



## The Recorder

**The Recorder** is the Newsletter of the International John Bunyan Society. Published once a year, it offers members of the society a forum for notes, queries, conference announcements, calls for papers, news of members, reviews, abstracts, bibliographies: anything of interest to scholars and readers of seventeenth-century texts.

Submissions are gratefully received by 1 March 2008 for the Spring 2008 issue. Disk as well as paper submissions are welcome. E-mail submissions and all other enquiries should be sent to:

**Ken Simpson, Editor**  
**The Recorder**  
Department of English  
Thompson Rivers University  
900 McGill Road, P.O. Box 3010  
Kamloops, BC  
V2C 5N3 Canada  
E-mail: [ksimpson@tru.ca](mailto:ksimpson@tru.ca)



Thanks to Jackie Mullen and the TRU Print Shop for their help.

Cover image reproduced from a photograph  
of Hans Feibusch's mural of  
Christian emerging from the River of Death,  
St. Elisabeth's Church, Eastbourne, UK.



## The International John Bunyan Society

**Thomas Luxon, President**  
Dartmouth College, USA  
E-mail: [Thomas.H.Luxon@Dartmouth.edu](mailto:Thomas.H.Luxon@Dartmouth.edu)

**†James F. Forrest, Honorary President**  
University of Alberta, Canada

**Tamsin Spargo, Vice President**  
Liverpool John Moores University, UK  
E-mail: [t.spargo@livjm.ac.uk](mailto:t.spargo@livjm.ac.uk)

**David Gay, Secretary**  
University of Alberta, Canada  
E-mail: [david.gay@ualberta.ca](mailto:david.gay@ualberta.ca)

**Roger Pooley, Treasurer**  
Keele University, UK  
E-mail: [r.f.pooley@keele.ac.uk](mailto:r.f.pooley@keele.ac.uk)

**Arlette Zinck, Associate Treasurer (Canada)**  
King's College, Canada  
E-mail: [azinck@KingsU.ab.ca](mailto:azinck@KingsU.ab.ca)

**Ken Simpson, Editor, The Recorder**  
Thompson Rivers University, Canada  
E-mail: [ksimpson@tru.ca](mailto:ksimpson@tru.ca)

**Kirby Booker, Assistant Editor**  
Thompson Rivers University, Canada  
Email: [k\\_booker@tru.ca](mailto:k_booker@tru.ca)



## PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

Thomas H. Luxon, Dartmouth College

I am pleased to announce that the Fifth Triennial Conference of the International John Bunyan Society will be held in Hanover, New Hampshire, USA on the campus of Dartmouth College from August 15-19, 2007.

The Conference theme is "Early Modern Religion and Literature in Old and New England." The following distinguished scholars have agreed to deliver plenary addresses during the conference:

Dr. Tamsin Spargo, Liverpool John Moores University, UK  
Professor Elisabeth Sauer, Brock University, CA  
Professor Neil Keeble, University of Stirling, UK  
Professor Paul Stevens, University of Toronto, CA  
Professor Julie Crawford, Columbia University, USA  
Professor Bob Owens, The Open University, UK

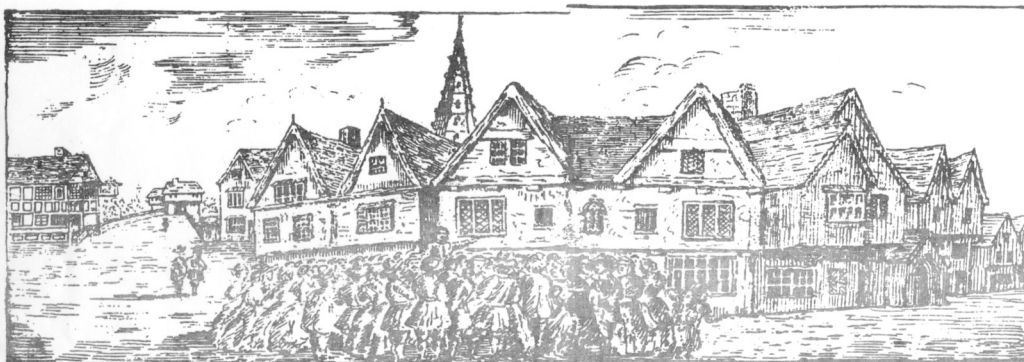
The following distinguished scholars have agreed to serve on a panel of speakers considering "Zeal and Toleration in Bunyan's Age and in Bunyan Studies":

Dr Michael Davies, University of Liverpool, UK  
Professor Nigel Smith, Princeton University, USA  
Professor Paul Stevens, University of Toronto, CA  
Professor Vera Camden, Kent State University, USA

The Fannie and Alan Leslie Center for the Humanities at Dartmouth College has generously underwritten part of the conference costs with a grant of \$12,000 and we may expect support from other offices at Dartmouth. Given this support, we plan to offer five fellowships to graduate students that will cover all conference costs and a travel allowance of up to US\$400.

The Rauner Special Collections Library of Dartmouth College will mount an exhibit of 17th and 18th century religious books and pamphlets along with its particularly stunning collection of 17th-century editions of Milton's works. The Hood Museum is hunting its vaults for items relevant to the conference theme, and I have already booked a visit to Canterbury Shaker Village, one of the last of the Shaker communities in the new world.

Please visit the conference website at <http://www.dartmouth.edu/~ijbs/> for the call for papers and registration information.



