

# CAKE AND COCKHORSE



*The Town Hall & High Street Banbury.*

## BANBURY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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# 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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In our Summer 2003 issue (15.9) Barrie Trinder wrote about the various memoirs of Banbury in the last two centuries. With sixteen subjects he could only devote a paragraph to each.

One that caught my eye was Thomas Ward Boss (born 1825), long-time librarian at the Mechanics' Institute. Then I realised I had a copy of the published version of his talk delivered one hundred and one years ago, in March 1903. Re-reading it, I found it quite absorbing, a wonderful complement to George Herbert's famous *Shoemaker's Window*, a reminiscence of Banbury in the 1830s and later.

On the assumption that few are likely to track down copies in local libraries, it seems well worthwhile to reprint it here, from the original Cheney's version. There are a few insignificant misprints, but, especially in view of the sad demise of our oldest Banbury business, it is good to reprint a typical piece of their work.

It was tempting to reset it and add copious footnotes and illustrations – but it is already 27 pages long. Time and energy did not allow – it's up to others! **J.G.**

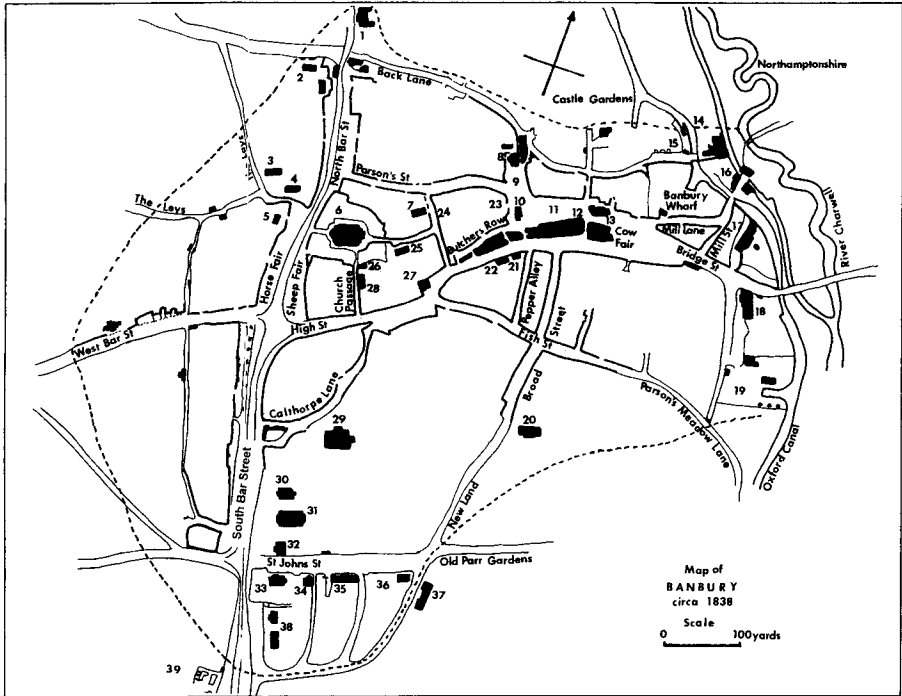
Cover: The new Banbury Town Hall, opened in October 1854 (page 73).

# REMINISCENCES OF OLD BANBURY

*Being the substance of a Lecture delivered at the Municipal Schools,  
Banbury, March 14<sup>th</sup>, 1903.*

**Thomas Ward Boss**

*Librarian of Mechanics' Institute*



*This map, from St. Mary's, Banbury, vestry records, was first published in C&CH.2.9 (September 1964), with a commentary by Barrie Trinder. This version, with enhanced lettering, appeared in 'The Book of Banbury', by Christine Bloxham, Barracuda Books, 1975, reproduced by kind permission.*

**Key:** 1 Dye Works; 2 National School; 3 Fleets; 4 Meeting House; 5 Chapel; 6 Church; 7 Wesleyan Chapel; 8 Gilletts Bank; 9 Cornhill; 10 Town Hall; 11 Market Place; 12 Fox; 13 Queen's Head; 14 Cobb's Factory; 15 Dock Yard; 16 Banbury Mills; 17 Gas Works; 18 Parker's Wharf Timber Yard; 19 Bridge Wharf; 20 Kirby's Building; 21 Red Lion; 22 Old (Cobbs) Bank; 23 Unicorn; 24 Church Lane; 25 Meeting House; 26 Infant Schools; 27 White Lion; 28 Mechanics' Institute; 29 Calthorpe House; 30 Chappell; 31 Catholic Church; 32 Mr Ward's; 33 Dr Williams; 34 Mr Wall's; 35 Austin's Malthouse; 36 Danby's; 37 Barrett's Malthouse; 38 Calthorpe Terrace; 39 Easington Farm.

I am sure you will all need an apology from me for having promised to give a few recollections of my native town and other personal reminiscences that are still green in the gleams of my memory, and the events that have occurred during a period of seventy years. I am afraid many of these recollections will be somewhat confusing to my hearers and I therefore crave your indulgence.

My reason for giving this rough narrative of events in this gossiping fashion has been at the request of many old friends, and of Mr. Beale, the head master.

I have no pretension to give you a paper having any literary merit, for it is dotted down far from feelings of egotism. The whole scope and object of the paper is to glance seventy years along the whirligig of time, and take a retrospect into the past history of my own time, and calmly review some of the many changes that have taken place in my own town and county.

Born in 1825, in the reign of George the Fourth, I spent the first seven years of my life in the City of Oxford. I trust you will pardon the digression if I relate some of the earliest and still well remembered events that occurred in 1830, 1831, and 1832 in that city. Men that we have known in our day have had some curious hobbies. One, whose name became as familiar as household words, and a person of great wealth, who had travelled much in Europe, Asia and Africa, and whose ambition was to become the proprietor of a large menagerie of wild beasts. George Wombwell by name, under the patronage of His Majesty King George the Fourth, opened for the first time a menagerie at Windsor Castle. The bandsmen were dressed in clothes made from skins of wild beasts. A few weeks after, the collection came to Oxford. My uncle, Sergeant George Ward, the schoolmaster of the 90th Regiment of Light Infantry, was in full regimentals. My father, a sergeant in the 52nd, the old Oxfordshire Regiment, was also in uniform. I was sitting on my uncle's shoulders, they were standing before the cage of a huge monkey, when at the sight of the red coats he burst into a great fury of passion, screamed and shook his cage, which sent the whole of the animals into a great uproar, that created almost a panic in the exhibition. The keeper quietly asked my uncle to leave the show. The animal had been captured by a party of redcoats in his native wilds not two years before, and the sight of a red coat always produced a like frenzy in the animal. I was glad to get outside, it was such a din and noise, Yes, I do well remember it as if it were but a tale of yesterday.

The new London Bridge, Rennie's beautiful classic design, was opened in 1831 by His Majesty King William the Fourth and Queen Adelaide, in person, only a few weeks after the death of George the Fourth. A few months later William and Adelaide came to the City of Oxford to open the Clarendon Press. All the great dignitaries of the University and City Authorities were present in their robes of office. I well remember seeing the procession pass by my home in St. Giles.

I believe it was in March, 1832, I was a child attending the Infant School in Bullock Alley. A mandate was issued that every boy must be at the school by half-past seven o'clock on Monday morning, or he would not be allowed to go on the roof of the school to see some men hanged. The distance from the roof of the school to the gallows was not more than a hundred yards. We went to see the executions. I recollect but little of the fearful sight. I was faint and trembling, and hid myself behind the bigger boys. The crime of each of the three men hanged at Oxford that morning was only robbery. Political feeling ran very high in Oxford during the Reform Bill agitation in 1831 and 1832. I have seen many hundreds of angry fighting men in the streets of Oxford; crowds extending from the Sheldonian Theatre to the middle of St. Giles', University men and townsmen equally hostile in their election squabbles.

When engineering projects were engaging the minds of men a road steam coach, very much like some of the motor cars of the present day, appeared in the streets of Oxford. It carried a chimney eight feet high, and four passengers. It steamed into the yard of the Star Hotel, and was inspected by large crowds during the evening. Next morning when it departed for Woodstock the streets were crowded to see it off.

Before I was seven years of age I was one of the little boys who were selected to accompany the Court Leet of the Ward of St. Giles round their boundary, and well recollect the many amusing incidents of that day.

I have gathered fruit and flowers in my father's garden in St. Giles on the site now occupied by Keble College. I have seen the butterfly with painted wing kissing the nectar from off the blossoms of wild flowers that grew thick around on the spot where many years afterwards that lovely temple of science, the Museum in the Park, has been erected. Now I am home again.

In the first place I will give you a few reminiscences of Banbury Michaelmas Fair as I knew it about the years 1834 to 1850. You can form no idea of the magnitude of the Fair of sixty years ago from what it is now. Immense crowds visited the Fair by road, for at this period railways were unknown in the Midlands.

Vehicles of every size, shape, and description, from the roughest farmers' waggons, carts and vans, were all brought into requisition to meet the many requirements of the day. Many thousands of persons walked long distances—from twenty to thirty miles, there and back—to attend the Fair. The greater part of the domestic servants only left their places once a year, and this was therefore their only holiday of the year. There were then no Registry Offices for servants, no such arrangement as a month's wages, or a month's warning. All stood in the streets in groups, seeking new masters and mistresses, the farmers seeking grooms, waggons, and shepherds, who stood waiting to be hired. Some had bunches of whipcord, horse hair, or wool in their buttonholes, which represented their respective callings. Dairy maids in those days were largely sought after, for the railway milk cans and their transit by rail were yet unknown. Such were the immense crowds waiting on the pavement between the bottom of Butcher's Row and the bottom of Parson's Street that shopkeepers were compelled to erect hoarding in front of their windows to prevent the pressure of the crowd from breaking them. Hiring was a busy feature for several hours during the Fair,—the usual time for the hiring contract being one year, the payment of one shilling over to the servant being the seal of engagement, which was as binding as the King's shilling is when taken by the raw recruit from the Sergeant; the forfeiture of this bond, except by mutual consent, was punishable by imprisonment.

Large refreshment booths were to be found in the Fair and other parts of the town. It was in earlier times permissible for householders to open their houses for the sale of beer and food during the fair under not very stringent conditions. Large green boughs were erected over the street doors. These special refreshment places were called "Bower Houses," open only during the Fair. Prodigious quantities of ham, beef, and pickled salmon were provided to feed the many thousands of visitors assembled. Parson's Lane, Horse Fair, and High Street were a great throng of people.

Banbury was highly celebrated for its Cheese Fair. Very early on the morning of the Michaelmas Fair a large number of farmers' wagons and other vehicles began to arrive from Warwickshire, Worcestershire and other districts, and large cargoes of cheese might have been seen stacked all over the Cornhill. Great commercial activity prevailed in this part of the Fair during the day. Our local cheesemongers and many others from a large district were busily engaged tasting, weighing, buying and carting away to the purchasers' warehouses, and consigning to other towns. This Fair in Banbury has ceased to exist since the middle of the 19th century.

The Royal Mail Coach passed through Banbury every morning (Sunday excepted) at four o'clock, and changing horses at the Red Lion Hotel, continued its journey northward ; another returned at eleven o'clock at night. The bugle horn of the mail guard aroused the sleepers as the coach passed through the streets of the town, whilst the brilliancy of the Mail lamp sent bright flashes far and wide through the darkness of night.

