

# CAKE & COCKHORSE



BANBURY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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# BANBURY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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

# CAKE & COCKHORSE

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

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It is with trembling that we put before some of you the main article in this issue, that by Barrie Trinder on Banbury in 1931 under the title *Fifty Years On*. Many of you share with your editor the attribute of remembering 1931. This being an historical magazine, that places us firmly in history, along with the monumental inscriptions, and the wills and inventories of records volume 13 which is still a ghostly gap on our shelves. Cheer up. There is plenty of pleasure in all our yesterdays, and records volume 13 will turn up if not tomorrow at least in a future which can be foreseen. The series is not like one of those hotels which misses floor 13 for fear that it will be forever empty.

Cheer up too because the rest of this issue is alive with song and dance. There is morris dancing; and there is the Adderbury frieze. In some of our parishes there is warm debate, in connection with the new alternative service book, whether Sunday mornings should be livened up and made more matey. Certainly mediaeval churches were brightly painted, as was classical Rome, and the Adderbury frieze is not the only evidence that rubicund little men added jocund sound to animated sight. Irene Bennett has traced the Church tradition behind the mediaeval sculptures. Doom-watchers, a majority on 20th Century media, were mediaevally a minority. That is why preachers and panellers (any questions) should consult historians.

## ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The AGM will be at Tadmarton Manor on Saturday June 13, by kind invitation of Major and Mrs Asser. James Bond from the Woodstock Museum will speak.

Our cover picture is from an advertisement in the Banbury Guardian of 24 December 1931.

## FIFTY YEARS ON – BANBURY IN 1931

1931 was the year in which unemployment soared to more than two and a half million, when a weak minority Labour government was replaced by a weak 'National' government with a colossal majority, and when Britain came off the Gold Standard. It was the beginning of a period described by Charles Loch Mowat as 'one long diminuendo' which lasted until the spring of 1940.<sup>1</sup> While the view of the 1930s as a time of poverty and hardship has been considerably qualified in recent years by historians who have stressed that for those in work, particularly those living in the south of England, it was a time of rising living standards, with falling prices, new ranges of luxury goods in the shops, and cheap housing, in the older industrial regions it was a time of scarcely relieved misery. Fifty years after the crisis of 1931 it is appropriate to review the place of that year of crisis in the history of Banbury.

In her sociological classic *Tradition and Change*, Margaret Stacey suggested that Banbury in the early twentieth century was a 'traditional' community, whose ways of life and assumptions were abruptly challenged by the building in 1931-33 of an aluminium factory which brought to the town professional managers, migrant workers from the old industrial areas, and effective trades unions. There are many other reasons for seeing 1931 as a turning point in local as well as in national history. It marked the end of a period of stagnation which had begun with the Agricultural Depression in the 1870s. Between 1831 and 1871 the population of Banbury had risen by 83.10 per cent. Between 1871 and 1931 it grew by only 18.56 per cent. While in the mid-nineteenth century Banbury had seen vigorous economic growth, innovations in many fields of technology, a flourishing cultural life, and exceptionally open and free-ranging discussion of political and religious issues, it became in the closing decades of the nineteenth century a very different kind of society. Its social hierarchy was rigid. It was a place 'where you knew where you were'. Business men were slow to innovate, and more concerned with maintaining their social positions than with expanding their concerns. The serious discussion of political and religious issues was strenuously avoided.<sup>2</sup> This was not a situation which had existed since time immemorial, but the product of half a century of economic stagnation which was coming to an end in the early 1930s. A close examination of the year 1931 shows numerous portents of economic and social change, quite apart from the opening of the aluminium factory. It is the purpose of this article to show how the innovations of the early thirties, and the ending of age-old traditional practices, were perceived at the time.

During the year beginning in November 1930 the Mayor of Banbury was Cllr. Fred Mold, a nurseryman, a leader of the Neithrop Wesleyan Mission, a Liberal (although he sat on the Council as an Independent), and a member of the Corporation since 1912. His family collected copies of

the Banbury Guardian during the year of his mayoralty, and it is from this collection that the material in this article has been drawn.<sup>3</sup>

The Banbury Guardian in 1931 was a highly idiosyncratic newspaper. It was edited by William Potts, then in his early sixties, who clearly wrote most of the editorial matter himself. Readers of his History of Banbury will readily recognise his style.<sup>4</sup> It was a newspaper which reflected a community whose activities were pursued at a leisurely pace. The affairs of the local churches and voluntary societies were reported at great length. In August a column and a half was devoted to the departure of two Wesleyan ministers, and two columns to the Jubilee of the Wesleyan Church at Cropredy. In January a whole column was used to summarise the first of a series of lectures on 'The Growth of English Prose', by the Revd. F. E. Hutchinson, secretary of the Oxford University Delegacy for Extra-Mural Studies. Potts was himself chairman of the Banbury and District Lecture School which organised the series. No less than seven and a half columns described the presentation of an Austin Twelve-Six motor car to Canon Jones, Vicar of Banbury, on his departure from the parish on Monday 20 April.<sup>5</sup> Potts wrote with exaggerated deference towards those in authority, as can be seen in his account of an interview with the manager of the aluminium works. He tried scrupulously to appear to be fair to all sides. An examination of the short accounts he wrote of the candidates in the municipal election in November 1931 is an interesting exercise in linguistic analysis, in which, at a distance of 50 years, his preferences appear all too obvious. The leisurely nature of local society is further shown by the long reviews given to two works of local history which appeared during the year, A. Ll. B. Thomas and E. B. Emmot, "William Charles Braithwaite: Memoirs and Papers", and Elsie Corbett, "The History of Spelsbury". Weddings, and not just those of the gentry or leading traders, were described in great detail, and reports often concluded with long lists of presents. Obituaries were similarly detailed, and often quite revealing, and the minutiae of funerals were recorded with precision. In many ways Potts was the epitome of the 'traditional' community which Margaret Stacey described. The Guardian never suggested that anyone acted from unworthy motives; it always assumed that addresses to Brotherhood meetings or chapel anniversaries were worth printing at length, and that the ideas conveyed on such occasions were commonly accepted among all reasonable men.

The crisis of 1931 made only a limited impact on Banbury. The Banbury Guardian had long since ceased to print national and international news. On 3 September 1931 it published a message from the Conservative MP, Major A. J. Edmondson, on the crisis, but he did no more than repeat conventional party thinking on the subject. In the general election in October there was no contest in the Banbury division and Edmondson was returned unopposed. In the borough council elections in November there were pleas that the retiring members, two Conservative and two Labour, might be returned without opposition to avoid the expense of a contest, but

in the event the election was fiercely fought and four Conservatives swept the board. The same party's candidates secured an overwhelming victory in a by-election which followed the creation of new aldermen.

In the sphere of local government there were several important changes in 1931. The old Board of Guardians has disappeared in 1930. The borough boundary was extended during 1931, and it was resolved that Banbury should have a full-time town clerk. Confidence in local government had been rudely shaken the previous year when it was revealed that the borough accountant, G. H. Oakes, had embezzled £7,369 of the council's money, for which he received a 20 month prison sentence. Much time at council meetings early in 1931 was taken up with explanations of the affair. The borough council's offices were for the first time concentrated in one place, after the opening of the new County School (now Stanbridge Hall) allowed the use of the former school buildings in Marlborough Road for the purpose.

Trades Unions in Banbury in the 1920s were far from strong. While their affairs do not figure prominently in the Banbury Guardian in 1931, some significant developments were recorded. The Banbury Typographical Association dined together, and members expressed their pleasure in belonging to a union branch which had flourished for eighty years. In April the formation of a local branch of the National and Local Government Officers Association was announced, and there was a lengthy report of the first annual dinner of the recently formed Banbury branch of the National Union of Teachers.

Incidents during the building of the aluminium works, the site of which had been purchased in 1929,<sup>6</sup> were reported in great detail, and it was obviously seen by the town at large, not just by William Potts, as a development which promised a greater degree of prosperity for the district. High hopes were also entertained of the reconstituted Britannia Works, but these were to be dashed in 1933 when the company went into liquidation.<sup>7</sup> Another significant development was the completion of the Great Western Railway marshalling yard, which for 40 years made Banbury an important railway freight centre.<sup>8</sup> The local printing firm, Cheneys, completed a major extension during 1931. Perhaps the most noticeable and most symbolic change of the year was the removal of cattle selling from the streets. In 1925 Midland Marts Ltd. opened their enclosed cattle market in Grimsbury for auction sales, but it was not until 1931 that the dealers' market was removed there. The dealers went temporarily to Grimsbury during the Michaelmas Fair, the first at which cattle did not appear on the streets, and in November the same issue of the Guardian which announced the beginning of commercial production at the aluminium works reported the last sale of cattle on the streets of Banbury on 12 November.<sup>9</sup>

Many notable changes took place in the appearance of Banbury in the early 1930s. The closure of the Globe Yard Wesleyan Mission in Calthorpe Street in October 1931 was a consequence of the demolition of the

slum property in that region.<sup>10</sup> The worst housing in the town centre had largely been cleared by 1930. At the same time the construction of local authority housing in the suburbs continued, and in March 1931 plans were revealed for the streets subsequently called Ruskin Road and Wykham Place. National and even international concerns were gaining footholds in the town centre. The site of the Red Lion in High Street, Banbury's premier inn during the nineteenth century, had already been acquired by F.W. Woolworth and Co. by 1931, although their store did not open during that year. In January it was announced that Barclays Bank had acquired another of the town's principal inns, the Old George on the corner of Bridge Street and Broad Street, which it intended to destroy and replace with a new building. The pressure from the motor vehicle was increasing, and it was during 1931 that Banbury Cross became a traffic island. The People's Park, purchased with a legacy of the chemist George Vincent Ball and opened in 1919, was much improved during 1931.<sup>11</sup>

The Grand and Palace cinemas dominated public entertainment, and the growing influence of popular dance music was reflected in advertisements for dancing lessons and in the reports on numerous social occasions. The chief venue for social events in Banbury in 1931 seems to have been the Lorna Cafe, which was in the buildings in High Street adjacent to the White Lion, later occupied by the Westminster Bank. It was the scene of such varied events as the Rugby Football Club AGM, a party for the employees of Pilsworth's shop, a bridge drive, a presentation to the Assistant Postmaster who was leaving the town, and the NUT dinner. The largest meeting place in the town was the Co-operative Society garage, where took place a boxing promotion in March, the presentation to Canon Jones on his departure from the parish in April, and an election rally in October. The Michaelmas Fair remained a recreational event of major importance, and the Horse Fair in January still flourished, nearly a hundred horses being sold in 1931.