John Bunyan preaching from 2 Tim. Ch. 4 v. 6, 7 & 8 in front of the Mote Hall 18th October 1659.  
From an original print in the Bunyan Meeting Museum Bedford.



From Hans Feibusch's murals depicting *The Pilgrim's Progress* in St. Elisabeth's Church, Eastbourne, UK: Christiana and Mercy flee Grim. (Photo courtesy of Terri Ball).



## News and Notes

### Bunyan Influences Giller Prize Winner

Andrea Baillie (Canadian Press) reports that when asked what book inspired him the most, David Bergen, winner of the 2005 Giller Prize for his novel, *The Time In Between*, replied, “*Pilgrim’s Progress*. . . . I had it read to me when I was very young (which, in itself, is a whole other bit). It got me emotionally, and of course, it’s a quest.” The Giller Prize is Canada’s most prestigious literary award.

### Bellringing Fear Knocks Latter-day Bunyans Off Feet

Thanks to Galen Johnson and Vera Camden for bringing this item from *The Australian* (Section: World, p. 8, 07/05/2005) to our attention, excerpts of which are included below:

A paralysing fear that strikes church bell-ringers at the peak of their prowess is being acknowledged 350 years after the author of *The Pilgrim’s Progress* became its first recorded sufferer. John Bunyan gave up ringing at Elstow church in Bedfordshire, England, in the 1640s because, as he wrote: “I would go to the steeple-house and look on, though I durst not ring . . . but quickly after I began to think how if one of the bells should fall?” He was later unable even to approach the steeple door “for fear the steeple should fall upon my head.”

Bellringers often perform in small, enclosed ringing chambers at the top of narrow spiral staircases. Some towers, especially high ones, sway like the “deck of a ship” when the bells are being rung “full circle.” This combined with the noise and vibration, can trigger sensations that could be likened to shellshock.

Bellringer Julie Mottershead reported such symptoms in a letter to *The Ringing World*, the campanology journal. “I can only describe it as ‘ringing vertigo’,” she said. “I found that over a few sessions I was feeling increasingly uncomfortable ringing up, and then suddenly I could not ring at all – it was as if the world was caving in around me.” Her letter prompted other sufferers to come out of the belfry. . . . Rosemary Bennett, 49, from Bournemouth in England, had been ringing for six years when she started to suffer palpitations, trembling and a “slight numbness of the arms. I really thought I was going to die there and then,” Ms Bennett said. “The following week the same thing happened. Eventually I had no option but to stop ringing.” Ms Bennett said she sought medical treatment to no avail and a body scan found nothing physically wrong. . . .

Robert Lewis, editor of *The Ringing World*, believes the condition has not been recognized until now because people felt unable to discuss it. “Now it has been publicised it’s amazing how many people have come forward,” he said. “I have looked through old editions of *The Ringing World* and can find no reference to this, but I’m sure it is not a new phenomenon.”



## Dating The Spiritual Warfare Broadsheet

Arlette Zinck, The King’s University College

The Spiritual Warfare broadsheet was purchased sometime before 1980 by the Bruce Peel Special Collections at the University of Alberta for its potential relevance to the library’s Bunyan collection. The bookseller (the individual’s name is no longer known) who facilitated the library’s purchase of the broadsheet speculated in his or her synopsis of the work that it might be a source or inspiration for John Bunyan’s *The Holy War*. The work was tentatively dated to 1680, two years before the first edition of Bunyan’s last allegory appeared. It is now possible to date this particular broadsheet to 1697. The sheet is a reprint of an earlier broadsheet that was originally produced in the heat of the civil war period, likely sometime between 1642 and 1651. Whether or not the original version of this broadsheet may have influenced Bunyan is still a matter for speculation, but the reprinting of this broadsheet may indeed be connected with Bunyan’s work.

The Spiritual Warfare broadsheet depicts a castle surrounded by military regiments suited in the garb appropriate to England’s civil war period. In the centre of the castle yard is a solitary soldier at three times the scale of the characters positioned around him. Twelve Graces surround the solitary soldier, as well as a collection of seven battalions, each of which is labeled *Couradge*, *Hope*, *Faith*, *God’s word*, *Boldnes* and *Strength*. The figures of *Time*, *Howers* and *Daies* (drawn to the same scale as the solitary soldier) appear in triplicate, positioned outside of the castle walls, facing the satanic forces.

An enormous field full of enemy battalions and weaponry surrounds the castle on the outside. Here there are 24 groups, each labeled after vices. Immediately beneath them in the bottom centre of the image is the opulent tent of Satan himself. Satan, depicted here as the great dragon clothed in regal garb, is seated on a throne and holding a sword in his right hand and an orb in his left. He is flanked by five figures who are also wearing crowns and who bear the labels of five vices: *Custom*, *Lust*, *Hypocrisie*, *Pride* and *Vain-glori*. All of these characters are drawn in the same scale as the solitary soldier and the figures of *Time*, *Howers* and *Daies*.

A poem exhorting readers to spiritual warfare frames the picture on the top. Readers are challenged to recognize their ability to combat “hellish powers [that] besiege or batter” them if they, “like a Christian soldier bold, shalt always be prepar’d/ In military wise to keep / A Fortified Guard.” The poem on the bottom of the page describes a scene wherein Satan gives instructions to his troops for the destruction of the castle and its virtues.

