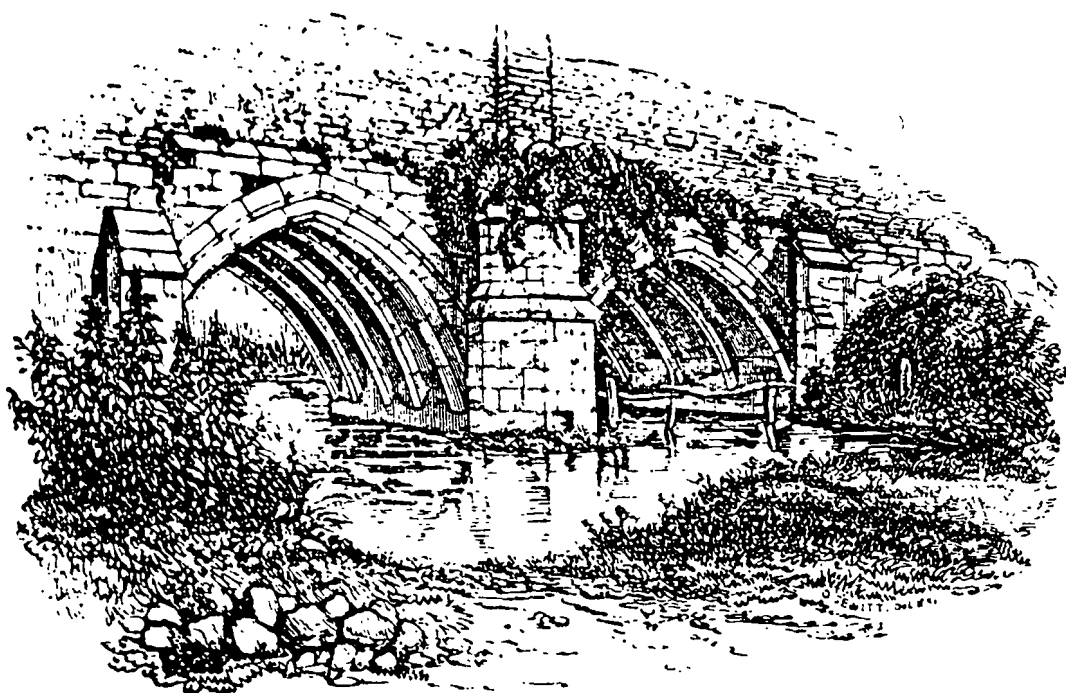


CAKE AND COCKHORSE



Banbury Historical Society
September 1965

2s.6d.

BANBURY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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The Society was founded in 1958 to encourage interest in the history of the town and neighbouring parts of Oxfordshire, Northamptonshire and Warwickshire.

The magazine Cake and Cockhorse is issued to members four times a year. This includes illustrated articles based on original local historical research, as well as recording the Society's activities. A booklet Old Banbury - a short popular history, by E.R.C. Brinkworth, M.A., price 3/6 and a pamphlet A History of Banbury Cross price 6d have been published and a Christmas card is a popular annual production,

The Society also publishes an annual records volume. Banbury Marriage Register has been published in three parts, a volume on Oxfordshire Clockmakers 1400-1850 and South Newington Churchwardens' Accounts 1553-1684 have been produced and the Register of Baptisms and Burials for Banbury covering the years 1558 - 1653 is planned for 1965.

Meetings are held during the winter, normally at 7.30 p.m. at the Conservative Club. Talks on general and local archaeological, historical and architectural subjects are given by invited lecturers. In the summer, excursions to local country houses and churches are arranged. Archaeological excavations and special exhibitions are arranged from time to time.

Membership of the Society is open to all, no proposer or seconder being needed. The annual subscription is 25/-, including the annual records volume, or 10/- if this is excluded. Junior membership is 5/-.

Application forms can be obtained from the Hon. Secretary or the Hon. Treasurer.

CAKE AND COCKHORSE

The magazine of the Banbury Historical Society. Issued to members four times a year.
Volume Three. Number One. September, 1965.

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It has always been one of the intentions of the Banbury Historical Society that its attentions should not be confined to north Oxfordshire but should range over the whole of the area for which Banbury is market town, but until this issue the society's publications have paid but little attention to the southern parts of Warwickshire and Northamptonshire. Banbury's connections with Northamptonshire are well illustrated by the three articles in this issue. When William Chauncey of Edgecote died in 1585 he was owed twenty pounds by Matthew Knight of the Reindeer Inn. Boddington Methodist Church has always formed part of the Banbury Circuit. William Cotton, "the Banbury newsman", was one of the unfortunate victims of the Culworth Gang.

From the time when the earliest Methodists in Boddington were fumbling to establish a sound society, and making themselves ridiculous by the Bake House controversy of 1829, through the period of rapid and confident Methodist expansion at the expense of the parish church at the end of the nineteenth century to the missionary campaigns of the inter war years, Michael Edwards' study of Methodism in Boddington vividly portrays the place of the chapel in village society. Colour is added by the use of obituaries from the denominational magazines and by recollections of present members of the church. The aged Emma Creed's confident assertion that "Methodists always vote Liberal" is of particular interest.

The inventory of the possessions of William Chauncey is yet another indication of the extraordinary wealth of historical material to be found in this type of source. The extremely detailed account of the furnishings of this large house amounts almost to a conducted tour, and there is also information here to interest the economic historian. The valuation of the flock of sheep at Edgecote at well over three hundred pounds while the crop of growing corn was worth only seventy pounds shows that along with many other Northamptonshire gentry, the Chaunceys were making most of their money from sheep in the late sixteenth century.

It is extraordinary that James Beesley's account of the Culworth Gang has never before been published, since it has long been recognised as the most important single original source on the subject. It is to be hoped that its publication will stimulate the appearance of a more detailed and scholarly account.

Acknowledgement: We wish to record our thanks and gratitude to the Archivist and staff at the Northamptonshire Record Office, Delapre Abbey, for help and advice with all three of the articles in this issue.

SOCIETY NEWS AND ACTIVITIES

Autumn Programme

Thursday, 30th September, 7.30 p.m. Conservative Club (next to Martins Bank) High Street, Banbury. "Forming a Museum". A talk by Miss Jean Cook, Curator, Oxford City and County Museum. Miss Cook was appointed Curator of this completely new museum last year, and has since been working on its preparation. This includes the collection of exhibits and adaptation of Fletchers House, Woodstock, where the museum is to be housed.

Tuesday, 30th November, 7.30 p.m. "The Village of Bloxham" - a meeting to be held in Bloxham, in co-operation with the Oxfordshire Rural Community Council, on the lines of the most successful Adderbury meeting last year.

READING AND USING HISTORICAL DOCUMENTS

A course of ten meetings, starting on Wednesday, 29th September, 7.30 p.m., Reference Room, Banbury Public Library, is to be held on the reading and use of historical records. After initial stages a special study will be made of 16th and 17th century records (in English) relating to Banbury. The course is being organised in conjunction with the Oxford University Extra-Mural Delegacy. Members have already been circulated about this, but any who require and have not received information are asked to contact the course tutor, Dr. E.R.C. Brinkworth, 31 Horton View, Banbury, as soon as possible.

Dr. Brinkworth will also be conducting a course of ten illustrated lectures on "The Anglican Church from the Reformation to the Present Day", to be held in Adderbury Parish Church, starting Friday, 1st October, 7.30 p.m.

CHRISTMAS CARDS

This year's Christmas card, illustrated opposite, is taken from an early 19th Century painting of Broughton Castle, by kind permission of Lord and Lady Saye and Sele. The cost, to members only, will be approximately 10/- per dozen. The Society's earlier cards, of North Bar and St. Mary's Church, and of the Town Hall and Cow Fair, four-colour at 9/- per dozen, and of the Cross, and of South Bar, two-colour at 6/- per dozen, are all again available. All prices include envelopes. All cards can be supplied, from early October, by the Hon. Secretary, Humber House, Bloxham, Banbury, and will also be on sale at the November meeting. Overprinting of addresses can be arranged on quantities of over 50, but such orders must be placed by mid-September.

MR. W.H. CLARK

It is with great regret that we record the death in April of Walter H. Clark, F.R.I.B.A., of Adderbury.

Readers will recall Mr. Clark's account of Adderbury as he remembered it before the First World War, which we published in our March issue. After a lifetime of successful practice as an architect Mr. Clark retired to Adderbury, living at Moorey House which had been bought and extensively rebuilt by his grandmother. He took a great interest in village affairs, and his great love for the buildings of Adderbury is reflected in his book A Short History of Adderbury, published by the Banbury Civic Society in 1964. This was illustrated by many of his own drawings which were always marked by meticulous draughtsmanship and a sensitive feeling for landscape.

Mr. Clark was a member of the Banbury Historical Society almost from its foundation and many of his drawings have adorned the pages and covers of *Cake and Cockhorse* - the last of them on page 7 of this issue. He was always delighted to assist in any way possible and we shall greatly miss his help.

We extend our deepest sympathy to his widow and daughter.



BROUGHTON CASTLE.
LAMBERT. PINX^t.

AN ORIGINAL ACCOUNT OF THE CULWORTH GANG

This account of the activities of the Culworth Gang was written by James Beesley and published in the first three numbers of the Manuscript Magazine of the Banbury Mechanics' Institute in December 1837, January 1838 and February 1838. A greatly condensed version of it appears in Alfred Beesley's History of Banbury pp 528-531.

A considerable amount of research has been done on the Culworth Gang since 1838, though, regrettably, very little has been published. Nevertheless this account remains of great importance to anyone investigating the history of the Gang since it draws freely on the memory of those who remembered the incidents described. It is to be hoped that it will not be long before a much more detailed account is published setting the exploits of the highwaymen firmly in the social context of the time.

SOME ACCOUNT OF THE CULWORTH GANG

Who is there resident in the neighbourhood of Banbury who has not heard of the "Culworth Gang" ? Half a century has elapsed since that daring band of robbers was dispersed and the ringleaders executed; yet their exploits are remembered and spoken of with as much freshness and interest as if they were of recent occurrence.

From some cause there always appeared to be attached to the history of these men a more than ordinary degree of interest, and few have heard the "Gang" mentioned without feeling a desire to learn something of the parties who composed it.

Actuated by this desire, the writer of this paper has at various opportunities noted down information relating to them, which he trusts will not be unacceptable to the readers of the Banbury Mechanics' Magazine.

The gang comprised about fifteen individuals, chiefly resident at Culworth and the adjacent villages. It had its origin in three or four of them associating together for the purpose of poaching. This pursuit engendered habits of indolence and an indisposition to follow the ordinary occupations of life, and was soon followed by its usual result - thieving.

