# CAKE AND COCKHORSE

## BANBURY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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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.**

**Volume 13** **Number Two** **Spring 1995**



Recent numbers have been dominated by events in the relatively recent past - perhaps to the dismay of those who consider history only starts before they were born! In this issue we redress the balance, with Romans, Celts and our medieval forebears, the emphasis on what they ate and how they cooked it. Coming a few centuries nearer, Phillip Arnold, one of our more genealogically minded members, shows the value of researching a whole community and not just those who are obviously of the ancestral line.

Seasoned members may recall crowding into the back parlour of the Unicorn Inn in the autumn of 1977 to hear Dr Margaret Spufford speak on 'Seventeenth Century Literature and Popular Print' - it is a good to have her with us again, in spirit, or at least print, with her review of our long-awaited latest records volume.

Another book whose review is timely is Yvonne Huntriss' *Exploring Old Bloxham*. This editorial is being written the day after our Village Meeting at Bloxham, when Yvonne guided us round Bloxham's lovely church - in Pevsner's view 'one of the grandest in the country', to which he devotes over three pages. We had the advantage of having its features pointed out to us in person, aided by the beam of Charles's torch. It was pleasing too to see the dignified memorial to Geoffrey Forsyth Lawson, our former Vice-President, who conducted so many of our village meetings and who cared for Bloxham church for decades.

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

# THE ROMANO-BRITISH KITCHEN

## *Michael Hoadley*

On the eve of the Roman Conquest the people of Britain would have recognised the taste, if not the appearance, of at least a quarter of the foods we eat today Root vegetables, fruits, nuts, berries, seeds, seafood and shellfish were abundant. Honey from the nests of wild bees and salt were available Wild herbs and fungi were probably used to make soups and stews more palatable Unleavened bread and home-brewed ale were made By the 1st Century BC the chicken had been introduced and wine and vinegar were imported Wild cattle and pigs were indigenous, goats and sheep had been introduced, and milk, cheese and butter were available. Before the end of the last Ice Age, native foods that were already established in Britain included.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Bilberry | Fat Hen | Samphire |
| Black Currant | Gooseberry | Sloe |
| Blackberry | Juniper | Strawberry |
| Broad Bean | Laver | Turnip |
| Cabbage | Leek | Walnut |
| Carrot | Marigold | Watercress |
| Chives | Mushroom | Wild Rose |
| Crab Apple | Nettle | Raspberry |
| Damson | Parsnip | |
| Elderberry | Rowan | |

The Romans regarded food as an aesthetic experience as well as a means of survival Their knowledge of food and its preparation was the culmination of centuries of experience.

As well as a variety of plants, vegetables and herbs, the Romans increased the indigenous meat supply with the addition of rabbits, guinea fowl and pheasants (the rabbits and guinea fowl died out when the Romans left and were reintroduced some centuries later)

Although vineyards were introduced and thrived, particularly in the south around Silchester, wine was largely imported, predominantly from Spain but also from Italy and France

Among the foodstuffs the Romans cultivated in Britain or imported were.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Apple | Celery | Garlic |
| Basil | Cherry | Ginger |
| Bay | Chervil | Guinea Fowl |
| Cabbage | Chick Pea | Leek |
| Carrot | Fennel | Lentil |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Lettuce | Pea | Rosemary |
| Marjoram | Pear | Sage |
| Marrow | Pepper | Shallot |
| Mint | Pheasant | Sweet Chestnut |
| Onion | Quince | Thyme |
| Parsley | Rabbit | Turnip |
| Parsnip | Radish | |

Those plants the Romans brought to Britain that were already indigenous to the region represented domestic rather than wild strains

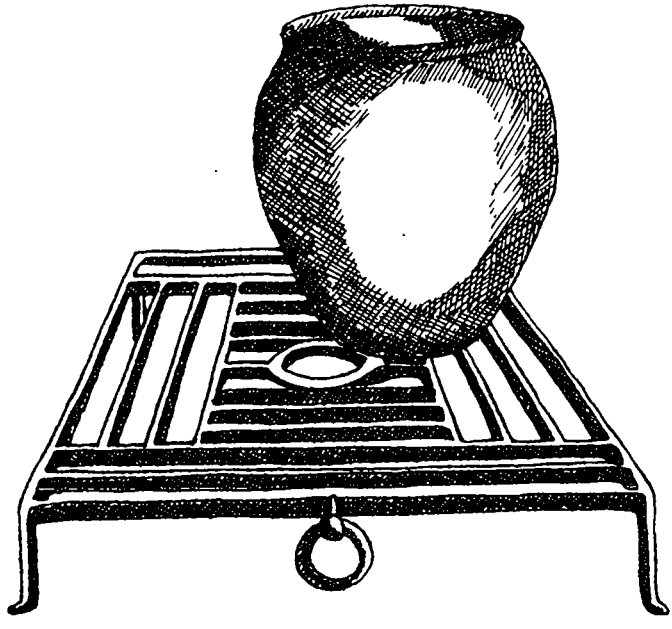
We must not think that Romanization made all that a great difference to the bulk of the local population 'Peasant' diet and food preparation did not alter dramatically Goods and methods filtered down through society much as they continue to do at least until the advent of the Industrial Revolution.

The word 'elite' has become anathema to many historians and archaeologists but Roman society was not egalitarian no matter what terms are in or out of favour. The British 'elite', their new lords and those locals who curried Roman favour became the Romano-British 'elite' The peasant population continued to cultivate and prepare food in their own long established ways for a long time to come

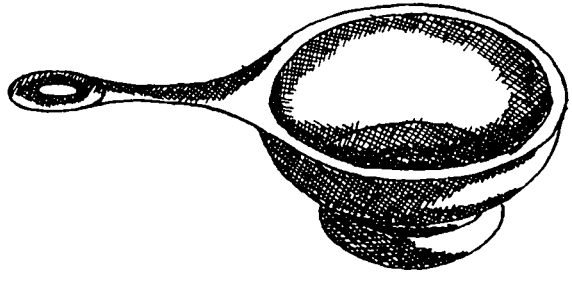
The better off ate well, enjoyed both imported and locally produced pottery, glass, table and kitchen ware and had kitchens that the modern housewife would have found recognisable in many respects Both the comfortable town house and the country villa had what we might call a fully-fitted kitchen.

The Roman kitchen *(culina)* had tables for food preparation, shelves and cupboards and pantries for the storage of food and utensils, and an oven that burnt wood and charcoal and frequently had a type of range over it An interior pump supplied water from a storage tank or intramural well to a stone or clay basin Many of the utensils that the Romans used to cook with are recognisable to us and have their modern counterparts An inventory of such utensils would include

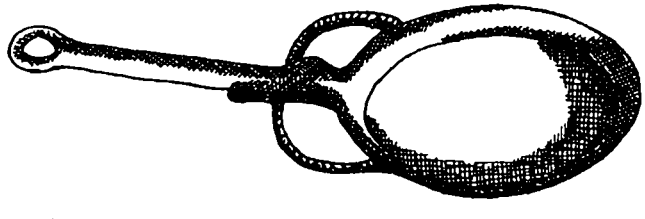
*Boletar* - a dish for cooking and eating.
*Coclear* - a small spoon
*Cola* - a strainer.
*Craticula* - a small gridiron.
*Cultellus* - a small knife.
*Discus* - a dished shaped like a quoit
*Fretale* - a frying pan.
*Lagena* - a large flask.
*Lanx* - a serving dish.
*Mortarium* - a mortar.
*Olla* - a jar.
*Operculum* - a lid.



A bronze cooking pot and a gridiron



A *patera*, a Roman skillet made in bronze This was a multi-purpose cooking utensil and every Roman soldier carried one in his backpack.



A Roman frying pan, *sartago*, made in iron. The Romans fried a lot of their food

*Patella* - a small pan.
*Patina* - a broad shallow dish or pan.
*Pultarius* - a metal vessel or a small pot used for pottage
*Quadratum* - a chopping-board.
*Sartago* - a frying pan.
*Simpulum* - a ladle
*Sportella* - a small basket
*Trulla* - a small ladle often used for wine
*Zerma*- a saucepan

The *trivet*, which was used in this country until recent times for placing on or near the fire to keep pots of food and drink warm, was a recognisable item in the Roman home.

Most cooking was done in earthenware pots and bronze pans which were placed on tripods and grids over the fire A hand rotary quern was used for milling wheat and barley and the pestle and mortar were used for pulping herbs and vegetables

Wine and oil was stored in large jars called *amphora* Hooks on walls and in ceilings were used for hanging meat, vegetables and utensils.

