

# 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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We now have to face up to editorial life without David. For the past seventeen years *Cake & Cockhorse* has been edited first by the late David Fiennes and then by David Hitchcox. Tributes have been paid to both, but their real record lies in the fifty issues that they oversaw. This is the last of the current volume, and your present editors trust it maintains the high standard set by their predecessors.

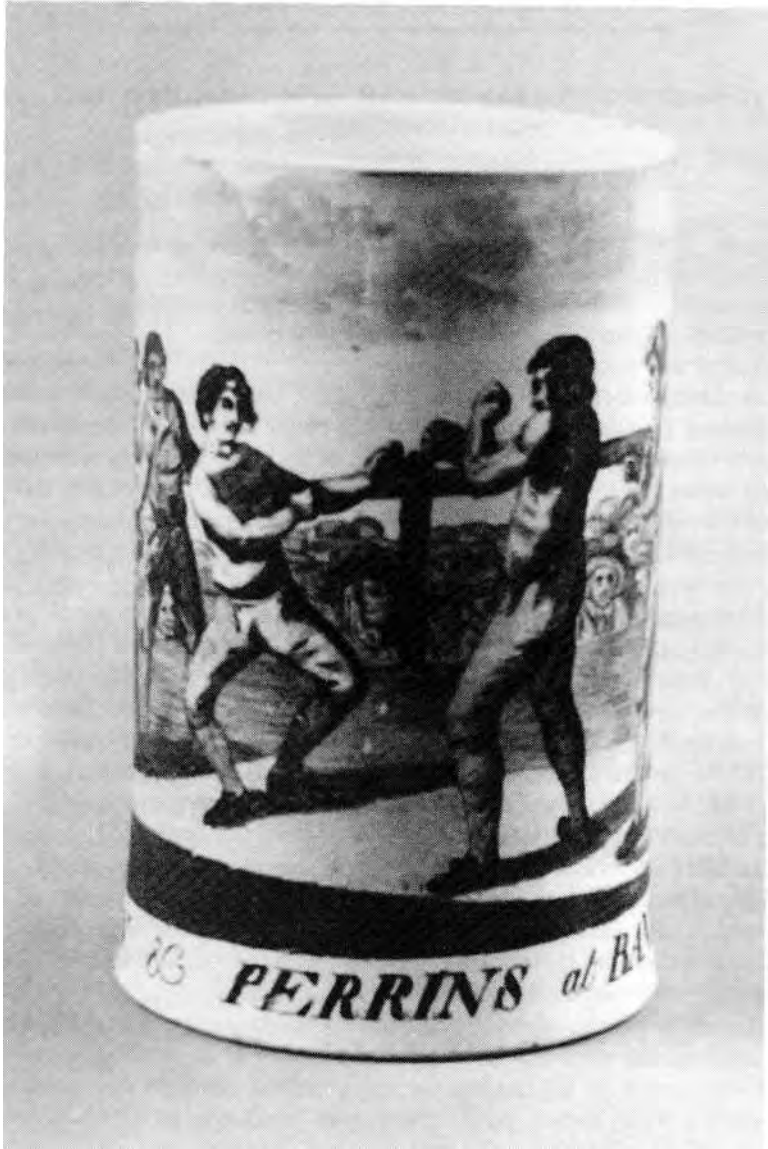
A decision which faces every editor is whether to try to have a particular theme in any one issue or to cover a variety of topics. It is satisfactory to have complimentary articles grouped together (and in the long term useful). In the short term it means this will only attract those who find the theme of interest.

In this issue Hugh Compton's article on Canal Entrepreneurs once again stresses the enormous importance to Banbury and district of the Canal over a period of seventy years - more even than the coming of the M40. For one day early in that time Banbury became the equivalent of Wembley Stadium or the Albert Hall, when Johnson and Perrins contested the boxing championship.

The photo of repair to Kings Sutton lock and bridge (page 243) reminds us that canals remain an ever more important part of our heritage. Amazingly, traffic today for recreational purposes is far greater than even in the heyday of their commercial life. Perhaps eventually our local authorities will realise the opportunities there are in Banbury itself for preservation of canal buildings before they become so decayed that demolition is the only option.

Conservation and repair are of ever greater importance, and it is good that the tiny church of tiny Alkerton is being so well looked after. Practical economists would say there is no justification for two churches, Alkerton and Shenington, within half a mile of each other. Those who live there, and local historians, fortunately think otherwise.

J.S.W.G.



## PRIZE FIGHTING AT BANBURY

*Jeremy Gibson*

Early in March I was telephoned by an old acquaintance, Mr Brian Christmas "Aren't you interested in Banbury?", he asked. "There's a Banbury item coming up for sale; it's in *Antiques & Collectables*", which he then kindly sent me. It read

**Pottery auction packs a punch.** Sotheby's Sussex is boxing clever with the sale of British Pottery and Porcelain on 23rd March.

The great white hope is a creamware mug commemorating the famous boxing match between Tom Johnson and Isaac Perrins at Banbury

The fight was notable because, despite being about half the size of Perrins, Johnson emerged the victor. .

The Staffordshire boxing mug, which dates from the late 18th century, is one of three different types commemorating boxing known to exist. It is decorated with a view of the match above the title '*JOHNSON & PERRINS at BANBURY*'.

This sent me to Nat Fleischer's *Pictorial History of Boxing*, where I found an illustration, a further description of the match and what led up to it. Boxing became popular as a sport in England in the early eighteenth century. The first acknowledged champion was James Figg (died 1740) whose portrait was even painted by no less than William Hogarth. Others followed, though from 1761 to 1783 the championship was in an unsettled state. At that time:

"the championship of England fell into the hands of Tom Johnson, who put in his claim for the title and supported it with dignity and courage. Through him boxing regained public confidence. Johnson, christened Thomas Jackling, ruled from 1783 to 1791

"From the time he assumed the crown until 1789, Johnson waded through his opponents as if they were so many novices. A search was made at Bristol, the hotbed of pugilism, and there an opponent was found in Bill Warr, but he was polished off as easily as were the others. Then came a battle with Isaac Perrins at Banbury, Oxfordshire, on October 22, 1789, and this likewise resulted in victory for Johnson."

The accompanying picture (see page 216) has the caption: "Tom Johnson demolished the giant challenger Isaac Perrins in one hour and 15 minutes, on October 22, 1789. Perrins, six inches taller and 70 pounds heavier, was slowly weakened by body blows and finished with an attack to the head."



Sixteen years ago Julian Barbour wrote about another championship prize fight which was supposed to have taken place near Banbury, at Shenington, between Tom Cribb and Molyneux, in December 1810. Although the conclusion of his article was that the match almost certainly took place elsewhere, his explanation of the choice of site remains relevant. Boxing was then, as it was two decades earlier, illegal, and when a match was known to be about to take place, the local magistrates did their best to stop it. Shenington was an ideal spot, as it was an enclave of Gloucestershire bordered by Oxfordshire and Warwickshire, so there was little likelihood of interference by Gloucestershire JP's, and two convenient borders across which to move or escape. Banbury itself had similar advantages, with the borough being its own jurisdiction, whilst outside the borough Neithrop was in Oxfordshire and Grimsbury in Northamptonshire.

This time, given such a precise date, it was easy to confirm that the match really did take place in Banbury, as it was fully reported in the local press:

*Jackson's Oxford Journal*, 24 October 1789.