Of the individuals who composed the Gang the following were the most prominent. John Smith, a labourer of Culworth, a man, although considerably advanced in life, of great bodily strength, and daring energy of character. His two sons, John Smith and William Smith also labourers residing at Culworth. William Abbott, the parish clerk of Sulgrave and by trade a shoemaker - it is said he always carried pistols about his person, even when fulfilling the sacred duties of his office. William Bowers, labourer; Richard Law, carpenter; William Pettipher, labourer; William Tervill, labourer; Thomas Malsbury, labourer; and Richard Jack, labourer; all of Culworth.

Besides the above individuals there were others who were connected with, and occasionally aided, them in their dangerous pursuits. One of the Auxiliaries was the son of very respectable parents in the neighbourhood and his motives for joining them are supposed to have existed in the excitement and romance attending their excursions rather than the Love of Plunder. Of this person further mention will be made hereafter.

The depredations of the Gang were not confined to their own neighbourhood but extended far and wide - on one night they would commit a highway robbery near Hopcroft's Holt - and a few nights afterwards, another near Gaydon Inn; and their next offence would, perhaps, be a burglary near Towcester or Stoney Stratford. So well were their plans laid and so true did they keep to each other that for upwards of ten years they continued to commit depredation after depredation without detection.

In the lapse of time, from death, removal or other cause, their numbers fell off and the principal actors consisted of the individuals before named. Upon these the suspicions of their neighbours had long rested, a natural result considering their frequent absence from home and almost total abstinence from labour. It is indeed asserted that to many their pursuits were well known, but such was the dread and fear in which they were held that none would come forward to give testimony against them.

At length to use the language of an old Chronicle from whence some of the particulars contained in this paper are extracted, "The wicked were taken in their own Craftiness". It seems that Law and Pettipher, a short time before they were apprehended, called at a public house in Towcester kept by one Duffin and it being then late they proposed staying all night, which was agreed to. They had each of them a bag which were supposed to contain fighting cocks, as they pretended to have been at a cock fighting at Blakesley that day, and when they retired to bed, too confident in their own security they left their bags behind them. The landlord wishing to view the contents to satisfy his curiosity, opened one of the bags and to his great surprise found it to contain two smock frocks and a couple of masks. This was enough - the landlord, who had heard of the numerous robberies committed in the neighbourhood, the perpetrators of which were generally thus disguised, was no longer at a loss to guess at the parties concerned; he therefore sent for a constable to whom he shewed the contents of the bags and it was agreed between them not to take any steps then. In the morning the two men went away without any notice of what had happened. In a few days after a report was spread that the house of William Mayho of Sewell Grounds near Blakesley had been broken open in the night and all the money and valuable articles in the house taken away and that the robbers were dressed in smock frocks and had their faces blacked. In consequence of this, Duffin and the constable immediately gave information of what had occurred at the house of the former and Law and Pettipher were apprehended and carried before a justice who committed them to gaol.

For some time after their committal to gaol, Law and Pettipher strongly denied the robbery at Mayho's; but being pressed upon the subject repeatedly and thinking that the chain of their connexion was broken the only way to save themselves was to discover what they knew; they impeached Bowers, one of the gang, the person who planned the robbery at Mayho's, and also the rest of their confederates. Upon which they were apprehended excepting Jack who absconded. On searching their houses a great quantity of stolen goods of different kinds was found. Several articles were also found hidden in a vault dug under the floor of an old barn, and some were found in Sulgrave Church having been secreted there by Abbott the Parish Clerk. A catalogue of the articles was made by the Rev. Mr. O'Clare, the Clergyman of Culworth, and advertised in the Northampton Paper in order to come at a knowledge of the owners, and so that the Gang might not escape for want of prosecutors.

The individuals committed for trial were Law, Pettipher, Old Smith, Bowers, Abbott the Clerk, Tervill and both the young Smiths.

They were tried at the Northamptonshire Summer Assizes 1787 upon several charges and, with the exception of Tervill and the young Smiths, were all convicted and sentenced to death. This sentence was carried into execution upon Old Smith, Bowers, Law and Pettipher on the third of August 1787. Abbott was reprieved and transported for life.

After their condemnation they made a confession of no less than forty-seven different robberies. Among them were the following.

Malsbury, Turrell and the servant of Mr. Pettum robbed Mr. Pettum of Lawsfield of upwards of £100.

Malsbury and Smith the Elder robbed Mr. Wright, Attorney at Law, near Field Burcot of all his money and Papers.

Law, Turrell and Pettipher robbed William Cotton, the Banbury newsman.

The same men robbed Hoppersford Tollgate House.

Law, Pettipher, Old Smith and the young Smiths robbed three farmers coming from Towcester fair.

Old Smith, Pettipher and Law robbed the Revd. Mr. Wilkinson, a Clergyman, one Sunday in open day.

Old Smith, Turrell and Pettipher robbed Mr. Wyatt of Sulgrave Grounds. The manner in which they committed this robbery was as follows. One of them in the middle of the night called Mr. Wyatt up under pretence of having a drove of pigs which he wanted to have taken in; but as soon as Mr. Wyatt had got a few yards from the door they knocked him down and one of them stamped upon his breast whereby he was dreadfully bruised. They then dragged him in the House and confined him and his wife in a pantry where one of the Gang stood sentry over them

while the rest ransacked the House of whatever was valuable. Mrs. Wyatt is now living and although very old and infirm gives a vivid description of the robbery.

Old Smith, Pettipher, Tervill and Bowers robbed the houses of Mr. Toms of Farndon, Mrs. Flowers Cherwode near Buckingham, Mr. Mitchell Buckmaster near Cropredy and Mr. Gostelow of Adson Grounds, all within a fortnight.

Old Smith, the two young Smiths, Tervill and Bowers attempted to rob the house of Mr. Eaglestone in the parish of Wolverstone (sic) near Stoney Stratford on Sunday night the 23rd November 1783. They put on smock frocks and black'd their faces and having met with one of Mr. Eaglestone's servants near home, they led him to the house and threatened to murder him if he refused to knock at the door. The door being opened they rushed in. Mr. Eaglestone and his two men servants immediately attacked them, and would have secured them all but in the confusion one of the men received a terrible blow from his fellow servant which quite disabled him; tho' not before the robbers had got so much the worst of it that they were glad to make off without their expected booty.

The same men robbed a turnpike house on their return home.

Old Smith, Jack and Abbott robbed two men coming from Stow-on-the-Wold fair in the bottom below Chipping Norton.

On St. Thomas's Day 1785, Old Smith and Abbott robbed a traveller on horseback of £50 in the day time between Towcester and Plumb Park Corner.

The day but one after they robbed a Mr. Owen near Hopcroft's Holt of his watch, hat and nine guineas.

In the month of January 1785, Old Smith, the young Smiths, Pettipher, Turrill, Bowers and Law stopped Mr. Richardson, the Oxford Carrier near to Sturdy's Castle about eight o'clock at night. Mr. Richardson had an excellent dog with him which one of the gang stuck in the shoulder with a fork. Four of them seized Mr. Richardson and his son, the others drove his cart behind a hedge some distance from the road, after which two stood guard over Mr. Richardson and his son while the others ransacked all the loading about which they employed themselves for three quarters of an hour; and at length carried off money and goods to the value of £140.

The above narration contains but a few of the exploits of this celebrated gang. It is sufficient however to shew that they were wholesale plunderers, not your mere petty-larceny men.

Shortly before his execution Old Smith wrote a letter to his wife of which the following is a copy:

"My Dear and Loving Wife,

These come with my kind love to you and all my dear children, begging you will come and see me before I depart this wicked world, and beg of God to forgive me all my sins, and I will endeavour to make my peace with God before I die. My Dear, I desire my son William will make my coffin, and let me have it here before I die; and I desire you will have my body taken home to my own house that you may see me buried; And beg of my children to take warning by my unhappy fate, that they may turn to the paths of virtue; and beg of them to beware of bad company and Sabbath-Breaking which is the prayer of a dying father. My Dear, I hope you will come to see me and let my daughter Molly know, that she may meet you here, for I cannot die in peace without I do see her, so I beg you will desire her to come.

So no more from your dying husband,

John Smith.

P. S. Desire my son John to marry Elizabeth B---e and beg of him to be good to her and the child, and take warning by me that they may live in comfort. I desire you will take care of these lines and cause them to be read to my children every Sabbath day; and I hope that God will give them grace to take warning - it is the prayer of a dying father".

Young John Smith profited but little from the wretched end to which his father came, for in about two years after, he was apprehended for a highway robbery near Gaydon Inn and tried, convicted and executed at Warwick. The Elizabeth B---e above mentioned was a young woman residing at Claydon with whom he had formed an acquaintance. She was deeply attached to him notwithstanding his lawless courses. She was present at his execution and after he had hung the usual time, his body was delivered over to her. With a donkey and a pair of panniers she conveyed

the body from Warwick to Culworth leaving Warwick at nightfall and travelling all night with her melancholy burthen - thus exhibiting an instance of constancy of devotion rarely exceeded.

There is one striking incident connected with the history of the gang which may be here mentioned. It is that of an individual dying at the hands of the common executioner for a crime of which he was entirely innocent.

The circumstances are as follow. At the Northampton Spring Assizes 1785 the individual in question, whose name was James Tarvey, was tried for robbing William Adams on the highway near Chipping Warden.

I have not been able to obtain any particulars of the evidence against him, but it must have been apparently conclusive for he was convicted and sentenced to be executed.

From the time of his commitment to the last moment of his life he uniformly persisted in denying the robbery and at the place of execution desired the spectators to remember his dying words - "that he knew nothing of the robbery for which he suffered, nor had any concern with any other person either in public or private about it". Such indeed was the tenor of his conduct throughout the last trying scene that those who witnessed his exit were impressed with the strongest conviction of his innocence. It was not long before the fact of the poor fellow's innocence was established. Law and Pettipher after their conviction which the reader will recollect took place in 1787 solemnly declared that John Smith the Elder, and John Smith the Younger committed the robbery for which Tarvey suffered. Old Smith was closely pressed to acknowledge the truth of this declaration but to no purpose.

The fact however was fully ascertained upon the trial of Young Smith at Warwick. It is somewhat remarkable that the Judge who presided on his trial was the same who tried the unfortunate Tarvey. On the trial there was some discrepancy in the evidence as to Smith's identity. The Judge, in his charge was commenting upon it in a strain which the prisoner considered unfavourable to him when he interrupted his Lordship by telling him to beware for that he had once sentenced an Innocent Man to execution. This however did not avail him; he was convicted and executed. It is reported that after his conviction the Judge desired enquiry to be made by the gaoler with reference to the observations he made upon his trial.

This was done and he made a full confession of the Robbery for which Tarvey suffered, entirely exculpating that individual from any participation in it.