No definite date is assigned to the work, but the printer’s blurb which follows the poetic text provides several definite clues to the dating. The engraving of the spiritual war picture is credited to Martin Droeshout. Droeshout is most famous for his frontispiece engraving of Shakespeare’s portrait that appeared in the first folio of 1623. The Cotes brothers, printers located in Aldersgate, collaborated with Droeshout on the Shakespeare engraving, and Richard Cotes, the one surviving Cotes Brother, collaborated with Droeshout on the spiritual warfare broadsheet (the name of Richard Cotes appears alongside of Droeshout’s in the credit line of the military drawing). Since Droeshout’s last drawings are dated 1651, and since Richard Cotes took over the Cotes Brother’s business in 1642 when his brother Thomas died, the broadsheet was most likely first published sometime between 1642 and 1651. These dates also place the drawing within the civil war era.

Although Cotes is most likely to have been the original printer of the work, the credits that follow the poetic text indicate that the broadsheet was also “printed and sold by John Garret” sometime later. A survey of the Term Catalogues confirms that John Garret frequently reprinted older works that appeared to him to have resale value. Garret was in business between the years 1676 to 1697. Preceding the note that says that the broadsheet was printed for John Garret is a list of works that were also available for sale in his shop at the Cornhill exchange. By matching the titles on offer in the printer’s blurb against the Term Catalogue descriptions of works available for sale by Garret, it is possible to date the reprinting of the broadsheet to 1697. This is also the year in which he published “A New map of the World in Divers Projections”, which appears in the November 1697 Term Catalogue and is the third item listed for sale on the broad-

sheet. The remaining 9 titles that are advertised on the broadsheet appear in the Term Catalogues between 1675 to 1692, with one other entry dated 1676 and the rest falling between 1680 and 1688.

Why might the broadsheet have become suddenly popular again in 1697? The most logical answer may be the fact that John Bunyan's *The Holy War*, the definite word on spiritual warfare by one of the most marketable authors ever, was republished by Nathaniel Ponder in 1696. *The Holy War* was originally published in 1682, and a spurious second edition full of irregularities emerged in 1684. Ponder's edition of 1696 returned to the copy text used in 1682, thus making it the first official reprint of the authentic text. If Garret had an eye for choosing existing texts with great potential for resale, he may very well have seen a lucrative future for the broadsheet given the renewed interest in the topic of spiritual warfare that Bunyan's book was likely to generate. It seems reasonable to assume that Garret might have hoped to ride on the coat tails of Bunyan's epic to financial success of his own. Whether or not Garret succeeded with this plan, however, is a matter for speculation, but we do know that this piece is among the very last Garret produced before closing his business later this same year.

**Bibliography**

Arber, Edward, ed. *The Term Catalogues*. London, 1903. Volumes I, II, III.

Harrison, Brian and Colin Matthew, eds. *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2004. Accessed on line 26 January 2006. <http://www.library.ualberta.ca/databases/databasesinfo/index.cfm?ID=3404>.

Plomer, Henry R. *A Dictionary of the Printers and Booksellers who Were at work in England, Scotland and Ireland From 1668 to 1725*. Printed for the Bibliographical Society. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1922.



**On the Trail of the Pilgrim: Adventures in Collecting John Bunyan**

**Robert G. Collmer, Baylor University**

Sitting in my den—far away from a famous “Denn” in Bedford—is my collection of books and memorabilia about John Bunyan. For over forty years materials related to one author have led me on a trail of collecting. As I begin to consider disposing of the trove, let me reminisce.

I happened to become interested in Bunyan not because of a dissertation topic or my own Baptist background (my father, a Baptist missionary, had been pastor of the Fourth Baptist Church of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania) but, strangely enough, from research I was doing in Holland. In the fall of 1960 with my wife, Linn, and two small children, I traveled on our meagre funds to study Donne's reception in Dutch, an outgrowth of a dissertation at the University of Pennsylvania. There by chance I discovered that some of Bunyan's works had been translated into Dutch, just as some of Donne's bawdy poems had been translated into the same language while he was alive. Thus, I became intrigued with Bunyan through Donne. Bunyan, I learned, was still a favourite among certain Hollanders and Afrikaners. So, I began to pick up volumes, especially those that had illustrations by the greatest of Dutch copper engravers, Jan Luyken. I drifted into collecting Bunyan material, concentrating on *The Pilgrim's Progress*. From there I moved into collecting others works and objects related to the cult of Bunyan.

My collection is small in comparison with the great ones at, for instance, the British Library, the New York Public Library Lenox Collection, the rare volumes at the University of Alberta (reflecting the leadership of good friend James F. Forrest), and the Vrije Universiteit in Amsterdam, or even smaller ones, such as the collection at Wheaton College (which owes its existence to Beatrice Batson), the Houghton Library at Harvard, or the little-known one at Covenant College, Lookout Mountain, Georgia. Materials related to editing Bunyan have been for sale from the library of Roger Sharrock offered by Colin Franklin, Culham, Ox-

cifically, Dunan-Page exposes Bunyan's daring fascination with testing the same theological boundaries that he commends to others, almost as if he had an attention-defeated compulsion to offer himself as the exception that might prove his religious rules, so long as God's grace might still exonerate him.