## BOXING

*Extract of a Letter from Banbury, dated October 21.*

"This Day the long expected Battle between Johnson and Perrins took Place here, previous to which a large Area had been inclosed in a Ground near the Church, in the Centre of which was a Stage four Feet high, covered with green Turf, according to mutual Agreement

"Upon this Occasion it is computed that near Ten Thousand People of very different Descriptions, had assembled. - The Doors were opened before Eleven, and at Twelve Johnson mounted the Stage, accompanied by Ward of Bristol his Second [perhaps the same as Bill Warr whom he had defeated earlier], and Jo Ward his Bottleholder. Soon after this the Fence, consisting of Boards placed upright, was broke down, when it was found expedient to throw open the Doors and permit the Populace to enter Gratis

"For about an Hour Johnson and his Friends, with divers Gentlemen walked and were in Conversation upon the Stage, and at length the Company became rather impatient for Perrins, who did not mount till near One, attended by his Brother as Bottleholder, and Pickard as his Second. Perrins having been saluted by the Spectators as Johnson had been at his first Appearance, the Combatants immediately stripped, when Perrins's Person appeared perfectly gigantic in Comparison to his Antagonist, and indeed individually so to the surrounding Multitude

"The usual Ceremony of shaking Hands across a Handkerchief held by the Seconds now took Place, and the Engagement began. -In the first Onset Johnson displayed great scientific Art, and after some manoeuvring brought down Perrins as he did again in the second Round. In the third Round Perrins knocked down Johnson, as he did again in the Fifth by a Blow on the Side. But after this,

except when he gained a Blow on Johnson's right Eye which appeared to give him considerable Advantage, and some Hopes to his Friends, every Round was totally in Favour of Johnson, who had also nearly closed an Eye of Perrins.

"At about Half an Hour from the Commencement of the Battle the Combatants had two Rounds of close fighting, by way of exchanging Blow for Blow, but in these Efforts Johnson had also greatly the Advantage, by closing in upon Perrins so as to render his Length of Arm disadvantageous to himself. -Changing this Mode of fighting, the Contest lasted in the Whole ONE HOUR and THIRTEEN MINUTES; when Perrins acknowledged his Adversary victorious, after receiving a kind of farewell Blow upon the Side of the Head that nearly produced Stupefaction; and he might have prudently done this at least twenty Minutes sooner.

"The Umpires were Col. Tarlton for Johnson; and for Perrins a Gentleman from Birmingham: There were present the principal Men of Science throughout the Kingdom, as well as the Amateurs of this *rational Amusement*; insomuch that for many Miles round not a Carriage or a Saddle Horse could be obtained for any Consideration

"The Odds were two to one early in the Battle, which afterwards became very high; but though the Sums depending were immense, the chief Bets were made before the Battle commenced.

"The Money taken for Admission is said to amount to Eight Hundred Guineas, and except breaking down the Fence in order to gain Admittance, the Populace were very peaceable Spectators "

N.B. During the Contest Pickard, Perrins's Second, having upbraided Johnson for fighting like a Coward, as soon as the Battle was over, Johnson made a violent Attack upon Pickard, and offered to fight him that Moment for 100 Guineas - But not relishing this Specimen of his Adversary's Strength and Agility, he judiciously declined the Combat.

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We learn from another Correspondent at Banbury, that Yesterday two other Battles were fought upon the Stage erected there for Johnson and Perrins: - The first between *Big Ben* and *Jacombs*, who fought with great Obstinacy for an Hour and Twenty-five Minutes, when *Jacombs*, who was far superior in Strength to his Antagonist, was beat, like Perrins, by the scientific Skill of *Big Ben* in this Profession.

In about a Quarter of an Hour after these Champions quitted the Stage, George the Brewer, and Pickard, (Perrins's Second) had perhaps the most bloody Conflict that was ever remembered upon any Stage -This Battle, though fought without any Attempt at Manoeuvre or Delay whatsoever, lasted Half an Hour; and our Correspondent adds, that less Humanity, between Man and Man, was absolutely impossible -Every Savage Ferocity seemed to possess the Minds of the Combatants, who, in their Thirst for Victory, were almost transported to



Madness; and Pickard in particular, was so dreadfully mauled about the Face, that it would have been impossible for him to be recognized by his most intimate Friends. -In this Situation he reluctantly resigned the Palm of Victory to George the Brewer.

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We have the authority to say, that there was a Meeting of some of the County Magistrates at Oxford on Wednesday Afternoon, being the Day on which they first received Information that the above Battle was to be fought within this County, to consider whether any, and what Steps could be taken to prevent such Assembly, but not having Time to communicate their Resolutions to the proper Officers of the County, or to make their Intention publickly known, and being informed that a great Concourse of People were collected together, they concurred, that at so great Distance from the Place of Meeting, and at so late a Period, they could not interfere with any good Effect; but as they understand the Place fixed upon for this tumultuous Meeting was within the Town of Banbury, which has a separate Jurisdiction, and its own Magistrates, Enquiry will be made by the whose authority such Assembly was held and every Means will be taken by the Magistrates to prevent in future such riotous Assemblies being suffered at any Place within the County of Oxford

*Jackson's Oxford Journal*, 31 October 1789.

RYAN, and GEORGE the BREWER, we are now told, are to fight within a Month for *One Hundred Guineas* a Side. The Place not fixed - but supposed to be somewhere in the Vicinity of the Metropolis.

JOHNSON has also challenged BIG BEN, by Letter, in the publick Newspapers, to fight him any Time within two Months - for *Two Hundred Guineas* and the Door Money.

A Battle is likewise expected to take Place between the *Court of King's Bench* and his *Worship the Mayor of Banbury*. -*Two to one* (says the Proverb) *is Odds*. What therefore may become of the Borough Magistrate with *four* Justices against him!

Johnson was on the Stage at Banbury, on Friday last, and sparr'd a little *in Play* with Will Ward, perhaps to show that he was not much hurt, but ready for another Battle. Perrins appeared also on the Stage, and shook Hands with Johnson, his Head, Hands, and Face were tied up, and he appeared stiff in his Body and Joints; he was on the Ground, however, and stood in one of the Waggons during both the Battles of that Day.

*Jackson's Oxford Journal*, 6 November 1789.

JOHNSON has laconically agreed to BIG BEN's Terms, being "anxious" (he says) for an Opportunity to drub him for his former Indolence.

*Jackson's Oxford Journal*, 28 November 1789.

*Johnson* and *Big Ben* are not so likely to fight a pitched battle as the Amateurs of Boxing wish. The latter having without Provocation broken the Pipe of the former at a Publick-house we understand a Battle ensued, in which *Johnson* came off Conqueror

This match eventually took place (my source has contradictory dates of 1789 and 1791) with the Duke of Hamilton sponsoring "a challenge of Benjamin Brain (Big Ben). In this fight Johnson was struck heavily on the nose in the second round. Bothered considerably by this damage and breaking of the metacarpal bone of the middle finger of his right hand by striking it on a spike, he lost the crown. Thus was the renowned Tom Johnson deprived of the title he had so long held with honour

"With the victory of Big Ben and the defeat of Johnson ends the first period of heavyweight boxing. The second starts with the rise of the great Daniel Mendoza. "

*Jackson's Oxford Journal*, 23 October 1790.

## BOXING

*Extract of a Letter from Banbury, dated Oct. 20, 1790.*

"This Morning, about Nine o'Clock, a numerous Concourse of People assembled from all Parts to see decided a long expected Contest between Richard Careless and John Grant, of this Place; the former aged Eighteen [Richard son of Richard Careles, labourer, and Elizabeth, of Calthorpe, baptised 15 May 1774], and the other Twenty-two Years [baptism not located]. -The parties met, by Agreement, in a Piece of Ground adjoining the Town, called the Leys, well known among the Pugilists for being the Spot where Johnson and Perrins fought; but, when just ready to set to, unfortunately they were prevented from taking their Morning's Diversion by several Gentlemen of the *Staff*. This ungenteel Intrusion obliged the Gentlemen of the *Fist*, and their numerous Retinue, to re-enter Banbury to determine this grand Point of Honour; but here they were again disappointed through the Vigilance of our Worshipful Mayor, assisted by some of his Attendants; -being thus a second Time disturbed, the whole Cavalcade then moved, not slowly, but precipitately into Northamptonshire, where they might amuse themselves without Interruption About Ten o'Clock the Battle commenced, when, after a few Rounds, the Odds ran in Favour of Grant; but in the Course of near two Hours from the first Onset, Careless was the Favourite, who, after a severe Contest of two Hours and an Half, bore the Palm of Victory -To speak impartially, we scarce ever remember to have seen the Science of Boxing displayed with greater Ability than by these two young Amateurs; -they both stood boldly up, and did not *fall* with a *knock-down Blow*; which is not always the Case. -Had Johnson or Mendoza been on the Ground they would have been charmed with the Skill displayed on this Occasion, particularly the Younger,

who was perfectly cool, and collected to the last. -When all was ended, and the mighty Sum was to be produced, to the Astonishment of all the Beholders, it was - a GUINEA."