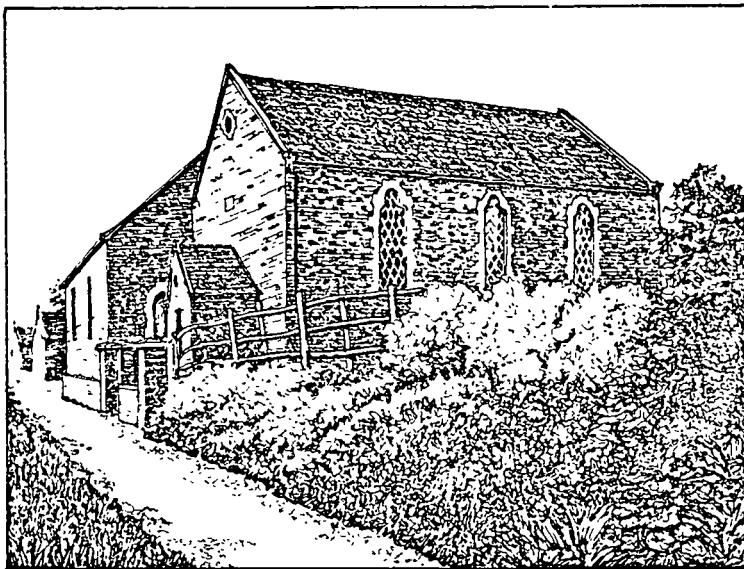
It is melancholy to reflect upon the fate of this poor man. It must be dreadful enough to be sent out of the world by the common hangman; but what must it be with the consciousness of being altogether innocent of the crime alleged against you - leaving behind a blackened memory and a wife and children for the finger of Scorn to point at. Verily, all the crimes of the Culworth Gang weigh but as a feather to that of being the cause of this man suffering innocently.

I must now draw my subject to a conclusion. I have related the end of the principal portion of the gang. Of the others - I will briefly state that Jack who absconded, was never more heard of; Malsbury lived for some years afterwards at Culworth when he was accidentally run over by a cart and killed upon the spot.

William Smith became an industrious, steady labourer, and a greater proof of his reformation cannot be adduced than the fact of his having worked for one master upwards of twenty years.

The individual named in the first number of the magazine as having frequently joined the gang in their excursion thought it prudent on their apprehension to leave the country. He went to the Indies where he amassed, it is said, a considerable sum of money. After being there many years his heart yearned for his native land and he took his passage in an homeward bound vessel. He was taken ill on the voyage and died shortly after he came on shore. His relatives, whom he had apprized of his intention to revisit England found but very little money in his possession and no papers whatsoever. All their enquiries to ascertain whether he left property behind him proved unavailing.

This ends the account of the Culworth Gang. It has been reluctantly contributed and nought save an earnest desire to promote the interest of the Banbury Mechanics' Institute could have urged the writer to the task. He fears that neither in style nor matter is it worthy of a place in the magazine.



METHODISM IN BODDINGTON, 1797-1965

Preface

These pages tell the story of a small Methodist chapel in a remote Northamptonshire village. We are in danger of forgetting the debt we owe to the village chapels of our land. In the preface to her book 'Joseph Ashby of Tysoe', M. K. Ashby says, 'Village Methodism, though now admitted to respectability, has hardly had its meed. If anything could convince one of direct human access to Divine Grace, it might well be the example set by a century ago by denuded Methodist labourers to all those who claimed superiority over them - an example of forgiveness, restraint and hope'.

This booklet is issued in connection with the Centenary services of Upper Boddington Methodist Church, but I have not limited the story to either the last hundred years or to Upper Boddington. The men who built the present chapel in 1865 were themselves representatives of a Methodist society that went back to the closing years of the previous century. Another Methodist cause at Lower Boddington arose out of Upper Boddington. All this will be found here. 'These also, one and all, are commemorated for their faith'. (Hebrews 11 v.39, New English Bible).

I would like to thank the Rector of Boddington, the Rev. E. W. Killer, for allowing me to browse through the Parish Church records so freely. The Circuit Archivist, Mr. L. Patrick, and the Superintendent Minister, the Rev. John Hully, have given me equal freedom with the Methodist Circuit records, and I am most grateful to them. My special thanks are due to Mr. B. Trinder of the Banbury Historical Society, and the Editor of its magazine, 'Cake and Cockhorse' who has enabled this article to be published at a moderate cost, and made available to members of the Banbury Historical Society as well as to the Circuit. Finally, I would like to thank the many Methodists of the two Boddington societies for so tolerantly putting up with their minister's persistent enquiries about the past; they have been most kind and helpful in so many ways, and above all, this is their story.

M. S. Edwards

1. The Village

The parish of Boddington stands near the boundaries of three counties. A Northamptonshire parish, its market town is Banbury in Oxfordshire, but it has many links with nearby Warwickshire. It consists of Upper and Lower Boddington; the former contains the Parish Church and the school. It is a pre-Conquest village, mentioned in Domesday Book. In the last century, it was part of Earl Spencer's large estate.

The population fluctuated considerably in the nineteenth century. In 1801, it was 476. It rose steadily to 926 in 1851 and then declined rapidly, until in 1901 it was back to 487. Our own century has seen a further decline. The reason must be sought in the declining demand for agricultural labour, and the wretched conditions of the labourers, which made them to drift into the towns in the hope of a better life.

It is difficult for us to appreciate the dire poverty of village life in the last century. The end of the Napoleonic wars brought lower wages, higher corn prices, and the gradual loss of village industries to the new industrial towns. Ricks and threshing machines were destroyed in the widespread rioting of 1830-1 in the Midlands and the south. In 1834, the wage of a Boddington labourer was 10 to 12 shillings a week with beer in the summer, and only 8 to 9 shillings a week without beer in the winter. This could be supplemented by a wife and children, who could earn 4 and 2 shillings a week respectively in the summer and at harvest time; there was no work for them in the winter. Although these wages were not the lowest in the district, they were meagre indeed; no answer was given to the Poor Law Commissioners of 1834 by the Boddington authorities to the question, 'Could the family subsist on these earnings?' Indeed, 41 out of 77 labourers in Upper Boddington and 34 out of 36 labourers in Lower Boddington were receiving parish relief in 1834. As late as 1901, the Rector of Boddington noted 'the extreme poverty of the parish' as one factor impeding his ministry.

This poverty dominated all the activities of the parish. A long list of illegitimate children in the Parish Church's records for the Eighteenth Century spoke of the morals of the people. Intemperance was once rife, though by the eighteen-seventies the Rector informed the Bishop that it had greatly declined. He deplored the 'general ignorance and want of cultivation of the mind' prevailing at this time. An annual Wake was once held and its atmosphere may be judged by the story of William Collins of Northend, who sold his 'Banbury Cakes' there before his conversion in 1789. On one occasion at Boddington Wake, Collins feigned himself blind, in order to beg money to buy ale. Someone who knew him shouted, 'That's Collins, he's not blind'. Collins replied, 'If you don't hold your tongue, I'll blind you!' Village Wakes were an outlet for the crushed and exploited labourers, and behaviour was often totally unrestrained.

Poverty moulded the religious outlook of the people. There was little love among many of them for the Established Church. In their eyes, the Parish Church upheld the injustices of village life, and served the interests of the farmers and wealthier classes. The villages were under squire-parson rule, and it was not surprising that the Parish Church made little impact upon the people. From 1807 to 1867, the Rev. Thomas Golightly was Rector, with the Rev. Gilbert Golightly as his curate for part of the time. In 1846, there were two Sunday services and a Sunday school of 40 children. In 1875, when the Rev. E.T. Sale was Rector, there were 50 resident communicants in a village of 650 people. The Sunday School numbers were exactly what they were in 1846, while the Rector's experiment of an evening school had met with little success. In 1886, the number of communicants had dropped to 40, though the congregation had risen to 75. By 1901, the Rev. R.H. Woodcock reported an increase in the number of communicants, but a decline in the congregation. He attributed this not only to the declining population, but also to the poverty of the parish, and 'the absence of resident gentry and landlords'. Four years later, the same Rector deplored the 'far from satisfactory' attitude to Sunday observance in the Parish. The class consciousness of the Parish Church, now happily no more, hampered its work in the last century.

Methodism in Boddington grew out of this background. It was for many of its village supporters a permitted form of protest against the rural status quo. But we must not suppose that social factors determine spiritual movements; Methodism did not arise because of social dissatisfaction but because men fired by a Message proclaimed it and lived by it, and attracted others to it. No amount of favourable conditions can produce a revival of religion; spiritual

things are spiritually discerned, and however much spiritual and social factors mingle, the spiritual is primary. The preaching of the Gospel of Salvation by the early Methodists brought the power of vital religion home to men and women in town and village. The eternal human need of salvation from sin and the reality of the Christian experience of forgiveness brought men to accept Christ as Saviour and Lord. They found new life and strengthening fellowship through the instrumentality of Methodism. Their outlook on social matters was based upon their new found faith. If they stood for change in the social order, it was an outworking of their deep conviction that salvation was for all men, that all men could know it, and that all men could be perfected in love in this life.

2. The First Society (1797-1829)

When John Wesley preached in Banbury at the Presbyterian Meeting House in November 1784, Methodism had been established in the Tysoe neighbourhood for about 14 years. The first Banbury chapel was opened in 1791, and became the head of a Banbury Circuit in 1793. The first Banbury Circuit embraced Buckingham, Brackley and Tysoe, and consisted of 210 members in 12 towns and villages. Continued Methodist infiltration into the villages surrounding Banbury followed.

We do not know how Methodism came to Boddington. No written evidence seems to have survived, nor is there any local tradition about it. There seem to be at least three possibilities:-

- (1) Preachers from Banbury introduced Methodism into the village.
- (2) Methodism came from Tysoe. There is a Methodist family connection between the Heritages of the two villages.
- (3) Methodism was introduced from Northend, the nearest Methodist cause in the Circuit list of 1793. William Collins of Northend, the Methodist baker, knew Boddington well, and it is highly likely that there was a marriage between a Northend Collins and a Boddington Heritage. (Either between a daughter of William Collins and the William Heritage of 1768 to 1853, or between Mahala, grand-daughter of William Collins, and the William Heritage born in 1801).

We move out of the realm of conjecture in 1797 and 1798, when two applications were made by the first Boddington Methodists for the licensing of Methodist Preaching Houses. (Until 1852, all Dissenting Meeting Houses and Chapels had to be licensed by the Bishop). The full wording of these applications is as follows:-

The first, to the Archdeacon of Northampton, reads:- "This is to certify to you that a certain House situate at Upper Boddington in the County of Northampton in the occupation of Will. Lawrence is intended forthwith to be used as a place for Religious Worship of Almighty God for diverse of his Majesty's Protestant Subjects - commonly called Methodist and we do hereby require this Certificate to be registered in your Court agreeable to the Act of Parliament in that Case made and provided. As witness our hands this Seventeen Day of July 1797.