The author divides her chapters among three sections, corresponding to epithets that were commonly hurled at religious extremists in Bunyan's century: schismatic, fanatic, and wretch. The first section treats



Bunyan's *A Confession of My Faith* and other treatises composed ostensibly to foster reconciliation among various types of his fellow Baptists. Dunan-Page effectively contends that while Bunyan professed a desire in these writings for a unity that might transcend different sacramental standards, his brazen assertion of an individual rather than a denominational confession, coupled with his highly polemical style, only contributed to popular perceptions that Bunyan really was like the belligerent Anabaptists of Münster whom he disavowed. The second section ponders not only that illustrator Robert White chose to render his “sleeping portrait” of Bunyan with the recognized motifs of a melancholic, such as leaning drowsily on the left hand, but further that Bunyan himself drew the heroes of *The Pilgrim's Progress* with the symptoms of madness as diagnosed by contemporaries: weeping, trembling, crying aloud, proving unable to act, and even in the narrator's case relying upon a dream for inspiration. Dunan-Page understandably wonders how Bunyan could seriously have expected such characters to be imitable for his readers, but her concern is mitigated by the reality that many thousands of readers have indeed derived inspiration from Bunyan's protagonists over the centuries. The book's third section turns mainly to *The Pilgrim's Progress*, Part II, seeking to demonstrate how the pilgrims there typically learn to live with their respective fears rather than defeat them. Dunan-Page treats Greatheart's invasion of Doubting Castle as the ultimate instance of addressing fear in both its “godly” and anxious connotations, although her suggestion that Bunyan consulted apocryphal teachings on Christ's harrowing of hell to depict the scene seems questionable, and even if true would hardly lend evidence for Bunyan's religious extremism.

Dunan-Page has made a worthy contribution to Bunyan studies, providing occasion to reassess the tinker's intriguing incongruities.

The essays in this volume, along with the perceptive introduction provided by the editor, advance our understanding of the reception of *The Pilgrim's Progress* in contexts that are now as germane to the text as Bunyan's own historically-specific location. At the same time, they demonstrate how certain features of Bunyan's narrative art expand the possibilities of its reception. This collection will both inform and stimulate more research into the reception history of *The Pilgrim's Progress*.

**John Bunyan. *The Pilgrim's Progress and Other Select Works*. Reprint of London: John G. Murdoch, [c.1874]. Green Forest, Arizona: Master Books, New Leaf Press, 2005. 860 pp. ISBN 0890514402. \$59.00.**

**Reviewed by Robert G. Collmer, Baylor University**

Facsimiles of *The Pilgrim's Progress* such as the one printed in London by Elliott Stock and distributed by the British Red Cross to soldiers in World War I or reprints of authoritative critical works, such as the great three-volume George Offor edition of the mid-nineteenth century by modern presses like Baker Book House and Banner of Truth Trust, are common. And now books-on-demand make many editions of Bunyan's works availa-





**Ken Simpson, ed. *Reading Bunyan's Readers: New Essays on the Reception of The Pilgrim's Progress. A Special Feature in 1650-1850: Ideas, Aesthetics, and Inquiries in the Early Modern Era.* Vol. 13 (2006). 167-311. ISBN 0404644120. \$124.50.**

**Reviewed by David Gay, University of Alberta**

In presenting six new essays on the reception of *The Pilgrim's Progress*, Ken Simpson observes the anxiety and affirmation Bunyan experienced in the early reception of his book. Publishing the second part of *The Pilgrim's Progress* in the wake of various imitations of part one, Bunyan sought to “control the reception” of his book by “asserting his authorship of works that are meant to offer the legitimate moral and doctrinal interpretations of the original text” (169). Such authorial control is impossible, especially in the case of a book that was translated into over two hundred languages in a range of contexts. In reviewing the treatment of reception in recent scholarship, Simpson asserts the need for more “historically specific studies” of Bunyan’s reception. This collection of essays is the ideal vehicle for pursuing that direction.

The collection begins appropriately with Isabel Hofmeyr, whose *Portable Bunyan: A Transnational History of The Pilgrim's Progress* is a landmark study in reception, and a strong influence on other authors in this volume. In “John Bunyan and George Simeon Mwase in Nyasaland,” Hofmeyr places *The Pilgrim's Progress* in a part of Africa with “competing international interests,” and probes its complex relation to African Christianity and missionary activity. Her study challenges the perception of Bunyan in terms of world and national literatures: “Bunyan had an avowedly Protestant evangelical agenda, and his texts hold transnational ambitions” (176). The next essay by Sylvia Brown and Arlette Zinck – “The Pilgrim's Progress Among Aboriginal Canadians” – develops this insight by examining the careers of three missionary translators in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. These authors examine how translations function as “points of intersection between cultures and languages” (202). For missionary translators, *The Pilgrim's Progress* in various forms could serve as a “cultural intermediary, a two-way frame upon which familiar indigenous characters and beliefs, as well as evangelical messages, could be hung” (223).

Robert Collmer’s study of Catholic versions of *The Pilgrim's Progress* in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries offers a fascinating account of the changes translators made in order to make the text “acceptable to the authorities and palatable” for Catholic readers (227). Such changes range from the effects of translation itself, to the alterations of names and places, to significant doctrinal separations and adaptations entailed by the Catholic context. Mary Burke examines the work of James Simson, who, in the later nineteenth century, wrote with a “disconcerting monomania” on the possibility of Bunyan’s gypsy origins (246), a controversy that appeared “sporadically on the pages of journals and newspapers throughout the Victorian period” (254), and that included a dispute between Simson and George Offor in the pages of *Notes and Queries*. As Burke argues, this controversy takes the “mainstream Protestant” Bunyan and “reconstitutes him as a representative of the marginalized, the misunderstood, and the nonconformist, in every sense of the word” (263).

