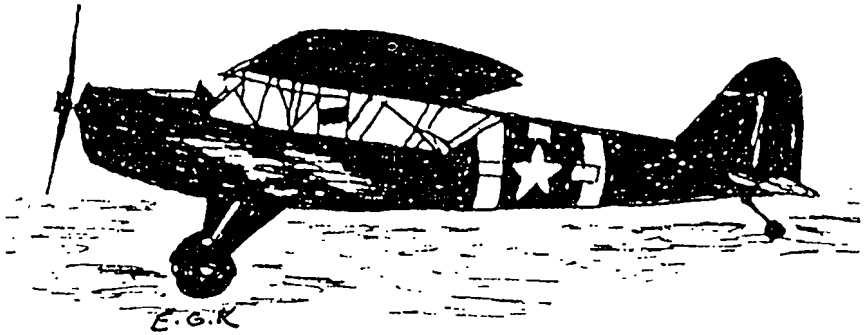


# CAKE AND COCKHORSE



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**Details of the Society's activities and  
publications will be found inside the back cover.**

# Cake and Cockhorse

The magazine of the Banbury Historical Society, issued three times a year.

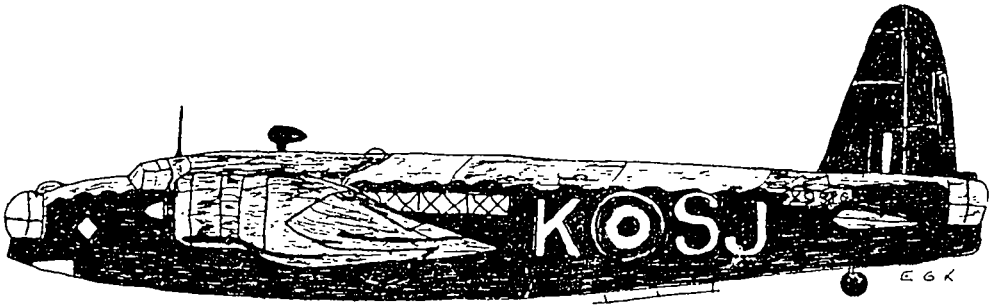
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Ten years ago the late David Fiennes asked if I would like to assist him with editing *Cake & Cockhorse*. I willingly accepted, little did I know that I would soon be in the Editor's chair. Now, after more than thirty issues of our magazine, I feel it is once again time for a change. It is proposed to spread the load by sharing editorial responsibility in a small committee, comprising, at the moment, Joan Bowes, Nan Clifton and Jeremy Gibson, with a little help from myself.

This issue has as its main article 'They flew from Wykham Hill'. With the fiftieth anniversary of D-Day imminent, it is of particular interest to this area, and shows the importance of recording recent history. Few Banbury people can ever have suspected the existence of this 'airfield'.

I would like to thank Joyce Hoad for her letter regarding the Society and I am sure that many of her comments will be of interest. The one point that concerns the editor is in regard to last year's "missing issue". It was decided that because of the late arrival (and considerable length) of the main article for the Summer number that it would be better to combine Summer and Autumn in one bumper issue. In fact members received as many pages of *Cake & Cockhorse* as usual (bearing in mind the greater amount of matter per page allowed by typeset rather than typewritten text). Following on from this it may be that other members have comments or questions about the Society or our local history. If they like to put pen to paper and write to the Editor(s), we may be able to publish letters regularly.

**D.A.H.**



## D-DAY PRELUDE

**Eric G. Kaye**

Fifty years on and 1994 Preparations are being made to celebrate the 50th Anniversary of D-Day

Let us then take a look back and recall what military preparation took place in and around Banbury and district and beyond, during those preceding months that became the prelude to the launching of the largest invasion ever, against an enemy

Involvement in the area came first with the Operational Training Units of the Royal Air Force with a primary role training bomber aircrew, drawn from the United Kingdom, Commonwealth and Dominions, but who from their locations at Chipping Warden, Edgehill (Shenington), Moreton-in-Marsh, Enstone, Wellesbourne Mountford, Gaydon and others, also despatched crews, generally those nearing completion of their operational training, on Nickel raids - leaflet dropping exercises over enemy territory - and Window dropping - strips of metal foil dropped to disrupt enemy radar - to harass the enemy while the build-up for the invasion continued.

Then came the 696th Armoured Field Artillery Battalion of the United States Army, who in April 1944 moved into Wykham Park, midway between Banbury and Bloxham From there they continued training for the part they would play in the pending invasion Although an artillery unit, they also had an aviation connection, operating Piper Cub L4 spotter aircraft which served as the "eyes" for the gunners, the subject of David Neal's article

During their stay, these small aircraft, often referred to as "Grasshoppers", were flown from a home made airstrip sited at the top of Wykham Hill, soon becoming a regular sight for those living nearby, until their eventual departure for Normandy, which was to be after the initial assault and the way had been paved for the supporting forces to follow

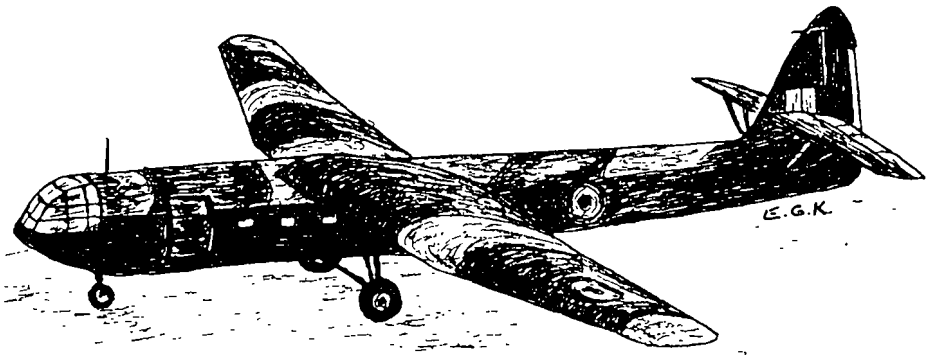
However, it was the Oxfordshire airfields of No's 38 and 36 Groups, further to the south and west of the county, that formed the hub for the part to be played by the airborne forces spearheading the invasion.

As D-Day edged nearer, the build-up of forces increased with a quickening tempo. Brize Norton with 296 and 297 Squadrons and Harwell with 295 and 570 Squadrons were operating Armstrong Whitworth Albemarles towing Horsa gliders Broadwell, just to the south of Burford, hosted a thousand airborne troops, many of whom would leave for Normandy by the resident Dakota's of No's 512 and 575 Squadrons and their Horsa gliders At Hampstead Norris, glider pilot refresher courses were being provided, while Kingston Bagpuize and Kelmscott were used for practice dropping of Paratroops

The role for photo reconnaissance to record the progress from D-Day onwards fell to squadrons of the USAF, operating P38 Lockheed Lightnings and Spitfires from Chalgrove and Mount Farm

It is significant therefore that when zero hour arrived and the signal to go was given, history was made, when from those Oxfordshire airfields in company with several from Gloucestershire, the first ever major airborne assault was launched

With the arrival of 6th June 1944, the prelude was complete and the overture D-Day began



*Opposite: Vickers Wellington Mk. 1c. 21 OTU.  
Above: Airspeed Horsa, Troop Carrying Glider.*

Eric Kaye is author of *The Story of RAF Edgehill* (locally known as Shenington Aerodrome), fully illustrated. £12.95 It tells the story of the hectic life of a Bomber OTU (Operational Training Unit) during the years 1941-1945 and onwards through a variety of changes of use to the present day. Copies are available from the author at Corner House, Epwell, Banbury, Oxon OX15 6LA.

# THEY FLEW FROM WYKHAM HILL

David J. Neal

When I was young my father told me many tales. One was that "*When I was a lad they used to fly Taylor Austers from the top of Wykham Hill*". Who "they" were he never revealed, neither did he elucidate on from where exactly at the top of Wykham Hill they flew

I never believed this story. After all, whilst gliders may slope soar, you do not normally fly from a hill. From my days of cycling to friends in Bloxham I knew Wykham Hill to be steep, and could not visualise any area which was both level and large enough for aeroplanes. Beside, I thought I knew where all the old airfields were locally, and certainly there was not one at Wykham Hill

As I grew older, I realised that Taylor Austers did not need the acres of tarmac that I associated with airfields. I began to think what if there was some truth in this tale after all, could I prove to Dad that occasionally his son did listen

## The Site

Wykham Hill is a valley side, crossed by the main A361 road, approximately midway between the village of Bloxham and the town of Banbury. At its base, some 322 feet above sea level, the Sor brook runs almost due west/east. The main road climbs steeply north in the direction of Banbury, reaching a height of 415 feet within half a mile at the crossroads with Wykham Lane. This lane runs west to Broughton and east to Bodicote. The slope of the road decreases, only climbing a further 20 feet over the next 500 yards, then remaining reasonably level until it reaches the junction with Salt Lane before beginning its final journey into Banbury.