The Roman kitchen was lit by hanging lamps and light and ventilation was supplied by windows, usually of the clerestory type.

The poor lived mainly on a kind of gruel made from wheat and barley Their bread was coarse and usually eaten dry. Meat, when it was affordable, was eked out in stews made with boiled wheat and vegetables In the days of the Roman Republic food tended to be simple and unfussy. With the growth of the Empire, classical Greek cuisine became the standard for the upper and middle classes. In Roman Britain only the more exclusive of establishments, in the first instance, would have been inventive in food preparation. Then as now, the knowledge of fine food was disseminated through the medium of the cookbook.

Cookbooks were numerous but only two have come down to the present and those in only an imperfect form These were the work of a 1st Century gourmet named M Gavius Apicus. They only survive in their 4th Century versions The first good English translation of Apicus was published in 1958. Apicus wrote a book of general recipes and another on the preparation of sauces According to Senaca, Apicus took his own life when he felt that he could no longer afford to maintain his standard of eating. Apicus neither provided cooking times nor quantities but modern cooks and researchers have corrected these omissions. Restaurants offering a Roman cuisine are popular in Trier in Germany and several enterprising caterers in this country offer a Roman banquet service in your own home.

Markets and butchers supplied the basic ingredients for the town house kitchen but large rural villas were largely self-sufficient Villas had kitchen gardens that

A typical Roman kitchen

supplied fresh herbs and vegetables Drying and preserving were kitchen procedures that insured that the winter shortfall would be met

Preparations for the main meal of the day, dinner *(cena)*, were started early, The other two meals, breakfast *(ientaculum)* and lunch *(prandium)* were usually served cold Breakfast consisted of bread, honey and fruit Lunch was cold meat, bread and fruit There were a great many cheeses but smoked cheese was a particular favourite with the Romans

The simplicity of breakfast and lunch meant that more time and effort could be expended on the preparation of a dinner which, in its procession of courses, bore a remarkable similarity to our own style of entertaining It is unlikely that the mistress of the fine town house or handsome villas would have ventured much into the kitchen Cooks, servers and kitchen helpers made up part of the domestic staff

Than as now, the kitchen had its hazards It was a primary source of lead poisoning. Lead was used in the manufacture of cooking pots and pans. Because it imparted a nasty taste to food, herbs and spices were used in great quantities to smother any unpleasantness

Pots and pans were scoured with sand and water, consequently the lifespan of some utensils was short and cheap wares were mass produced Tables and surfaces were rubbed with mint which acted as an air freshener

Knives and spoons were used The fork as we know it and use it was not available but a type of pronged skewer was known and probably used for turning joints and spearing large pieces of meat Pork was the most common meat on the Roman table

It is in the area of domestic life that the impact of Romanization can most easily be assessed That this impact was not long lasting is evidenced by the return to more primitive forms of food preparation and the disappearance of previously available foodstuffs when Britain was cut adrift from the Empire The sophisticated kitchen went into decline. The Saxon household had more in common with the late Iron Age than with the Roman one

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# Here begynnyth the treatyse of fyſshynge wyth an Angle.

Salamon in his parablys ſayth that a good ſpyrytte makyth a flourynge aege/ that is a fayre aege & a longe. And ſyth it is ſoo: I aſke this queſtyon/. Whi che bey the meanes & the cauſes that enduce a man in to a merp ſpyrytte.: Truly to my beſte dyſcrecõn it ſemeth good dyſportes & honeſt gamys in whom a man I|oyeth wythout ony repentannce after. Thenne folowyth it ỹ goode dyſportes & honeſt games bey cauſe of mannys fayr aege & longe lyfe. And therfore now woll I| chooſe of foure good dyſportes & honeſte gamys/ that is to wyte: of huntynge: hawkynge: fyſſhynge: & foulynge. The beſte to my ſymple dyſcrecõn why the is fyſſhynge: callyd Angelynge wyth a rodde: and a lyne

**Here begynnyth the treatyse of fysshynge wyth an Angle.**

SAlamon [Solomon] in his parablys sayth that a good spyryte makyth a flourynge aege, that is a fayre aege & a longe. And syth it is soo I aske this questyon, whiche ben the meanes & the causes that enduce a man in to a mery spyryte Truly to my beste dyscrecion it semeth good dysportes & honest gamys in whom a man Joyeth wythout ony repentannce after Thenne folowyth it is gode dysportes & honest games ben cause of mannys fayr aege & longe life And therfore now woll I chose of foure good disportes & honeste gamys, that is to wyte of huntynge· hawkynge· fysshynge & foulynge The beste to my symple dyscrecion whythe is fysshynge callyd Anglynge with a rodde. and a lyne

# NORTH OXFORDSHIRE MEDIEVAL LARDERS

*J.P. Bowes*

Nowadays imported and refrigerated food feeds us through the winter. But how did our medieval forebears cope five hundred years ago? Although most people existed on salted, dried and smoked fish and meat, others had several sources of fresh supplies of food during the long dark icy months

Pigeons were kept as a staple food in monasteries and manors for their meat, eggs and for the fertiliser gained from their droppings They were a nuisance to the common man because of crop and seed feeding, but as they were classed as game they could not be killed

Small deer parks were set up, often near a manor house. They were fenced areas with a mound on the outside and a ditch on the inside of the perimeter. Therefore, the deer leaped in but could not get out. These parks were of a size that usually gave about half a day's hunting for the owner and his guests.

Another source of fresh food was rabbits They are thought to have been introduced into this country by the Romans and, although their name is seldom mentioned on a medieval banquet menu, they were part of the winter's food supply The rabbit was not a naturally burrowing animal It was kept in a 'hutch' in medieval times. This 'hutch' was built with stones, it had a central passageway with cavities leading off for breeding, the whole being covered with soil and grass, and the rabbits were fed via a hatch that was opened at one end If they were needed for dinner they were hit on the head as they appeared This seems to

have been a sport for the ladies of the manor When root crops became part of the three field system the rabbits took off from their man-made burrows and gained their independence as they ate their way through the turnips and carrots

This notice of pigeons, deer and rabbits had to be made but they were a small part of the larder compared to fishpond farming, which developed during medieval years as the Black Death decimated the population several times, leaving only one man for every ten agricultural jobs.

Fishponds represented an investment of capital with good returns for the minimum of labour Only one person was needed to activate the sluices which ran from one pond to another, so he could work a whole string of fishponds It would seem that the main fish cultivated were bream, roach, perch, dace, chub, allis shard, barbel, ruff, salmon and pike (pike often lived in ponds which were fed from the waste water from a nearby house) Carp may have been farmed but it only became popular in Tudor times

The fish were caught in diverse ways If only a few were needed they were got by rod and line. When more, a net was spread from bank to bank or from a purpose built island in the middle of the pond Every day a few were kept in readiness in a stew pond - a small pond used in spring for new born fish These fishponds had secondary usages, namely in the keeping of ducks, geese and swans and, in the leets (the channels from the springs), eels.

In the winter, when the ice was thick, parts of the pond were cleared to create holes, both to help oxygenate the water and for fishing The ice removed was taken to castle cellars and in later centuries to ice-houses specially constructed near to the water where the fresh food was refrigerated

In southern Oxfordshire there were few medieval fishponds as such, as the fish were farmed in moats, but in the northern half of the county and in Northamptonshire fishponds were made in the impermeable clay valleys as they utilised the natural characteristics of the ground - a marshland, spring lines and a high water table.

When the viability of a fish-farming product became noticed fishponds sprang up all over the place, as single ponds, as ponds linked with moats and even on hillsides linked to springs. Most of these have now been worked out. Those remaining can be identified by their slightly rectangular shaped hollows with banks which show a channel midway where the wooden sluice gates would have been.

As time progressed through the eighteenth century, some ponds were converted or their water supply altered to make ornamental lakes. Sir Anthony Cope, who enhanced the grounds at Hanwell Castle, constructed a jet of water which balanced a ball in the middle of the pond Sanderson Miller in refurbishing the pools at Wroxton Abbey added waterfalls and walks. Adderbury pools became purely ornamental and then in Victorian times became bathing and boating areas.

