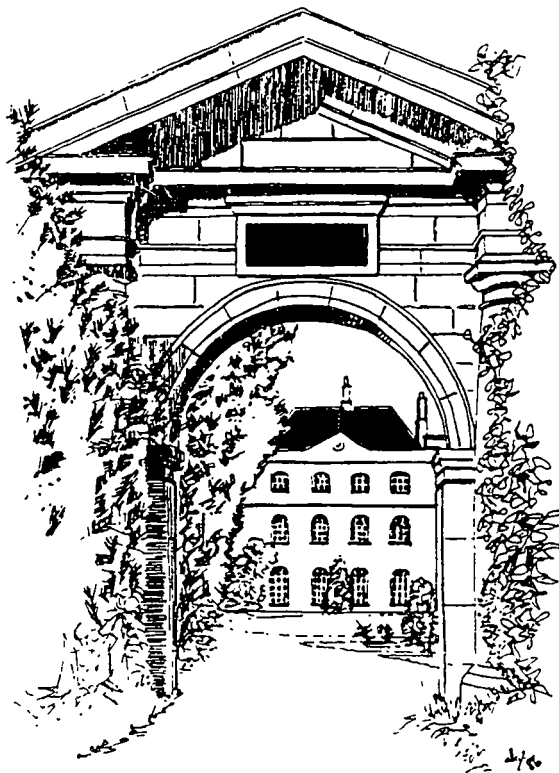


# CAKE AND COCKHORSE



## 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.

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None of our members by now can be unaware of the Oscar-winning film *Shakespeare in Love*. It drew me to the cinema for the first time for years. I enjoyed it so much that I went back the following day to see it again. I eagerly await the opportunity to get it on videotape.

However, an added interest for readers is that, once again, Broughton Castle is the star (forget Gwyneth Paltrow!). It is Paltrow aka Viola De Lesseps' home, just a boat-row up the Thames from the Globe theatre in Southwark (I loved the line 'Follow that boat!'). Visitors to the Castle may have missed the balcony that is so conveniently available for the Romeo/Juliet substitutes (how nearly we had *Romeo and Ethel*), though, given the success of the film, maybe planning authorities will insist on its retention.

The exterior of the Castle is familiar to us all, but it is fun to recognise the interior scenes as well, again with some unexpected additions.

But what makes the setting even more appropriate is that the male lead, Joseph Fiennes, is our President's third cousin, and he was able to stay there whilst filming.

Lady Saye and Sele's article ('Filming at Broughton Castle', *C&CH* 13.9, Summer 1997), reminded us of the Castle's contribution towards filmed entertainment. It is splendid that it has now, effectively, won its own Oscar.

*Cover*: Roger Morris' Tuscan archway, the entrance to Adderbury House, familiar to all who pass through the village (reproduced by kind permission of Nicholas Allen from *Adderbury: A Thousand Years of History*, B.H.S. vol. 25 and Phillimore – now reprinted and again available). Steven Weaver reports on archaeological excavation in the grounds of Adderbury House

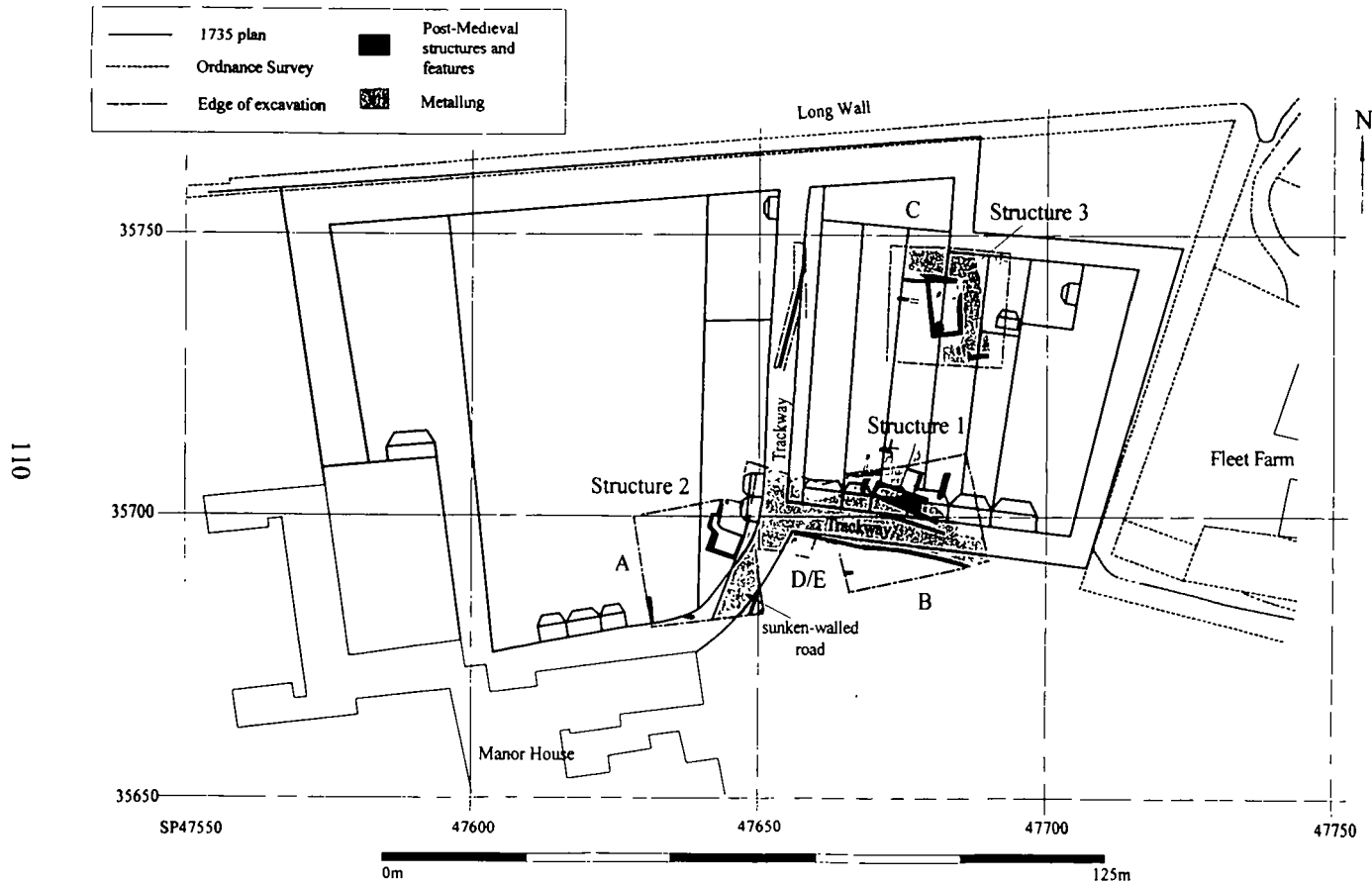


Figure 1. Comparison of post-Medieval features with the Manorial plan of 1735.

