

# The Leamington Omnibus

Newsletter of the Leamington History Group

Autumn 2012

## J E Duggins, R B A. 1881 - 1968



James Edward Duggins

Leamington artist & photographer James Edward Duggins was born on 27<sup>th</sup> March, 1881, the son of a Cubbington watchmaker.

He studied under Algernon Talmage with the Newlyn School. In St Ives, Duggins became friends with John Anthony Park whose marine pictures were a big source of inspiration to him. He met Edward Stott and Sir George Clausen who had a profound influence on Duggins' pastel work. He also met Sir John Alfred Arnesby Brown whose rustic images of cattle and leafy landscapes influenced his composition and technique.

James Duggins exhibited at a number of galleries including the Paris Salon (1927), the Royal Academy, Manchester, Birmingham, Liverpool and Coventry. The Royal Leamington Spa Art Gallery and Museum holds eleven of his works.

In 1906, after two years in Cornwall, he established a successful photographic business, The Grove Studio, 23 Regent Grove, Leamington (now numbered 36/37). A number of mayoral portraits photographed by Duggins hang to this day in the Town Hall.

James Duggins taught at The Boys' College, Binswood Avenue, and the Art School, in Leamington. He continued painting in the countryside of Warwickshire and the Cotswolds, which was his greatest love, until the age of 67. He then devoted his time to small pencil sketches as he worked alongside his son David in the photographic business.

He illustrated two books: 'Sweet Arden' (1906) by George Morley, also 'Unknown Warwickshire' (1924) by Mary Dormer Harris.

He died on 23<sup>rd</sup> December 1968 and was laid to rest in the Churchyard at St Mary Magdalene, Lillington, where he had been a member of the choir for many years. His headstone can be seen there today, inscribed "A Warwickshire Artist."



Regent Grove

*Helen Cunliffe 2012*

Photographs from a private collection  
Reproduced with permission

## *Leamington History Group Detectives*



Mr & Mrs Pincher, from Bridgewater in Somerset, with a photograph of the house where Mrs Pincher lived as a child, identified as a result of a joint sleuthing effort by LHG members, and tracked down and presented to them by Chairman Alan Griffin. In 1937, Mrs Frances Pincher, then a four-year old girl, came with her parents and two older brothers to Leamington where her father became Permanent Staff Instructor to local Territorial Army Units. Frances remembered a large white-painted house with railings, an apartment over a garage where field artillery guns were stored; a dairy almost opposite, and a school nearby. At the outbreak of war, when her father was posted to France, the family moved to Surrey, and never came back. Having written to Robert Nash at the Town Hall, to see if anyone could help locate the house, imagine her delight when History Group members discovered that it was in fact, number 9 Clarendon Place, at the end of Waterloo Terrace. Mr & Mrs Pincher came to Leamington on 4<sup>th</sup> September, to see the house and to say a personal thank you to History Group members.

*Alan Griffin*

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## George Matthews Bennett, Bonesetter 1844 – 1913

What are, or were, bonesetters, you may ask. They were healers, joint manipulators, and setters of fractured bones, long before the advent of X-rays, Plaster of Paris, and now, MRI scans. Often unqualified other than by experience, their 'trade' generally ran in families, handed down from father to son or daughter. It used to be said that to be a successful bonesetter, you had to be the seventh son of a seventh son! Their modern counterparts are chiropractors and osteopaths.

In the Middle Ages, boys aged 12-17 were apprenticed for 7 years to recognised master craftsmen, some later entering university training along with physicians. The best bonesetters were approved by royalty, - and could therefore charge more for their services. In Europe, bonesetters belonged to a guild which oversaw training, supported its members professionally and ruled on disciplinary charges. In Britain, traditionally, bonesetters were employed by those who could not afford the much higher fees charged by university-qualified physicians.



