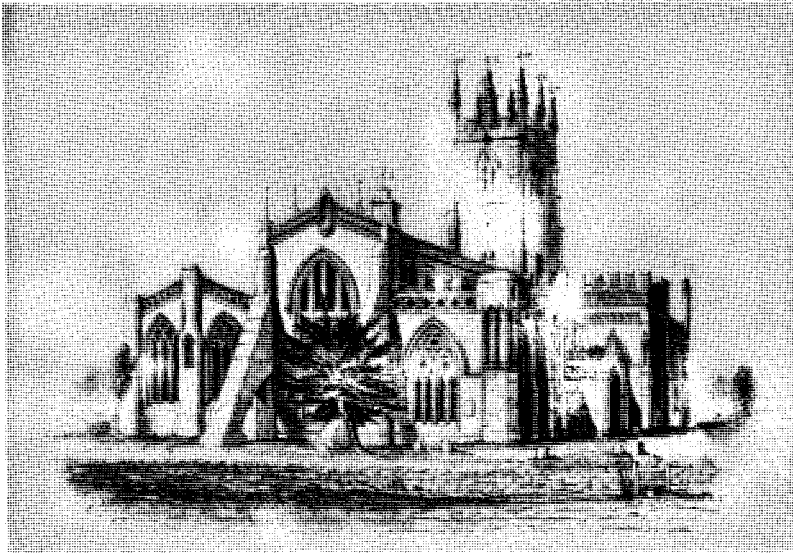


CAKE & COCKHORSE

The Magazine of the Banbury Historical Society



Vol. I, No. 2

November 1959

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BANBURY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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CAKE AND COCKHORSE

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Issued to Members four times a year.

VOLUME I. NUMBER 2. NOVEMBER 1959.

Hon. Editor : Dr. C.F.C. Beeson,
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PROGRAMME, 1959/60 SEASON

Note: All Meetings will be held at 7.30 p.m. in the Town Hall.

Tuesday, 24th November. - Dr. M.J. Aitken - "Scientific Techniques in Archaeology". - In the Court Room.

In recent years archaeologists have been looking to the scientists to provide new techniques for solving some of the complex problems which arise during excavations. The story of the development of these techniques is fascinating and the Society is extremely fortunate in having as its speaker for this November meeting one of the leading scientists in this field, Dr. M.J. Aitken of the Oxford University Archaeological Research Laboratory. His work with the development of the proton magnetometer has been hailed as one of the major advances in archaeological technique. In his address, which will be illustrated with slides, Dr. Aitken will describe some of the up-to-date methods of dating; plotting buried sites before a spade is put into the ground; and future developments for looking back into the past. This is not a talk for the technically minded only but is intended for the general interest of members.

Tuesday, 26th January, 1960. - Mr. F. Anker - "The History of the Banbury Fire Service". - In the Court Room.

Tuesday, 29th March, 1960. - Annual General Meeting - In the Court Room. It is hoped to show a series of films of local views, buildings, etc. Anyone willing to loan photographs, particularly colour slides, that might be of interest is asked to communicate with the Hon. Secretary.

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LECTURES

WORTHIES OF BANBURYSHIRE

Those who attended the Society's most recent meeting, on 29th September, were privileged to hear a most entertaining talk by our Hon. Research Adviser, Dr. Brinkworth. His subject was "Worthies of Banburyshire", and four most interesting and

comparatively unknown ones he chose.

Three were almost contemporaries: Lord Falkland of Great Tew, Dr. Thomas Lydyat of Alkerton, and the Comptons of Compton Wynyates, in particular Sir William Compton, who held Banbury Castle for the King in the Civil War. To Falkland's hospitable mansion at Tew came all that was best of Oxford's intellect. He created a haven of peace so soon to be shattered tragically in the Civil War when he himself was killed at Newbury. Not far away, at Alkerton, Dr. Lydyat, a celebrated astronomist and chronologist and a writer of European reputation, forsook the world after the death of his patron Prince Henry, eldest son of James I. His studies also were roughly disturbed by misfortune and war. Very different was the gallant Sir William Compton, whose exploits must make even puritan Banbury wish it was royalist! It is evident however that the Comptons did not always hold so honoured a place in the neighbourhood, for in the 18th century they deserted their lovely home of Compton Wynyates, and were it not for a steward who ignored his instructions, would have pulled it down completely.