The Wykham Lane crossroads can be said to represent "the top of Wykham Hill". The area in which flying took place is centred around this junction. In the southeast corner is the site of Wykham Park, now the Tudor Hall school and, in the northwest, is the field which was used as an airstrip.

## Wykham Park

Wykham Park is an estate dating back to 1279 when it was owned by one Robert de Wykeham. The house was extensively rebuilt in the early nineteenth century and in 1928 was bought by Sir Arthur Turberville Smith-Bingham, who added a mirror lined riding hall. However, at the outbreak of World War II the Park was requisitioned by the British Army. The manor house, riding hall and servants' quarters were supplemented by a number of Nissen huts. In April 1944 the site was occupied by the 696th Armoured Field Artillery Battalion of the United States Army, the unit which was actively involved in the operation of aircraft from the site. The 696th departed Wykham for France in July 1944.

In 1945, the Tudor Hall school, which originated in Kent but had occupied premises near Chipping Camden following the outbreak of war, moved to the Park and has occupied the site ever since. Although the riding hall has been demolished and the site used for the building housing the school's music department, the concrete foundations of the Nissen huts were still to be found in the area to the north west of the main building when new work was carried out.

### **The field at the top of Wykham Hill**

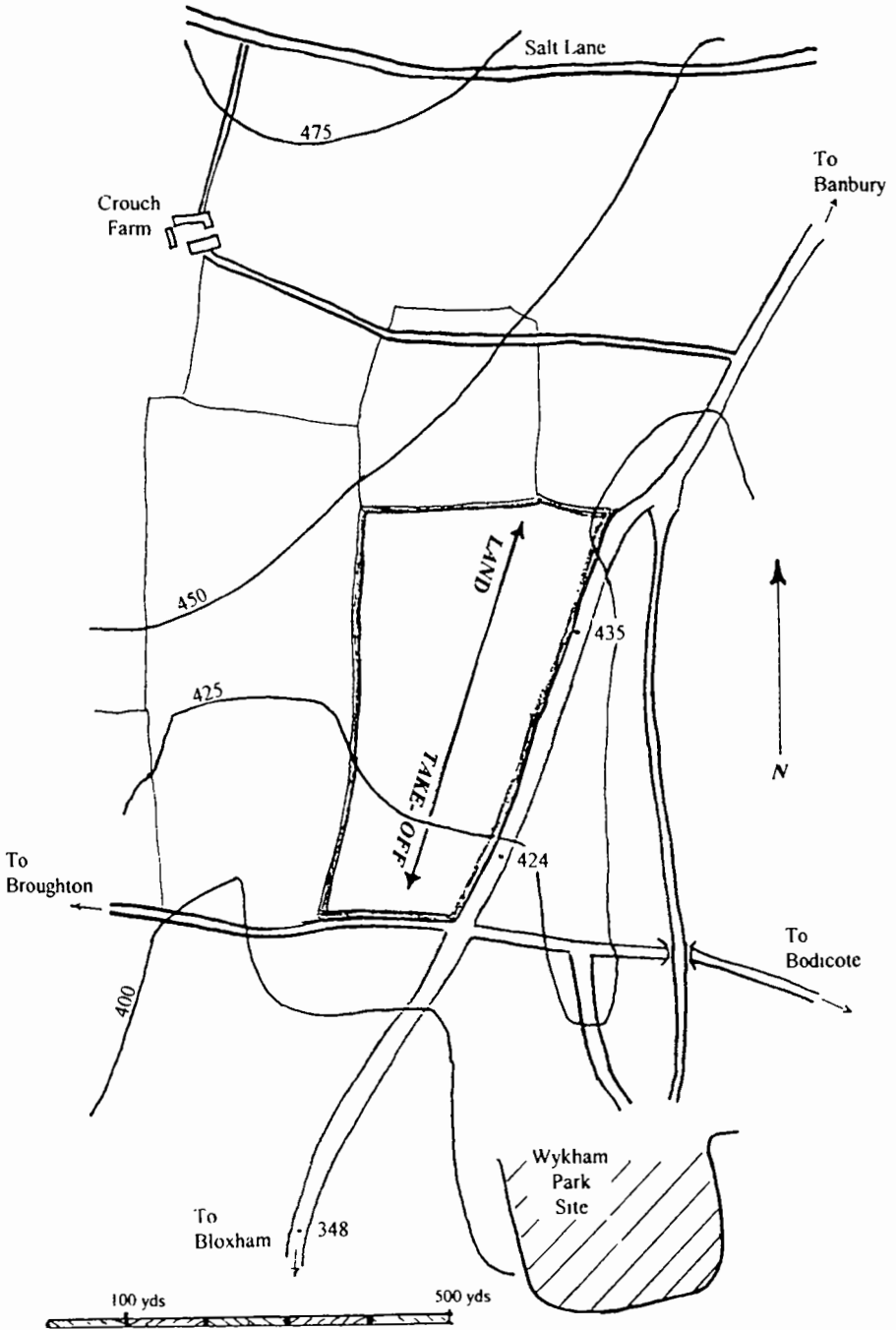
Nothing remains today to indicate that the field lying in the northwest corner of the crossroads was once used as an airstrip. In fact its present size, undulations and proximity to buildings seem to preclude aerial activity of any sort. It was smaller, yet things were different in mid- 1944.

At that time the field was roughly rectangular, with its longest side running parallel to, though slightly raised from, the main road. It was approximately 500 yards in length, 250 yards wide at the northern end and tapered to some 150 yards at the southern boundary abutting Wykham Lane. A number of trees grew in the eastern hedge alongside the main road and a gate in this hedge provided access. From the south it sloped gently, rising some 25 feet toward its northern boundary, with Crouch Hill "towering" to a height of 556 feet half a mile to the north. The central and western parts of the field were more level.

Today the field is much larger, the western hedge having been removed in the 1960s. To the west of the original boundary, Wykham Lane dips sharply into a small gully which runs north into the new, enlarged, field and continues almost as far as the northern edge. Opposite the southern boundary, next to the crossroads and on the opposite side of Wykham Lane stands a house presently occupied by Ken Gibbard. During the war Ken farmed nearby Crouch Farm to the north-west. This house seemingly presents an obstacle, being directly under the only obvious flightpath and would certainly present a hazard to any aircraft taking off or landing today. However, the presence of the property is misleading, for it was built in 1960 as two properties which were later converted into one.

Prior to WW II the field was owned and farmed by the Bradshaws of Wykham Mill. The Gibbards' land was to the north and west, but Ken remembers seeing aircraft using the site during 1944. His family took over the land in the 1960s yet, despite ploughing the field numerous times, Ken says he has never turned up any aviation artifacts.

Any aircraft using the field during the 1940s would have taken off and landed in a northerly or southerly direction. Given the type of aircraft used and their limited engine power it is likely that, subject to the wind, landings would have been made heading north and take offs south to take advantage of the slope. Immediately after take-off the planes would have turned east or west to gain height along the valley. The dimensions of the field would have allowed a clear run of some 400 yards, short by the standards of today's light aircraft but more than adequate for normal operations of the planes used by the 696th A F A.





## **The 696th Armoured Field Artillery Battalion**

On 8th April 1944, the 696th A F A departed from Kington for the 85 mile journey to Banbury Kington is situated in Herefordshire, some ten miles north of Hay-on-Wye

At that time the 696th was assigned to the 5th Field Artillery Group which had its Headquarters at Banbury References show other battalions in the Group as being the 83rd, 117th and 695th A unit of the 87th A F A is known to have been based at Adderbury although exactly where has not been confirmed Although the 696th eventually went to France with the 5th F A , the association did not last long after they arrived in mainland Europe Sources show the 696th as being part of the 5th and the 193rd F A Groups at various times during its history, certainly some battalions were somewhat nomadic!