# EXCAVATIONS AT ADDERBURY HOUSE

A short description of the excavation of post-Medieval buildings and Medieval features at Adderbury House, Adderbury, Oxfordshire. 1996

*Steven D.G. Weaver*

## **Summary**

*A field evaluation carried out at Adderbury House, Adderbury, Oxfordshire, led to the discovery of post-Medieval stone walls and garden features and a number of Medieval ditches and pits. Four areas were subsequently excavated, which led to the discovery of a post-Medieval settlement represented by a series of structures, path/trackways, a boundary wall, and pits. The Medieval period was represented by a series of north-south and east-west aligned ditches in three of the four excavated areas.*

## **Introduction**

The site lies close to the historic core of Adderbury village to the north of Adderbury House, on uneven ground previously used as allotments. As the site is situated close to the core of the village, it was thought that the evaluation and subsequently the excavation may reveal deposits of late Saxon and Medieval date, representing the early development of the village settlement.

In May 1996 a field evaluation carried out by Thames Valley Archaeological Services (Weaver 1996) revealed three areas of potential which were subsequently targeted by the excavation (Fig. 1). A 25 m x 20 m area (B) was excavated around Trench 8, and two areas measuring 20 m x 20 m (A and C) were excavated around Trenches 1 and 6. A small slit trench (Area D) was excavated to ascertain whether a boundary wall located in evaluation Trench 5 (F2) continued further south. The extensive nature of the deposits located in Areas A, B and D led to the stripping of a further 10 m x 14 m area (E).

The fieldwork was carried out to a project specification approved by Mr Paul Smith, County Archaeological Officer for Oxfordshire, in accordance with the Department of the Environment's Planning and Policy Guidance Note *Archaeology and Planning* (PPG16 1990). The site lies at a height of 102.72 m above Ordnance Datum and, according to the British Geological Survey, lies on Marlstone Rock Bed (BGS

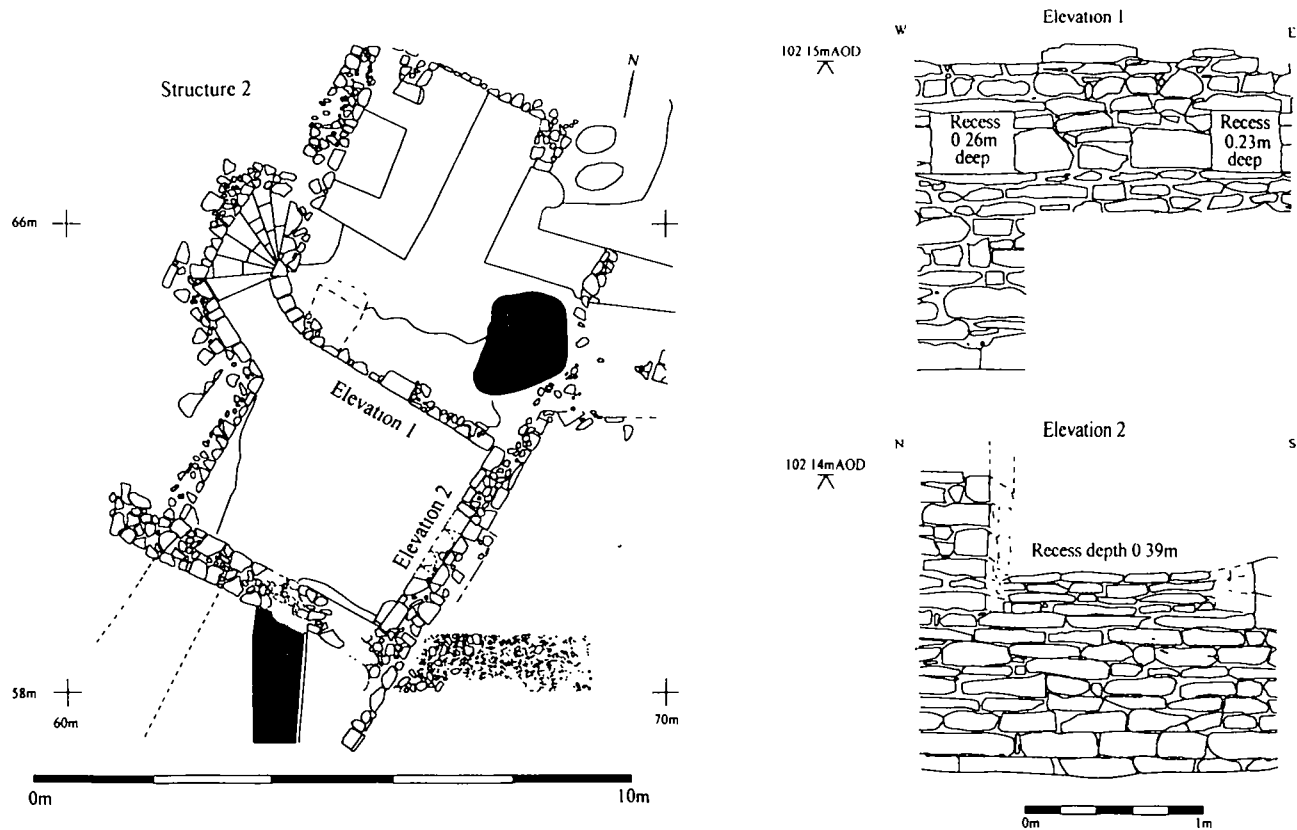


Figure 2 Plan and sections of Structure 2.

1968). The stripping of topsoil and subsoil layers revealed a Marlstone and orange/yellow clayey silt natural.

### **Evaluation**

The evaluation consisted of nine machine-excavated trenches c 15 m long (Weaver 1996). The trenches revealed that the site had been subject to modern disturbance from allotment activity, services, engineer's test-pits, and what appeared to be quarrying in the north-west corner of the site (Trench 3).

No archaeological features were recorded in Trenches 2, 3 and 9. However, 25 features were recorded in the remaining trenches: Trench 1 contained two Medieval ditches and a dark spread; Trench 4 had a modern pit and a possible post-Medieval pit; Trench 5/5A, contained a boundary wall; Trench 6/6A contained two possible pits, a series of walls, two possible postholes, a structural feature, a metallised surface, and a linear feature; Trench 7 had a post-Medieval ?ornamental flowerbed, a late Medieval/post-Medieval pit and a series of undated linear features; Trench 8 contained a post-Medieval boundary wall and foundation trench, and two possible Medieval pits, which later proved to be ditches.