The final two essays in the collection explore features of Bunyan’s art that bear on its reception. H. Clark Maddux argues for a complementary relationship between the “dark allegory” of *The Pilgrim's Progress* and the “evidentiary dialogue” of *The Life and Death of Mr. Badman* corresponding to Ramus’ distinction between artificial and non-artificial styles of argument. The distinction explains Bunyan’s reception in New England, where recognition of this technique made New Englanders “prepared for reading Bunyan even before the fact” (267). In “From Doctrine to Narrative and Back in *The Pilgrim's Progress*,” Calvin Peterson demonstrates that the doctrine of election, which is foundational to *The Pilgrim's Progress*, “is itself narrative in nature” (304). Being “literary-like,” any conceptual articulation of predestination will have narrative elements and structure. In consequence, election in *The Pilgrim's Progress* implies two narratives: a divine perspective on individual election, and an individual search for election that cannot yield absolute certainty. The double narrative projects the “hermeneutical challenges” readers face in reconciling doctrine and narrative in Bunyan’s text, with important implications for its reception.

ford.

I own over three hundred and thirty separate copies of *The Pilgrim's Progress* in English and other languages, including early Dutch and other more exotic tongues such as Hebrew, Malay, Zulu, Inuit, etc., some with illustrations using the attire of the potential readers. Furthermore, there are some thirty collections of Bunyan’s works containing his major books. The earliest *Pilgrim's Progress* in English is the fifth edition (1680), but the illustrations have all been cut out. The earliest Dutch edition is dated 1683 (with a frontispiece from 1682). Illustrations in woodcuts, copper, steel, and chromolithography have been especially interesting.

Beyond *The Pilgrim's Progress*, my collection has other works by Bunyan. Of note are a first edition of *The Holy War* (and the first Dutch edition from 1685), *Komst en Welkomst tot Christus* (1689), and the third edition of *The Acceptable Sacrifice* (1698), advertised as the last work written by Bunyan, proofs for which purportedly were corrected by him on his deathbed. Some volumes are interesting because of their associations. There is a 1774 edition of *The Life and Death of Mr. Badman* owned by Richard Monckton Milnes (Lord Houghton). Some are odd, such as “The Elstow Edition,” 1881, bound in wood from the tree at the Elstow church.

Versions and echoes of Bunyan have attracted me. Palafox’s *De Harder van de Goede Nacht* (1684) is the first work in Dutch claiming connection with Bunyan. *The Female Pilgrim* and *The Progress of the Pilgrim Good-Intent in Jacobinical Times* were well known at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Children’s editions of *Pilgrim's Progress*, for instance, in words of one syllable, a comic book, picture cards, and games are here. Objects such as a toasting iron with the figure of Bunyan at the end, a brass letter opener, sheets from newspapers commemorating celebrations of Bunyan (for instance, the erection of the statue in Bedford in 1874), pictures of Bunyan from cigarette and ice cream cards, models of his birthplace, and china cups exist. I have over 200 related items.

In contrast to Christian, who made his journey in order to enter the Celestial City, I walked a path that has



brought pleasure from picking up pieces on the way.

### **The John Bunyan Collections At Bedford Central Library**

**Barry Stephenson, Bedfordshire Heritage Library**

Bedford Central Library is extremely fortunate to have two remarkable collections of works by and about Bunyan. These are The Frank Mott Harrison Collection and The George Offor Collection. In addition, the Local Studies Library holds many twentieth-century editions of Bunyan’s works as well as recent biographical and critical studies.

Frank Mott Harrison was one of the leading Bunyan scholars of the twentieth century and in 1938, to commemorate the 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Bunyan’s death, he bequeathed his collection of some one thousand items to Bedford Central Library. Of the sixty works written by Bunyan, twenty-seven are in the collection, including fourteen first editions. Among these are *Some Gospel Truths Opened* (1656), Bunyan’s first work, and *The Acceptable Sacrifice* (1689), which was not published until after his death.

Among the editions of *The Pilgrim's Progress* are the 22<sup>nd</sup> edition published in 1728, which contains the first attempt at engraved illustrations in England, an “improved language” edition (1811), and an 1861 edition illustrated by J. D. Watson. This is the illustrator’s own copy and includes some extra illustrations. An 1885 edition for the price of 1d, a 1941 edition prepared especially for presentation to members of the forces, and an undated edition “for the little ones in words of one syllable” are also unique editions in the collection.

There are large sections on both critical and biographical works as well. One of the most interesting sec-

tions covers works of interest to Bunyan, including a copy of *The Plain-Man’s Pathway to Heaven* (1654), which was one of the two books Bunyan’s first wife owned when they married. There are also sections on verse adaptations, dramatic and musical arrangements, and works similar in conception to *The Pilgrim’s Progress*. Among these is *Two Little Pilgrims’ Progress: a story of the City Beautiful*, written by Francis Hodgson Burnett, the author of *Little Lord Fauntleroy*.

There is also a small section on novels that feature Bunyan, among them May Wyne’s delightful *The King’s Highway: a romantic novel* (1930), in which the preacher is befriended by a highwayman called Grey Mask. Dr. Harrison was interested in every aspect of “Bunyaniana,” which explains the presence in the collection of a card came called “Progress” based on Bunyan’s book. Although there are a few translations, this is the area in which the collection is the weakest.