An explanation of the set-up of the American land forces is in order here The forces were made up of a number of Armies, controlling a number of Corps HQs which in turn controlled a number of Divisions Divisional HQs contained an Artillery HQ which controlled 3 to 4 A F A Battalions The Artillery HQ generally had two liaison aircraft (although the 5th F A Group had three) with each A F A also having two Each Artillery HQ therefore controlled eight to ten aircraft, or eleven in the case of the 5th F A Group

In June 1944, the 5th F A was temporarily attached to VII Corps of the First Army, although by August it was part of VIII Corps of the Third Army

Soon settling in to Wykham Park, the 696th began to adapt it to their needs They referred to the main building as the "castle" and used it for administration offices, officers' quarters, and the officers' mess and lounge Two outside buildings were used as messes for the enlisted men who were quartered in the Nissen huts The riding hall was utilised as a maintenance shop and the battalion motor pool located next to this. On the opposite side of the main road the 696th parked their two Piper Cub L 4 "Grasshopper" observation planes They were generally parked toward the southeast corner parallel to the main road and were frequently tied down when not in use

The major task facing the 696th was to build up its equipment and vehicles to the standard required for an A F A This was specified in a document called the "Table of Organisation and Equipment" The most important pieces of equipment were the eighteen M7 105mm self-propelled howitzers These were known as "Priests" because their anti-aircraft machine gun was mounted on a pulpit-like tower on the right side of the front superstructure Other units in the 5th F A began building up with M7s powered by water cooled engines but there were insufficient to equip every unit fully Rather than go into battle with a mixture of vehicles the 696th simply used the M7s with air cooled engines "handed down" by the other units

The 105mm Howitzer had a range of 11,160 yards and a rate of fire of four rounds per minute Each M7 carried a crew of seven, 69 rounds of 105mm ammunition and 300 rounds of 12.7mm ammunition for the machine gun

In May 1944 the Battalion travelled to Wales for a week, to a range at Ysbyty Ystwyth ten miles northwest of Tregaron in what is now Dyfed. This was their first chance to use the howitzers they had been issued with in England. The aircraft, pilots and observers went too, not only to train in directing artillery fire but to brush up on the pilots' flying skills and the observers' navigation. The Battalion returned to Wykham after a week but the aircraft and pilots stayed longer, to train others in the vital skills of artillery spotting

On their return to Wykham, the build up to D-Day on 6th June was becoming apparent. The unit realised they were not to take part in the landings themselves although the vehicles were modestly waterproofed in readiness for an eventual journey to Normandy. On the evening of D-Day the Cubs had black and white invasion stripes applied, used to identify friendly aircraft. Some of the men, however, contented themselves with visiting the Bradshaws, helping with their haymaking and partaking of Mrs Bradshaw's home baked tarts and cold roast pork.

In early July, the Battalion carried out their final training on the Larkhill ranges near Salisbury, Wiltshire. These were firing tests under simulated combat conditions. They returned briefly to Wykham but on 25th July departed for Weymouth, bound eventually for France. It is likely the aircraft were flown to Normandy from the Weymouth area, after being fitted with long range fuel tanks. Following the breakout in Normandy, the 696th went to Rennes, across Brittany and to Lorient. As well as their main role, the Cubs flew security on the flanks of the armoured columns to warn of any threats from nearby German troops.

### **The aeroplanes**

It has not been determined with which mark of Piper Cub the 696th were equipped whilst they were at Wykham. Most units operating Cubs at that time flew the Piper Cub L 4H. All aircraft of the lightplane class were known by the name "grasshoppers" in view of their ability to operate from almost any suitable space.

Details of the Piper Cub L 4H are

Wingspan:	35 ft 2 ins
Length	22 ft 3 ins
Height	6 ft 8 ins
Wing area:	179 sq ft.
Gross weight.	1220 lbs.
Empty weight	708 lbs.
Power:	Continental 0-170-3 developing 65 hp at 2300 rpm
Max speed	85 mph
Cruise speed	75 mph.
Stalling speed:	39 mph.
Rate of climb:	300 ft/min.
Ceiling.	9300 ft

In layout the Cub was a high-wing monoplane with two seats in tandem. The radio was mounted on the observer's table. With full tanks and two crew the weight sometimes exceeded the maximum for take-off. On occasions the pilot had both to fly the aircraft and direct the artillery fire, the observer having had to leave the plane to enable it to take off from some muddy field. Elmer Hunter, an observer with the 696th recalls having to do just that!

The aircraft were painted in a basic colour of "olive drab" with neutral grey undersurfaces and carried the usual five-pointed star insignia of white on a blue disc with a horizontal white bar. Invasion stripes were applied immediately prior to D-Day to upper and lower wing surfaces and around the fuselage. However, units in Normandy soon began removing these as, with airstrips close to the front, effective camouflage was considered more vital than recognition by friendly forces.

### **Flying at Wykham**

Certainly flying in England was totally different to flying in the U.S. As well as wartime hazards such as barrage balloons, the pilots had to cope with unfamiliar terrain, small fields, a plethora of railway lines leading to similar looking towns and rapidly changing weather conditions. The ability of the grasshoppers to land almost anywhere was used to the full with pilots landing near roads and towns to verify their whereabouts before continuing on their way.

Elmer Hunter states that they did little actual training with the aircraft whilst the unit was at Wykham, other than the visits to the ranges mentioned earlier. Practice cross country navigation for observers like himself was carried out along with liaison flights between the various units of the Group.

Pilots known to have flown with the 696th at Wykham were Lt Ateo Ciabattoni, who left the unit whilst they were at Wykham, Lt. John E. Hall and Lt Vincent Lynch.

Because of the relative low power of the engine, take off was normally carried out down the slope, i.e. heading south. The sight of a Piper Cub suddenly appearing low over a hedge after take off certainly surprised Peter Dunham, an evacuee to Banbury, who was cycling along Wykham Lane in mid 1944, having no idea there was an airstrip in so confined a space.

### **The Austers**

Piper Cubs were flying from the field at the top of Wykham Hill in 1944 but there has yet to be any positive trace of "Taylor Austers" at the site. The Taylorcraft Auster was a British light aircraft performing a similar role for the A.O.P. (Air Observation Post) squadrons of the R.A.F. as the Piper Cub did for the American Field Artillery units. Various types of Auster served with the A.O.P.s, mainly the Marks 3, 4 and 5. The Mark 5 was the most numerous and successful wartime variant.

For the purposes of comparison with the Piper Cub L 4H, details of the Auster Mark 4 are shown overleaf.

Wingspan	36 ft
Length	22 ft 5 ins
Height	8 ft
Wing area	167 sq ft
Gross weight	1700 lbs.
Empty weight	1100 lbs.
Power	Lycoming O-290-3 developing 130 hp
Max speed	130 mph
Cruise speed	110 mph
Stalling speed	30 mph.
Rate of climb	800 ft per min

Beside being more powerful than the Cub, the major difference between the two was that the Auster Mark 4 seated three people, all earlier models being two seaters. The Auster Mark 5 was similar to the Mark 4 but was equipped with a blind-flying panel and did not have a trim vane under the tailplane

Ken Wakefield states that whilst delving into the location of U S airstrips in the U K he found that aircraft reported as Taylor Austers quite often turned out to be Piper Cubs and vice-versa. In appearance the two are similar

Peter Wright advises that he could find no trace of any British unit at the location, or of the use of Taylorcraft Auster aircraft at the site "To most people all light observation machines were Austers so this could be the explanation of the use of such a title "

Histories of the British A.O.P Squadrons do not mention Wykham Hill or Banbury, and it therefore seems unlikely that such a unit was engaged in flying from the site. The confusion seems to have arisen as a result of the physical similarities between the two aircraft

Two correspondents report seeing Westland Lysanders in the field. It is unlikely that the Lysander could be mistaken for either an Auster or a Cub, although it is similar to the American Curtiss O52 Owl, which was designed originally to perform a similar "spotting" role. No further detail confirming the presence, or purpose, of these aircraft at the site has come to light.

### **The memories**

Researching the history of flight from the "Top of Wykham Hill" has resulted in many people sharing their memories of that period. Some relate to what was happening at the site, others were broader in outlook. A few names have been mentioned already, but many do not easily fit into the earlier sections. Their memories are now given in quotation marks below, with explanations following where applicable.