### **Excavation**

The excavation consisted of an archaeologically supervised topsoil strip of five areas (A–E), comprising approximately 1420 sq m (Fig. 1). The site had been subject to a moderate degree of ground disturbance including modern services crossing the site from east to west and north to south, together with allotment disturbance and several engineer's test-pits.

The 284 archaeological features and deposits revealed were generally well-preserved. They consisted of a series of stone-walled structures with associated floors and hearths, a sunken-walled trackway, a series of metallised surfaces, a stone boundary wall, a well, pits, postholes, hearths, stone drains, and ditches. The foundations were of varying depths and walls survived from one or two courses up to 0.60 m. high. The well-preserved remains of a 1.83 m deep cellar were discovered in Area A (Fig. 2).

The material remains from the archaeological features and deposits include pottery, animal bone, glass, clay pipe, shell, coins and metalwork. These ranged in date from the Medieval, late Medieval and post-Medieval periods.

## **Discussion**

The village of Adderbury has a rich history, with first reference to the settlement being made in an Anglo-Saxon charter or will around AD 990. It is further listed as Edburberie in the Domesday survey of AD 1086 (Allen 1995, 2). Pre-Medieval settlement evidence as yet has not been revealed, although two unexcavated Roman sites are known within the parish and a number of Prehistoric flints have been recovered and noted in the Oxfordshire Sites and Monuments Record.

Adderbury House, as it stands today, is the result of three and a half centuries of alterations by various occupants. During the Civil War the house stationed Prince Rupert, the Commander of King Charles' cavalry. The house was under the lease of Charles Wilmot (1612) and later his son Henry Wilmot (1645) (Allen 1995, 95). It was garrisoned by both Royalist and later Parliamentary troops who confiscated the house after the civil war, due to Henry Wilmot's royalist sympathies.

In 1697 John Campbell, 2nd Duke of Argyll let the house, and later, in 1717, took over the lease and undertook an extensive rebuilding programme (Allen 1995, 95). The Duke of Argyll died in 1743 and the house passed down to his wife and then his daughter. The house then passed to Henry Scott, 3rd Duke of Buccleuch, in 1767 who created the parkland that surrounds the present day house (Allen 1995, 99).

### ***Evidence from the excavation***

#### ***Prehistoric***

The Prehistoric period was represented by a small number of residual struck flint flakes, recovered both from the excavation and evaluation, which range in date from the Mesolithic to the Bronze Age period. Previous evidence of Prehistoric activity in the parish has been indicated by a number of worked flints documented in the Sites and Monuments Record. The finds from this excavation support previous evidence of Prehistoric activity within the general locale. However, the nature of this activity is unknown due to the residual nature of the finds.

#### ***Medieval***

Medieval activity at this site was characterised by a series of ditches, pits and postholes. Pottery recovered from a number of these features would appear to suggest that this activity occurred sometime within the late 13th and 14th centuries.



The low yield of finds from the features, with the exception of ditch 245 (in the south-east corner of Area B), suggests that they do not relate directly to an area of occupation. The higher quantity of Medieval pottery recovered from ditch 245 may indicate that it was closer to an area of settlement, possibly located to the south-east of the site.

Environmental data recovered from eight ditches produced evidence of cereal cultivation including wheat, barley and oats. It is most likely that the features of this phase relate to agricultural activity. Medieval field systems, indicated by ridge and furrow, lie directly north of the site, and it is possible that the features recorded during the excavation were part of this system.

The alignment of the ditches east-west and roughly north-south corresponds with established trackways to the north and east of the site. The intercutting nature of the features suggests that the site was subject to more than one phase of activity.

It is interesting to note that the orientation of a number of the earlier Medieval ditches are closely adhered to within the later post-Medieval settlement pattern observed over the site.

#### *Post-Medieval*

The post-Medieval phase is represented by extensive deposits representing a settlement certainly in use during the 18th and 19th centuries, but which most probably had 17th century origins. A number of cartographic sources were consulted to throw further light on the nature of the archaeological features and deposits recorded.

A schematic plan attached to the Manorial record of Adderbury House documented in 1735 clearly indicates the presence of structures and trackways that correlate reasonably well to Structures 1 and 2 (Areas A and B), as well as trackways and boundaries recorded in these areas during the excavation (Fig. 1). The Manorial plan correlates less well with the structures revealed in the north-eastern part of the site. However, as the plan is schematic the more westerly of the two buildings may relate to Structure 3.

The Manorial plan also shows a row of east-west aligned houses towards the south of the site which appear to be represented by the remains of the walls, floors, and drains of Structure 1. Unfortunately, due to the heavy truncation and extensive reuse of the site it was not possible to define any single dwelling amongst the 'Structure 1' deposits.

The row of cottages were aligned along an east-west trackway which is most likely represented by the metalling and boundary wall found to the south of Structure 1 (Fig. 1). A north-south trackway with two structures against its western edge also recorded on the Manorial plan appear to relate to the excavated sunken-walled road and Structure 2 (Fig. 1).

The close correlation between the 1735 plan and post-Medieval deposits suggests that the site was occupied by several structures linked by a series of walled trackways within the grounds of Adderbury House. The cottages were most likely inhabited by a number of tenants, who may have served as labourers or servants in the employ of the owner.

At a later period it would appear that the north-south trackway, and probably also the east-west trackway, fell out of use when the original boundary wall was extended westward over the roadway and then turned north (not shown on plans).

Pottery evidence recovered from a number of features and deposits indicates that the settlement was still in use between the 18th and 19th centuries. Davis' map of 1790 (Fig. 3) shows buildings to the east of the excavated areas along the lane between the site and Fleet Farm. It also shows a north-south boundary along the same alignment as the earlier trackway. Inaccuracies within the cartographic evidence must be taken into account, as Davis appears to indicate that Adderbury House was situated to the west of the excavated area, rather than to the south. It is possible, therefore, that structures found during the excavation represent those on Davis' map.

