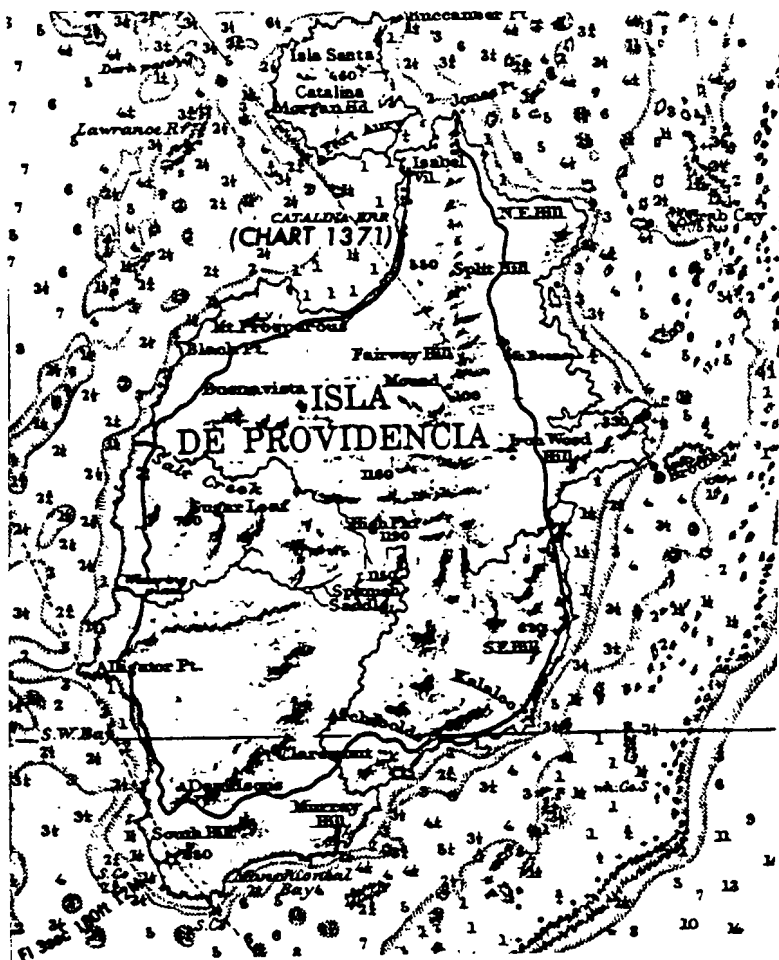


CAKE & COCKHORSE



BANBURY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

AUTUMN 1978. PRICE 50p.

ISSN 0522-0823

BANBURY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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Details about the Society's activities and
publications can be found on the inside back cover

Our cover illustration is taken from the present-day chart of Isla de Providencia. Little has changed since its 17th century occupation by the English Providence Island Company, except that the islet to the north-west was then joined to the main island by an isthmus.

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The Magazine of the Banbury Historical Society. Issued three times a year.

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Members of historical societies are congenitally diffident. Let us not speculate on the reason. They need not be; it is very pleasing that members of our Society are losing their shyness. Recently several members have sent us contributions, covered by letters blushing with diffidence, which we have been, are and will continue to be glad to put to print.

There is room in Cake and Cockhorse for Cleopatra variety. Major articles should be carefully researched and fully referenced; future generations will depend on them for fact, not fiction. They should also be readable and of interest to the generality of members. But there is room too for fiction, or rather myth, and its exposure, as shown by the article in this issue on the prize-fight at Shenington which wasn't. Myths, who invented them and why, are true history. The next issue will return to Shenington with true light on an 18th century farmer as shed by his account book.

A third and important function is to record recent history where it would otherwise be forgotten. Old men's memories may not always be accurate - memory is rosily selective, but they can be the spice of history and delightful to read. The memories of Bloxham mummers in this issue will we hope amuse many while recording minutiae of a past way of life which would otherwise soon be forgotten. There must be much else to record of the recent past of Banburyshire, to be winkled out of aging memories and cross-checked with any valuable newspaper or other contemporary records.

Fourthly, we have a duty to make available to researchers

contemporary records from the past. Uniquely for a small society we publish scholarly records volumes. Shorter material can occasionally find a place in the magazine. The Banbury parish ratebook for 1782 will not be bedside reading for many members; but its three pages, with added research into later years, could one day blossom into a fascinating social and economic analysis of the rise and fall of Banbury families, or at least provide a Banbury sixth-former with bonus marks for an essay.

Professional or amateur, blush not to put pen to paper. The only criteria are accuracy and identification of sources.

Who for the past three centuries has heard of Henry Halhed? One of a well-known 17th century family of Banbury Woollen-drapers, he has been dug out of history by Jeremy Gibson as a by-product of his work on the Corporation records. (See Records Volume 15, 1977).

The importance of Banbury's mayors is not to be underestimated. But as worthy and worshipful middle-Englanders, presiding for a year over a town as far from the heady smell of tar and the salt sea's tang as is possible in England, they have stuck to their lasts. Their response to the cry "Westward look the land is bright" has been another pint in the Unicorn. Not so Henry Halhed.

He at first seemed remarkable only for his disappearance from the records after his year as mayor in 1630/31. To an historical sleuth there is nothing like a good disappearance to bring out the Poirot in him. The fascinating outcome, taking the Poirots in the case to dusty records in London and Oxford, and to the West Indies, would have delighted Daniel Defoe if only he had heard of Henry Halhed. Read on.

D. E. M. F.

PROVIDENCE AND HENRY HALHED - MAYOR OF BANBURY 1630/31

Henry Halhed (born 1577) was a prominent member of a prominent Banbury family of woollen drapers. Most of his life was as respectable, predictable, and uneventful as that of any of the puritan hierarchy of tradesmen who ruled Banbury under the early Stuarts. But when he was aged over 50 he uprooted in a spectacular way, and his subsequent career is a salutary reminder of the initiative, versatility, and courage of our seventeenth century forebears.

Halhed's grandfather, after whom he was named, was one of the original Freemen of the Borough when this was incorporated in 1554. Soon he was on the Corporation, and, in 1565, Bailiff (Banbury was not granted Mayoral status until 1608). In 1580 only John Knight, owner of the Reindeer Inn, was taxed higher than this Henry, who at his death in the year of the Armada left extensive Banbury property to his three sons. The eldest, William, was the only one with a family, and young Henry and his elder brother Thomas were each left £10 - a substantial sum for a lad of 11 to look forward to on his majority.

In September 1600 he married the very young Elizabeth Yewicke - she was only 17; but then her father Robert, a Neithrop yeoman, had died eight years earlier leaving his widow with four young daughters. Margaret Yewicke must have been anxious to settle them; two of the elder sisters were already married before Elizabeth, the youngest. She cannot have had much dower, but perhaps the 23-year-old Henry was able to marry for love. His father William's will, made a few months earlier, implies that he was already living in the "house in Villettes Lane with the stall thereof" which he bequeathed his son, together with agricultural land. William Halhed was by this time blind, and within two years Henry came into his inheritance. By 1606 he was a free tenant of property yielding 2s. 6d. annual revenue to the Crown - a larger sum than most Crown tenants were paying.

Brother Thomas of course inherited the bulk of the property from their father. Within a few years, like his father, uncle Thomas and grandfather, this Thomas was a member of the Corporation. Under the 1608 Charter he was named one of the new class of Assistants; by 1613 elected a Chief Burgess, and in 1618 an Alderman and Mayor. The younger Henry seemed bound the same way: in 1609-10 one of the Constables (a responsible Corporation official); Churchwarden in 1616; and on the Corporation in 1618.

Meanwhile, in 1617, Henry Halhed, his brother Thomas and several others, including William, Lord Saye and Sele, were involved in a legal dispute with Sir Thomas Chamberlayne. The Halheds possessed land in the common fields of Calthorpe and Wickham which Chamberlayne and John Gill, another local gentleman, had recently enclosed. The rights of the Andrewes family were also affected and this brought Lord Saye into the

dispute, as he was an executor of Edward Andrewes, a former servant. At Lord Saye's behest, Raphe Carter, a fellow-executor, "sett on work Edward Thomson and Richard Hunnett two poor labouring men in quiet and peaceable manner . . . to cut up part of the hedges and lay down part of the banks to make way for sheep into the closes to use their common . . ." Henry Halhead "for himself says that he never did in any scornful or deriding manner use any contemptuous speeches either touching the late Lord Chancellor or Sir Thomas Chamberlayne . . ."

The outcome of the case is unknown, but it is significant on two counts. It shows that the Halheds were in association with Lord Saye and Sele at an early date, and it may account for Henry's lifelong opposition to the practice of inclosure of common fields. The latter was to achieve expression many years later in a pamphlet entitled "Inclosure Thrown Open; or Depopulation Depopulated, not by Spades and Mattocks, but by the Word of God . . ." which was published in London in 1650. He enumerates eight arguments or ways used by enclosers to gain their ends, which he proceeds to demolish - all bear the stamp of personal experience and doubtless were bitter memories harboured from the quarrel with Chamberlayne.

One of the families that Thomas and Henry must have known well was the Showells. Henry Showell, a saddler, was a senior alderman who died in 1615. His sons, born late in life, and much younger than the Halheds, seem to have been of adventurous disposition - for in 1621, when their mother Mary made her will, both were out of the country - the 21-year-old Nathaniel, or Nethaniah, for whom she made the proviso that his legacy should only stand for seven years "if he shall not return into England . . . (unless he shall be stayed by imprisonment)"; whilst Isaiah, three years older, was "now in Virginia as I think" - moreover that was probably not his first trip, for his mother already owned a Virginian catskin. So when Isaiah returned a few months later, with a substantial stock of tobacco, and property in Virginia, the Halheds cannot but have heard at first hand if they had not before, of the New World whose colonisation was only just beginning to be successfully achieved. Maybe such tales planted a seed that was to grow and bear fruit ten years later.