For the fourth of his "worthies" Dr. Brinkworth turned almost to living memory. The Reverend George Bell was Vicar of Bloxham from 1789, the year of the French Revolution, until the mid-19th century. During his long incumbency he saw many changes, including the building of many of the large houses in the village, for Bloxham was just becoming a popular place to retire to or to "commute" to from Banbury. He was evidently a great character, and one anecdote concerns his conduct of Holy Communion service. He used to keep the communion wine in a large bottle on the altar, and on occasion would have to ask the congregation for a corkscrew. If no one could oblige, the proceedings were held up until one had been fetched from the Hawk and Partridge across the road!

DIGGING UP THE PAST

The Sibford Local History Committee is to be congratulated on their enterprise in procuring as speakers three of the leaders of recent Oxford University Archaeological Society excavations at Swalcliffe Lea and Madmarston Camp. They were rewarded with a packed hall on Saturday, 24th October. The first part of the talk, by Mr. Peter Fowler, was devoted to the excavation over several years of the Iron Age fortress on Madmarston Hill. This in particular was illustrated admirably by coloured slides and maps, together with a profusion of finds. During the meeting both Mr. Fowler and the

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other speakers mentioned the great importance of various scientific instruments which have revolutionised archaeology and with which they experimented, a subject which will be dealt with in more detail at our own next lecture, on 24th November. After the interval Mr. Jeffery May spoke about the extensive Romano-British settlement site in the valley below. Structural remains covering the whole of the Roman period were uncovered on the south side of the present road, and the Roman road was in fact located about fifty feet to the north of its supposed course. Finally Mrs. Fowler gave a brief description of a further excavation on the site, this time of a medieval settlement. Thus it seems probable that, allowing the likelihood of a Saxon village at neighbouring Tadmarton, the area has been almost continuously inhabited from the Iron Age to the present day.

THE SECRETARY'S REPORT

At the meeting held in the Council Chamber of the Town Hall on Tuesday, 29th September the alterations to Article 3 (Membership) of the Rules were passed unanimously. As a result the annual ordinary subscription as from 1st Jan., 1960, will be 10/- or 5/- for Junior members (those who have not yet left school). The foundation of a Records Section was also agreed to, with an annual subscription of 25/-, which will entitle the member to an annual records publication in addition to receipt of the magazine and other privileges of ordinary membership. This has already resulted in several new corporate members, and it is hoped that when the time comes for renewal of subscriptions a number of our current members will support this venture. The first volume is already published, and will be reviewed by our member Professor Cheney, Professor of Medieval History in the University of Cambridge, in the January issue of "Coke & Cockhorse".

Mr. and Mrs. Fillmore were unanimously elected Honorary Life Members.

Christmas Card

In 1958 one of the Society's most popular ventures was the publication of a Christmas card of Cornhill in 1857, taken from an old print. In the same tradition is this year's card which uses the engraving of the Cross in 1860. It is particularly appropriate as this is the centenary year of the Cross. The card is printed in two colours this year, and mounted as before.

It is available in good stationers for 7½d each, or for 6/- a dozen, including envelopes, from the Hon. Secretary. It will also be on sale at the meeting of Nov. 24th. The reduced price is available to members only. To be economically possible it is important to sell a large number, so we ask members to support the Society by buying as many as they can.

THE TREASURER'S REPORT

Financial : Cash in Hand and at the Bank amounts to £67 as at 5th November, 1959. For this improvement we must thank our new life member Miss M. Gillett who has most generously donated five pounds to help with the Society's record copying and other projects. It is hoped that this admirable precedent will be emulated by other members.