*"The western boundary was only a bit of a hedge or a bank, running north toward where the tree is now. We farmed the land beyond and knew there were aircraft in the field but didn't take that much notice. There may have been a couple of tents or huts in the field but not much else."* [Conversations with Ken Gibbard, farmer and current landowner of the site, 11 Feb '93 and 7 Aug '93 ]

*"We came across the concrete bases of the Nissen huts when we built a new part of the school. An American left an extract from 'Cockney' with us. He turned up a couple of years ago saying he was stationed here during the war and could he have a look around."* [Conversation with Lt Col L D Wood, bursar of Tudor Hall school, 11 Feb 93 The American to whom he refers is Elmer Hunter who flew as an observer with the 696th ]

*"The wind vane that they used was removed to the side wall of one of the houses at Wykham Mill Farm. It's supposed to still be there."* [Conversation with Eric Kaye, author, 11 Feb. 93 In addition to confirming much of the detail then known about the site and later providing the address in the U S A. of Elmer Hunter, Eric gave this unusual piece of information. Despite contacting Alick MacNair, who lived at the farmhouse from 1967 to 1988, and the current owners of the property, Jaguar Sport Ltd, the existence and present state of any wind vane remains uncertain During a visit to Ken Gibbard on 7 August 93, he remembered there being a normal windsock in the field

*"I was based at Enstone during that period of the war. I remember the Americans at the field and at Wykham Park. There was a five-bar gate in the hedge by the Bloxham Road, this was the main entrance into the field. It was guarded by an American sentry in a small tent. I recall two Cubs, often parked in the corner by the crossroads. There were some tents in the opposite corner. There may have been a curved corrugated tin type hanger. I'm not certain. They had black and white invasion stripes painted on the aircraft.*

*"The Americans often thumbed lifts into town. I used to pick them up, sometimes in exchange for petrol of which they seemed to have a plentiful supply. It was probably intended for the 'planes."* [Conversation with John Woollams, ex R A F, 12 Feb 93 The existence of the invasion stripes would date this as being in June 1944 ]

*"Our enquiries reveal that US Army Taylorcraft Austers training artillery spotters used the strip at Wykham Hill during 1944"* [Letter from Alan Barker, Wellesbourne Aviation Group, 1 Feb 93 This confirms the use of the site by American forces, again the Piper Cub is mistakenly identified as a Taylorcraft Auster.]

*"This is not a 'phone in. David, if you're listening, I'm inundated with calls confirming Austers flew from the site supporting the Royal Artillery."* [Sarah Kennedy, BBC Radio Two, 22 Jan 93 Sarah read out a request for help at 5 57 a m and gave the above reply immediately after the 6 00 a m. news that day ]

*"To the best of my knowledge the U.S. Army were in tented accommodation in the field. The aircraft they were flying were Piper Cubs not Austers. This was during the summer of 1942. They were flying Piper Cubs as training for*

*observation purposes.*" [Letter from Bob Bowley, 1460 Club, 16 Feb 93 The tents to which he refers may be the same ones as mentioned by John Woollams. The date appears inaccurate by two years Although US liaison aircraft arrived in Britain in September 1942, the HQ of the First U S Army did not arrive, in Bristol, until October 1943 The build-up of a definite presence of U.S. A F As took place in early 1944 ]

*"I remember Cubs, not Austers, at the site during the war. There were not many, only a few. I also remember tanks in a copse on the opposite side of the road."* [Conversation with Jim Wright, 20 Feb 93. The tanks were presumably the M7 'Priests' in the grounds of Wykham Park ]

*"I saw these aircraft on the ground at Wykham. There were usually four or five of them, painted dark green as you might expect. They were U.S. Army aircraft. When not in use they were parked down toward the corner by the crossroads next to the road that leads to Broughton, often pegged to the ground no doubt as a precaution against the wind. I also recall a number of tents being pitched there. When they were in use they flew very low, just above the hedgerows. We knew them as Taylorcraft spotter aircraft. American troops were stationed at Wykham Park, Adderbury and Bloxham."* [Letter from F Baughen, 7 Feb 93 More supporting evidence for the presence of US troops in the area Again Adderbury is mentioned, but no confirmation of another airstrip in that area ]

*"A small unit of the U.S. Army was based in a large field at the top of Wykham Hill. It consisted of six Piper Cub aircraft and various tents. It is thought it was there to act as a communication facility prior to the Normandy invasion."* [Letter from Doug Todd, 10 Jan 93 and conversation with him 12 Feb. 93 Although the 696th only had two aircraft, the 5th F.A Group controlled eleven, so it is possible that six were present at the site on occasions Some of the Divisional HQ aircraft would certainly have been used for communication purposes.]

*"Remember seeing tanks around the Green in Adderbury in mid 1944. Also Piper Cubs gliding low over the Bloxham road."* [Conversation with Mr Clifton, 10 June 93. The tanks could have been more units of U S artillery battalions ]

*"U.S. personnel were accommodated in the building now known as Tudor Hall school. The light spotter aircraft were operated from a clear field with an unobstructed approach."* [Letter from T. Keegan, 22 March 93 ]

*"I must have been about eleven years of age when the Americans were based at Wykham. I remember the aircraft being lined up in the field, parallel to the hedgerow following the A361, tied down when not in use. They were very light 'planes compared with the fighters and bombers located at aerodromes in the*

*vicinity. As young lads we used to visit the Wykham crossroads worrying the pilots to take us for a ride, obviously without success."* [Letter from Graham Hobday, 11 May 93, living in Broughton at that time ]

*"The airstrip was at the top of Wykham Hill. As a fifteen year old, cycling to work at Banbury Co-op, I remember it well. I cannot recall when the Piper Cubs arrived, but they left on the morning of D-Day, 6th June 1944. In the morning of the 5th, troops were painting black and white stripes on the aircraft. I wondered what they were doing."* [Conversation with C Wise, 26 July 93 He feels it is likely that he may have mistaken one of the 696th's visits to the ranges with their eventual departure from Wykham. However he is certain that they left the area permanently shortly after D-Day, which fits in with their known departure date of 25th July ]

*"A British unit was at Wykham before we were stationed there, and an American one after we left. I doubt whether the American unit would have been artillery with aircraft as most of them had already gone to France."* [Letters from Elmer Hunter, observer with the 696th, 26 Feb 93 and 22 March 93 ]

*"They used to spend a lot of their free time with us. They brought food with them, tins of apricot jam which were delicious. On his return to America, Joe Harbourn's wife had a baby which they named Susan, after me."* [Letter from Susan Hinde, 17 March 93 Susan is the daughter of the Bradshaw family who lived at Wykham Mill Farm and farmed the site in 1944 ]

*"During the war I lived at Bloxham. I remember seeing a Lysander at the site as well as Cubs."* [Conversation with Peter Nicholls, 19 July 93. Another reference to Lysanders using the field Ken Gibbard also believes a Lysander used the airstrip at some point ]

Finally, three memories which serve as lessons to all those sons who do not believe their father's tales

*"People don't believe me when I tell them there was an airfield at the top of Wykham Hill!"* [Conversation with C Wise, 26/7/93 ]

*"We oldies are not always wrong and your father is quite correct in saying that the field in the corner was used as an airstrip during the last war."* [Letter from Ken Gibbard, 4 Jan 93 ]

*"Your father has an acute memory and, if he says he watched Austers, then Austers they were. When we were young your father often visited relations in Bloxham on Sunday afternoons, and it could have been on some of these occasions that he went to Wykham Hill."* [Letter from Ron Brooks, a contemporary of father's, 15 Feb 93 ]

## Conclusion

Have I proved that I did occasionally listen to my father?

Certainly Piper Cubs flew from the site at the "Top of Wykham Hill" during 1944. Units of various US Field Artillery Battalions were based in and around Banbury from 1943 to 1944 so aircraft could have been flown from the site by units other than the 696th.

There are two people who claim to have seen a Westland Lysander at the site, so perhaps other aircraft used it at some time.

Taylor Austers and Piper Cubs were similar in appearance and many people confused the two types.

**YES!** Not only have I proved that I *did* listen to my father but that, in this instance, his tale is basically true!

## Bibliography and Sources

The majority of the information that follows has been obtained from the various people listed in the "Acknowledgements". I am, however, indebted to the following sources:

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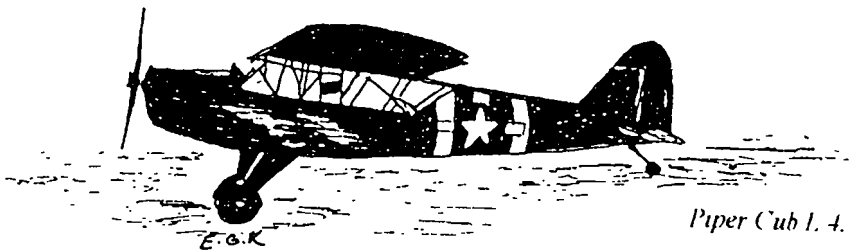
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*Piper Cub I. 4.*



## Acknowledgments

During my research into this site, I have been impressed by the willingness of total strangers to share with me their reminiscences and knowledge of Wykham Hill, the Banbury area, flying and wartime experiences. Many times I found myself talking and writing about things totally unconnected with Taylor Austers or Wykham Hill, yet which I found so interesting that it was difficult to keep "on track." The people I visited have welcomed me into their homes and enabled me to develop a "feel" for what was happening in the area during WWII. To all these people I express my thanks, although I leave it to their sons to prove the truth behind the tales some of them told me!