***List of locations***

*Medieval Fishponds*

*Original early valley bottom medieval fishponds:*
**Charwelton** - where the River Cherwell rises, **Duns Tew**,
**Horley** - plus two ornamental; **Hanwell** - plus one ornamental

*Single pond:* **Chipping Norton; Great Milton.**

*Ponds in North Oxfordshire linked with moats:* **Broughton Castle.**

*Hillside ponds:* **Shenington.**

*Ice Houses:* **Wroxton Abbey; Adderbury.**

*Pigeon Cotes:* **Minster Lovell.**

*Deer Parks:* **Broughton Castle.**

*Rabbit Warrens:* **Wroxton.**

***Reference***

*Walking Through the Centuries*, by J P Bowes, 1993, available from Ottakers, Banbury, and Banbury Museum , or from the author (see inside front cover)

***Note.*** Several articles have appeared in *Cake & Cockhorse* which are of relevance

**Hanwell:** 'Heraldry, Horology and Horticulture at Hanwell', J S W Gibson, **11.**1 (Autumn 1978), pp 16-20, quoting Dr Robert Plot, *Natural History of Oxfordshire*, 1705

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# A ROMANO-CELTIC RELIGIOUS COMPLEX NEAR BUCKINGHAM

**Shelagh Lewis**

North Buckinghamshire is not an area noted for visible archaeological remains - centuries, if not millenia, of intensive agricultural activity have seen to that However, about three kilometres east of the town of Buckingham are two splendid Roman burial mounds which can be found just beyond the old Thornborough bridge by the side of the A421 from Buckingham to Bletchley Both mounds were excavated by the Duke of Buckingham in 1839-40 One had been disturbed previously and 'no relics except loose stones, evidently not in their original position were recovered.' The second mound (probably that closer to Buckingham) was examined more thoroughly. It was described as being *c.*25ft (*c.*7 6m.) high and *c.*156ft. (*c.*47.5m ) in diameter The Duke cut a trench through the centre and dug down to about 2ft (0 6m ) below the level of the present ground surface There, he found a platform of rough limestone which had originally been protected by a wooden covering of oak planks that had collapsed from the weight of the overlying mound The platform showed signs of burning and had evidently been used as the site of a funeral pyre On the platform was a group of objects most of which now form part of the Braybrook collection in Cambridge

Three glass jugs were found, the largest of which, a square-bodied vessel of greenish glass, contained ashes and human bone fragments. Three items of imported Samian pottery - a bowl, a dish and a small cup stamped TITTIUS FE(CIT) - were also recovered as well as a 'poppy-head' beaker and two small globular amphorae.

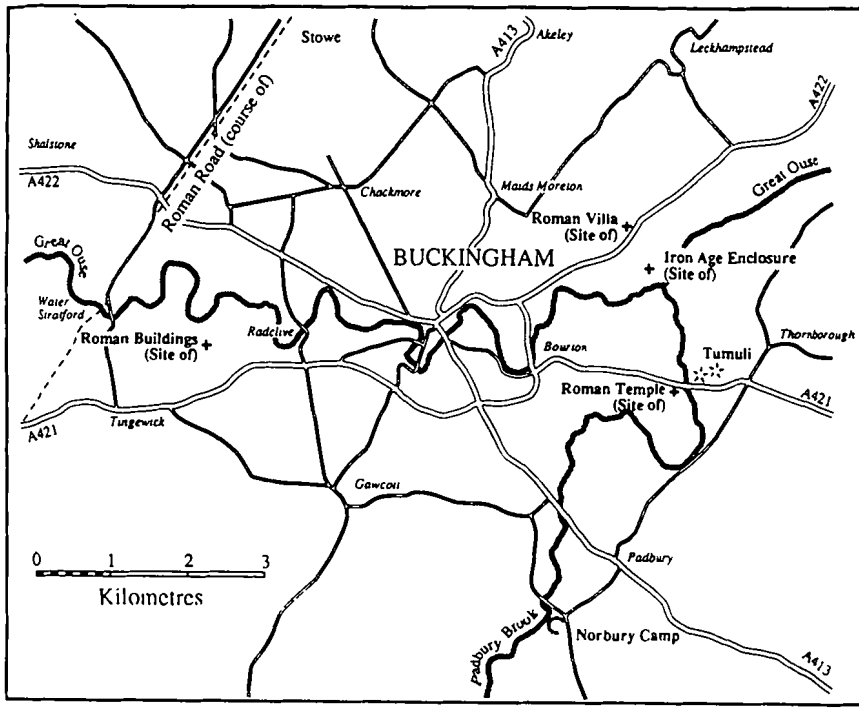
A group of bronzes accompanied the burial. There were two handsome jugs with decorated handles, a *patera* (saucepan), a reeded handle terminating in a wolf's head and a delightful lamp still retaining part of its suspension chain and the lid which covered its oil chamber Various bronze fragments which were also recoveredmight have formed part of the fittings of a wooden box or casket The Duke of Buckingham left no known description of his excavation but other early reports refer to additional objects of gold and iron none of which survive

The mounds are examples of a well-known type of monument found throughout the western Roman Empire There are several similar groups in Britain and they are commonly considered to have been erected over the remains of Romanised natives of high status who wished to be buried in the manner of their forefathers beneath a mound. The grave-goods from Thornborough are outstanding and parallels suggest that the mound excavated was probably raised in the middle to later years of the 2nd century A D

Local legend had long insisted that the mounds were merely the visible focus of a much more extensive cemetery and an opportunity to test this arose in the early 70's when substantial road works were undertaken in the vicinity. Survey and excavation by Buckinghamshire County Museum revealed a number of interesting features including a group of at least seven cremation burials. One, and possibly two, had originally been in wooden boxes, one was in a fairly deep cutting in the natural clay and four were buried in quite shallow hollows A scattering of bones and potsherds might have been the remains of further destroyed cremations Three of the burials were of people under thirty and a further two those of children Three were contained in pottery vessels and a fourth in a globular, ribbed glass jar All were accompanied by grave goods with a particular type of shallow Samian dish being common to all but two The burials were arranged in rough circle and were so close to the surface as to suggest a protective mound might have covered them originally The grave-goods indicate a date in the second half of the 1st century A.D or very early 2nd century for all of the burials

One other burial was found during the excavations. This was an unburnt burial which had been placed in the upper fill of a ditch There had been no attempt at careful arrangement of the corpse which had been thrown in on its left side The neck was broken and the head lay forward on the rib cage. Study of the bones indicated that the cause of death was a blow to the skull and the skull itself was rotated suggesting decapitation before burial - possibly this was the cause of death The deceased was an adult female over 35 and was unaccompanied by any grave-goods. Stratification suggested that the body had been deposited during the Roman period although at a later date than the cremation burials Do we have a victim of murder, execution or sacrifice?

Some ten years prior to the excavations of the early 70's further evidence of the significance of the site at Thornborough had come to light. In 1961, Charles Green, an enthusiastic member of the *Viatores* group of Roman road tracers, had been surveying near Thornborough bridge when he noticed quantities of pottery, tile and stonework protruding from a ditch on the Buckingham side of the river Green obtained permission to excavate the site and revealed a Romano-Celtic temple of well-known type The temple stood on a slight natural rise with its entrance facing the river Like many such temples it consisted of a 'square within a square' The central square or *cella* measured about 17ft. (*c*.5m ) square and probably consisted of a tallish central tower with clerestory windows providing the main lighting. This small inner sanctuary was not intended as a gathering place for worshippers, rather it would have provided a home for a cult statue of whichever deity was the main focus of worship at the site and a plinth situated towards the back wall, facing the entrance, probably provided seating for such a statue We do not know which god was worshipped here but the siting of the temple has led to the suggestion that the main dedication might have been to a river god Surrounding the central tower was the *portico* - a roofed verandah or




Simplified plan of the Romano-Celtic temple at Thornborough (redrawn by David and Claire Mattey, Courtesy of the Buckinghamshire Archaeological Society).

