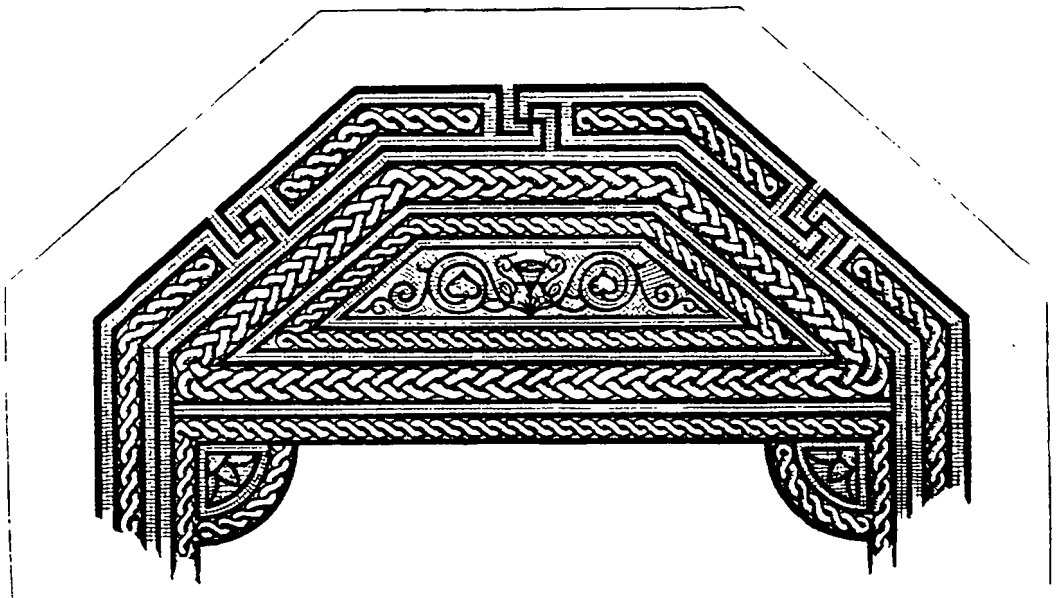


CAKE AND COCKHORSE



Banbury Historical Society

November 1965

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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 and 1966.

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 two. November, 1965.

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The past year has been a notable one for local history in the Banbury area, and many of its most important happenings, both in publishing and in archaeology are summarised in this issue.

Dr. Beckinsale's article and Miss Taylor's book have long been awaited by everyone interested in the local history of the last two centuries. Both come fully up to expectations, though on reading them one is made aware of the enormous amount of work that remains to be done on the 18th and 19th centuries in north Oxfordshire. Brian Waters' Thirteen Rivers to the Thames shows that there is much of interest in the countryside of this part of England which is completely unknown to most travel writers. The publication of the first Oxfordshire Roundabout could be the beginning of a much wider interest in local history.

In matters archaeological, the findings at Rainsborough Camp this summer are obviously of considerable importance. Interest in this dig has been rather overshadowed by the spectacular finds at Wigginton where the villa site seems to be of major importance. It is unfortunate that no further work was done on Sulgrave Castle this summer.

In the short term the outlook for future publications is less attractive than for some years. The first volume of the Banbury Baptisms and Burials Register will be published by the Historical Society for 1965 and 1966. This seems to be the only major contribution to local history likely to appear in the immediate future. The long term outlook is much brighter. The success of Dr. Brinkworth's class in palaeography means that it should before long be possible to discover much more about life in the turbulent Banbury of the 17th century. A study of religion and recreation in Banbury in the first half of the 19th century is in preparation. Several records publications of outstanding interest are planned by the Historical Society before 1970. A reviews issue of Cake and Cockhorse in 1966 will probably not be worthwhile. This does not indicate any sickness in the state of local historical studies.

Our next issues: Cake and Cockhorse III. iii. will appear in February or March and will be devoted to History through Living Memory. Vol. III. No. iv. will be published in May and will contain a detailed survey of Neithrop in 1851.

SOCIETY NEWS AND ACTIVITIES

Thursday, 27th January, 7.30 p.m. Conservative Club (next to Martins Bank), High Street, Banbury. "Industrial Archaeology". An illustrated talk by Mr. Robin Chaplin of Birmingham University. This comparatively new study has already created widespread interest, and has been the subject of a recent series of television programmes. Two books on regional industrial archaeology have just been published. Banbury itself has many significant remains of its early industrialisation in the 18th and 19th centuries, and the present century has of course made and is making its own enormous contribution to the industrial archaeology of the future. Altogether it is time that members heard more of an aspect of local history in which they may well like to participate. We can be certain that Mr. Chaplin will give us plenty to think about.

Wednesday, 30th March, 7.30 p.m., Banbury. "Excavations at Rainsborough Iron Age fort. 1961-5", by Michael Avery.

THE GLOBE ROOM AND THE MUSEUM

As members will have read in the local press, the repair and restoration of the Globe Room panels has now been completed and they have at last returned to Banbury. They will eventually form part of the projected Civic Centre some years hence. Meanwhile they are being erected in the large room on the second floor of the Borough Library. This opportunity is being taken to transfer the museum exhibits from the totally inadequate room they formerly occupied off the Reference Library. They will be much more suitably displayed in the room housing the panels and an adjoining one. It will be some months before these can be opened to the public.