Henry's own children were growing up - his eldest son William went up to Oxford in 1624, as did Thomas's son Nathaniel a few years later. These Banbury woollendrapers were well aware of the wider opportunities a university education could offer. Meanwhile Henry's career on the Corporation followed a predictable course - Bridgemaster (a charity trustee) from 1620 to 1625, by 1627 he was promoted Alderman.

Then on 2 March 1627/8 disaster struck - Banbury's Great Fire. And one of the chief sufferers was Henry Halhed. For not only did he, together with the rest of the Corporation, sign the printed appeal that was sent round soliciting charitable relief for the sufferers in the Fire - but also, unlike other Corporation members, his name appears as one of those

receiving such relief: one of the four granted £1, the highest amount, from money sent by the City of Coventry.

Recollection of that disaster can be seen in the anti-enclosure pamphlet, when Halhed writes ". . . as in a Publike Danger, (for example, if a Towne were on fire) no man will blame the poorest and meanest creature, that, spying the fire breake out, shall cry, Fire, Fire, because every man's interest is concerned in such a publike danger."

Another echo of these days is the pamphlet's reference to how "Free-Quarter of Souldiers is so exceeding burthensome". Only a few days after the fire the constable had been involved in an altercation with soldiers billeted in Banbury, and on 26th March Halhed made a deposition to the House of Lords "that hearing an Outcrye from the Constable Phillipps' Howse and fearing lease their would be murther [he] went to the Constables and saw Henry Reaynd strike the Constable with his sword drawne."

For the time being Henry seems to have recovered from the effect of the Fire, and on the first Monday in September 1630 he was called on to serve his term as Mayor - as Thomas had, for the second time, two years earlier. In May we get a glimpse of the puritanical zeal so typical of Banburians when, reporting to the Privy Council, he explains how the poor are relieved by monies gathered from "punishment of drunkards, tipsters and swearers . . . and as for rogues and vagabonds, we are little troubled with them, they like their entertainment so ill." On 30 December 1631 the accounts for his Mayoral year were presented and agreed by the auditors - and that is the last occasion Henry Halhed occurs in the Borough records. By June 1632, when the Corporation were inviting Lord Saye and Sele to become High Steward, his name has disappeared.

Joshua Sprigge, a Banburian who in his boyhood had known Henry Halhed, wrote of him in 1650 (in a Preface to the Inclosure pamphlet) that he had lived "the best of his time in a Burrough-town; where he was a Magistrate, and exercised his Calling in the house, as a Shop-keeper . . ." On the surface he appeared to be making a prosperous living, but this may not have really been the case. Unlike his brother Thomas, who was certainly wealthy, Henry never occurs amongst the Banbury tradesmen taxed for Subsidies; The Fire must have hit him hard. Remarks in the pamphlet suggest that Halhed's trade was suffering. The poor, turned out of their home villages by depopulation, are "constrained to flee into other Towns, to the great annoyance and charge of the places whither they are driven." . . . "every Town is mightily increased with poor people [who] press into such towns, and erect cottages . . ." "It [inclosure] is also the utter decay of trading: For the Yeoman and Husbandmen, they lack the Commodities the Tradesmen have to seel; Hats, Bands, Jurkins, Dublets, Points, Breeches, Stockings, Garters, Chooes, and all other necessaries . . . which things set men on work, and maintain Tradesmen . . . but the Depopulating-Incloser overthrows all at once . . ."; ". . . if the Clothier have not sale for his Cloth and be constrained to sell at lowe Rates, then

come they upon the Poor with Abatement, which utterly overthrows them ..."; "... Cities and Market-towns be brought to great ruine and decay ..."

Whilst trade was suffering, maybe Isaiah Showell's tales of wealth to be gained in the New World were still remembered - and so a suggestion from Lord Saye and Sele might find fertile ground.

In addition to his well-known national and parliamentary activities, Lord Saye was an active 'Adventurer' in colonising projects. One of these was entitled 'The Governor and Company of Adventurers of the City of Westminster for the Plantation of the Islands of Providence, Henrietta and the adjacent islands lying upon the coast of America', which was incorporated on 4 December 1630. Providence was a minute island off the Spanish Main (now part of the Republic of Colombia, and off the coast of Nicaragua).

The first colonists sailed in February 1630/1, in the 'Seaflower', and in the 'Little Hopewell' in July. But apparently there was trouble between passengers and crew. So for the next shipload it was wished to appoint a responsible individual as 'captain' of the colonists. It is known that the principals in these projects drew on their own tenants and neighbourhood for settlers - Robert Rich, Earl of Warwick, from East Anglia, Robert Greville, Lord Brooke, from around Warwick - and of course Lord Saye from Banburyshire. The Halheds were old business colleagues of Lord Saye's family (quite apart from the alliance during the inclosure dispute with Sir Robert Chamberlayne). What more natural than the suggestion that the impoverished ex-Mayor of Banbury take this responsible post, and at the same time recoup his fortunes?

And so it is that we find Henry and Elizabeth Halhed "selling-up" in March 1631/2 - three houses, two shops and a barn being converted into ready money - and, at the ages of 54 and 48, respectively, embarking on the greatest adventure of their lives. Accompanying them were their younger children, teenage daughters Patience and Grace (good puritan names) and 8-year-old Samuel. What a stir it must have caused in Banbury, what wistful envy amongst Patience and Grace's beaux, amongst Samuel's school-fellows - and what head-shakings amongst Henry and Elizabeth's contemporaries. But set off they did, travelling with the Warwickshire contingent to Plymouth, where the 200-ton 'Charity', already with the East Anglians on board from London, was to collect them - 150 passengers in all. The fare was £6 a head.

The journey, hazardous and uncomfortable at the best of times, was made far worse by the behaviour of the master, Thomas Punt. Despite the commission of the Company of Providence Island to Henry Halhed, assisted by Samuel Rishworth, for the government of the passengers (with power to punish all misbehaving themselves), they appear to have been misused just as much as on earlier voyages. At any rate, the following March the Court of the Company were examining the mariners of the 'Charity' upon divers complaints concerning the ill carriage of Mr Punt in

his late voyage: not providing for the comfort of passengers; abating a considerable portion of their allowance of bread and beer; and, worst of all, "uncivil usage of Mr Halhed, in command of the passengers". All must have been thankful to reach the island and disembark at their new home.

Halhed must have been expecting to be part of a devout, puritan settlement. In this he had the backing of the Company. An instruction to the Governor that he took with him would have reassured him - that it had been heard that some in the island had sent for cards, dice and tables. The Governor was told that if any arrived he was to have them burnt. The Company "mislike not lawful recreations such as chess, shooting, etc..." but that was as far as they would allow.

Further evidence of the devout intentions of the Company was the despatch of no less than three ministers for the little community - at one point in the 1630's this numbered about 500 in all, including thirty to forty women and a few children. These ministers, who may have accompanied Halhed and Rishworth, were a Mr Rous, lecturer; Hope Sherrard, minister of New Westminster; and a Mr Ditloff. The instructions to the Governor carried by Halhed appointed him, Rishworth and Edward Gates to the Council of the island, and requested that the three ministers be consulted on all matters of importance. An earlier settler, Mr Essex, had recently died, and Halhed and Rishworth were to be given use of the buildings on his land - eventually the Company settled the whole estate on Halhed.

In Hope Sherrard, Halhed evidently found a kindred spirit. Sherrard became the leader of the extreme puritans on the island, where he remained for eight years, with Halhed as his close supporter.

But Rous and Ditloff were not so congenial. It was not long before doctrinal differences caused Ditloff to suspend Halhed from the sacrament. Rous did not survive long in any case - he was dead by June 1634, by which time Ditloff was intending shortly "to go home into his country", having already returned to England and attended to take leave of the Company. He then told all he knew about a charge against Mr Rous, deceased, for inveigling Mr Halhed's servant. Ditloff understood that Rous was "insufficient", not able to pray "extemporary", and would, soldier-like, beat his men; that he wrote, if those things were true Mr Rous was fitter for a buff coat than a cassock; but afterwards found it otherwise". Mr Rous had taught him songs called catches, "the meaning of which was the motion of creatures as the nightingale and the like, and Messrs Rous and Sherland sang with him, but never on the Sabbath day."

Doubtless the religious atmosphere was more congenial to Halhed when Sherrard was left as the only minister of those three. There was trouble with other settlers too. Edward Gates blotted his copybook somehow, and was suspended from the Council. Halhed must have been glad when a Captain Rudyard petitioned for permission to sell his plantation,

for at the same time the Company found him "to blame for scandalizing Mr Halhead" (how we long to know the cause!).

These scraps of evidence of squabbles amongst the Councillors and the clergy on the island are just one side of the coin. Certainly there were men like Halhed who sought to sustain a puritan enclave in the heart of the Roman Catholic Spanish Main. But the island too was the rendezvous for turbulent irreligious buccaneers, for all who sailed just within the (English) law, and for those who recognised no law at all - and all alike with the aim of raiding the Spaniards. What a contrast! The former woollendrapery, used to the ordered and predictable life of a small market town, famous for its sober puritanity - and the wild, free-living, drunken and debauched, murderous villains that most of the buccaneers must have been. One must admire Henry Halhed for remaining, and not returning to England forthwith.

But stick it out he did. In February 1635/6 the Company recorded payments to him. Later that year came the first attempt by the Spaniards to over-run this troublesome colony, but the defences of the island were good. On 28 March 1638 the Company was writing to the Governor, heartily thankful that they were delivered from the attempt of the Spaniards to seize the island. . . Mr Rishworth was to be restored to his place on the Council . . . Mr Halhed was to be allowed a hundredweight of tobacco, as a mark of respect for his public employments.