The "Old Sovereign" Coach left Banbury every morning at seven o'clock, by Bicester and Aylesbury, where it transferred its passengers to the London Coach, the "Old Sovereign" Coach returning to Banbury at six o'clock, with parcels, the town's fish supply, the daily papers, which were then very limited in numbers, and passengers. About the year 1840 when the London and North Western Railway was opened, a Mail Coach was started every morning from Banbury to Wolverton Station through Brackley, Buckingham and Stony Stratford. This route was the quickest and brought London within seven hours of Banbury, and opened a new route to the north.

The London Waggon from Banbury was drawn by eight strong horses. It had very broad wheels. A large punt, or square-shaped boat, was suspended by chains to the bottom of the waggon between the wheels. In this punt lambs, sheep, pigs, and poultry of various sorts were carried, being fed at intervals on the journey. In the bed of the waggon goods of a heavy character were packed three or four feet in height ; on the top of these were five or six tiers consisting of butter in flats, and carcasses of sheep and pigs. The size of the waggon was eighteen feet in length, seven-and-a-half feet in breadth at the bottom of the waggon and twelve feet to the top of the tilt. Stout iron rods were fixed on the sides of the waggon and ran up perpendiclarly, which assisted to support and strengthen the sides and carry the heavy tilt of the waggon. Good heavy mohair curtains securely closed up the back. Bags containing a large quantity of food for the horses hung in waterproof sheets in front. A light ladder to reach the top of the load was securely placed at the side of the waggon. Two huge horn lanterns were carried, one in front and one behind the team. Two waggoners, with massive whips, always travelled with the team. Such is a picture of the London Waggon as it was to be found on all the English roads, carrying the food and commerce of the country, until the railway invasion, towards the middle of the nineteenth century, created and spread so many improvements and blessings over the land.

The Banbury borough elections up to within fifty years ago were held at the old Town Hall. The hustings was erected in front of the Hall and was twenty feet high, and was capable of



holding upwards of one hundred persons. On the nomination day the candidates, their proposers and seconders, and principal adherents arranged themselves in their party divisions on the hustings. The official proclamation having been read the business of the day commenced, perhaps as many as three thousand persons being assembled in front, nine-tenths of them being non-electors, for the franchise had not then descended lower than the ten pound renters. The total number of electors in the old Borough did not exceed 400 at this period. These non-electors were fully privileged and permitted to create all the noise, uproar, and confusion that their strength and power of lung could command; cheers, groans, hisses, yells, and every kind of hubbub. However high and commendable the proposers may have placed the merits of their favourites before the public, this, and even the great eloquence and power of the candidates themselves, was lost to the ears of the crowd. This noisy discord having continued for two or three hours, a gentleman on the platform proposed that a show of hands be taken for the candidates. This having been done midst much confusion, the Mayor announced that the show of hands was largely in favour of the light blue candidate, whereon the energetic agent demanded that a poll should be taken on behalf of his honourable and learned friend the candidate for the purple and yellow party. It was proclaimed that the poll would open at nine o'clock on the following morning. The large crowd soon dispersed, and the rest of the day was given up to renewed canvassing, band playing and processions. The public houses did a roaring trade. Early on the morning of the polling day the polling booth was being got ready under the hustings. A hoarding was erected not more than four feet high, so that the public could see all over the polling station. A small, low platform, not more than a foot high, on which the elector had to stand when giving his vote was arranged outside so that the voter could be seen by all the polling clerks inside and the public outside the station. A large number of Special Constables to assist in keeping the peace and maintaining order was sworn in for the day. Their wand of office and authority was a stout broom handle about five feet long. In selecting these men as specials the authorities did not scrutinize in every case the character of the men for sobriety and civility; in fact it was considered a grand policy to make roughs specials and prevent them making any disturbance during the time they were on duty, or they would forfeit their pay of 5s. for the day. These constables were stationed round the polling booth to keep the crowd from pressing too near the booth. Shortly before nine o'clock the bands went to the Committee rooms and the candidates, accompanied by a large number of their supporters, walked

to the polling station. Party colours were most lavishly displayed in these days. At the general election in July, 1847, for more than a month before polling day several bands of music paraded the streets daily accompanied by large gangs of pugilists and other rowdy characters, engaged by both sides. There were few houses in the town but what showed flags or some party colours. This was known as the Tancred and Macgregor election. At nine o'clock the elector appeared before the chief polling clerk, who asked him his name. "Who do you vote for?" "Brown," replied the elector. "Mr. Robinson votes for Brown!" The name is hooted loud enough to be heard by every one inside and by hundreds outside the booth. "Thank you, thank you, Mr. Robinson," is repeated again and again. This is followed by loud cheers and hisses. Another elector comes up to vote. "Your name, sir." "Dick Pullinger." "Who do you vote for, Mr. Pullinger?" "I shall vote for the gent with the white hat, blue coat and gold buttons," replied Mr. Pullinger. Mr. Pullinger having been told that he must give the name of the gentleman he wished to vote for, either Mr. Brown or Mr. Blue. Mr. Pullinger loudly cries out, "Now I know I shall vote for Mr. Blue." Mr. Pullinger having left the booth he was roughly jostled by a rowdy crowd outside. It was customary to announce the state of the poll every half hour, and paste it on the four corners of the booth. This was eagerly copied and with great haste carried to the Committee rooms. As the day wore on the noise and excitement grew with much intensity all over the borough. Scouts and canvassers were hard at work, seeking out the unpolled electors with vigorous energy, free fights taking place in several parts of the town. Doubtful electors who had not fully decided which party to espouse could have been seen in the hands of different political parties pulling him and leading him along the streets towards the polling station, all more or less advanced towards a state of inebriation. Towards four o'clock the Market Place was densely crowded, and at four o'clock the returning Officer declared the poll closed and that Mr. Brown had been duly elected the member for Banbury. The honourable member having briefly addressed the electors, thanking them for the proud position they had placed him in that day, the Special Constables formed a line by carrying their broom handles horizontally in their hands to form a barrier against the crowd. Within the interior of the barrier an avenue was formed. An arm chair had been lavishly and richly decorated with ribbons, the colours of the new member. Bearers were placed under the seat of the chair, eight men placed the bearers on their shoulders, the new member was lifted into the chair of honour, and accompanied by many of his leading sup-

porters with bands playing, he was cheered through the principal streets of the town, receiving the salutations and congratulations of the ladies and children dressed in their party colours as they appeared in large numbers at their windows on the route of the procession. Returning to the Market Place, the member having safely left the chair, a desperate fight and scramble for the ribbons ensued. Every inch of ribbon was torn from the chair, which was broken to atoms by the mob. A large quantity of beer was given away at many public-houses. It was long past the hour of midnight before peace and quietude reigned in the streets. Now in giving you a description of one of our borough elections I am giving you a very feeble and lenient picture of the reality. There was great disorder and drunkenness in the town, I admit, but no serious injury to life or damage to property is recorded.

At the time Her Majesty ascended the throne in 1837, the Post Office management was very unsatisfactory. The wide system of getting letters franked to avoid postage, by having the signature of persons in the higher circles of Society, Peers, Members of Parliament, and others. Letters bearing the signatures of these important personages exempted the letters from postage. The revenue from the Post Office became smaller year by year, so that the expenses of management grew yearly larger and the income in the revenue showed a great decrease. Many other restraints were levied on the letter-writing public. The writing paper then used was about the size of a boy's small copy book, and called Bath Post Gilt Edges, and sold at one penny per sheet. Sealing wax was then generally used to seal the letters, as envelopes were unknown in England. If two sheets of paper were used in the letter double postage was charged. Postal Reform and Penny Postage was then the great cry in the land. Mr. Rowland Hill was one of the leading pioneers and advocates. In 1840 this great concession was given to the people, and the Penny Post reformation was established in the kingdom.

On a bright but cold day, April 25th, 1843, about eleven o'clock in the morning, the town was startled by the ringing of the church bells, which soon burst out into a joy peal clang clang, which denoted that some royal event had occurred, and it was soon known that the queen's horses, carriages, and postillions had arrived in the town, for on that morning, a royal princess had been born at Buckingham Palace. The nurse, who had daily been expecting to be called to London, was the wife of Mr. William Willifer, butcher, living in South Bar, near the Swan Inn, in the house now occupied by Mrs. John Cheney. Early in the afternoon the royal postillions returned with their important passenger to Stevenage, then the nearest station on the Great Western Railway

to Banbury, for railway stations either at Didcot or Oxford were unknown. The birth of this princess caused great rejoicing in England. She was the third child and second daughter of Queen Victoria and Albert, Prince Consort. She was named Alice Maud Mary, and died in 1878.

In the Market Place, opposite to the Angel Inn, was a pool of dirty sludgy water, in which pickpockets and other disreputable characters have been unwillingly dragged. At the bottom of the Market Place was a very old house. The eaves of the thatch were not more than ten feet from the ground; the two upstairs windows, about two feet square, peeped through a thick thatch roof. This old house for many years was occupied by George Baker, grocer and provision merchant. These old premises were pulled down fifty years ago, and the building now occupied as the Birmingham Bank was built as a private residence for a well-known, good and worthy townsman, John Phillips Barford, Esq. On the west side of the Market Place were some very antiquated and curious old houses. That occupied by Messrs. Robins is full of interest. The house next door, which was occupied by Mr. Thomas Taylor, was pulled down in 1856, when the Central Corn Exchange was built. This was one of the largest and most interesting houses on the west front. Mr. Taylor, who was a saddler and harness maker, had in his front shop a life-sized model of a fine carriage horse, fully equipped in a bright set of carriage harness. This was a source of much wonder to the juveniles, to witness the extreme quietness of the animal. The two next shops were occupied by Mrs. Pepples, hosier, and Mr. Thomas Strange, jeweller. A set of five steps had to be climbed to reach the shops; the shop windows were very small and of a very antique character. These steps and high windows have been removed more than fifty years.

A great number of cattle from Wales and Herefordshire used to be on trek through Banbury to Northampton and the grazing lands of the Eastern Counties. I have known as many as 2,000 pass through Banbury in a day; they would not travel more than two miles per hour. I have known them three hours marching through the town. Large herds of fat cattle would leave Banbury on a Friday and reach Smithfield Cattle Market on a Monday morning. Another sight to be seen in Banbury streets very regularly, was large carts laden with bales of rags going to North Newington Paper Mills. They made at these mills a very superior blue foolscap paper which was in regular and constant demand to supply the wants of several Government offices in London, but steam and modern machinery has superseded this industry at North Newington, as it has done at many paper mills in Oxfordshire.

In the year 1838, Mr. Richard Heydon, banker, died. The house where he resided for many years was the one now occupied by Mr. A. Stockton, on The Green. It had a very long frontage, more than half its length being covered with a thick ivy foliage. The property was soon after sold to many persons in lots, and in 1839 Crouch Street was formed and the British Schools were built and many private residences erected. In the year 1835, at the time the Mechanics' Institute was being established, Thomas Moon Talfourd, Esq., M.P., of the Inner Temple, Serjeant-at-Law, was the Deputy Recorder for the Borough of Banbury. He took a deep interest in the formation of the Institute, assisting the committee in various ways, occasionally sending a donation of books, some of which are still on the shelves. He became a very great lawyer, and was made one of Her Majesty's Judges. At the Staffordshire Assizes there was a prisoner being tried for highway robbery; whilst commenting strongly on the folly of persons exhibiting their wealth among strangers in public houses, he was seen to hang down his head, and in a few minutes he was carried a corpse from the judgment seat.