I would like to single out for specific thanks three people

Ken Gibbard for his invaluable assistance with the layout of the fields in 1944 and for allowing me to walk around and over his ploughed field to visualise the geography.

Eric Kaye for tracing the address of Elmer Hunter in the U.S. and for providing background on aviation in the area during the war.

Ken Wakefield in addition to providing the history of US liaison aircraft and their activity, for taking time to talk to me at Old Sarum's AOP fly-in and allowing me the opportunity to photograph his Piper Cub L 4H G-BKHG, in the markings of 44-79766 D63 of the HQ Ninth U.S. Army.

In addition, I owe thanks to certain members of my family who knew I was researching this piece of history. They managed to keep it from my father and almost successfully prevented him from reading about it on the three times it was mentioned in the local newspaper. On the only occasion that he did see it, he is alleged to have jumped up and down saying "Just wait until I speak to David, he never believed me and here it is, someone else remembers it!" The family have certainly enhanced their reputation as a devout lot.

I would like also to acknowledge the help of all the people, listed below, who assisted in many ways, great and small, with information on flying from the top of Wykham Hill.

Alan Barker, F. Baughen, Robert Bowley, Ron Brooks, Maurice Brown, Steve Challis, Charlie Chester, Mr Clifton, Harry Colegrave, Peter W. Davis, Peter Dunham, Mark Evans, Dennis Foster, Patsy de Freitas (Banbury Library), Jeremy Gibson (Banbury Historical Society), Flt Lt A J M Grieve, David Harper, Susan Hinde, Graham Hobday, Elmer Hunter, Yvonne Huntriss (Bloxham Museum), T. Keegan, Christine Kelly (and Banbury Museum), Sarah Kennedy, John Lawton, Alick Macnair, Robert W. McCormick, Fiona Miller (and Jaguar Sport Ltd.), John V. Nicholls, Peter Nicholls, Ron Setter, James Taylor (Imperial War Museum), Doug Todd, Debbie Tweedie (and the *Banbury Guardian* team Nicola Bell, Gordon Rayner and Mark Wiltshire), Jane Willmott (and the *Bloxham Broadsheet*), C. Wise, L. D. Wood, John Woollams, Jim Wright, Peter F. G. Wright

Finally, my thanks to my wife, Janice, who has put up with me disappearing to visit people, running up the telephone bill and clogging up the word-processor with letters and records over the last twelve months.

## TOSTY TELL ME TRUE....

**Christine Bloxham**

*Tisty, tosty, tell me true,  
Who shall I be married to?  
Tisty, tosty cowslip ball,  
At my sweetheart's name you'll fall...*

In spring thoughts have, from time immemorial, turned to love, and this is reflected in country folklore. The rhyme above was quoted by Mollie Harris in *A Kind of Magic*, she and her friends would make balls of cowslips and toss them in the air, chanting the rhyme, and adding at the end the names of all the young men they knew, perhaps accidentally-on-purpose ensuring that the ball fell at the right name!

Girls often speculated about their future loves, in the way that girls of today play with their Barbie bride dolls, dreaming of their own weddings. Rhymes for counting cherry and plum stones such as

*Tinker, tailor, soldier, sailor,  
Rich man, poor man, beggarman, thief*

are familiar, but most local variations have now disappeared. One quoted by Iona and Peter Opie in the *Oxford Nursery Rhyme Book* (1970) has local relevance:

*Soldier brave, sailor true,  
Skilled physician, Oxford blue,  
Learned lawyer, squire so hale,  
Dashing airman, Curate pale.*

Everyday events became entwined with superstitions about love so if you cut your nails or sneezed on a Sunday it was said that you would see your true love on the Monday. If your ears burned, someone was thinking about you.

*Right your mother,  
Left your lover.*

Cheek burning too was considered significant:

*Right cheek, left cheek, why do you burn?  
Cursed be she that doth me harm;  
If it be a maid, let she be slayed,  
If she be a wife, let her lose her life,  
And if she be a widow, long let her mourn,  
But if it be my own true love, burn, cheek, burn.*

Although perhaps too young for Valentines cards, children enjoyed St Valentine's day. They would often wander round in small groups and would chant rhymes to all they met in the hopes of getting some money. The Bodicote children chanted:

*The rose is red, the violets blue  
Carnation's sweet and so be you  
So please to give us a Wolentine.*

At that they would be suitably grateful if granted their request, but if it was refused and they were sent away empty handed they would shout after the offending person:

*The rose is red, the violet's blue  
The devil's black and so be you!*

As the girls got older their thoughts might turn to divinations. These, surprisingly, sometimes seemed to work - perhaps because people tended to live in smaller more closely knit communities, and the chances were that girls would know the range of boys from which they would choose potential husbands from quite an early age. In those circumstances, if a girl let it be known that she was trying out a divination there might be a little connivance.

This explanation does not apply to all stories however, and for some there is no ready explanation, as the time in the mid-nineteenth century when three girls from North Leigh decided to try out the sinister Hempseed divination. As with most divinations, it was hedged around with ritual designed to get the participant into the right responsive frame of mood to experience supernatural happenings. The girls had first to obtain some hempseed, in itself a mystical substance. Next they had to go to the churchyard at midnight - walking by flickering lantern-light along dark unlit country lanes, in itself a potentially frightening experience. Once in the churchyard, surrounded by lowering gravestones, each girl in turn had to walk three times (a ritual number) round the churchyard, throwing the hempseed over her shoulder while chanting.

*I sow hempseed,  
Hempseed I sow,  
He that is to be my husband,  
Come after me and mow,  
Not in his best or Sunday array,  
But in the clothes he wears every day.*

As she walked round, being careful not to bump into gravestones, and presumably fearing seeing ghosts, the hempseed was supposed to grow magically up behind her, and if she peered over her shoulder she would see the wraith of her future husband walking behind her, mowing the hemp with a sickle. The first

girl was desperately disappointed, as she saw nothing - and subsequently died a spinster in her eighties. The second girl suddenly collapsed into hysterics in the middle of her walk around the churchyard, and cried convulsively, refusing to be consoled. When she had been calmed down she gasped out that she had seen her coffin - and she apparently died the next year. Not surprisingly the third girl decided not to risk trying, and the divination has been banned in North Leigh ever since

Not all stories have such alarming endings, fortunately. Another divination from North Leigh was much more lighthearted. This one was done with a wedding cake. The girl took two pieces of wedding cake, one sugary to represent the bride and the other fruity for the groom - echoing the days when two wedding cakes were made, a light one with sugar icing called the bride cake and a rich fruit cake called the groom cake. She put these pieces under her pillow, then had to get into bed backwards, reciting:

*I put this cake under my head,  
To dream of the living, not of the dead,  
To dream of the man I shall wed,  
Not in his best or Sunday array  
But in the clothes that he wears every day.*

After that, whatever happened, she had to remain silent until she went to sleep, or the charm would not work.

Love is just as much a preoccupation as ever today, but apart from cherry stone rhymes few of the old superstitions and divinations remain, except perhaps some of the old skipping rhymes, still sometimes found in the playground.

*Blackberry, strawberry, gooseberry tart,  
Tell me the name of my sweetheart,  
A, B, C, D....*



Christine Bloxham was formerly Curator of Banbury Museum and Hon. Secretary of the Banbury Historical Society. She is well known for her writing on folklore and broadcasts on Radio Oxford, as well as appearing regularly on the lecture programmes of this and other local societies.

# Lecture Reports

Brian Little

**Thursday 9th September 1993.**

## *Country Houses round Banbury.*

The big house like the big country continues to fascinate. Further evidence was demonstrated by the size of the audience.

In essence **Robert Bailey's** talk was a guide to how to get the most out of your visit. It focused on properties not too far from Banbury and especially in Northamptonshire. These were seen as the sum of their architectural delights from which included such notable characteristics as the vaulted corridors of Broughton Castle and the long gallery at Stanway House.