Miss Jean Cook of the Oxford City and County Museum at the September meeting gave one of the most interesting and purposeful talks the Society has yet been privileged to hear, and it is a great pity there were not more members present. Following this a small group within the Society was formed of members prepared to come along to the Museum from time to time. There they are helping with some of the work that is needed on the exhibits before they can be re-displayed. This consists at present of detailed cataloguing, for which knowledge of the exhibits themselves is not normally necessary; in due course the exhibition cases must be repainted and refurbished, and fresh displays prepared using modern techniques. All this is being done with the enthusiastic co-operation of the Library and Museum staff and committee, and with practical help and advice from Miss Cook. The work is varied enough to suit anyone prepared to be interested in the Museum, and more helpers would be welcome. They should contact the Hon. Secretary or Dr. G.E. Gardam, who is organising the group.

MEETING AT BLOXHAM

Over eighty attended the most successful Bloxham meeting on 30th November. They heard an excellent talk from Mr. G. Forsyth Lawson, illustrated with many of his beautiful colour photographs; after which Mr. Leslie Wood of the Oxfordshire Rural Community Council led a general discussion on street and place names in the village. The meeting was made even more enjoyable by the tea and coffee prepared by Mrs. Henderson, Miss Mills, Mrs. G.F. Lawson and Mrs. I.F. Lawson.

PROFESSOR SIR IAN RICHMOND

By the untimely death of Professor Richmond the Society has lost a much valued friend and adviser. His guidance has been of great value to us and his scholarly advice will be sadly missed. His most important contribution to our activities was his initiation of the recent excavations at Wigginton. It was through his influence that the project was adopted by the Ministry of Public Building and Works, and without his energetic diplomacy there would have been no excavation. The continuation and completion of this work would be a most fitting memorial to him.

J.H.F.

Gilletts. Bankers at Banbury and Oxford

by Audrey M. Taylor. Clarendon Press: Oxford University Press, 1964, 35s.

The publication of this scholarly study of local economic history is a major event in the chronicles of Oxfordshire and particularly of Banbury, all the more so because it is written in an attractive and lucid style that makes its interesting matter easily intelligible. The production also is excellent with a minimum of footnotes and a commendable addition of several maps, including Stone's map of Ten Miles Round Banbury (c. 1855), and of a few pleasant plates in colour. There is to be a second volume dealing with the London branch of the Gillett family but it is this earlier volume that throws so much light on local life and economy in Oxfordshire.

It is perhaps unnecessary to demonstrate the book's wider importance. English large joint-stock companies have attracted the detailed attention of several historians but there are very few histories of local private banks. Miss Taylor's work sets a worthy precedent to what might well be many successors. Indeed Oxfordshire seems more favoured than most counties in regard to writings on local banks. On reading Gilletts, many will recall Stanley Weyman's Ovington's Bank, an historical romance by a barrister, educated at Christ Church, Oxford and for some time on the Oxford circuit. Wayman stresses the crises whereas Miss Taylor gives the local background as only an economic historian can; she has facts and people, their dealings and feelings, their society and struggle for economic survival. The crises and successes become very real. Nor does she neglect the humbler strata and the more menial environmental details of everyday business life. She is, it is true, fortunate in having to tell a success story in which disaster or near disaster is sometimes only just surmounted and in which the most eminent members arrived at the beginning and end of the play. But the Gillett family has, like the proverbial people and their government, got the good historian they deserved.

As A. W. Tuke portrays in his able foreword, the financial roots of Gilletts probably sprang from William, a Quaker farmer and woolcomber who had by 1800 become a shag and worsted manufacturer with a cottage workshop at Upper Brailes. William probably extended the normal practice of giving credit to customers into a system of receiving deposits from farmers and of lending money on note of hand. His sons, Joseph and William, mixed finance and manufacturing rather more clearly. In 1810 they joined with their father and Joshua Thome of Banbury in a shag- and shaloon-manufacturing company, Joseph being in charge of the Banbury end and William junior of a small establishment at 40, Friday Street, London. Joseph also went into banking at Shipston-on-Stour and later with the aid of £5,000 interest-free from his father-in-law, a Birmingham banker, acquired a partnership in a local bank. In 1822 Joseph became managing partner of Banbury New Bank and so began a remarkable rivalry with the slightly older and more powerful Cobbs Bank. He almost went under in 1825 and in 1831 was nearly dislodged by Cobb who bought Woodlands (the former home of the Whately family) which Joseph had on lease. In desperation Joseph purchased the house vacated by Cobb (No.2, West Street) and enlarged it into a roomy, comfortable dwelling with 'a well-thought out system of central heating'.