Later cartographic sources such as the First Edition Ordnance Survey map of 1881 and the Second Edition Ordnance Survey map of 1900 (not illustrated) indicate that no structures were present within the excavated area. When the house passed to Henry Scott, 3rd Duke of Buccleuch, in 1767, he commissioned Capability Brown to landscape the parkland. One possible explanation for the lack of buildings on later maps is that they were demolished as part of this emparkment in 1767/8. Another gentleman, Sir William Chambers, was commissioned to undertake further building programmes at this time (Allen 1995, 99). The introduction of Enclosure by Act of Parliament had a far reaching effect on the rural landscape in the 18th and 19th centuries. Around the 18th century it became the fashion to create large country estates with portrait-style landscaped parks (Batey 1968, 108). Emparkment often

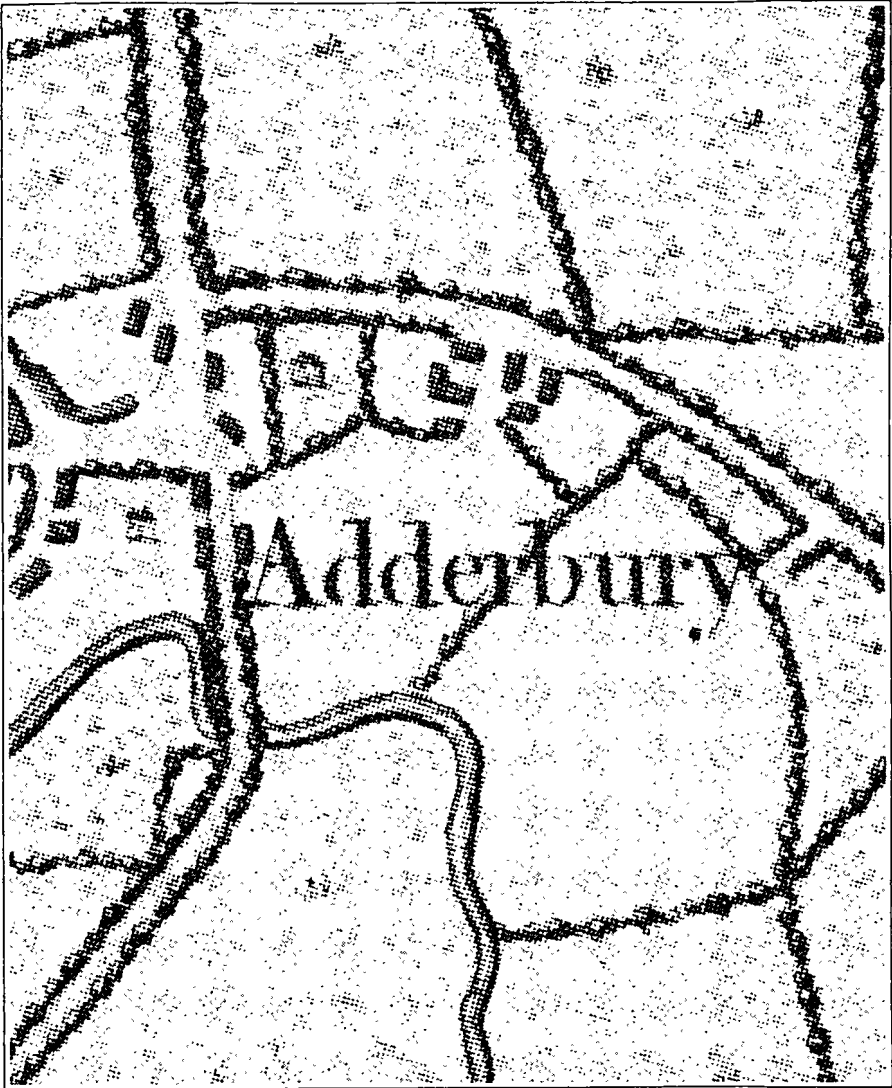


Figure 3. Detail of East Adderbury from Richard Davis' 1790 map of Oxfordshire, at two inches to the mile, but here enlarged.

meant the removal of whole villages, for example at Nuneham Courtney, Oxfordshire in 1761, Moor Crichele, Dorset in 1765. Shugborough, Staffordshire, between 1723 and 1773, and at Milton Abbas where the village was demolished between 1771 and 1790 as part of a landscaping scheme by Capability Brown (Crossley 1990, 72). It was not always necessary to relocate whole villages, but only demolish those dwellings that would spoil the vista of the landlord. As part of Capability Brown's landscaping scheme the Duke of Buccleuch demolished 90 cottages in the area of the 'Red Lion Inn', which lies c 250 m to the west of the development site (Allen 1995, 92). It would seem likely, therefore, that the structures recorded during the excavation may have been among them. The construction of the later boundary wall most likely incorporated stone robbed from the demolished buildings. In support of this, Allen has noted that stones used in the park wall, eg Long Wall, part of which lies directly to the north of the site, were dressed in a manner superior to the usual level of work for a wall.

The Phase 3 north-south boundary wall may be represented by the north-south boundary that lies between Davis' proposed location of Adderbury House and a group of buildings to the east. Later post-Medieval activity on the site was represented by a series of rubbish pits aligned along and to the north and east of the boundary wall, and the incorporation of a hearth (124/5) within the wall. The pits contained large quantities of mostly 18th to 19th century pottery. As mentioned above, Davis' map shows structures present on the eastern edge of the development, where there was evidence of disturbance of the archaeological deposits. It may be that the pits and hearth relate to activity at the ends of land plots which formed the back gardens/yards of buildings aligned along the southern edge of the site. However, inaccuracies in Davis' map must be taken into account.

The rubbish pits fell out of use when the later boundary wall was demolished. The exact date of this demolition could not be ascertained during the excavation, although it must have occurred before 1881 as no boundary wall is indicated on the First Edition or Second Edition Ordnance Survey maps. If further buildings were also present along the eastern boundary of the site, these too had gone by 1881.