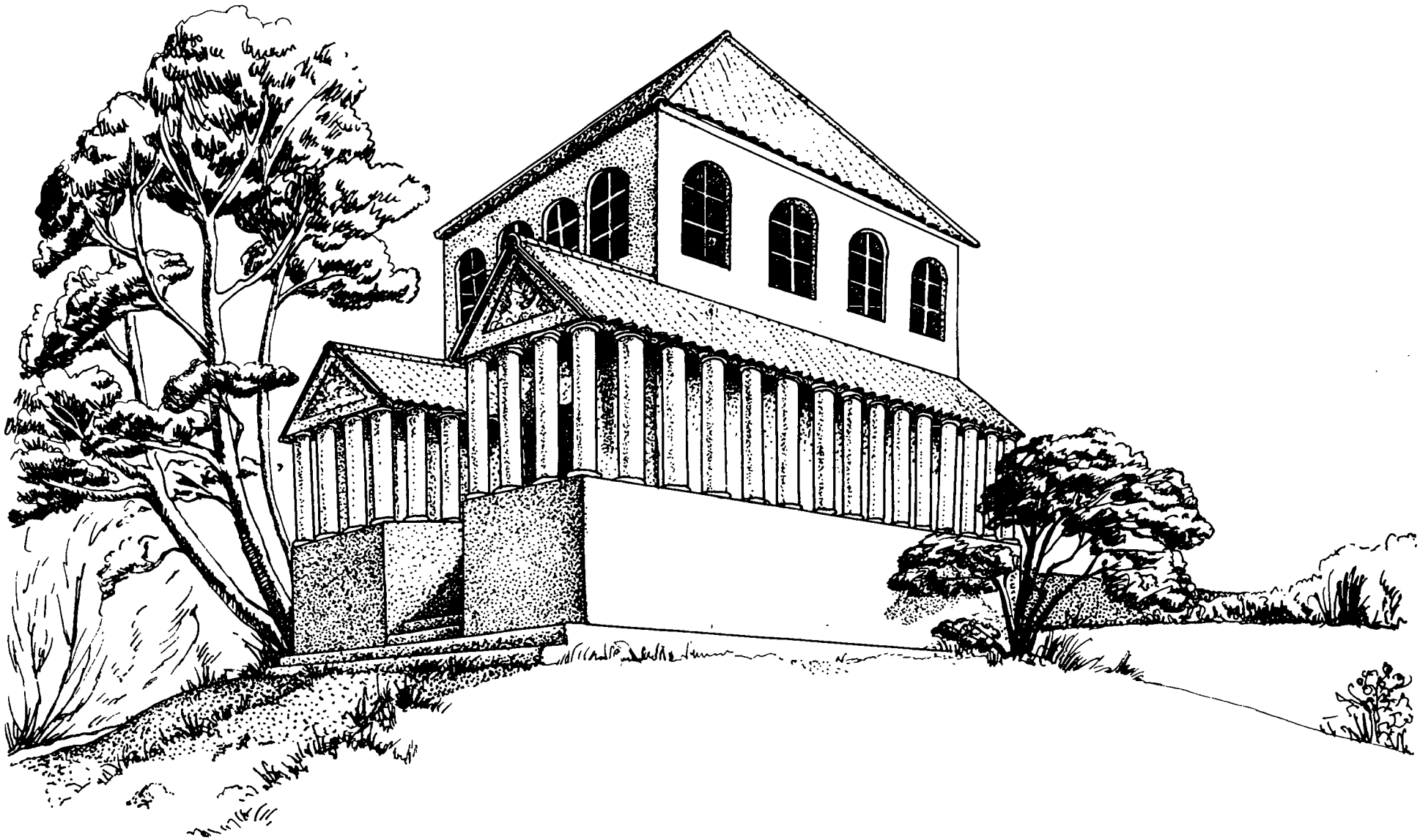
ambulatory which allowed worshippers to process around the inner sanctuary Sometimes this was fully enclosed but often provided only with a low wall topped by small pillars or even left open-walled with the roof supported by a colonnade At Thornborough the *portico* was 53ft (*c.*16m.) square There was an extension at the east (entrance) side which was porched and probably covered a flight of steps leading to the entrance Quantities of red and white plaster showed how the walls had been coloured

Such temples are known from all the Celtic parts of the Roman Empire and well over a hundred are recorded in Britain alone They are found in both rural and urban situations and reflect the process of Romanisation whereby rather than stamp out elements of native culture a positive effort was made to bring them under the classical umbrella Native deities would be linked with Roman counterparts who possessed superficially similar characteristics resulting in a single conflated deity satisfactory to both the classical and native traditions. One of the best-known examples of this practice is at Bath where Sulis, a native healing deity, was linked with the Roman goddess Minerva who was worshipped at Bath under the title 'Sulis-Minerva' It is generally presumed that most Romano-Celtic temples catered for the tastes of both native and incomer At Thornborough about 315 coins - mostly of low denomination - were associated with the temple and suggest it was in use between A D 244 and A D 408 However, some 1st and 2nd century material was found and this, together with the discovery of human skeletal remains earlier than, but aligned with, the temple suggest the presence of an earlier Pre-Roman Iron Age and/or early Roman temple on the site

Other buildings lay close to the main structure One of these was basilical (like a modern church) in plan It was examined only cursorily but beneath its threshold was buried the skull of a horse ringed with oyster shells and crowned with a large, smooth pebble. Such discoveries imply that the excavated temple was just one part of a larger religious complex.

Since Green's excavations more evidence has come to light which suggests that Thornborough was an unexpectedly important focus of religious activity during Roman times. In 1981 a small bronze statuette was found on the footpath near the temple The figure was crowned with a distinctive high ostrich-feather diadem which is an attribute of the Egyptian goddess Isis. Although deities of the Egyptian pantheon were worshipped in Britain during the Roman period they are recorded only sparsely and most evidence for their worship comes from the larger towns and military sites where one might expect the cosmopolitan mix of people who would be attracted to exotic foreign deities They are only rarely found at remote rural sites.

During the past twenty years there has been a regular increase in casual finds in the area. A small shrine of the period has been identified just a few hundred metres west of the known temple. This shrine incorporated the deliberate burial of a horse skull and small regularly-spaced deposits of oyster shells, iron nails and



pot rims Also from the general vicinity are several small bronze representations of deities including a handsome Cupid, a small bust of Minerva and others which perhaps depict native gods. Recent stray finds include a small gold foil 'feather', of a type often pinned to the internal walls of Romano-Celtic temples as an



offering, and the bronze hand of a statue holding a cake of bread in its outstretched palm. Such statues are occasionally found at temple sites and seem to represent either priests or worshippers who carried a flask of wine in one hand and a loaf in the other for presentation at a sacrifice

Numerous coins have been recovered - possibly as many as two thousand - in addition to items of personal jewellery which were often given as offerings at temple sites by both men and women Many of these show signs of deliberate damage in an attempt to 'destroy' their original functions before dedicating them to the gods Bracelets and pins were bent in half and the pins of brooches were snapped off Another group comprises a small but outstanding collection of 'votives', scaled-down versions of everyday objects specially made for use as offerings Three tiny axes, a superb claw-hammer and a tiny phallus - the universal symbol of fertility - have come from the vicinity We do not know whether such offerings were made to beg favours from the gods or in thanks-giving for favours granted but they were often sold at special shops which were part of temple complexes and their sale no doubt helped to support the upkeep of the temple.

Little is known of the ceremonials and other activities that took place at Romano-Celtic temples. Officiating priests, and sometimes priestesses, are attested and priestly regalia has come from several such sites but we do not know how these shadowy figures related to the priests of the purely classical religions and to the druids and other religious figures of the Celtic world The finding of quantities of animal bones and, notably, several kilos of oyster shells, suggests that feasting and perhaps animal sacrifice played a part in the local rituals An interesting sidelight on temple practices came from the discovery of a number of lead dice - one marked incorrectly Perhaps supplicants could request a throw of the lucky dice to ascertain their future while the incorrect markings might indicate that the temple guardians ensured that the odds were loaded in their favour so that a satisfactory response could always be given and the reputation of the temple enhanced!

What population might have been served by this religious complex? Although several buildings of indeterminate function are known from the immediate vicinity nothing of a certainly domestic nature has been identified there. However at Foscote, a mere two kilometres to the northwest, a handsome villa was excavated in the 1830's and other nineteenth century discoveries as well as more recent fieldwork point to a fairly substantial, if scattered, Romano-British rural population within a six kilometre radius of the Thornborough group

No large-scale organised examination has taken place at Thornborough and much of the recovered material is the result of casual finds but the quality and quantity of the discoveries is striking and hints at a site which perhaps enjoyed more than merely local significance The position of the site might provide a clue. From Neolithic times onwards it seems there was a tendency to mark boundaries by the construction of sacred sites and often markets - perhaps to provide neutral enclaves at points of potential conflict. The group of sites at Thornborough lies at a logical spot to mark the boundaries of the *pagi* associated with the Roman towns at Towcester, Fenny Stratford and Alchester (a point already noted by the Milton Keynes Archaeological Unit) *Pagi* were the rural districts administered

by towns and their borders seem often to have been determined by pre-existing tribal bounds At Thornborough we have a river crossing and a road junction both of which probably pre-date the Roman conquest There was undoubtedly a pre-conquest and early Roman temple at the site and an expanding religious complex during the later Roman period The whole was associated with a cemetery whose diversity and richness are already confirmed Insufficient systematic investigation has taken place there to confirm the theory but it certainly offers a good possibility

The known temple at Thornborough was burnt down in the very early 5th century A D. right at the end of the Roman era Was this an accident? Or could it have been the action of an increasingly confident local Christian group disturbed at the blatant continuation of the old pagan ways? There is no certain evidence of Roman period Christianity locally but from Great Horwood a few kilometres east of Thornborough has come an interesting group of late Roman silver objects which include a beaker, a brooch and two spoons One of the spoons bears the inscription **VENERIA VIVAS.** Similar groups are known from other parts of the country and the silver spoon is an element common to a number of these The bowls of such spoons are frequently inscribed with symbols such as the *chi-rho*

 or the fish, which have Christian associations Sometimes these symbols are accompanied by phrases which read '..**VIVAS**' interpreted in a Christian context as meaning '.lives (or has been born again) in Christ' It has been suggested that these spoons might have performed the function of christening spoons Unfortunately the Horwood group lacks the critical element of an explicit Christian symbol so it is not possible to be sure that it indicates a Christian community However, the strong possibility remains and if these objects do point to the presence of Christians their quality suggests that the late Roman pagans in the area certainly had no monopoly of wealth.