Each part of his analysis was a cameo of the best images presented by each house in its constituent parts. The overall conclusion from this was that the best buildings are in private ownership. Age of construction, designer inputs, external vistas and overall settings all contrive to make such country house-going a worthwhile leisure pursuit.

The freshness and vigour of Robert Bailey's presentation gave added spice to his topic. He really rejoiced in the Palladian style at Stoke Park and the statuary of Rousham. His audience was encouraged to do so too. Doubtless the 1994 season will see eager faces turning up at his selected venues.

**Thursday 14th October 1993.**

## *Britain's Canal Heritage.*

An evening spent in the company of **Roger Butler** (of Britain's Inland Waterways) proved beyond doubt that Britain's canal heritage is indeed incredibly rich and diverse. The notion of 'up the cut' just does not do justice to a 'peripherique' of warehouses, cottages and canal ephemera which afford the historian both local interest and regional distinction.

The bonus on this occasion was the superb photography by the speaker. Cross shots, long profiles, reflections, seasonal delights - all were there in profusion. Thoughts on canal a holiday for summer '94 must have entered the minds of many of his audience.

Much of the early part of Roger's presentation was to do with historic settings - a host of reasons for canal conservation. The later stages took up the theme of regeneration and comprehensive planning especially where the canals passed through urban areas. Nottingham City Challenge was a case in point.

Banbury's own Oxford Canal was not neglected but was shown to be crying out for a successful conclusion to the Raglan/Cherwell plan. Like so many other areas its vision was being determined in a corridor effect.

A few shots of Venice in the concluding section reminded us all of the grace and charm of that water orientated city. It also confirmed our understanding of the need to take a fresh look at Britain's own heritage, for long neglected but now presented in new formats for the age of leisure rather than an era of commerce.

**Thursday 11th November 1993.**

***Regional Variations in Distribution of Christian Names in 1851, including the registration district of Banbury***

If you were around at the time of the 1851 census then you were most likely to have been a John or a Mark. George and Jane were also popular. More exotic and unusual names were around at this time - there were a sprinkling of Calebs, Urbans. Decimas and Silences!

All this fascinating information was drawn from the study of a limited local area - roughly Hornton to Hook Norton. **Dr. Tom Arkell's** objective was to establish regional variations in the use of names. Were there any differences as between locals and outsiders? Significantly Henry and Joseph proved to be good imports into the region.

Clearly names waxed and waned. In 1851 William's were up but James' down whilst Henry was very popular in Oxford.

Satisfactory conclusions were not easy to establish claimed the speaker. It was necessary to invoke cultural influences - the inheritance of names, and to look for exceptions provided by local cells of families. Beyond that it is a case of uncharted waters and perhaps a belief that a peep into the first reliable census is fun anyway.

**Thursday 9th December 1993.**

***Through a glass darkly.***

Through a glass darkly was a lighthearted and informative review of the creators, designs and materials involved in stained windows. Most examples down the ages were drawn from churches but there were few more bizarre offerings from other sources.

**Mr F.S. London** traced the origins of this art form to early centres of excellence such as the Nile. He showed that the glass itself could be produced in a number of ways and specific schools of glaziers, notably Southwark, emerged with time.

Stained glass, even as early as the 4th Century, was seen to have two functions, to keep out the weather and offer an attractive presentation. As such the early windows were often a visual aid for priest stories.

If decoration and illustration were the key functions of glass then these often manifested themselves as portrayals of doom or presentations of likenesses.

The actual features incorporated went with the time. There was a rich variety of patterns and colours and many attempts to keep faith with conventions, for instance kings wore crowns. From the fourteenth Century there were even great walls of glass. Perspective gathered strength from the sixteenth Century and the 1900's saw a reversion to Gothic styles and the emergence of the arts and crafts movement.

Appropriately Mr. London ended his talk in the present century. He confessed to being bemused by abstracts but got a lot of pleasure out of Harry Clark's brooding figures. Signature and symbolism might proclaim the artist but context, colour and clarity were themes he could comment to his modest attentive audience.

**Thursday 13th January 1994.**

***Society in Early Victorian Southern Northamptonshire.***

Those expecting **Dr John Clarke** to be speaking about (High) Society with a capital 'S' were in for a surprise, for his theme was entirely on what official and other contemporary writings revealed about the other end of the spectrum. In a season of excellent lectures his was outstanding. We hope to publish it in due course.

**Thursday 10th February 1994.**

***Nineteenth Century Education in Oxfordshire.***

Going to school in the last century was a 'back to basics' story for many young people. Well taught 3 R's meant money for school but a narrow focus for its pupils. Grouped round the tortoise stove or shivering in the back row, children were required to please teacher, inspector and sometimes cleric. No surprise therefore that one school log book had the entry "kidnapped by the curate"

Attendance could be elusive for other reasons as well. Notably there were claims of work and the attractions of the occasional fair. Harvest especially was the signal for summer holidays

**David Eddershaw's** talk was a well organised and entertaining insight into nineteenth century organisation, control and reform. The background was both religious and political, reflected in the style of building and in the educational message. For the fortunate this message was conveyed from the teacher to bright pupil and on down the conveyor belt

The various stages of reform contributed something to educational betterment but 1870 had come and gone before a new generation of Board schools could levy rate support. It was a whole sixteen years on to any kind of compulsory learning and then only to age 10

In the closing stages of David Eddershaw's talk members were given glimpses of life in several Oxfordshire schools. Fundamentally the frame was the same - hard benches, simple boards with individual slates and rote learning which ranged through basic tables, kings and queens, capes and bays. In his final comparison of primary groups divided by a century of learning, we were left to reflect on how much more had changed than just the transition from smock to tee shirt

**Thursday 10th March 1994.**

***The Ascott Martyrs.***

Here was a stirring tale from deep in Cotswold country, told with gusto by the **Reverend Ralph Mann**. It surrounded the doings of a band of women who championed the cause of the agricultural workers. Their low pay at a time of relative prosperity in the 1870's and 1880's was an obvious injustice. Nationally the farm worker of that time could secure some 14s a day but in Oxfordshire and adjacent county areas the figure on offer was more like 11s or a best 12s.

Locally at Ascott the fuse was lit by the owner of Crown Farm who would not go beyond 7s.6d. and tried to import replacement labour. These men of Ramsden could not reach the fields because Ascott's Martyrs blocked their way. This action inspired a prosecution from the farmer arising from which the ten so called ringleaders were sent to Oxford for ten days hard labour. From this point onwards the story is a pattern of letters, parliamentary comment and finally the royal pardon. Back to Ascott came the ladies who then enjoyed a euphoric period of newspaper naming and reporting. Longer term their success stood for peaceful picketing but times changed and agriculture went into decline with rural populations shrinking

Throughout the unfolding story it is easy to lose sight of figures like Joseph Arch who pioneered farm workers getting together within unions. The labourers' association NARU may not have done much to support the women of Ascott but these martyrs bridged the transition from prosperity to decline and secured rights which hopefully would endure until better times on the land.

## Correspondence

*From Mrs. Joyce Hoad, 133 Sundale Avenue, Selsdon, South Croydon CR2 8RX.*

I was gratified to see that the 1958 Constitution with later amendments had been printed in the latest issue of *Cake & Cockhorse* following my request at the 1993 A G M I was of the opinion that 35 years later few of the original members still attended, whilst those who had joined in the succeeding years were uncertain as to the aims or requirements of the Society

However I feel I must correct the statement "that no normal notification was received" for accompanying my subscription in January 1993 was a letter to the Hon Sec. in which I requested a copy of the Constitution Shortly after J S W G phoned me to discover the problem, but there was none, and he promised to send me a copy of the Constitution Subsequent verbal reminders brought further promises during succeeding months At the time of the A G M in July I still had not received my copy it was only then that I decided that the request needed a formal minute.