So far the scanty evidence of life on the island has been culled from the State Papers Colonial, which include the official despatches to and from the Providence Island Company. However about 1637 a new Governor was appointed. This was Captain Nathaniel Butler, an interesting character who had been active in various roles in the Caribbean for many years. Whilst Butler was on the island he used his spare time to write a manual of seamanship, which was later published. The original manuscript has ended up in the British (Museum) Library. The back of this book had some unused pages, and these Butler utilised as a diary, which gives a fascinating personal and very human light on activities in the tiny colony.

The Company had evidently found difficulty in finding the right man for Governor - there were constant changes. Those who were sympathetic to the puritan settlers, and acceptable to them, were likely to be up-sides with the buccaneers, and vice versa. Butler's sympathies clearly lay with the latter - for a Caribbean rover this is not surprising. The diary commences on 10 February 1638/9 and Halhed is first mentioned on 10 April: "I went againe early this morneing to ye Carpenter att ye Baye to Vewe ye Carriages for our Guns: Mr Hallyheade dined with me: our Dutchmen' shallope went out a second time for ye Musquitoes [nearby islands] for more Turtle. In the eveninge I went againe to the Baye to see how the Smithe hadd fitted the yron Worcke for our New Carridges." His official duty to attend divine services was probably irksome: "Apr 14

[Easter Day] I was att church both morneinge and afternoone upon this Lorde's daye att Mr Sherrard's parish, who preached bothe times, but in the afternoone itt was rather a narration than a sermon."

Butler's real wish was to get back to sea and use any excuse for raids on the Spaniards. This he determined to do in May 1639 and informed the Councill of his intention: "the most by farr of the people seemed very well satisfied, only some of ye old Counsellors would needes be of another minde." This is the first open reference to the obvious differences of opinion between him and the "old Councillors", elsewhere referred to as "the Three Sherrardian counsellors" and named as Messrs. Lane, Hallyheade and Francis.

The raiding trip was reasonably successful, despite the disapproval of the "old Councillors". Butler later commented bitterly: "I never lived amongst men of more spleene nor of less witt to conceale itt. . . . When they hearde that wee hadd take ye Towne of Truxillo and found it emptie, some of them shewed as much Joye as they hadd bin Spaniards, because wee found it emptie. I have many times wondered what should make them soe splenative against myself, as I have ever found them . . . only I am not of their opinion in all thinges nor will be ledd wch. way they list Upon an implicit fayth: as my poor predecessor was".

Things did not improve after Butler's return in September 1639. "Jan 26 [1639/40] Upon this Lordes daye I was att church, both morneing and Eveninge, when Mr Sherrarde preached tollorably in the morninge and intollorably in ye afternoon." "Jan 27 . . . at diner time Old Halheade and Mr Frauncis came unto me, rather for Businesse than Love."

He noted more of his objections: "These men have their meetings twice a week, vz. Mr Sherrard, Mr Leverton (being ye two Ministers) La:, Holly: (and sometimes H. and Fr. with some other of their churche where (as they give out themselves) they consult of their affairs, with the effect . . . it is to plott dissention and troubles in ye Counsell and Islande, and it is certain that there is nothing among ye old counsellors more common than to make themselves parties and judges.

"The truth is that Mr Lane, Mr Hallyheade, Mr Frann., Counsellors here who should ione wth us in ye Execution of Justice prove the cheife Instruments of contentions and ye originall Causes of so many disorders, so that there be no hope of quiett wheresoever. They or such as They hold any places of Magistracye. There is not an Act yt hathe passed in yr Counsell of Warre since it was erected but one waye or other some or all of them have secretly attempted to bring it to contempt; so ill . . . they take it that you have left them out from being Counsellors of Warre".

In face of refusal to pay taxes towards the maintenance of the island's forts, "I have caused the sheriff to make distresses . . . But this hath hitherto been done upon Smyth, ye sonne in Law to Hallheade; one of Mr Sherrard's F." - so Patience or Grace had found a husband on the island - with ten times as many men as women in the colony nubile girls

must have been in great demand!

Finally, Butler comments bitterly: "If any thinge be debated in ye Counsell of ye Island; the next sermon will have a glance att itt; or a Jercke or a Censure."

It was in this unhappy atmosphere that Captain Butler set off (with much of the male population) on another raiding expedition - doubtless thankfully turning his back on the constant dissensions. In his place as Deputy Governor was a certain Captain Carter - it is not clear whether he was formally appointed as such by Butler (if he had the right to make such an appointment) or whether he just took it upon himself to assume the post. What is clear is that he and the puritan settlers were at even greater loggerheads than under Butler's rule. Carter's pretensions were dramatically put to the test and his unsuitability for military command proved at the end of May (1640), when the Spaniards mounted another and much more determined attack on the island.

A vivid account of this attack and its glorious repulse is contained in a sixteen-page letter written by Henry Halhed, Richard Lane, Hope Sherrard and Nicholas Leverton. On Thursday 28 May thirteen sail of Spanish ships appeared "all upon the wing ready to flye into our harbour; upon sight whereof there was an alarme made by three great guns from our forts . . ." That day and the next the islanders and remaining garrison soldiers were active in taking up defensive positions, moving guns to points of vantage, and so on. "All this while our men cheerfully attended . . . only those that had taken upon them to bee our chiefe commanders showed now in the time of danger no small weaknes and pusillanimity, being so farre from directing or encouraging others that they needed it most of all themselves. Our deputy Governor, Generall, Admirall, Counsellor of warre and Counsellor of the land (with all which titles he was pleased to imblazon himselfe in publicke) . . . had not now so much spirit or power left in him as to use but the words of command, and where intreatyes did not prevaile, he rested himselfe content."

The Spaniards now appeared to be about to launch an assault, and the men "hastened to attend the enemy"; but before starting they came near to Warwick Fort, and "gave an exceeding great showt, which much revived the drooping spirits of the weaker sexe, who for the most part were there gathered together, amongst whom were some bigge with childe, others with infants hanging upon the breast and little ones in their hands, . . . and so they, with the ministers, while the enemy laid siege to us, did by the powerfull engine of the praier lay siege to heaven."

Nine boatloads of Spanish soldiers attempted to land. "They came along singing with a dreadful and formall tone 'pero diablo cornuda, sa, sa, sa.' . . . Meanewhile our small shot plied them very courageously, killing many, and the very shore itself fought against them, being of slimy, slippery stones, and beset with a high cliff only to be climbed in certain places and with difficulty . . . But as for him who tooke upon him to be

Generall, he utterly forsooke the leaguer, and sheltered himselfe in Black Rock fort . . . "

A subsequent attack was similarly repulsed, many Spaniards being shot or drowned. A few escaped on to the land and were soon captured or surrendered. Although promised quarter, "him that took upon himself to be Generall" forthwith put them all to death.

The number of the enemy was said to be 1500, although only 300 had attempted to land. In the attack the islanders lost not a man, with only five hurt, of whom two subsequently died. They stood to arms, expecting another attack the following day, "but they [the Spaniards] stirred not at all", until the next morning, when they weighed anchor, set, sail and so departed.

This scathing indictment of Captain Carter was soon despatched to England. Whereupon Carter, knowing or guessing its content, arrested the signatories, Halhed amongst them, claiming that their theology was unsound, and shipped them back to England, in irons, on the 'Hopewell', with a letter denouncing them to Archbishop Laud.

Fortunately for Halhed and his companions the man whom he was meant to face, Archbishop Laud, was by the time of their arrival in England himself behind bars - for his unsound theology.

Instead Lord Saye and his fellow board-members were quick to strike off the irons, congratulate the four on their conduct, invite them to return honourably to Providence Island, summon Carter home to account for his misdoings and recall Butler.

And here what Halhed would doubtless account as divine providence interposed - for, at the age of 63, he evidently declined to return to Providence Island again. So he missed the final, conclusive, Spanish attack on the Island in May, 1641, when Admiral Pimienta, with nine galleons and three smaller ships carrying 2,000 troupes, overwhelmed the islanders. Depleted in numbers, they could not face the 600 men landed from lighters. The Spaniards captured 600 negroes, gold, indigo, cochineal, with 56 big and 48 small guns placed in 14 forts and entrenchments. The women and children were sent back to England in an English ship (but presumably Elizabeth Halhed and perhaps her children would have accompanied Henry on the 'Hopewell'); the men were taken to Cartagena and Spain, whence they were probably eventually ransomed or exchanged. Tantalisingly no record has been found of anyone but Halhed of the Banbury contingent, nor of any others that returned.

Henry Halhed does not appear to have returned to Banbury. In this he was fortunate, for the Civil War, so shortly to break out, dealt harshly with the town. However, he kept in touch with his old friends, or at any rate with Joshua Sprigge, on whom he prevailed to write the Preface to his pamphlet on the evils of Inclosure, already referred to. This was published ten years later, in 1650, when Sprigge wrote "I have known the Author from my childhood [he was born in 1618] and have observed him

(ever since I observed anything) to be a constant and zealous Witness against Depopulation . . . Yea, now, in his old-age, his Courage and Hope against this is as fresh and green as ever . . . Nor can any Particular interest of his own (by those that know him) be suspected to set him on work; he living the best of his time in a Burrough-town . . . Until Providence snatching him thence, made him Governour [a slight exaggeration!] of the onely Island called by her name; where he continued, until the Isle of Great Britain being about to be born again into a new and free state, might deservedly be Christned The Isle of Providence; whither he might be brought back, as we may soberly judge, for this end, partly, if not mainly, to give his witness and testimony against Depopulation."