George Bennett came from a long line of Oxfordshire Bonesetters, a family tradition which stretched back at least 200 years. He inherited the mantle from Matthews Bennett, an uncle who practised in Leamington and district, and once in business, George adopted 'Matthews' as his middle name, advertised widely, holding clinics not only widely in Warwickshire, but in coaching inns all over the south of England, - and latterly, also in London. He was a great publicist: local directories of the time feature many prominent advertisements such as the one below.

GM Bennett's book, 'The Art of the Bonesetter', published in 1884, sought to vindicate "The Art", beset as it was by contemporary medical professionals' disdainful attitudes and critical comments. It carried fulsome endorsements from the good and the great as to the efficacy of his treatments.

*Faithfully yours.*  
*G.M.B.*

This vigorous, energetic man was a liberal, a staunch member of the Church of England, - and at the same time, a freemason, a druid, and a forester. He clearly sought to cover every eventuality, including ensuring a good professional start for his older son, George junior, by having him educated at a private school in Oxford, and then as a medical student in London. When his father died in 1913, George junior duly carried on the Leamington practice, until his own death in 1940.

Mark Ryan

SPENNEL'S ALMANACK AND ANNUAL DIRECTORY FOR 1900. i

**MR. MATTHEWS BENNETT,**  
**BONE SETTER,**  
**31, Rugby Road, LEAMINGTON,**  
ATTENDS TO ALL KINDS OF  
**Fractures, Sprains, Dislocations,**  
**Contracted Joints, Injured Spines,**  
&c., &c., &c. **FREE**

**MR. BENNETT** at home all day Saturdays and Sundays, other days before 12 and after 6, except occasional Thursdays, when after 6 only.

**RUGBY:** Eagle Temperance Hotel, every Monday, 2 till 4.  
**COVENTRY:** 63, Hertford Street, every Friday, 1 till 4.  
**STRATFORD-ON-AVON:** 8, Chapel Street, 2nd and 4th Tuesdays in every month, 1 till 4.  
**WARWICK:** Woolpack Hotel; Saturdays, 3 till 4-30.

Patients attended in any part of the Country.

Appointments made by Letter or Telegram prevent disappointment and waiting.



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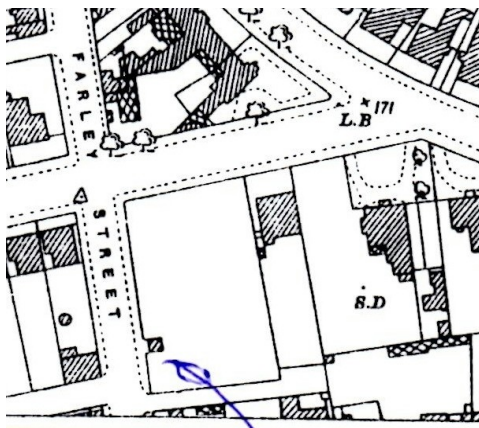
## The 'Half Crown Side'.

My mother, who grew up in Leamington in its more genteel days, often used to say that in the thirties, you chose very carefully where you went walking, - and where you might be seen walking.

If you valued your reputation, you steered very clear of "the half crown side" of the Parade. This was the left hand side, from the Pump Rooms up to Christchurch and it was widely referred to in this way because it was where the shops were, the side frequented by girls who were in service or who worked in shops, - i.e. 'trade'. The better off walked on the other side, by the Town Hall, the Regent Hotel, Lloyds Bank, and so on, - the shadier side, protecting their complexion, as well as their reputation!

Nora Connolly

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## WHAT IS THIS?

The small building in Farley Street, indicated by an arrow at the bottom of the map was the shed where the last Bath Chair in Leamington was kept, observed by Kit Smith, as he walked to school in about 1932.

George David Taylor was the Bath Chair man, from about 1909 onwards. He operated from The Bath Chair Office, listed at various addresses, - in Russell Terrace, in New Street in 1913, and in Spencer Street from 1914 to 1916. In 1926, local directories give Mrs Taylor's name as head of the business, - and dealing in second hand books. By 1932, Mrs Taylor had become a Stationer, - Bath Chairs having become redundant as the car and the tram became popular.