Concerning the other matter of the accounts, I explained to J S W G after the A G M that the errors were only discovered when I checked the accounts during the tedious journey on the M25/M40 Prior to the meeting, although I spoke briefly to J S W G I was more concerned with a dry entry during the torrential downpour, than errors in the accounts Also I was totally unaware that J S W G had anything to do with the accounts so I did not mention the errors to him. As I did not know the Treasurer I was unable to contact him in the short time available before the meeting. Therefore although there was no time to put anything in writing it was not my intention to put anyone "on the Spot" There were three discrepancies, two of amounts exceeding £500 Although I requested a reason I stated that I had complete faith in the Treasurer as I felt sure it was a clerical error but the accounts could not be passed as correct

Whilst on the subject of the A G M I appreciate that the outing is always superb but we must not lose sight of the object of the meeting which is the legal requirement to hold an A G M It may be the only time when members can have a say in the running of "The Society" especially those who such as myself live 90 miles distant. I make attempts throughout the year to attend other visits and the occasional lecture but still felt a little on the outside despite Jeremy's best efforts to enlist me onto the committee

Therefore I did not find it commendable that the main object of the A G M seems to be to speed the meeting through in record time with complete disregard for discussion The tone of the meeting is "You haven't any questions have you?" leaving few prepared to say "Well, Yes I have " Surely it would be possible to allot 40 minutes into the day's time-table Part of the trouble with the accounts



was that very little time had been allotted for the A.G.M reports and accounts We need more time though I would prefer some short verbal reports from the Officers which, besides giving an opportunity for discussion, would help members recognise whom they have to thank for the previous year's hard work It is at this time that the future of the Society and its publications could be discussed.

It was also noted that the Magazine will consist of two issues this year. Perhaps the Editor could elaborate on the reasons for this If lack of material or help is the cause then non-active members might be persuaded that as well as attending lectures and visits their assistance would be appreciated

At previous A G M 's I requested knowledge of publications in the pipe line and when they are due The answers are always vague and I would like to see a statement concerning the aims at a future date Members who are paying the extra subscription are entitled to know when the next publication is due although I am sure we all appreciate that we are getting excellent value with top quality publications. Another request of mine was for the number of members to be issued, to see if our Society was thriving, falling or remaining constant There must be others who have views on the future of the Society which could be discussed if the atmosphere was less forbidding After my issues had been aired it encouraged another member to ask about facilities after meetings and I am sure that there must have been more unasked queries about the running of the Society As we never get to hear what is debated in Committee we do not know what goodies you have in store for us

The Society appears to be putting an unfair workload on a few willing shoulders - a statement reinforced by J.S W G 's comment that he has only missed one committee meeting in 35 years Looking through the back issues it would appear that many others have also served in excess of ten years A thriving forward-looking society is always in need of new blood Although called Banbury Historical Society - with an object to foster the study of domestic history, genealogy, heraldry etc etc, it would be interesting to discover how many members have ever carried out any research and how many just come along to hear about Banburyshire and go on walks If the committee could ascertain the feeling of the general membership then it would be able to discuss in committee the way forward for the next ten years.

As I was informed by a member that they only come for the tour, if this is the general feeling then why not just have the tour and call it "The Banbury Society for walks, talks and tours", let's dispense with the A G.M and cause an excellent Society to fold through lack of commitment!

**Joyce Hoad.**

*Note. The only members of the 1984 committee who have served consecutively since are David Hitchcox and Jeremy Gibson.*

## THE BRINKWORTH PRIZE FUND

The Brinkworth Prize Fund has made a regular appearance in the Society's accounts since 1986, and there have been sporadic references to it in the Annual Reports and elsewhere in *Cake & Cockhorse*.

As many readers will know, Ted Brinkworth was the Society's inspiration and its co-founder. It was his series of University Extra-Mural lectures in the autumn of 1957 which created the momentum for the inaugural meetings, it was his knowledge and scholarship which gave it credibility, and, above all, it was his friendly and encouraging personality which we hope still personifies our Society. Local history is meant to be fun!

From the start Gwladys Davies was his constant companion, and in due course, to our joy, his wife as well. For many years too she was a hard-working committee member and latterly Chairman. For over 25 years the name Brinkworth was synonymous with the Society.

On Gwladys' death in 1985, her family generously donated a capital sum to the Society, the income thereof to be used at will, but as far as possible to encourage an interest in local history amongst those still at school. In its first year, thanks to David Hitchcox's work in disseminating information, three primary schools submitted very worthwhile projects and received small grants from income. Since then, despite his and others' unremitting efforts, no interest has been shown except in 1990, when we were able to grant £250 to Banbury School for a project on the effect of the new motorway (M40) on the Banbury countryside.

However, thanks to the coincidence of the 350th anniversary of the start of the Civil War including our own local battle of Edgehill (with museum exhibitions to match) and an energetic local studies liaison officer in Cherwell District, Paul McKee, 1992-3 was a bumper year, and we have been able to help four schools to take pupils to Banbury Museum, together with two much more substantial grants to St John's Roman Catholic School, Banbury, and Chipping Norton School for their Civil War projects, described below.

Whilst our local schools have history staff with initiative the name Brinkworth will, deservedly, be perpetuated.

**J.S.W.G.**

The monies expended from the Brinkworth Prize Fund from March 1993 comprised four grants of £50 each to Banbury School (Centenary Year), Bletchington P.C. School, Chipping Norton School and Great Rollright School. Grants of £150 each were made as below.

**Chipping Norton School** - for a major project, which involved their feeder primary schools, details of which were sent to the B.H.S. by Chris Bridges, Head of History. It promoted cross-phase links between primary and secondary school and 'living history' at Sulgrave and Holdenby, together with the wider aspects of the English Civil War.

**St. John's Roman Catholic School, Banbury** - Again the term 'living history' occurs, from Hilary Rowlands, in the material sent to the B.H.S. The money was used for more much appreciated school visits, as this letter shows

*'Thank you for awarding our school the Brinkworth Prize for the Civil War Project  
'I particularly remember drawing the soldier from the Sealed Knot Society We went on a school trip to Broughton Castle and to the Tower of London to help us with our project I really enjoyed our day out at the library too'*

**Kelly Price** (aged 10)

'They work miracles at Banbury Museum' was praise that I overheard five minutes ago, spoken by a member of the public, in our cramped research room at Banbury Museum

Banbury Museum and Tourist Information Centre received over 74,000 visitors in 1993 This fantastic figure has been achieved through hard work and a very successful formula at the very heart of which is education.

We market our unique product to schools proactively, and the Brinkworth Prize Fund has been invaluable in stimulating interest We offer approximately five different temporary exhibitions annually, all of which are assessed for their educational potential and some of which are deliberately targeted towards the requirements of the National Curriculum. One such exhibition was Dynamic Toys which brought together toys, both contemporary and historic, from all over the world This exhibition was exceptionally successful with the gallery heaving with children for the duration of its time in Banbury.

We encourage teachers to bring their classes to the museum by offering twilight sessions These are special late night open evenings when teachers can visit an exhibition and talk to Paul McKee, our Museum Officer who is an education specialist Later this year we will be launching two boxes of handling material, on shops and shopping and transport We also offer In Service Training to improve the ways in which teachers use our objects to educate

Our temporary exhibition programme is both varied and exciting. Last year we had the Oxfordshire Museums exhibition on the English Civil War, and later this year we have exhibitions on Privies (a truly lavatorial experience), the USAF at RAF Upper Heyford, and an exhibition put on by the *Banbury Guardian* of photographs taken over the last five years. The variety of subject matter appeals to a wide range of people who come back time and time again Other key elements in our formula are the permanent exhibition on Banburyshire and our coffee and bookshop which has a small exhibition area for local artists

I will finish on the same note that I began We are fortunate in having excellent staff which are very helpful and deal with numerous history enquires every day.

**Simon Townsend**

# BANBURY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

## ANNUAL REPORT, 1993

Your Committee have pleasure in submitting the 36th Annual Report and Statement of Accounts, for the year 1993

Officers and other committee members were unchanged from 1992. Membership of the Society was 213 (143 records members) at the end of the year. During the year we welcomed 20 new members (two rejoining), but lost 29 through, death, resignation or non-renewal. Attendance at meetings and new membership benefitted from the publicity efforts of Joan Bowes, who has arranged for posters (fresh for each meeting) to be displayed in a number of key places.

The three opening meetings of the year, the last to be arranged by Penelope Renold, were on valuing antiques (Tim Holloway), a return visit from John Cheney, on the second century of his famous printing firm, and history from landscapes, as seen by Dr Peter Cornah. The village meeting was at Hook Norton, where the local society put on a display and showed us a videotape of the Central Television imaginative update of *Twenty-Four Square Miles*, interviewing descendants of several of those who appeared in the original film.

The A.G.M. was held at Sulgrave Manor and was made considerably more lively and interesting than usual by Mrs Joyce Hoad, who, apart from spotting some embarrassing typing errors in the accounts, had several pertinent questions to ask. In consequence we have since published an updated version of the Society's Rules (the first since the Society was founded in the late '50s) and provide figures for membership (above). Whilst not proposing to publish a list of members, this can be made available to any member wishing to inspect it. The formal meeting was followed by an enjoyable and informative tour of the house conducted by John Coles.