Throughout the 1830's profits were high and Joseph bought many properties in Banbury and Brailes. In the 'Hungry Forties' he established a bank at Woodstock and built more cottages at Neithrop and Adderbury as well as a plush factory in Sheep Street and the bank in Cornhill, London. The analyses of the banking accounts, especially of the number of customers and amounts invested, demonstrate the relative smallness of farming profits compared with those from trade, transport and manufacturing during the 1820's whereas by the 1840's the farmers were fairly prosperous (due partly to high prices of wheat) and all types of trade, particularly textiles, were depressed generally. Gillett and Lees either lost on or made only small profits from plush making and in 1848 Joseph Gillett finally left the plush business.

Miss Taylor describes in considerable detail the Banbury plush industry from 1838 to 1851. This excellent account should be read in conjunction with R. P. Beckinsale's article in Oxoniensia, XXVIII, 1963, pp.53-67 which was delayed two whole years in the press at a time when otherwise

DATE	NAME	ADDRESS
25 th July	D ^r Mrs Axel Munthe	del Esand, Sweden
Sept 15	Mrs & Mr Wiclaus S. Clark	Street Somerset?
Sept 6 - 20. 1915.	Ruth Kennedy	Gerardo Cross. Bucks. -
Sept. 21 - 24.	Hilda Clark	Maternité départementale. Châlons & Marne
June 28 th see	Peter & Grama Munthe	
Sept-25 th	M ^{rs} L. J. Annett	95 Richmond Park Rd Highgate - n. - Hamps
Sept. 6 - 26	M ^{rs} J. Gillett.	102 Banbury Rd. Oxford.
Sept. 24 th - 27 th	C. Chamberlain	Bank, Lyndhurst, Hants
Sept 6 - Oct 5	U. C. Gillett. with son, Tony	102 Banbury Rd Oxford.
"	* Nicholas.	* Hereford
"	Bertha Ward	
Sept 20 - Oct 5	Alice Wood	

The plate opposite shows Cornhill, Banbury, in 1857, with the new Gilletts Bank next to the Plough Inn and the Corn Exchange.



it would have been readily available for reference. This article gives the national setting and shows *inter alia* that the prices quoted by Miss Taylor for plush (pp. 78-80) were in fact the cost of embossing the plush by Bessemer's machine.

Although Gillett's manufacturing of plush ceased they continued to manufacture agricultural machinery at Brailes, and the great economic depression of 1847-8, when wheat and bread prices soared, did not seriously disturb them. In these years they rebuilt their bank at Banbury. By 1877 they had replaced a market-day agency at Witney by a bank-partnership and had bought the former Shakespeare Hotel in Cornmarket as the site for their Oxford bank. In the latter borough, their business expanded with the growth of the city, which depended, as Miss Taylor competently describes, largely on the Clarendon Press, the railway, brewing, clothing and the University which now admitted women and Nonconformists.

The volume ends with an account of working conditions and customs in a typical country bank about 1900. Just as the bank began with the great skill of Joseph Ashby Gillett so in the twentieth century it ended its private existence under the inspiration of Arthur Bevington Gillett. Arthur opened in 1900 a branch office at Cowley Road, East Oxford which was expanding rapidly as a residential area. Among its first customers was William R. Morris who had a small cycle shop in Longwall. According to Arthur Gillett, in 1912 William Morris went to the Bank and explained to him his idea of assembling small cars from components. Gillett willingly offered to loan Morris £4,000 to go with the same sum already promised by another backer. Until April 1919 when Gilletts disposed of their Bank at very favourable terms to Barclays, they remained the bankers for Morris Motors.

This Arthur Bevington Gillett (1875-1954) was also a close friend of Field Marshall Smuts, E.M. Forster and many other scholars and, like his forbears, was a philanthropist and lover of the countryside. Miss Taylor's book will kill one legend long current about him in the north Cotswolds. There it is said that when staying at Willersey Hill Farm, then a favourite warm-season haunt of Oxford notables, he agreed to loan Morris the money when they were walking together down the lovely hillside to Broadway. The attached page of the Visitors' Book, here reproduced for the first time, is a striking reminder of the Gilletts and their dog Fera. Was it mere chance that they coincided with his wife's family, the Clarks, of Street, Somerset ?

This sidelight is not intended to distract from the high quality and great interest of Miss Taylor's humane and fascinating volume. Irrespective of its wider significance, Gilletts. Bankers at Banbury and Oxford is without any doubt a MUST for all Oxonians who like local history and country affairs.

Robert & Monica Beckinsale

The Plush Industry of Oxfordshire
by R. P. Beckinsale in Oxoniensia, Vol. XXVIII, 1963. Oxford Architectural
& Historical Society. 1964.

The plush industry is part of the accepted wisdom of north Oxfordshire local history. The name "Shutford" is linked with it, just as "Banbury" in the popular imagination is linked with "Cross" and "Cakes". Yet our knowledge until recently has been dangerously imprecise. When and why did the industry grow up ? How did it operate ? Why and when did it decline ? Until such problems as these have been solved, all other speculation about the trade is vain. Fortunately the publication of Miss Taylor's Gilletts and Dr. Beckinsale's study of the industry in the most recent Oxoniensia enable precise answers to be given to these questions.