In the town of Stratford-on-Avon in the year 1552, John Shakspere, the father of the poet, and other inhabitants of Henley Street were fined for making a dung heap in the road. The warning did not have any effect on other towns in the neighbourhood, or sanitary reform travelled very slowly in those days. In the year 1833 a great dung heap was made in Monument Street, not more than 50 yards from the centre of the Oxford Road, and close beneath the windows of some cottages in the street. Some bushels of lime were thrown on the great heap of night soil, and loose straw on the top of that to hide its ugliness, but not its danger, where it lay for several weeks. Typhus fever of a very virulent character broke out in the immediate locality. Within two months twelve persons had died from the visitation, and fifty persons were lying seriously ill at one time. I myself was one of the victims, and lay for more than four months in a very feeble and helpless state.

There were other heaps of contaminating matter in our streets in those days besides the one I have just referred to, one of which was in the Cow Fair near where the Town Hall now stands. The present building called the Town Hall Tavern is built upon a piece of land where stood an old hostelry called The Bull's Head. On the site of the present Police Station stood a large farrier's shop. Between the shoeing forge and the Bull's Head was a yard enclosed within brick walls, the entrance to which was where the drinking trough at the north-east corner now stands. This enclosure was the common ash pit for the district.

It was six yards square, and in its front wall there was an opening about four feet from the ground. Through this the inhabitants poured their house refuse until the manure pit could hold no more, and, as it was seldom emptied, the street around became an unsightly and dangerous nuisance.

About the year 1830 much angry feeling began to prevail between the farmers and labourers on wage grievances, for farmers began to purchase machinery of a labour saving nature. This produced a wide feeling of alarm and discontent, for the labourers were united in their opposition to the introduction of agricultural machinery in the villages, as calculated to diminish their labour and wages. This feeling of discontent was not confined to this neighbourhood alone, but extended over a large district of the Midlands and the west of England. Passions and ill-feelings became more inflamed between masters and men. The labourers arranged midnight meetings to form schemes of vengeance against their employers. At last active deeds of lawlessness commenced. Many machines were found broken to pieces, cattle were badly maimed, incendiary fires became more frequent, and the wildest disorder reigned in our district. Valuable machinery was broken to pieces, carried away, and at night burnt in great heaps. The authorities and the friends of law were fully aroused for defence. The county magistrates and many others were in the saddle the greater part of the night, ready to read the riot act on any emergency. In these days there was no police force. Troops of cavalry were being sent into all the affected districts. A troop of the 10th Hussars from Birmingham galloped through Neithrop into a field just beyond where Neithrop Church now stands. They galloped through the fire, scattering it all over the field. Many of the rioters received blows from the swords of the soldiers, but the scabbard had not been taken off the blade. These men fell thinking in their fright that they had been wounded, whilst many of the rioters fell from the trees thinking they were shot as the Hussars fired a volley of blank cartridges high in the air. At this time there were no less than 800 persons waiting remand in the counties of Wilts and Gloucester alone, many of them confined in tithe barns and other queer places for the want of adequate accommodation in the prisons. These angry feelings between the farmers and the labourers slowly and gradually improved, but it was a work of considerable time. The thrashing machine again took its place in the economy of labour, and the flail is heard no more in our village barns. As bread became very cheap, allotments of land have been given to the cottager, almost a free education has been given to the village children. A deeper interest be-

tween farmer and labourer has been established, and the mellowing influence of time has borne good fruit.

Intense and long protracted frost brought much privation and distress among the poor and needy of the town. I have known seasons when the canal has been frozen over for five weeks at a time, and as this was the only way in which coal could be procured you can readily conceive that this commodity soon fetched a high price. I have known it as much as 4s. 6d. the cwt. The appeal for help by the poor was pitifully and grievously made to the benevolent and generous. Subscriptions to coal funds and other purposes flowed liberally in from the wealthy and charitable. Ladies visited the poor and needy in their cheerless homes and thus brought light in darkness and food into hungry homes.

There were in those days few public rooms in the town where balls, concerts, and other entertainments could be given. I remember a grand concert in the National School, Southam Road, as far back as 1835, where ladies were carried in sedan chairs, the room being lighted with oil lamps. In 1837 my mother took me to a Schoolroom on the Green to hear a lecture on temperance. The schoolmaster that occupied the school during the day was a Banbury man, Mr. Joseph Osborn, who afterwards became a spirit merchant and chief magistrate of his native town. The temperance lecturer was quite a young man, he walked that day from Warwick, over 20 miles, and carried heavy packages on his shoulders. He unpacked in the school a large number of temperance tracts. He gave his lecture, which was much applauded; but there were not more than 60 persons in the room at the time. He then made an effort to sell his publications, and succeeded to his satisfaction. He told us he was going to walk to Oxford the next day. By hard work and ever constant industry, he succeeded in business as a temperance publisher, and afterwards published more educational works than any firm in London. It was more than forty years from the time I heard the temperance lecturer in Banbury until I was introduced to him in his counting house at Belle Sauvage Yard. He was then at the head of the firm of Cassell, Petter and Galpin. Mr. Cassell was pleased with the interview and well remembered his lecture at Banbury. It was a very pleasing ten minutes' chat. He was very glad to tell me of the hard trials and privations he had overcome, and the grand achievements he had won. The school on the Green, mentioned in the early part of this paragraph, was occupied for many years after as a shoeing forge by Mr. C. N. Page, as a Veterinary Surgeon. About the year 1842 Mr. Thos. Mitchell, a well-known Shakespearian reader, gave a reading in the Boys' British Schoolroom.

Between the acts a number of local musicians played a selection of music. Not very long afterwards the first of the Banbury Philharmonic Concerts was given in the Girls' Schoolroom. These schools were built in 1839.

The old Theatre in Church Lane was the property of Mr. James Hill, then residing in Parson's Lane. It was used only by a theatrical manager named Jackman, who visited the town for three months every two years. On the night the Banbury Gas Company was inaugurated, Mr. James Hill invited several gentlemen to a hot supper on the stage of his theatre, where it had been cooked by gas. On the same night a huge gas trophy many feet high was erected near the centre of the Horse Fair. Many specimens of gas burners, coloured glasses and other interesting things connected with gas were exhibited. The streets were crowded till a late hour.

Our late beloved Queen Victoria paid two visits to Banbury during her long reign. The first visit, October, 1858, was on her return from the north to Windsor Castle, when she received addresses from the Corporation and Edward Bennett, Esq., who was Mayor at that time. This was on Banbury Michaelmas Fair day, great crowds of people went down to the Railway Station. The fair was almost deserted for about an hour in the afternoon. The second visit of her Majesty was in the summer of 1867, when she went to Wolverhampton to unveil a statue of her late beloved husband, the Prince Consort, that the good people of that flourishing town had erected in his honour. Her Majesty stayed at Banbury Station for a quarter of an hour, to receive a loyal address. On that morning there was a grand luncheon at the Council Chamber, the Council, the Recorder, the Magistrates, and other gentlemen were invited. Shortly before noon a procession was formed at the hall and walked to the Railway Station. The two maces were used on that occasion, which had not been done for many years previously. Seats were provided on the platform for a large number of townspeople. William R. Harrison, Esq., Mayor, read the address. She was very pleased with her reception at Banbury. Lord Derby was her Majesty's Minister in attendance. A pretty little girl, the daughter of the Mayor, presented to her Majesty a lovely bouquet of flowers. Alexander Staveley Hill, Recorder of Banbury, joined the royal train here and proceeded to Wolverhampton, dressed in his full robes as Doctor of Law.

Spring Fields, as they were called seventy years ago, on the north side of Mr. Munton's Flower Show Field had a footpath which passed from the Horse Fair to the bottom of Constitution Hill in Broughton Road. After getting to the first clap-gate the footpath,



between high walls and hedges, turned to the right, but did not go beyond the north-east of the field, or to Paradise, Neithrop, as it does now. Two fine springs flowed from a high bank in Neithrop House grounds, trickled through some old stone pipes into two stone basins, erected on a bank on the Spring Field side of the hedge. The water was strongly impregnated with iron. Many persons brought jugs and bottles to be filled for drinking purposes, and numbers of people resorted there for bathing their faces and hands in the early part of the day. The fine spring which flows from the high ground at Bretch, on the north side of Wood Green, into the Spring Fields along a gravelly ditch, formerly ran into two small pools about six yards square and eighteen inches deep. There many youths of the town used to resort for bathing. The existence of this spring was undoubtedly why the locality took the name of Spring Fields. The water then ran past Neithrop House and Ark House, into a large pond on the same site now occupied by Mr. Bloxham's yard. For many years large dye works were carried on by the late Mr. Richard Thorne on the same spot. When the new road was first laid and the name was under consideration, Mr. George Crosby, chairman, and Mr. Thomas Garrett, surveyor, having, when boys, bathed in the Spring Fields, suggested the name of Bath Road, which was unanimously adopted.

Over sixty years ago a large trade was done in cork cutting, in the green lane running from the Broughton Road to Bloxham Road. It was then as much a country lane as the Saltway is at present. The cork cutters made large fires on the ground, upon which were laid large gridirons. The pieces of green cork bark, about four feet square, were laid upon the top, going through a process of scrubbing and turning until quite dry and fit for cutting. From this the lane derived its title of "Cork Lane."

It is nearly seventy years since I beheld a man coming down the Oxford Road with a very bulky package on his back. He went straight to the foot of the Monument, took the package from his shoulders, partly emptied its contents into a green bag which he carried on his arm. He held a small red paper box in his hand, and commenced to strike little pieces of wood on his coat sleeve and shoes, which burst into flame. He made a brief speech on the discovery of lucifer matches, and commenced selling them readily at threepence a box as he walked round the town followed by crowds of people. That was the first time these matches were seen and sold in Banbury. From that date the old tinder box, flint and steel were superseded.

Seventy years ago large plantations of trees ran for more than a mile along the Oxford Road to the Jolly Weavers' Inn. They

consisted of some very fine trees—oak, beech, and large clumps of the fine tall scotch firs, which spread their wide and ornamental green boughs from their tops like a canopy. There was, at that time, only one house on the Oxford Road between Banbury and Adderbury. The late Mr. George Cave resided there for more than fifty years. He was a road surveyor and travelled long distances round Banbury in the days of the old turnpike trust. The late Charles Henry Davids resided at the same house for many years. About the year 1830 Mr. Thomas Perry laid out those beautiful grounds so well known as "Perry's Nursery." The next piece of spinney that was cut down was bought for Mr. Charles Taylor, then foreman at Cobb's Factory, where he had built four brick houses, now occupied by Mrs. Lumbert, Mrs. Day, and others. There was a large level field running from Perry's field to the Old Parr boundary. This was used as the old Banbury Cricket Ground for over twenty years. I remember the Eleven of England playing there in their tall black hats. It was also let for all kinds of sports, circus shows, races, and many other things, until Mr. Jonathan Gillett purchased a large piece of the land and built the house now occupied by his son.