George Offor was the leading Bunyan editor of the nineteenth century. After his death in 1864, his library, including some 500 Bunyan items, was sent for sale at Sotheby’s in June 1865. On the third day of the sale, most of the Bunyan items were destroyed or damaged by fire in the auction rooms. In the twentieth century, Richard Offor, the scholar’s grandson, began collecting Bunyan items and in 1951 gave the collection to Bedfordshire County Council for display at Elstow Moot Hall. In 1959 the British Museum donated a number of Bunyan books where they had duplicate copies; many of the titles had probably been in the original Offor collection. In 1981 most of the collection went to County Hall Library with the rest going to The Bunyan Museum. When the County Library closed in 1986, the collection was transferred to Bedford Central Library. The strength of this collection is in the large number of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century editions of Bunyan’s works and translations of them. It does not contain the wide range of Bunyan material to be found in the Harrison collection

There is a printed catalogue of the Harrison collection, with Bunyan’s works arranged in chronological order by the publication date of the first editions. The Offor collection has no printed catalogue, but there is a handwritten sheaf catalogue written by Richard Offor. The catalogue is arranged by author’s surname and then alphabetically by title if more than one title by a given author is held in the collection, so Bunyan’s texts are arranged in alphabetical order and not by date of publication.

The collections are housed in the newly opened Bedfordshire Heritage Library, which is open Tuesdays from 9:30-1:00 and 2:00-5:30, and by appointment at other times, except Sundays. For a more detailed ac-



count of the collections there is an excellent article by Roger Thompson in *Bunyan Studies* 1.1 (1988): 43-54.

**The Pilgrim’s Path: Sources from Stevington**

**Kathy Brown**

**Introduction**

It has long been a tradition within the villages close to Bedford to claim some Bunyan connections. Just over a hundred years ago a local vicar, Albert Foster, wrote *Bunyan’s Country*,<sup>1</sup> a topographical study of *The Pilgrim’s Progress*, in which he provides a detailed analysis of some of the features which he thought he recognised from the text. He ascribed the nuns at House Beautiful to those of Elstow Abbey, House Beautiful itself to Houghton House near Ampthill, and the cross to the one standing on the green at Elstow.<sup>2</sup>

About five years ago, I went to France to design a garden in the Dordogne and I woke up one morning to find Vera Britain’s *In the Steps of John Bunyan* on the table beside my bed. She wrote it after World War II.

1. Published in 1901.  
2. No one can hesitate for a moment as to where the cross at which Christian lost his burden stood” (p. 64).

unique or inaccessible settings. Above all, these authors avoid obvious conclusions by allowing the reader to finish them (to compose the ending), and by providing the reader “with a sense of participation and inclusion in the story that continues beyond its ending” (p. 136). These authors are tellers of stories within stories; they require actual readers to interpret the narrative process. All of these authors “repeatedly included self-reflexive elements in their texts” (p. 137) by showing their characters “developing, telling, reading, and responding to stories” (p. 137). Model readers are required within their stories who will demonstrate how we as real readers should act and respond.



Bertsch discusses both *Grace Abounding* (1666) and *Pilgrim’s Progress* (1678, 1684), the uncertain narrative and lack of a definite ending in the one leading to the depiction of an alternative and transcendent reality in the other. When readers come to the end of *Pilgrim’s Progress*, they enter God’s story and they “find salvation by overcoming the separation between themselves and the text” (p. 44). Social interaction now becomes important in creating meaning and Bunyan’s fiction anticipates the novels of Grimmelshausen, Defoe, and Schnabel, who rely very little on “the endless unfolding of the Bible’s meaning in personal experience, in allegoresis, and in the imagination that transcends the letter of Scripture” (p. 44).

The theoretical foundation of Bertsch’s work is in fact more felicitously defined than I have been able to describe and her study of narratology is convincing. Her close and careful reading of the several texts is cogent and informative, though anyone familiar with Bunyan (or with the other writers under consideration) will find little here that is new. But the juxtaposition of Bunyan with Daniel Defoe’s *Robinson Crusoe* (1719) is unexpected, and even more surprising are the accounts of Hans Jakob Christoph von Grimmelshausen’s *Simplicissimus* (1668) and *Springinsfeld* (1670), and the now rather obscure four volumes of Johann Gottfried Schnabel’s *Wunderliche Fata einiger See-Fahrer* (1731-43). Bertsch is principally concerned with writing a comparative study that reveals changing linguistic and narrative meaning. She assumes that her readers are familiar with the texts she studies, often in considerable detail. In such a thematically focused study, there is little space for contextualization, so that one finds, for example, no reference to the historical context of Grimmelshausen, whose powerful stories reflect events of the Thirty Years War.

Nevertheless, Janet Bertsch writes with exemplary clarity and authority and she reminds us of just how far fiction has travelled since the seventeenth century. The authors she discusses in her book all believed that what they wrote had a serious moral purpose and that their stories surely had the power to change their readers. These four writers, she says, “claim that their stories have a real value because the readers’ emotional and sentimental responses to a work cause them to internalise its moral lesson” (p. 3). There are obvious differences in these texts, but they are united at least in a common goal; and Bertsch has achieved her aim of elucidating this arresting theme in a brief volume, densely and elegantly argued.