Wm. Lawrence
Joseph Harper
Thomas Reynolds
John Heretage.

Registered 1-8-1797."

The second, to the Bishop of Peterborough, reads:- "We whose names are underwritten being Protestant Dissenters from the Church of England commonly called Methodists, beg leave to acquaint you, that a House in the occupation of Thomas Reynolds, situate in the Parish of Boddington in the County of Northampton, and within your jurisdiction, is intended to be a place of Meeting for the said people for the Worship of Almighty God. We therefore request that it may be registered in your Registry, pursuant to the Statute in such case made and provided and a certificate granted accordingly.

Thos. Reynolds
William Heretage
John Heretage
Wm. Lawrence
Jn. Dawkins.
Boddington, Mar 29 1798."

These documents give us our first glimpse of Boddington Methodism. Who were these first Boddington Methodists? We know little about them. Joseph Harper was an Itinerant Preacher of the old Northampton Circuit in 1791 (it then included the Banbury area), and Superintendent Preacher of the Banbury Circuit in 1796. William Lawrence's name appears on a similar Meeting House Certificate for Woodford in 1808. John Dawkins in 1834 was the Deputy Overseer of the Boddington Poor. Thomas Reynolds is unknown, but it is interesting to note that John Heritage's wife was a Jane Reynolds - obviously a close relation. John Heritage (1764-1843) married Jane at Boddington Church in 1787. His brother William Heritage (1768-1853) married an 'Ann' (Collins?) who died in 1813. They had five children, Sarah, Thomas, William, John, and Ann, all baptised at the Parish Church. The Heritage brothers were weavers - an occupation that was increasingly being carried on in the new factory towns. In 1797 they began a family connection with Methodism in Boddington that is still maintained today.

Where were the houses licensed for Methodist worship in the village? There is a strong tradition in the village confirmed by later events that one of them was the Bake House at Upper Boddington. There is also the tradition that the Bake House was for a long time in the possession of the Heritage family, probably from the time of Thomas Heritage, who was a baker and the son of William Heritage. We do not know why there were two certificates: it is most unlikely that two houses would be used in a village like Boddington in these early days, and we must assume that the first house was abandoned when the second was licensed.

Another interesting feature of the certificates is that in the first, the Methodists are simply called 'Protestants', while in the second, they are 'Protestant Dissenters from the Church of England'. At this very time, Methodism was asserting her independence from the Church of England by allowing Methodist administration of the Sacraments, and perhaps the differing descriptions on the two certificates point to a growing consciousness of independence. It is unlikely that the first Boddington Methodists felt any obligation to attend the Parish Church services, as had been John Wesley's original intention; although doubtless they did so for special events like baptisms, marriages and burials.

What was it like to be a Boddington Methodist in those far-off days? We can only draw upon what we know happened in other villages, as nothing has survived in Boddington itself. Village Methodism until recent times was always a religious protest against the squire-parson establishment. For this reason, it was barely tolerated by the 'better classes'. Country gentlemen were apt to regard Methodism as a 'shocking offence', second only to poaching. Methodists, even of the politically conservative Wesleyan variety, were regarded as revolutionaries; the fact that they were spiritual rather than political revolutionaries only won them a suspicious toleration from the gentry, and a resentful hostility from many clergy. Jobs and cottages were alike endangered for a labourer who became a Methodist. Ridicule and persecution were certainly endured by village Methodists in the Banbury Circuit. About 1790, William Geden, the Methodist class leader of Tysoe, was often assailed with sticks and stones, and frequently covered with filth from head to foot. The same fate awaited William Collins, when he became a Methodist at the same time. Collins was urged by the people of Northend 'to give up these wild and dangerous notions, and not ruin himself by joining such a despised set of people'. At Hellidon in 1804, there was an attempt to arrest a Methodist preacher at an open-air meeting in the village street. Such scenes were likely to have been repeated in a village such as Boddington, which had apparently known no previous Dissenting cause.

The Methodists would react by creating an intimate spiritual fellowship. Persecution and ridicule served only to bind them closer together. Their Bake House Services were a contrast to the Church worship; extempore prayer, fervent and often lengthy preaching, and equally fervent hymn singing were the dominant notes. The hymns would be sung unaccompanied, the words being given out two lines at a time, as few would be able to read. Class meetings would be held during the week; there the real bonds of fellowship were forged, and the Lord's Supper and the Love Feast were administered. (The Love Feast was a meal of bread or biscuit and water, at which testimonies were given; Wesley copied it from the Moravians, but it died out in Methodism later in the 19th Century).

The earliest surviving Circuit Plans show a fortnightly service was held at Boddington at 1.30 p.m. on Sundays in 1810. The time fluctuated, as in 1816 it was at 2.00 p.m., in 1823 at 2.30 p.m., and at 2.00 p.m. again in 1827. These services would be taken by the local

preachers, as the itinerant preachers (they were not yet called Ministers) came during the week. Special collections taken at these services include collections for Overseas Missions, Home Missions, and the Chapel Fund.

The Bake House society came to an abrupt end in 1829. We must remember that the first Methodists were converted from a life of sometimes marked depravity, and the temptation to lapse must often have been great. Much depended upon the quality of local lay leadership, as it was extremely difficult for effective pastoral oversight to be exercised by the itinerant preachers in a widely scattered country circuit. It must also be borne in mind that the early Methodist outlook was extremely strict, and any lapse from what was considered to be the Christian standard was particularly shocking. We can therefore understand the events of 1829 more readily; the facts were considered so scandalous that George Budd in his account of Boddington Methodism written in 1890 for the circuit magazine makes no direct reference to them. What was considered unfit for the genteel eyes of Victorian Methodists was fortunately recorded in the Local Preachers' Minute Book at the time, though it is unlikely that we shall ever know the full story. But for the fortunate survival of this book, we would never have known why Boddington disappeared from the Circuit Plan between 1830 and 1835.

From this book, it is evident that all was not well at Boddington. On June 23rd 1828, the local preachers met at Warmington. It was moved and seconded 'that a quarterly notice be given to the friends at Boddington to provide another Preaching House'. An amendment was carried 'that the Preaching House be abandoned forthwith, and the Brethren do preach out of doors or in any other House that may offer'. No reason was given for this drastic decision. At the next meeting in Banbury, it was decided to resume the Boddington Preaching House - still no reason given in the minutes. Finally, at Oxhill on July 1st 1829, the tale is told. 'It is reported to this Meeting that Baking on Sunday is commenced at the Preaching House - Boddington - and all prospect of doing good cut off - for the present - resolved to be given up'.

Whatever may have been the trouble in 1828, the issue of Sunday baking was a sensitive one for village Methodism at the time. Seven years previously, the 'Wesleyan Methodist Magazine' had attacked the practice of public baking on the Lord's Day as ungodly and unnecessary. It made the baker and his customers unfit to worship God. Christian families should deny themselves cooked meat on Sunday. Sunday dinner parties were 'an abomination to God and a curse to men'. The writer recognised that the evil was widespread because customers threatened their bakers with withdrawal of custom unless they worked on Sundays. 'Surely it becomes consistent Christians to give their support to such Bakers as will abandon this evil'.

We can now see the peculiar offence of the Boddington case in Methodist eyes. If the Heritages were in residence at the Bake House in 1829, a Methodist baker had deliberately commenced public baking on Sundays. Worse still, the Bake House was also the Methodist Preaching House. Whether the baker had been threatened by his customers in the matter or not, it is hardly surprising that the local preachers were so determined to give up the place!

There can be no doubt that feeling ran so high on this issue that the Society at Boddington was broken up. The name of Boddington was removed from the Circuit Plan. George Budd, who returned home to Boddington in November 1832, categorically states that Methodism 'had no existence' there. He adds, 'There were others in the village who had been formerly connected with Methodism, one of whom had been a local preacher'. (The only local preacher whose name disappears from the minute book unaccounted for is a man called Mobbs. 'Rusher's Banbury List' shows a carrier of this name who operated a service from Boddington to Banbury from 1815 to 1826. This could be the same man). As far as Budd was concerned, there was only one 'worthy representative' of Methodism in the village. Unfortunately, no statistics from this early period have survived, and we do not know the strength of the Boddington society, nor how many of them were affected by the break up. It seems from Budd's account that only one Methodist survived.

It is easy to imagine the excitement and scandal in the village at this time. Local Methodism had been made to look ridiculous in the eyes of its enemies; no doubt they rejoiced at the disintegration of the local cause. The recriminations of the dispute must have given Methodism a bad name. But the hymn writer reminds us that 'God moves in a mysterious way', and in fact the story of Boddington Methodism had only just begun.

The First Chapel (1836-65)

When George Budd returned to his native Boddington in 1832, he found only one 'worthy representative' of Methodism there. This was Thomas Clues (1792-1861), an agricultural labourer, who was respected by everyone who knew him. The fact that Budd could say this of him must mean that he was in no way implicated in the Sunday baking scandal. Clues appears to have been the only member of the old society to continue in the new; at least, not until much later do we hear of the old names again.

Thomas Clues went to Methodist services and class meetings at Chipping Warden. This suggests he lived at Lower Boddington, or else he would have gone to West Farndon. Budd often joined him on these journeys. No doubt Clues would tell him of the old society, and the sad story of its end; they would speak too of the possibility of re-establishing Methodism in their village. They eventually decided to hold a service on Sunday evenings in Clues' cottage. Clues preached from a pulpit consisting of a chairback, on which a desk with a candlestick was hooked. Budd's family were the only listeners, but on that day, Methodist preaching returned to the village.

In time, more listeners came. A friend lent them another form, and the following Sunday, Clues suggested that it should be taken to the cottage. Budd wrote, 'I was doubtful as to its being required, as there was to be a collection for candles; however, we took it and had a good attendance and a collection of two shillings and sixpence'. As several listeners were 'spiritually impressed', Budd and Clues started a prayer meeting on Friday, October 11th, 1833. Before the end of the year, the weekly prayer meeting was attended by nearly twenty people, while the cottage could not hold the number who came for the Sunday service. A class meeting was established in May 1834, consisting of ten people; in June, the Boddington society was re-established by the Superintendent Minister, the Rev. Thomas Twiddy.