On the site where Mr. Abbotts now resides stood two low squabby houses, with low roof and small glass windows. The ancient Priory was then approached through an old lych gate, up some steps, to the front door. The boundary wall which now stands, had a very peculiar and ugly looking coping erection running along the top, consisting of cows' heads and horns entwined with each other, about two feet high about the wall. These were securely fixed by iron rods and cement. Near to the private gate stood a large chestnut tree, beneath which was a large stone stile by the Priory wall leading to a cutting, about six feet deep and not more than four feet wide. A tall thickset hedge ran along the top of the bank on either side. This walk was called "The Aqueduct." About half-way along there was a carriage road went over the pathway leading from Calthorpe House, coming out at the Lodge gate, where Mr. C. Shilson's house now stands. The footway brought one into Newland Road, opposite the Green Lane. In the year 1834 much of the Calthorpe estate was sold for building purposes. St. John's Road was cut through, and Austin's great malthouse was begun. Calthorpe Road was cut up into building plots and sold readily. The first private house, built by John Milward, is the one now occupied by J. Harlock Esq.

The house where Mr. O. J. Stockton now resided was built by Mr. Henry Ward, a coal merchant. Dashwood Road was made in 1840. The dangerous and steep incline (in some places as deep

as 24 feet) was cut through from Perry's Nursery to below the Bloxham Road, and the hollow in the road as far as the Cross was raised several feet. Bloxham Road was also very steep. There was a fearful accident to a brewer's dray at the bottom of the hill one night after dark. The draymen had lost control of the horses, which dashed into a stone wall at the bottom. One of the draymen was killed, one horse killed and another had to be shot. The dray was a complete wreck and empty barrels were broken and strewn in all directions. The road was shortly afterwards improved, and made as at present. On one winter's evening in 1836, when the Catholic Church was being built, a large quantity of prepared freestone, ready for building was stacked on the ground about four feet high and nine feet long; a quantity of haulm and loose straw was thrown on the top to protect them from the ravages of the frost. There were about a dozen of us Oxford Bar boys playing hide and seek in and about the new building. It was my turn to hide. I went towards the straw that covered the stones intending to hide there. Pulling some away from the top I threw myself down on my side and to my astonishment found something alive underneath me, and in a few seconds heard a most horrible roar and groans. In quick time I regained my feet trembling with fright. Two tall men in blue blouses came out from the straw, leading a huge dancing bear. A large crowd soon gathered round and one of the old watchmen was quickly on the spot. The tale was soon told, the men had failed to get lodgings, so they sought for rest under the straw, not thinking that a stranger uninvited was about to invade their sleeping apartments. The watchmen were still unable to get anyone to take them in, so bear and men were locked in a coal shed in Calthorpe Lane for the night, and next morning saw them all out of the town. St. John's Roman Catholic Church was opened in 1838. The top part of the pinnacles on the tower were about seven feet high and were taken down some years after. They were considered dangerous as they rocked in a gale. A few years later a chapel was built at the end of Dashwood Road, called Austin's Chapel. It was used only for a few years then turned into a private school. It is now called Henwick House.

A Wesleyan Meeting House had been erected near the top of Calthorpe Lane, in what was called Lodging House Yard, but it was used for a few years only, and had since been used as a common lodging house. There was a passage through from Calthorpe Street to South Bar. At one time the shop at the end was kept by an Irishman, named "Peggy McWhee," who had lost his leg at Waterloo. Many a rough fight have I seen outside his shop, in which he, with his wooden leg and crutch, assisted by his

wife Bridget's strong arm and tongue, always acted the part of peacemaker, never allowing the combatants to part until he had made peace between them. Oh, that we had more Peggy McWhees in our day.

The old Banbury Workhouse in South Bar ceased to be used as a poor house in 1838. Mr. Draper, solicitor, purchased the premises and built four houses with shops, one of those lately occupied by Miss Loxley. Much of the old building is still standing behind. The old White Swan Inn still retained the old features it has done without any visible alteration for the past 150 years, excepting the old billiard room at the back, which had to be removed when the Congregational Church and Sunday School was built in the year 1855 by Messrs. John and Thomas Davis, and opened the following year. I was then living next door, and well remember frequently seeing the Rev. Joseph Parker, Mr. J. G. Walford, and Mr. T. Watkins (the Building Committee) in consultation in my house. In several parts of the town stood large finger posts giving the directions to different towns and their distances. One stood just off the main road near the centre of the Horse Fair, another about where the front of the Town Hall now stands, and another at the top of Parson's Lane. A small sketch of one of these is shown in the Institute Manuscript Magazine for 1839. In the same picture is given a view of old Sally Garrett's shop, where articles of a miscellaneous character could be bought, from bulls-eyes to besoms. The husband of this chatty old lady was of a merry and convivial character, and went by the name of "Twisty" Garrett. There was at that time a large number of shops similar to that kept by kind old Sally Garrett. On the right-hand corner stood a fine stone house; those walls looked substantial but the timbers within were much decayed. It was occupied by Mr. Peter Bignell, an attorney, who died about 1839. The old house was pulled down and a new one erected by Mr. John Gazey, who carried on the business of spirit merchant upwards of thirty years. Beyond the old corner shop was a low, one-storied, thatched building, not more than ten feet high, several windows about sixteen inches square, with two iron bars fastened to the woodwork and shutters fixed from the inside. This malthouse was removed in 1840, and Messrs. Fortescues' offices and the three brick houses beyond were erected.

What is now Church Passage was a narrow footpath not more than four feet wide, with high walls on each side. There were three iron gratings about four feet square, which received the waste water as it came down from the churchyard. As people walked over the gratings, they gave a very peculiar sound which

was called "tink-a-tank," and the place retained that name for many years. In the year 1834 there were four very old low-roofed houses with bow windows and small panes of glass. They were purchased by Messrs. Garrett and Webster, and the three brick houses between the bottom of Church Passage and the White Horse Hotel were built. Mr. Joseph Garrett then arranged for the widening of "Tink-a-tank." One of the walls was taken down and set back seven feet, and from that time the road was called "Church Passage." The next year the old Mechanics' Institute, now used as Church Rooms, was built. The late Lord Saye and Sele came to reside at Broughton Castle in 1849, and became President of the Institute in 1851. In 1852 his Lordship was made High Steward of the Borough of Banbury. In the same year he became a life member of the Society of Arts and affiliated the Institute with that society. Classes were taught at the Institute Room and a scholarship in botany, medals, and high class certificates were gained by pupils. Lord Saye and Sele was a frequent visitor to the Institute and took much interest in its welfare. To return to the High Street, the old White Horse Hotel, with its fine old gateway, was removed more than sixty years ago, and the present one erected. In the centre of the High Street many old and curious houses were pulled down a very few years. Over sixty years ago, Mrs. Bays kept a sweet shop on the spot where Mr. T. J. Watkins lived for so many years. It had a large old-fashioned bow window. One market day a bullock entered the shop, went round the counter and dashed through the window, carrying the whole framework with him, all the glass bottles of sweets were sent into the middle of the road, and a large crowd of boys were soon on their hands and knees filling their pockets with the soiled goodies. Nearly opposite the Red Lion Hotel were three narrow houses with small shop windows, gables over the top, and four steps to each door. These were all pulled down at one time. There was a remarkable old low-built house where Messrs. E. and H. Austen built their grocery premises, now about fifty years ago. The house was very long with some very small windows over the shop. The front wall consisted of mortar and dab, with quantities of small pebbles sticking out. The shop window was not more than three feet from the ground. The front of the house was set back from the pavement about two feet. All along the front were white posts and a rail, two feet high, so that loungers could rest and admire the sweets and other articles of confectionery displayed. A very favourite spot of juveniles. Mr. George Crosby occupied the premises many years. He was father of the late Alderman G. Crosby. There was another old house in the High Street occupied by an old Banbury

family without a break for more than two hundred years, on the site where Mr. Henry Strange now resides. It was a low-roofed but very roomy house and business premises, used as grocers and cheesemongers. The family gave many Chief Magistrates to the old Borough. I have known as many as four members of the family in business at the same time. Dr. Richard Grimby told me some years ago that it was the custom of his great grandfather to close his shop for two hours on market day and put on the door this notice :—"Gone to dinner, re-open at three o'clock."

It was long before Watt had discovered the mighty power of steam, or George Stephenson had given up clockmaking and had, with his great talent and engineering skill, produced his locomotive engine, that postillions, horses and chaise conveyed passengers from one end of the country to the other. It was a sight to be seen every day at our hotel gateways, many postillions booted and spurred, scarlet riding jackets with rows of white metal buttons, black velvet cap, white gloves and riding whip, waiting the arrival of a chaise. Immediately the hot, smoking horses are taken to the stables and fresh ones placed in the traces with only a stop of a few minutes, clang goes the whip and the horses are going through the streets, ten miles an hour, towards the next stage. Sometimes three or four chaises would leave together when the demand was large. We often hear grumbling now at the state of our streets, but we have improved since then. It was a common sight to see helpers from the stables assisting to lift carriages out of the ruts at the entrance of the hotel yard.

A little more than sixty-five years ago there were no Cherwell Streets, no Windsor Street, no Gatteridge Street, all were fields excepting a few kitchen gardens. The bottom part of Fish Street, or Scalding Lane, as it was then called, was in a very dirty state. A black open sewer flowed along under the hedge to near the drawbridge. A large culvert took the sewage under the Canal and Parson's meadow and discharged itself into the Cherwell. I remember where the first Banbury Agricultural Show was held in the lower part of Fish Street. The entrance was through a gateway with an arch over the black sewer which ran beneath. On the same spot the first workshop and offices were built for Mr. James Gardner, of the High Street, to extend the manufacture of his celebrated Turnip Cutters. These premises were afterwards purchased by Mr. B. Samuelson, and the Banbury Britannia Works commenced. After 1845 Banbury Races ceased to be held at Grimsbury. Shortly after the Great Western Railway Company bought the land, and in a few years speculators in small lots of land became numerous ; land was surveyed and drained, streets pegged out, many hundred lots were laid down and the Banbury Diggings as they were called,

began to become a suburb. The town had adopted the Board of Health Act, and a Burial Board was created. The members of the Board of Health met regularly at the Institute Committee Room. The passing of plans for the many new houses at Grimsbury gave them abundant occupation.

The Banbury Horticultural Society was established in 1843, and held its first show on the Bowling Green at the Flying Horse Inn, Parson's Street. A few years later Dr. Stanton Wise allowed the society to use his spacious pleasure grounds, at the back of his residence in High Street, for holding its annual exhibitions on the very spot where these schools now stand, before Marlborough Road was made or the Wesleyan Chapel built.

The first passenger train ran out of Banbury on the London and North-Western Railway on the 1st of May, 1850, and the traffic on the Great Western Railway by Banbury in 1852.