**Anne Dunan-Page. *Grace Overwhelming: John Bunyan, The Pilgrim’s Progress, and the Extremes of the Baptist Mind*. Oxford: Peter Lang, 2006. 355 pp. ISBN 0820462969. \$66.95.**

**Reviewed by Galen K. Johnson, John Brown University**

Bunyan scholars can be grateful for the lasting interest that Peter Lang Verlag has shown in their shared specialization, for Anne Dunan-Page’s *Grace Overwhelming* is now the third volume devoted to Bunyan in its Religions and Discourse series. Dunan-Page is Lecturer in English at Montpellier University, France, and has published multiple essays on the literature of English dissent. Despite the suggestion of her book’s subtitle, it does not so much proffer a new interpretation of *The Pilgrim’s Progress*, nor sustain a thoroughgoing investigation of the Baptist mind, as it illustrates through the invocation of each subject why even Bunyan’s post-conversion life was spent in need no less than witness of a grace overwhelming. Spe-

I believe then, that they all went on till they came to the foot of an Hill, at the bottom of which was a Spring. . . . *Christian* now went to the \*Spring and drank thereof to refresh himself. . . . (p. 34)

The foot of the hill in Stevington provides several smaller springs and one large one known as the Holy Well, forming a clear cool pool of water which was known never to have dried up.<sup>4</sup>

Bunyan’s comments on water in *The Holy City* have a remarkable affinity with the underlying meaning of this part of *The Pilgrim’s Progress*. Through Christ’s death on the cross, Christian was released of his burden of sin, which then rolled into a sepulchre, a tomb of death, and was swallowed up. Then from the same spot there emerged a stream from which Christian drank to refresh the body but also to quench the spiritu-



al thirst of the soul before going up to House Beautiful and being accepted into the family of the Church. Bunyan surely recognised the symbolic landscape of Stevington, not only the cross and sepulchre but also the imagery of the crystal clear water flowing out from beneath the threshold of the house of God, a subject about which he wrote at length in *The Holy City* and *The Water of Life*, and more succinctly in *The Pilgrim’s Progress*.

Conclusion

There is no doubt that Bunyan knew the Bible intimately and used many biblical allusions such as “the narrow way”, “the pit,” etc. Yet I think he could quite easily see representations of the scriptures in the Bedfordshire landscape, imprint these pictures on his mind, and then use them readily in his sermons and writings.

I have attempted to trace how in *The Pilgrim’s Progress* there are connections with the village of Stevington, and particularly with the Cross, the Sepulchre, and the Spring; however, it is not just that one or two key places are mentioned. Here we have a whole scenario linked geographically in the script and in close alignment on the ground.

I am not, I hasten to say, claiming the village as the source of the entire landscape of *The Pilgrim’s Progress*, or that these topographical associations are the most important aspects of the story. Far from it. But while many eminent literary scholars and historians have done much to help readers comprehend the language and allegory of Bunyan’s great work, I feel there is still so much more to understand. I think Bunyan used his knowledge of local customs, local religious issues, and local geography to give the story an added richness. Thus in a small way, my search helps to explain why such an impoverished and uneducated man could create such a masterpiece.

(This is an excerpt from a longer article. Further excerpts are planned for future issues of *The Recorder*. For further information, contact Kathy Brown at <Kathy\_Brown@tinyworld.co.uk>.

**Janet Bertsch. *Storytelling in the Works of Bunyan, Grimmelshausen, Defoe, and Schnabel*. Woodbridge, Suffolk: Camden House, 2004. x + 152 pp. \$75.00 (cloth). ISBN 1571132996.**

Reviewed by P. G. Stanwood, University of British Columbia

The title of this useful and unusual book truly indicates its plan and compass. This work is a comparative study of two English and two German writers who help in the development of a common narrative mode. These authors all model the shape of novels to come (there is a passing reference to *Pamela* and *Tristram Shandy* near the end of the book), for their stories “share a basic structure, use of language, and moral outlook” (p. 2). Generally speaking, they are biblically centred, and they often occur either on islands or in

As I read it, I was transported back to my own village, indeed to my own house. Unlike other writers on the subject, Britain thought that the scene at the cross in *The Pilgrim’s Progress* was pivotal. She attributed that scene to Stevington, not to Elstow, for she linked it to the sepulchre. This is a vital clue because in Stevington, down the hill from the cross and beneath the wall of the church there lies the Holy Well, entombed in sepulchral stone surroundings. It still exists today. With these two landmarks so closely aligned she was convinced that Stevington was an important site. She also knew that according to local Stevington custom, John Bunyan preached in the meadows down by the river.

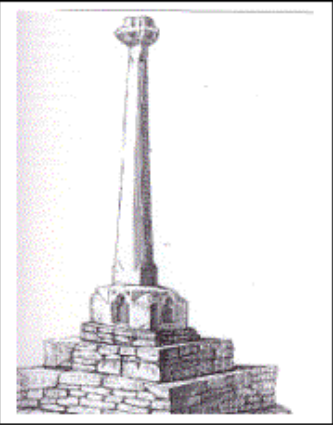
The imagery of the cross and sepulchre are certainly strong indicators of a link between Stevington and *The Pilgrim’s Progress*. As soon as I returned from holiday I began to research the history of the village, and my search began to indicate that there were other connections, as well as the physical landmarks. A study of medieval and contemporary documents in Stevington revealed a rich religious history, from medieval pilgrims to the emergence, in the seventeenth century, of a strong, active Baptist community rivalling that of Bedford. My argument in the remainder of this paper is that Stevington village and its surroundings may have inspired some of the most memorable incidents and scenes in *The Pilgrim’s Progress*.