In retrospect it is clear that if any year was a turning point in Banbury's history it was 1931, but it is a salutary warning to historians that William Potts concluded the year with the observation that it had 'not seen many events in Banbury outstanding among those which fill its ordinary character'. The town's population began to increase rapidly in the 1930s. Like other parts of the south-east Banbury enjoyed a considerable building boom, and other modern industries were established alongside the aluminium factory. Chain stores took root in the town centre, and a third cinema and a swimming pool were added to local amenities. However much the thirties were a period of stagnation and depression at a national level, for Banbury, and for the south-east in general, they were a time of economic growth. In Banbury a pattern of decline dating back half a century was effectively reversed in 1931.

At the conclusion of his English Journey in 1933, J.B. Priestley remarked that he had seen three Englands. The first was Old England, 'of

the country, of the cathedrals and minsters and manor houses and inns, of Parson and Squire'. The second was the nineteenth century 'industrial England of coal, iron, steel, cotton, wool, railways; of thousands of rows of little houses all alike'. The third was:

'the England of arterial and by-pass roads, of filling stations and factories that look like exhibition buildings, of giant cinemas and dance-halls and cafes, bungalows with tiny garages, cocktail bars, Woolworths, motor-coaches, wireless, hiking, factory girls looking like actresses, greyhound racing and dirt tracks, swimming pools and everything given away for cigarette coupons'.<sup>12</sup>

It was in 1931 that Banbury ceased to be part of the first England and became decisively part of the third.

Barrie Trinder

### References

1. C.L. Mowat, **Britain Between the Wars 1918-1940**, 1955, p.413.
2. Margaret Stacey, **Tradition and Change: a study of Banbury**, 1960, pp.11-12, 31, 54-58.
3. I am grateful to Miss Kathleen Mold and Miss Phyllis Mold, grand-daughters of Cllr. Fred Mold, for making this set available to me. The file has now been placed in Banbury Museum. Complete files of the Banbury Guardian are available in the British Library Newspaper Library, Colindale, and in the Bodleian Library.
4. William Potts, **A History of Banbury**, 1958.
5. For an account of Canon Williams's impact on Banbury see Anthony L.E. Williams, **From A to B (Antrim to Bermuda)**, 1972, pp.121-26.
6. W. Potts, *op.cit.*, p.243.
7. Archie Potts, 'Ernest Samuelson and the Britannia Works', C & CH, IV, 12, 1971, pp.187-93.
8. Barrie Trinder, 'The Railway Marshalling Yard at Banbury', C & CH, IV, 8, 1970, pp.131-36.
9. W. Potts, *op.cit.*, p.243.
10. VCH, Oxon, X, p.119.
11. W. Potts, *op.cit.*, p.244.
12. J.B. Priestley, **English Journey**, 1934, pp.397-403.

Banbury Guardian, Thursday, January 1, 1931.

## **BANBURY IN 1930**

### **A Local Retrospect**

The most important event of 1930 was the purchase by the Northern Aluminium Company of the site at Hardwick for the erection of their new works. The matter had been under consideration during the latter part of the previous year and the new year opened with every anticipation that it would not be very old before Banbury would secure this new industry. That anticipation was speedily fulfilled for on February 15th the contract for the purchase of the site was signed and the year closed with the erection of the works in an advanced stage of progress. Another important industrial development has been the large extensions made to the Great Western Railway sidings on the north side of Banbury bridge, which are now nearing completion and will considerably increase the railway work at Banbury and its importance as a railway centre. The old Britannia Works, the foundation of Banbury's industrial character, were transferred to a new company early in the year. Another event of commercial interest is that the Midland Marts Ltd. has this year reached the satisfactory position of being able to declare a dividend, that that new venture which is rapidly making Banbury one of the most important stock markets in the South of England must now be considered as firmly established.....

...

On May 23rd the new County School was formally opened at Easington by Sir Charles Trevelyan, President of the Board of Education. The school had been moved from the old building in Marlborough Road at the opening of the term. In the new school Banbury possesses a building of which it may justly be proud, for it is undoubtedly one of the finest in the provinces. The buildings vacated in Marlborough Road have been purchased by the Town Council as municipal offices. All the borough departments are collected there, and it is a convenience to have them all under one roof, and a new Council Chamber has been constructed in the building. The rate-payers have made a very good financial bargain, for the building was obtained at a price less than would have been the cost of reconstructing the Town Hall to meet the demands of the growing municipal business.

A matter arising out of municipal affairs suddenly arrested the attention of the public on June 6th when the then Borough Accountant was charged concerning defalcations in his department ... there is no need to make further reference here to one of the most unpleasant episodes in the modern municipal history of Banbury.

Neithrop House was formally opened as a Clinic under the Banbury Town Council and the Education Committee on July 4th and possibly no borough of this size has so excellent a centre for carrying on this very important work. Great improvements have been made in the adjoining People's Park during the year, the most important of which has been the opening of the new bowling green and pavilion. Other improvements are

being made and next summer will see Banbury in possession of a pleasure ground which should be an asset to the town.

An old and historical feature of the town has disappeared in the Red Lion Hotel in High Street, bought by a well-known commercial firm and demolished during the summer to be replaced by one of their stores, and part of the site will be occupied by a bank. This has been a matter of regret to those who appreciate the old buildings of the town. It also displaced the local corn market and later in the year this was moved to a new and commodious Corn Exchange, erected by Messrs. Hunt Edmunds and Co. at the rear of the Crown Hotel in Bridge Street, which hotel is being enlarged and reconstructed by the firm. The George Street portion of the old Red Lion was secured by Messrs. Hopcraft and Norris of Brackley, who are continuing it as a licensed house, and for their Banbury Offices and stores . . . .

As, unfortunately, has been the case throughout the country, unemployment has been experienced here to a serious extent. The total at the Banbury Exchange on December 22nd stood at 625. This was 46 less than the previous week as that number of men had been found employment on the site of the Aluminium Works, and it is hoped that as the work there progresses and especially when operations in the completed works commence, a considerable reduction will be made in the total of Banbury's unemployed.

The year 1931 opens with promise for the industrial welfare of Banbury. It is our sincere hope that that promise will be fulfilled.

Banbury Guardian, Thursday, January 29, 1931.

### **THE BRITANNIA WORKS**

#### **Reorganisation and Progress**

#### **The Sale of the Lower Works.**

It may we think, fairly be said that the interest of Banbury people in the business of Messrs. Samuelson and Co., is something more than merely commercial. The founding of the firm and the development of the Britannia Works about 80 years ago changed the character of the town, and the welfare of the town has been ever since so closely connected with that of the works, that a sentimental attachment has been created which makes any change in the latter of more than casual interest. When, therefore, a new firm was formed last March to reorganise and carry on the business it was welcomed as an augury of renewed life and welfare. In the same manner the sale of the Lower Works, announced in these columns last week, has created a similar interest. As we then indicated, the disposal of that part of the older works is part of the original scheme of re-organisation, and the utilisation of modern machines and methods which concentrate the manufacturing processes and eliminate costs by reducing space.

The transfer of plant from the Lower to the Upper Works will occupy the next three months, by which time the purchase for which the contract has been signed will be completed. As we have already said it is

in the interests of more efficient and economic working, that the new Company, upon taking possession, decided to transfer to the Upper or Main Works, all departments which comprised the Lower Works, thereby making it possible to dispose of all but that portion of the latter which is necessary for storage purposes.

This is being accomplished by removing from the Upper Works a considerable amount of obsolete and unserviceable plant, which, together with the entire re-arrangement and grouping of the remaining machinery, renders it practicable to accommodate in somewhat condensed, but much more efficient and up-to-date form, the foundry, smiths' shop, carpenters' and pattern shops, paint shop, pattern stores and saw mill from the other works. . . . .

In the new foundry, which will be capable of producing castings up to 5½ tons weight, an overhead travelling electric crane and a pair of the latest type coke-fired mould and core drying ovens are being installed, while numerous improvements in the arrangement and layout are being effected during the transfer of small plant and equipment from the existing foundry, and it is anticipated that, with the increased facilities, double the output possible with the old equipment will be obtained.

Particular attention has been paid to the machine shop arrangement, which is such that all classes of light and heavy machining, from the turning of a simple brass bush to the machining of a casting of several tons weight, can be accomplished with expedition, and adequate space has been reserved for fitting, mounting and assembling heavy machinery, etc., which is handled by means of large capacity hand-power travelling cranes.

Like the machine shop, the saw mill is equipped with a complete range of light and heavy machinery, capable of handling all classes of repetition work to limits of great accuracy, such for example as is necessary in certain milling machinery woodwork.

In short, the tout ensemble comprises a self-contained and complete engineering factory adapted for the execution of widely varied general engineering work and there is every prospect that the works, newly-equipped and with up-to-date methods and process and the enterprise being exhibited by the new Company which has already received most encouraging support, a new era of prosperity lies ahead of Banbury's famous and old-fashioned industry.

Banbury Guardian, Thursday, February 5th, 1931.

## **NEW TRAFFIC REGULATIONS AT THE CROSS**

### **Institution of the Roundabout System**

A further development in traffic control has been this week instituted at Banbury Cross, by the institution of the roundabout system, and Superintendent Hedges asks to draw the attention of the public to it. It should be born in mind that

All vehicles, from whatever direction, must pass the Cross, **having the Cross on their right hand.**

If this simple direction is born in mind by drivers of all classes of vehicles, motor or otherwise, there can be no confusion and the risks of accidents will be minimised. All drivers have to remember is that the Cross, when they pass it, must be on their right.

Vehicles from South Bar to High Street must in future pass round the west of the Cross instead of cutting between the south island and the Cross as heretofore. Vehicles from High Street to West Bar must pass round the South Bar side of the Cross, as must those from the Horse Fair to West Bar. These constitute vital alterations in the courses at present taken and should be remembered.

Arrows giving directions and stop signs have been painted on the road.

Banbury Guardian, Thursday, February 19, 1931.

### **ELECTRICAL PROGRESS IN BANBURY AREA**

#### **Many New Consumers**

The Shropshire, Worcestershire and Staffordshire Electric Supply Company during the present year have connected approximately 150 new consumers to their mains in the Banbury area. Cables have been laid practically all over the town, with the exception of a portion of the Easington estate, and work on this section will be commenced almost immediately, a number of prospective consumers having everything ready to be connected.

The new municipal housing scheme near the County School at Easington will have the advantage of electric installation. Many new consumers have just been connected in the Grimsbury district, where the most recent cable-laying scheme was carried out.