Shortly before the marriage of the Crown Prince of Prussia to the Princess Royal of England, questions as to how the occasion should be celebrated were much discussed, and many propositions made. On a Sunday, at noon, two or three weeks before the wedding, Mr. Thomas Clarke, of the Banbury Mills, called upon me on the subject of the royal wedding. He told me there was a suggestion to re-build the Banbury Cross, and another that a ball and dinner be given in the newly-erected Central Corn Exchange. He asked me to go to a meeting at the Red Lion on Monday evening, which I did, and by a large majority the scheme to re-build the Banbury Cross was adopted. Committees were appointed to canvass different parts of the town, and on the day of the wedding we began our canvass. Mr. John Lee Merry, another gentleman and myself collected over £90 on one side of High Street. Other canvassers were equally successful, and within a month the Committees felt they were justified in asking for designs to be sent in, and that of Mr. Bruton, of Oxford, was accepted. From some old plans it was soon found where the old Cross had stood, and the foundations were discovered without much difficulty. There was considerable opposition against re-building the Cross, so the Committee had some uphill work to contend with. There was not a great demonstration at the laying of the foundation stone. In the absence of the Mayor, Edward Bennett, Esq., our worthy Sergeant-at-Mace, Mr. D. Dixon, laid the stone after a pithy speech. The National Anthem was sung, and the Committee and others adjourned to the Swan Inn, where the hostess, Mrs. Randle, had provided a most enjoyable repast and a very pleasant evening was spent. On the day the Cross was finished (by arrangement previously made) I found myself on the scaffold at the top of the Cross, under the care and protection of the builder, the gilt cross

was suspended by a pulley, and with the assistance of two men, gradually lowered into the cavity made for its reception, and with two or three strong blows from a wooden mallet I drove it into the socket. I was very glad to find myself again on the ground, where I received the congratulations of many friends, and so the foundation stone and fixing of the cross on the top were both executed by the two Sergeants-at-Mace of the good old Borough, thus giving the event a semi-official character.

A few years after the Cross was built, I noticed a lady walking round it and entering the initials from the shields into her pocket book. Seeing some woodcuts of the Cross, heading some note-paper in my window, she came into the shop and said, "I guess I can buy some of the pictures of the Cross you have there." Yes, madam," I replied, "I calculate you can buy as many as you like." "Why, how did you know I was an American?" "By your words and speech," I replied, "Yes," she said, "I am, I have come across to see the old country once again, and it has given me great pleasure to stand by the Banbury Cross. My father was an English officer, stationed away in The Himalayas, East Indies, where my mother used to dance myself and sister on her knee and sing to us the well-known and loved nursery rhyme, 'Ride a cock-horse to Banbury Cross.' For many years I have been settled in the far western state of Illinois, where I, too, have sung to sleep my own children to the dear old rhyme."

Over fifty years ago there lived in the town a very respected and industrious tradesman who carried on the business of jeweller, watchmaker, and optician, successfully for many years. He was an Italian by birth but had not seen his native country for forty years. One day in 1850 his neighbours were much surprised to see the following notice, written on a bright piece of tin, and nailed to the shutters of his shop—"John Kalabergo, gone to Italy, return next year." He remained there six months, and on his return was persuaded to bring with him a nephew of about twenty years of age, a step which he soon regretted; the young man was very wild and unsteady, and gave his uncle much anxiety, the longer he remained the worse he got, and at last his uncle intimated to him that he should be sent back home. I was personally acquainted with Mr. Kalabergo, and was frequently at his shop in the Market Place. On the first Tuesday evening in 1852 I met him in High Street and accompanied him to the George and Dragon Inn, where he wanted to attend the monthly meeting of the Old Charitable Society. On the following Friday morning Mr. Kalabergo and his nephew drove, as usual, to call on his customers in the Prior's Marston district, intending to return to Banbury, by Byfield, on Saturday. That evening between five



and six o'clock, some persons saw the horse and trap standing in the road with no one in charge. They led the horse back towards Williamscote and about half way up the hill found the body of Mr. Kalabergo in a pool of blood on the ice and snow. The corpse was taken to the Inn, at Williamscote, and the cart brought to Banbury. Soon after six o'clock, the nephew called on the Rev. T. Tandy, the Roman Catholic Priest, to whom he told a rambling story, that he and his uncle had been attacked by robbers, that he had escaped through the hedge, and, guided by the lights, made his way across the fields to Banbury, leaving his uncle much injured. Notwithstanding this story, he was arrested the same night, and in a few days committed to Oxford for wilful murder. It was some weeks before the pistol was found (supposed to be in consequence of a dream) in a watercourse between Williamscote hill and the turnpike road, over which the murderer had run. The evidence was very conclusive; he was tried at the Lent Assizes, and in a few weeks hanged at Oxford. A few friends of the late John Kalabergo erected a memorial stone to their highly esteemed townsman on Williamscote hill, where it can be seen to this day.

Now I am not going into the mystery of dreams but simply relate to you one of the most remarkable nights I ever spent in my life. When I was a boy about fourteen years of age living in South Bar, I was in bed and asleep, and about two o'clock in the morning, when a most fearful dream held my senses in bondage. I thought that the house next door was in flames and burning most furiously, yet I was spellbound and powerless to escape from the advancing flames, I screamed in my fright, and my father brought a light into my room and awoke me. I told him my dream, he said there was no fire, I was a foolish boy and got me to sleep again, but the dream with all its terror reappeared, the flames still in full fury. Something again awoke me, someone ran by our door, and I heard voices, and in a few minutes the footsteps returned, and stopped at our house, rapping the shutters heavily. My father opened the window, and the man said, "Come at once John, to the Station House, we are getting the fire engine out, there is a large fire at Bodicote." My father was a fireman. With difficulty I dressed myself and was soon standing in South Bar Street. It looked as if all Easington was in flames. It was a dream no longer, but the largest fire I ever saw in my life. In Bodicote, women were running about in great alarm. Children were crying and furniture was being removed to places of safety in the fields. It was a scene of much terror. I remember seeing men pulling the carcasses of horses and cows from stable and cow-house, there was a large number of animals destroyed. I felt very tired and cold, and returned home about six o'clock in the morning.

It was a night I shall never forget as long as memory holds her seat in the brain.

There are very few, if any, here to-night, who remember the old watchmen of the town. These generally were men over middle age. They wore long grey coats, and carried a lanthorn and a staff five feet long, in their hands. Each night as they walked through the streets they had to call the hour, and the state of the weather, in a loud and doleful voice, "Past twelve o'clock, and a cloudy morning." "Past one o'clock, and a very fine morning," "Past five o'clock, and a very wet morning." This had to be repeated about every two hundred yards. In the stillness of night this melancholy message could be heard from one end of the street to the other. Who shall say how many evilly disposed persons have not received these cries as a warning, "Run away thief, for I am coming." In 1836 the New Constabulary Act of Sir R. Peel was adopted in Banbury, and the force consisted of four constables, and that well-known Banbury man, Mr. William Thompson, as superintendent. From that date the cry of the old Charlies was heard no more in our streets.

Many old landmarks have been removed since I was a boy. I have lost the row of fine poplar trees that ran along Green Lane, as far as Mr. Bray's house, and which could be seen from Canon's Ashby, Prior's Marston, and Napton; also the forty fine poplars which stood at the bottom of Bear Garden. The grand old Windmill on the Bloxham Road, near the first milestone, is doubtless well remembered by many persons of middle age. There is a fine well of pure spring water, and many of the stones of the mill are still lying on the spot. The fine thickset plantation of firs that used to be on the top of Crouch Hill rendered it a far more conspicuous object for a long distance than it is now. From the top of this well-known hill a lovely panorama of country can be seen, a view unequalled in Oxfordshire, extending as it does to Brill Hill in Buckinghamshire, and Nettlebed in the south of the county of Oxford. Till the time the Calthorpe Estate was cut up in 1834 there was a row of fine old elms, commencing about the New Land end of Marlborough Road and extending, without a break, past Mr. Harlock's and Dr. Burton's house to the Oxford Road. Many of the fine old trees were left standing till recently, and many clumps of fine Scotch firs.

The last time the Old Town Hall was used was at an election, about the year 1859. As I have told you, party feeling ran very high, and when the poll was declared, great excitement ensued, and a man (a non-resident) threw a heavy chair from the hustings on to the heads of the people. This was broken to pieces and hurled back through the windows of the

hall, followed by stones and other missiles, till every pane of glass in front was broken. A few months after the late Mr. George Cave bought the hall and had it re-built for a warehouse in one of the Cherwell wharves, where it now stands. I cannot let this topic pass without a few remarks. When quite a boy, I have seen some old topers sitting in the stocks there; one of the most frequent occupants of this back-aching machine was a man called Rosy Butler, a coal heaver, he was of a merry temperament, and would sing to the children who gathered round, for an hour at a time. He had many sympathisers, who gave him presents of tobacco, &c. There was also an old lady who kept an apple stall under the arches of the Hall for many years. At that time a bonfire was held every fifth of November, in front of the hall, and the fuel and materials given by the tradesmen for that purpose were stored under the arches.

In the first week of October, 1854, there was great excitement in the vicinity of Bridge Street, the occasion being the opening of the New Town Hall. The Mayor, Council, Borough and County Magistrates, Members of Parliament, and many other gentlemen were present. Whilst the function was proceeding, and just when the cheers which follows the toast of "The Queen," had hardly subsided, a gentleman hurriedly entered the hall, crossed to the chairman, and handed to him a very important communication, and he, in a few moments arose and announced to the meeting the good news that a great battle had been fought and won on the banks of the Alma, and the Allied Armies were in full march on Sebastopol. I cannot describe the enthusiasm which prevailed, all rose to their feet and the cheers and shouts of joy were something to be remembered. The news rapidly spread in the town, bells pealed out their joyous clang (no hooters then), and cheers for the red, white, and blue rang through the streets. At that time it took thirteen days to get a telegraphic message from the Crimea, and great was the anxiety and uncertainty which prevailed until further news came to hand. It subsequently transpired that the great battle of the Alma had been won, but more than two years' hard fighting, two winters in the trenches, much sickness and privation had to be endured, Inkerman and Balaclava had to be fought before Sebastopol was taken.

I remember having a brief musical treat one Sunday evening. I saw a great crowd outside the Red Lion Hotel; great stillness prevailed, and in a few minutes a grand voice charmed the ear. The air was "Home, Sweet Home," and the vocalist was Jenny Lind, who was *en route* from Oxford to Leamington, and resting for the night at Banbury.

I now return to South Bar Street, and will give you a few words about the Monument. In 1825 a Local Paving and Lighting Act was obtained and carried into effect by forty commissioners, chosen by the inhabitants. Many of the traces of "dirty Banbury" were removed, and in a year or two they laid out that long promenade of pavement from West Bar to the top of South Bar, now called "The Green." Near this spot was one of the old finger-posts, very shabby and much decayed. The Commissioners removed this and erected a stone monument, as you may see in the painting now shown. On three sides were given the towns and their distances north, west and south of Banbury. In those days there were a great many weavers in Banbury and neighbourhood, and many lived in South Bar. They, and others, held their after dinner Parliament, as it was called, round the Monument every day for half-an-hour, and all the topics of the day were warmly discussed. The man with a wooden leg, seen in the painting, was chairman of the meeting. His name was Clarke, he was a tailor. I knew him well and have often listened to his speeches on that spot. The cart going down the centre of the road in the picture was John Dipper's, one of the oldest Bloxham carriers. I find his name in "Rusher's List of Carriers" more than seventy years ago.