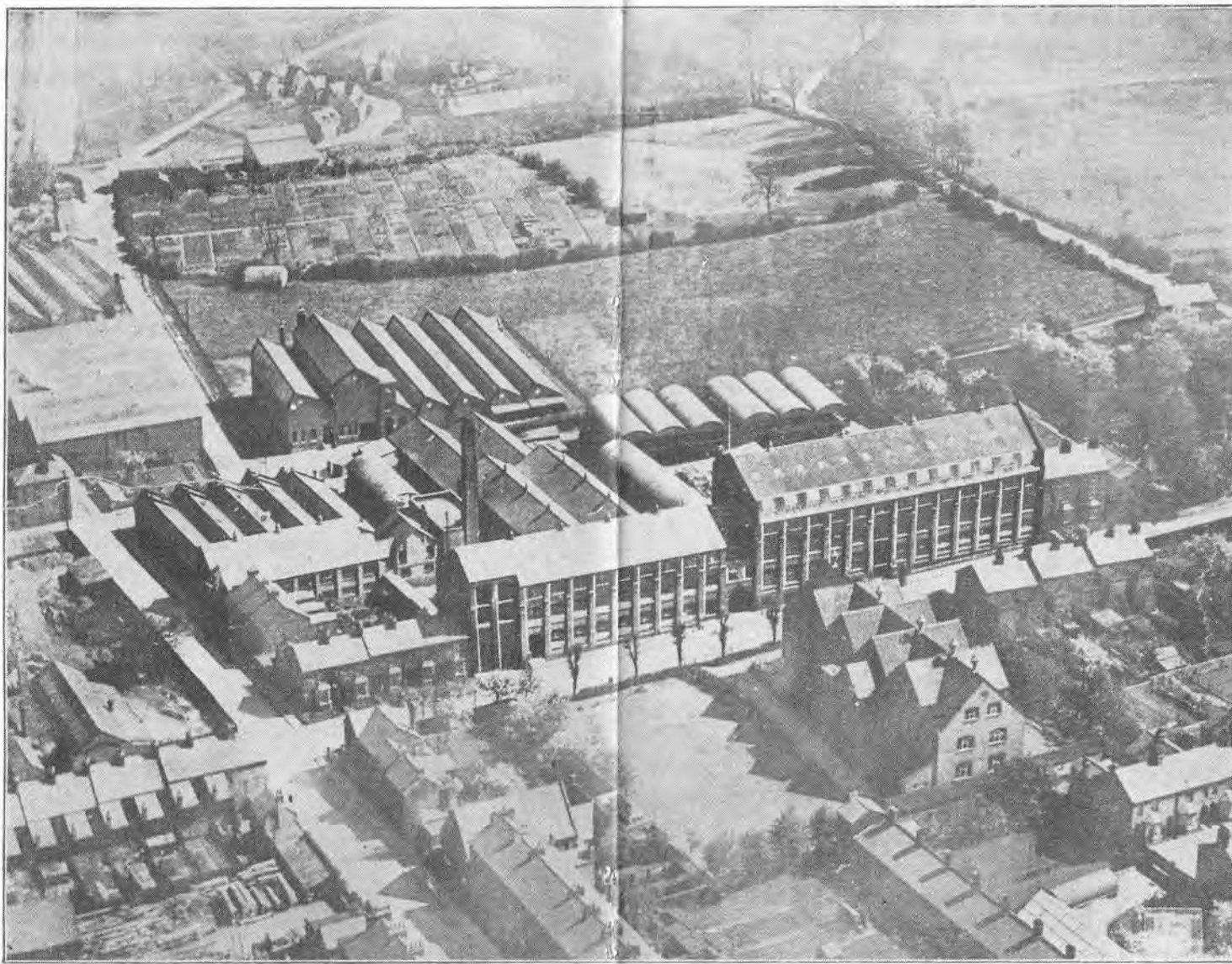
The house and surrounding estate subsequently became occupied by the War Office in the 1940s, who erected temporary huts within the

grounds and billeted a number of British and American regiments. Testament to the site's occupation by military forces was the recovery of a live mortar shell during construction work on the site. Most recently the site was used as an allotment. Although this caused some damage to subsoil features, especially to the eastern half of Area B and the western half of Area A, preservation of the archaeological deposits was generally good.

It is anticipated that a more complete article describing this excavation will be published in *Oxoniensia* in the near future.

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**Aerial View of the Works of Henry Stone and Son Ltd., Banbury.**

This photograph was first published in *The British Industries Review*, and is reprinted here to illustrate Walter McCanna's article.

It accompanied an article 'Mass Production on The English System', itself of considerable interest for future publication. At present the date is uncertain, but it is certainly pre-1925, as Lewis W. Stone, mentioned as Chairman, died in that year.

# The WAR EFFORT at HENRY STONE & SON Ltd., BANBURY, 1939-1945

*Walter C. McCanna*

*One time Foreman of Cabinet-makers at Henry Stone & Son Ltd.*

I was resident in Banbury from August 1937 until June 1949 and remember very well the impact of the 1939-45 War upon Banbury: the 'blackout'. arrival of the evacuees, rationing, shortages of food and fuel etc., rigid curtailment of the use of private cars, very long hours of work, the presence of the three overs, *i.e.* the Americans [over-paid, over-sexed and over here].

Apart from a six-month period 1940-41, my employment was at Henry Stone & Son Ltd, who were held in high esteem in the world of furniture. The firm's change from furniture to aircraft production was, of necessity, gradual, but by the end of 1940 the 'furniture side' was engaged 100% on aircraft. The Boxmaking Department, which had occupied the smaller of the multi-storey buildings in Britannia Road, was closed down (it was never re-instated) and that building was leased to the Ministry of Food, who filled it with, I think, cattlefood.

Early in 1941 I was given the then empty cabinet-making shop, a large bundle of blueprints, a list of jigs and aids necessary to ensure production of 'x' sets per week (regretfully I cannot recall the amount), the whole thing so '*secret*' that I could not be informed as to what we were going to build. How stupid! As soon as I had sorted the blueprints I knew exactly what was afoot; but stupid? The future success of the great invasion and subsequent freeing of Europe depended very much on not letting accurate information reaching the enemy. The drawings were of a medium-sized glider, built from wood, mainly spruce and birch plywood, designed to carry about thirty airborne troops; and we were to make the tail-end: *i.e.* tailplane, elevator with trimmers, and rudder. The machine was designed by Miles General Aircraft Company and its production was spread all over the country; a firm in Nottingham of similar status to Stone's had an identical contract; Mullinger's of Birmingham, the famous coachbuilders, made fuselages.

After many months of tedious exacting work in which I was assisted by Mr Arthur Pitcher, one of a local family long associated with Henry Stone's, and fact-finding visits to the main contractor at Tottenham, north London, we were ready to start producing with labour and equipment all ready. Unfortunately we were only able to proceed with the early stages of production, as essential metal parts were not available. This was due to the enemy's severe bombing of Coventry, Birmingham and other Midland industrial cities. Much resentment was aroused by these raids on our cities and towns, but in fact a lot of British war effort was disrupted as a result of them. Although we tend to think that Coventry and Birmingham are centres of large engineering firms like the car industry, they were also the homes of hundreds of small enterprises producing a myriad of metal fittings and artefacts, many to the high degree of accuracy demanded by the A.I.D. (Aeronautical Inspection Directorate, the government body responsible for quality and safety in aircraft).

So these air-raids not only killed many people and destroyed buildings but they effectively put the brakes on much of our industry, for nearly all the small outfits were wiped out, not only their buildings (some were housed in most unlikely places) but the specialist machinery and tooling they used. The manufacture of all sorts of metal items ceased immediately leaving many firms, including Stone's, stranded and unable to meet production schedules. My own Hotspur contract was delayed for nearly a year while we searched high and low for possible sources of supply to the required standard. We found a small outfit housed in a couple of cottages in Warwick Road, Banbury, making milkbottle seals, who were A.I.D. approved; they did some work for us. Eventually all was sorted out and production began in earnest and the contract was completed. We had about 24 men and 30 women engaged on this job. All the men were Stone's furniture people but the ladies were a mixed lot, some were Stone's girls from furniture or boxmaking or printing, some were local girls directed from other occupations and some were evacuees from London, a few being East-enders!