The S. W. and S. Power Company has lately further increased its activities, having absorbed the South Wales Power Company, and its total area now covers approximately 4,000 square miles. An 11,000 volt high tension transmission line is in course of erection from Moreton-in-Marsh to Banbury, the route of the line being via Long Compton and Hook Norton. It will join up with the existing 11,000 volt line at Adderbury. A further line of similar voltage from Stratford-on-Avon to Banbury is contemplated. This line will join on to the present line which runs parallel with the Southam Road and the canal, and which supplies the Aluminium Factory from Banbury Power Station.

Our representative was informed that the piece of land that has recently been fenced off in Mr. Rathbone's field by the Southam Road will eventually house the transforming and switching gear necessary to deal with 66,000 volt supply which will shortly be available in Banbury by direct line from the company's main generating station at Stourport, which is about 56 miles distant from Banbury. By this means Banbury will be in a position to offer unlimited power to any commercial enterprise likely to commence operations here.

Banbury Guardian, Thursday, May 28, 1931.

### **THE PALACE THEATRE**

The Bloxham School Presentation of "The Mikado".

The programme at the Palace all this week is well up to the high standard which the management of that theatre has recently provided for their patrons. The leading film "The Bad One" combines romance, drama and comedy, very well blended and the acting, especially that of Dolores Del Rio and Edmund Lowe, is faultless. "Egypt", another of those delightful travelogues and "The Life of Chopin" one of the Music Master series are among the supporting items, in addition to comedy and other interest and topical items. A very entertaining programme.

For the first three days next week, the beautiful Nancy Carroll appears in a modern romantic drama, "The Devil's Holiday", and on Thursday next week the leading film will be "The Return of Dr. Fu Manchu", a thrilling mystery drama, with Warner Oland, Neil Hamilton - who is fast becoming one of the leading screen actors of the day - and O.P. Heggie, in the chief roles. Both these films are very good productions, and together with the usual excellent supporting programmes which the Palace management arrange will doubtless prove first rate entertainment.

Booking has now commenced in earnest for the two performances of "The Mikado" which are to be given on Monday and Tuesday, June 29th and 30th by the Bloxham School Operatic and Dramatic Society in aid of the Horton General Hospital. We have been asked to make it clear that "The Mikado" is not a "Talkie" as quite a number of people have enquired whether it is so.

Banbury Guardian, Thursday, October 1, 1931

### **THE ALUMINIUM WORKS**

#### **THE COMMENCEMENT OF WORK**

#### **DESCRIPTION OF THE PROCESSES**

A tour of the Works

The announcement in last Thursday's paper that the starting of the works of the Northern Aluminium Company at Banbury had been suspended in consequence of the financial situation and the state of trade, caused the greatest disappointment here. That suspension was due to a cablegram from Canada. On Friday morning another cablegram was received cancelling the suspension and in view of the prospective imposition of a tariff, and the signs of a trade revival, ordering the works here to start as arranged. . . . . A representative of the Banbury Guardian was very kindly granted an interview with Mr. R.D. Palmer, the General Works Manager.

Naturally the first question asked was what was the possible date of starting work. Mr. Palmer replied that some little time must still elapse before the actual commercial output would begin. 'We have to tune up the whole of the plant', he said, 'Next week we shall start the hot rolling mill. That will run light for a day or two to test the bearings and other parts. If these are satisfactory a few rolling ingots will be heated and hot

rolled. The roughing and finishing mills will be tested with this sheet, and so on until all the plant is tuned up. Then we can commence work'.

'About when do you expect that will be?'

'I have started too much machinery', he replied, 'to be certain as to the time required, but if nothing occurs during the tests to cause us delay, I should imagine we shall be able to be at work by November 1st'.

Then we put a question as to the number of men likely to be employed.

Mr. Palmer replied that they would start with one eight-hour shift, which would mean about 125 employees. They had, of course, to train these and that would at the start check the employment. As soon however, as they had one shift trained, they would put on another and so double the employment by running two shifts a day. Ultimately they hoped to be employing three shifts, running the whole twenty-four hours. That, of course, would mean three times the number of employees. Some of these would be girls used in cutting and other of the lighter processes. There was an office staff of about 25 which would be unaffected by the number of shifts. . . . the Company's railway siding runs in from the Great Western Railway and it is here that the pig aluminium will be delivered. There was a large stacking, weighing some 450 tons, standing there ready for the start. The railway line runs along the exterior of this building and here electric hoists will lift consignments of coke from the trucks unto the coke bunkers from which the melting furnaces in the interior of the building will be fed. . . .

The first process is to remelt the aluminium pigs. This is done in the smaller limb of the building. . . Here are two coke-heated furnaces, each of 20,000 lbs. capacity, capable of one heat a day and therefore producing each day 40,000 lbs. of rolling ingots. The molten metal runs from the furnaces into crucibles and these are carried on overhead trolleys to the moulds, which are 16 in number, each of which casts an ingot for the rolling mill. These ingots are carried by trucks to the huge hot rolling mill in the main building.

#### The Hot Rolling Mill

This is the heaviest machine in the works. It is driven by a 1,000 horse power motor and has its foundations 17 feet deep in the earth. It consists of three large rollers which are astride a table 150 feet in length, made up of a series of rollers which carry the ingots forward between the lower and middle rollers and then, by automatically rising, back between the middle and upper rollers until the ingot is reduced to a sheet of the required thickness. When the metal ingot is placed on the table of this rolling machine from the mould it is  $5\frac{1}{2}$  inches thick, 16 inches wide and 30 inches long. It passes backwards and forwards through the rollers until it becomes a sheet  $\frac{1}{4}$  of an inch thick (or even less), from 2 feet to 6 feet wide and from 16 feet to 40 feet long.

#### The Cold Rolling Mills

The hot rolling mill having produced from the ingot a sheet of the dimen-

sions given above, of which the length had been increased from the 30 inches of the ingot to an average of 30 feet, this is then taken to the cold rolling mills for the process of roughing and finishing, being first cut into manageable lengths. Then it is carried to the rolling mills . . . . Each of these consists of two adjustable rollers. The roughing mills further reduce the sheet to the thickness required, for which purpose the upper of the two rollers can be raised or lowered. Heavy as the machine is, this is a simple process. The operator merely presses a button and an electric motor raises or lowers the upper roller, while a dial indicates the aperture thus procured, and which will be the thickness of the sheet, which while it is reduced in thickness is, of course, increased in length.

Then it is passed on to another mill in the "train", through the rolls of which it is passed until it attains the right degree of surface finish. It is then ready to be cut into the requisite sizes for supplying to the aluminium manufacturing trade. For some purposes of manufacture a softened sheet is required and this is secured by an electrically annealing process after the sheet leaves the finishing mill. An adjacent apartment is awaiting the erection of machines for heat-treating aluminium alloys, for use in such manufactures as aircraft and bus construction. At the end of the main building a machine is in course of erection for roll grinding. The rollers of the mills have necessarily to be very smooth and accurately cambered, and to preserve these qualities they will be ground on the powerful machine now being built. . . .

Asked as to the output of which the works will be capable, Mr. Palmer said that with the present plant working night shifts, the capacity would be the production of 35,000 lbs. of sheet aluminium a day, working six days a week. Space has been left and the foundations laid, however, for the erection of further melting furnaces and mills when required. Distribution of finished goods will mostly be by road lorries, and incoming pigs and goods will be brought by rail. . . .

We must express to Mr. Palmer our thanks for the courtesy and help afforded us, and the time he placed at our disposal, in order that we might be able to give the public the above account of the buildings and the processes on which the works will be employed.

Banbury Guardian, Thursday, October 22, 1931.

#### **BANBURY'S OLDEST PRINTING FIRM**

Extension of Messrs. Cheney and Sons' Works.

The present year has seen the commencement of a new departure in the development of the firm of Messrs. Cheney and Sons, who have recently completed the extension of their works which has increased the area of the premises by about forty per cent. The building has been extended on the east side and is now practically double the size of the building which was erected in 1895 when the firm moved into Calthorpe Street and an addition of three-eighths to the building which was erected in 1923 after the fire.

The new part includes new offices, a small extension of the composing room, a considerable addition to the machine and bindery room and also considerable additions to the paper store room and packing warehouse. The work has been done by the firm of Messrs. Bloxham and Hardy, who have carried it out with great efficiency.

The extensions record another step in the development of what is certainly by far the oldest firm of printers in the town.

Banbury Guardian, Thursday, October 22, 1931.

### **THE BANBURY MICHAELMAS FAIR**

An enjoyable carnival

This ancient fair passed off very successfully on Thursday and Friday. Thousands of visitors from the surrounding country and further afield came by rail, bus or car and the fine weather enhanced their pleasure and comfort. Many of the attractions were in full swing on Wednesday night, the eve of the fair. It is many years since the fair was favoured with such delightful weather.

For the first time in the history of the fair there were no cattle in the streets. It was customary for the store cattle to stand in Broad Street, Newland, and Marlborough Road, but on this occasion the dealers agreed to take their cattle and do their business at the Midland Marts Saleyard where they occupied the portion which has been provided for their permanent accommodation. We were informed that they were pleased with the site and the arrangements, and that the proceedings which are in progress for their permanent occupation of the site are likely to mature. In Broad Street there were a number of horses brought by dealers who did their business by barter in the time-honoured way.

Superintendent Hedges and his staff of constabulary very efficiently dealt with the traffic. The buses plying in and out of the south, west and north of the town were parked in South Bar, the Horse Fair and North Bar, and those from the east on the Grimsbury side, and motor traffic coming through the town was diverted through the side streets.

The attractions of the fair were as varied as ever. The most popular was the Ghost Train through Ghost Town. In little coupes visitors rode round two by two to enjoy the thrills and it was an amusing experience. Cornhill was occupied by a motor carnival "Dodge-um" and this was an extremely popular diversion. There were the usual roundabouts and an almost endless variety of games of chance for prizes, which made lovely "fairings" for both children and adults.

The pleasures of the fair were kept up till a late hour of Friday night, but the town had assumed its normal appearance on Saturday.

Banbury Guardian, Thursday, October 29, 1931.

### **IMPROVEMENTS IN THE PEOPLE'S PARK**

The New Band Stand

By the courtesy of Mr. S. Hilton, the Borough Surveyor, we print

# Look back 50 years

Which of these delightful ready-to-serve summer foods and drinks do you think you could have obtained at a moment's notice 50 years ago?

All through a history of more than half-a-century the International Stores have continually introduced and developed every new method of manufacture or trading that would better their service to their customers.

When one hears of what food shops were like in Grandmother's younger days and sees what the International Branches are now—the immense progress that has been made is astonishing.