It is interesting that Mendoza is mentioned in the same breath as Johnson as early as 1790. Daniel Mendoza, a Spanish-English Jew, was the first Jew to win the Championship. However, he was first beaten, twice, by Richard Humphries, "the Gentleman Fighter", in 1787 and 1788, before gaining his revenge in 1789 and again in 1790, eventually defeating Bill Warr for the Championship in 1791.

There was evidently a long-running feud between the Carless and Grant families:

*Jackson's Oxford Journal*, 12 September 1795.

"At Banbury, on Tuesday last, a dispute arising between one Careless, a Fishmonger, and Grant, a Fruiterer, respecting the purchase of a basket of fruit, a most severe battle ensued, which, after a contest of two hours, terminated in favour of Careless, and, we are concerned to add, that Grant is since dead."

*Oxford Mercury*, 16 September 1795.

"On Tuesday two young men of [Banbury], Richard Grant [baptism not located] and William Careless [William son of Richard Careless, uxor */sic/*, and Elizabeth, of Grimsbury, baptised 18 June 1779], whose parents were huxters, and could not agree, it is supposed, respecting their trade, met in Parsons Meadow, where after two hours fighting, Grant was so terribly bruised as to be carried home in a chair, and died in consequence early this morning. The parents of both were present during the battle, encouraging their respective sons to fight. What is very remarkable, the same young man, William Careless, some time ago accidentally killed a boy at Middleton Cheney ... by throwing a stick." Banbury burials register records, on 10 September, "Richard son of Thomas Grant, kill'd by fighting with Mr Carless."

Armed with this information, I was able to attend the sale at Sotheby's and successfully bid for the mug commemorating the championship match between Johnson and Perrins. Backed by an offer of half the cost from our Society, the Museum Service has since acquired the mug for display in Banbury Museum. By a happy coincidence, when I was attending our Society's stall at the Brackley History Society Fair in July, I happened to mention the mug to Allan Hawkins, former headmaster of Croughton CofE School and a contributor to *Brackley Observed*. It transpired he was also a keen member of Banbury Numismatic Society, and actually owned a medal struck to commemorate this prize-fight. It bears the head of Tom Johnson. He was able to come to our A.G.M. later in the month and display it whilst the mug was being shown to those at the meeting. Apparently there was a similar one struck of Isaac Perrins. I would be most interested to hear from anyone possessing this.

*Sources*

*Antiques and Collectables*, March 1994.

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J.B. Barbour, 'Did Tom Cribb fight Molyneux at Shenington?', *Cake & Cock-horse*, 7, 7 (Autumn 1978).

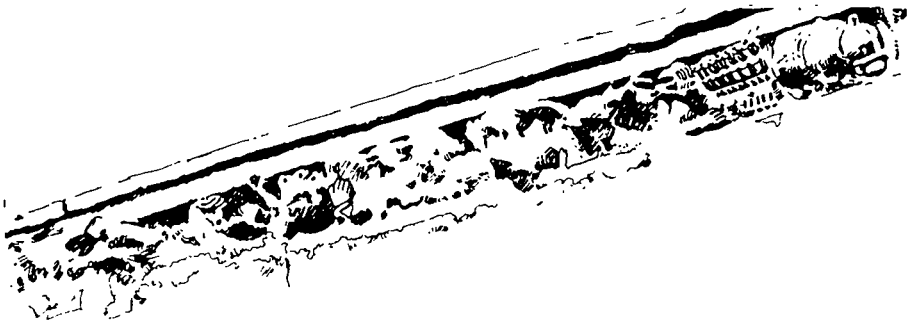
*Baptism Register of Banbury, Oxfordshire, Part Three, 1723-1812* Banbury Historical Society, vol. 16, 1978.



*Jackson's Oxford Journal* and *Oxford Mercury*, dates as shown. For the former, the Synopsis by Eileen Davies is, as always, invaluable. For the period 1781-1790 it has a subject index, which facilitated location of relevant entries, and I have not attempted to identify any before 1781. The accounts of the 1795 match have already been quoted in my article 'A Few Weeks in 1795', *Cake & Cockhorse*, 11, 4, Autumn 1989.

Photographs of the commemorative mug kindly supplied by and reproduced by permission of Oxfordshire Museum Service and Cherwell District Council





## ALKERTON: A Famous Church Frieze; A Famous Rector

*Nan Clifton*

In 1993 Alkerton Church succeeded in preventing its 750 years of history crumbling into dust. The target figure was £64,000. With the help of residents and English Heritage the Appeal is now within reach. It is still a little short and the Appeal remains open.

Alkerton and its church lie six miles north west of Banbury, clinging to a hillside above a wooded valley. Dedicated to St. Michael and All the Angels, it dates back to the thirteenth century. Its main claim to fame rests in the carvings above the clerestory windows - around 1890 the historian Howard S. Pearson wrote: "Throughout the centuries .. unaltered by the gnawing tooth of time, that tooth is slowly but surely wearing them away."

The frieze may have depicted the life and times of Edward the Black Prince. He was born at Woodstock in 1330 and is depicted throughout Oxfordshire, for instance in a wall painting in Hornton church. Although this suggestion is dismissed in the account of Alkerton in volume nine of the Oxfordshire *Victoria County History*, it still seems worth quoting the following undated and unheaded description of the frieze carvings, discovered amongst some old papers.

"Beginning from the south east end of the clerestory, a dragon emblematic of the dedication to St. Michael, the guardian of the Black Prince as a child; Lamb of God, emblematic of youthful innocence, two rapacious nurses with grotesque heads, two priests - the boy's tutors, his Lady Mother with her dog; hunting, archery, falconry; his Lady-love with her amusements including a pet squirrel, the harp, a tame bear and organs [?]. Then comes the Lion of England; the Black Prince's father Edward III, with sceptre; the fleur-de-lys, and then the Black Prince himself followed by three trumpeters supposed to represent the triumphal entry into London after his return from French victories.

"In allusion to the Prince's untimely death, following figures set forth the joys of Heaven and a spiritual emblem; the pelican (an image of our Lord); the holy dove; three angels with wings bearing the soul unwinged and lastly St. Michael triumphing over the dragon."

There are similar friezes at Adderbury, Hanwell and Bloxham



The rectory was rebuilt early in the seventeenth century. The earliest parish record of such reads.

"The foundation of ye Parsonage House was laid by Thomas Lydiatt Monday ye 2nd May 1625 and the house was built up and covered with slat and Glazed ye same summer."

The Lydiat family were important in Alkerton from the mid-sixteenth century, when Christopher Lydiat, a London citizen, acquired the manor. He and, later, his son lived in the manor house (probably the house now known as Tanner's Pool). Thomas Lydiat (1572-1646) was another of Christopher's sons, and he was presented to the living in 1612 by his father. He had been close to James I's talented eldest son Prince Henry, to whom he was chronographer and cosmographer [chronograph: instrument recording time with great accuracy, cosmography: description, mapping, of general features of universe or earth]; and was a well-known scholar and mathematician, writing astronomical and chronological books and corresponding with his friend Archbishop Ussher. He was imprisoned for debt in the Bocardo prison in Oxford, in King's Bench and elsewhere from 1629 to 1632, not because of the cost of rebuilding the rectory house; but as the result of ill-advisedly taking on the debts of a brother. Beesley describes how as a Royalist he suffered during the Civil War:

"December 10th [1644]. A letter of this date from that eminent scholar Thomas Lydyat of Alkerton, addressed to Sir William Compton [governor of Banbury Castle], states that he had been, up to that time, four times pillaged by the Parliament's forces from Compton [Wynyates] House, to the value of at least £70, and forced for a quarter of a year to borrow a shirt to shift himself; that he had been twice carried from his house, once to Warwick, and once to Banbury, and that, on the first occasion, he was hurried away on a poor jade, infamously used by the soldiers at Warwick, and so sorely hurt that he was, at the writing of the said letter, 'not throughly whole,' and doubted he scarce ever should be. The cause of all which ill usage received from the Parliamentarian soldiers was, that he had denied them money and had defended his books and papers, and afterwards, while a prisoner at Warwick Castle, had spoken much for the King and the bishops "

The hinged door at the old rectory is an understandable relic of these troubled times. Half of the door could be opened separately, that being narrow enough for the occupant to defend it with his sword. In 1665 this door was moved from the south of the house to the north - supposedly to prevent plague germs drifting in from London!

