should be a stranger to him, only I consider that our Town is large.

Faith: Whose son is he? And whereabouts doth he dwell?

Chr.: He is the son of one Say-well; he dwelt in Prating Row; and is known of all that are acquainted with him by the name of Talkative in Prating Row; and notwithstanding his fine tongue, he is but a sorry fellow.

Faith: Well, he seems to be a very pretty man.

Chr.: That is, to them that have not thorough acquaintance with him, for he is best abroad, near home he is ugly enough.

By-ends

Chr.: Pray, who are your Kindred there if a man may be so bold?

By-ends: Almost the whole Town; and in particular, my Lord Turn-about, my Lord Time-server, my Lord Fair-speech (from whose ancestors that Town first took its name), also Mr. Smoothman, Mr. Facing-both-ways, Mr. Anything; and the Parson of our Parish, Mr. Two-tongues, was my Mother's own Brother by Father's side; and to tell you the truth, I am a Gentleman of good Quality, yet my Great Grandfather was but a Waterman, looking one way and rowing another; and I got most of my estate by the same occupation.

Chr.: Are you a married man?

By-ends: Yes, and my Wife is a very virtuous woman, the Daughter of a virtuous woman; she was my Lady Feigning's Daughter, therefore she came of a very honourable Family, and is arrived to such a pitch of breeding that she knows how to carry it all, even to Prince and Peasant. 'Tis true we somewhat differ in Religion from those of the stricter sort, yet but in two small points: First, we never strive against Wind and Tide: Secondly, we are always most zealous when Religion goes in his Silver Slippers; we love much to walk with him in the Street, if the Sun shines, and the People applaud him.

And we listen to the persuasive words of Mr. Worldly Wiseman or as John Bunyan terms it, "the reasoning of the flesh".

World: How camest thou by that burden at first?

Chr.: By reading this book in my hand.

World: I thought so; and it has happened unto thee as to other weak men, who, meddling with things too high for them, do suddenly fall into thy distractions, which distractions do not only unman men (as thine, I perceive, have done thee) but they run them upon desperate ventures, to obtain they know not what.

Chr.: I know what I would obtain: it is ease from my heavy burden.

World: But why wilt thou seek ease this way, seeing so many dangers attend it? especially since (hadst thou but patience to hear me) I could direct thee to the obtaining what thou desirest, without the dangers that thou, in this way, wilt run thyself into. Yea, and the remedy is at hand. Besides, I will add, that instead of these dangers, thou shalt meet with much safety, friendship, and content.

The main aim of the book, however, is edification not entertainment and both story-line and style are subordinate to preaching. This is illustrated most clearly in the dreadful anticlimax which saves Christian and Hopeful from the clutches of Giant Despair.

Puritans believed in the doctrine of Predestination, the idea that one's salvation or damnation has been decided by God even before one is born. John Bunyan, for years, believed himself to be damned and as with many Puritans, a main preoccupation in his life was a search for signs that he was numbered amongst the elect. A sequence of signs of election were sought and these form the allegorical theme of *The Pilgrim's Progress*. In many ways Christian is an autobiographical figure and there are close links between this book and *Grace Abounding*. Christian's courage and strength springs from fear and desperation and so it was with Bunyan but then fear and desperation are very much a part of the human condition and maybe here lies the key to the universal appeal of his story.

BUNYAN'S MEAD



An appreciation of the early development of Elstow village must include a visit to the cottages on the east side of the High Street.

Here are examples of the late mediaeval village which grew up at the gates of the Abbey. Many of the cottages retain features indicative of their early origins, dating back to the 13th and early 14th century, which is quite rare for the county.

Recently the High Street has been restored under the guidance of Bernard West the well-known architect, artist and conservationist. In fact should Bunyan retrace his steps today he would notice maybe, a few houses missing and he might not recognise the Swan Inn—but otherwise he would find things very much the same.

During restoration, fascinating links with Elstow's early history were revealed. In the 17th Century, for example, panelling of rooms was fashionable, in order to cover up what was then considered the crude work of previous generations. The original panels were discovered all over the place and remodelling rooms was like fitting together a jig-saw, but eventually all the pieces fell into position.