One of the most remarkable characters living in Banbury sixty years ago was a man named William Castle, who always went by the name of "Old Metal." He was a born comedian, full of oddities of speech and drollery. His name was a terror to children to whom he was known as "the Bogieman." He is best remembered as the fool of the King Sutton Morrice Dancers. This troupe always came to Banbury for a few days at Whitsuntide, when Old Metal, in a queer, fanciful dress, with his staff, bladder and calf's tail, would keep the crowd at a distance, whilst his ready wit, grimaces, and marvellous powers of contortion kept crowds of grown-up people in roars of laughter. He was fond of appearing in different characters, and the portrait is an excellent likeness of him as a clerical gentleman.

These reminiscences would not be complete without some account of the Coronation of Her Majesty Queen Victoria, June 28th, 1838. I can only briefly describe it, for the festivities were on a larger scale than ever before, or since, known in the good old town. There was a grand procession of all the trades, friendly and other societies, schools, &c. Many bands of music, decorated cars, men in armour, and other subjects of interest far too numerous to mention. I was one of the boys selected as a woolcomber, our car was decorated with flowers and contained a group of shepherds and shepherdesses with crooks, a lamb, sheep,

dog and six woolcombers, with fleeces of wool. We met at six o'clock in the morning, at the offices at Cobb's factory. We had coffee and rolls for breakfast and afterwards proceeded in our car to wait for the procession to be formed. Perhaps the best part of the whole procession was "The shipwrights, taking a cruise in their good ship Victoria." A large boat was rigged as a schooner, drawn by horses, and carried the Queen's pennon and the Union Jack. On the mainsail was inscribed "Britannia rules the waves," and along the rudder were fastened models of vessels from the three-decker to the jolly boat. The vessel "Victoria" was manned by the shipwrights in sailors' dresses. In a bower at the stern was Britannia, who performed her part with great dignity, the lady is now over eighty years of age, and is living at Grimsbury. The procession started from Easington at nine o'clock, went to the Bridge, the Sun Rising at Neithrop, and returned to the Horse Fair at one o'clock, when the dinner took place. Forty-five long tables had been prepared, extending from West Bar Street to the Friends' Meeting House, running from the pavement to the road. There were 80 persons at each table and a superintendent for each. The larder for this big dinner was at the Malthouse at the top of High Street. Carvers, waiters, and others, formed themselves in line from the Malthouse to the tables and passed the provisions along. So well were the operations conducted, that everything was placed on the tables in half-an-hour. A kilderkin of ale stood in front of the chairman at the head of each adult table; one waiter at each table was appointed tapster, and stood by Sir John Barleycorn and gave out the due proportion of beer for each person. The actual partakers, including carvers, waiters and others, were nearly 4,000 persons. The following provisions were provided—3,059lbs. of meat, 1,700lbs. of pudding, 1,595lbs. of bread, 612 gallons of ale.

The cost of these provisions, tables, printing, bands, and other expenses connected with the dinner was £222 14s. 4d., leaving a balance in hand, all defrayed by voluntary contributions from the inhabitants. On the opposite side of the Horse Fair was a roped ring where the sports took place at three o'clock. There was climbing of a greasy pole, jingling matches, bobbing for oranges, &c. Donkey races took place from the Monument to the front gates of the Churchyard. Whilst the sports were going on, the Sunday School Children, 865 in number, marched in procession to a tea in Messrs. Staley's meadow, near the bridge. I carried a flag, and I do think I felt the proudest and happiest boy in Banbury that afternoon. The Rev. J. R. Rushton, for many years curate at St. Mary's Church, and Mr. J. G. Walford, of the old Congregational Chapel, had the management of that happy

gathering. At six o'clock, dancing had commenced under the beautiful row of lime trees upon the green, and later in the evening the grass plots within the railings were also used. Several bands of music were in attendance. Late at night, my mother sought and found me, fast asleep in a chair, on the green. She led me home just as the rockets were shooting, and fire balloons sailing high over the house tops. And the Coronation day of the most illustrious Queen that ever sat on a throne was a thing of the past, but the bright and glorious events of that day still live in my memory.

Having now concluded my Reminiscences and Personal Recollections for the past seventy-four years, that I had provided for this lecture, I am now desirous of giving a brief historic incident that occurred in this old town more than 150 years ago, which has left a name behind that has been handed down from father to son for many generations, and so many versions of the deed have been given that it has assumed an almost fabulous character, and has made the name famous in Banbury. Details of the event are but little known at this distant date, but many curious accounts have been given of the man and his crime. Being in possession of the authentic facts of the case, I feel constrained to give them briefly in this paper. In the month of March 1746-7, the following record appears in the Register of Banbury—"Lydia Wilde, wid. and relict of Willm. Wilde, sen., slatter, was murdered the 7th and buried the 11th day." A brief account of this murder was given in the *Oxford Flying Weekly Journal* dated March 14th, 1746-7, and is as follows:—"We hear from Banbury that last Sunday, Widow Wilde of that place was found barbarously murdered in her own kitchen. There were several wounds upon her head, one of which is very large and appears to have been done with a hammer, and her throat was cut almost from ear to ear. An Irish fellow, a shag weaver, is strongly suspected, his shoes being found in his lodgings bloody half way up the heels, and much blood sprinkled on the upper leather. He plundered the house of about £20." The name of the murderer was Parr. He was tried at Banbury, was convicted, and hanged in the Horse Fair, opposite the scene of his crime. He was afterwards gibbeted on the spot which, from the circumstance, has been since called "Parr's Piece," on the south side of the way leading from Easington Farm toward Broad Street. The house in which the murder was committed was the second in the Horse Fair reckoning from West Bar Street. It is said that Old Parr's gibbet fell from the tree where it had hung for many years. The gibbet was found by some chimney sweepers who thereupon made a procession with

the body through the town and collected money from the inhabitants by exhibiting the same.

As we advance into old age we all have our hours of reflection, and our minds revert to the past, and we draw comparisons with the present ; and as we take a retrospect along the march of time, how many changes we see in a life's journey. The town has been steadily progressive. Seventy years ago there was but one day school in the town. The National School in the Southam Road was established 1817, and a few years after the Infants' School at the top of Tink-a-tank. Since that period six other new day schools have been built, and the cry is still for more. The Parish Church, St. Mary's, was the only Church in the town. This was built on the site of the fine old Banbury Church, and was opened about the year 1797. Four other Churches have been built within the last sixty years, and in the same period seven Nonconformist places of worship have been erected. In the High Street alone upwards of sixty new houses have been erected, and many others greatly improved by new shop windows and other ways since I was a boy. Since the establishment of the Board of Health, over forty years ago, cleanliness has greatly improved the town. The Cemetery on the Southam Road was then made. It has been twice enlarged since. The blessings of sobriety have vastly increased in our midst. In my younger days I have seen many drunken brawls and much fighting in the streets, women as well as men being combatants, even on a Sabbath morn.

The recreation and pastimes of the people have undergone an agreeable change since I was a youth, when bull baiting, prize fighting, cock fighting, and dog fighting, and many other cruel amusements were permitted and freely indulged in.

In bringing these items of my lecture to a conclusion, I must ask my readers for their lenient criticism. There may be errors and inaccuracies, and, if so, it is pardonable, for the paper was written entirely from memory within the space of three months previous to the lecture being delivered.

## Book Reviews

**The Lost Architectural Landscapes of Warwickshire: Vol. 1 – The South**, by Peter Bolton (hardback, 160pp., 93 figs.). Landmark Publishing, Ashbourne Hall, Cokayne Ave., Ashbourne, Derbyshire DE6 1EJ, 2003, ISBN 1 901522 98 9. £19.95.

The changes that have taken place in English villages and country towns over the last fifty years have been enormous. Peter Bolton's book sets out to document, town by town and village by village and in considerable detail, change and loss within each town and village in the area of the Stratford on Avon District Council. Buildings of every sort have gone – country houses, pubs, churches, railway stations, schools, cottages and more – but the loss is more than the sum of the parts. The phrase 'lost architectural landscapes' in the title is just: the built environment has changed as much as the natural. Nor is Peter Bolton afraid to criticise new buildings where criticism is merited, and he prefaces the book with a page of quotations from philistine and complacent councillors who permitted so much of this destruction and crass rebuilding.

It is good when a book raises questions as well as providing information, and *Lost Architectural Landscapes* certainly does that – to the extent, perhaps, that one wishes that there was more in the book than it would be realistic to hope for. In a book about lost landscapes it would be good to have more pictures to show what these vanished buildings actually looked like. Bolton gives very little idea of the character of the lost building stock, and even major houses and institutional buildings are often minimally described. There are no maps to show where buildings stood. For those who want to follow up particular leads, Bolton's sources are not always clear. But all of this would have called for a much fatter (and more expensive) book, and in documenting these changes one has to start somewhere. It must already have taken a huge amount of work to have amassed the information summarised in *Lost Landscapes*.

There are other ways in which the information that Bolton provides might be used – to illustrate, for example, the impact on the historic environment of the broader social and economic changes that have taken place in the area, discussion that could increase our understanding of its recent history and might help us to manage these pressures better in the future. It would be interesting, too, to use these dates and facts to test how effective measures for the protection of the heritage have actually been. (There have been some successes as well as failures – successes which the author has sometimes noted but often without telling us why a building, once threatened, has since been saved.) Such work, based on the facts collected by Peter Bolton, would give the information in this book a more than parochial interest.



*Lost Landscapes* should be seen as a stimulus for further research, as well as a memorial volume to what we have lost: a starting point for deeper studies of the drastic and profound changes of the recent past.

And for some appalling misprints, the author deserves every sympathy.

Nicholas Cooper

[*Note. A brief notice appeared in the previous issue of 'C&CH'.*]

**Village Chapels: Some aspects of rural Methodism in the East Cotswolds and South Midlands, 1800-2000**, by Pauline Ashridge (94pp., illustrated). Kershaw Publishing, Hook Norton. ISBN 0 9546632 0 9. £6.99.

This book encompasses a great deal of research on the small village Methodist chapels in what is essentially, despite its title, north Oxfordshire (or dare I say Banburyshire). The little houses of worship Dr Ashridge describes are all miraculous survivors, having seen the steady decline in worship in the twentieth century and, in many cases, suffering the indignity of being taken into secular use – as offices, storerooms and of course house conversions. She writes about her subjects with affection, putting a human face to the stories of these modest buildings.

In the introduction she sketches out a concise history of the Methodist movement. This is followed by a brief history of twenty-three small chapels from Cropredy north of Banbury down to Kingham just south of Chipping Norton – plus a very small scattering in Northamptonshire and Warwickshire and just one in Gloucestershire.

Excellent footnotes are provided with detailed documentary sources for the piece on each chapel. I do feel that this interesting book would benefit from a short bibliography of the general books used for background. Nevertheless it will be a useful tool for any historian writing local village history in this area or to someone who is curious to know a bit more about a movement that was so influential, at one time, that it was described as 'a second national church by the side of the first'.

This book complements the HMSO booklet, published in 1986, entitled *Nonconformist Chapels and Meeting-houses: Northamptonshire and Oxfordshire*. This records very bare historic information but much architectural detail and is very well illustrated.