Lydiat died on 6th April 1646 and was buried in the church the next day. The monument erected to him has long since disappeared, but another is in the cloisters at New College, Oxford.



What do survive are his nuncupative [made orally] will and probate inventory, proved in the Oxford court, and a terrier describing his house and glebe land.

The will is dated four days before he died, "being then weak in body but of perfect remembrance" when "he did declare his last will and testament in these words - That his will was that his Cosen Samuel Lydiat should inioy after the decease of him the said Thomas all his moneyes goods and lands, and made him the said Samuell his whole executor..." in the presence of "Christo: Lidyat" and "Tim. Lydyat". It was proved on 3rd May

The inventory runs:

A Inventorie of the goods and Chattels of Mr Thomas Lidyat late Rector of the Church of Alkerton in Oxfordsheire who deceased Aprill 2 anno Domini 1646 had and taken by us whose names are underwritten

<i>Imprimis</i> His Bookes greater and lesser volumes	£50.
<i>It.</i> His wearing Apparrell	£5.
<i>It.</i> His money	£62.
<i>It.</i> Foure Bedsteeds & Bedding with all appurtenances both Woollen and Linnen	£10.
<i>It.</i> Sixe Trunkes & 4 Coffers	£2.
<i>It.</i> Foure Tables 2 Formes 2 ioyned Stooles, 3 Chayres	£1.
<i>It.</i> Brasse and Pewter	£3
<i>It.</i> A mault mill	£1.
<i>It.</i> Boardes	£1.
<i>It.</i> Barrells Coules & bruing vessells and other wooden trumperie	£2.
<i>It.</i> Fier Woods	5s.
<i>It.</i> Money Owing	£28 15s
<i>It.</i> The Curb of the Well with Bucket & linkes	10s.
<i>It.</i> Sixe Bushells of mault	15s.
<i>It.</i> Three Bushells of Oates	4s.
<i>It.</i> For Hey	7s.
<i>It.</i> One Spit and one payer of Andyrans	4s.
<i>It.</i> One Iron to ly before the Fier & Fiershovle & tongs and an iron grate	5s
<i>It.</i> Twelve Cushens	6s.
<i>It.</i> Rack & manger in the Stable	3s.
<i>It.</i> Three Ladders	2s.
<i>It.</i> One Booke at Warwicke	5s

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The sume is      £169 1s.

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Tho: Smart, clericus  
Ben Goodwyn

John Goodwyn  
William Lidyat

Thomas Smart is as yet unidentified John and Benjamin Goodwin were from another prominent Alkerton family, and William Lydyat may have been Thomas's brother All three, like Thomas himself, paid 16s. in subsidy in May 1642, only exceeded by Christopher Lydiate, presumably the elder brother and lord of the manor, who paid 18s. These three also took the Protestation Oath a few weeks before the Subsidy was collected

Another survival of Lydiat's local writing is a terrier prepared by him. In addition to a catalogue of the glebe fields, this provides a description of the rectory and its surroundings:

A Terror [sic] of the Glebe Lands of Alkerton

Of the houses and orchards belonging to the Parsonage of Alkerton as follows:

A dwelling House of three bayes with a lean-to one bay

A Barn containing four Bayes.

A Stable one Bay with a Straw House one bay.

One Garden and two Orchards one on the North Side of the Church and the other on the South Side

Tithes of all things are paid according to the law.

Copied out of Mr Lydiats Terrier which he wrote with his own hand left in the custody of Samuel Lydiat his Executor, by me Richard Burden successor of the said Mr Thomas Lydiat, Jan. 18, 1647.

This was recopied in 1685 and again in 1701. A further terrier was recorded in 1805.

Anthony a Wood described Lydiat as "a person of small stature, yet of great parts and of a public soul, and though a poor and contemptible priest to look upon (for so he was held by the vulgar)" nevertheless confounded other scholars in erudite arguments. He is perhaps best remembered thanks to Dr Johnson, who, in his *Vanity of Human Wishes*, speaking of unfortunate learned men, says:

"There mark what ill the scholar's life assail,

Toil, envy, want, the patron, and the gaol,

See nations, slowly wise, and meanly just,

To buried merit raise the tardy bust.

If dreams yet flatter, once again attend,

Hear Lydyat's life, and Galileo's end."

He remains Alkerton's most famous son.

### **Acknowledgment**

My thanks to Joan Bowes and Jeremy Gibson for their help in the preparation of this article

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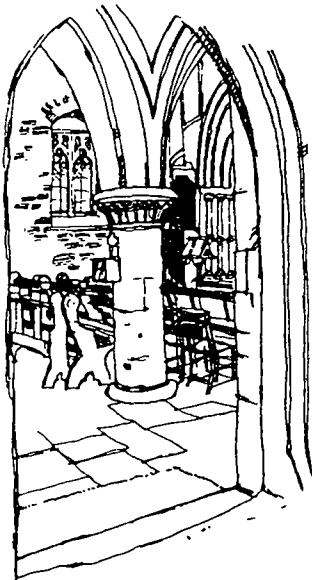
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Francis W. Steer, *The Archives of New College, Oxford*, 1974, p.152 The tablet to Lydiat is at the north end of the east cloister.

*Oxfordshire Archives*: Will and inventory of Thomas Lydiat, 1646 [139/2/32] (indexed in D.M Barratt, *Probate Records of the Courts of the Bishop and Archdeacon of Oxford, 1516-1732*, Vol. 2, L - Z, British Record Society, vol 94, 1985)

Alkerton parish register [MS d d Par Alkerton d 1]

*Bodleian Library*: MS Top Oxon c 60, 24 sqq, William Henry Turner's "Oxfordshire Collections: Parochial Notes A - L", for the Alkerton terrier .



*Drawings by Ian Heard  
reproduced from the  
St. Michael's Alkerton  
Preservation Appeal  
leaflet.*



## TWO CANAL ENTREPRENEURS FROM BANBURY

*Hugh Compton*

### **James Barnes**

On 30th March 1778, amidst scenes of wild jubilation, the Oxford Canal Company [OCC] opened the canal as far south as Banbury. There the Company's efforts rested whilst plans were being produced and money raised for the final stretch to Oxford.