Membership : As on 5th November, 1959 the total membership is 141 - Life 21, Ordinary 116, Corporate 4. We are pleased to welcome the following members who have joined since 1st September 1959 - Life: Miss M. Gillett. Ordinary: Mr. Edgson, Mr. C. Farwell, Rev. and Mrs. T. Griffiths. Our apologies go to Mrs. H. Brown and Mrs. F.A.S. Gibson whose names were omitted in error from the list of new members in our last issue. Corporate: The Banbury Guardian Ltd., Northampton Central Library, Warwickshire County Record Office.

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R E S E A R C H

PARISH REGISTERS

Work is continuing on the Parish Registers listed in "Cake & Cockhorse" No. 1, pp. 9 and 10, with the exception of Banbury St. Mary.

Since our first number appeared the Society has suffered two grievous losses. The first, and we hope only temporary one, is the very serious illness of Mrs. Pain, our Hon. Treasurer's wife. Mrs. Pain has been working on Banbury parish register together with Mrs. Fillmore for almost two years. Our very best wishes go to her for a speedy recovery, and our sympathy to both her and Mr. Pain. The second, of a different nature, is the departure to St. Albans of Mr. and Mrs. Fillmore. Mr. Fillmore was the Society's first Hon. Treasurer, and only knowledge of his impending transfer caused him to resign from that office. He has remained until now an invaluable committee member. Frequently his businesslike commonsense have restrained our wilder and less practical schemes, and his counsel will be sorely missed. If anything Mrs. Fillmore has done even more work

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on the registers, including copying the whole of the first volume.

This double loss has brought transcription of the Banbury register to a halt. The most fitting tribute to Mrs. Fillmore's and Mrs. Pain's work would be for other members to carry on where they have left off. At the same time we should like to record our gratitude to the Vicar and Mrs. Carpenter for their hospitality to date to our transcribers.

ARCHAEOLOGIA

BANBURY CASTLE - Interim Report

It is hoped to resume work on the site of Banbury Castle in the near future. So far, work has been concentrated on two exploratory trenches cut into the southern and eastern parts of the mound in Castle Wharf, and situated almost at right angles to each other.

Trench No. 1 cuts into the mound in a northerly direction; at its northern extremity, just below the wall of the present mineral-water bottling factory, from a depth of 10ft.6in., we have had one piece of 14th Century green-glazed pottery and from its southern extremity we have recovered portions of two human skulls and other large human bones - the remains of two soldiers who were killed during the Civil War and who were disinterred from their original resting places and reburied in our present find spot some 100 years ago.

Trench No. 2 cuts into the mound in an east/west direction. At its western extremity at a depth of about 13in., from the turf line on the top of the mound, and under a layer of rubbish, an asphalt road was uncovered, this also ran across the line of No.1 trench at about the same depth. Below the foundation of the road at the western extremity of No. 2 trench, and running below the old boundary wall of the mineral-water plant were a number of large stones, some of which showed signs of dressing, these can be seen in the northern section of the trench, and may be the foundation rubble of the Castle Keep. At a depth of about 2ft. 9in., two potsherds of Romano-British pottery were unearthed, and at a depth of about 7ft. the lower jaw of a sow was found lying on a stone. At the foot of the mound at the eastern extremity of No.2 trench, some 18in. below the ground-level more large rough stones were unearthed together with a sherd of 14th Century pottery (similar to that found in No. 1 trench and at about the same depth).

The construction of the part of the mound we have so far excavated has presented some complex problems which can probably be

answered if one accepts the opinion that before the buildings at present on the mound were erected, the top portion of the original mound was removed and spread over the edges. This would account for the fact that we have Romano-British pottery at a depth of 3ft. and 14th Century pottery at 11ft.