## HOLIDAY FARE

Note these prices for FINEST Goods

### COOKED GAMMON

	per lb
Choice, sliced	2/4
Whole or Half	2/2

### MEATS IN GLASS

	per glass
Lunch Tongues	2/- & 2/9
Ox Tongues	4/3 & 6/-
Oxford Brawn	1/- & 1/6

### PASTES

	per glass
Meat or Fish	4½d & 6½d
Mitre Brand.	Many Varieties

### MITRE PICKLES

Mixed or	per jar
Piccalilli	8½d, 1/2 & 2/2
And many other kinds	

### EMPIRE FRUITS

Apricots	large tins	8½d
Peaches	"	8d
Pears	"	10d
Choice Fruit in heavy syrup		

### CORDIALS

	bottles
Lemon Squash	10½d & 1/3
Orange Squash	1/- & 1/6
Lime Juice Cordial	10½d & 1/3

### CANNED FISH

	lives
Best Red Salmon	1/2
Choice Sardines	4d & 7d
Norwegian Brisling	5½d
Finest Lobster	10d & 1/5

Also Confectionery, Jellies, Fruits, etc. in great variety at moderate prices

# International Stores

The Greatest Grocers  
in the World

Tea, Coffee,  
Groceries and Provisions

above a photograph of the band stand which has been erected in the People's Park, Banbury. The work was completed last week and the hoarding removed and the public are now able to appreciate the latest addition to the Park, which will prove a great asset to its amenities next summer, when band concerts will no doubt be regularly arranged.

As will be seen by the photograph, the band stand is of classic design, the nearly flat roof being carried in front by six pedestals and columns of reconstructed Bath stone, rising from the front of the platform, which is three feet above the ground, and the front of which is finished with a reconstructed stone coping which surmounts the front walls of the same material pannelled in white cement. A flight of concrete steps in the centre gives access to the platform. The spaces between the pedestals are filled with oak balustrades.

At the back the roof is carried by six piers of two-inch hand made red bricks, bevelled-edged and sand faced, each pier being 18 inches by 18 inches, pointed with white cement, the intervening spaces at back and sides being filled with oak-framed casement windows. The piers and columns are surmounted by a wooden frieze and cornice, painted with permastone, giving the effect of stone texture. The floor of the platform is laid with two-inch oak boards, grooved and tongued and secret-jointed. There is a shallow dais running along the back of the platform. The roof is covered with two layers of rubberoid, with a layer of bitumen between the two courses.

The stand is rectangular in shape with a bowed front, the dimensions being 25 feet wide and 15 feet deep, large enough to accommodate a band of forty performers.

The whole has been designed by Mr. Hilton and the columns were made to his drawings by the Croft Granite Company, Leicester. It has been built under Mr. Hilton's supervision by direct labour. The foundation stone was laid by Raymond Hilton, the Surveyor's twelve year old son.

The stand has been erected at the bottom of the open part of the Park, backing against the stream which separates that part from the gardens of Neithrop House, and the sloping ground in front forms a natural amphitheatre, which will accommodate a large audience. The wooden fencing, which has hitherto divided the Park from the gardens, has been removed and a couple of bridges over the stream give access to the latter, through which the new entrance from Warwick Road is reached. These large iron-work gates with the new open iron fencing on low stone walls, not only give a handsome finish to this part of the Park, but constitute an improvement to the Warwick Road. From the gardens a wicket gate leads to the bowling green.

The well timbered garden, with its lawns and flower beds, constitutes a most welcome addition to the Park and the public are fortunate in having such an attractive resort. All tastes are catered for now in the Park. In addition to the expanse of open grassland with its numerous trees

giving shade on a hot day, there are pleasant gardens for those who want to rest, while the more energetic have the hard tennis courts, the bowling green and the putting green, and the children their playground, with its swings, see-saws and paddling pool.

The new bandstand now provides for concerts being given and heard under comfortable conditions. It is, as will be seen, of the modern sheel type, which is replacing the old-fashioned circular open stand, on which it is a great improvement from the acoustic point of view. In front of the stand there will be flower beds enclosed by a low railing. Ratepayers will be interested to know that the cost of the stand has been provided from a fund independent of the rates.

Banbury Guardian, Thursday, October 29, 1931.

### **SALE OF THE GLOBE YARD WESLEYAN MISSION HALL**

Owing to the demolition of the houses round and about the Mission Hall in Globe Yard, Calthorpe Street, it has been found impossible to continue the work there and the trustees have decided to offer the hall for sale.

For more than 50 years the Mission has carried on a successful work among the people there. Until the present hall was erected, the services were held in some cottages, conducted by a large mission band, and at that time the rooms were usually crowded and much good work was accomplished. A capital Sunday School, Women's Meeting, Savings Bank, Band of Hope, Sunday and weekday services and all the usual work of a successful Mission Church was most enthusiastically and successfully carried on.

The present hall has been the scene of much interesting and lasting evangelistic work. With great regret it has been found necessary to sell the hall, for owing to the removal of the people who usually attended the services and meetings, it has been found impossible to carry on the activities of which the hall was the centre.

Banbury Guardian, Thursday, November 5, 1931.

### **THE ALUMINIUM WORKS**

Work Commencing this week.

Large consignment of pig aluminium

The Northern Aluminium Company who have now quite completed the large rolling mills at Banbury are commencing operations this week and are starting with evidences of the coming trade revival. A cargo of 2,500 tons of pig aluminium shipped from Arvida, Quebec, is being delivered from Manchester to add to the initial stock of 500 tons already at the works, and the first batch of finished sheets will be rolled this week. Shipments are being pushed forward in haste, the prospects of tariffs having given an impetus to the trade.

Mr. R.D. Palmer, the general manager of the Banbury works, informs us that about 75 men will commence work at once. His company, he says, are delighted with the result of the General Election, and he

considers moderate tariffs in this country will assuredly lead to prosperity, and the filip to trade would have a favourable reflex on other countries, because experience has shown that the prosperity of one country has never interfered with that of another, but has had a contrary effect. He did not anticipate any tariff would be put on imported pig aluminium coming into this country, and that would be where judicious trade bargaining would come in, and their's was a clear case for colonial preference. He predicted a great impetus to commercial enterprise like their's, and they hoped very soon to find employment for about 200 people.

Banbury Guardian, Thursday, November 19, 1931

### **THE ALUMINIUM WORKS**

Work Commenced

It is good news that at last the Northern Aluminium Works at Hardwick, Banbury commenced work this week on a commercial basis, and are now turning out orders. The first consignment was passing through inspection for delivery to customers yesterday (Wednesday). On Tuesday the large hot-rolling mill rolled out 50 ingots.

Banbury Guardian, Thursday, November 26, 1931.

### **THE CLOSING OF THE CALTHORPE STREET WESLEYAN MISSION HALL**

Valedictory Sunday Evening Service

Sunday evening was a sad occasion in connection with the Calthorpe Street Mission Hall as it was the last occasion when the Wesleyan Church will hold services there. The property has been sold to Mrs. Girling, and will no longer be used as a place of worship.

Mr. F. Batts, who has been a leading and very conscientious worker there for many years conducted the service and alluded in his sermon to many people who in days gone by had worked in the mission, and he paid a tribute to Mrs. Taylor, the caretaker, and to Mr. James Tobin, who for the past three years had played the organ....

Banbury Guardian, Thursday, December 31, 1931.

Banbury in 1931

A local retrospect.

The year which closes to-night has not seen many events in Banbury outstanding among those which fill its ordinary calendar. The latter seem to get more numerous every year. The past twelve months have been marked by activities in all spheres of our local life and it may be said that all have shown success and progress in the aims and efforts for which they exist. The conditions have not been of a very exhilarating character. The wet summer militated against sports and other outdoor events, and although we had a cheering period of fine weather in September and October, the national financial crisis had then accrued and had tinged the outlook with anxiety, though it cannot be said that it hampered to any degree the progress of local organisations or efforts made on their behalf. Another depressing feature of the year has been the growth of local unemployment.

In our Retrospect last year we recorded that the total at the Banbury Exchange on December 22nd, 1930 stood at 624. On December 21st, the corresponding date this year, the total was 1254. It has, therefore, been doubled during the year and now stands at the highest figure ever recorded. To a large extent this is due to the completion during the year of several works which had been absorbing local labour, and the prevention of new undertakings owing to the general uncertainty of the national situation, which has also checked production in local industries.

On the other side we have to set the completion of, and the start of work at the works of the Northern Aluminium Company Ltd. at Hardwick. Last year closed with the works in the progress of erection, a very trying time of negotiations having been brought to an end by the purchase of the site on the 5th of February preceding. The work of erection and equipment was practically completed and a commencement of work in a few weeks was anticipated. The town suffered a shock therefore when we had to announce in our issue of September 24th that a cablegram had been received from the associated undertaking in Canada which supplies the aluminium pigs for rolling ordering a suspension of the opening of the works here. The next morning, however, another cablegram cancelled the former and ordered the work to proceed as arranged. A special edition of the Banbury Guardian was at once issued, and the interest taken in the works in the town was demonstrated by the wide and immediate demand for it, several hundred copies being sold in a short space of time. The completion of the work was pushed on, and the start of the commercial output was made on November 17th, when the large hot mill rolled out 50 ingots. Another development completed during the year was the new hump sidings at the Great Western Railway, which was opened for business on July 27th, and which adds considerably to Banbury's importance as a railway centre. While its completion led to the cessation of work entailed by the labour over many months of its construction, it at once added to the number of railwaymen employed at Banbury. . . . .

At the beginning of July the preliminary statement of the results of the Census taken in April were issued. These showed that the population of Banbury then stood at 6,675 males and 7,728 females, a total of 13,953 persons, showing an increase of 319 males, 294 females, or a total of 613 persons over the census figures of 1921. The Town Council have been concerned with further housing schemes during the year. An addition of 78 new houses to the Easington estate is nearing completion, and the proceeding involved by the compulsory purchase of land in Warwick Road for a further housing scheme are drawing towards their closing states, and the New Year will probably see building commenced there.

The coming year will also see an extension of the Borough Boundary, under the Local Government Act of 1929. Land at the top of Hardwick Hill down to the Hanwell Brook will be transferred to the Borough from the parish of Bourton, and there will be an adjustment of the boundary involving

a few fields in the fork of the roads opposite the Barleymow Inn on the Warwick Road, transferring land from Drayton. These are minor alterations to dispose of an irregular boundary line. Rather more important is the transfer from Bodicote parish. The line of the Borough boundary in the Salt Way will be carried eastward along that lane to Bodicote and hence to the Oxford Road and across the fields down to the River Cherwell to join the existing boundary where it leaves the river to run to the Oxford Road along the bottom of the gardens of the houses on the south side of Hightown Road. By this all the houses and lands on the east of the Oxford Road between Hightown Road and the first Bodicote turn will be in the Borough of Banbury, and the present anomaly of one side of the Oxford Road being in the Borough, and the opposite side in the parish of Bodicote will cease to exist. The area of the Borough will be increased from 4, 633 to 5, 051 acres. . . . .