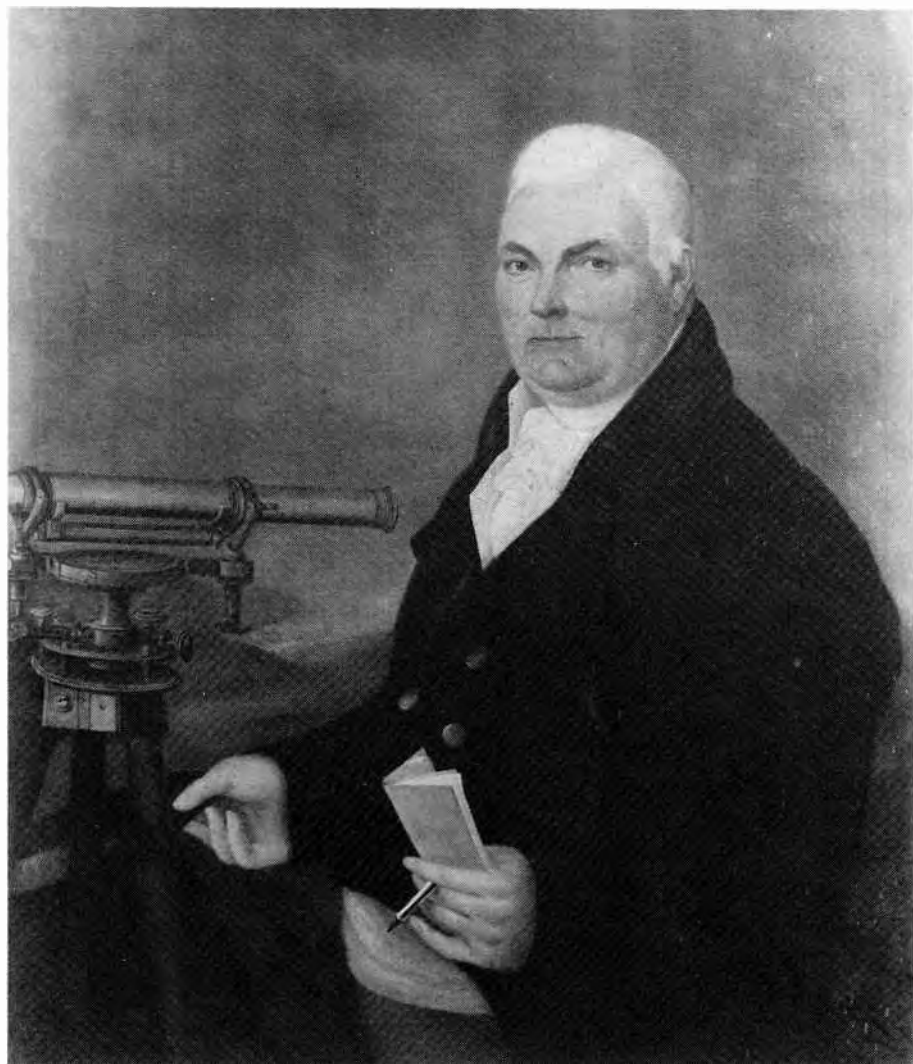
Robert Whitworth, of Leadenhall Street in London, a noted engineer of the day, was called upon in 1779 to make a detailed survey for the extension to Oxford. His plan was eventually approved and embodied in the Act passed in April 1786.<sup>1</sup>

The OCC now needed a man 'on the spot' who had the necessary management skills to maintain a strict construction schedule for the project and at the same time ensure that the expected expenditure was not exceeded. What better than to involve a Banbury man whose business acumen had been shown in the growth of his brewery in North Bar. James Barnes. His interest in the OCC was already known through his loan, in 1778, of £80 at 4½%

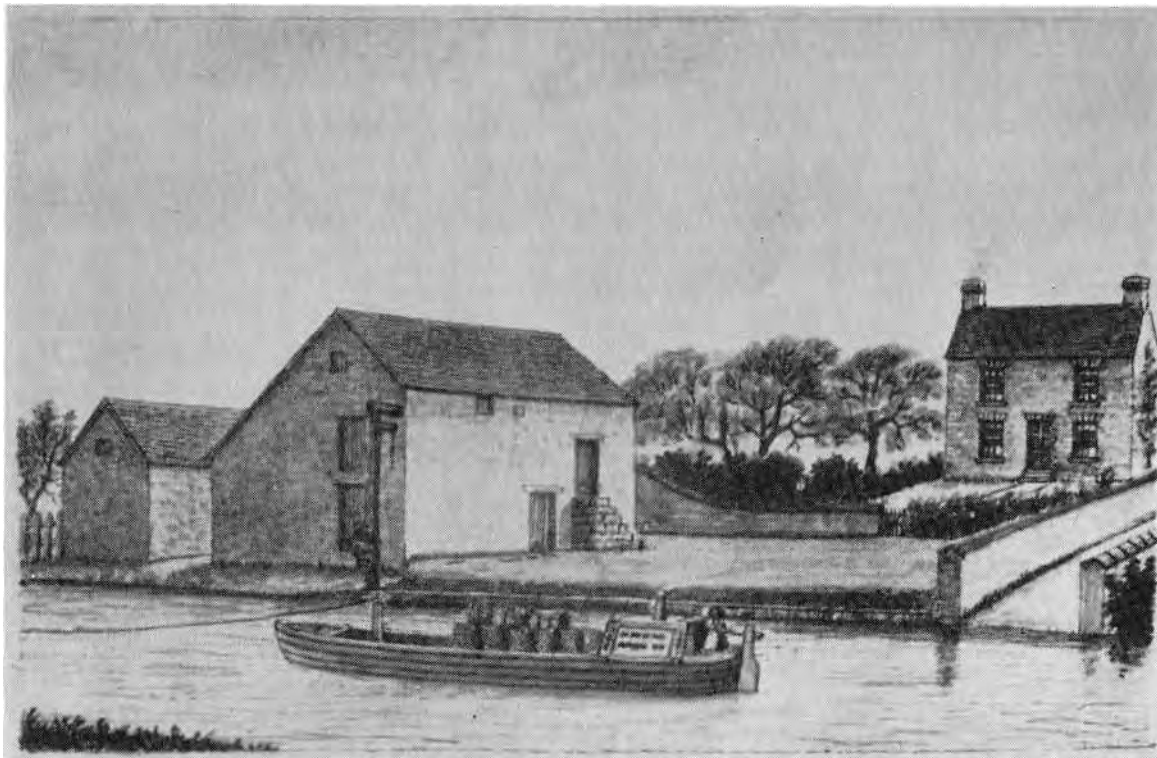
In May 1786 Barnes was appointed 'Surveyor of the Works' at £50 per annum. As the Committee found his efforts were to their satisfaction his salary was increased by stages until in 1791 it was £200 p.a. He was to work strictly to Robert Whitworth's plan, with six surveyors under his charge: Samuel Simcock of Cropredy, Samuel Weston of Aynho, John Churchill of Deddington, Henry Tawney of Oxford together with Stephen Townsend and James Lord of Eynsham.<sup>2</sup>

Money was raised in the form of loans, with the lion's share coming from Oxford, but three individuals in Banbury contributed £1,160.<sup>3</sup> Barnes soon found that the OCC wished to use his expertise at other points on the canal. He was asked to examine the whole of it from Longford to Banbury and report on the need for repairs. This included problems being encountered with collieries working under the canal in the Hawkesbury area. Barnes' contract stated he was to complete the canal to Oxford by 1st January 1791<sup>4</sup>, but in practice he managed to achieve this goal a year earlier. Thereafter he was employed in taking certain remedial action at points where defects had come to light.

Whilst all this was going on he had maintained his brewing interests - so much so that the OCC committee was moved to record on 13th December 1791 that his 'various occupations and connections prevent that attention which is particularly necessary in his department ... that he be required within two months to make up all accounts and that his salary be continued for the next two months'. It seems



*James Barnes, canal engineer (courtesy National Portrait Gallery).*



*Grantham's Wharf, Heyford, 18th-19th century, now long disappeared (pen and wash by Joseph Wilkins of Deddington, from the Dew Collection, courtesy Bodleian Library).*

that to help the OCC he had not taken any salary since 1787, as at this meeting it was agreed to pay his outstanding monies to the extent of £835. This ended his connection with the OCC except for his purchase of a house in Banbury from them for £398 in 1796. It is unknown if this was the stone and slate property which he insured for £600 in 1808.<sup>5</sup>

Evidently his talents were by now widely known, for in 1792 the Marquis of Buckingham had asked him to make a survey for a possible canal route from Braunston on the Oxford Canal to London. This culminated in the Grand Junction Canal [GJC]. His outline plan was approved at a meeting held in the Bull Inn at Stony Stratford on 20th July 1792.<sup>6</sup> Following that, William Jessop was asked to draw up a detailed specification and it says a lot for Barnes that only a few alterations were made to the original scheme. In the same year Barnes himself was appointed to a similar type of position to that which he had held on the OCC, but this time it was under William Jessop. He was paid £2 2s. per day, plus 10s 6d per day expenses.

Work started at both ends of the canal and by September 1796 the connection off the Oxford Canal at Braunston to Blisworth had been completed and was open for traffic. In May 1795 the contractors who had been making the Blisworth tunnel either gave up the work or were dismissed. As a result Barnes continued with the project using direct labour until 1802, when new contracts were let.

Whilst there he was called upon to deal with a National Emergency. In June 1798 the situation in Ireland had become so critical that reinforcements were urgently required. Transport by canal, where possible, was considered to be the most expeditious. To this end the military opted for Blisworth as the loading point for the two regiments, with a requirement of forty narrow boats. The Deputy Quartermaster General and the Deputy Commissary General were to be in attendance and the GJC for their part instructed Barnes to be there too with his assistant W. Constable of Blisworth.<sup>7</sup> Happily all went well and the situation in Ireland was saved.