Nothing more is known of Henry Halhed. Where he lived and died has not been discovered. It is hoped that he and Elizabeth after their turbulent eight years on Providence Island were able to spend their old age in comfort and as much peace as the Civil War would allow. One can imagine him, an intolerant old puritan, constantly inveighing against the evils of inclosure and depopulation, to the resignation of his friends, who put up with his company for those times when he could be side-tracked on to his tales of the Spanish Main, the buccaneers, negro slaves, tobacco, pieces of eight - but probably he'd be more likely to recall the doctrinal points he scored off Rous and Ditloff!

D. E. M. Fiennes
J. S. W. Gibson

Sources

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- Henry Halhed senior bur. 15 Dec 1588. Will PCC 27 Leicester.
- Henry Halhed, son of William and Alice, bapt. 13 September 1577, married 14 September 1600 Elizabeth Yewicke, dau. of Robert and Margaret, bapt. 28 April 1583.
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- William Halhed bur. 21 July 1602. Will PCC 58 Montague.
- Henry and Elizabeth Halhed's children: Ales, 1601-1626; Anna 1603; Mary, 1604; John, 1605-1611; William, b. 1608; Hopestill, 1610; Patience, b. 1614; Grace, b. 1616; Temperance, 1620-23; Samuel, b. 1624

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Postscript on Isla de Providencia

Providence, or Providencia as it is now called, lies some 450 miles south-west of Jamaica and 170 miles east of the Nicaraguan coast. It was near to the Spanish galleons' route from Cartagena to Mexico and Havana. It is about six miles long from south to north and four miles broad from west to east, hilly to nearly 1200 feet, with a shallow but well-protected harbour to the north-west and a long coral reef guarding the east.

It has a population of about 4000. Though Spanish is the official language, English is the mother tongue and the only language normally spoken.

In December, 1977, I took the opportunity of a visit to Central America to visit Providencia for five days. Local airlines from mainland to Colombia and Central America call at San Andres, a duty-free Colombian holiday island; from there an irregular light aircraft service flies to Providencia in half an hour. San Andres, called San Andreas on 17th century maps, was granted to the English Providence Island Company by the name of Henrietta but was never settled by them. In Henry Halhed's day the fare from England to Providence was £6; if one takes a factor of 50 for currency inflation, the fare today is the same, give or take a few pounds.

Before the English took the island and called it Providence, the Spanish name was Santa Catalina. That name survives for the hilly islet, in the 17th century joined to the main island by an isthmus, which guards the north side of the harbour. On it were Warwick Fort (now Fort Aury) and Brooke Fort. The only town (five shops, two churches and a bar) is on the harbour, then New Westminster, now Isabel but by everybody called Old Town.

Of the English occupation of the 1630s no memory remains. The local people - Huffington, Hawkins, Webster, Hoy, Steel, Rees-Brown, Henry, Livingston, Robinson, Bryan were names noted - claim origin from the companions of Harry Morgan (1635-1688) buccaneer and Governor of Jamaica, who used Providence as a buccaneering base. A proud name on the island is Archbold, from a late 18th century immigrant who may

well have descended from Harry Morgan's brother-in-law Colonel Henry Archbold of Jamaica.

Though no memory remains, several place names survive, traceable from Nathaniel Butler's diary - Watering Place, South West Bay, and others. Though sites of other forts could be identified, the whereabouts of Say and Seale Fort could only be guessed. Black Rock Fort where Governor Carter skulked was surely on Black Point. Below it there is a shore "being of slimy, slipping stones, and beset with a high cliff only to be climbed in certain places and with difficulty" which must be where the Spaniards landed in 1640.

Few people visit Providencia. The Colombian Embassy in London could not tell me how to get there. There is no hotel. "Good" was the reply to every enquiry of local people as to their life, health, and government. Is it we or they who have changed since the 17th century? Only one old man had a complaint; having spent his working life in north America as a mechanic, he could find nothing mechanical which needed repair. Being not good at ponies, he was bored.

D. E. M. Fiennes

DID TOM CRIBB FIGHT MOLYNEUX AT SHENINGTON?

Miller's Rambles Round the Edge Hills (p.118) contains the following entertaining account of an encounter between Cribb and Molyneux:

A battle was fought in this parish in the first decade of the nineteenth century. The fight was not a duel, though there were only two combatants; it was a noted prize-fight. Mr Morant Gale of Upton held estates in the West Indies. Molyneux, who would try conclusions with Cribb, was a black. Mr Morant, therefore, backed him. Shenington was chosen for the ring, as being in Gloucestershire, thus far remote from a justice of the peace, who could act. The spot selected was the Rector's Glebe, he being out for a visit, in the hollow at the back of the temple pond. At the beginning Molyneux appeared to have it all his own way, Cribb getting the worst of it in almost every round. His backers began to get nervous.

'Don't lose heart, ' said Cribb; 'my head' - he had the thickest skull ever known - 'will last out his knuckles.'

And so it proved, Cribb keeping his thick skull well forward, and dealing his crushing blows on Molyneux's unprotected body. Molyneux's knuckles went to pieces against the bony head of his opponent, while his ribs were unable to stand the smashing blows of Cribb's tremendous fists. Cribb won the fight, and Morant, with many others, lost his money, December 23, 1810.

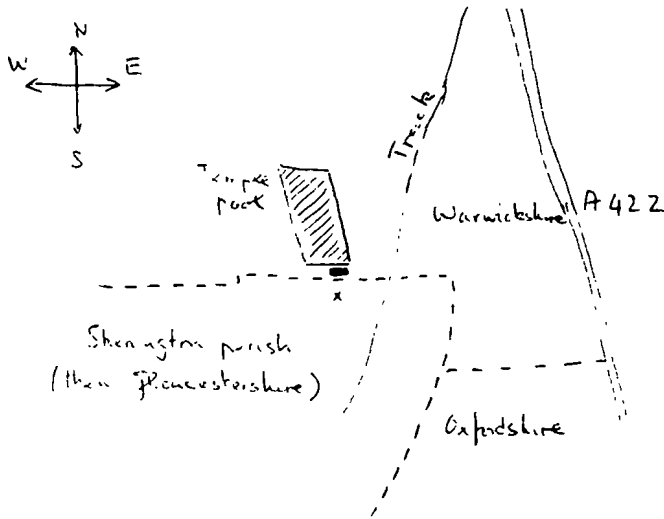
Four years ago, when I was editor of this magazine, our Committee Member Mrs N. Clifton wrote about the history of Shenington (see C. & C.H., Vol.6, No.1). I was interested to hear about Miller's account quoted above because the Cribb-Molyneux encounter generated great enthusiasm and can almost be seen as initiating the title of heavyweight champion of the world, a rare distinction for Shenington. When Mrs Clifton then produced the drawing by Thomas Rowlandson reproduced here, I was keen to see the historic site, and persuaded Mr and Mrs Clifton to walk out one Sunday the mile or so with me to the "Rector's Glebe".

We soon located the spot; it would be hard to find a place better suited to stage an illegal prize fight. The advantage of Shenington was that, until 1844, it was a detached part of Gloucestershire (such detached parts were quite common, as one can see by examining Morden's 17th Century maps of the counties). Moreover, the parish and county boundary runs immediately south of the Temple Pool of Upton House, which is itself in Warwickshire (see sketch map). The Temple Pool is supported by quite a high dam (now tree covered) and its sloping bank, which is still in Warwickshire, would have afforded an ideal grandstand for the gentry etc, while the riff-raff could have milled around the ring in the Rector's Glebe immediately below the dam - in Gloucestershire. There is even a convenient



Hubert & Co. del.

Wm. J. G. & Co. sculp.



Sketch map of presumed site (marked by cross) of prize fight. The photograph reproduced below was taken, looking south over the presumed site, from below the Temple, which stands at the southern end of the pool. Note that the site, like Thistleton Gap, was then very close to the junction of three counties (the Temple pool is about 200-300 yards long). Upton House is at the top-left of the sketch map.



track leading down to the site from the Banbury-Stratford road (A422).

The view south from the dam and over the presumed position of the ring is shown in the photograph, which was taken that afternoon. It matches the Rowlandson drawing quite well, especially in the line of the hills in the background and the line of carriages drawn up on the left, which corresponds more or less exactly to the position of the track down from the A422. By a remarkable coincidence, when we examined the site four years ago (1974) we found, very close to where the ring must have been, the stump of an oak tree which had been felled only a few weeks earlier by Mr Hopkins, the forester at Upton House. Mr Clifton and I counted 163 clear tree rings from the rim into the confused central area and, since 1974 minus 163 equals 1811, I, at least, jumped to the conclusion that an oak sapling had been planted there after the fight to commemorate the historic event - and that we had happened along in search of the site just after the tree had been felled after so many years! It all fitted perfectly.

Doubts came when I consulted other sources. The article on Cribb in the Dictionary of National Biography says that Cribb fought (and beat) Molyneux twice: on 18th December 1810 (at a place not named) and then again on 28th September, 1811, at Thistleton Gap in Leicestershire. Apart from the date (18th and not 23rd December), this is consistent with the first encounter having been at Shenington, as described by Miller. The VCH article on Shenington (VCH, Vol.IX, p.140), says

The village acquired notoriety in 1810 when a prize fight was arranged by Morant Gale of Upton (Warws.) between Molyneux, a Negro pugilist, and the English champion, Thomas Cribb. The ring was in Shenington Hollow, well away from the vigilant watch of the Gloucestershire J. P. s, and the match was fought on 3 December.

and in a footnote adds

The tradition was recorded in 1900 by Miller ... For the contestants see T. C. Wignall, *The Story of Boxing*, 85 sqq.