Nicholas J. Allen

'Within the Shelter of the Old Elm Tree: Oddfellowship and Community in North Oxfordshire, 1871-2002', by Malcolm Bee, *Family and Community History*, Vol. 6/2, November 2003. Maney Publishing, Hudson Road, Leeds LS9 7DL.

'North Oxfordshire' in this context is Chipping Norton. More social than local history, nevertheless the human side breaks through to offer, despite its dedicated intent, an entertaining view of the importance of Friendly Societies. J.G.

## Lecture Reports

### *Brian Little*

**Thursday 11th December 2003.**

***The History of Duelling with Pistols* – Hugh Hinde.**

This was a highly entertaining and well-presented talk to a small but warmly appreciative audience.

It appears that the earliest pistol dates approximately to the start of the eighteenth century, a time when swords were less fashionable. Young army officers, especially in Ireland, developed a liking for this form of weaponry and it is to their ranks that we must look for reasons for combat. Frequently these were frivolous and often a way of settling differences over favoured ladies, matters of integrity and honour and even an extension of earlier dog fights in which no animal was supreme.

As for the duels themselves, the way these were organised was often haphazard, as for instance two people shooting from either end of a table or at the length of a scarf.

By the 1770's rules for duelling had been formulated and seconds were acquired by duelists to ensure that the event was well organised and brought to a satisfactory conclusion. Their other duties related to time and place and above all access to a surgeon. Wounds could be very serious as medical aids were limited compared with today.

The greatest beneficiaries were the gunsmiths, many located in London. They developed flintlock and percussion varieties of pistol and some like Manton and Griffin developed a name for their work. It was the accuracy of performance of the percussion type which may well have led to the decline of duelling. *The Times* spoke out against it and Queen Victoria frowned on the activity despite being surrounded by many one-time activists.

In England fights between individuals developed into target pistol shooting, By contrast duelling in France was still evident in the 1930's. Our neighbours across the Channel were late in appreciating the many hazards of 'pistols for two'.

**Thursday 8th January 2004.**

***The Gunpowder Plot, 1605* – Graham Sutherland.**

This was history delivered on a popular front and in a breezy manner. Graham lost no time in setting the scene. In his words, there was an air of expectancy in London at the start of the seventeenth century. March 1603 and the Queen was dead. There were no less than three contenders for the throne. Each needed to be aware of a general suspicion of Catholicism and a fear of Spain. Then there was also the deviousness of Robert Cecil, who had been adviser to Elizabeth.

It was against this background that the Gunpowder Plot was hatched. At the heart of this was Guy Fawkes, a man of York who was also a mercenary and a soldier on the hunt for gunpowder. As this needed to be fresh to be of use, it was conceivable that the whole scheme would not have come to anything anyway.

There was always going to be a moment when the conspirators had to decide to press ahead. This involved finding storage for arms and ammunition. Several Warwickshire houses were used.

Curiously it was widely known that the Plot was a live issue even though support from abroad was not forthcoming. The conspirators got so far as assembling at the Lion Inn at Dunchurch, though Fawkes himself was in London where cellars were being searched. Supporters rallied round but ultimately Catholics were rounded up and those at the centre of the Plot were hanged, drawn and quartered. Only Digby pleaded his guilt.

Graham Sutherland concluded his challenging talk with some key questions. Was Catesby responsible for the Plot or was the whole affair a ruse devised by Cecil? We may never know the real answers but with the four hundredth Anniversary in the offing it seems a good time to re-open the inquest. Our speaker did that in some style.

As a postscript Jeremy Gibson revealed a direct Banbury link with the Plot. William Knight, Banbury's leading personality, in his will of 1631 left to his grandson: "the yron crowe[bar] given me by Sr Walter Cope's Ladie, being the same the traiterous Papiste dugg under the Parl'mt House withall." Walter Cope was a younger brother of Sir Anthony Cope of Hanwell, M.P. for Banbury.

#### **Thursday 12th February 2004.**

##### ***The History of Deddington Castle – Chris Day.***

Sadly, because of illness, Mr Lethbridge was unable to deliver the advertised talk on 'Oxfordshire churches', so at short notice our member Chris Day stood in with an excellent and comprehensive account of one of Britain's smaller castles. In the late 1940s and in the 1970s this attracted the attention of archaeologists who identified the remains of late Saxon buildings along with associate artefacts.

Since these investigations, the site has been traced back to an Iron Age hill fort. The clue to this revised dating was the steep earthworks.

The defensive quality of the structure was greatly enhanced in the eleventh and twelfth centuries by the addition of stone which must have made the three and a half acre site most impressive.

By 1190 the settlement of Deddington had been split into three manors. One of these embraced the castle which by then belonged to the Dives family, supporters of Richard the Lionheart. This was about the peak of its importance, as from 1281 and on into the fourteenth century the castle diminished in size. Indeed stones were removed as they were needed for repair and construction purposes, partly in Deddington itself.

In 1364 St. George's Chapel, Windsor, acquired the manor including the castle site but did not devote any money to its maintenance. Unsurprisingly, Leland, that keen observer of the environment, remarked 'there hath been a castle'.

Deddington itself flourished in spite of the castle's demise. The *raison d'être* for the growth of traffic and trade was the major road crossing (now guarded by traffic lights). Even this focal point did not save Deddington from being in the shadow of Banbury. Its castle site was developed into parkland with fishponds by the St George's Windsor manorial owners. Their underlying purpose was to create a hunting park and hold fairs.

During the nineteenth century, 'gentlemanly' sport (cricket) and recreations (a rifle club) gradually opened up the castle site to the 'respectable' public, marked by a gigantic thatched pavilion in which balls for 'gentry' were held. Only by 1886 did football follow, with children's games in the 1930s.

The opening in recent years of the Windmill Centre on the west of Deddington has removed sports from the castle site, but today's visitors to its once again relaxed scene cannot fail to be impressed by its extent. This is one of many good reasons to want to know more about it.

#### **Thursday 11th March 2004.**

#### ***The Theory and Practice of Medicine from Medieval Times to the Scientific Revolution* – Steve Bacon.**

This was a fascinating if at times gruesome account of techniques used in medieval medicine. Steve's talk centred around the notion of health and quality of life being due to the balance within our bodies of what were known as the four humours – blood, phlegm, black bile and yellow bile.

Understanding of how this balance worked or could be altered depended very much on Greek and Roman knowledge and, where available, Arab experience. In fairly general terms, the humours were an outcome of what you ate, drank and argued about. People could be sanguine or melancholic depending on humour balance.

This broad-based introduction was followed by some graphic descriptions of how leeches were employed, arrows were removed from the body and wounds healed (honey helped) or made worse!. Last but not least Steve Bacon ventured into the world of amputation. His impressive display of related medieval artefacts greatly exceeded the time available for explaining their use. However, it all made for an interesting evening and an unusual conclusion to the season of indoor meetings.

## The Cromwell Association comes to Banbury

The Cromwell Association, the academic and historical society which works to promote the study and understanding of the life and times of Oliver Cromwell and of the civil war period in general, is coming to Banbury on Saturday 24th April. Each year, the Association holds its AGM and related events on the Saturday nearest to Cromwell's birthday – he was born on 25th April 1599 – in a venue with some Cromwellian or civil war significance.

Banbury has been selected as the venue this year, for the town and castle served as a key civil war stronghold in north Oxfordshire. To the south lay strongly royalist territory, focused on the king's HQ at Oxford. However, Banbury lay on the fringes of much more divided counties, for the parliamentarians held much of neighbouring Warwickshire and Northamptonshire. Banbury itself was notoriously puritan, and of course parliamentary, but early in the war the royalists siezed and garrisoned the castle, thus holding the town for most of the civil war. The surrounding area saw frequent parliamentary raids and parliamentary forces occasionally attacked the town itself. Thus parliamentarians overran the town in summer 1644 and established their HQ in St Mary's church, but the royalists held out in the castle, resisting a brief and unsuccessful siege, and in October royalist reinforcements drove off the parliamentarians. In January 1646, with the king now clearly losing the war and facing defeat throughout the country, the parliamentarians returned and overwhelmed the town. Again, however, the royalist garrison in the castle held out for several months, only surrendering after the king had fled Oxford in May. With that, Banbury's civil war effectively came to an end. Although Cromwell passed through north Oxfordshire on several occasions, we have no clear record of him ever staying at Banbury or playing a rôle in any of the military actions in and around the town.

The Association will be in Banbury on Saturday morning, meeting at the Museum. As well as the AGM, there will be a short lecture on the civil war in the area, entitled 'Beyond Edgehill: Further Thoughts'. It will be given by Dr Philip Tennant, author of *Edgehill and Beyond: The People's War in the South Midlands* (B.H.S. 23, 1992), an outstanding study of the civil war in the south midlands region, which focuses on the involvement of the ordinary people in the war.

In the afternoon the Association will be paying a group visit to Broughton Castle, the grand fortified mansion owned by generations of the Fiennes family, Lords Saye and Sele. In the 1630s the first viscount was one of the key political opponents of Charles I and his Personal Rule, and the Castle was their regular meeting place. In effect Broughton Castle was the birthplace of what led to the civil war and the overthrow of the king.

## OBITUARIES

### *Edward Thomas Clark (1910-2004)*

Ted Clark died on 12 January 2004 at Totnes, Devon, at the age of 93. He had been Editor of the *Banbury Guardian* from 1947 to 1965, and made a great contribution to our understanding of Banbury and its history.

Edward Thomas Clark, M.B.E., known to all as Ted, son of Theo, who built Clark's Mill in Station Approach, and his wife Ethel, was born at Wimbledon on 13<sup>th</sup> May 1910, the elder twin by half an hour of George, who later inherited the Mill.

He and his twin brother were named Edward and George after Edward VII and his successor George V.

The family moved to Banbury in his early childhood. Then after commencing school in Banbury, Ted was sent to Taunton School in Somerset where, apart from studies, he first learnt to play and to love cricket. Quality coaching combined with natural talent ensured that Ted would be considered good enough to play for Oxfordshire in the Minor Counties competition.

Before the intervention of the Second World War, Ted gained experience in journalism by becoming a reporter for the *Banbury Guardian* under the editorship of William Potts. He felt the need to widen his newspaper contacts and sought experience with the *Western Morning News*. It was while working for this newspaper that he joined the Royal Devon Regiment and later was commissioned into the Royal Berkshire Regiment. He was decorated for his war services.

After the war Ted returned to the *Banbury Guardian* where first he became advertising manager and later succeeded Potts as Editor. It was in this rôle that he will be remembered for his leadership of the paper and for his fund-raising skills. Also he and John Cheney prepared Potts' manuscript of the History of Banbury so that it could be published (in 1958).

Ted was Chairman of the co-ordinating committee for the National Savings Movement and was awarded the M.B.E. for his services to the campaign.

Outside of journalism, he belonged to several town organisations, notably Banbury Rotary Club, of which he was President in 1964-65, and later the Compton Club with its Rotary members in their advancing years.