An interesting find was what might be described as the "ghost staircase". This has been ascribed to the 16th Century. It was a staircase, one side of which was painted on a wall; presumably the builder did not have sufficient wood to complete the job. A thorough search was made until it was found possible to reconstruct the staircase almost completely.

Another interesting discovery was part of an old painting on a beam which showed the word "God" and part of a picture of a cherub.

A rather unusual find was a little "loo" next to a fireplace, so positioned that people could sit on it without getting cold.

The restoration of "Bunyan Mead", as it has been named, is not, however, interesting merely as a museum piece; what has fascinated the Abbey School pupils on their visit to the cottages as part of their Social Studies course is the skilful blending of respect for history with the tasteful modifications which are a response to modern-day requirements. Elstow village had been falling into decay. The restored cottages now provide beautiful homes for a cross-section of the community. The elderly persons' bungalows at the rear of the development are linked with the older cottages by attractive tree-studded paths and the added facilities of a common room together with a Warden to care for the elderly—brings Elstow to the forefront in finding a solution to a present day problem by the skilful up-dating of the past.

MOOT HALL



Elstow Moot Hall was used as a market-house in connection with the fairs which were held on the green beside the market cross; as a meeting place for Elstow manor-court; for village purposes; and latterly for Nonconformist worship.

Originally the whole timber frame was filled with wattle-and-daub. Curved tension-braces join the upright posts to the horizontal plates and are halved into fairly widely spaced studes (i.e. intermediate uprights). As the Moot Hall is now accessible in all its parts, it affords a rare opportunity for demonstrating what a simple and logical work of "structural engineering" mediaeval carpenters produced.

Elstow May fair dates from the early 12th century, and was granted by Henry I and confirmed by Henry II to the nuns of Elstow Abbey. A structure was needed on the green, both for storing the stalls and other gear for the fairs and for the court of pie powder—for hearing of disputes arising there, examining merchants' credentials and testing measures. The present Moot Hall is believed to date from about 1500.

In Bunyan's time the fair was "a thing of ancient standing" and was widely attended and the large gatherings offered occasion for dispute and theft. In 1645, during the Civil War, the gathering of people of differing sympathies led to a disturbance at the May fair, and the Bedfordshire Parliamentary Committee wrote "WEE are very sorry to heare that at Elstow Fayre last there should happen such distempers and violences between the county and Major Ennis and his soldiers". This disturbance which Bunyan, then a lad of 17, may have witnessed, perhaps lingered in his mind when many years later he wrote of Christian and Faithful at Vanity Fair, when there was "hubbub and great stir in the fair, insomuch that all order was confounded", and "the great one of the fair came down" to investigate. In similar manner—Hilliersdon perhaps came down from the upper floor of the Moot Hall in May, 1645. Restored in 1951 by Bedfordshire County Council, the Moot Hall is now a museum illustrating English 17th century life and traditions associated with John Bunyan.

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BEDFORD JUDO CLUB

Bedford Judo Club was formed in 1951 and is now well established as the premier Judo Club in the Eastern Region, with an excellent reputation. Players of the National Judo Squad are amongst the large membership of the club, which includes some of the top players and coaches.

The club is privileged to meet at the Abbey School, ELSTOW, at the following times:

Monday, Thursday, Friday 7—10 p.m.

Saturdays 2—5 p.m.

For information 'phone BEDFORD 768601.

The club has researched records to establish the type of wrestling which took place in the time of John Bunyan and the result of our findings is that which you see taking place today. The wrestling varied from County to County and this afternoon's programme is an interpretation of the style prevalent in Bedfordshire.

Wrestling is in no way Judo but the members have entered into this new venture with the enthusiasm and good spirit which prevails generally within the club. We hope you will enjoy the end product.

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WARNING

Sealed Knot Battles can be dangerous

ADMISSION IS SUBJECT TO THE FOLLOWING:

In no circumstances can the Sealed Knot Limited,
its members, those taking part, or the promoters of
this event, accept liability for any personal injury, loss
or damage of any kind suffered by any spectator or
any other person howsoever caused or arising out of
or in connection with this event.