Dr. Beckinsale shows how the cloth weaving industry of north Oxfordshire was slow to develop, but that it was sustained in the 16th and 17th centuries by the flourishing sheep farms of the area and the weekly wool market granted to Banbury in 1608. Early in the 18th century weaving was often combined with farming, and weavers frequently changed from one type of cloth to another. The making of shag (otherwise known as Utrecht velvet and later called plush) spread through the district after 1750. It needed neither scouring nor fulling, so that its production was not hampered by the low rainfall of north Oxfordshire, and relatively efficient communications aided the collection of the various raw materials and the distribution of the finished product.

One of the most useful features of Dr. Beckinsale's article is his lucid exposition of technical terms. He explains that plush was a long napped shaggy cloth, with a velvet nap on one side, composed of a weft of a single thread and a double warp of two threads twisted. Weft and warp might be composed of the same fibre, or there might be a worsted warp with a weft of silk or hair.

Dr. Beckinsale includes a long letter of 1787 from Joseph Clark, a weaving master in Banbury, who complained of the degree of control exercised over the industry by the workmen. Presumably he is referring here to the trade club mentioned in the Commissioner's report of 1838. The cloth trade was evidently flourishing greatly in 1787.

The basis of most people's knowledge of the plush industry has hitherto been the incomplete summary of The Report of the Assistant Commissioner on Hand Loom Weavers of 1838 in Beesley's History of Banbury. Dr. Beckinsale quotes extensively from the portions of the report relating to plush which Beesley excludes, and from his knowledge of the trade in other parts of the country he is able to show the relevance of the various comments made. He suggests that the trade club's prohibition of female labour may explain why the Gilletts employed twenty girls at Brailes on the less skilled processes of manufacture. The validity of George Herbert's account of the weaving trade in Shoemaker's Window is endorsed. It is good to see critical use made of this valuable but dangerously misleading source.

The full details of the sale to Gillett, Lees and Company of Henry Bessemer's embossing machine are recorded, and it is suggested that the arrival of this machine may explain why a reduced plush industry survived in Oxfordshire into the twentieth century.

Comparison and critical analysis of the census returns of 1841 and 1851 reveals the decline of the plush trade in north Oxfordshire. Dr. Beckinsale shows that the most likely cause was the application of the power loom to plush weaving in Coventry, combined with a general falling off of demand. It would seem that local manufacturers failed to gain a mass market for their plush as covering for railway seats.

Dr. Beckinsale goes on to record the further decline of the trade and the failure of various attempts to introduce new fabrics into the Banbury area. He also shows why the plush industry survived at Shutford until 1947, and why it then had to close down, in spite of a sufficiency of orders.

Shutford and Adderbury were the two Oxfordshire villages where plush weaving was most strongly established in the early 19th century; they were also the only north Oxfordshire villages which had organised bodies of Chartists. There were close contacts between Wiltshire and Oxfordshire Chartists, just as there were between the weaving industries of the two counties. There was considerable mobility of weaving labour between Banbury and Coventry in the mid 19th century; there were also close links between Primitive Methodism in the two towns in the 1840's. In 1852 when the weaving masters tried to impose a cut in wages, the weavers formed the Banbury Plush Weaver's Co-operative Society.

These points illustrate some of the questions which remain to be answered about plush weaving in north Oxfordshire. There seems little doubt that the plush weavers formed a distinct social group in the early 19th century. Did they feel themselves part of a labour aristocracy? How was their morale affected by the slump of the 1840's? Did they attend particular churches? To what extent were they connected with radical politics?

Dr. Beckinsale's article does not attempt to answer this sort of question, but by his careful explanation of plush weaving technology, by placing the Oxfordshire trade in its national setting, and above all by his survey of the chronology of the fortunes of the trade, he has provided a reliable foundation for further investigation.

B. S. T.

Oxoniensia XXVIII. 1963. Oxford Architectural & Historical Society. 1964.

In addition to Dr. Beckinsale's article reviewed above, the latest Oxoniensia contains several items of particular interest to readers in the Banbury area. These include a short study by Maurice Byrne of the late 18th century church band at Swalcliffe, the usual full range of notices of recent archaeological excavations, and a number of reviews of Banbury Historical Society publications. Oxoniensia is available from the Hon. Treasurer of the O. A. H. S., Ashmolean Museum, Oxford.

History of Banbury Methodism, with Special Reference to the Centenary of
Marlborough Road Church, 1865-1965.

by B.S. Trinder. Banbury Advertiser Press in conjunction with Banbury
Historical Society. 1965. 2s.6d.

The editor of Cake and Cockhorse is well qualified to write the history of Banbury Methodism, for he is both a professional historian and a Banbury Methodist. The combination is important; too often local Methodist histories have been written by loyal Methodists lacking knowledge of the development of the community in which the church is set. It is the strongest feature of Mr. Trinder's booklet that it maintains an admirable balance between the internal development of local Methodism, and its external relationship to the wider life of Banbury. Here is a fascinating account of the changing fortunes of Banbury Methodism in the context of the developing town. It is a model of its kind, and deserves to be widely imitated.