There were just two excursions in the summer (arranged by Hugh White). The first was to the lovely remote Hillesden church and on to Claydon House, the second to Witney, where Mr Charles Gott showed us what a wealth of unexpected alleys and buildings this historic market town possesses.

Of the autumn meetings (arranged by Dr John Rivers), three were lavishly illustrated, on very different topics: Bruce Bailey on country houses 'round' Banbury (including a very detailed demonstration of how Broughton Castle developed), Roger Butler on Britain's canal heritage (with a galaxy of some of the most beautiful slides ever shown to the Society), and Mr F S London speaking with authority and humour on stained glass.

*Cake & Cockhorse* appeared only twice, as the second was a 'double' number for both Summer and Autumn (at 48 pages fully justifying this description) The new typeset presentation means that significantly more material can be included per page Contributors included Reg Apletree, Jeremy Gibson, Michael Hoadley, Pamela Horn, Robert Kinchin-Smith, Brian Little, Penelope Renold and Barrie Trinder The first issue of *Cake & Cockhorse* edited by David Hitchcox was for Spring 1984 Now, in Spring 1994, he has indicated his wish to retire, and it is appropriate to thank him (and his wife Ann, who has done most of the typing) for these years of work and dedication during which our journal has well maintained its expected combination of interest, scholarship and entertainment Joan Bowes, backed by Nan Clifton and, as ever, Jeremy Gibson, has been gathering contributions, and members can be assured they will continue to be able to enjoy these in future issues (and *three* a year)

No records volume appeared during 1993 However, another bumper volume (in collaboration with the Oxfordshire Record Society) is well advanced and should be available before the A.G.M. This consists of a revised edition of the March 1641/2 Protestation Return for Oxfordshire (mainly north and west, first published by the O.R.S. forty years ago), combined with the May 1642 Subsidy Lists for Banbury, Bloxham, Ploughley and Bampton Hundreds. Together they provide a quasi-census of adult males at the time, the subsidy giving the added dimension of land-holding by non-residents The index alone comes to over a hundred pages

During the year we were delighted to make grants from the Brinkworth Fund to various schools in the Cherwell District, our thanks to Paul McKee for his liaison

The Society's finances remain healthy, though substantial outlay on the records volume is imminent At the 1993 A.G.M. rises in subscription rates were agreed, to £10 for records and corporate members, £7.50 for ordinary members, to take effect from 1st January 1995

## Banbury Historical Society

*Revenue Account for the Year ended 31st December 1993*

	1993		1992	
<b>INCOME</b>				
Subscriptions	1747		1591	
Less Transfer to Publications Account	<u>565</u>	1182	<u>402</u>	1189
Income Tax Refund on Covenants		75		93
Bank Interest		510		555
Donations - General	-----		319	
- re Postage	<u>92</u>	<u>92</u>	<u>293</u>	<u>612</u>
		1859		2449
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>				
<i>Cake &amp; Cockhorse</i>				
Printing	584		1061	
Postage and envelopes	<u>165</u>		<u>112</u>	
	749		1173	
Less sales	<u>100</u>		<u>90</u>	
	649		1083	
Lecture, Meeting, Secretarial and Administrative Expenses	116		133	
Hall Hire and Speakers' Expenses	155		302	
Less Donations at Meetings	(15)		(22)	
Subscriptions to other Bodies	8		15	
Bank Charges	68		92	
Publicity	<u>40</u>		<u>22</u>	
		<u>1021</u>		<u>1625</u>
<b>SURPLUS FOR THE YEAR</b>				
Transferred to Capital Account		£838		£824

*Publications Account for the Year ended 31st December 1993*

<b>INCOME</b>				
Proportion of Subscriptions		565		402
Sales of Publications			216	
Less Share of <i>Cake &amp; Cockhorse</i>	<u>100</u>	859	<u>90</u>	126
		1424		528
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>				
Records Volume ( <i>Edgehill and Beyond</i> )		-----		1768
<b>SURPLUS (DEFICIT) FOR THE YEAR</b>				
Transferred to/from Publications Reserve		£ 1424		£ (1240)

*Brnkworth Prize Account for the Year ended 31st December 1993*

	1993		1992	
<b>INCOME</b>				
Interest received		166		255
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>				
Grants and prizes		<u>500</u>		-----
<b>SURPLUS (DEFICIT) FOR THE YEAR</b>				
Transferred to/from Brnkworth Prize Fund		£ (334)		£ 255

## Banbury Historical Society

*BALANCE SHEET as at 31st December 1993*

<b>CAPITAL ACCOUNT</b>				
As at 1st January 1993		4355		3530
Add Surplus for the Year		<u>838</u>	5193	<u>824</u> 4354
<b>PUBLICATIONS RESERVE</b>				
As at 1st January 1993		2665		3904
Add Surplus for the Year		1424		-----
Less Deficit for the Year		-----	4089	<u>(1240)</u> 2664
<b>BRINKWORTH PRIZE FUND</b>				
As at 1st January 1993		3304		3049
Add surplus for the Year		-----		255
Less Deficit for the Year		<u>(334)</u>	2970	-----
				3304
<b>SUBSCRIPTIONS RECEIVED IN ADVANCE</b>				
		318		266
<b>GRANT FOR FUTURE PUBLICATION</b>				
		750		750
<b>SUNDRY CREDITORS</b>				
		<u>140</u>		<u>70</u>
		£ 13460		£ 11408

REPRESENTED BY -

<b>At NATWEST BANK - Banbury</b>				
Current Account		200		201
Business Reserve Account		-----		7900
<b>At LEEDS &amp; HOLBECK B/SCTY - Banbury</b>				
Charities Account		<u>10176</u>	10376	-----
			148	3
<b>BRINKWORTH FUND INVESTMENT</b>				
<b>At NATWEST BANK - Banbury</b>				
Capital Reserve Account		-----		3304
<b>At LEEDS &amp; HOLBECK B/SCTY - Banbury</b>				
Charities Account		<u>2936</u>		-----
		£ 13460		£ 11408

I have examined the above Balance Sheet and the annexed Revenue Accounts and they are in accordance with the books and information and explanations supplied to me

28th February 1994

R J Mayne, F.C.A., F.C.M.A.

# BANBURY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The Banbury Historical 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 and 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. Well over a hundred issues and some three hundred articles have been published. Most back issues are still available and out-of-print issues can if required be photocopied.

Publications still in print include:

*Old Banbury - a short popular history*, by E.R.C. Brinkworth

*The Building and Furnishing of St. Mary's Church, Banbury*

*The Globe Room at the Reindeer Inn, Banbury*

Records series

*Wigginton Constables' Books 1691-1836* (vol. 11, with Phillimore)

*Banbury Wills and Inventories 1591-1650*, 2 parts (vols. 13, 14).

*Banbury Corporation Records: Tudor and Stuart* (vol. 15)

*Victorian Banbury*, by Barric Trinder (vol. 19, with Phillimore)

*Aynho, A Northamptonshire Village*, by Nicholas Cooper (vol. 20)

*Banbury Gaol Records*, ed. Penelope Renold (vol. 21).

*Banbury Baptism and Burial Registers, 1813-1838* (vol. 22)

*Edgehill and Beyond: The People's War in the South Midlands 1642-1645*,

by Philip Tennant (vol. 23, with Alan Sutton).

Current prices, and availability of other back volumes, from the Hon. Secretary, c/o Banbury Museum

In preparation:

*Oxfordshire and North Berkshire Protestation Returns 1641-2*, also including the May/June 1642 subsidy for the Hundreds of Bampton, Banbury, Bloxham and Ploughley, in Oxfordshire, and Hormer in Berkshire, fully indexed. Revision and expansion of Oxfordshire Record Society vol. 36 (1955) - to be published jointly with the Oxfordshire Record Society, 1994.

Selections from the *Diaries of William Cotton Risley, Vicar of Deddington 1836-1848*

The Society is always interested to receive suggestions of records suitable for publication, backed by offers of help with transcription, editing and indexing.

Meetings are held during the autumn and winter, normally at 7.30 p.m. on the second Thursday of each month, at the North Oxfordshire College, Broughton Road, Banbury. Talks are given by invited lecturers on general and local historical, archaeological and architectural subjects. Excursions are arranged in the spring and summer, and the A.G.M. is usually held at a local country house.

Membership of the Society is open to all, no proposer being needed. The annual subscription (for 1994) is **£8.00** including any records volumes published, or **£5.00** if these are not required. From 1995 these rates will rise to **£10.00** and **£7.50** respectively.