But when I consulted Wignall and other books, notably Mile's *Pugilistica* [H. D. Miles, *Pugilistica*, John Grant, Edinburgh (1906)] and Egan's *Boxiana* [P. Egan, *Boxiana or Sketches of Ancient and Modern Pugilism*, Vol.1 (London, 1823)], I could find no mention of Shenington or Morant Gale; in fact, the first encounter seems to have been at Cophthall Common in Sussex. The following extracts are from Egan (pp.401-403) which I give in some detail, both for their intrinsic interest and the possible light they may shed on the mystery:

Much as the interest of the former contests of the CHAMPION had excited the interest in the *Sporting World*, they were now looked at as trifling, when compared with his battle with Molineaux: and even those persons who had hitherto passed over Boxing in general,

as beneath their notice, now seemed to take a lively interest in the issue of this fight. It appeared somewhat as a national concern, and ALL felt for the honour of their country, and deeply interested in the fate of their Champion, TOM CRIB. . . . the day selected for this grand milling exhibition, December 10, 1810, at Cophall Common, in the neighbourhood of East Grinstead, Sussex, within 30 miles of the Metropolis. Notwithstanding the torrents, and the distance from London, the Fancy were not to be deterred from witnessing the mill; and who waded through a clayey road nearly knee-deep for five miles . . . About 12 o'clock, Mr Jackson, with his usual consideration, had the ring formed at the foot of a hill, (twenty-four feet roped) surrounded by the numerous carriages which had conveyed the spectators thither, to ward off the chilling breezes and rain which came keenly from the eastward. . . . Cribb, . . . , was got by Molineaux against the ropes, which were in height about five feet, and in three rows. . . . about two hundred persons rushed from the outer to the exterior ring.

According to Egan, the fight went to 19 rounds and lasted 30 minutes.

Miles agrees with Egan about the venue but says the fight took place on 18th December, 1810, and gives this account of the preparations (p.254):

At twelve o'clock, Mr Jackson, who generally officiates as master of ceremonies, formed an outer circle of the various vehicles which had transported so many thousands from the Metropolis, at the foot of a hill, in order to shield the combatants as much as possible from the chilling rain and wind from the eastward. A twenty-four feet ring, according to preceding arrangement, was constructed within this circle, with stakes and ropes, . . .

The descriptions given in both books do not seem to tally too well with Rowlandson's drawing, which depicts a ring made of posts and rails. The drawing itself is part of the collection of sporting pictures at Brodick Castle, which belongs to the National Trust of Scotland and is reproduced here with their permission. In 1974, I corresponded with Mr Basil Skinner, who had made some notes for the catalogue and has kindly allowed me to make use of them. According to him, the Rowlandson drawing is simply captioned Cribb and Molineaux with no other information. Mr Skinner was not able to establish which fight Rowlandson depicted. However, there is a further drawing at Brodick Castle by S. Alken which depicts the first encounter and is inscribed: Crib beating Molineux, Cophtham Common Decr 10th 1810.

The account given by Miles (pp.256-258) of the second encounter is as follows; again, the account does not tally too well with Rowlandson's

drawing:

A match was accordingly made for £300 a-side, and on Saturday, September 28th, 1811, was brought to issue at Thistleton Gap, in the parish of Wymondham, in the county of Leicester, very near Crown Point, the spot where the three counties, Lincoln, Leicester, and Rutland unite. This match created, if possible, more interest than that which had preceded it, and for twenty miles around the scene of action not a bed was to be obtained for love or money the previous night, unless bespoken days before-hand. . . . there were about 20,000 persons present, including many Corinthians of the highest rank. . . . The stage, which was twenty-five feet square, was erected in a stubble field, surrounded first by a roped ring, in order to prevent any interruption by the crowd, and secondly, by as well-framed and supported a circle of pedestrians as perhaps was ever witnessed, notwithstanding the great distance from the metropolis. The first row of these, as usual on upon most occasions, lying down, the second kneeling, and the rest standing up. Outside these again were numerous horsemen, some seated, while others more eager stood, circus-like, upon their saddle; these were intermixed with every description of carriage, gig, barouche, buggy, cart, and waggon. The display of sporting men, from the peer on the box of his four-in-hand to the rustic in clouted shoes, but as perfect a picture as the fancy can well conceive.

On this occasion, Molyneux was trounced; Cribb broke the negro's jaw in the ninth round and forced him to retire two rounds later.

On the basis of this evidence it seems doubtful that Cribb ever fought Molyneux at Shenington. The Thistleton Gap encounter is beyond all doubt; the Coptham (Copthall) Common one is a little less so and there does seem to be uncertainty about the date. However, while one can understand reticence to give advance information in public on the venue of a forthcoming illegal prize fight, it seems hard to believe that the true venue could have been in doubt after the event, especially one so celebrated.

I was not able to trace any local evidence for the fight apart from Miller. Lord Bearsted, the present owner of Upton House, told me in a letter in 1974 that he knew nothing beyond what is contained in Miller, who is not renowned for accuracy. (Miller's account of the fight bears no resemblance to those given of either Cribb-Molyneux encounter, except in the exaggerated language employed.) On the other hand, the Shenington site offers so many advantages it seems entirely probable that prize fights did take place there; perhaps the word-of-mouth tradition magnified them into something more than they really were.

My researches into the fight were not completed and I doubt if the opportunity to take them up again will present itself in the near future, but

I thought it would be worth publishing these notes in the hope that one of our readers knows something further.

I conclude with an amusing extract about Cribb's training. Cribb's backer was Captain Robert Barclay of Urie (the first owner of the Alken drawing). Barclay was a noted pedestrian, which in pre-motoring days meant someone who walks as an athletic performance. The sport was very popular in those days and Miles, in the quotation above, refers to the "as well-framed and supported a circle of pedestrians as perhaps was ever witnessed". In the book *Pedestrianism* by W. Thom (Aberdeen, 1813), one can find numerous accounts of the extraordinary walking feats performed in those days (such as walking overnight from Oxford to London and then returning immediately the following day), and also this report (p.244) on how Barclay prepared Cribb for battle at Thistleton Gap:

The champion arrived at Ury on the 7th of July of that year. He weighed sixteen stones; and from his mode of living in London, and the confinement of a crowded city, he had been corpulent, big-bellied, full of gross humours, and short-breathed; and it was with difficulty he could walk ten miles. He first went through a course of physic, which consisted of three dozes [presumably doses], but for two weeks he walked about as he pleased, and generally traversed the woods and plantations with a fowling-piece in his hand. The reports of his musquet resounded everywhere through the groves and the hollows of that delightful place, to the great terror of the magpies and wood-pigeons.

In the event, fitness seemed to have been decisive in Cribb's victory over Molyneux. But reading the above one wonders how long either of them would have lasted against Mohammed Ali.

J. B. Barbour



Medieval strip-lynchets at Shenington. This remarkable aerial photograph is from an infra-red colour transparency taken by K. A. Carrdus on 15th May, 1974, and shows the strip-lynchets between the village of Shenington and the World War II aerodrome. It is even more spectacular than Major Allen's celebrated aerial photograph in the thirties, which is displayed in the Ashmolean Museum and reproduced in VCH, Vol. IX. On Robert Whitlesey's map of 1732 the hill in the centre is called Wad-hill and the fields Short Kinwall and Long Kinwall. The white patch at the bottom-left of the hill is water from a spring; it shows white because of the infra-red light used for the photograph. At the top of the photograph there can be seen two of the mushroom shaped aircraft dispersal pads of the aerodrome, which does not, of course, appear in Major Allen's photograph. Nor does the tree on Wad-hill, which was planted in the Silver Jubilee Year 1935. However, Allen's photograph does show the iron tree guard visible in this photograph between the 1935 tree and the brow of Wad-hill. It surrounded an oak tree planted in 1910 (Coronation Year) which however grew to a height of only 10-12 feet and died a few years ago. This photograph, like the foregoing notes on the prize fight, is a by-product of Mrs Clifton's article on Shenington in Vol. 6, No. 1. I am very grateful to Mr Carrdus for making the photograph available and Mr H. Clifton for some of this information.

J. B. Barbour

MUMMERING AND NIGGERING IN BLOXHAM

Some of the older men in Bloxham still have memories of the mummers. Mr. William Preedy, born in 1905, says he remembers them coming round in his early childhood. Mr. Syd Charles, born 1895, says that his knowledge of mummering comes from listening to stories told by an older generation; "Either of what they'd done or of what they'd seen." Their tales would have covered memories going back to the middle of the nineteenth century, but mummering continued strongly till the First World War. After this war niggering began; the "Niggers" often being called "The Bloxham Mummers". As will be seen the links between true mummering and niggering are unbroken and interesting.

The Heaths were the great mummers of Bloxham and Robert Heath (b.c1850, d.1926) was the last of them. He was of gipsy origin and wore gold earrings. Mummering had been handed down from father to son and members of this same family carried the tradition on into niggering until the 2nd World War.

Mr. William Woodford, now aged 90 years, says he remembers seeing the mummers when he was a small boy but cannot remember much about them except that they had handkerchiefs and ribbons and came round on Boxing Day. Mr. Preedy remembers that they came down the street on Boxing Day; some wore masks, those who had no masks had faces blacked with cork and candle. They were either four or five in number. He remembers that the first mummer would come across with a besom and sweep the doorsteps, and up and down the middle of the road. Then the mummers would do a dance similar to that of the Morris Dancers. The one with the besom would suddenly shout out: "Here comes old Father Beelzebub, and in his hand he carries his club." Other remembered words were: "For where is a man that will bid me stand? I'll knock him down right in the sand. I'll cut him up as small as flies, and then you can have him to make mincepies." He would then run at the crowd with his club which was a knobby stick and frighten the children to death. One mummer was dressed as a woman and was called Sally. (Sally is a name which, it will be seen, recurs later in niggering.)

The words which Mr. Charles remembers are those heard from his father and his uncle, Thomas and Josh Charles: "In comes I Father Beelzebub, in me hand I carry me club, under me arm a dripping pan, don't ee think I be a jolly old man?" There was also Father Christmas and Billy the Sweep who would say: "In comes I, Billy the Sweep, all these young rascals I have to keep, both young and old both great and small, I think myself the best man of all." Father Beelzebub would then say: "Take that!" and hit Billy the Sweep.