The full extent of the group of sites at Thornborough remains to be ascertained as does the proper date range and, indeed, the exact nature of the complex. However, it would surely repay future work and would further our understanding of an aspect of Romano-Celtic life that is the subject of much speculation but surprisingly little hard fact

*The Thornborough mounds are scheduled ancient monuments. They can be approached by a footpath from the layby at the old Thornborough bridge beside the A421 but it is illegal even to carry a metal detector across the site. The temple is on private land with no access. No upstanding remains survive but its position is visible from the burial mounds.*

# TADMARTON: A Village in the Making

*Phillip Arnold*

Searching for my mother's ancestors in Oxfordshire back through the centuries I seemed to be lacking one of the essential props - wills It looked to me as if my forebears were too poor to have anything to leave to their descendants Then one day in a short foray into the neighbouring county of Northamptonshire, I found members of my family in Middleton Cheney with wills! Just two wills to be precise and rather too brief for my liking

Having some time previously compiled a list of all those bearing my mother's family name, I knew the family could possibly have originated from Tadmarton. Could I at last have found something concrete on which to work? Indeed I had, not only wills but evidence linking the Tadmarton family to my own family in Middleton Cheney

There then followed many happy visits to Oxfordshire Archives reading wills and inventories All good things, however, come to an end and I finally ran out of wills and inventories. At that stage it occurred to me that since the wills I had been looking at, nearly always included overseers, witnesses and appraisers from the village, I could get more information regarding my family from the wills of others living in Tadmarton I, therefore, began a search through all the wills made by the inhabitants of the village looking for references to members of my family as overseers, witnesses and appraisers.

Suddenly, I became so interested in the people whose lives I was looking at that I changed the direction of my research from the narrow prospect of searching for my ancestors to the much wider one of trying to build up a picture of the inhabitants of Tadmarton in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries This originally involved delving into the Tadmarton Registers and the wills and inventories of the inhabitants but inevitably led to a search over a much larger area The neighbouring parish of Swalcliffe was an obvious source of information but my search has now spread to Banbury and beyond

Having decided to limit my research to the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, I began to compile the family trees of all the inhabitants of the village during that period in order to try to produce a 'census' of the inhabitants for certain years. I started with lists of every ten years from 1551, the Register in Tadmarton starts in 1548, up to 1611 but found this too ambitious and have continued with just 1621, 1641 and 1665. The last two years have been picked because of the Protestation and Hearth Tax returns. I have yet to decide what other later years to choose but the last year will obviously be 1701

There is much to be achieved from such a study I have established from the data so far obtained, the average age for marriage was 28 for men and 24 for

women although this may well change as further information is processed Local and family crises can be identified Eight members of one family were buried within a comparatively short period in 1629. The length of time between baptisms in a family possibly illustrates the concept of breast feeding as a contraceptive and the haste at which widows and widowers re-married must be evidence of the need to find a bread winner or mother for a young family

Unfortunately the Tadmarton Parish Registers do not include all the baptisms, marriages and burials which took place in the parish during the period under review The record of baptisms and marriages does not begin until 1548 and burials not until 1551. Although there are entries for all the years from 1548 for baptisms, there is no record of marriages for sixty of the years up to 1700 In addition, for ninetten years there are no burials recorded From 1692 to 1698 there is only one year when a marriage or burial is recorded and that is a solitary marriage in 1696 It is also difficult to believe there could only be a single baptism in one year and as many as fourteen in another year

The absence of baptism and marriage entries is confirmed by the nearly 150 each of baptism and marriage records it has not been possible to trace in connection with my investigation.

Another problem is missing wills According to the *Victoria County History: Oxfordshire* (vol 9, p 155) the value of the inventory attached to the will of Robert Austen who died in 1665 was £2,280 including wool valued at £110 If these figures are correct then Robert must have been a very rich man indeed Alas, the will [2/1/15] is missing at Oxfordshire Archives. I do hope this will can be traced since it must be an important one for Banburyshire!

I hope to produce the result of my labours in the not too distant future and I am at present classifying the inhabitants of Tadmarton into categories namely, Gentry, Clergy, Yeoman, Husbandmen, Trades and Professions (not many of these) and the Others. I have allocated the following families at present.-

**Gentry:** Burton, Austen, Lord
**Clergy:** Standysh, Craiker, Sacheverall, Wheatley, Oldys
**Yeomen:** Anderton, Bailie, Bellowes, Gunne, Pargeter, Whitley, Tossell
**Husbandmen:** Frere als Baker, Coke, Jeffes, Bloxham, Gibberd, Hale, Lovell, Hancock, Saman, Line, Rooke, Hyren, Turbat, Dumbleton, Plastow, Hawtain, Vial, Treadwell, Potter, Warde.
**Trades and Professions:** Brotherton, Curnock, Slaimaker, Greene, Mason, Hartley

The allocation has to be a very rough one since some families, for example, have both yeomen and husbandmen amongst their members.

To produce the record of the village that I have in mind, it is essential to gather as much information as possible about Tadmarton in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries If any member has any such information, I should be very pleased to hear from them. A possible future bonus might be the finding of the missing will and inventory of Robert Austen. Maybe someone has a copy!

# Book Reviews

**Oxfordshire and North Berkshire Protestation Returns and Tax Assessments, 1641-42**, ed Jeremy Gibson, Banbury Historical Society **24** and Oxfordshire Record Society **59**, 1994 xxiv, 292 pp , maps, illustrated, indexed £15 00 + £2 00 p&p (UK), from Banbury Museum, 8 Horsefair, Banbury, Oxon OX16 0AA (cheques payable to Cherwell District Council)

*Factual description by the editor:*

The Protestation Returns of 1641-42 arose from the troubles between Charles I and his Parliament, brought to a head by the King's attempt to arrest the five Members, as illustrated on the front cover It was ordained that every adult should sign a 'Protestation' which effectively pledged support for Parliament and the Protestant church. This was interpreted generally as every male, women rarely being included in the returns. Those extant provide a quasi-census, the most complete before 1841. Their survival varies, and in Oxfordshire cover the north-western hundreds, Banbury, Bloxham, Chadlington, Wootton and Bampton, and those in the southern tip, Binfield and Langtree, altogether listing over 11,800 adult males throughout the county. The returns were first published by the Oxfordshire Record Society forty years ago.

This much more ambitious replacement has involved a complete recheck of the original returns resulting in considerable rearrangement plus corrections and additions To this has been added, as well as the newly discovered returns for Caversham and Yarnton, and the Buckinghamshire enclave of Caversfield, the returns for the Abingdon Division of north Berkshire (comprising the Hundreds of Moreton, Ock and Hormer), much of which lie in present-day Oxfordshire and are adjacent to the historic county boundary of the Thames and Isis.

Records of a tax assessment compiled within three months of the Protestation are extant for the north and west Oxfordshire Hundreds of Bampton, Banbury, Bloxham and Ploughley, and the Berkshire Hundred of Hormer. This had a very low tax threshold and consequently up to seven times as many tax payers as the earlier subsidies Where both Protestation and assessment survive, they provide a valuable comparison, listing many of the same people but often with variant spellings The tax also included women and absentee landowners For Banbury (borough and parish) and Ploughley Hundred (which have no extant Protestation returns) the assessment provides an invaluable alternative

Together the records published here include around 15,000 names. Gwyn de Jong's index has been expanded and edited to provide much greater grouping of surnames with alternative spellings and now covers 80 two-column pages.