Mr. Trinder has written this fine piece of local history in a very short time. Originally, the Marlborough Road trustees asked me to write this booklet, but eventually I had to decline because of the amount of time needed to assemble the data. Mr. Trinder had less than two months notice to produce the history, and he could devote only a fortnight to the actual work. In this remarkably short span of time, he has written this detailed and very accurate account. This unavoidable haste has occasioned one or two minor errors or blemishes. Wesley was 81, not 84, when he visited Banbury in 1784. (page 7). It is doubtful if positive evidence exists for a Methodist New Connexion split in Banbury in 1797. (pages 7 and 10). The reference to Banbury in J. Blackwell's Life of Alexander Kilham (1838), mentioned on page 10, cannot be traced, and there are no Banbury references in the index of the Methodist New Connexion Magazine from 1797 to 1800. But it is certainly curious that Brackley replaced Banbury as the Circuit chapel from 1797 to 1803, and we must regard the case as 'not proven'. It is a pity that there is such a brief account of the most recent period.

Methodism came late to Banbury and developed slowly. A certain docility of character can be discerned in the comparative weakness of the various secession movements from Wesleyan Methodism, the absence of controversial comment in official Wesleyan documents, and the not very marked sense of evangelistic enterprise. They were also Conservative in their political outlook or were quite unconcerned with politics in the pre-1865 period. They contrast strongly in all this with the Banbury Baptists and Independents, of whom Mr. Trinder has already written (Cake and Cockhorse, Jan. 1965, pages 179-190); they were robust in their controversies, uninhibited in their comments, and often unashamed political radicals. Perhaps the constant struggle of the Wesleyans against debt weakened their vitality. The arrival of the Primitive Methodists in 1839 remedied this to some extent.

The picture changes quite suddenly with the building of Marlborough Road in 1865, and the arrival of the wealthy William Mewburn upon the Banbury scene. Mr. Trinder well calls the 1865-1914 period 'Affluence and Influence', when the Wesleyans had the most opulent and modern chapel in the town. Congregations and membership were growing, influence and activities were increasing. Work amongst the poor in the Calthorpe Street Mission Hall began. Following the example of Mewburn, Wesleyan politics became Liberal. By contrast, the Primitive Methodists went through a more difficult time. All this Mr. Trinder lucidly describes.

It is tempting to think that the post-1865 period was nobler than the pre-1865 one. Mr. Trinder leaves us in no doubt that this is not so. As Methodism prospered, pride of possession and arrogance increased, just as Wesley had prophesied. Wesleyans were people who 'got on': the process is neatly symbolised by the career of Samuel Eglington, who was successively a bricklayer, a mason, a builder, and a gentleman. (page 12). The original Wesleyans in Banbury had been working men; (page 10) but by the 1870's, a Banbury Town Mission symbolised the failure of all the churches to attract the poor, and this culminated in the building of the Calthorpe Street Mission Hall less than 100 yards from Marlborough Road. 'It was felt necessary because the inhabitants of Calthorpe Street "would not go" to Marlborough Road.' (page 25. Apartheid is sometimes justified on similar grounds). Even the Sunday School was segregated

from the others in the great Sunday School demonstration of 1880. (page 24). With all this went the political and personal ascendancy of Mewburn. 'If we do not vote for Mr. Mewburn, what will become of us in a future state?', asked an old lady. (page 23). He controlled the appointment of ministers to the Banbury Circuit, (page 21), while building large houses requiring an army of servants for them. (page 24). In chapel, he sat in one of the best pews downstairs, while his servants went into the gallery.

In all this, Marlborough Road was only too typical of Wesleyan attitudes in certain large town churches. Their pew rents and respect of persons contrast with Wesley's 'We have no 5/- and 2/6 seats at the Foundery, nor ever had, nor ever shall the poorest have frequently the best places because they come first'. He once reminded the Earl of Dartmouth, 'Have you a person in all England who speaks to your Lordship so plain and downright as I do ? Who remembers not the peer but the man, not the earl but the immortal spirit ?' No Wesleyan minister would have dared to address William Mewburn in that fashion.

It is a relief to turn from this oppressive gentility to the more proletarian Primitive Methodists. They were active in 1852 in the Banbury Plush Weavers' Co-operative Society; they remained working class in composition and outlook. They were certainly more evangelistic than the Wesleyans, and more concerned with total abstinence; as a Church they were much poorer in money and fewer in numbers after 1865. It is unfortunate that they left fewer records than the Wesleyans, as we should like to know more about them, but what is known Mr. Trinder gives us.

This is a very good Methodist history. It is a very good local history. On both grounds, it deserves to be widely read.

Rev. M.S. Edwards

Note: Copies of this booklet are available from the Hon. Secretary, Banbury Historical Society, Humber House, Bloxham, Banbury, at 3/- post free.

A Memorial of Richard Edmunds of Banbury

Ed. Thomas Champness.

London & Rochdale, 1895.

The existence of a biography of Richard Edmunds was first brought to the Society's notice by Mr. John Langley, who remembers seeing a copy on his father's bookshelf when he was a boy. The book seemed likely to be of some considerable historical importance, for there exist several good memoirs of 19th century Banbury, including those of George Herbert, Sarah Beesley and Thomas Ward Boss, but none of them describes the activities with which Edmunds was most concerned, market trading, iron founding, Methodism and local government in the latter half of the century. It seems that no copy of the book is in the Bodleian Library. Banbury Public Library tried to obtain it through the regional library loan system. This attempt was unsuccessful, but the Banbury bookseller, Harold South, obtained a copy in a remarkably short time. The edition of the book was obviously a very small one, and it may be useful to review here its historical value.