With the completion of the Hotspur contract nearly all the labour was dispersed to other departments of Stone's. I managed to retain for the remainder of the war a small squad of two men, later three, and two apprentices. The two men as well as being very fine craftsmen were also



a couple of characters. Both had worked all their lives at Stone's, apart from service in the army during the 1914-18 War where both received terrible wounds. They were Fred Watts and Bill Green. Fred lived at the beginning of Springfield Avenue and Bill at the far end. It was my privilege to maintain friendship with them for years after I left Banbury until they both died. The third man was Bert Jarvis, who had left Stone's many years before and who had been directed back by the Ministry of Labour, who kept a very tight control of labour throughout the war. The two apprentices were 'Chick' Webb and Peter Waters.

The most important contract that Stone's had was from Vickers Armstrong for parts for the Wellington Bomber, known throughout the R.A.F. as the 'Wimpy'. Vickers' main factory for the Wimpy was at Weybridge near the old Brooklands Motor Racing Track, but a 'shadow' factory had been established at Squires Gate Airport near Blackpool and it was this factory that Stone's supplied during the early years of the war. Later on, about 1943, my department switched to Wellington production for the Weybridge works and we did some stuff for Blackpool. We progressively took on many more types of components, increasing the labour force as required until I had a very big department indeed by the end of the war.

The Wellington aircraft was designed by Barnes Wallis on what he called the 'Geodetic' principle, which meant that the fuselage was basically an enormous cage built of aluminium tubing formed in a sort of spiralling trellis pattern. This provided a very strong foundation to which longitudinal wooden stringers were fastened. These stringers were moulded with a shallow flat-bottomed groove; the fabric cladding (a heavy linen cloth) was held to these stringers by a matching hardwood moulding that was screwed through the fabric and into the stringers. At the end of the war it was calculated that Stone's had produced sufficient mileage of those stringers to reach to the Moon and back, and, remarkably, the matching hardboard bead was sent out with  $\frac{3}{32}$ " holes drilled at 2" pitch (2" apart), and *all these holes were drilled on a single head machine by one person*, a local girl who suffered personal tragedy when her army husband was killed in the D-Day landings.

There were several openings in this fuselage for things like bomb-doors, camera-doors, flare-hatches, emergency doors etc. and due to the unusual design of the latticework these openings were of weird shapes

requiring unusual methods of production. The fuselage interior was fitted with the pilots' floor, a catwalk to the rear, bulkheads, navigator's table, racks to house the radio gear, racks to hold flares, and so on.

Nearly all of these components were manufactured in the oldest part of Stone's, the single storey building, now (1989) demolished, that faced Gatteridge Street and Windsor Street/Swan Close, and the work went on until the end of the war. My department was the peacetime cabinetmaking shop, the first full-length floor of the larger building in Britannia Road; underneath is the basement/packing which can only be half the length of the building due to the contour of the ground. In my department we did the Hotspur contract, then my gang of six made some large cases, probably fifty in number, which we understood were to be used for transporting hefty outboard motors for landing craft to the Far East to be used in the war against the Japanese; I believe the motors were built in Banbury. We were then asked to look at the emergency door of the Wellington as, so far, Stone's had not managed to make them to the required standard, though it must be said that samples borrowed from Vickers were very poor. After a few days of experiments and discussion the combined brain-power and experience of Messrs. Watts, Green and McCanna brought forth a very satisfactory method of procedure. We jiggged up, offered samples to Vickers which were accepted by their Inspectorate, and within a week or so were in production at the rate of fifty complete sets of door and frame per week. I say fifty but memory is not very sure; I can only work out the capacity of the jigs and presses we used to do the job. I have no idea of how many 'Wimpys' were built, but we made so many emergency doors it seems impossible that there could have been that number of craft about to fit them into. We often used to speculate as to what the R.A.F. did with them. Each door contained one gross of 3/8" x 4" countersunk rustproved woodscrews; these were inserted by the two apprentices, Chick and Peter.

After a while Bert Jarvis joined the squad and we began to make other items for the Wellingtons, mostly those being built at Weybridge, and so the department was enlarged as more pieces were added to the repertoire. We recruited two teams of local housewives, one group who could manage to work mornings, the other to work afternoons; very helpful the ladies were too.

A contract to produce rudders for the Mosquito aircraft was carried out in one corner of my department by a handful of people. Being part of the airframe of what was the fastest plane about at that time required work of the highest standards. In the opinion of many, the Mosquito ranks as one of the most successful aircraft of all time. Leading edges for the Mosquito mainplanes were made in some quantity in the department two floors above, and the floor immediately above saw the production of components for the Airspeed 'Horsa' gliders which were to be used in great numbers during the D-Day landings in Normandy.

Extremely long hours were worked: for a long period we worked from 7.00 a.m. to 8.00 p.m. with 1½ hours unpaid meal breaks Mondays to Fridays, 7.00 a.m. to 4.30 p.m. on Saturdays and 7.00 a.m. to 1.00 p.m. on Sundays. The ladies finished at 7.30 p.m. Mondays to Fridays. This made a week of 80½ hours including 9½ hours unpaid meal breaks, often made more tedious by 'firewatching' duties which varied from one night in seven to one in five, depending on whether or not there was a night shift working in the Mill (machine shop). Firewatching duty, for which we received a subsistence of about 2s.6d. [12½p], took place during the hours of darkness outside of working hours; in practice it meant that one stayed on the firm all night, though for those who lived near enough, the rules were slightly bent to allow them to go home and have a meal and get cleaned up, for facilities for this were non-existent at Stone's. The general idea was to try to prevent serious fire gaining hold on buildings should the Germans decide to blitz Banbury. If no alert had been sounded we tried to get some sleep on unpadded wooden bunks with two filthy blankets for company.

One affliction suffered by all those engaged in the assembly of components was the effect on the hands of the adhesive used which was a 'caseine' type. This attacked the slightest scratch and crept underneath fingernails. Use of gloves was impossible and barrier creams ineffective, so we all suffered with upturned fingernails and niggling sores that took weeks to heal.

In Banbury in general there was a great shortage of many things including food. Although food was rationed, the possession of a ration book did not necessarily mean that one got one's ration. This came about because the powers that be had not taken fully into account the huge increase in the population of Banbury, which I was told had doubled due

to the large number of evacuees that had come into the area. We arranged with relations living on the South Coast, where the reverse situation applied, to send us stuff in short supply in Banbury in exchange for the necessary points, coupons and cash.