*Critical comment by Margaret Spufford, Professor of Social and Local History, Roehampton Institute, London.*

We all stand indebted to Jeremy Gibson for his invaluable series of *Guides for Genealogists, Family and Local Historians* published for the Federation of Family History Societies These are often the first port of call for all historians needing a quick guide to a new source, or, indeed, to the county survivals of a familiar one When it comes to Jeremy Gibson as a record-editor, and to his more detailed work, there may well be feelings of undue envy for that lucky county, Oxfordshire, where he lives, and that even luckier borough, Banbury, which claims his principal (ancestral) allegiance. (Can we, perhaps, coax him away to live elsewhere when he has exhausted the possible work on the local records, if he ever does?) He stands in a most estimable line of such people, who have served their local communities in this way Dr W.M. Palmer, the local GP of Linton in Cambridgeshire between the wars, comes to mind, he also produced invaluable work for his favoured community and the surrounding area We are fortunate that a long tradition, beginning in the seventeenth century with the rise of the gentleman antiquaries, still survives.

This volume on the Protestation Returns and Tax Assessments of 1641-2 is no antiquarian production, however It is scrupulously edited and indexed (variant spellings of the same surname are inserted in brackets when this reviewer, for one, would have assumed variation at the period) and the combination of the two quite different sets of documents, so near in time to each other, can therefore throw interesting light on each other

Historians have mainly used the Protestation Returns, which were to be signed or marked by every adult over the age of 18, and vowed to defend 'the true Reformed Protestant Religion', as the first extended statistical evidence we have on literacy [David Cressey, *Literacy and the Social Order: Reading and Writing in Tudor and Stuart England* (Cambridge, 1980); Appendix and *passim*] It is therefore a very great pity that most Oxfordshire and many north Berkshire parishes generally have returns in the hand of the parson or parish clerk. When they have not, for instance at Claydon and Mollington, those who (unable to sign) made marks are asterisked. There are only six such places in the half of Oxfordshire which survives, against eleven out of the 34 places in the relatively small Abingdon Division of Berkshire.

The Protestation Returns of Oxfordshire may therefore be a sad disappointment to the historians of literacy, but they contain other insights Despite the rubric that the oath was to be tendered to adults over the age of 18, unintentional evidence is provided of the legal 'invisibility' of women in the period by the vast majority of parishes in which they are ignored On the rare occasions they were not, fascinating glimpses of family structure are provided, especially when, as at Stanton Harcourt, the names of the householder and his wife are followed by groups of names, or single names, which might well prove,

on investigation, to be those of resident servants. There are other intriguing glimpses too, sometimes of local occupations, as at Rotherfield Greys and Steventon (Berks.), both on the Thames, when the bargemen were absent, but 'being communicants' were likely to take the oath.

The principal object of the oath was, of course, to establish Protestant nonconformity, and the Returns are therefore a prime source for recusancy The Members of the University of Oxford fall under some suspicion, also. A remarkable number of them were absent when the oath was tendered to them on 21 February 1641 - surely in Full Term?

The Tax Assessments of 1642 are of interest in themselves, since they are very much fuller than the Tudor and earlier Stuart subsidy returns, even though the exempt include all wage labourers In Banbury there were 47 subsidy taxpayers in May 1641 but no less than 328 named in the May 1642 assessment printed here. In other ways too the assessments are much more inclusive than other tax-records of the time, and therefore more useful. They also taxed people's holdings in every place where they held land It ought, therefore, to be possible to perform that almost impossible, and important, feat, to trace the scale of inter-parochial activities of, for instance, a substantial yeoman We know (usually from their wills) that yeomen operated quite frequently in many parishes, but it has been impossible to see how general such landholding was Now, with the help of this volume, it can be done (in Bampton, Banbury, Bloxham and Hormer Hundreds, at least) and it would be an important study

I notice Mr Gibson intends a guide to these Tax Assessments of the 1640's (together with Protestation Returns and other contemporary records) perhaps I can put in a plea that he will note in it the total sum for which each county was reckoned liable, since the list of these sums will, in itself, give us the contemporary view of the comparative wealth of counties?

A reviewer, even when very favourably disposed, is supposed to note some small error or omission Perhaps I should follow tradition by noting that I wished I could have found the source of the nineteenth century maps of Oxfordshire and Berkshire on pp xx-xxiii But it really seems cavalier to do so, when I am so grateful that dedicated and scholarly people, like Mr Gibson, continued to make the historian's life easier, by supplying tools like this volume, well-produced and charmingly illustrated, ready to her hand

**Margaret Spufford**

*Note.* The maps are from the first (1831) edition of Lewis' *Topographical Dictionary of England* This is mentioned (rather obscurely) on the title verso, and clearly should have been more prominently indicated Three tiresome errors have been brought to attention, which readers of *C&CH*, many of whom will have the volume, may like to amend in their copies

*page xxiv:* on the outline map, key, the figures 15 and 16, referring to Ock and Hormer Hundreds, are transposed;

*page 223:* Index of Names, entries under **Caple**, except for 'StanH', should be under the preceding entry for **Cantwell**;

*page 293.* Index of Places, insert **Kidd:** Kiddington (Nether and Over) **130**

**Oxford Church Courts: Depositions 1581-1586,** Jack Howard-Drake; Oxfordshire County Council, 1994, vi + 70 pp., £3.95 (+ 50p p&p, from Oxfordshire Archives, County Hall, Oxford OX1 1ND)

This volume marks the third stage in Mr Howard-Drake's ambitious and exciting project, in which he plans to calendar the eighteen volumes of depositions made over the period *c.*1542-1694 in the Oxford Church Courts, which are now in the Oxfordshire Archives The depositions calendared here were made in the Archdeacon's Court from 3 February 1580/1 to 21 January 1585/6, and they make wonderful reading

As in the two previous volumes (published in 1991 and 1993), the majority of the cases recorded concern tithes, testamentary matters, defamation and matrimonial disputes 35 arise from refusal or reluctance to pay the great and small tithes, 25 are concerned to establish the validity of wills, sometimes to challenge their provisions, or to deal with problems resulting from intestacy; 21 are defamation cases, mainly originating in claims of sexual promiscuity (a constant source of rumours and gossip ('fame') in closed communities), or the falling-out of neighbours, where the verbal exchanges are usually couched in sexual terms - 'arrant whore' and 'bawdy knave', for example - as well as an impressive range of inventive and insulting name-calling, the fifteen matrimonial cases are, for the most part, questions of breach of promise, involving the complicated business of making and keeping marriage pledges and contracts, five more concern the repair and maintenance of lay and ecclesiastical buildings (Yarnton church, for example, where the roof and windows let in the rain, the timbers were rotting and the walls actually sinking), claims to mortuary payments, and the making of a disturbance within the church building, in the remaining three of the 104 cases recorded in this volume the issues are not clear

It has been claimed that, in working with the records of the ecclesiastical courts, 'much labour is apt to produce little save material for an historical gossip column'; Mr Howard-Drake's continuing labours, however, are certainly producing very much more than that, and are fast building up a welcome mass of fascinating detail, which will be invaluable in helping us to enlarge considerably our knowledge and understanding of the daily lives of our sixteenth and seventeenth century ancestors in Oxfordshire

As well as expressing our indebtedness to Mr Howard-Drake we must not forget to acknowledge the skill and industry of Mrs Joan Howard-Drake, whose work in transcribing the original documents is providing the solid basis for the whole project.

**R.K. Gilkes**

*Note.* The earlier volumes of these Depositions were reviewed in *C&CH* **12.**1 (Spring 1992), p 46, and **12.**6/7 (Summer/Autumn 1993), p 176.