The GJC having realised that the opening of the throughout route was going to be seriously delayed asked Barnes and Jessop to prepare plans for a tram-road over Blisworth Hill in 1799. Although approved quite quickly it seems not to have been opened until 1801.<sup>8</sup>

Again in 1804 the contractors were removed from Blisworth tunnel and Barnes assumed full responsibility until the works were completed in February 1805.

Barnes had other canal interests, for in 1799 he was called in to plan a route from the Leicester and Northamptonshire Union canal to Braunston, although nothing came of it. Three years later he proposed an alteration to Norton Junction on the GJC. Following a slight amendment by Thomas Telford this was approved and when constructed became known as the Grand Union canal.

In January 1805 Barnes retired from the GJC after thirteen years' service, though he was involved with several further minor canal matters. Two years earlier his daughter Mary had married Richard Austin of Adderbury. By 1808

Austin had been taken into partnership in the brewery, which by now was probably the largest in the town. In 1814, now well into his 70's, Barnes sold out his brewery interest to Austin, for a 5% return per annum. By then it was valued at £37,061, and included 23 public houses and two malshouses.<sup>9</sup>

Much earlier, on 8th March 1799, he had been elected a Capital Burgess on the Banbury Corporation. He was chosen as Mayor in 1801 whilst still a Burgess; and was again Mayor in 1809. Election to the Banbury Corporation was for life (until the reform of 1835) and so he became an Alderman in due course and at least by 1806. From 1812 to 1815 he was Bridgemaster administering the Banbury Charities,<sup>10</sup> for once someone who actually knew something about bridges!

The franchise for the borough's M.P. was confined to the eighteen members of the Corporation. At the parliamentary election of 1806 he actively supported the successful candidature of William Praed, when for the first time for many years the Earl of Guilford's candidate was defeated, probably due to some temporary local quarrel. Praed was Chairman of the GJC, and not surprisingly also enjoyed the less direct backing of the Marquis of Buckingham. However at a further general election the following year the result was a tie, and at the subsequent by-election, whilst Barnes remained true to Praed, Dudley North was returned with a majority of two out of the eight votes allowed (three votes on either side were rejected for unexplained reasons).<sup>11</sup>

James Barnes was born about 1740 (not at Banbury), and died in his eightieth year, on 18th January 1819. He was buried at Bodicote, where presumably he lived at least in old age, even though he is described in the register as 'from Banbury'. There is a monument to him in Bodicote church, where he is proudly described as 'Principal Engineer of the Grand Junction Canal'. His earlier involvement with the Oxford Canal is not mentioned, nor his brewing interests. He was predeceased by his wife Mary, who died in 1807 aged 54. At the baptism of his daughter Mary in 1784 he was described as a 'victualler'; at the christening of his second child, Jemmima, in 1786, this had changed to 'brewer'.<sup>12</sup>

His will shows that he owned 45 shares in the GJC, then selling for about £280 per share and earning 7% per annum.<sup>13</sup>

### **Thomas Cotton**

James Barnes was not the only Banbury entrepreneur to benefit from the coming of the canal. In 1969 the late G.C.J. Hartland wrote an illustrated article entitled 'The Boat Building Yard at Banbury'.<sup>14</sup> This describes the yard at the eastern end of Factory Street (formerly Back Lane), one of three known but the only one to have prospered for a considerable time. It later became famous as Tooley's boat yard, immortalised by L.T.C. Rolt in his classic book *Narrow Boat*. Whilst Hartland rightly states Evans started the business, shortly after that it was taken over by Thomas Cotton.





*Memorial tablet to James Barnes in Bodicote Church  
(photo D. W. Hadley).*

# TABLES

FOR ASCERTAINING

*THE WEIGHT OF THE CARGOES*

OF

*BOATS AND BARGES,*

NAVIGATING ON

*The Grand Junction Canal,*

MADE

UNDER THE DIRECTIONS

OF

*THE COMMITTEE OF PROPRIETORS.*

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1805.

Cotton was born of labouring class parents in March of 1768. Eventually he became a successful boat builder

A snapshot of the boat trade, from printed registers of boats working on the Grand Junction Canal [GJC] in 1805,<sup>15</sup> records eleven boats made by Cotton, built over a period of five years. Five of these were owned by the GJC and used for maintenance purposes on that part of the canal to the south of Blisworth tunnel in Northamptonshire. To get there they must have been navigated down the river Thames from Oxford to Brentford before going on the GJC. No doubt the opportunity would have been taken to use them to alleviate the back-log of traffic from the Midlands and the North West for London Thomas Twiss of Manchester bought one called 'Industry' which traded between that place and Blisworth. At that time Blisworth tunnel was still under construction and therefore traffic had to be trans-shipped into wagons on the Blisworth Hill tramway for the journey to Stoke Bruerne. Roper Barnes of Blisworth had another which traded from Fenny Stratford to Paddington conveying lime. Another in the lime trade was owned by Sir Christopher Baynes and traded between Harefeld and Paddington. Thomas Homer of St. Marylebone in London also owned two which he used in the brick trade from Drayton to Paddington. In the Midlands there was John White at Oldbury who had one for use in the coal trade.<sup>16</sup> Other GJC records show that Cotton owned two boats himself, registered on 1st July 1809 and 5th March 1810 respectively, which he used when trading from Banbury to points on the GJC The last recorded boat built by him was in March of 1811<sup>17</sup> when Worster & Co. of Braunston took delivery of a new boat from him.

Little else is known of his trading activities. He married Sarah King of Charlton on 30th March 1793, when he was described as a boat builder of Neithrop. They had four children (Harriott, 1795; Thomas, 1797; Amelia, 1799, Holford, 1800). She died shortly after the last birth, the infant only surviving a few weeks. Cotton remarried soon afterwards, having a further five children by his second wife Elizabeth (Sarah Redhead, 1803; Robert, 1804; Elizabeth, 1806; Esther, 1809, Alfred, 1812). She too died soon after the birth of her last child; probably both she and Sarah of puerperal fever It is an indication of his standing that there was gravestone to her in Banbury churchyard. Alas, it seems this prosperity did not continue, as when Thomas Cotton of Banbury, aged 73, was buried in February 1837 he had been resident in the Union Workhouse The age doesn't quite fit, but that is not unusual<sup>18</sup>

(13)		To PICKFORD & Co.						
M. Stratton		From	Weight	Rate	Paid on	£	s	d.
Date								
1805								
February 4	50	Coals	500 cwt	3/6		26	2	0
1810	50	Coals	500 cwt	3/6		27	11	0