The overall memories are of a great comradeship existing among us all, the sheer utter weariness and fatigue of the long hours of work, the monotonous inadequate diet, shaving with worn-out blades and no proper shaving soap, being cold during the winter months, often no beer, the black-out, the presence of the American Army who acted as if they were an occupying force; perhaps they were!

But suddenly the Yanks and their monstrous vehicles disappeared, the night was full of the sound of thousands of aircraft and the morning radio news told us the Invasion was on! Dear God, it was the beginning of the end.

One small cautionary tale comes to mind, perfectly true for I was there:-

British Intelligence became aware that the Germans had something to make the aerial bombing of Britain even more terrible, but apparently it was not known as to the form it would take.

The responsible Government Department, in their wisdom, sent out people to check up and strengthen Air Raid Precautions. A cluster of officials descended on Banbury and one representative visited Stone's where he addressed a group of firewatchers, one of whom was Ernie Jelfs, a woodworking machinist who had stayed at work past retiring age 'until us beat that there 'itler' as he put it.

Now the gentleman from the Government obviously had not been very well briefed and floundered along trying to sound intelligent, when his eyes alighted upon the fire-hydrant and fire-hose that were a permanent installation in the yard. There was an iron fire-escape running from ground to top-floor on the back on the main building in Britannia Road.

Quoth the man, 'You know, if incendiary bombs lodge on the roof, the easiest way to deal with them would be to run up that fire-escape with this fire-hose and deal with them like that.'

We stood silent digesting this statement when up piped Earnie: 'Look you 'ere, Mister, if they Jerries start chucking fire-bombs on us I ain't running up no stairs with a water-pipe, no, you won't see my arse for dust as I be running for the gate'. This pronouncement effectively closed the meeting.

The new form of bombing proved to be the V1 and V2 missiles.

## Lecture Reports

*Brian Little*

**Thursday 14th January 1999.**

**'The Mary Rose' – Bob Foster.**

This was a lively talk by a real enthusiast for his subject. Set against a backdrop of Anglo-French discords, the story quickly moved towards discovery of why the vessel was in the opinion of Henry VIII the 'Finest Flower of all my trove'. Sea trials in the Channel revealed that she was significantly different from earlier designs – no castle structure, guns lower in the ship and netting to discourage boarders.

Despite these design changes and Henry's confidence in dining on *Great Harry*, the French invasion of 1545 ended in disaster. As *Mary Rose* was manoeuvring she heeled over as she turned into the wind.

Was she overloaded? Certainly Bob saw close comparisons with the much more recent *Herald of Free Enterprise* incident. Thirty men were saved but six hundred perished. This then became the prelude to rape and pillage by the French. The Isle of Wight took the brunt before enemy forces departed for home.

The *Mary Rose* remained well preserved in soft sand until 1982 when a heavy lifting crane brought her to the surface. Before that a wide variety of artefacts were recovered.

The irony is that to all intents and purposes the *Mary Rose* was a well equipped ship. We can now enjoy her in the protected environment at Portsmouth – nearly five hundred years on from when a ship's bell emerged from a foundry bearing the fine inscription '*Mary Rose 1510*'.

**Thursday 11th February 1999.**

***Writing the History of Oxfordshire Places* – Chris Day.**

Mention the magic words *Victoria County History* and for most local historians this spells accuracy, thoroughness and reliability. An evening with Chris Day convinced members of his audience that nothing had changed.

Through the medium of well chosen examples, especially Combe, the Bartons and North Leigh, our speaker demonstrated that there really is no substitute for turning over every conceivable historic stone. Failure to do this means running the risk that everything gets blamed on the Black Death!

Early research for the *V.C.H.* was much more limited subject-wise than today's investigation. In the past it was a case of 'architecture rules O.K.' A bicycle got you round the buildings where the only real obstacle might be someone like a past Chief Constable of North Yorkshire who was against the measurement of buildings.

From the 1920's antiquarian outlook, the *V.C.H.* has got into the more diverse fields of economic history, landscape patterns and archaeology.

Another striking change is the response to requests to give talks to groups such as the one we all enjoyed so much. Chris Day's rapport was in marked contrast to Ralph Pugh's vision of the meeting with interested bodies as 'idle tittle tattle and indifferent sherry'.

No gem from Jerez for Chris but from him a magnum of champagne in terms of insight into human influences and decision making and landscape interpretation. His analysis of England near North Leigh was one of the best demonstrations of how no fieldwork is good field work until you have got clay on your boots!

In the end there is no shame attached to admitting defeat in research. At North Aston either of two buildings could have been the manor. I suspect that over the twenty years of his work for the *V.C.H.* defeat was not in capital letters on the Chris Day agenda.

#### **Thursday 11th March 1999.**

##### ***Images of Women in Power – Dr Rowena Archer***

This was an evening with a strong medieval focus and an even stronger emphasis on the pursuit of female strivings in Chaucer's England.

Dr Archer's starting point was the Wife of Bath, a character in a tale with a fervant desire for sovereignty. At once this portrayal of her raises the question of what is and is not realistic. Right away the historian is confronted by the absence of a medieval sisterhood and the existence of a chasm between aristocrats and peasants.

Many of the former were aspirants hoping to succeed to lands owned by their husbands. By being in a status position known as a jointee, there was more than a hope of tax evasion.

A different image of women stems from the Church, which proclaimed chastity and obedience – pious hopes maybe if you read the rare surviving letters (Paston *etc.*) to secret suitors.

In London the business woman was literate to a degree. This set the lie to the quoted belief that the 'only skill of women was to raise chickens'! Dr Archer's slides reinforced the declared talent of Chaucer's ladies which could culminate in the status of authority and so ensure that if men were away at the wars, their women had the capability for activity at home. This included having several husbands (in succession) – some, like Catherine, Duchess of Norfolk, from the early age of twelve.

Alice Chaucer married three times. She may have been a commoner, but she ended as Countess of Suffolk, with large landholdings in East Anglia and elsewhere, including north Oxfordshire. She eventually settled at Ewelme in the south of the county, where she is commemorated by a splendid tomb.

## Book Review

**The World of Flora Thompson**, by Christine Bloxham. Robert Dugdale (26 Norham Road, Oxford OX2 6SF), 1998. 240 pp., A5, 56 pp., £9.95.

The author of *Lark Rise to Candleford* is deservedly revered as an outstanding social historian, and she has made famous the tiny Oxfordshire hamlet of Juniper Hill, just south of Brackley. Although she disguised the names of people and most places, many of the latter are easily identified (and Banbury itself is actually named).

In this biography Christine has researched deeply into both places and people, and her discoveries will greatly enhance the reading of Flora Thompson's own books. Lavishly illustrated with photographs and drawings, this book is a 'must' for all who love *Lark Rise*.