Landmarks in *The Pilgrim’s Progress*

1. The Cross

Now I saw in my Dream, that the high way up which *Christian* was to go, was fenced on either side with a Wall, and that Wall is called \**Salvation*. Up this way therefore did burdened Christian run, but not without great difficulty, because of the load on his back. He ran thus till he came at a place somewhat ascending; and upon that place stood a *Cross*, and a little below in the bottom, a *Sepulcher*. So I saw in my Dream, that just as *Christian* came up with the *Cross*, his burden loosed from off his Shoulders, and fell from off his back; and began to tumble; and so continued to do, till it came to the mouth of the *Sepulcher*, where it

(*The Progress*, ed. 31)



Engraving of the ancient cross in Stevington, by Thomas Fisher, published in 1836 in his collections of Bedfordshire Drawings. The cross still stands in the middle of Stevington at the heart of the village. Reproduced with thanks to the Cecil Higgins Museum and Art Gallery, Bedford.

fell in, and saw it no more.

*Pilgrim’s Keeble*, p.



I believe that Bunyan’s account of Christian’s approach to the cross contains a number of clues about the locality that was in Bunyan’s mind.

First, the cross was approached by a highway, between two walls.

Secondly, it stood on a place “somewhat ascending.”

Thirdly, the burden tumbled off Christian’s shoulders and down to the sepulchre where it fell in and disappeared.

Other scholars have identified the cross here with the cross at Bunyan’s home village Elstow, on the green close to where he played tip cat as a youth, not many years later. He certainly knew well. But there is no walled highway approaching the Elstow cross, and it sits in the midst of the green, which is as flat as a pancake. By contrast, Stevington the eastern proach lies between high stone walls, part broken through with development of a recent housing estate.<sup>3</sup> cross itself is a simple stone shaft, standing in the middle of the crossroads guarding the route which slopes steeply down to the site of the old hospitium, the church, and the Holy Well.

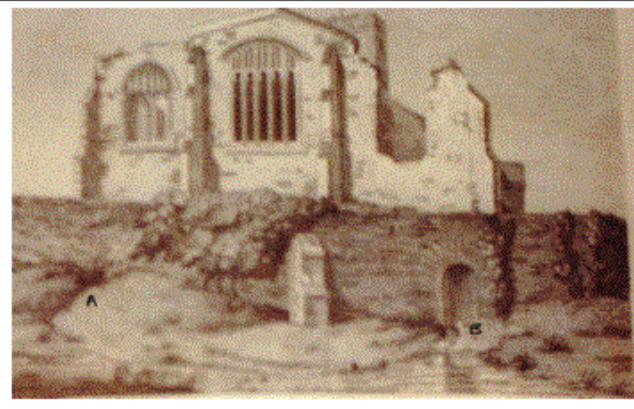


The Holy Well at Stevington. Photo Kathy Brown

2. The Sepulchre

The Holy Well at Stevington could be recognised as the sepulchre in the story. It is a chamber four feet deep set back into the ancient stone wall surrounding the eastern boundary of the church land. The chamber has an arched roof of stone and gives the appearance of a cave set into the limestone escarpment on which the church is built. Water seeps out beneath the limestone rock to form a pool of water. The concept of the burden falling in and being seen no more is easy to imagine on a practical level. In theological terms, however, the prospect is even more exciting for here is a receptacle for sin and, at the same time, a source of water emanating from beneath the church. This symbolism is of immense importance.

Bunyan discussed the subject of water at length in *The Holy City*, which began as a sermon to inmates in prison, and therefore predates the writing of *The Pilgrim’s Progress*. Toward the end of the book, he quotes from Revelations Chapter 22, verse 1: “And he shewed me a pure River of Water of Life, clear as Crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God, and of the Lamb.” He gives several interpretations of the meaning of water. The first is that “no soul can be cleansed or effectually washed from his guilt and filth, but by the Grace of God.” He also writes that it is called “Water of Life” because whoever drinks it shall “die no more, but the water that Christ shall give shall be in him a Well of water, springing up in him to eternal life.”



Early nineteenth century drawing by Thomas Fisher of St Mary the Virgin Church at Stevington. Reproduced with thanks to the Cecil Higgins Museum and Art Gallery, Bedford. Beneath the wall of the church, two springs emerged, the one seen to the right being the Holy Well. Together they flowed down to the Great Ouse. Note both the south and north chapels were in ruins. It was in the north chapel that the broken tombstones lie with symbols of the Tree of Life. The view is almost unchanged today.

3. In living memory the banks on either side of the road appeared even higher with bushes growing on the land behind the walls. This is the traditional route recognised by the older members of the Baptist church in Stevington. Vera Britain saw it as the route up Church Road. Either way the interpretation is the same.

3. The Spring

Bunyan went on to use water as an emblem on several occasions in *The Pilgrim’s Progress*. The first is where Christian pauses to drink from the spring:

4. The small stream from the first spring runs into the water from the second and the two combine to flow through a very boggy area now colonised by butterbur (used as a healing herb in medieval times) in summer and snowdrops in winter.