One's first impression is one of disappointment. It is a work of hagiography rather than biography, consisting of short memoirs of Richard Edmunds by his famous Evangelical son-in-law, Thomas Champness, and his brother the Rev. F.F. Edmunds, a selection of his own sermons and the memorial sermon preached by the Rev. F. Stanley Shelton. There is no mention of politics, only a few references to the family business and even the descriptions of church life are rather sparse in detail. Nevertheless such information as there is exists nowhere else, and does enable a sketch of Richard Edmunds's life to be drawn and some analysis of his ideas to be made.

The subject of the biography was the son of Richard Edmunds I, a Banbury ironmonger and seedsman, was born in the town on July 13th 1822, and died there in January 1895. His father was an Anglican at the time of his birth, though for many years he "knew nothing about the grace which sure salvation brings". One day he was awakened to a sense of guilt when reading the Bible at home and was helped to conversion by the Rev. J. Jennings, a Wesleyan minister resident in Banbury from 1826 to 1827. So profound was his religious experience that

he would interrupt the collects in St. Mary's with sonorous "Amens" and interject the Te Deum with cheers. So shocked were the churchmen that the vicar suggested that he would be happier among the Methodists. He became a Wesleyan local preacher, and he was the "burgess and Methodist preacher" who seconded the Reform candidate at the tumultuous election of 1831. He was "an earnest, godly man, exemplary in the discipline of his family and the observation of the Sabbath". His wife seems to have been an extremely religious woman whose views deeply affected her sons.

Richard Edmunds II was educated for a time at home with a lady teacher, but later attended a boarding school in Warwickshire run by a Mr. R.T. Heel, probably the same R. T. Heel, the music tutor, who lived at 82 High Street from about 1859. At the age of 14 Richard Edmunds entered the family business and travelled to markets as far away as Warwick in order to buy com. His cheerful disposition brought immediate success, and the bankers in the town offered to open an account with him years before he attained his majority.

As might be expected in a publication with which the celebrated Evangelical preacher Thomas Champness was concerned there is much about the conversion of Richard Edmunds II. There are in fact two accounts, one in the memoir by Champness and one in that by his brother, and they differ considerably in detail. His brother quotes extensively from a journal which Richard Edmunds kept at the time. In 1837 he had a long conversation on death and judgement with his father when walking home from a service at Bloxham, and shortly afterwards he was received into membership of Mr. Garrett's class at the Wesleyan chapel, which met at the home of Betty Dawson. Still he failed to find the experience he was seeking, and was no nearer to it after crying out aloud for mercy during a service in London in February 1838. According to his brother he finally found the satisfaction he was searching for during a sermon in the Church Lane Chapel on June 23rd 1838 when the Rev. Joseph Hollis was preaching about Miss Caroline Lewis, a devoted young woman who was thrown from her carriage when returning from a service in the country. The church was crowded and Richard Edmunds was sitting on the pulpit steps with his friend John Kilby, the Banbury solicitor. Champness says that conversion finally came in a cottage service at Grimsbury on May 19th 1839 following a talk with his father the previous evening, and sermons by a Mr. Illingworth of London in Banbury during April of that year.

Soon afterwards he began to take an active part in preaching. His first cottage service, in which he performed as one of a team, was at Grimsbury or Nethercote in the summer of 1839. His brother quotes from his journal: "Went to Nethercote in the evening with W. Baker, T. Lewis and J. Durran, and with fear and trembling spoke from 'Him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out'. The Lord was pleased to manifest His presence. I had considerable liberty and was encouraged." In 1840 he began to take services on his own, the first of them at Shutford, where Job Taylor, a village carrier remarked in Oxfordshire dialect that "He flogged Dolly". He continued preaching until August 1892. He held most of the local offices open to laymen in the Wesleyan church, including those of class leader (1847), circuit steward (1846) and district treasurer of the Missionary Society.

Richard Edmunds married twice. His first wife was Elizabeth Walton whom he married in 1848 and who died in 1875. They had five sons and three daughters. In 1878 he married a widow, Mrs. Barnes.

He was a member of the Town Council from 1857, a magistrate from 1865, a member of the Board of Health, a Poor Law Guardian, chairman of the local Building Society, a member of the management committee of the Savings Bank, a director of the gas and water undertakings, and Mayor of the Borough on three occasions. Richard Edmunds II, like his father, was a conservative in local politics, but seems never to have been an active party man in general elections. Unfortunately the biography says very little about any of these activities.