**The Banbury to Verney Junction Branch**, by Bill Simpson, revised reprint 1994 Lamplight Publications, 38 Spinney Drive, Cherwell Heights, Banbury OX16 9TA 176 pp , copiously illustrated, card cover, £7.95

This excellent little book is a reprint of Mr Simpson's history of the Buckinghamshire Railway, first published by the Oxford Publishing Company in 1978 There are minor revisions, including the provision of an index. The railway described ran from a junction at Bletchley on the London and North Western Railway's Euston - Birmingham main line and opened in 1850, the same year as the Great Western line from London and Oxford to Banbury These events were preceded by an episode of high railway politicking ably described in the first chapter of the book Ultimately the Great Western line was extended north through Leamington to Birmingham, while the Buckinghamshire line, despite proposals to extend it west, always remained a branch with its terminus at Merton Street, Banbury, almost adjoining the present Banbury station

The principal intermediate stations were at Winslow, Verney Junction (from where a further branch was opened through Bicester to Oxford in 1851), Buckingham and Brackley Verney Junction was one of the few stations named after a family rather than a place, and there is a short foreword by Ralph Verney, who (in 1977) looked forward to the eventual building of the Channel Tunnel

But a book like this inevitably looks back Mr Simpson researched his subject thoroughly, and his interviews with railway staff and their descendants, enabling him to identify many of the figures shown in the plentiful photographs, make this a valuable social document rather than just a book of pictures of engines and trains Some familiar names are acknowledged - Barrie Trinder and Graham Wilton as photographers, Christine Bloxham, and our late member Geoffrey Hartland from whom information on the First World War shell filling factory at Banbury was obtained Some members may recollect a visit to the site organised by him one sunny afternoon many years ago

The Verney Junction - Banbury branch railway, like so many others, became for over a century a seemingly permanent but unspectacular feature of the largely rural scene

There were some big occasions In 1950, King George VI arrived at Brackley by train with the present Queen Mother *en route* to Silverstone for the first Grand Prix of Europe Despite all preparations the unusually low height of the line's platforms had been overlooked, so that an old ammunition box was pressed into service as an impromptu step. This incident was faithfully recorded by the camera, and the photograph duly appears in Mr Simpson's book

Despite the line's value for transporting cattle from Midland Marts, other freight, and military vehicles during the Second World War (all pictured), the decline in passenger traffic made the end inevitable British Railways introduced diesel railcars in 1956, and indeed opened two new halts at Radclive and Water Stratford, but the line closed to passengers on the last day of 1960, and to goods

traffic in 1964 The track was lifted in 1967 and today there are few signs that the railway ever existed

A slight criticism of the book is that no opportunity has been taken, in the sixteen years since it was first published, to bring the story up to date or to incorporate any further illustrations or research For example a photograph of the locomotive *John* which worked at the Banbury munitions depot was captioned in 1978 that it 'was acquired very late in the book's production and afforded very little time for any research into its history' There is no excuse for repeating this caption *verbatim* in 1994!

One would also like to have seen some account of the remaining traces of the line Although Banbury's Merton Street terminus has completely disappeared, one can still visit the derelict platforms of Verney Junction and cross the rusting single track before refreshment at the distinctive Verney Arms Hotel, and recapture some of the line's atmosphere by a diesel train ride from Bicester to Oxford along the associated branch line. One wonders how long that will survive privatisation.

**Alan Donaldson**

**Exploring Old Bloxham**, by Y S Huntriss, photographic work by R C Huntriss, 1994 The author (Merrilets, Church Street, Bloxham, Banbury OX15 4ET) 104 pp, copiously illustrated, card cover, £5 (at Bloxham P O ; Banbury Museum; Virginia House, Bloxham) or £6 50 by post (U K ) from the author

Having lived in Bloxham for over twelve years, I feel shamed at how little I knew of the history that surrounded me Yvonne Huntriss leads us around the village in five walks, clearly mapped and lavishly illustrated with dozens of historic photographs, which leave no one with any excuse for such ignorance still.

She tells us who had lived in and what had happened at many of the buildings portrayed, with a wealth of corroborative detail Many former villagers appear in the photographs, nearly always identified The deserted street outside my 'local', the Red Lion (with a splendid open tourer of the 1920's outside) contrasts sharply with today's busy main road, as does the view of our neighbour, the grocer's shop at Shadbolt's Corner (I never knew it was called that), run in the 1960's by Mrs Little

There is just so much in this book that I can't start to describe it. I can only say it is a model for any aspiring village historian to follow in presenting pictorial history However, I suspect few could emulate it - Yvonne's knowledge of her village is so great, both from her accumulation of reminiscence and as a dedicated historian. How splendid that she has put it so attractively on permanent record

Anyone who knows Bloxham is urged to get it. proceeds go to Bloxham Museum - another of the author's achievements in putting Bloxham on the historical map. And it's even got an index!

**Jeremy Gibson**

# Lecture Reports

## *Brian Little*

**Thursday 8th December 1994.**

***The Cassington Excavations* - Gill Hay (Oxford Archaeological Unit)**

This was an outstanding talk by any standards All too often archaeology is a story of rescue digs. Here was a tale of continuous occupation amid the Thames Valley river gravels. Appropriately the last slide was a rainbow - yes, there must be more to discover over the rainbow and with time in hand!

Bearing in mind the disturbances by agriculture, it is remarkable to have continuous occupation from 1400 B C Finds have included Iron Age and Roman objects and there has been evidence of small circular buildings

Cassington was a mixed economy as testified by burnt wheat from holes and by horse and ox skulls Farming intensity increased in Roman times.

Initially the site was thought to be small but then came evidence of Saxon settlement - a pioneer frontier Nearby evidence of mid-Saxon occupation is even more exciting - very rare in Britain, the only one in Oxfordshire

Questions about this valley area fairly bristle, some of them prehistoric issues as well. For instance, was there a Bronze Age ecological disaster? A lowering of the water table may well have heralded an unusually dry spell. That it was a phase only was clear in the later Bronze Age when occupation of the flood plain ceased following heavier rainfall Gravel islands were then sought out by settlers.

The involvement of English Heritage surely means that exploration will continue amidst the river gravels Cassington to Yarnton may yet turn out more famous than Putney to Mortlake!

**Thursday 12th January 1995.**

***The work of English Heritage* - Anthony Fleming.**

If you've seen the flag, you've seen the property, if you've seen the property, you were probably one of several millions who visited an English Heritage site in England in 1994. Honey pots were Stonehenge and Dover Castle but there were 400 buildings aside from Dover's lofty site and many ancient monuments apart from the Wiltshire Druids venue. Special events are sometimes on the local menu and these can include battle re-enactments Recently battle sites have been registered by the Heritage.

With so much to conserve and no little public interest it is perhaps surprising that administration areas are huge. The midland area is based on Northampton but ranges from Lincolnshire to the Welsh Borders Across such a vast area interest leaflets and booklets abound and topics range from golf courses to barn conversions At the individual officer level contributions may take the form of detailed presentations at enquiries.

With the advent of the National Curriculum in school, English Heritage has fashioned a role in education by setting up opportunities for children to be more practically involved in local history. This an exciting development especially as some Heritage sites like Stonehenge and Hadrian's Wall have world significance

Throughout his well illustrated talk, Anthony Fleming put a lot of stress on Castles and mentioned Kenilworth, Stokesey and Banbury. He remarked about Banbury that it might well have incorporated a major water element Our town featured a second time when he mentioned Lincoln with its great added Cathedral. He reminded his audience of Lincoln's early control of Banbury

After a superb range of slides and a very detailed analysis of the responsibilities, Anthony drew his threads together in a catch phrase for the future - all in English Heritage had a role "to battle for the Heritage"

**Thursday 9th February 1995.**

***Compton Verney: an 18th century Warwickshire House and Landscape.***

**Dr Geoffrey Tyack.**

Talks about country houses are always popular This was no exception Take a lesser known property, add some striking re-building, mix in a dash of Capability Brown and the outcome is bound to hold the attention.

Geoffrey Tyack traced the story of Compton Verney from its pre 18th century origins to an age when the surrounds were graced by a fine orangery and numerous other buildings. He explored especially the association between titled owners and the need to live up to this status by creating the grand vision. Sadly it was a case of designer unknown

Part of the good life was the Verney family's pursuit of horsemanship and hunting. They cared for horses in a way that ensured impressive stables - a home for horses better than the nearby quarters for servants

Very much a feature of the later house was the formal garden. Brown partly set it out but the Verneys nurtured it. However, as more buildings arrived so the formal garden disappeared and we need to visit Westbury Court in Gloucestershire to see its likeness

The House itself was never a place of the grand staircase but compensations there were - a medieval hall and a fine library of books

Set amidst a generous planting of trees and within the context of a Victorian estate village, Compton Verney held the attention of its audience Let us hope it will soon be open in some form or other to the public

# BANBURY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

## ANNUAL REPORT, 1994

Your Committee have pleasure in submitting the 37th Annual Report and Statement of Accounts, for the year 1994.