Kit Smith & Mick Cullen

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## New Book

Most Local History Societies have within their ranks members who have published works to their credit but I doubt that few such groups can compare with the Leamington History Group, 3 of whose members published books during a 10 week period this summer.

Kenneth Owen is the latest member to join the illustrious group of LHG scribes to see their work in print. His book, entitled 'A History of the Brass Bands of Royal Leamington Spa' is a comprehensive history of local brass bands from early Victorian times to the present day. Ken's 150 page book is the end product of many years of painstaking research and personal knowledge, acquired during his 50 years as a Leamington bandsman.

The volume is beautifully produced and printed in Leamington, and contains an astonishing amount of information. It is a 'must have' for anyone interested in Leamington history and cost £10 from Ken at our South Lodge Tuesday drop-in sessions.

Alan Griffin

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## New Research Group

Jenny St John is setting up an informal research group to look into women's roles in Leamington in the recent past. She would like to welcome anyone who would like to join in researching the lives of local women with a story to tell, from 19th century independent business women, factory workers and midwives to suffragettes and women criminals! We intend to meet once a month in a Leamington cafe, for discussion and support. If you are interested, please join us for tea and a chat on Thursday 20 September at 4pm at the Pump Rooms Cafe.

Jenny St John

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## Another Teaser

Can you identify what the Leamington ladies listed below might have had in common?

Mrs Wackrill Archery Rd; Mrs A Hill Northumberland Rd; Mrs Hassall 47 Avenue Rd;  
Mrs Nutter 9 Church St; Mrs Davies 50 Greatheed Rd; Mrs Inge  
Mrs Dykes 12 Milverton Crescent; Mrs Thornton 48 Warwick Rd; Mrs Hellis 16 Victoria Rd

[The answer is at the foot of the page.]

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### REMINDER: Future meetings include

*Jo Clarke*, Humble Village to Splendid Spa, on Monday 24<sup>th</sup> September

*Allan Jennings*, Leamington Pubs in 1852, on Monday October 22

*Chris Baker*, Murder Most Foul: Sir Bernard Spilsbury in the Great War, on Monday November 26

*The Christmas Extravaganza* on December 17

- all at the Dormer Conference Centre, next to St Peter's Church in Dormer Place, starting at 7.30 pm.

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### The Current Committee.

**Alan Griffin**, Chairman; **Robin Stott**, Vice-Chairman; **Terry Gardner**, Treasurer; **Margaret Rushton**,  
Secretary; **Jo Clark**, Archivist; **Maggie McGreevy**; **Ronnie Goldstein**; **Mick Cullen**.

Contact us via the Secretary, on 01926 424659, or [margaret.m.rushton@gmail.com](mailto:margaret.m.rushton@gmail.com), or come to a Tuesday morning drop-in session, at South Lodge, Jephson Gardens, 10 am - 12 noon

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### Another Teaser ..... The answer:

The ladies were Leamington's very first female Special Constables. In December 1914, the Chief Constable of Warwickshire appointed a group of ladies to act as Special Female Patrols, in Leamington, in this case.

Documents in the Police Local History Society archive reveal the reason for this forward-thinking move:

'The undermentioned ladies have been appointed to act as Special Female patrols, for the purpose of advising young females who are in the habit of frequenting the streets of the evils and dangers they are exposed to at the present time, owing to the influx of soldiers in the town.

They will wear a badge on the arm and also be in possession of an authority signed by the Chief Constable, T. T. Earnshaw (Warrant Card)

All members of the force must render any assistance and protection if required and see that the ladies are not subjected to any abuse or insult'.

*Terry Gardner Police Local History Society*

*Many thanks to all those who have contributed to the Newsletter. Keep the articles coming, - and don't forget we are looking for chapters for 'People and Places' volume 2, planned for 2013. - Ed.*