

Universal Directory, Volume 2, Part 2

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Preamble to Deddington entry on pp. 896-897.

DEDDINGTON is an ancient market-town. It was formerly a corporation-town, and sent members to parliament in the reigns of Edward I and Edward III but never since; yet it is a pretty large town. It is distant from London seventy-two miles, and from Oxford sixteen.

It has a market weekly on Saturdays; and three fairs a year, viz. August 21, October 11, and November 22.

Here is a large well-built church, which has a strong tower, and in it a ring of six new well-toned bells. The town is governed by a bailiff chosen annually. In the neighbourhood are two noted springs celebrated for their medicinal virtues. One of them is of a strong sulphureous scent, highly impregnated with a vitrioline salt. In the digging of it was found the stone called pyrites argenteus, and a bed of belemnites, commonly called thunder-bolts; and out of it hath since been taken the silver marcasite, of a glistening colour. It is likewise famous for the goodness of its malt-liquor; whence it is called "Drunken Deddington." And in Charles the Second's reign, according to a traditionary tale, a few old women, lovers of the stupifying juice, pawned the bells of the tower to enable them to enjoy the Bacchanalian rites with less restraint; a story fraught with improbability, but yet received as true by the common people.

There is a very pleasant wharf called Botany-bay, distant a mile and a half from this place, situate on the canal from Birmingham to Oxford, which is of great advantage to the inhabitants by reducing the price of coals.

There is a turnpike-road through this place from Oxford to Banbury. It is said here was formerly a castle, to which the earl of Pembroke conducted Piers de Gaveston, and there abandoned him to the fury of his enemies. Here is a charity-school.

The post goes through every day from Woodstock to Banbury. The principal inns are, the King's Arms, which is the post-office, kept by John Williams, and the Three Tuns, kept by Thomas Williams.