The theology of his sermons is unremarkable, but the social attitudes they reveal are of some interest. When talking of the role of the state, he said with almost naive directness that "the aim of good government should be the greatest happiness of the greatest number". No source was acknowledged for this statement. He believed that Church and State should be separate because "whenever kingcraft or statecraft have interfered with spiritual Church matters,

something has always gone wrong". He was a firm believer in the reformation of manners "everything should be done to uphold the sacredness of the Sabbath, to remove temptations to drunkenness, and encourage sobriety, thrift, healthy recreation, a study of nature, and all that is useful in science and pleasurable in art". The duty of government was not to raise the greatest amount of taxation from the people, but "to raise the people to the highest point of purity and happiness". He saw the religious element in Society as the nation's real safeguard, acting like lightening conductors in turning aside the wrath of Heaven. He was a firm believer in Education, in church schools, and in the restriction of child labour. He saw "our neglected sons, drunkards and criminal classes" as the result of the lack of education, and put forward the view shared by many Nonconformist proponents of Education in the mid-19th century that it was far less costly to maintain schools than prisons.

It is unfortunate that a copy of this book was not available when the recent History of Banbury Methodism was being written, for it does give some understanding of what actually happened and what was actually said in Wesleyan services in the mid-19th century.

B. S. T.

Thirteen Rivers to the Thames by Brian Waters. Dent. 1964. 25s.

Mr. Waters has a novel approach to writing about the countryside. He has explored on foot and in the coracle in which he is pictured on the dust jacket the thirteen major tributaries of the River Thames. He describes countryside which is generally little known or appreciated, and this is, in itself, a welcome break from the ill-informed ravings about dreaming spires and swans of Avon which make up so many travel books.

Mr. Waters has some highly entertaining stories about north Oxfordshire and the Cherwell. He relates how the source spring of the Cherwell at Charwelton was blocked and diverted into a horsepond because the farmer who owned the cellar in which it was situated grew tired of having his Sabbath rest disturbed by Oxford undergraduates demanding to see it. Mr. Waters tells of "Sooty", a chimney sweep, poacher and squatting smallholder, who encroached on a patch of river side meadow near to Banbury. He explains that many Oxfordshire mills went out of production during the General Strike, because until then foreign grain came by rail from Avonmouth to the mills, but during the strike the Avonmouth millers began to mill it and despatch it direct to farmers by lorry. He conveys a lively impression of an otter hunt near Edgecote, and draws attention to a tombstone at Rousham commemorating an otter hound, killed by the "Tyrant of Cherwell's Flood".

The book is not without its inaccuracies. If the author had travelled the whole length of the Cherwell in his coracle he would have discovered that the river flows in the same bed as the Oxford Canal for some miles near Bletchington. The present Edgcote House was not standing in 1642. Oxford undergraduates still punt to Islip.

At times Mr. Waters commits worse sins than inaccuracy. His account of Banbury, with its garbled statements about Puritanism, might have come from any hack guide-book. His authentic sounding statement that the Great Civil War was "the greatest domestic disgrace in the history of the most united nation of the world" is no more than an opinion. His remarks about the unloveliness of Northamptonshire grow tedious.

Yet this is altogether a most interesting book exploring areas which no previous traveller has described. The countryside seen from river banks looks very different and seems much more alive than when viewed from a stately home, a parish church or a poet's birthplace. Readers in Oxfordshire will find much to enthrall them - and not only in the chapters on the rivers within the county.

B. S. T.

Oxfordshire Roundabout

Vol. 1. No.1. June 1965. Donald Parsons & Co.Ltd. 2s.

During the past decade the glossy society magazine has become one of the essential features of the more affluent parts of England, and the appearance of Oxfordshire Roundabout occasions no surprise.

For the local historian the attraction of this type of publication is that it enables articles in a popular style on historical topics to reach a much greater audience than is possible with the publications of local learned societies, and to be published at greater length and with far better illustrations than is possible in a newspaper. Provided that standards of accuracy and perspective are maintained this is altogether a welcome opportunity.

The first issue of Oxfordshire Roundabout has only two historical articles, both with a scientific bias, but the magazine obviously needs time to establish itself before it can equal the achievements of, for example, the Shropshire Magazine which has recently published a study of timber framed buildings by the editor of the Shropshire Victoria County History and a superbly illustrated feature on deserted villages by a D.Phil. scholar. What needs to be avoided is the "scissors and paste" article, written in language as distorted as the colours on a cheap picture postcard, drawing entirely on inaccurate secondary sources, and displaying utter ignorance of local topography. The paragraph on Banbury in the leading article of Oxfordshire Roundabout is an awful warning of the dangers of this approach.

Glossy magazines do not exist just for local historians. They should, and do, try to reflect the everyday life of the areas they serve. All too often this becomes the everyday life of a very restricted section of society. Page after page of many magazines shows scenes of inactivity at hunt balls, fashionable charity functions, top-hatted weddings and the social gatherings of one of the two major political parties.

The most pleasing feature of the first issue of Oxfordshire Roundabout is that it does not attempt this type of coverage. The only feature which is devoted to current events in the county is a double-page spread on the Oxfordshire Show. This is a thoroughly worthwhile subject, and it is commendable that the text describes prize cattle rather than prize people, though the photographs are rather unimaginative.