Clues' room was now quite inadequate, and the new society needed a chapel. This required funds, but Budd had already collected 16/4 from the two Boddingtons for missionary work, and he was eager to begin. In January 1835, a committee was set up, with Mr. Watson of Wardington as treasurer, Mr. Gilbert of Lower Boddington as secretary, and Mr. Budd as collector. Richard Gilbert was a draper who had recently moved to Lower Boddington and opened a shop. Later, he became a local preacher, and a leader of Methodism in the village. By the end of the year, Budd had collected £13/13/- from the two Boddingtons. Mr. Watson had bought a cottage attached to an old blacksmith's shop in Lower Boddington; this he offered to the society as a chapel at a nominal rent of 5/- a year. In January 1836, the Circuit Quarterly Meeting gave permission for a circuit collection to meet the cost of alterations, and Clues and Budd set out to visit the Circuit full of hope. They collected ten guineas from thirty villages in three days. Soon they had enough to pay the £35/17/- bill for the alterations. The chapel was licensed at the Bishop's Office by the Superintendent Minister, the Rev. John Simmons, and Boddington was restored to the Circuit Plan. On April 28th 1836 the little chapel was opened by the Rev. Mr. Loxton of Leamington, the preacher on the following Sunday being the Rev. James Meadmore, one of the Circuit Ministers. The disaster of 1829 had been swallowed up in the victory of 1836.

This first Boddington chapel still stands. It is the building attached to the present Post Office in Lower Boddington. To this small ex-blacksmith's shop, the ministers and local preachers would walk or ride to take their Sunday services. The majority of the congregation came from Upper Boddington, Budd tells us, as many of the Lower Boddington people were Anglicans or Roman Catholics. The chapel was in continual use until the building of the present Upper Boddington chapel in 1865; it then was apparently sold to the Rector, the Rev. Thomas Golightly. His successor, the Rev. E. T. Sale bought it and later turned it into a Church room.

The Circuit Plans of the period give us some insight into chapel life. The Sunday service was at 2.00 p.m. until 1842, when a 6.00 p.m. service was added. The Minister came once a quarter only on the Sundays from 1840 onwards. The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper was sometimes planned when he came; an occasional Love Feast also appears, such as on a Sunday in 1849. Collections were taken for the General Chapel Fund, the Worn-Out Ministers Fund, and for the Methodist Schools at Kingswood and Woodhouse Grove. From 1840, ministerial weeknight work was printed on the Plans, and from these we learn that Boddington's day was Wednesdays. On these occasions, the circuit ministers would come once a month to visit, preach, and renew the class tickets of the members. Baptisms also took place during the weeknight visits of the

ministers. The first Boddington Baptism recorded in the Circuit Baptismal Register was on November 19th 1848, when Eliza Ann, daughter of George and Temperance Ariss of Upper Boddington was baptised. These baptisms are recorded as 'held in the Wesleyan chapel'. The impression from the Plans is of a far more consolidated and stable society than its predecessor.

One further glimpse of chapel life at this time comes from the Religious Census of 1851, when for the first and only time, a census of chapels was taken along with the population census. The Boddington chapel is returned as having 40 free and 60 other sittings. (It is only by a considerable stretch of the imagination that one can conceive of a hundred people squeezing into the small chapel). A Sunday School met on the premises. The numbers present at Divine Worship on Sunday, March 30th 1851 was 50 in the afternoon, and 57 at night. The average attendance in the past year was 70. (At this time, the population of the Boddingtons was at its highest - 926). The return is signed by the Steward, Thomas Clues, and by John Archer.)

The Methodist worshippers would still find life very hard. The 'hungry forties' were years of political unrest and economic misery, when the revolutionary appeal of Chartism (there was a flourishing branch as near as Daventry) alarmed the authorities. While there seems to have been no organised opposition in the Boddingtons, the villagers would share the hardship and discontent of the times. The fifties were better, as wages in the countryside generally rose; but there was a decreasing demand for agricultural labour, and Boddington's population began to decline.

We do not know how the revival of Methodism was received in the village, though we can imagine the Rector and the Anglican farmers would not welcome it. The Methodists themselves had every reason to be satisfied. They had seen their congregation rise from two in 1832 to 70 in 1851 (though how many of these were committed members, it is impossible to say). They had their own chapel, and their own Sunday school. They held missionary meetings. Parents began to have their children baptised at the chapel, a sure sign of the acceptance of Methodism as a recognised village institution. The names in the Circuit Baptismal Register are Ariss and Maycock in 1848, Clues in 1855, Gilbert in 1859 and 1864, Hull in 1861 and 1863, and Smallbone in 1865. The society must have been encouraged by leaders such as Richard Gilbert, who as a draper was better off than the majority of the members. For many years he persevered with local preaching, but gave it up in 1849. All in all, the society seems to have lived down the events of 1829; Methodism made a good second beginning.

This was a time of great disturbance inside Wesleyan Methodism as a whole. When Budd was happily travelling the Circuit for subscriptions, a great agitation against the proposed Theological Institution was raging; at the time Clues was filling in his census papers, the Fly Sheet agitation, which cost Methodism one hundred thousand members, was at its height. No tremor of these upheavals troubled the humble Methodists of Boddington, who in their own way, had already experienced the evils of internal strife; now, they worshipped God in peace, and witnessed to their Lord unhindered.

The Present Chapels (1865-1900)

The chapel at Lower Boddington must have proved inadequate when the congregation increased in the early sixties. The majority of the Society came from Upper Boddington, and soon there was a decision to build a new chapel there. At the March Quarterly Meeting in 1862, the Society was permitted to build, provided there was no debt. Exactly two years later, they were able to secure the ground and collect subscriptions for a new chapel.

The site chosen was a peice of ground of 152 square yards situated in what was then called Cox's Lane. By a Conveyance of May 12th 1864, it was bought for £22/16/-, and passed into the hands of Methodist trustees. The site had been the gardens of two cottages, which until 1856 constituted the local Workhouse. The first trustees were :- Thomas Hull (carrier), Richard Edmunds (ironmonger), Edward James Payne (grocer), William Baker (tailor and woollen draper), Thomas Mace (solicitor's clerk), John Hyde (woollen draper) - all of Banbury, James Jones (farmer) of Middleton Cheney, John Foster (pig dealer) of Eydon, Benjamin Stacey (farmer) of Wardington, Thomas Ivens (farmer) of Sulgrave, John Archer (farmer) of Little Bourton, Thomas Elkington (farmer) of Arlescott, and Ebenezer Moulton (Superintendent Preacher).

It is strange that none of these trustees is shown as living at Boddington, though John Archer evidently had done, as his name appeared with that of Thomas Clues on the 1851 Census

papers. Thomas Hull, however, was a native of Boddington who spent most of his life there. He became a pillar of the local cause, and held the offices of Society Steward, Poor Steward, and Class Leader.

We have no account of the opening of the chapel a hundred years ago, although the 'Banbury Guardian' did report the stone laying ceremony: On September 7th 1865, we read, "On Tuesday last the Memorial stone was laid by W. Mewburn, Esq. of Wykham Park Banbury in the presence of a large and respectable audience. Earnest and eloquent addresses were delivered by that gentleman and the Rev. L. D. Reay (the newly appointed Superintendent) explanatory of the doctrines that would be preached in the new chapel. Tea having been provided in a spacious marquee tastefully decorated for the occasion, about 170 sat down and did ample justice to the good things provided. After tea, a public meeting was held in the tent, R. Edmunds, Esq. Mayor of Banbury (and himself a Methodist) in the chair. Addresses were delivered by the Revs. L. D. Reay and T. Champness, with Messrs. Mewburn, Hollier, Hyde, Mace, and others. Votes of thanks were given to Mr. Mewburn, the Mayor, and the ladies. A collection was made which, with the offerings placed upon the stone in the afternoon and the proceeds of the tea, amounted to upwards of £30. The Chapel will be a neat structure capable of accommodating about a hundred persons. Estimated cost £200".

This report and the list of trustees mark the growing 'respectability' of rural Methodism. Tastefully decorated marquees, chapels costing £200, and the presence of two eminent Wesleyan laymen, the wealthy William Mewburn and the Mayor of Banbury, indicate a social atmosphere that would probably have surprised old Thomas Clues, the agricultural labourer. While many labourers continued to attend the chapel, it seems they no longer controlled its affairs. This respectability, however, was far more marked in the towns than in the villages, where the Wesleyan chapel continued to be a symbol of opposition to the rural establishment.

This was to be seen in the next decade. In February 1872, Joseph Arch, a Warwickshire farm labourer and Primitive Methodist local preacher, founded the Agricultural Labourers' Trade Union. It spread rapidly, and obtained wage increase from squires unaccustomed to efficient union organisation. They retaliated in 1874 with lock-outs, and the power of the Union was broken. In the bitter controversy, the established Church in many villages made common cause with the squires. The Bishop of Peterborough made a public attack on those who sympathised with and helped the labourers. The labourers of Boddington were affected by these events; the Rector, the Rev. E. T. Sale, informed the Bishop in 1875 that 'the Agricultural Labourers Union has been the means of producing disaffection against the Church amongst the young men, which (will) probably take a long time to heal'.

These events almost certainly explain the startling increase in the strength of the chapel between 1872 and 1875. In 1872, the Rector informed the Bishop that 5 to 10 per cent of the villagers were Dissenters, a term covering Roman Catholics as well as Wesleyan Methodists. This would be between 70 to 140 people. His own congregation was then between 20 to 30 people. In 1875, the same Rector reported that the Dissenters 'number probably 1/3rd to 1/4 of the whole population' - that is, between 160 and 220 people. The church congregation, however, had risen to 50. This increase in Wesleyan Methodist strength came at a time of declining population, and makes it more marked still. As by 1878 the Rector reported that the Dissenters numbered 'possibly 1/5th of the parish', i.e., 140, and that his own congregation had increased to 130, we can safely say that between 1872 and 1875, the unpopularity of the Church caused by its opposition to Arch's Union brought a temporary increase in the chapel's strength.

Our various figures from different sources rarely coincide; it is unfortunate, for example, that we have no statistics from Methodist sources of actual membership figures until 1882, when Boddington is stated to have only 24 members. Not until 1886 do we get a complete picture of Boddington's religious affiliations. It is a very revealing picture.

<u>Year</u>	<u>Population</u>	<u>Church of England</u>	<u>Methodism</u>	<u>Balance</u>
1886	530	Congregation 75 Communicants 40 Sunday School 35	Congregation 80-100 Members 36 Sunday School 95	225

Three things stand out from these figures.

- (1) The Church went through a lean time in the last quarter of the century. Its congregation was smaller than the chapel's, on the Rector's own figures; it had even lost ground since the 130 reported in 1878. Its Sunday School was much weaker than the chapel's, although the Church had an influence on the Day School opened in 1870. In 1886, the Day School had 65 children. The Rector also had evening classes, which were 'well attended'.
- (2) Methodism was the dominant spiritual force in the village despite the decrease since 1878. It was gaining ground through conversions, as well as through the unpopularity of the Church. It was making the greater impact on the young. Yet only a very few - 36 out of 100 - were committed members of the Methodist Church. In other words, the Methodist cause was not nearly so well consolidated as it might have been. Even the increase of 12 members since 1882 was partly due to the arrival in Lower Boddington of Methodists from Cropredy (see below).
- (3) The most significant fact of all is that 225 inhabitants of Boddington attended neither Church nor chapel. Even allowing for a small Roman Catholic element in the village, this is a very high proportion of non-worshippers. It demonstrates conclusively that there is little evidence for the belief of those who extol the past at the expense of the present by claiming that this was 'a golden age' of Christian faith.