It is interesting to note that none of the older women in the village remembers mummering at all. Evidently it was men's business. One told me that she was too scared to stop and watch; she ran home when

they were about.

There is a general agreement that niggering took over from mummering to keep up the old custom. Where there were four or five mummers, they could manage with three niggers. These also went round the streets on Boxing Day. No masks were used but the niggers blacked their faces. They wore red mufflers and flashy waistcoats with pearl buttons, black trousers and high silk hats. In the early days they wore ribbons on the back of their long tail coats, recalling those Mr. Woodford remembers worn by the mummers. These coats were often secondhand, donated or lent by the gentry or their staff, and if they were too big it did not matter because it was always cold and then two or three jackets could be worn underneath.

Mr. Preedy says there were two troupes of niggers in his day: the Hosbands and the Heaths did Bloxham village, while Leonard Charles, Mr. Preedy himself and Bert Green took the surrounding villages of Bodicote, Adderbury and Milton. Mr. Gerald Hosband agrees with that but adds that after true mummering ended with his grandfather Robert, the first niggers were Robert's sons Jack and Alf together with a brother-in-law George Coe, Syd Charles and Durg Hawtin. As the older men gave up, younger members of the family took over and the group was then made up of Mr. Gerald Hosband, George Coe's sons, Bob and George, and Jack Heath's son Gilbert. Mr. Syd Charles would also on occasion turn out with Mr. Preedy and Bert Green replacing his nephew Leonard, but this group had no real connection with the Heath family tradition of mummering and niggering, and went out for a few years only.

Mr. Syd Charles started as a boy. He remembers that early in December the men would get together to practice the songs and to look over the clothes they were to wear. The three characters represented were Bumper Jones with a tambourine, Uncle Neddy with the bones and Sally who played the melodeon. Each man kept to the same part. Mr. Preedy remembers the preparations. Two or three candles were set out on the kitchen table with two or three corks and a saucer of milk. They burned the ends of the corks, dipped them in milk and went over their faces to blacken them. Before setting out, recollected Mr. Charles, they might have a cup of tea and a bowl of bread and lard (fat from home-cured bacon) stirred up with pepper and salt like a pudding.

The niggers who did the village set off at 7.30 am on Boxing Day starting from Queen's Square, but the Avenue after it was built in 1938. They used to come up the street with a bit of a jig; if they met anyone they would bang the tambourine in front of him for coppers. Crowds used to follow and lots of children. They would stop at various houses to perform; they would sing and dance, and beer and cider were brought out and offered to them. Mr. Hosband completes the picture: "Then the day after Boxing Day we would go to the toffs' houses and sometimes we were well received and sometimes not at all; it depended on the state you were in."

Mr. Charles had a big pocket in which to put the money collected. "There were more pennies and halfpennies than shillings and sixpences," he says. The niggers would be out all day but go home for a bit of tea and to re-black their faces. In the evenings they would go into the public houses for a proper session having visited them but briefly during the day. At the end of the day the money was divided out between them; 30/- apiece were average takings.

The niggers who toured the villages would set out at 8 am reaching Milton by 8.30 am, nor would they get home till midnight or later, having had nothing to eat all day but plenty to drink. Mr. Preedy claims that they could pick up £3 apiece in that time, this when wages were 30/- a week and rent was 7/-. Mr. Charles says that a teetotaler could never nigger for: "You were offered entertainment and drops of wine and drops of whiskey. And after you'd had a couple or three glasses of beer and two or three drops of mangold or parsnip wine, you could have done things then you could never have done if you were sober." He added that you had got to stay sensible and behave yourself and keep your balance.

The trip round the villages took in the big houses such as Broughton Grange and Wykham Park. The Niggers never went in; they would perform on the lawn before an open window from which the house owners and their guests would watch. Sometimes things got a little out of hand as on the occasion when, having done well on the lawn at the front of the house, they were told to go round to the back to give a turn or two to the servants. Instead of staying outside on the doorstep, Uncle Neddy collared one of the maids, Bumper Jones collared the cook and light heartedly pushed them in the sink, and Sally chased the other maid upstairs to black her face. In came the butler and footman to throw them out. The two niggers still downstairs were flung out in time to see poor Sally thrown neck and crop out of the front door with a gun blast after him.

The niggers went out in all weathers and they went on foot but Mr. Preedy's group went out in a pony trap. One morning, when Mr. Preedy was being collected by his fellow niggers, his wife's mother was staying with them. She saw a black face peering in at the window and exclaimed: "So you're having the sweep today!" On one occasion, in a state of euphoria the merry band left the trap in Adderbury and continued on their way to Bodicote and Wykham and so back to Bloxham on foot. That was the time when, coming down the drive of a house in the Oxford Road, "Still playing real merry," as Mr. Preedy remembers, "A big car pulled up with a camera. 'Can we take your photograph?' 'Not without you put something in the box!' About £1 went in which was a lot in those days. We were so silly we never told them where we lived, just Bloxham. The photo came to Sergeant Stickley. He recognised us and sent it on." It is easy to believe Mr. Preedy when he tells us "By the end of the day the tembourine made my knees, elbows, and seat sore. Sometimes the melodeon used to bust and we had to call at a house for stamp paper to

repair it."

It is not surprising that there are some slight contradictions and confusions about the period when true mummering changed to niggering. Mr. Syd Charles was a nigger and says he started as a boy, which probably means about 1905. Mr. Preedy, born in that year, has very clear memories of the words and actions of the mummers he saw. It is difficult to reconcile these two statements. The general feeling is that the First World War brought mummering to an end but Mr. Tustian, now aged 82 years, thinks it could have ended earlier, at the time of the Boer War. It is possible that as the words of the mummers' plays were handed down verbally, gaps may have occurred in them as the ritual became less important to the actors, and minstrel songs inserted to make up for them. Mr. Preedy says: "The mummers would interweave dance to the melodeon and bones and then sing songs which were the ones the niggers took over." Even these songs could, through forgetfulness, become nonsense jingles as Mr. Hosband points out in this one: "Sally come up and dine a down/ Sally come twist the wheel around/ The old man has gone out to town/ So Sally come up with the weasel."

Of the niggering songs the two following must have been favourites because they are the best remembered. The words in brackets are variations due no doubt to the lapse of time for Mr. Charles says he last went niggering in 1929, Mr. Hosband in 1942.

1. "Of all the fair darkies you ever did see
We are the fairest in every degree.
Hear the bones rattle,
Hark how they prattle
While me and my boys (banjo)
Shall (so) merrily play
For we'll laugh and we'll sing and the banjo shall play
(We laugh and we sing to the music so fine)
To be ha! ha! ha! ha! To be ha! ha! ha! hay! "
2. "The last year I was twenty
My master set me free.
If I had money plenty
I'd go and have a spree.

Chorus repeated after each verse.

Oh Sally! Oh Sally!
Oh Sally's the girl for me!
A lovely night, when the moon shines bright
Oh Sally's the girl for me.

Oh to (you should) see her on a Sunday
When down the street she walk
You'd think it was Victoria
Just landed from New York.



Left to right: William Preedy - Bumper Jones, Bert Green - Sally, Syd Charles - Uncle Neddy.

Her foot it was so slender (Sally's got a slender waist)
Her ankle so very small (And her ankle is so small)
And if it wasn't for her heel
She'd have no foot at all.

Sally's got a lovely nose
And right across her face it goes.
Same as like thunder when it blows,
The lovely nose of Sally's."

There remain only the following remnants of niggering songs remembered by Mr. Hosband:

"If the man in the moon was a coon, coon, coon, what would I do?
No courting in the moonlight night,
No courting in the pale moonlight,
If the man in the moon was a coon."

"O, one evening by the moonlight
You can hear those darkies singing,
And one evening by the moonlight
You can hear their banjos strumming.
And the old folk they enjoy it as they sit around
And listen to the music of those banjos in the moonlight."

Y. S. Huntriss

Banbury Parish Ratebook 1782

In the September 1964 issue of "Cake and Cockhorse" (Vol. 2, No. 9, pp. 154-56), Barrie Trinder listed various church records which the then Vicar of Banbury, the Revd. D. I. T. Eastman, had deposited, on the Society's advice, partially in the Bodleian Library (the Diocesan Record Office) and partially in Banbury Public Library. Recently the present Vicar, the Revd. Ian Beacham, decided that it would be more appropriate for all these records to be in one place. Accordingly, with the help of the Society, the records formerly in the Banbury Library have been transferred to join the parish registers in the Bodleian. The records transferred consist mainly of Parish Ratebooks for the period of 1782 to 1860; a map of Banbury in 1838, which was printed in "Cake and Cockhorse" when the list was published; and visiting plans, c. 1850, of which use was made by Barrie Trinder in his article "Banbury's Poor in 1850" (C&CH, Vol. 3, No. 6, Winter, 1966). The opportunity has been taken to transcribe the earliest Parish Ratebook, for 1782, and this is now published opposite by kind permission of Mr Beacham. It is contained in an exercise book, size 7 $\frac{3}{4}$ " x approx. 6 $\frac{1}{4}$ " (20 x 16 cm.). It has no cover, and the twenty-two paper folios are numbered as such (ff. 2-18). The entries are on the recto only, the verso being blank.

BANBURY PARISH RATEBOOK 1782

[f.1] Borough of Banbury To Wit,
In the County of Oxon.

An Assessment made by the Church-Wardens, and other Inhabitants, for the Repairs of the Church, and Reimburse the Church-Wardens, at Sixpence in the Pound P^r Pound Rent, February the 7th ... one thousand seven hundred & eighty two.