At the beginning of February a one-way system of traffic at Banbury Cross was introduced. All vehicles from or to whatever direction, have to pass on the left of the Cross. Motorists and others speedily fell into the observance of the new regulation, which has been facilitated by the erection of very distinct notice boards. It has worked with complete smoothness, as is shown by the fact that during the eleven months it has been in operation there has been no serious accident at this once dangerous spot. . . . .

One important step has been taken during the year in the final removal of the cattle market from the streets of the town. For years this has been what is described as 'a burning question' and when the Midland Marts Company was formed, they were compelled, as part of the agreement, to set aside a portion of their saleyard for the accommodation of dealers in store cattle. Negotiations between the Town Council, the Midland Marts and the cattle dealers have since then been continuously in progress without reaching an agreement. This was, however, achieved this year, the Corporation renting the portion of the saleyard and removing the sales of cattle by private dealing thereto, an agreed scale of tolls being eventually achieved. It was on Michaelmas Fair Day this year that the streets were for the first time free of cattle, the dealers asking to be allowed to use the saleyard at Grimsbury instead of being removed to side streets as has previous been the practice on fair day. But, all formalities having been complied with, at the beginning of November the Town Council, acting on the powers they hold, issued a notice that after November 13th all trading in cattle must take place on the allotted ground adjoining the Midland Marts Saleyard, and so November 12th was the last market day on which a cattle market was held in the streets of the town. . . . .

The People's Park has been increased in its amenities in many ways during the year, under the care of Mr. S. Hilton, the Borough Surveyor, and in October an important addition to it was completed in the shape of a substantial and elegantly designed bandstand designed by Mr. Hilton.

The park provides Banbury with a place for rest or recreation which is a credit to the town, and the opening into it of the Neithrop House gardens has enhanced its attractiveness and value. At last, by the addition of the bandstand the public will have facilities for listening to open-air music which have hitherto been lacking.....

The question of a full time Town Clerk has been before the Council for some considerable time, and it was decided at the October meeting that the Town Clerk appointed after Mr. Stockton's retirement should be given a salary of £500 a year as Town Clerk and Clerk to the Education Committee, rising by six annual increments of £25 to the sum of £650 per annum, and that an assistant should be provided at a salary of £150 rising to £200.....

If the closing period of the year has been marked by uncertainty and anxiety, it has not been altogether of a depressing nature, for it is felt here, as elsewhere that the troubles afflicting the country have been realised, and being dealt with, as to all appearances they are, the coming year will see a turn in the tide of the nation's affairs. The year certainly closes on a note of optimism, and we profoundly trust that 1932 will not be very old when we discover that it has been justified and that Banbury will have its full measure of the better things which such a change in our affairs will bring.

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## THE FRIEZE IN ADDERBURY CHURCH

A feature several Churches in the area of Banbury share in common is decorative stone-work, frequently carved below the cornices of a parapet as at Adderbury, Bloxham, Alkerton and Hanwell. Quite probably these churches shared the skill of an imaginative stone master-craftsman.

The Adderbury frieze is an outstanding example of such work - running from E to W along the outer wall of the N aisle and being intercepted by a decorated window with the Coronation of the Virgin; our Lord on the W crowning the Blessed Virgin, on the E an angel on either side. [Adderbury Church is dedicated to St Mary the Virgin.] This sculptured scroll in stone provides a coherent picture of a rural community in festive mood. In the words of the Rev. Henry Gepp, Fellow of New College Oxford, and Vicar of Adderbury from 1874-1913 and Rural Dean of Deddington 1906-1912 - the quality of these carvings convey "much life and animation" - adding "that the villagers of that date had a keen sense of humour and of the charm of music" - a reference to the 10 musical instruments which figure on the frieze.

The inspiration of the Adderbury frieze presented to the eye of the writer a living page of Mediaeval festivity - spread across the north wall like a human scroll, it conveys an intensely human quality, vital and life-like and more especially suggestive of human pleasure and zest in the celebration. But what particular festival? Did it stem from rural or religious traditions? These were the questions to be sought to be solved and it is this starting point that prompted the following researches.

It is interesting to read in Charles E Keyser's paper of January 1924, from the *Antiquaries Journal*, "Sculptured cornices on Churches near Banbury", that these sculptures "were a quaint conceit of an ingenious mind", and later, "One is at a loss to understand the motive for introducing such subjects on the walls of such sacred edifices. It may be conceded that they were intended to convey some salutary lessons to the uninstructed and popular world which we are unable to fathom at the present time".

The early Church from the 4th century onwards re-enacted the main events in the life of Christ through processions, providing visually living pictures of these central occasions, so that the faithful followers could be sustained and re-enforced in their belief.

The description of these processions is recorded by Etheria,<sup>1</sup> a lady of noble birth of Galician origin, who tells of "the faithful betaking themselves to Bethlehem, 6 miles from Jerusalem, on the Eve of Epiphany, and in the church at the Grotto of the Holy Manger sang an office. Before dawn the clergy and people returned to Jerusalem singing 'Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord'. On Palm Sunday, a week before Easter, was celebrated the entry into Jerusalem. The climax of the ceremony came later in the afternoon when the clergy and people gathered at

the Church of the Ascension, on the summit of the Mount of Olives. Here they heard the Gospel narrative of the event, after which the Bishop, preceded by the people singing hymns and antiphons, with children and even infants in arms, carrying branches of Palm. The procession descended from the Mount of Olives, entered the City and the Bishop conducted evening service in the Church of Anastasis which encloses the Holy Sepulchre".

At Augsburg and Essen in Germany during the Middle Ages, a striking feature of this Palm Sunday ceremonial was to bring into church the wooden figure of Christ riding upon an Ass (called a Palmesel).



*Palmesel* from Steinen, Switzerland, in the Schweizerisches Landesmuseum, Zurich

It is thought the custom went as far back as 973.

After the blessing of the Palms, the Palmesel was placed in the middle of the Church facing East and the hymn - All Glory Laud and Honour - (sung to this very day on Palm Sunday) was sung. Each verse was taken first by the choristers and then repeated by those attending the service.

#### YMNUS:

Gloria, laus et honor tibi sit, Rex Christe Redemptor,  
Cui puerile decus prompsit Osanna pium.  
Israel es tu rex, Davidis et inclita proles;  
Nomine qui in Domini, rex benedicte, venis. Gloria.  
Cetus in excelsis te laudat celicus omnis,  
Et mortalis homo, et cuncta creata simul. Cui.  
Plebs Hebrea tibi cum palmis obvian venit  
Cum prece, voto, ymnis assumus ecce tibi. Gloria.  
Hi tibi passuro solvebant munia laudis;  
Nos tibi regnanti pangimus ecce melos. Cui.  
Hi placuere tibi, placeat devotio nostra,  
Rex pie, rex clemens, cui bona cuncta placent. Gloria.

From a History of the Environs of Paris (by Dulaure)<sup>2</sup> comes the legend to the effect that the ass ridden by Christ came ultimately to Verona, died there and was buried in a wooden effigy at Santa Maria in Organo and honoured by a yearly procession.

A 16th century English author, Brand, in "A Dialogue: the Pilgrimage of Pure Devotyon" says, "Upon Palme Sundaye they play the foles sadly, drawynge after them an Ass in a rope, when they be not moche distante from the wooden Ass that they draw" (Chambers 1 p.333-4). None of the events that followed Palm Sunday are omitted from such commemorations. The Last Supper, The Agony in the Garden, The Crucifixion with the services held at the Church of Golgotha or Martyrium, and at the Holy Sepulchre. Finally, the Adoration of the Cross, where each worshipper kneels (probably the Anglican custom of genuflecting had its origin in this) touches the relic of the Cross with eyes and forehead and passes on.

The Ascension and Pentecost provide the most vivid realistic commemorations held, as they were on the spot where Christ ascended and for Pentecost, in the Church of Sion, where the Holy Spirit descended upon the disciples. These commemorative events in the East, gradually found their way to the West (with certain modifications) and from them sprang the Liturgical Calendar. (The Procession of Palms figures in Liturgical use at Winchester and Salisbury), briefly, the Calendar of Christian Festivals were as follows:

**Advent** Nov. 27th - Dec. 3rd; **Christmas** Dec. 25th to **Epiphany** Jan. 6th, with the Nativity as the central theme. During the Middle Ages added colour was given by the visit of the Magi, the baptism of Jesus in Jordan, and his first miracle in Cana.

**Lent** came as the next major season of the Calendar, beginning with Ash Wednesday and ending on Easter Eve. On Maundy Thursday the washing of feet was commemorated, the Last Supper, (the institution of the Eucharist), on Good Friday, the Crucifixion, and Easter, the Resurrection. Pentecost or Whit Sunday, a fortnight or so later, with the Feast of the Ascension, 10 days before Pentecost. It is significant to discover that Rogation, devoted specially to ask for forgiveness of sins and particularly to seek heavenly blessing on the fruits of the earth, intervened before Ascension.

In these earlier centuries, dramatic interest centred on the simple appeal of Palm Sunday. Though these splendidly vivid ceremonials were designed to make an impact upon the faithful, as yet none could with justice be claimed as liturgical drama. Dramatic and moving methods of intoning the Lessons or Passiones of Holy Week, from St. Mathew, St. Mark, St. Luke and St. John, underline the continuing aim to make a powerful impact in the reading of the Gospel narratives by contrasting voices of pitch and calibre.