## Sources

- 1 26 Geo III c 20.
- 2 *Warwick County Record Office*. CR.1590/P2. Samuel Weston was probably son of, or at least connected with, Robert Weston, agent of the Cartwright estate at Aynho [Nicholas Cooper, *Aynho: A Northamptonshire Village*, BHS 20, 1984] James Lord of Eynsham (d.1809) left money to provide bread or coal (doubtless to be brought by canal) [*VCH.12*, p. 157]. there is still a 'Lord's Farm' in Eynsham. Stephen Townesend 'of Oxford' and John Churchill 'of Woodstock' built the new tower of Woodstock church in 1784-6 [*VCH.12*, p. 412]. A Samuel Churchill was an attorney in Deddington in 1791-2, and the family continued there into the nineteenth century [Mary Vane Turner, *The Story of Deddington*, 1933, p. 49]. The Tawney family later owned one of Banbury's banks [Audrey M. Taylor, *Gilleus: Bankers at Banbury and Oxford*, 1964, pp 5-6]. A canal wharf was set up at Cropredy, and by 1784 a company wharfinger was established there, to offset the private monopoly which the canal contractor Simcock had acquired (*V.C.H.10*, p. 160).
- 3 *PRO*: RAIL.855/17.
- 4 *PRO*: RAIL.1019/15 (56).
- 5 *Oxfordshire Archives*: S&F Box 10(H).
- 6 A.H Faulkner, *The Grand Junction Canal*, 1993, p. 2, George Freeston, correspondence re. Blisworth Tunnel, *Cake & Cockhorse*, 1.2 (November 1959), pp 19-20 (originally 7-8).
- 7 H.J. Compton and A Carr-Gomm, *The Military on English Waterways*. Railway and Canal Historical Society, 1991, p. 14.
- 8 Victor Hatley, *Rails over Blisworth Hill: The Story of Northamptonshire's First Railway*, Northamptonshire Historical Series 2, 2nd ed., 1971.
- 9 Barrie Trinder, *Victorian Banbury*, BHS 19, 1982, pp. 34-35.
- 10 For the duties of the Bridgemaster see *VCH.10* pp. 75-76 and *Banbury Corporation Records Tudor and Stuart*, BHS 15, 1977, p 79 (1602-3).
- 11 Alfred Beesley, *The History of Banbury*, 1842, p 541; David Eastwood, 'Politics and Elections in Banbury 1806-1831', *C&CH*, 11.9 (Summer 1991), pp. 233-40. *Oxfordshire Archives*, B B. XVII/i, Banbury Corporation Election Book, for James Barnes' election as Capital Burgess, 1799.
- 12 J.S.W Gibson (ed.), *Banbury Parish Registers*, various volumes published by Banbury Historical Society, covering baptisms, marriages and burials to 1838; Bodicote Parish Registers, unpublished (at *Centre for Oxfordshire Studies*); *C&CH* 1.2 (*op. cit*). No obituary has been found in *Jackson's Oxford Journal*.
- 13 *Oxfordshire Archives*: S&F Box 10(H). Will of James Barnes.
- 14 *C&CH*, 4.4 (Summer 1969), pp. 55-57.
- 15 G. Freeston, private papers, including *Tables for ascertaining the Weight of the Cargoes of Boats and Barges navigating on The Grand Junction Canal made under the direction of the Committee of Proprietors*. London, 1805
- 16 *PRO*: RAIL.830/103.
- 17 A.H. Faulkner, private MS records.
- 18 As Ref 12

*Note.* Hugh Compton is author of *The Oxford Canal*, published by David & Charles in 1976, the first authoritative source for its history.

# CONSERVATION - REFLECTION ON THE PAST 1984 to 1994

*Sally Stradling*

The past decade has seen some significant developments in conservation of the historic environment at both national and local levels. As a general framework the Government White Paper, *This Common Inheritance*, although published in 1990, gives an indication of changes in attitudes towards conservation stemming from the 1980's. It sets the scene at a national level and includes policies for promoting enjoyment and understanding of the heritage as well as the encouragement of private sector efforts to maintain and restore heritage property. Other new trends include joint management arrangements or the possibilities of local authorities assuming responsibility for scheduled ancient monuments in their areas. The following article outlines some of the most important changes to be felt at a local level setting these within a national context.

As a starting point it is useful to consider some summary statistics for Cherwell District in 1994:

Approximately 3,000 listed buildings.

48 Conservation areas.

30 Scheduled Ancient Monuments.

17 Historic parks, gardens and landscapes, five of which are contained on the English Heritage national register.

What do these figures reveal about conservation at a local level? In order to interpret these figures it is necessary to sketch in the background influences which have shaped this change.

Starting with listed buildings; the numbers of listed buildings in the District increased from approximately 1,000 to 3,000 within the years 1984 to 1987. This was as a direct result of the national re-survey of listed buildings which was initiated by Michael Heseltine the then Minister for the Environment. One of the catalysts for the re-survey was the overnight demolition of the Firestone factory in 1980 as consideration was being given to listing it. Heseltine determined to review the way in which the Country's more important buildings were being recorded and protected. It transpired that a painfully slow re-survey had been going on since 1970 but by 1981 only one third of the Country had been covered. Vast tracts of countryside were expected to take a further 25 years to complete. Hence the re-survey, as a result of which the number of listed buildings nationally has increased from 247,000 in 1980 to over 500,000 today.

Listed buildings are buildings of architectural or historic interest and are listed in three categories according to importance - Grade I, Grade II\* and Grade II.



*Telephone kiosk in South Bar, Banbury, December 1987  
(spot-listed 25 January 1988).*

Statutory protection for a listed building means that special listed building consent in addition to ordinary planning permission has to be obtained for any works of alteration, extension or demolition which affect its character. Listing also applies to any structure attached to a listed building or within its curtilage that existed before 1st July 1948. For a full exposition of what listing means the reader may obtain copies of a leaflet from the Department of National Heritage.

The first listing programme ran from 1947 to 1968. Over the years the criteria for selection has changed and many vernacular, farm and industrial buildings are now considered worthy of listing. Listing can even encompass structures such as telephone kiosks and churchyard memorials.

It is not just old buildings which are listed. During recent years English Heritage has undertaken schematic surveys of post-1939 buildings, including the listing of schools, industrial buildings, universities, commercial buildings and housing. Examples of post-war listing include the Leicester University engineering building 1961 to 1963 by Stirling and Gowan and a new accommodation block at Brasenose College, Oxford, completed in 1961. St Katherine's College, Oxford 1961-1966 by the Danish architect Arne Jacobsen was listed at Grade I. An example of a commercial building which has gained listed status is the Willis Faber and Dumas building in Ipswich embracing the work of one of our current architectural giants Sir Norman Foster. If there has been a shift in emphasis recently it is from a broad selection of the best examples of our built heritage across a wide range of building types to a small select number of recent listings intended to act as a body of exemplars against which further listing proposals can be measured.

At a local level examples of a new listings include telephone kiosks in South Bar, Banbury and Market Place, Bicester, Canal locks, lift bridges and Canal Cottages along the Oxford Canal, brick kilns at Adderbury, a lime kiln at Middleton Stoney, numerous churchyard memorials, cottages and farmhouses.

There are 48 conservation areas in Cherwell District and approximately 7,500 nationally. The concept of conservation areas came into being with the 1967 Civic Amenities Act, largely brought about by the energy and vision of the late Sir Duncan Sandys. The primary intention of conservation area legislation is to protect historic areas as opposed to individual buildings. The desirability of protecting historic urban areas was seen as particularly urgent in the aftermath of the second world war and into the 1960s as large scale clearance schemes were promoted in many towns and cities. The first conservation areas designation in Cherwell District included Banbury and Bicester in 1969 with representative designations of conservation areas in the rural areas following in the 1970s and 80s. One of the more unusual designations is the Rousham conservation area. The historic landscape relating to the country house at Rousham was remodelled in the mid-eighteenth century by the English Landscape Gardener William Kent who not only redesigned the gardens immediately adjacent to the Jacobean Manor House, which is in West Oxfordshire, but also created a complete

landscape in the Cherwell Valley to the north and east of the house. The Rousham Conservation area was therefore designated to protect important views out from and back to the country house as well as features in the landscape.

The statutory definition of a conservation area is "an area of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve to enhance". The criteria for the selection of areas which can qualify for designation are wide ranging and are set out fully in Department of the Environment's Circular 8/87.

Control of development in conservation areas favours the retention and rehabilitation of buildings, whether listed or unlisted. This is not to suggest that conservation areas are preservation areas where no development may take place, but that they are areas where the existing character and scale should be respected where new developments is proposed.

1993 saw the first 25 years of conservation areas assessed in conference and report. Widespread concern has been expressed by conservation bodies that planning controls in conservation areas are inadequate to protect their special character and quality. Whilst most trees, buildings and walls are afforded protection in conservation areas and consent is required for their demolition, it appears a weakness of the system when there is no clear-cut protection for visually important features such as windows and doors. New shopping developments and pedestrianisation schemes require special attention to detail. Respect for the existing historic grain of an area is important if harm is not to be done in the name of progress with inappropriate scale, materials and design. Incorporation of existing buildings with new shopping centres without the needless demolition of unlisted buildings in town centres can be achieved as at Chesterfield and retains the 'familiar and cherished local scene'.

To highlight the threat to historic areas through the erosion of special character, English Heritage initiated the Framing Opinions Conference/roadshow examining issues and proposing solutions to the problems associated with the retention of historic doors and windows. Cherwell District Council jointly hosted one of these conferences in October 1993.