[The sum shown is that of the Pound Rent. A single asterisk indicates no assessment made; and a double asterisk that the assessment is not marked as paid.]

Mr. Hemmings, £2	Mrs. Howse, £3	Mr. John Austin, £6
Mr. Baylis, £2	Mr. Padbury, £5	Mr. Pain's other Yard, £1*
Late Charls Dent, £1	Mr. Towerzey, £4	Foulk Jarvis, £1.10s.
Late Mr. Essex, £1	Mr. Bazely, £2	Mr. John Pearson, £3.10s.
Mr. Callow, £14	Mr. Fairfax, £7.10s.	Mr. Wm. Longe, £6
Mrs. Horsman, £1.10s.	[f.4]	Do. his Close, £4
Mr. Justice Clarson, £7	Mr. Hayward, £12	Barnard James, £1
Wid ^o . Webb, £1.10s.	Mr. Robt. Wild, £3.10s.	[f.6]
Mr. Hunt, £2	Mr. Saml. Hill, £3.10s.	Wid ^o . Dickens, £1
Mrs. Golby, £2	Mr. James Austin, £4	Mr. Thos. Richardson, £7
[f.2]	Mr. Richd. Roberts, £10	Mrs. Golby, £1.10s.**
John Callow, £1	Mr. Arnit [Arntt]'s Garden, £3*	Mrs. Lamb, £1.10s.**
Mr. Wiseman, £1	Mr. Geo. Claridge, £3	Mr. Thos. Dury, £2
James Mourby, £1	Mr. Godson, £4.10s.	The Jew, £2
John Ward Excus'd, £1*	Mr. Brain, £5**	Mrs. Lane, £5
Mrs. Baker, £1**	Mr. Lamprey, £1**	Mrs. Pain, Wid ^o ., £3.10s.
Thomas Gothorn, £1**	Mr. Kerrod, £1**	The Rev nd . Mr. Hampton, £6
Wharfingers Office, £2	Mr. Butler, £1**	Mr. Barrett, £4
Late James Ward, £5**	John Roberts, £1**	Miss Hides, £3
Mrs. Barnes, £6	Mr. Walker, £6.10s.	Mr. Judd, £7 [altered from £4]
Mrs. Lambert, £5	Mr. Youick, £6	Mr. Haddon, £24
Mr. John Bloxham, £7	Mr. Gibbard, £4	Mr. John King, £5
Do. his other House, £5	Mrs. Canning, £2	Mr. Devonshire, £6
Mrs. Pratt, £7	Rev nd . Mr. Spellman, £4	Do. Old Tann Yard, £3
Mr. Gulliver, £4	Mr. Pain, £4	Mr. Rusinworth, £6
Mr. Rich. Wise, £6	Do. his other Yard, £1	Mr. Dury & Co., £5
Mr. Dundas, £5	Mr. Eld. Pearson, £1.10s.	Mr. Chapman, £6.10s.
Mr. Newman, £8	John Charles Sen ^r . Excus'd, £1*	Mr. Broof, £4.10s.
Mr. Pinfold, £6.10s.	[f.5]	Thos. Grant, £1
Late Mrs. Wyatt, void, £6*	Mr. Bennet Sup ^r vis ^r ., £4*	Robt. Smith, £1
Late Mr Golby's Shop v ^d ., £3.10s.*	Mr. Harker Off ^r . in Ex., £2*	[f.7]
[f.3]	Dew Bloxnam Excus'd, £2*	Thos. Bloxham, £1**
Miss Hawtyn, £6	Late Wid ^o . Beal, £1*	Wid ^o . Harris, £1**
Mrs. Beesley, £4	Jarret Beal, £1**	Wid ^o . Buswell, £1**
Mr. Hall, £4	Mr. Thomas, £1**	John Mourby, £1**
Mrs. Pedley, £6	Mr. Dawson, £4.10s.	John Wrighton, £2**
Mr. Bloxham's other House, £5*	Mr. Pigot's Close, £1.10s.*	Wid ^o . Beasand Excus'd
Mr. Golby, £8	Tenem ^t s. in Old Tan-Yard, £3**	Mr. Leighton, £1.10s.**
Mr. Loftus, £7	Thos. Waters, £1**	Mr. Walker, £1**
Mr. Wm. Wells, £3.10s.	Thos. Webster, £1**	Mr. Hobday's Close, £6*
Mr. Barlow, £8	Mr. Wm. Saul, £3	Doctor Burford, £14
Mr. Turner, £6		Mrs. Aplin, £4
Mr. Hawtyn, £10		Mr. Bignell, £8
Mr. Fran. Goodwin, £8		Fran. Pigot Esq ^r . Void, £7*
Messrs. M. Wells's, £8		Do. Close at N.Barr, £1.10s.
Mr. Arnold, £5		Mrs. Aplin Void, £12*
Miss Greenals, £5		
Mr. Wheeler, £4		
Mr. Humphris, £5		

[f.7 contd.]

Mr. Pitfield, £4
Mr. Winkles, £4
Chas. Essex, £1.10s.
Richd. Gazey, £1
Robt. Webster, £1**
Mr. Green's Tenem^{ts.}, £8
Do. White Lion Warehouse,
£4

[f.8]

Willm. Golby Sen^{r.}, £1**
Late Peace Wadhams, £1**
Saml. Slatter Jun^{r.}, £1**
Mr. Richd. Charles, £1
Mr. Jarrett, £1
Wm. Golby Jun^{r.}, £1**
Wm. Nichols Excus'd, £1*
Late John Richardson, £1**
Benjn. Perry, £1**
Late Wm. Grant, £1**
Late Wm. Sparks, £1.10s.**
Robt. Blaby, £1
Wid^{o.} Bowers, £1.10s.**
Wid^{o.} D'Oyly Excus'd,
£1.10s.
John Wild, £1.10s.
Edmd. Leaver, £1.10s.
Messrs. Gardner & Midleton,
£1**

[Mr. Miles, pd. 1s.3d.]

John Smallbone, £1
Late Moss, £1**
Thos. Adkins, £1**
Thos. Dickens, £1**
Late Wm. Cox, £1**

[f.9]

Mr. Burges, £1
Mr. Miles, £2.10s.
Mrs. Hiatt, £6
Ambrose Davis, £2**
Mr. Danl. Walford, £3
Thos. Cotes, £3**
Joseph Gardner, £2
Wid^{o.} Butler, £1.10s.**
Mr. John Taylor, £3
Joseph Hopkins, £1.10s.**
Wid^{o.} Bloxham, £1.10s.**
Mr. Aplin, £8
Miss Shelton's, £3.10s.
Mr. Wilson, £5
Do. his other House, £6
James Osborn, £2
Late Hughes, £2.10s.**
Mr. North, £1.10s.**
Mr. Clever, £1.10s.
Mrs. Ashness Sen^{r.}, £3
Mr. Clark, £3
[f.10]
Mr. Bridgwater, £6
Mr. Varney, £2
Saml. Slatter Senr., £2**

Mr. Willm. Claridge, £9
Mr. Jameson, £2.10s.
Mrs. Lucas, £4
Mr. Osbaldiston, £3
Mr. Webster, £2**
Mr. Marritt, £2.10s.**
Mrs. Golby, £2**
Mr. Wilson's other House,
£6**
Matthew Smith, £6
Thos. Hancock Excus'd.,
£1*
Mr. Goodwin's Garden, £2*
Mrs. Newman's Garden, £1*
Isaac Davis, £1.10s.**
Wm. Robt. Davis's Tenem^{ts.},
£1.10s.**

Ends 2nd. Division

Mr. Gwilliam's Close, £6*
Mr. Longe's Close, £4*
Wid^{o.} Harwood Excus'd, £1*
Wm. Waters, £1**
[f.11]

John Hobley, £1**
John Hollard, £1**
Mr. Brotherton, £1**
Dickerson Wid^{o.}, £1*
Saml. Harper, £1*
Wm. Mourby, £1**
James Colly Terry, £1**
Mr. Arnitt, £?
Wid^{o.} Ilitt, £1.10s.
Wid^{o.} Mander, £1**
Wid^{o.} Roman, £1**
John Watson, £2**
Wid^{o.} Burlin, £1.10s.
[Late - crossed out] Wm.
Wild, £2

Mr. Charles Wyatt O.G., £4*
Mr John Rimill Sen^{r.},
£5.10s.
Do. Late Robt. Wild, £2.10s.
Mr. John Smith, £7
Richd. Miller Sen^{r.}, £3**
Mr. John Rimill Jun^{r.}, £8
Wid^{o.} Wyatt Sen^{r.} Excus'd,
£1*

[f.12]

Mrs. Wyatt, Wid^{o.}, £7
Late Wid^{o.} Bloxham, Void
£4**

Mr. Marcy, £4
Mr. Wm. Bull, £3
Benjn. Hands, £1.10s.**
Late Mr. Sanders, £1**
John Ainge Sen^{r.}, £1
Mr. Thos. Clarke, £3.10s.
Mrs. Parker, £6
Mr. Horsman Sen^{r.}, £2

Mr. Essex, £2
Wid^{o.} Lambert, £2
Wid^{o.} Mascord's Garden,
£2.10s.
Mr. Shackel, £2
Do. the other side,
£1.10s.**
Late Dean, £1**
Thos. Mander & Co.,
£1.10s.**
Thos. Lamprey, Void, £1*
John Hands, £1.10s.
Edwd. Dickerson, £1.10s.
Wm. Baker, £3
Hannah Dumbleton, £3**
[f.13]
Mr. George King, £6
Mr. Jonathan Dury, £5.10s.
[pd. 1s.]