"The narrative is given by one in a strong, manly tenor voice; the words of our Saviour are chaunted in a deep solemn bass and whatever is spoken by any other person is given by the third in a high contralto (counter Tenor). This at once produces a dramatic effect; each part has its particular cadence, of old, simple, but rich chaunt, suited to the character represented, and worthy of ancient tragedy. That of the narrator is clear, distinct, and slightly modulated; that in which ordinary interlocutors speak, sprightly and almost bordering upon colloquial familiarity; but that in which our Saviour's words are uttered, is slow, grave and most solemn, beginning low and ascending by full tones, then gently varied in rich though simple undulations, till it ends by a graceful and expressive cadence, modified with still greater effective interrogating phrases".<sup>3</sup>

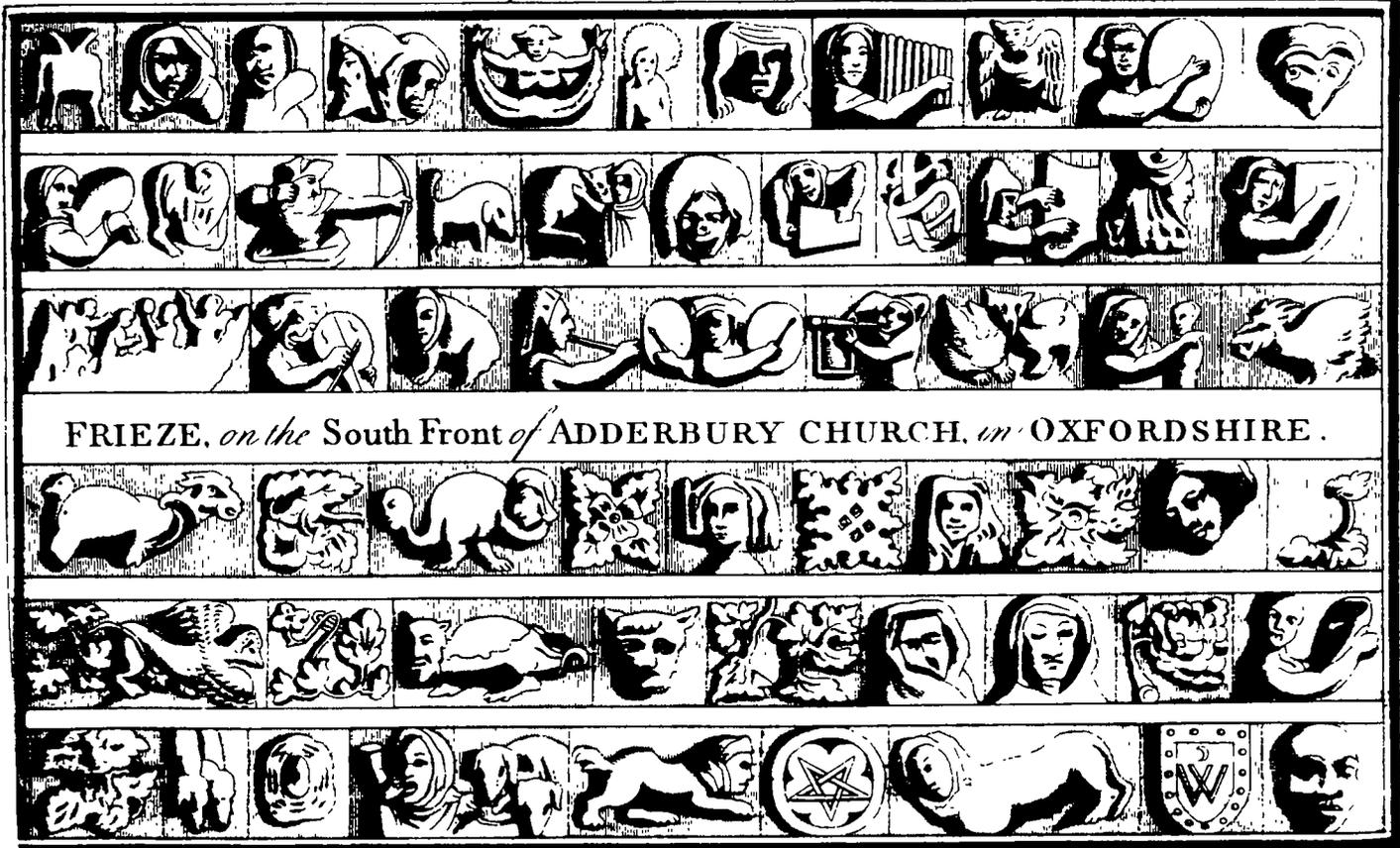
Two of the observances of Holy Week - The DEPOSITIO (or Burial) and the ELEVATIO (or Resurrection) - with the HARROWING of HELL intervening - were in use in the 10th century in Winchester (the latter even earlier).

In the first, a symbolic burying of the Body of Christ, a consecrated Cross and Host were placed in a Sepulchrum (simulating the Sepulchre) and placed upon a special altar. The altar was a symbol of a tomb, and the custom of wrapping the Cross in a clean linen cloth brings to light the Jewish custom at a burial to wrap the body in a shroud and then bind the shroud to the body by winding long strips of cloth about it.

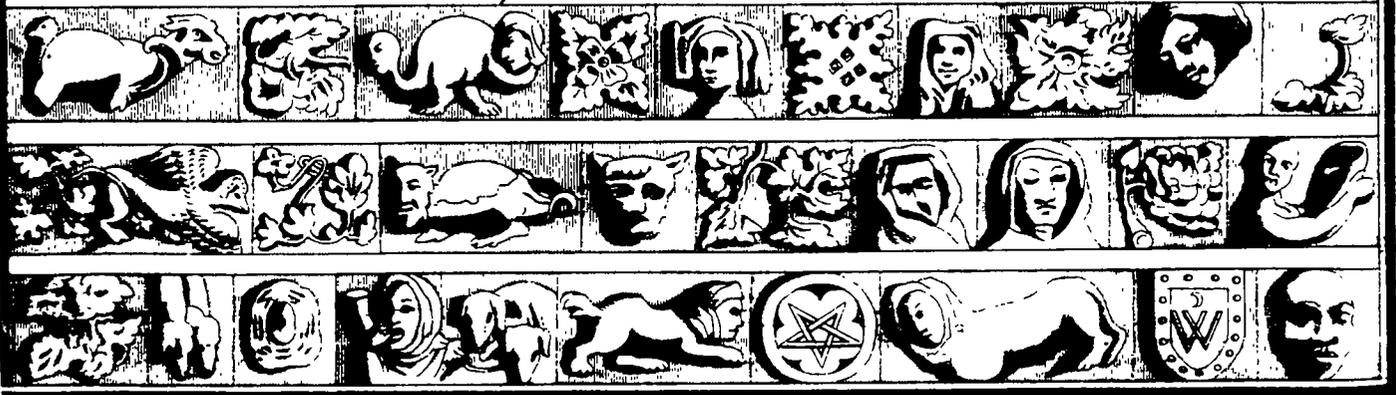
The **Elevatio** is described thus:

"There was in the Abbye Church of Duresme uerye solempne seruice upon Easter Day, betweene 3 and 4 of the clocke in the morninge, in honour of the Resurrection, where 2 of the oldest monkes of the quire came to the Sepulchre, beinge sett upp upon Good Friday, after the Passion, all couered with redd ueluet and embrodered with gold, and then did sence

FRIEZE, *on the North Front of* ADDERBURY CHURCH, *in* OXFORDSHIRE.



FRIEZE, *on the South Front of* ADDERBURY CHURCH, *in* OXFORDSHIRE.



it, either monke with a paire of siluer sencors sittinge on their knees before the Sepulchre. Then they both risinge came to the Sepulchre, out of which, with great reverence, they tooke a maruelous beatifull Image of our Sauour, representinge the Resurrection, with a crosse in his hand, in the breast wherof was enclosed in bright christall the Holy Sacrament of the altar, through the which christall the Blessed Host was conspicuous to the beholders. Then, after the eleuation of the said picture, carried by the said 2 monkes uppon a faire ueluet cushion, all embrodered, singinge the anthem of Christus resugens, they brought (it) to the high altar, settinge that on the medst thereof, whereon it stood, the two monkes kneelinge on their knees before the altar; and senceing it all the time that the rest of the whole quire was in singinge the foresaid anthem of Christus resurgens. The which anthem beinge ended, the 2 Monkes tooke up the cushines and the picture from the altar, supportinge it betwixt them, proceeding, in procession, from the high altar to the south quire dore, where there was 4 antient gentlemen, belonginge to the prior, appointed to attend their comminge, holdinge upp a most rich cannopye of purple ueluet, tached round about with redd silke and gold fringe; and at euerye corner did stand one of these ancient gentlemen, to beare it ouer the said Image, with the Holy Sacrament, carried by two monkes round about the church, the whole quire waitinge uppon it with goodly torches and great store of other lights, all singinge, reioyceinge, and praising God most deuoutly, till they came to the high altar againe, whereon they did place the said Image there to remaine until the Assencion day."<sup>4</sup>

It is the apocryphal Gospel of Nicodemus that provides the narrative of the DESCENSUS or Harrowing of Hell - dating back to the 2nd or 3rd century.<sup>5</sup> Here a dramatic account of Christ's descent into Hell, in the interval between the Crucifixion and Resurrection is given; "of his breaking down the gates, of his binding Satan and of his releasing the souls of the patriarchs from their long imprisonment". The narrative includes the last 4 verses of the 24th Psalm.

Altars were of great significance in the dramatic texts which developed from these ceremonial of observances, more especially as the dialogue was delivered across the altar.

"During the years immediately following the Crucifixion, the altars used un renewal of the Last Supper were probably mere tables of wood (*mensae*) in the houses if the faithful. Later, during a century or two of persecution, the observance often occurred in special and remote localities, such as the catacombs about Rome, and similar places of burial. In such cemeteries the altar was inevitably placed, in some manner, over the body of a martyr or saint. It may have been constructed in a grave-chapel about ground, or it may have been the very cover of a sarcophagus, in a chamber under ground. Whatever its particular form, the Christian altar very early became closely associated with the tomb of a martyr or saint. As one writer has remarked, "The "arca", i. e., the chest which

contained the martyr's bones, became an "ara", i.e., a table bearing the flesh and blood of the divine man. It was natural, then, that with the erection of altars in churches, after the Peace of the Church, the identification of tomb and altar should have been piously maintained, and that the church altar should have been built, normally, over the tomb of a saint, or, to reverse the relation, that the relics of a saint (Sancta Sancti) should have been buried under the altar. Thus it happens that to this day, under the main altar of many a church edifice, may be found the tomb of a saint, the saint's place of rest being variously called Confessio, Matyrium, or Testimonium."

To the mediaeval worshipper then it was no difficult matter to associate the altar with the sepulchre of Christ - the consecrated wafer or Host symbolising the body of Christ were placed in a separate receptacle or sepulchrum - a significant point for choosing the altar as the place for delivering dramatic dialogues. In short, a mise-en-scène of striking symbolic significance.<sup>6</sup> It is contradiction in terms that the earliest text of a liturgical dramatic dialogue, wove into its texture literary additions, or interpolations, other than those in formal liturgical use; in other words in "unsanctified literary additions to the authorised liturgical texts." This entire caucus of skilled literary creation came to be called "tropes" and emerged during the Carolingian empire; known also as the Carolingian Renaissance, a direct result of the inspiration and zeal of Charlemagne (c. 742-814) to revive the glory of Christian belief in his Kingdom.