J.G.

## BANBURY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

### ANNUAL REPORT, 1998

Your Committee have pleasure in submitting the 41st Annual Report and Statement of Accounts, for the year 1998.

The Officers and Committee were again re-elected at the A.G.M. without change.

Membership of the Society has slightly fallen but remains well over two hundred and fifty, most as records members. Attendance at meetings and new membership continue to benefit from the publicity efforts of Joan Bowes, who has distributed posters (fresh for each meeting) for display at an ever-increasing number of key places.

The year's meetings, again arranged by Nick Allen, maintained their accustomed entertaining variety. Reports on most, prepared by Brian Little, have appeared in *Cake & Cockhorse*.

In the summer we visited the Oxfordshire Museum Store at Standlake, where Simon Townsend revealed to us the fascinating wealth of material not at present on open display; and Wellesbourne Watermill, with a guided tour of the mill, a video viewing and home ground flour for sale. Once again we are grateful to Fiona Thompson for her initiative and efficient arrangements.

For the A.G.M., we were privileged to visit Compton Verney, a house of mystery for so long, now at last in process of restoration. After a day of threatening weather, the clouds cleared and the sun shone for the pleasant walk through the park from cars to house and, after the meeting, a tour of its art galleries. We are most grateful to the Compton Verney House Trust for their welcome and hospitality.

In the autumn we returned to our earlier practice of holding a start-of-season reception at Banbury Museum. On this occasion it was mainly restricted to members, giving more room for circulation. It was much enjoyed and we are most grateful to Simon and his staff for their willingness to receive us.

The normal three issues of *Cake & Cockhorse* appeared, with contributions from Derek Barrett, Jack Howard-Drake and Steve Litherland as well as from regulars Nicholas Allen, Hugh Compton, Jeremy Gibson, Brian Little, and Martin Sirot-Smith.

Ross Gilkes' *The 'Bawdy Court' of Banbury, 1625-1638*, which appeared early in 1998, has been very well received both by subscribers and reviewers, with sales reflecting this interest. Alan Rosevear's *Turnpike Roads to Banbury* is now close to production.

The continuing fall in membership is reflected in the reduced income from subscriptions, but our financial position remains strong because, for a variety of reasons, expenses were lower than last year. The generous grant from the Greening Lamborn Trust towards the *Bawdy Court* records volume has meant that we have sufficient funds in hand to meet the cost of the next volume. The Publications Account also benefitted from the many copies of *Bawdy Court* sold to non-members. The Brinkworth Fund had a quiet year; we still have difficulty finding suitable projects of a broadly educational nature that might benefit from the admittedly modest grants in aid on offer. If members are aware of any suitable projects, which should have some connection with the Banbury area, please let the Committee know.



### Banbury Historical Society

#### Revenue Account for the Year ended 31 December 1998

	1998	1997
<b>INCOME</b>		
Subscriptions	2195	2554
Less transfer to Publications Account	<u>(480)</u>	<u>576</u>
	1715	1978
Income tax refund on covenants	142	154
Building society interest	647	526
Sundries	<u>35</u>	<u>34</u>
	<u>2539</u>	<u>2692</u>
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>		
Cake & Cockhorse – Costs less sales	1423	1644
Secretarial and administration	66	227
Meetings	232	241
Reception and AGM	135	193
Publicity	55	51
Sundries	<u>64</u>	<u>24</u>
	1975	2380
<b>SURPLUS for the year</b>		
transferred to Accumulated Fund	£ 564	£ 312

#### Publications Account for the Year ended 31 December 1998

<b>INCOME</b>		
Proportion of Subscriptions	480	576
Grant from Greening Lamborn Trust	2000	-
Sale of publications	473	190
	<u>2953</u>	<u>766</u>
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>		
Records volume	3303	479
	--	--
<b>DEFICIT (SURPLUS) for the year</b>		
transferred to Publications Reserve	£ (350)	287

#### Brinkworth Fund Account for the Year ended 31 December 1998

<b>INCOME</b>		
Building Society Interest	159	134
Other	<u>46</u>	<u>-</u>
	205	134
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>		
Grant to student	20	-
(Grant to Banbury Museum)	<u>-</u>	<u>450</u>
	--	--
<b>SURPLUS (DEFICIT) for the year</b>		
transferred to (from) to the Brinkworth Fund	£ 185	£ (316)

### Banbury Historical Society

#### Balance Sheet as at 31st December 1998

	1998	1997
<b>ACCUMULATED FUND</b>		
As at 1 January 1998	7044	6732
Add surplus for the year	<u>564</u>	<u>312</u>
	7608	7044
Balance at 31 December 1998	7608	7044
<b>PUBLICATIONS RESERVE</b>		
As at 1 January 1998	4500	4213
(Add surplus for the year)	287	-
Less deficit for the year	<u>(350)</u>	<u>-</u>
	4150	4500
Balance at 31 December 1998	4150	4500
<b>BRINKWORTH FUND</b>		
As at 1 January 1998	2841	3157
Add surplus for the year	185	-
(Less deficit for the year)	<u>-</u>	<u>(316)</u>
	3026	2841
Balance at 31 December 1998	3026	2841
<b>TOTAL BALANCE at 31 December 1998</b>	<u>14784</u>	<u>14385</u>
<b>REPRESENTED BY -</b>		
<b>ASSETS</b>		
NatWest Bank Banbury - Current Account	28	66
Leeds & Holbeck Bldg Soc - Main Account	12482	11959
Leeds & Holbeck B S - Brinkworth Account	3027	2841
Cash	<u>33</u>	<u>8</u>
	15570	14874
Sundry debtors	<u>161</u>	<u>92</u>
	15731	14966
<b>LESS LIABILITIES</b>		
Subscriptions received in advance	412	161
Sundry creditors	<u>535</u>	<u>420</u>
	947	581
Total Liabilities	<u>947</u>	<u>581</u>
<b>NET ASSETS</b>	<u>£ 14,784</u>	<u>£ 14,385</u>

I have reviewed and audited the books and records of the Banbury Historical Society and confirm that the accounts prepared by the Hon Treasurer represent a fair and accurate summary of the financial transactions completed in the year ended 31 12 98

B S Goodchild, ACIB, ACIS

## 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).

*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).

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

*Adderbury: A Thousand years of History*, by Nicholas Allen (vol. 25, with Phillimore – now reprinted).

*The 'Bawdy Court' of Banbury: The Act Book of the Peculiar Court of Banbury and Cropredy 1625-38*, ed. R.K. Gilkes (vol. 26).

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

In preparation:

*Turnpike Roads to Banbury*, by Alan Rosevear.

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**.