In the mid-1960s when Woodrow Wyatt incorporated the *Banbury Guardian* into his press empire there was no place for Ted in his strategy and so he sought the deputy editorship of the *Stratford-upon-Avon Herald*. After ten years in this capacity Ted established himself as a local historian in Banbury. He lectured to many groups, was featured on the B.B.C. and sound broadcasts such as 'Down Your Way'. He will also be remembered for his book of postcards entitled

*Banbury in old picture postcards* (1982) and his short history and guide to the town (1992). Perhaps of greater importance was his dedication to Potts' *History of Banbury*, of which he edited a second edition in 1978. This was enhanced by research published by our Society in the two decades since its first publication and an index provided by Jeremy Gibson.

The final chapter of his life was acted out in Devon where sadly his beloved Freda died in 2003. He gave generously of his time to St Mary's Church in Totnes just as he had worked hard for St Mary's Broughton near Banbury.

It was wholly appropriate that in 2002 Ted unveiled a blue plaque in honour of William Potts on the building that used to house the *Banbury Guardian*. He knew what editorship was all about.

**Brian Little**

### ***Professor Margaret Stacey (1922-2004)***

With regret and respect we record the death on 10<sup>th</sup> February 2004 of Margaret Stacey, one of the most distinguished scholars to have lived in Banbury, and author of a book that made the town a place of interest for sociologists all over the world.

Born Margaret Petrie in London in 1922, she studied at the London School of Economics where she took a First in Sociology in 1943, after which she worked for a time in a Royal Ordnance Factory. In 1945 she married Frank Stacey, a political scientist, who from 1974 until his death in 1977 held a chair at the University of Nottingham. From 1944 Margaret held a joint post with the delegacies for Extra-mural Studies and Social Training at the University of Oxford.

The Staceys moved to live at No.6 The Byeway on the Grimsbury Manor Estate, the first large-scale private housing development in Banbury after the conclusion of World War 2, and on the very edge of the town. The Banbury Social Survey arose from a request by the local branch of the Workers' Educational Association for a three-year tutorial class in Sociology. The research took place in 1948-51, and the results were published by Oxford University Press in *Tradition and Change: A Study of Banbury*, in 1960.

The study was replicated in 1966-68 under Margaret Stacey's direction by a team of fieldworkers led by Colin Bell (Obituary: *C&CH* 15.9, 2003), and published by Routledge & Keegan Paul as *Power, Persistence and Change: a second study of Banbury*, in 1975.

Margaret Stacey left Banbury to take up a post at Swansea in 1951, moving in 1974 to a chair at the University of Warwick that she occupied until her retirement in 1989, when she became emeritus professor. Her principal specialism came to be in the sociology of medicine. She was a member of the General Medical Council for 1976-84, and her many publications included works on the effects of hospitals on children and their families, as well as studies

of sociological theory. In attempting to explain Margaret Stacey's influence on Banbury it is pertinent to apply her own methods of fieldwork, and to observe that *Kelly's Directory* for 1950 shows the Stacey's at No.6 The Byeway, Leslie (L.C.A.) Lewis, the area officer for the National Assistance Board, at No.15, and T.W. Muskett, the borough librarian, in the 'gatekeeper's house' at the entrance to the cul-de-sac, No.33 Grimsbury Drive. Lewis and Muskett were leading figures in the local W.E.A., and it is interesting to speculate that the Banbury Social Survey may have originated from neighbourly conversations.

**Barrie S. Trinder**

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## **BANBURY HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

### **ANNUAL REPORT, 2003**

Your Committee have pleasure in submitting the 46th Annual Report and Statement of Accounts, for the year 2003.

At the A.G.M. officers and other members were again re-elected.

Membership of the Society remains close to three hundred, most as records members. Attendance at meetings and new membership remain constant, thanks to posters (fresh for each meeting) distributed by Deborah Hayter for display at an ever-increasing number of key places.

During 2003 and since, we have been saddened by the deaths of several long-term members, including Ted Clark, Nan Clifton, Sarah Markham (née Loveday), Francis Sitwell and Rosemary Wade.

The year's meetings maintained their accustomed entertaining variety. Nick Allen has now been arranging these since 1997, and we have a full line-up for 2004/05. Reports prepared by Brian Little have appeared in *Cake & Cockhorse*. The first talk, by Captain George Prideaux, was a swash-buckling account, in full costume, of the Merchant Adventurers of the seventeenth century. In contrast we came right up to living-memory with Bill King's description of thankfully never-needed resistance groups in this country during the Second World War. Vernon Brook's slide-show of Cotswold buildings reminded us, as if it was necessary, of the beautiful countryside at our doorsteps. This was the last to be held at the North Oxfordshire College after many years of meeting there, and it is appropriate to thank Brian Little for his constant liaison with the authorities which enabled matters always (nearly) to run so smoothly.

For the autumn's meetings we moved to the new Banbury Museum, and concern that the new location would be unpopular was soon dissipated by house-full attendance at the first two. It was also gratifying to be able to welcome disabled members, for whom the College had been daunting. Deborah Hayter gave a fascinating talk on the origins of place names in the Banbury



Region, and Hugh Compton spoke with the in-depth knowledge of the true expert on our local canal. Hugh Hinde completed another successful year with an entertaining exposition on the history of duelling with pistols.

In the summer, on two beautiful summer days, we visited Milton Manor House (near Abingdon) and were conducted round the earthworks and gardens at Canons Ashby. Fiona Thompson, Beryl Hudson and Deborah Hayter organised these with their usual initiative and efficiency. For the A.G.M., we were invited to Shalstone House by Mr Geoffrey Purefoy, his family home for over two centuries.

Our start-of-season reception was held at the new Museum, hosted by Simon and his staff, and as always much enjoyed.

The normal three issues of *Cake & Cockhorse* appeared, with contributions from Nick Allen, Christine Bloxham, Ruth Brown, Hugh Compton, Deborah Hayter, Geoffrey Smedley-Stevenson, Philip Tennant and Barrie Trinder, as well as from regulars Brian Little and Jeremy Gibson, who compiled the 28-page index to Volume 15, that concluded with the Summer issue.

Regrettably it did not prove possible to finalise Dr Leo de Freitas' *Banbury and the Chapbook*, but it should appear soon. The delay with this and *Turnpike Roads to Banbury* is entirely due to your series editor's continuing inability to find the energy to devote the time it requires for their presentation, but they *will* be completed in due course. Geoffrey Smedley-Stevenson's long-term work on the diaries of William Cotton Risley, Vicar of Deddington 1836-1848, is effectively also ready for publication.

Income from subscriptions comfortably covered our day-to-day running costs, and made a significant contribution to our healthy end-of-year balance. This balance, together with a promised grant, should be sufficient to cover costs of the records volumes in the pipeline. There were no calls on the Brinkworth Fund during the year. The committee would welcome suggestions for expenditure from the Fund which need to be of a broadly educational nature.

**Banbury Historical Society**

**Revenue Account for the Year ended 31 December 2003**

	2003	2002
	£	£
<b>INCOME</b>		
Subscriptions	2500	2732
Income Tax refund	314	282
Building Society interest	311	342
Sale of publications	812	795
Over-provision for rent of hall written back	770	0
Other	41	69
Total Income	<u>4748</u>	<u>4220</u>
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>		
Cake & Cockhorse costs	2135	1728
Records volumes costs	31	45
Meetings	368	364
Reception & AGM	252	127
Administration inc publicity	243	101
Total Expenditure	<u>3029</u>	<u>2385</u>
<b>SURPLUS for the year to Accumulated Fund</b>	<u>1719</u>	<u>1835</u>

**Brinkworth Fund for the Year ended 31 December 2003**

<b>INCOME</b>	64	74
Building Society interest		
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>		
(Grant to Banbury Museum)	0	240
<b>SURPLUS (DEFICIT) for the year to (from) the Fund</b>	<u>64</u>	<u>(166)</u>

**Banbury Historical Society**

**Balance Sheet as at 31 December 2003**

	2003	2002
	£	£
<b>ACCUMULATED FUND</b>		
Balance at 1 January 2003	13,998	12,163
Plus Surplus for the year	1,719	1,835
Balance at 31 December 2003	<u>15,717</u>	<u>13,998</u>
<b>BRINKWORTH FUND</b>		
Balance at 1 January 2003	2,965	3,131
Plus Surplus (Less Deficit) for the year	64	-166
Balance at 31 December 2003	<u>3,029</u>	<u>2,965</u>
<b>TOTAL BALANCE at 31 December 2003</b>	<u>18,746</u>	<u>16,963</u>
<b>Represented by</b>		
<b>ASSETS:</b>		
NatWest Bank Banbury - Current Account	1,263	706
Leeds & Holbeck Bldg. Soc. - Main Account	14,667	14,356
Leeds & Holbeck Bldg. Soc. - Brinkworth Account	3,030	2,965
Cash	26	12
Plus Sundry Debtors	<u>18,986</u>	<u>18,039</u>
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<u>19,138</u>	<u>18,204</u>
<b>Less LIABILITIES:</b>		
Subscriptions in advance	392	471
Sundry Creditors	0	770
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES</b>	<u>392</u>	<u>1,241</u>
<b>NET ASSETS</b>	<u>18,746</u>	<u>16,963</u>

G.F.Griffiths, Hon. Treasurer

I have reviewed and examined 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 December 2003.

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.

### 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).

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

*King's Sutton Churchwardens' Accounts 1636-1700*, ed. Paul Hayter (vol. 27).

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

### In preparation:

*Banbury Chapbooks*, by Dr Leo John de Freitas.

*Turnpike Roads to Banbury*, by Alan Rosevear.

Selections from the *Diaries of William Cotton Risley, Vicar of Deddington 1836-1848*, ed. G. W. Smedley-Stevenson.

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 Banbury Museum, Spiceball Park 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**.

# BANBURY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

## Summer 2004 Programme

*Thursday 6th May, 2.15 p.m.*

**Honington Hall**, near Shipston-on-Stour.

*Thursday 3rd June, 1.45 p.m.*

**Stowe House**, near Buckingham.

*Saturday 3rd July, 5.00 p.m. for 5.30 p.m.*

**A.G.M. at Steane (near Brackley) Church.**

## Autumn 2004 Programme

*All meetings are held at Banbury Museum.*

*Thursday 2nd September, 6.00 p.m. – 8.00 p.m.*

Social evening at **Banbury Museum**, Spiceball Park Road, with conducted tours of the Museum.

*Thursday 9th September, 7.30 p.m.*

Banbury Plush. *Christine Bloxham*. The talk will be based on the artifacts in Banbury Museum. She will also include talking *in situ* about plush in the Museum. Christine was Curator of Banbury Museum in the 1970s and co-author with Vera Hodgkins of *Banbury and Shutford Plush* (B.H.S., 1980).

*Thursday 14th October, 7.30 p.m.*

The new Globe Theatre (from concept to realisation). *Margaret Thomas*.

*Thursday 11th November, 7.30 p.m.*

Medieval Villages in a Landscape (The Whitlewood Project). *Dr Richard Jones and Dr Mark Page, University of Leicester.*

*Thursday 9th December, 7.30 p.m.*

The History of Oxford College Gardens. *Michael Pirie, head gardener, Green College, Oxford.*

All meetings are held at the  
**Banbury Museum**, Spiceball Park Road, Banbury,  
at **7.30 p.m** (September Reception at 6.00 p.m.)

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