The power of words wedded to the power of music, did in fact create "tropes", providing as a result a creative form of expression for the cultured intelligentsia of Charlemagne liturgical school. In point of fact his fundamental aim to purify the service-books of his era, coupled with the liberal encouragement he gave to the arts, achieved jointly the liturgical purism he sought, at the same time releasing the powerhouse of extra-liturgical creative literary activity, bringing in its wake and into being, liturgical drama.

Of these dramatic texts, or tropes, i.e., additional attachments to the liturgy, the earliest surviving example is of the 10th century from the monastery of St. Gall and can be described as a dramatic trope, attached to the Introit of the Mass for Easter.

#### ITEM DE RESVRRECTIONE DOMINI

Interrogatio:

Quem queritis in sepulchro, Christicole ?

Responsio:

Iesum Nazarenum crucifixum, o caelicolae.

Non est hic, surrexit sicut predixerat; ite, nuntiate quia surrexit de sepulchro.

The first question would be put by the angel at the tomb, the reply is by the Marys and the angel then gives them a firm assurance of our Lord's Resurrection.

The vulgate versions of the Gospel narratives offer the source of this scene. The three Gospel accounts run as follows:

Matthew xxviii

5. Respondens autem angelus, dixit mulieribus: Nolite timere vos; scio enim quod Jesum, qui crucifixus est, quaeritis.
6. Non est hic; surrexit enim, sicut dixit. Venite et videte locum ubi posituserat Dominus.
7. Et cito euntes, dicite discipulis ejus quia surrexit; et ecce praedixi vobis.
10. Tunc ait illis Jesus: Nolite timere: ite, nunciate fratribus meis ut eant in Galilaeam; ibi me videbunt.

Mark xvi

5. Et introeuntes in monumentum, viderunt juvenem sedentem in dextris coopertum stola candida, et obstupuerunt.
6. Qui dicit illis: Nolite expavescere; Jesum quaeritis Nazarenum, crucifixum; surrexit, non est hic; ecce locus ubi posuerunt eum.
7. Sed ite, dicite discipulis ejus, et Petro, quia praecedit vos in Galilaeam; ibi eum videbitis, sicut dixit vobis.

Luke xxiv

4. Et factum est, dum mente consternatae essent de isto, ecce duo viri steterunt secus illas in veste fulgenti.
5. Cum timerent autem, et declinarent vultum in terram, dixerunt ad illas: Quid quaeritis viventem cum mortuis?
6. Non est hic, sed surrexit; recordamini qualiter locustus est vobis, cum adhuc in Galilaea esset.

Conclusion

From the simplicity of this earliest and briefest of dramatic tropes, sprang in succession the many that followed. As the texts were extended, so the characters grew in number and the dramatic impact developed in intensity.

The subjects ranged through the Old Testament prophets to the New Testament using the principal events of Our Lord's life on earth.

Many are profoundly moving; all serve the admirable purpose of bringing to life the written word of the Book of Life.

Irene Bennett

Bibliographical references:

1. Young, i, 86.
  2. Chambers, i, 133.
  3. Young, i, 100.
  4. Young, i, 138-9.
  5. Young, i, 149.
  6. Young, i, 218.
- [Karl Young, "Drama of the Mediaeval Church" I, II, Clarendon Press 1933].
- [E.K. Chambers "Mediaeval Stage" I, II O.U.P. 1903].

## MORRIS DANCING IN THE BANBURY REGION

Although Banbury itself is never known to have possessed an indigenous team of morris dancers, there are at least a dozen villages within a ten-mile radius which did so; and a number of these dance sides visited the town at certain times in order to exploit the potentially-larger audiences to be found there.

Characteristically, the dancing was performed at Whitsun, a holiday which was observed during a slack period in the agricultural cycle, chiefly on the feast days of the village Friendly Societies. The systematic collection of historical material relating to morris dancing began only during the final decade of the nineteenth-century,<sup>1</sup> and this has undoubtedly distorted the distribution of dance sides in the south midlands by emphasising the period from around 1820 onwards. Most of the available information was collected from old dancers and from villagers who had either observed the dancing or heard stories from relatives, and one of the chief problems lies in the accurate dating of this material. Certainly the impression received is one of a hey-day for the morris around the middle decades of the century, although we know there were dance teams in some of the villages long before this time. At Brackley, for example, the indigenous morris team is said to have donated a silver paten to the Church of St. James in that parish, upon which their names and the date 1623 was scratched.<sup>2</sup> There is, however, a dearth of references for most of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. We know that there was further dancing in Brackley throughout at least part of this period: in 1766 the morris team danced in Oxford at Whitsun<sup>3</sup> and during the 1830's there was again an active team of dancers.<sup>4</sup> Alfred Burton quotes an account of a Whit Ale held at Greatworth in 1785, which conforms to the standard description of such gatherings at this period: the banquet in a barn, a "Lord and Lady" with a set of six dancers, who performed in a procession and "round a garlanded maypole".<sup>5</sup> During the early years of the century there was also a set of dancers at Adderbury.<sup>6</sup>

It is probably a team from this latter village which features in the earliest-known mention of dancing in Banbury. Reporting the death of the well-known character William Castle, commonly called 'Old Mettle', the **Oxford Chronicle** stated:

June 2nd died William Castle, aged about 50 . . . His death was very sudden. On the preceding evening he had, in the vocation of fool, accompanied a party of Morris Dancers round Banbury, and seemed, and no doubt felt, in as high glee as he had ever been. The following morning, while mending his patchwork dress, with the intention of going to Adderbury Club, he fell from his seat, and expired instantly. . . .<sup>7</sup>

According to William Walton<sup>8</sup>, Castle would "flick the onlookers with a bladder on a cow-tail when he went with the Morris Men as the Fool",<sup>9</sup>

and the implication is that he acted this role with the Adderbury dancers. The village boasted three distinct morris teams at one stage, "each side visiting a different series of villages every day in Whitsun week".<sup>10</sup> Janet Blunt gives three sets of names, each constituting a separate Adderbury team.<sup>11</sup> One consisted of Edmund and Caleb Wyatt, John Walton and another of the same surname from Aynho, old Samuel and William Blackwell, with 'Mettle' Castle as fool; another of Tom and John Dorretts, William (snr), Thomas and John Walton and a man named Townsend; and the third - which she describes as the "1st Walton Sett" - of Charles, Henry, John, Tom and William Walton and Sam Blackwell. Obviously only two of these teams could have existed synchronously, since three of the men feature in the latter two line-ups; and upon examination of the ages of these men, we find other discrepancies. Of the first set, it seems unlikely that Caleb Wyatt (born 1834) and John Walton (1832) would have belonged to a team having 'Old Mettle' as fool, since he died in 1841; while Edmund Wyatt (1828) and William Blackwell (1825) also seem a little young. Only "old" Samuel Blackwell (1799) is of an age with Castle (born about 1790). Likewise, in the second line-up, William Walton senior is chronologically out of place: although he was born around 1810, in 1844 he was sentenced to a year's hard labour for stealing a cheese from the grocer's shop in the High Street; after which his son William (born 1837), and perhaps other of his children, was taken to the workhouse to be raised.<sup>12</sup> At this time his two sons Thomas and John were aged only nine and twelve respectively and are unlikely to have danced as yet. The so-called "Walton sett" is far more creditable, with the ages of the men involved falling within nine years of each other.<sup>13</sup> This team would appear to have started dancing sometime during the 1850's, and continued sporadically - according to William Walton, the leader - until around 1880.<sup>14</sup> Walton also mentioned that on the Thursday of Whit week, "they always danced at Banbury Fair where they met the Long Handborough and Wooton dancers and there all three sides used to dance together".<sup>15</sup> Perhaps he is relating a story about the older Adderbury team of which his father was leader, for in 1866 - when the team from Brackley danced in Banbury - the *Oxford Chronicle* observed: "It is nearly twenty years since a similar exhibition of such a bye-gone pageant was witnessed in Banbury."<sup>16</sup>; while the *Oxford Times* commented: "The sight was a novel one for many inhabitants of the borough . . ." <sup>17</sup>

Morris is reported at Helmdon<sup>18</sup>, Tadmarton<sup>19</sup> and Swalcliffe<sup>20</sup> during the 1850's; at Brailes<sup>21</sup>, Sibford<sup>22</sup> and Culworth<sup>23</sup> in the following decade; and at Sulgrave<sup>24</sup> and, again, Brailes<sup>25</sup> during the early 1870's. By this latter date, only the sides at Adderbury and Brackley were in regular performance, and, as we have seen, the dancing in the former village had ceased by about 1880.

The Brackley team continued to perform regularly until the Jubilee year of 1887, after which they continued sporadically until the advent of war in 1914.<sup>25</sup> At Whitsuntide, 1866, the dancers had walked over

to Banbury for a tour of the neighbourhood. The **Oxford Chronicle** reported:

A novel and amusing spectacle was afforded to young Banbury, on Whit Monday and Tuesday, by a set of morris dancers which perambulated the streets of the borough, dressed in many coloured ribbons, and other gaudy finery, and marshalled by the fool of the troupe, who was very active with his javelin, a cow's tail and bladder, and who displayed much witless buffoonery. The musical department consisted of the customary pipe and tabret, to whose doleful sounds the dancers performed their jigs with more strength than gracefulness...<sup>26</sup>

It was presumably also this team which danced at the Club feast at Bodicote during the same week.<sup>27</sup>

The reasons for the decline of the dancing are manifold and complex. In many villages there was a pronounced migration to the larger towns, aided by the establishment of the railway network, in search of work. Arch's National Agricultural Labourer's Union appears to have caused a good deal of social disruption during the 1870's throughout the whole county. Alun Howkins has argued convincingly for the transformation of Whitsun celebrations from drunkenness and rowdiness to "rational recreation" and tee-totalism during the nineteenth century, and has cited numerous examples from local newspapers to support his thesis.<sup>28</sup> These reveal the increasing variety of alternative pursuits being offered in the villages as the century progressed: from cricket to choral societies - brass and silver bands to flower shows. These would seem to have posed a direct challenge to the recruitment of men into the morris teams, with the younger generation in particular having more varied leisure pursuits from which to choose to spend their free time. In addition, the advent of compulsory education heralded a stricter and more moral behaviour pattern, and the transmission of traditional culture was increasingly eroded.

Keith Chandler

### Notes

1. When Percy Manning of Oxford hired Tom Carter to travel the area in search of information and old relics of the morris teams. Other collectors followed, including Cecil Sharp, George Butterworth, Mary Neal and Janet Blunt.
2. First mentioned in an article which appeared in the **Banbury Guardian**, 12.6.1884, p.3. The patent is still held in the Church at Brackley.
3. **Jackson's Oxford Journal**, 31.5.1766.
4. In the 1884 **Banbury Guardian** article, *op.cit.*, the author states, "This well-known troupe prides itself on having kept up the old custom of morrice-dancing through an unbroken succession of years, and one of the present company can boast a connection extending over something like half a century ..."