What of the human beings behind these impersonal statistics of Methodist increase? One pleasing feature in the new chapel was the return of some old names in the Circuit Baptismal register. Thomas, the son of William and Sarah Lawrence, was baptised in 1867; this William Lawrence was a descendant of the William Lawrence of the 1797 Certificate. The following year, the baptism of Thomas Collins Heritage, son of William and Sarah Heritage, is recorded. The part played by the Heritages since the events of 1829 is shrouded in mystery. It is enough to know that in the vigour of the new expansion, old recriminations had been forgotten, and old names restored to the fellowship.

The most interesting of the new converts to Methodism was a shoemaker, George Ariss (1845-1921). In his own words, until he was 20 he 'was a gay and thoughtless young man'. While living at Cropredy in 1865, he heard the Rev. Thomas Champness preach in the Wesleyan chapel on 'Behold, I stand at the door and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and sup with him, and he with me'. (Rev. 3 v.20). Champness, then a young minister in the Banbury Circuit, was destined to become one of the greatest evangelists of the age, and his sermon went straight to George Ariss's heart. '...as I listened to the earnest appeal made therefrom, I resolved, God being my helper, to 'open the door and let the Saviour in'. Champness told him afterwards, 'Jesus died to save sinners, and He would save you'. On January 14th 1866, George Ariss wrote, 'I obtained the joy of pardon, and I thank God, from that time to the present moment I've never lost it'. He returned to Boddington to become a shoemaker, and an outstanding worker in his village chapel. He filled with distinction every office in the local Society, being active in Overseas Missions and Sunday School work especially. Champness encouraged him to become a local preacher in 1870. His obituary in the Local Preachers Minute Book says of him, 'He was a forceful and persuasive preacher and warmly attached to our doctrine, which he declared with evangelical fervour and conviction'. There are still those in the Banbury Circuit who remember him with affection.

It was under the superintendency of this shoemaker-preacher that the Methodist Sunday school increased so rapidly. George Ariss had a deep affection for young people, and he delighted in his Sunday school work. At this very time, the Rector complained to the Bishop that scarcity of teachers in rural parishes such as his made it difficult to retain young people. As early as March 1872, the Circuit Quarterly Meeting was told of the urgent need for a school room, but difficulties held up a building scheme until 1885. In 1876, Thomas Hull bought a piece of the gardens belonging to the cottages adjoining the chapel for £30. Nine years later, the long-awaited school room was built at a cost of £140, £95 of which had been promised before building began. It could accommodate 100 children. By this time, the Sunday school, which met in the chapel, was 80 strong, with the promise of another 15 when more space was available.

Many of the familiar features of rural Methodist life date from this time. Chapel anniversaries are first mentioned on the Circuit plans between 1872 and 1879; these special services and the accompanying tea were eagerly awaited annual events. Sunday school anniversaries first

appear between 1881 and 1891, and Harvest Thanksgivings between 1891 and 1893. A circuit Overseas Missions campaign, with meetings in every chapel, had begun as far back as 1857. By 1878, Boddington had collected £13/15/-, which proved to be the highest figure for some years subsequently. This flowering of chapel life and the increased congregations came at a time when the Rector was noting the decline in intemperance in the village; perhaps the Methodists were partly responsible for this achievement. Certainly, they strongly opposed intemperance, and in 1890 the Banbury Circuit protested against the Publicans' Compensation Bill then before Parliament. A public meeting was held at Lower Boddington under Methodist auspices, and 65 people from Lower Boddington and 38 from Upper Boddington signed the resolution.

About 1885, John Cherry, a Methodist farmer of Cropredy, moved to Lower Boddington, where he and his family were welcome additions to the village cause. Within two years, he had become Society Steward, and a Class leader with 17 people in his Class, presumably the Lower Boddington part of the Society. This increase at Lower Boddington no doubt prompted John Cherry to propose that the Society be divided, and a new chapel built at Lower Boddington. He had bought a site containing a cottage and garden in 1885 for £10/10/-, and there the new chapel was built in 1888 at a cost of £140. It came on the Circuit Plan early in 1889, and had a membership of 19. William Cherry, John's son, was its main leader, and held the offices of Society, Poor and Chapel Stewards between 1892 and 1894. Thus, for the first time, there were two Methodist chapels in the Boddingtons; it was 23 years since the last Lower Boddington chapel had been closed.

The first trustees of Lower Boddington chapel appointed in 1889 were:- Arthur Fairfax (Solicitor), Thomas Edwin Dobbins Garrett (Surveyor), Percy Spencer Edmunds (Seed Merchant), Thomas Orton Hankinson (Bacon Factor), Eustace Durran (Watchmaker), and Arthur James Brummitt (Haberdasher) - all of Banbury - Fred Mellers (Clerk) of Grimsbury, George Ariss (Shoemaker) of Upper Boddington, John Cherry (Farmer) of Lower Boddington, William Cherry (Carrier) of Lower Boddington, Henry William Bradshaw (Carpenter) of Lower Boddington, Thomas Cherry (Mason) of Cropredy, Thomas Kench (Plumber) of Eydon, and George Cherry (Glazier) of Great Bourton.

Boddington Methodism at the end of the century seemed to be at the peak of its vitality. While the Rector complained of stationary or declining congregations, the two chapels were well filled, and their Sunday School was the most important influence among the young in the village, with about 100 scholars. Conversions were expected and experienced, and a lifetime of moral transformation and chapel work often followed. Farmers and labourers worked together in the village chapel, though the former were in control of chapel affairs to an extent unknown in previous days. While the congregations were large, the membership was fairly small; in 1899, Upper Boddington had still only two classes containing 25 members. There were large numbers of people outside the influence of either Church or chapel; but Methodism had quite lived down its unfortunate past in the village, and had become a permanent part of its life.

The Present Chapels (1900-1964)

The opening of the century saw the launching of the Wesleyan Twentieth Century Fund, the proceeds of which were eventually used in the building of Westminster Central Hall. Upper Boddington had twenty contributors to the Fund, Lower Boddington had 26. This was an indication of Lower Boddington's promising growth, and like Upper Boddington before them, they now needed a school room for Sunday School work. In 1910, John Cherry secured the land, and two years later a small iron chapel from Overthorpe was brought to Lower Boddington by voluntary labour, and erected next to the chapel.

There was also a new activity at Upper Boddington, for about the turn of the century, a branch of the Wesley Guild was established, largely through the enthusiasm of Miss Ethel Ariss, one of George Ariss's daughters. The Guild added a new dimension to Methodist church life, and in Boddington it became very popular. It is still in being today.

In 1900, William Creed of Lower Boddington became a local preacher 'on note', reverting to the status of an Exhorter five years later. He adorned this office until his death in 1941. William Creed was a Methodist in the old tradition - a labourer who was soundly converted after a spiritual struggle in his room lasting for several days. He taught himself to read, and he became one of the most acceptable preachers in the Circuit. His grasp of Christian truth, his real

Christian experience and his pointed, homely illustrations made him equally effective in the pulpit, at the class meeting, and in the Sunday school. He was quite outspoken, and once told a local preacher after a service at Lower Boddington, 'You've been uncommon dry tonight! No doubt this was said because he himself could never be 'dry'. The Rector, (The Rev. W. Gibbings) wrote in the Deanery Magazine after his death in 1941, 'William Creed was a staunch Non-conformist and one whose life was an example to all. There was no narrowness about him, and he would often join with the congregation at the Church in the Sunday morning services, and many of us will long remember the earnestness and the sincerity of his address at our Intercession Services last summer'.

He had two sisters, Sarah and Emma Creed. Emma's life was spent in service as a ladies' companion, but she returned to Lower Boddington after her retirement. She was a woman of simple, sincere piety, and to the end she kept her homely ways of speech. She delighted in her Sunday school work, and when she became housebound, spoke with deep interest of her 'little chapel'. She held fast to her Methodist convictions in her last days. The writer well remembers her in Daventry hospital in 1963, shortly before her death, when she asked him to fill in her postal vote for the Parliamentary by-election. Who did she wish to vote for? She replied, 'The Liberal, of course. Methodists always vote Liberal!'

George Ariss was still one of the foremost workers at Upper Boddington. He was greatly respected in the Circuit for his integrity, faithfulness, and his patience under much suffering. Even when his health forced him to relinquish his preaching, he attended worship whenever he could, and loved his chapel to the end. Long before his death in 1921, he had become the senior Local Preacher on the Circuit Plan, and the Local Preachers Meeting passed a special resolution at his death expressing 'its gratitude to God for the long life, noble Christian character, and devoted labours of this faithful soldier and servant of Jesus Christ'. He was eventually succeeded as Sunday School Superintendent by Miss Ethel Ariss, who had the same qualities of integrity and faithfulness.

Until the first World War, congregations remained about the same. The Rector, now the Rev. R. H. Woodcock, noted that one of the reasons for the decreasing Church congregation was 'dissenters taking the farms formerly occupied by Church people'. The chapel membership remained remarkably stable. Upper Boddington returned 30 members in 1914, and continued to do so until 1945; Lower Boddington had 16 in 1914, and 15 in 1945. During the first twenty years of the century, both chapels would have changed from the chalice to the individual cup in the administration of the Lord's Supper. Nothing special seems to have been done in 1915, when the 50th Anniversary was held at Upper Boddington. Forty Boddington baptisms are recorded in the Circuit Baptismal register between 1900 and 1930. No doubt Sunday School numbers remained high in these years.

In June 1920, Mr. and Mrs. Charles Cotterill moved from Chacombe to Upper Boddington. They were both local preachers, and Mrs. Cotterill had been a Wesley Deaconess. Mr. Cotterill died in 1923, at the age of 53; the Local Preachers' Meeting said of him, 'There was always an inward sense, among those who knew and heard him, that behind the message he so faithfully and wholeheartedly preached, was the integrity and sincerity of a true servant of God'. Mrs. Cotterill lived on for many years. One who knew her well says that her letters were a benediction to read, and her cottage was a place of comfort and healing to many a soul.