Other new initiatives which have taken place over the past few years include the historic towns forum and Royal Town Planning Institute assessment of current legislation and the planning framework affecting the designation and future management of conservation areas. Arising from various reports is a recognition that designation of a conservation area is not enough in itself and that it is vital for the successful management of conservation areas to produce appraisals of the special character which warranted designation in the first place and to include within this, justification for the boundary to the area. A number of districts and counties have now embarked on the production of conservation area appraisal documents, including Cherwell District Council. In addition on the 1st April 1994 this Council introduced a new grant scheme for conservation area enhancement.





*British Waterways: Repairs to Kings Sutton Lock and Bridge  
(12th February 1993); Grade II listed canal structure.*



*Cottage in Cropredy (30th September 1993). Grade II listed building.  
Historic Building grant made for thatching.*



*Milcombe Dovecote (16th March 1993).  
Grade II listed building and scheduled ancient monument.*

Department of the Environment's Circular 8/87 is due to be replaced with Planning Policy Guidance note 15. This new document will update all past reference to legislation and also provide an update to national governmental advice on listed buildings and conservation areas.

There are 30 scheduled ancient monuments in Cherwell District as well as many monuments and sites of archaeological or historic interest. The 1979 Ancient Monuments Archaeological Areas Act provides for the scheduling of ancient monuments and for the control of works which involve demolishing, destroying, damaging, removing, repairing, altering, flooding or tipping on to an ancient monument. The carrying out of unauthorised works is a criminal offence.

Development plans incorporating local policies together with central government guidance contained in Planning Policy Guidance note 16 (PPG 16) have over recent years ensured that archaeology of both national and local interest is taken into account within the formal planning framework in consideration of development proposals such as road schemes, new housing etc. It has now become established practice for archaeological assessments to be carried out prior to the determination of applications in order to record, evaluate and safeguard archaeological remains. Scheduled ancient monuments can vary from archaeological features in the landscape such as strip lynchets of medieval farming as at Shenington, to standing monuments such as Swalcliffe tithe barn (which is also listed at Grade I). Legislation affecting scheduled ancient monuments and listed buildings has evolved separately and in a piecemeal fashion. This is largely due to historic accident - in the late nineteenth century the proposed sale of plots of land for building at Avebury and the proposed "restoration" of Tewkesbury Abbey publicised the lack of protection awarded to historic sites and buildings and caused William Morris to react. Morris called for a halt to the so called restoration at Tewkesbury and the interest generated in the case was the catalyst for the formation of the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (SPAB). The Ancient Monuments Protection Act of 1882 vested responsibility for ancient monuments in central government, established an initial schedule for list and an inspectorate. Initially 68 monuments were scheduled, predominantly earthworks as well as monuments such as Stonehenge. Ancient monuments are primarily archaeological field monuments and structures that are ruins or normally uninhabited.

There is currently an overlap between scheduling and listing in for example the protection of standing monuments such as tithe barns and dovecotes. There are indications that this situation may be rationalised in future so that standing buildings are retained as listed buildings and below ground archaeology as scheduled ancient monuments.

During the past five years national grants have been made available for monument protection programmes to be carried out often through County Archaeological Officers to update County sites and monument records. The coverage of such constraint maps has now been completed for Cherwell District.

and this provides a record of the current state of knowledge concerning the historic environment. These provide a valuable resource in the assessment of development proposals.

Historic parks, gardens and landscapes contribute significantly towards the special character and identity of Cherwell District. Currently seventeen historic landscapes, parks and gardens have been identified as of special historic interest locally; five of these are included in the English Heritage register: the grounds of Broughton Castle, Rousham Park, Swerford Park, Wroxton Abbey and Yarnton Manor. The identification of historic landscapes in general is in its infancy. In 1983 English Heritage commenced a national register with grades of Grade I, Grade II and Grade II\* indicating the relative importance of a particular site. This register of parks and gardens of special historic interest seeks to draw attention to sites so that they may be safeguarded in any plans for development. It has been well recognised since the 1960s that pressures from developments such as new roads, housing and golf courses offer a serious threat to the future of the parks and gardens in England. The register was seen as the first step towards combating erosion of this heritage and to identify those sites worthy of conservation.

The register is purely advisory and no special statutory protection is afforded to sites included within it. Much of the work of English Heritage together with bodies such as the Garden History Society and County Gardens Trusts is to highlight the relative importance of such sites and to seek to persuade owners to take an active interest in looking after them. Grants are available for the repair of gardens and other lands of "outstanding" historic interest. The work of other agencies such as the Countryside Commission and Forestry Commission in guiding the evolution of the landscape is of vital importance too. It is worth mentioning that English Heritage is currently considering the designation of historic battlefield sites - such as the site of the Battle of Cropredy in Cherwell District and the designation of historic airfields.

The period between 1984 and 1994 has seen significant changes at a local level in both urban and rural areas. For example the property boom of the late 1980s was followed by the collapse of the property market and resultant ripple effect of depression in the building and construction industries country-wide. In Cherwell District this situation has left newly completed office schemes empty, other schemes with planning permission as yet unbuilt, whilst buildings or sites awaiting development deteriorate and become eyesores. On the land, changes in farming practice including the effects of agricultural policies within the European community have had implications for historic buildings and landscapes. This has included moves towards diversification as land owners have sought to find economic uses for land and redundant farm buildings. The widespread phenomenon of barn conversions, particularly to residential use, have brought changes in the appearance of rural areas like Cherwell District. Whilst advice from central government and development plan policies allow for change of use

and conversion in order to retain traditional farm buildings, sympathetic conversion retaining historic character providing accommodation meeting current regulations remains a difficult balancing act to achieve in practice.

Between 1991 and 1992 Cherwell District Council undertook a survey of buildings at risk in the District which was grant-aided by English Heritage and followed a national format of recording. The purpose of the survey was to monitor the condition of all listed buildings and to enable a management framework to be established for protecting and preserving the historic heritage in the District. Some nine per cent of the total of three thousand listed buildings in the District were found to be at risk from neglect, vandalism or structural decay as opposed to a seven per cent national figure. Over the past few years this situation has been remedied to some extent through efforts such as providing advice, guidance or grant aid and in other cases in seeing the successful conclusion of development proposals. Work still remains to be done to help find a solution for problem buildings such as Tadmarton House, Grimsbury Manor and Church House in Banbury, together with more unusual threatened structures such as churchyard memorials.

To conclude, the past ten years have seen increased recognition of the importance of the historic environment and the need to protect it adequately. The challenge remains in balancing conservation with the often conflicting aims of development and in being able to strike the right balance between the two.

Any views given are personal and do not necessarily reflect the view of Cherwell District Council.



*Barn at Wykham Mill Farm, Banbury (13th September 1991).  
Sympathetic conversion to showroom for Jaguar Sport.*

## **Brief Thoughts on Restoring an Old House**

*Jeremy Black*

The key words are sympathy and sensibility - sympathy because this implies an innate unwillingness to act unsympathetically and sensibility to guide the sympathy in the right direction.

1. If you are starting from scratch and have not yet bought your old house, buy one that typifies a kind you like as well as being attractive in itself; this will give you an extra safeguard against mistakes that are out of keeping.

2. Find an architect who really likes the building and its type. If you need guidance in finding an architect, the amenity societies and the conservation department of the local authority will help.

The architect needs to be well-informed about sources for the materials needed, and about possible sources of grants.

3 Engage a really good builder - one that you know you can rely on to act sympathetically and with sensibility, so that you do not feel you must be present for every minute of the works

4 Plan your works so that you can establish the priorities and postpone to a later day those parts for which funds are not yet available. But remember that many things may prove cheaper as part of some major works than when carried out as individual items

5 Beware of restoring away the works of more recent times. You can never know exactly what your house looked like in say the seventeenth century Even genuine seventeenth century imports can only be imports, and imitation only imitation. There may be more life in the authentic Victorian feature even if ugly.

6. Try to record what restoration uncovers whether by sketch or photograph. Buy your camera before you start the works

7 Co-operate with the conservation department of your local authority. They may be helpful, and you may in time be grateful for ideas that at first seemed obstructive.

# 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 Barrie Truher (vol. 19, with Phillimore).

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*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*,

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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 Horncr 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.