There have been some important changes. David Hitchcox, after more than ten years, retired from editing *Cake and Cockhorse*, though he remains on the Committee (and still helps with typing on to disc) Penelope Renold and Hugh White, who have respectively organised lecture programmes and excursions for many years, also retired The debt the Society owes all three is enormous, for these tasks involve a great deal of work Martin Allitt and and Kay Smith have joined the Committee

Membership of the Society was 238 (157 records members), an increase of almost ten per cent, at the end of the year. During the year we welcomed 31 new members, but lost 12 through, death, resignation or non-renewal Attendance at meetings and new membership continues to benefit 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 year's meetings, arranged by Dr John Rivers, well maintained the high standard set in the past Dr John Clarke's outstanding 'Society in Early Victorian Southern Northamptonshire' is due to be published in due course in *Cake & Cockhorse* David Eddershaw ('Nineteenth Century Education in Oxfordshire') and the Reverend Ralph Mann ('The Ascott Martyrs') completed a trio of talks which entertainingly illuminated the lives of our near ancestors. In the autumn John Steane spoke on what happened (literally) below stairs at Chastleton House, as revealed by archaeological examination, Uri Trede and colleagues memorably brought Roman soldiers to life, complete with arms and armour, Paul Bolitho reminded us how local incidents could have national effects and Gill Hey demonstrated how a village might move with the centuries as a result of changing water levels

The A G.M. for the first time for many years was held in Banbury, in perhaps its most historic setting, the Globe Room of the Reindeer Inn (recently the subject of an excellent article in the *Daily Telegraph*). Fewer than usual members attended, perhaps because of the very hot weather, but this fortunately meant that those who were there could more easily see the beam-wealthy private first floor rooms which well showed the antiquity of the building.

The summer excursions (arranged by Hugh White) were to Stanway, Stanton Harcourt and nearby Wroxton Abbey, all as always very enjoyable to the band of devotees who turn up so regularly.

*Cake & Cockhorse*, back to three a year and now regularly typeset, saw a smooth changeover from David Hitchcox to a triumvirate of familiar names, Joan

Bowes, Nan Clifton, and Jeremy Gibson, with two of the issues focusing on greatly differing fiftieth anniversaries of aspects of the Second World War. Contributors included Jeremy Black, Christine Bloxham, Nan Clifton, Hugh Compton, Jeremy Gibson, Joyce Hoad, Michael Hoadley, Eric Kaye, Brian Little, David Neal, 'Nick' Nicholls, Sally Stradling, Simon Townsend and Hugh White

The long forecast *Oxfordshire and North Berkshire Protestation Returns and Tax Assssments 1641-42*, published in conjunction with the Oxfordshire Record Society, was distributed early in 1995 We acknowledge with gratitude the grant from the British Academy towards the cost of its production No less than three further volumes are forecast for publication in this or next year Nick Allen's *History of Adderbury* will be published, in conjunction with Phillimore, in the autumn of 1995, a near-final text of *Turnpike Roads to Banbury*, by Alan Rosevear, has been received; and R.K. Gilkes has edited a transcript by the late Ted Brinkworth of the *Act Book of the Peculiar Court of Banbury and Cropredy 1625-38* (this promises to be one of the most entertaining and scurrilous books we have yet to publish!)

During the year grants from the Brinkworth Fund were awarded to help village publications likely to appear in 1995, on which further report will be made

There were several notable events during the year. The Society was involved in the purchase of a souvenir mug commemorating a prize fight which took place in 1789, already fully described in *Cake & Cockhorse* Not only were we able to act promptly to bid for it at the Sotheby's auction but we also donated half its cost when it was acquired from us (as had been intended) by Banbury Museum, where it is now on display The opening of the Centre for Banburyshire Studies at Banbury Library is sure to stimulate local historical research Indirectly the Society was honoured in the award to Jeremy Gibson by the Institute of Heraldic and Genealogical Studies of its Julian Bickersteth Memorial Gold Medal

General administrative costs including meetings remain stable, and thanks to the Treasurer's efforts bank charges are satisfactorily down. A return to three issues (96 pages compared with 1993's 72, and an additional postal bill) has resulted in the considerably higher cost of *Cake & Cockhorse* Outlay (including postage) on the records volume (to cover two years) is reflected in the publications account and the forecast publishing programme will deplete funds Despite a slight drop in income which should be more than offset by the increased subscription rates, now in force, the Society's finances remain healthy

# Banbury Historical Society

## Revenue Account for the Year ended 31st December 1994

| | | 1994 | | 1993 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **INCOME** | | | | |
| Subscriptions | 1533 | | 1747 | |
| *Less (Transfer to Publications Account)* | (527) | 1006 | (565) | 1182 |
| Income Tax Refund on Covenants | | 75 | | 75 |
| Building Society/Bank Interest | | 606 | | 510 |
| OFHS Open Day | | 49 | | — |
| Donations re Postage | | 52 | | 92 |
| | | 1788 | | 1859 |
| **EXPENDITURE** | | | | |
| ***Cake & Cockhorse*:-** | | | | |
| Printing | 972 | | 584 | |
| Postage and envelopes | 265 | | 165 | |
| | 1237 | | 749 | |
| *Less (sales)* | (100) | | (100) | |
| | 1137 | | 649 | |
| Lecture, Meeting, Secretarial and Administrative Expenses | 34 | | 116 | |
| Hall Hire and Speakers' Expenses | 235 | | 155 | |
| *Less (Donations at Meetings)* | (20) | | (15) | |
| Part cost of ***Banbury Mug*** | 223 | | — | |
| Subscriptions to other Bodies | 7 | | 8 | |
| Bank Charges | 13 | | 68 | |
| Publicity | 53 | | 40 | |
| | | 1682 | | 1021 |
| **SURPLUS FOR THE YEAR** | | | | |
| Transferred to Accumulated Fund | | £ 106 | | £ 838 |

## Publications Account for the Year ended 31st December 1994

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **INCOME** | | | | |
| Proportion of Subscriptions | | 527 | | 565 |
| Sales of Publications | 637 | | 959 | |
| *Less (Share of **Cake & Cockhorse**)* | (100) | 537 | (100) | 859 |
| | | 1064 | | 1424 |
| **EXPENDITURE** | | | | |
| Records Volume 24 (***Protestation Returns***) | 2373 | | — | |
| *Less (Grant)* | (750) | | — | |
| | | 1623 | | — |
| ***(DEFICIT) / SURPLUS* FOR THE YEAR** | | | | |
| Transferred *(from)/to* Publications Reserve | | £ (559) | | £ 1424 |

## Brinkworth Fund Account for the Year ended 31st December 1994

| | 1994 | 1993 |
|---|---|---|
| **INCOME** | | |
| Interest received | 163 | 166 |
| **EXPENDITURE** | | |
| Prize/Grant | 100 | 500 |
| **SURPLUS *(DEFICIT)* FOR THE YEAR** | | |
| Transferred to/*(from)* Brinkworth Fund | £ 63 | £ (334) |

# Banbury Historical Society

## BALANCE SHEET as at 31st December 1994

| | | 1994 | | 1993 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| ACCUMULATED FUND | | | | |
| As at 1st January 1994 | 5193 | | 4355 | |
| *Add* Surplus for the Year | 106 | 5299 | 838 | 5193 |
| PUBLICATIONS RESERVE | | | | |
| As at 1st January 1994 | 4089 | | 2665 | |
| *Add* Surplus for the Year | — | | 1424 | |
| *Less (Deficit) for the Year* | (559) | 3530 | — | 4089 |
| BRINKWORTH FUND | | | | |
| As at 1st January 1994 | 2970 | | 3304 | |
| *Add* Surplus for the Year | 63 | | — | |
| *Less (Deficit) for the Year* | — | 3033 | (334) | 2970 |
| SUBSCRIPTIONS *received in advance* | | 145 | | 318 |
| GRANT *for future publication* | | — | | 750 |
| CREDITORS *for services and supplies* | | 2681 | | 140 |
| | | £ 14688 | | £ 13460 |
| REPRESENTED BY - | | | | |
| GENERAL FUNDS | | | | |
| NATWEST BANK - Banbury | | | | |
| Current Account | 200 | | 200 | |
| LEEDS & HOLBECK B/SCTY - Banbury | | | | |
| Chantes No 1 Account | 11330 | | 10176 | |
| PETTY CASH | 31 | 11561 | — | 10376 |
| DEBTORS | | 94 | | 148 |
| BRINKWORTH FUND INVESTMENT | | | | |
| LEEDS & HOLBECK B/SCTY - Banbury | | | | |
| Chantes No 2 Account | | 3033 | | 2936 |
| | | £ 14688 | | £ 13460 |

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

16th March 1995 — R J Mayne, FCA, FCMA

# 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 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).
*Oxfordshire and North Berkshire Protestation Returns and Tax Assessments 1641-1642* (vol. 24).

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

In preparation:

*A History of Adderbury*, by Nick Allen.
*Turnpike Roads to Banbury*, by Alan Rosevear.
*Act Book of the Peculiar Court of Banbury and Cropredy 1625-38*, ed. R.K. Gilkes.
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 is **£10.00** including any records volumes published, or **£7.50** if these are not required; overseas membership, **£12.00.**

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