There was much friendly rivalry for the cause of Overseas Missions in the villages of the Banbury Circuit. Upper Boddington was well to the fore in this. A typical pre-War meeting was in 1908, when George Ariss was the local secretary for Missions. On Monday December 7th 1908, the meeting was held at Boddington, Mr. J. H. Judge being the chairman, and the speakers being the Rev. S. M. Butters (whose exciting subject was 'In a Chinese Prison') and Mr. G. W. Eaves, who spoke on 'Missionary Credentials'. The Society collected £7/14/2, an increase of 12 shillings and eightpence over the previous year; but Lower Boddington with fewer members had collected more, £9/6/10! Not until 1919 did Upper Boddington succeed in overtaking Lower Boddington. Upper Boddington won the Circuit Missionary Shield in 1923.

The great days of Overseas Missionary enterprise at Upper Boddington began in 1923, when Mr. Rex Johnson became the sole secretary. Mr. Johnson, who happily is still with us, was a Local Preacher who had moved to the village from Shotteswell; his evangelical zeal found an admirable sphere of service in the cause of Overseas Missions. In 1923, the Upper Boddington

total shot up to £43, the largest total to date, and the largest for many years to come. Year after year, the August Missionary meeting held on Bank Holiday Monday was a village event; in 1930, for example, the speakers were Mr. V. E. Charawanamuttu of Ceylon, and Miss Margaret Horwood, of the Madras School of Bible Women. The Circuit Missionary Plan stated that in 1929 'the great value of our Summer Meetings was again abundantly demonstrated. They were among the finest we have ever held, and have left an abiding and inspiring memory in our hearts'. Not until 1943 was the 1923 total beaten. In that year, £43/16/9 was collected, an increase of £8/17/4. The Rev. and Mrs. N. J. Green spoke on 'God's family in Nigeria'. Mr. Johnson redoubled his efforts after the Second World War; in 1948, the total rose to £73/18/1, and in 1949, the peak figure of £105 was reached. When Mr. Johnson retired from the office of secretary in the late nineteen-fifties, it was reckoned that he had collected £1500 from Overseas Missions; a splendid achievement.

A new venture at Upper Boddington between the wars was a chapel Tennis club, which was proposed in 1923. It was in existence in 1935, and seems to have disappeared since; it was probably a casualty of the Second World War. Lower Boddington chapel was redecorated and renovated; a Communion table and curtains were added, as well as electric heating. The total cost of these improvements was £122/19/6, and were made when Mr. Fred Cherry was the Chapel Steward. The chapel was reopened in 1931.

The great decline in religious conviction and churchgoing that is characteristic of our time has affected Boddington, as everywhere else. The effect of two world wars, indifference to spiritual issues, and the failure of the churches to readjust their work in the new conditions all have a bearing upon the present religious drought. In the Boddingtons, congregations and Sunday school numbers have declined; the stationary membership figures over a period of 30 years and the declining number of baptisms had heralded the approach of more difficult times.

There has been gain as well. Modern transport has enabled the villages of the Circuit to play a bigger part in Circuit life. Relationships with the Parish Church, especially during the ministry of the Rev. E. W. Killer, have never been better. The old hostility of 'church' and 'chapel' has gone.

Sources

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Schedule Book 1883-94, 20th Century Fund Book, Plans 1810-

date, Circuit Baptismal Register 1805-date, Overseas Missions

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EDGECOTE HOUSE IN 1585

The manor and advowson of Edgescote, Northants, was acquired in 1535 by Thomas Cromwell, Vicar-general and chief minister of Henry VIII. After his mishandling of the marriage of Henry to Anne of Cleves in 1539 and his inability to support a case for divorcing her, Cromwell fell into disfavour. Although created Earl of Essex in April 1540, he was accused in June, arrested in July, and executed at the end of that month. His property escheated to the Crown. Anne escaped the fate of her predecessors by agreeing to an annulment of the marriage. In compensation she was declared Henry's adopted sister and was granted a pension with the life interest in many estates. One of them was the Manor of Edgescote.

Queen for six months, Anne lived afterwards for 17 years, residing mainly in Richmond Palace and Ham House. She did not make use of Edgescote as in 1543 it was demised to William Chauncey at a reserved annual rent of £43.6.8d. He obtained a grant of the reversion fee in 1546⁽¹⁾, and again in 1551, (the 4th year of Edward VI) with reversion to his son Tobias.

William Chauncey was the son of John Chauncey of the Tower, Northampton (d. 1528) and previously lived at Paulerspury, Northants. He married Joan, daughter of John Bustard of East Adderbury Manor House⁽²⁾. It is clear from the valuation of £1,337 put on his goods and chattels in the following Inventory that he was well off. He was a Justice of the Peace and served as Sheriff of Northampton in 1579/80, and had permanent lodgings in London. As son-in-law of the Bustards he was no stranger to the Banbury region. His loan of £20 to Mathew Knight of the Reindeer Inn family indicates a further connection with the town⁽³⁾.

In Edgescote church a fine alabaster tomb bears his recumbent figure in plate armour with a tilting helmet at his head and a lion at his feet and beside him his wife Joan. The ledge of the tomb is inscribed "Here lye intombed Willia' Cha'ncye esquire lord and patrone of this man'or who deceased ye VIth of Aprill An^o d'ni 1585 and Joane His wife who died the 7th of May an^o d'ni 1571". There are eight shields of arms including his own: Or, three chevrons engrailed, gules, granted in 1546.

Edgescote House in 1585 had at least 36 rooms. The principal ones were the Hall, Great and Little Parlours, Drawing Chamber, the Great New and Green Lodging Chambers, Nursery, Study, also the Chapel with a room for the parson. On the upper floor were rooms over the gate and over the entry, a small room over the Hall, a Great Chamber over the Parlour and others over the nursery and the bolting house. Possibly on the ground floor were rooms for his brother, John Chauncey, Mrs. Kircam, the maids, husbandmen and hinds, a brushing chamber and the armoury. On the domestic side were the Great and Nether Kitchens, buttery, pantry, dairy, rooms for making and storing cheese, houses for brewing, stilling, spinning and sifting flour; also a kiln house and a house for the water cistern. In the farming section were the cowhouse, stables, hog yard, wool house, two mills, a lodge and wooden hovels.

Thomas Cromwell's chief addition to the building was the Great Kitchen which had two enormous stone chimneys with wide flat arches in front of them. According to John Bridges⁽⁴⁾ who saw the place in the early 18th century "in some rooms are doorcases and windows like chapel-windows; and in one room above stairs which is flagged there are over the chimney the ten quarterings of the family in one shield in stonework, as also the same coats in different shields; on the side of the arms towards the top are Mars and Venus with Cupid standing by her, and below are the statues of Apollo and Vulcan. This work bears the date 1598" - and was evidently added by Tobias Chauncy (d. 1607).

As to the furniture there were 8 pieces of tapestry in the two great chambers, 3 carpets, 9 tables and only 6 chairs, 15 cupboards, 16 presses and chests, 22 large furnished bedsteads and 16 lesser beds. Table ware comprised 670 ounces of silver plate worth £178 and pewter worth £11.

In 1752 the house was demolished by Richard Chauncy and replaced by the present mansion.

F.l.r.

E Registro Curi' Prerogat. Cantuarien' extract.

The true and perfect Inventorie Indented of all the goods and chattells as well movable as immovable of William Chauncy late of Edgcott in the Countie of North'ton Esq. taken and prized by George Butler of Aston in the wall in the County aforesayd gent', John Butler of Wardenton in the County of Oxford gent', Martin Wright of Trafford in the County of North'ton gent' & Richard Hall of Edgcott aforesayd in the County of Northampton aforesayd Yeoman the last Day of Aprill in the XXVIIth yeare of the Rainge of o^r Sovereigne Lady Elizabeth by the grace of God of England France and Ireland Queene Defender of the Faith in Anno Dom' 1585.

Plate

Imprimis thirteene score & twelve ounces of Plate	)	LXXI ^{li}	XII ^s
Double guilt att six shillings the ounce prized att)		
Item nyne ⁽⁵⁾ score & Eighteene ounces of plate p'cell	)	LXXXXVI ^{li}	X ^s
guilt at five shillings the ounce prized att)		
Household stuffe			
In the Hall			
Item two longe tables & two caruinge cupbords wth	)	III ^{li}	
other implements prized)		
In the Great Parlour			
Item fower peeces of tapestrie a longe table a short	)	XII ^{li}	
table two cubbords wth other implements prized att)		
In the litle Parlour			
Item one longe table & a forme a Rounde cupbord	)		XX ^s
wth other implements prized)		
In the great Chamber over the Parlour			
Item fower peeces of tapestry a fayre standinge bedsted	)	L ^{li}	
with bedding & furniture to the same wth other implements prized)		
In the Chamber called the Drawinge Chamber			
Item a standinge bedsted with beddinge & furniture to the	)	X ^{li}	
same two cupbords two carpetts wth other implements prized)		
In the Chamber over the entry			
Item a standinge bedsted wth beddinge & furniture to the	)	X ^{li}	
same a cupbord three chairs and other implements prized)		
In the Chamber called the great new lodginge Chamber			
Item one fayre standinge bedsted wth beddinge and furniture)		
to the same on pallett bedsted a table a cupbord two Chayres	)	XIII ^l	VI ^s VIII ^d
wth other implements prized)		
f.l.v. In the Chaple Chamber			
Item two standinge bedsteeds with beddinge and furniture	)	V ^{li}	
the same on chayr wth other implements prized)		
In the green Chamber lodginge			
Item one bedsted wth beddinge & other furniture to the same	)	XVI ^{li}	
one pallett bed wth other implements prized)		
In the Maides Chamber			
Item three bedsteds wth beddinge & furniture to the same on	)	VI ^{li}	
great presse wth other implements prized)		
In the Chamber Called Mrs. Kircams chamber			
Item on standinge bedsted furnished wth beddinge to the same	)	V ^{li}	
one cupbord & a carpett for the same wth other implements prized)		
In the Chamber called Mr. John Chaunceys Chamber			
Item on standinge bedsted wth beddinge and furniture to the	)		XL ^s
same & one cupbord prized)		
In the litle Chamber above the Hall)		
Item on bedsted one flocke bedd wth the furniture to the same	)		XV ^s
prized)		
In the brushing Chamber			
Item three presses two chests wth other implements prized			XL ^s
In the Armorie Chamber			
Item all the armour & weapons wth on ould chest	)	XXX ^{li}	
and other implements)		
In the Nurserie			
Item a bedsted a feather bedd wth furniture to the same	)	VI ^{li}	XIII ^s III ^d
two chests wth other implements prized)		