The top portion of one of the skulls has been almost completely reconstructed, and we hope to get the other skull built up from the many fragments in the near future. Our first skull is interesting in that the bone is extremely thin while the other is of the more normal thickness. A lower jaw (almost complete) contained a tooth which was ground down to the gum-line caused by grinding the teeth in sleep. From this we can deduce that this man suffered badly with his nerves.

Apart from the collection of human bones, we have not yet found any remains that can definitely be associated with Alexander's great castle, but great finds have a habit of turning up at the most unexpected times.

VAL BROMLEY - Archaeological Director.

We regret that lack of space necessitates postponing detailed consideration of several investigations and finds reported by Mr. Bromley. They are (1) A probable Sub-Roman occupation site on the new housing estate in the Broughton Road area of Banbury where Mr. G.C.J. Hartland found broken late Romano-British potsherds. From deeper strata several pieces of sub-Roman pottery of the early 'Lost Century' (420-597 A.D.) have been recovered. (2) Mr. Brachi of Long Cottage, Marston St. Lawrence has found a large quantity of Romano-British pottery at Edgecote, near Chipping Warden. This material shows a continuity from C.55 A.D. to C.500 A.D. Other items include a bone pin, a coin and part of a possible bronze balancing scale. (3) A perforated 3in. circular stone, possibly Neolithic, has been found on the site of the new maternity block, Horton General Hospital. (4) Mrs. Hall of Bloxham Grove Farm reports the ploughing up of part of a large Neolithic axe-head. (5) Brought to light in the stores of the Banbury Museum are several Egypto-logical items - two complete red ware pots and three funerary figurines, Ushabtis, of granite and glazed pottery.

C O R R E S P O N D E N C E

Letters and enquiries addressed to the Society will be referred to the appropriate expert and also published in the Magazine if desired.

Sir,

When the canal tunnel was constructed at Blisworth in 1800-1805 the engineer in charge was a Barnes of Banbury.

I am preparing our village story of the canal, etc., and I am

anxious to trace any reference to this family, particularly "our" Barnes - his birthplace and burial place, plus any other local legends. In your Society's searchings you might come across references to this early canal engineer.

Yours etc., George Freeston. (Blisworth, Northampton)

Editor's Note: James Barnes was buried at Bodicote, where a memorial in the church reads: "Sacred to the memory of James Barnes Esqre., Principal Engineer of the Grand Junction Canal, and late of Banbury, who died 18th Jan. 1819 aged 79. Also of Mary his wife who died 7th Jan. 1807 aged 54." Next to it is a memorial to his daughter Mary, who married Richard Austin and died in 1836. James Barnes was an important Banburian of his time, being Mayor in 1801 and 1809, and an Alderman for a number of years. As such he is mentioned in Beesley as having voted in the elections of 1806 and 1807 for William Praed Esq., against the local North candidate. This is hardly surprising, as Praed was chairman of the Grand Junction Canal and thus Barnes' boss!

Our member the Reverend Mr. Griffiths, Vicar of Great Tew, asks "What is the origin of the name, Traitor's Ford, on the road between Hook Norton and Brailes". Can any member assist?

FOR YOUR FURTHER READING

Stewart, J. Archaeological Guide and Glossary. This work is divided into four sections: Prehistoric, Roman, Abbeys and Castles, and the Foreword claims that it is "a handbook which the interested layman can use as a guide to further knowledge of a very wide range of antiquities." A useful feature is a comprehensive bibliography. Illustrated.

Our near neighbour, the Northamptonshire Record Society, publishes an annual magazine, "Northamptonshire Past and Present." price 5/- from the Hon. Secretary, N.R.S., Delapre Abbey, Northampton.

"Top. Oxon." A Bulletin of Oxfordshire Local History, produced by the Oxfordshire Archaeological Society and the Oxfordshire Rural Community Council, issued twice a year, is available from its Editorial Secretary, R.T. Lattey, The Old Shop, Neat Enstone, Oxford; annual subscription 2s.6d., post free.

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