Late Mr. Aplin, Void, £8*
Mrs. Thorp, £3
Mr. Andrew Longe, £8
Do. his Garden, £1
Mr. Pratt, £15
Mr. Allen, £10
Wid^{o.} Arnett, £4
Mourby Jun^{r.}, £1**
Thos. Grant, £3.10s.**
John Carey, £1.10s.
Richd. Baker Jun^{r.},
£1.10s.
Butcher's Shop, £1
Mr. Fidkin, £6
Mr. Haddon, £7
Mr. John Baker, £5
Mr. Wm. Sparks, £3
Mr. John Wheatly, £8
Mr. Armit's Garden, £3
Do. his House, £3
[f.14]

Mr. Welch, £2.10s.
Mrs. Savage, £3
Mrs. Hill, £4
Mrs. Woolley, £2
Mr. Bliss, £7
Mr. John Goodwin, £6
Do. his Garden, £2
Mr. Grimby Sen^{r.}, £3
Mr. Charles Bloxham, £3
Edwd. Golby, £1.10s.**
The Rev^{nd.} Doctor Lamb,
£8**
Mr. Jonah George, £4.10s.
Mr. Golby, £2
Mr. Cleaver, £6
Mr. Richd. Rimill, £4.10s.
Wid^{o.} Butler, £3.10s.
The other Tenem^{t.}, £2
Mr. Mulheron, £6.10s.
Mr. Hiatt, £1.10s.
Wm. Roberts & C., £2

[f.14 contd.]
 Miss Woodfields, £5
 Mr. Wm. Walford, £6
 [f.15]
 Mr. Deacle, £6
 Mr. Horn, Officer of
 Excise, £2.10s.*
 Tim. Barnes, £1.10s.
 Mr. Longe's Garden, £1*
 Mrs. Walker, £3
 Mr. Hobday's Close, £6
 Do. his House, £4
 Mr. Shirley, £2.10s.
 Mr. Hughes, £2.10s.
 Mr. Derby, £3.10s.
 Mrs. Fetherstone, £3
 Mrs. Welch Sen^r, £3
 Mr. Grimbley Jun^r, £2.10s.
 Mr. Ashness, £5

Ends 3rd. Division

Mr. Thos. Wise, £10
 Mr. Green's Warehouse, £4*
 Mrs. Bloxham, £4
 Mr. Howes, £5
 Mr. Rich^d. Taylor, £6
 John Weston Excus'd,
 £1.10s.*
 [f.16]
 Mr. Ainge Jun^r, £1
 Mr. Joan's Sen^r, £1.10s.
 Wm. Richardson, £1**
 Wid^o. Cook Excus'd, £1*

Mr. Mascord Sen^r, £2
 Mr. O'Donnal, £4
 Mrs. Welch, Wid^o, £4
 Mr. Cropley, £7
 Mr. Baughan, £4
 Mr. Wm. Horsman, £3.10s.
 Mr. Gwilliam, £3
 Do. his Close, £6
 Mr. Richd. Newman, £8
 Mrs. Parglter, £2.10s.**
 Mr. Robt. Davis, £2.10s.
 Mr. Richd. Lambert, £5
 Mrs. Butcher, £4.10s.
 Mr. Aris, £4
 Mr. Fry, £8
 Messrs. Newman & Dury,
 £13
 Messrs. Cheney & Beck,
 £12
 Mr. Heydon, £10
 [f.17]
 Mr. Spurrirt, £6
 Mr. Clarson Jun^r, £7
 Mr. Amazia Bloxham, £5
 Mr. Job Osborne, £5
 Mr. Chandler, £6.10s.
 Mr. Jarvice White, £7
 Mr. John Dury, £7
 Mr. Stacey, £4.10s.
 Mr. Collins, £3**
 The Parsonage Barn, £2*
 John Gunn, £2**
 Wid^o. Thomas, £1**
 Mrs. Lamprey, £1**

Mr. Wrighton, £1.10s.**
 John Alder & Co., £4**
 Mrs. Pain, £1**
 Wid^o. Barney, £3.10s.**
 Mr. Wm. Calcott, £8
 Mr. Charles Wyatt, £8
 Do. Old George, £4
 Mr. Wm. White, £6
 Mr. Richd. Burford, £12
 [f.18]
 Mr. Beer, £4
 Mr. Wm. Baker, £3
 Mr. James Ward, £6
 Richd. Cap Excus'd, £1*
 Mr. Lines, £1.10s.
 Mr. Steele, £3
 Wm. Claridge, £1.10s.
 Mrs. Watts', £2.10s.
 Mr. Joad, £4
 Mr. Andrew Page, £1.10s.**
 Mr. Pedley, £3
 Mr. Cave, £4
 Mr. Baker, £3
 Mr. Robt. Rimill, £5.10s.
 Mr. Osborn & Co.,
 £10.10s.**
 Mrs. Tyler, £7
 Mrs. Shatchwell, £3.10s.
 Mr. Blaby Jun^r, £3
 Mr. John Page, £2
 Mr. Ripke, £4
 Mr. Solomon Abraham, £4
 Mr. Carey Jun^r, £1.10s.

[f.19]

Seen and allow'd by us two of his Maj^{ties}. Justices of the Peace
 of the said Borough (One whereof being of the Quorum) Do approve
 of and Confirm the aforesaid State Given under our hands and Seals
 this [blank] Day of March 1782.

Sam^l. Clarson

[Pencilled in: Three illegible words]

[f.20]

[Page totals:] £ s d
 Page 1st 0 17 0
 2nd 1 11 9
 3rd 2 19 3
 4th 1 14 9
 5th 0 18 3
 6th 2 9 6
 7th 1 5 0
 8th 0 3 6
 9th 1 4 9
 10th 0 16 3
 11th 0 15 0
 12th 1 0 6
 13th 2 4 0
 14th 1 17 0
 15th 1 16 9

£ s d
 16th 2 10 6
 17th 2 3 0
 26 6 9
 18th 1 12 9
 27 19 6
 1 Bad
 Sixpence 6
 27 19 0

[f.21]

£ s d
 First Days Col^{on}. 11 0
 Second Do. 12 2
 Chandler 3 3
 Bull 1 6
 Jam^s. Moorby 6
 Third & fourtn 4 1 9
 Fifth Do. & Cash 10 0
 Total £ 27 19 0

[f.22 - blank]

CORRESPONDENCE

The Editor,
Cake & Cockhorse
Sir,

3rd November 1976

Once a statement appears in print it is far too readily accepted as infallible.

I have recently been browsing in a back number of the magazine, Vol. 3, No. 1, September 1965. In his editorial, Barrie Trinder, referring to a contribution by the late Dr. Beeson, 'Edgecote House in 1585', remarks that William Chauncey was owed £20 'by Matthew Knight of the Reindeer Inn'.

Reference to the article itself shows that Dr Beeson did not so commit himself, merely suggesting that he was 'of the Reindeer Inn family', with a reference to page 249 of Beesley's History of Banbury. Whilst the page concerned, which deals with the 1602/3 charity decree, does refer to Matthew Knight, it mentions no connection with the Reindeer or its family.

The builder and proprietor of the Reindeer was, as recorded on the gateway of the inn, and shown from documentary evidence by Michael Laithwaite (C & CH, Vol. 2, No. 10, November 1964, p. 159), John Knight, a wealthy baker who was a leading Banburian, three times Bailiff and father of William Knight who was such a dominant character in early 17th century Banbury. It may well be that Matthew was a relative, even his brother, but I know of no evidence to prove this. Knight is a common surname. And certainly, by 1600, there was little amity between him and William. It was Matthew Knight who made the damning deposition in the Star Chamber case relating to the destruction of the Cross, quoted by Paul Harvey (C & CH, Vol. 3, No. 10, Winter 1967, p. 187) – and in this, at any rate, there is no suggestion of any relationship between him and the man he claims was the chief culprit – William Knight, owner of the Reindeer Inn.

Matthew Knight in fact was a prosperous mercer, who was Bailiff in 1594-5, and took a leading part in Corporation affairs at the end of the 16th century. It seems likely, though I have no proof, that he was son of another John Knight, also a mercer, who was a contemporary of John the baker – so much so that in corporation records they were distinguished by their trades.

That these two might have been cousins is probable, but it is doubtful if this can ever be proved.

Yours faithfully,
J.S.W. Gibson

BANBURY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The Society was founded in 1957 to encourage interest in the history of the town of Banbury and neighbouring parts of Oxfordshire, Northamptonshire and Warwickshire.

The Magazine **Cake & Cockhorse** is issued to members three times a year. This includes illustrated articles based on original local historical research, as well as recording the Society's activities. Publications include **Old Banbury - a short popular history** by E. R. C. Brinkworth (2nd edition), **New Light on Banbury's Crosses**, **Roman Banburyshire**, **Banbury's Poor in 1850**, **Banbury Castle - a summary of excavations in 1972**, **The Building and Furnishing of St Mary's Church, Banbury**, and **Sanderson Miller of Radway and his work at Wroxton**, and a pamphlet **History of Banbury Cross**.

The Society also publishes records volumes. These have included **Clockmaking in Oxfordshire, 1400-1850**; **South Newington Churchwardens' Accounts 1553-1684**; **Banbury Marriage Register, 1558-1837** (3 parts) and **Baptism and Burial Register, 1558-1723** (2 parts); **A Victorian M. P. and his Constituents: The Correspondence of H. W. Tancred, 1841-1850**; a new edition of **Shoemaker's Window**; **Wigginton Constables' Books, 1691-1836**; and **Bodicote Parish Accounts, 1700-1822**. Part 2 of **Banbury Wills and Inventories, 1591-1650**, was published in June 1976, and Part 1 is well advanced.

Meetings are held during the autumn and winter, normally at 7.30 pm. 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 £4.50 including any records volumes published, or £3.00 if these are excluded.

Application forms can be obtained from the Hon. Membership Secretary.

Printed by: Parchment (Oxford) Limited, 60 Hurst Street, Oxford, for the Banbury Historical Society.

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