5. Alfred Burton, 'Rushbearing', 1891, p.119.
6. Janet Blunt, in her mss now housed at Vaughan Williams Library, Cecil Sharp House, London, mentions William 'Shackle' Wyatt as a dancer, and he was "an old man when William Walton [born 1837] was young." Vol.II, fol.80.
7. **Oxford Chronicle**, 5.6.1841, p.4. This is reprinted as Appendix A of the 1971 edition of 'Shoemaker's Window', by George Herbert.
8. Walton joined the team during the 1850's and was leader for twenty years until its demise about 1880.
9. Letter from Janet Blunt to Cecil Sharp, 1.5.1922. In Sharp correspondence, Vaughan Williams Library.
10. Cecil Sharp, Folk Dance Notes (hereafter FDN), vol.IV, fol.57.
11. Blunt mss, vol.VII, fol.227.
12. FDN, vol.IV, fol.57. He told Sharp his father had died at this time, the implication being that he died in prison. I am indebted to Michael Pickering (whose book on the cultural tradition in Adderbury, 'Village Song and Culture', is scheduled to be published by Croom and Helm in August 1981) for the account of criminal activity. Approximate dates of birth from the census enumeration books for 1841 (P.R.O. HO.107.875) and 1871 (RG.10.1460).
13. The Walton family: Charles (born 1830), John (1832), Tom (1835), William (1837) and Henry (1839); and Blackwell was born 1834.
14. Cecil Sharp, 'The Morris Book', vol.II, second edition, 1919, p.45. The dancing "ultimately lapsed about 40 years ago."
15. FDN, vol.IV, fol.58. Although I have checked the Whitsun issues of the **Banbury Guardian** from 1844 to 1895, I have discovered no mention of dancing at the Fair.
16. **Oxford Chronicle**, 25.5.1866, p.7.
17. **Oxford Times**, 25.5.1866, p.7.
18. FDN, vol.IV, fol.94.
19. FDN, vol.IV, fol.95.
20. **Ibid.**
21. FDN, vol.II, fol.132.
22. FDN, vol.II, fol.74. The teams at Brailes and Sibford used to compete against each other. There was also a morris side performing at the Club feast in Sibford in 1842, although it is not certain that this was an indigenous team. See **Oxford Chronicle**, 11.6.1842, p.2.
23. FDN, vol.IV, fol.98. In 1922 three informants confirmed the existence of a dance side in this village.
24. FDN, vol.II, fol.156.
25. Fred Hamer, 'The Hinton and Brackley Morris', **Journal of the English Folk Dance and Song Society**, 1955. Following the war they danced out occasionally: the final appearance being in 1923. See Chandler, 'Morris Dancing at Brackley: A study in longevity', in **English Dance and Song**, vol.42, no.4, 1981.
26. **Oxford Chronicle**, 26.5.1866, p.7. This is the earliest known

- description of the Brackley style of dancing and dress.
27. **Banbury Guardian**, 31.5.1866, p.e.
  28. Alun Howkins, 'Whitsun in 19th Century Oxfordshire', 1974.
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## BOOK REVIEWS

**Bishop Fell and Nonconformity: Visitation Documents from the Oxford Diocese 1682-83**, edited by Mary Clapinson, Oxfordshire Record Society, LII, 1980 (for the years 1977 and 1978), xli 94 pp. (£8.00, plus 25p postage, from the Hon. Secretary, O. R. S., c/o Bodleian Library, Oxford).

The most recent publication of the Oxfordshire Record Society makes available some important sources on the history of Dissent in the county in the second half of the seventeenth century. John Fell is probably best known from a cryptic nursery rhyme. He was a Royalist in the Civil War, and an energetic Dean of Christ Church after the Restoration, who became Bishop of Oxford in 1676. Like other Churchmen he was much concerned by the threat of Dissent, having once seen in his lifetime the Establishment overthrown. He was clearly quite ready to coerce Dissenters into conformity, but equally anxious to set right the failings of the Church of England, and to be acting on the basis of sound information. The documents in this volume consist of a series of letters sent to Fell from Oxfordshire incumbents in 1682, in response to questions from the bishop about Dissent, and lists of the numbers of Dissenters in each parish made for Archdeacon Timothy Halton in 1683. Also included is a return of the conventicles in the Oxford diocese of 1669 from the Lambeth Palace Library. The volume adds much welcome detail to a period of which our knowledge has generally been derived from a narrow range of much-used sources. There are returns from most of the parishes in the Banbury area, although not from Banbury itself which was outside the Bishop's jurisdiction. There is a particularly interesting account of Adderbury where the leading Quaker was Bray D'Oyley, lord of one part of the manor. The Church evidently found it difficult to confront a Dissenter of his social standing. The letter from the incumbent of Hanwell, who refers to the ill-effects of 'the factions Conventicle at Cauthrop House in Banbury' confirms the tradition that Dissenters met in Calthorpe House in the late seventeenth century (CF. VCH, **Oxon**, X, p.112).

These are sources which will be useful to historians in many Oxfordshire parishes as well as to those interested in church history generally. Mary Clapinson's introduction sets Fell in the context of his times with admirable clarity, and the annotations of the letters are remarkably thorough. The letters reveal many fascinating details of late seventeenth century Oxfordshire. The gardener at Rousham House was a

Dissenter and evidently a formidable opponent of the Church of England who had disputed doctrine not just with the local incumbent but with the Bishop himself. 'I question not but your Lordship knows the obstinacy of that sort of people' wrote the rector.

Barrie Trinder

**Mrs Delany, Her Life and her Flowers**, by Ruth Hayden, published by British Museum Publications Ltd. (Colonnade Books) at £9.95 (1980), 176 pages with many colour illustrations.

Members may be interested to know of this book, as my cousin, Mrs Ruth Hayden, gave a talk to the Society a few years ago, when we had an opportunity to see reproductions of the remarkable flower mosaics or collages that Mary Delany (1700-1788) began making after she was 70 (when her eyes were no longer good enough for embroidery!). Mrs Delany was well known in the 18th Century, and it is rather surprising that her work in general and the flower mosaics in particular are not better known. The British Museum has around 1000 of the mosaics, which are "built up of often very small, separately cut pieces of coloured paper representing not only conspicuous details but also contrasting colours or shades of the same colour". The effect achieved is amazing - both in terms of artistry and verisimilitude. The book gives an account of Mary Delany's very interesting life and is lavishly illustrated: "The most beautiful book we have produced" I was told by someone from the British Museum Publications.

J. B. Barbour

**A simplified Guide to Probate Jurisdictions: where to look for Wills**, compiled by J.S.W. Gibson, Gulliver Press, Banbury, and the Federation of Family History Societies, 1980, x + 62 pp; £2 (plus 25p postage), available from J.S.W. Gibson, Harts Cottage, Church Hanborough, Oxon.

This booklet is a much abbreviated and simplified version of the compiler's earlier work, "Wills and where to find them", published in 1974; it is stated to be "designed for the newcomer to local and family history", and its purpose is to suggest where to start looking for wills and their associated records. It is not concerned with probate records before the middle of the sixteenth century nor after the end of the nineteenth century.

The title of the booklet is somewhat misleading as very little is said about probate jurisdictions. In the short space devoted to the matter it is not easy to obtain a clear idea of the difference between the various ecclesiastical courts and the extent of their respective testamentary jurisdictions. Throughout the booklet a distinction is rightly drawn between those wills proved before 1858 and those proved thereafter, but the reader (especially the "newcomer") is provided with little information as to the significance of that date. What happened on 12 January 1858 was much more than the introduction of a "centralized system for probate". On the

date in question there came into force the Court of Probate Act 1857 which created the Court of Probate and transferred to it the testamentary jurisdiction of the ecclesiastical courts; the Court of Probate was itself merged in the Supreme Court of Judicature by the Judicature Act of 1873. The booklet has a glossary of technical terms which should be used with circumspection.

The real value of the booklet lies in its lists of indexes of wills which comprise almost the whole booklet: first, the indexes to the main collections, such as those wills proved in the Prerogative Court of Canterbury, and then the indexes to local wills. The latter are dealt with county by county (the county boundaries being those in existence before the local government reorganization of 1974), and each county is provided with a map showing the peculiar jurisdictions within it; the value of the maps, however, is somewhat reduced by the smallness of scale and the absence of any points of reference such as towns, major rivers, etc. The lists are not confined to England and Wales; lists are also provided for the Isle of Man, the Channel Islands, Scotland and Ireland.

A great deal of useful information has been packed into this booklet, and its modest price should make it attractive to many local historians and not merely to those who are "newcomers" to the subject.

Geoffrey de C. Parmiter

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### **VILLAGE MEETING**

The meeting announced for Deddington on Thursday April 9 will be at 7.30 pm in Church School which is on the main road at the corner of Earls Lane, before the traffic lights if you are coming from Banbury. Geoffrey Hindley will talk on 'Commerce and Trade in Deddington 1760-1830', followed by Geoffrey Forsyth Lawson's appreciation of present day Deddington.

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Northamptonshire Record Office - Report on the Work of the Archives Service for the year ended 31 March 1980. Copies may be obtained from the Chief Archivist, Delapre Abbey, Northampton NN4 9AW.

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Duncan Harrington has sent the following extracts from Kent records. From the parish register of Hollingbourne (KAO P 187/1/1 page 77) "Bapt - Aug 1728 William Son of William and Mary DUDLEY 'de Bambury in agro Oxon'". Extract of a deed of gift for repairs to highway in Banbury in Oxon 1601 (KAO U1/04).

# 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 has also published fifteen records volumes to date. These have included **Banbury Parish Registers** (in six parts: Marriages 1558-1837, Baptisms 1558-1812, Burials 1558-1723); **Banbury Corporation Records: Tudor and Stuart; Banbury Wills and Inventories 1621-1650; A Victorian M. P. and his Constituents: The Correspondence of H. W. Tancred 1841-1860; South Newington Churchwardens' Accounts 1553-1684; Wigginton Constables' Books 1691-1836; and Bodicote Parish Accounts 1700-1822**. Volumes in preparation include **Banbury Wills and Inventories 1591-1620 and 1661-1723; Banbury Burial Register 1723-1812 and Baptisms and Burials 1812-1837**; and an edition of letters to the 1st Earl of Guilford (of Wroxton, father of Lord North the Prime Minister).

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.

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