Advertising obviously takes up a large part of such an expensively produced magazine. It is unfortunate that Oxfordshire Roundabout reflects some of the worst tendencies in current journalistic and advertising practice. At many points it is difficult to distinguish between what is advertising and what is editorial comment. An article on artificial fibres reads just like a manufacturer's hand-out. A romantically written feature on the Turf Tavern conveniently coddles an advertisement for that same hostelry. There is no obvious difference between an advertisement for shoes which "show the kind of man you are" on page 8, and photographs of the same brand of shoes, which may or may not be an advertisement, on page 42. Critical assessments of motor cars are always interesting, but there is nothing in the photographs and description of the Vauxhall Viva on pages 42-44 which could not be found in the maker's publicity. There is a whole-page advertisement featuring the same model on page 61. Advertising has its place and its uses. It should not be confused with editorial matter. Just how it can distort standards of taste and judgement is shown by an (apparently) editorial comment on the "charming exterior appearance" of a roadhouse. Most people with feeling for architecture would hasten to voice dissent.

Oxfordshire Roundabout must be warmly welcomed for the opportunities it offers of spreading interest in local history still more widely in an area where interest is already strong. It is to be hoped that the new magazine will avoid the unapologetic snobbery of its counterparts in other parts of the country, and the excessive deference to advertisers which is so apparent in the first issue.

B. S. T.

Ed. Note: Oxfordshire Roundabout is published monthly. Unfortunately as we have not received any but the first we have been unable to appraise subsequent issues.

EXCAVATIONS AT RAINSBOROUGH, 1961-1965

The Oxford University Archaeological Society dug for the fifth year at Rainsborough Iron Age fort, near Charlton, Northants (OS map ref. : Banbury Sheet [SP(42)] 526348) thanks to the generous permission of Mr. Bull, the owner.

Recent work forces complete reappraisal of earlier views (see, e.g. C&CH 1.11 (Jan.1962) p.153; and 2.7 (Jan.1964) p.115). There are five phases : (1) defences with two concentric lines of ditch and stone-faced wall, and guardroomed entrance, set up on an unoccupied site about 425-325 BC, and deliberately burnt about 400-325 BC; (2) the inner bank rebuilt as a dump bank probably 150-100 BC, with a simple entrance also burnt; (3) occupation outside the outer bank in the mid-to-late 1st century AD; (4) occupation in this area and at the Western inner entrance, in the 4th century AD; (5) the inner bank heightened and the recently felled beeches planted about 1770.

The phase 1 structures are outstanding. The inner bank was really three low walls, each consisting of a core of limestone rubble faced front and back with dry stone walling, built one upon another and sandwiching layers of turf between them, thus forming a high stone-faced rampart. On top was a low free-standing parapet wall at the rear, and probably a wood palisade at the front. The rampart had been burnt. The ploughed down outer bank was also of rubble and turf layers, with perhaps an outer face of dry stone walling.

The outer stone facing of the bank extended right to the passageway of the entrance. This passage (16' wide, 40' long), paved with a thick stone road, was faced along each side with timber walling. Halfway along the passage were a bridge and probably also double gates on hinges. Behind this bridge, recesses in the passage sides, one on each side, had been sentryboxes. Behind these were the most unusual features of the entrance: two C-shaped guardrooms, entrances facing one another across the passage. These rooms were faced inside and out with dry stone walls, with a core of limestone rubble, and are most exceptional in this area. Sherds of about 20 pots were found on the guardroom floors, providing good dating evidence.

Phase 2 of the inner bank was a dump of burnt debris from the inner ditch : it had no wall, was presumably turf covered, with perhaps a palisade along the crest. The entrance was simple but massive, with double gates (and central posthole) across the site of the phase 1 gate, and an archway 30' behind these. But the guardrooms were left filled with rubbish, and no new road was laid. Phase 2 may have been a rushed rebuilding : it too was burnt. It may perhaps be dated by pottery of 150-100 BC from interior occupation.

In period 4, a small square stone building was placed on the fill of the inner ditch near the entrance, a heavy layer of stone laid through the entrance, and the ditch ends filled up to widen the entrance causeway. This suggests some Roman structure inside the camp, and though no trace was found, this might even be as notable as a temple.

Michael Avery.

THE ROMAN VILLA AT WIGGINTON

As a result of representations by members of the Society and Professor Sir Ian Richmond, the Ministry of Public Buildings and Works sponsored an excavation in August and September of the Roman Villa site at Wigginton which was being damaged by ploughing. The six week session under the direction of Mr. E. Greenfield was hampered by bad weather and illness but produced results beyond anything expected. The site is far larger than was supposed and includes more than one phase of occupation. Its full extent has not yet been determined but already six mosaic pavements and several hypocaust systems of the final occupation have been uncovered. The "chamber of semi-octagonal form" (Beesley, History of Banbury, p.41) was rediscovered and the mosaics checked against Beesley's drawings.

Large quantities of painted wall plaster were found and some of the pieces were large enough to show a design of winged cherubs.

The excavation was made possible through the kindness of Mr. G.R.W. Cobb, the owner, and Mr. H.G. Frogley, the tenant farmer. It is hoped that arrangements can be made for work to be continued in future years, as the complete excavation of the site will be a major undertaking lasting several seasons.

J.H.F.

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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