Item rings & apparell prized		XXX ^{li}	
In the Chamber over the Nurserie			
Item three bedsteeds wth three feather beds and furniture	)	X ^{li}	
to the same wth other implements prized)		
In the Kitchin			
Item spitts racks brasse potts & panns posnetts chafers	)	XXXV ^{li}	
a counter table two cupbords wth other implements prized)		
In the Cheese Chamber			
Item a cheese rack six cheese bords in a frame fouer ould	)	XIII ^s	III ^d
chests wth other implements prized)		
f.2.vr			
In the Spinninge House			
Item on wollen wheele two linnen wheeles linnen yarne	)	XL ^s	
& wollen yarne wth other implements prized)		
Item in the stillinge house old stills & one old chest prized	)	XX ^s	
Item in the beife house a powdringe troue cheese racks	)	XX ^s	
& other implements prized)		
In the Study			
Item a deske a deske table and all the bookes prized		III ^{li}	
Item in the Day'house cheese racks cheese fatts wth other	)	XX ^s	
implements prized)		
Item in the boultinge house fower boultinge whitches wth	)	XX ^s	
other implements prized)		
Item in the Chamber ouer the boultinge house one bedsteed	)	XX ^s	
one bed furnished wth other implements prized)		
Item in the neither Kitchen & Yeylinge house brewinge	)	XIII ^{li}	VI ^s VIII ^d
leads brewinge fatts wth other implements prized)		
Item in the buttry Settles hogsheds wth other implements prized		XXX ^s	
Item in the pantry a cupbord a safe wth other implements prized		XXVI ^s	III ^d
Item in the Kilnehouse & sesterne house a cesterne	)	III ^{li}	
a heure sakes wth other implements prized)		
Item in the chamber over the gate on bedd furnished	)	XXX ^s	
wth other implements prized)		
Item in the husbandmens chamber two old bedsteeds	)	XX ^s	
wth matrises prized)		
Item in the hinds chamber fower old bedsteeds wth	)	XL ^s	
matrises prized)		
In the parsons chamber			
Item a bedsted a feather bed furnished an old chest	)	XL ^s	
an old table wth other implements prized)		
Item in both the miles a bedsted a matresse wth furniture	)	X ^{li}	X ^s
to the same & all other implement prized)		
Item in the lodge a bedsted a matrice & furniture	)	XX ^s	
to the same wth other implements prized)		
Linnen in all places			
Item in the pantry presse linnen prized		XV ^{li}	
Item linnen in all other places		CXVIII ^{li}	XII ^s
Pewter in all places			
Item in pewter in the mayds chamber in the prese		III ^{li}	X ^s
Item pewter in the Kitchinge & pantry prized		VI ^{li}	
Item pewter in the Day' house prized		VI ^s	VIII ^d
f.2.v.			
Item five Cart horses prized		XV ^{li}	
Item fower sadle geldings three old mares one	)	XXXVI ^{li}	
colt on filly two horse colts on mill horse prized)		

Item sadles & bridles wth other furniture in the stable prized			XL ^s
Item eight plow oxen wth other great bease & calves prized	CX ^{li}		
Item sheep younge & old wth ewes & lambs prized	CCCXLIIII ^{li}	XIII ^s	IIII ^d
Item fifty seauen hogge & other swine prized	IX ^{li}		
Item twenty fitches of bacon	III ^{li}		
Item fower score quarter of mault prized	XL ^{li}		
Item come in the barne prized	VI ^{li}		
Item the crop of corne growing & in the barne prized	LXX ^{li}		
Item poultry prized			X ^s
Item three longe cartes on wayne ploughs harrows wth furniture to them wth other implements prized	) )	XVI ^{li}	
Item in the cow house planchers standerds lases & racks & other implements prized	) )		XL ^s
Item in the woole house plough timber iron lead & waights wth other implements prized	) )	XVI ^{li}	
Item in the hogg yard a Cestern & hoggs tross prized			XL ^s
Item all the timber hovells & fierwood about the ground prized			XX ^s
Item all other old trash & lumber herein not prized before			X ^s
Sum - MMCCCXIII ^{li} - XV ^s - VIII ^d			
Goods att London			
Item a bedsted a feather bed a matterice a coveringe on blancett & the curtins & tester of green say	) )		L ^s
Item a litle coffer a chest a litle cupbord			X ^s
Sum - III ^{li}			
Debts oweinge unto him			
Item oweinge unto him by Mathew Knight of Banbury in the County of Oxon	) )	XX ^{li}	
Sum' toto') huius Inven')		MCCCXXXVII ^{li} - XV ^s - VIII ^d	
Exhibited undecimo die Maii 1585 p' Petrum Johnson Not ^y publ' ^{cu} ' no'is p' curio Tobie Chauncy Executioris & p' pleno et vero Inven' & sub p'testam' de addend' et sig'			
Concordat cum registro			

C. F. C. Beeson.

(The original inventory is now in the Northamptonshire Record Office, Delapre Abbey.)

References

- (1) Baker, G. History of Northamptonshire, (1822-30). Vol. I. p. 494.
- (2) Gepp, H. S. History of Adderbury, (1924). pp 66-68.
- (3) Beesley, A. History of Banbury, (1841). p. 249.
- (4) Bridges, J. History & Antiquities of Northamptonshire, (1791). Vol. I. pp 117-119
- (5) Should be "nineteen".

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Annual General Meeting was held at Stowe School on Saturday, 3rd July. About eighty members and friends attended. For the first time for some years the President was unable to be present, due to illness, and a message of good wishes for his speedy recovery was sent. In his absence Mr. J.H. Fearon took the Chair. In his Report he commented on the Banbury Borough Council's refusal to authorise a grant towards the cost of our annual records publication from the sum recently allocated towards helping cultural activities in the town, on the grounds that this did not constitute "entertainment". The Society is still hoping to receive help through the Arts Council of Banbury from a grant made by the Oxfordshire County Council Education Committee. The Secretary emphasised the present inadequacy of members' subscriptions, which are at present subsidised by other sources of revenue such as postcard sales, and presaged the necessity for an increase in the near future. A scheme for payment of subscription by Deed of Covenant, by which the Society could benefit considerably without additional cost to members, is likely to be introduced shortly. The President, Vice-Presidents, honorary officers and committee were all re-elected, and the re-appointment as Hon. Auditor of Mr. A. Cheney, to whom a vote of thanks was passed, was confirmed.

The meeting was followed by a talk by Mr. J. Saunders on the history of Stowe as the seat of the family of the Dukes of Buckingham and Chandos, a tour of the house and grounds, and an excellent tea in the gardens on the South Front. We are most grateful to Mr. R.Q. Drayson, the Headmaster, Mr. Saunders and the boys who helped him, for their welcome and the lavish hospitality which all went to make a most successful and memorable Annual General Meeting.

SUMMER EXCURSIONS

The Society has not had its accustomed good fortune with weather this year. The Perambulation was held in a downpour and the day of the A.G.M. at Stowe was cloudy and chilly, though the rain held off until our departure. About thirty members visited Upton House on 21st July. Fortunately the chief interest here was the superb collection of pictures and porcelain, the enjoyment of which the accompanying cloudburst did nothing to dispel, and later it was dry enough for a somewhat squelchy tour of the garden to be made.

The churches of Oxhill, Wroxton, Chipping Warden and Kings Sutton were visited by the Architecture Study Group in good numbers but varying climatic conditions. We were pleased to be welcomed by the respective clergy, and are grateful to them for the trouble to which they went to show us their communion plate and to make us free of their towers.

On 27th July an informal visit was paid to the Oxford University Archaeological Society excavation of the early British camp at Rainsborough. Unfortunately due to short notice it was impossible to publicise this amongst members.

OUR COVER

The engraving on the cover, reproduced from Beesley's History of Banbury, shows the bridge connecting Banbury with Northamptonshire. Although there have been alterations to the bridge since the drawing was made about 1841, it is still possible to see parts of the medieval arches from a point just east of the Albion Inn.

A PERAMBULATION OF BANBURY

In the afternoon of Sunday, April 11th, about thirty members of the Society assembled for a perambulation of the centre of Banbury, during which inspections were made of a number of interesting but little known buildings. The first visit was to the premises of Messrs. E.W. Brown at number 85 High Street. The exterior of this range of buildings is widely acknowledged as one of the most interesting architectural features of the town, but the magnificent fireplace in the large room on the first floor was unknown to many. Mr. Gibson gave a short talk on his ancestors the Vivers family who built the house, and Mr. Michael Laithwaite who has made an extensive survey of the building drew attention to points of architectural interest. The small but interesting courtyard at the back of the house was also inspected.

The party then went to the Town Hall to view the portraits, particularly those recently returned from cleaning. In the Baptist Chapel notice was taken of the tombstones removed from the graveyard at the rear when the present schoolrooms were built, and of the fine coloured drawing of Caleb Clarke (d. 1851), one of the founders of the church.

Outside the former town gaol, on the return to the Market Place, Mr. A.W. Pain recounted some of its history, illustrating this from the 19th century gaoler's journal. At the Vine, built in 1857 at the Central Corn Exchange, the vast dealers' room with its vaulted iron ceiling was inspected. The final building to be visited was the headquarters of the St. John's Ambulance Brigade, which, it was pointed out by older members of the party, has changed but little since it was used as Messrs. Gilletts' Bank.

We are grateful to all who made possible an interesting and successful excursion, particularly to Mr. W. Brown for allowing us to visit 85 High Street, to Mr. N.G. Dufour for opening up the Town Hall, to Mr. George Clarke for permitting the visit to the Baptist Chapel, to the landlord of the Vine for allowing us to see the dealers' room, to Supt. T. Upton for permitting the visit to the St. John's Ambulance headquarters, and to Mr. V. Powell for opening the premises and pointing out features of interest.

It is hoped to organise a similar excursion in a different part of the town some time in 1966.

PUBLICATIONS

A second edition of the "Roman Banburyshire" number of Cake & Cockhorse has been produced, price 3/6d. This issue has been in constant demand and has been out of print for some time. It contains a Gazetteer of Roman Sites in the Banbury area (including parts of Northamptonshire and Warwickshire as well as north Oxfordshire), by V. Bromley, and a guide to possible Roman roads and tracks by Mrs. V.S. Wickham Steed. Both are illustrated by specially-drawn maps, and engravings from Beesley's History of Banbury are also reproduced. An illustration of the pavement at Wigginton is an addition to this reprint. Copies may be obtained from the Hon. Secretary.

The length of this year's records volume, Banbury Parish Register, Baptisms and Burials, 1558-1653 - over 300 pages - has been causing some delay in production. It is still hoped to complete work on it this year, but distribution to subscribers may not take place until early 1966.

The Index to Cake & Cockhorse, Volume Two, is also still in preparation. It will be distributed as soon as possible.

OXFORD ARCHITECTURAL AND HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The Society is concerned with the archaeology, history and architecture of the Oxford regions. Its activities include lectures, excursions and the publication of an annual journal, Oxoniensia. The Society also endeavours to preserve and safeguard local buildings and monuments. Full membership (to include Oxoniensia) two guineas. Ordinary membership, fifteen shillings.

Apply Hon. Treasurer, O.A. & H.S., Ashmolean Museum, Oxford.

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