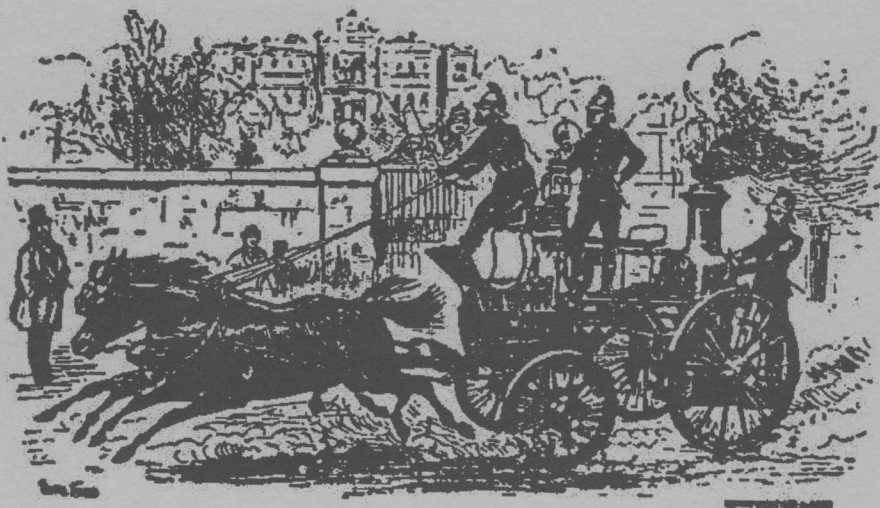


# CAKE AND COCKHORSE



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# BANBURY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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

# *Cake and Cockhorse*

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

Volume 17

Summer 2009

Number Nine

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## **Banbury Historical Society Local History Prize**

We are aware that there are lots of keen local historians in the area who are busily investigating aspects of their own history, so the Society held a competition earlier in the year for the best piece of local historical research, offering a prize of £100 and the opportunity to publish an article in *Cake and Cockhorse*.

The terms of the competition were deliberately wide to encourage one and all to enter by 30 April 2009. You rose to the challenge! We had sixteen entries varying enormously in size, format and complexity. The wide remit ensured that those who are in the middle of research were just as enthusiastic about entering as those who have completed and/or published their studies. And it was not only local history societies who entered; individuals did too, ensuring that we were aware of the wide spread of talent available.

Some of the subjects were fairly predictable – useful documentation of the history of local schools, businesses or churchyards, all of which is enormously helpful to the local historian. Others were described more as research projects and varied between investigating the alleged tunnels in Aynho to an immensely thorough investigation of the landscape history of Weedon Pinkney in 1593. Yet more were the results of the pursuit of details about individuals who had lived in or around Banbury, such as violin makers, printers or even Sir Winston Churchill.

We reviewed them all and considered them both as pieces of original research and as potential for publication.

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Cover: From the Programme of the Fete al Fresco, 1898, “Banbury Fire Brigade (under Captain Fortescue) will give a Display illustrating A Call to Fire.” (p.301)

We also identified several which we hope will prove the subject of talks to the Society in the future or which might be exemplars of research methodology to encourage others.

Ultimately a choice had to be made, but we were unable to identify an out-and-out-winner, so we divided the prize equally between two local societies – **Aynho History Society** for its report on the on-going work on the Aynho tunnels and the Sydenham Quarries Research Project, and **Steeple Aston Archive** for its publication on Steeple Aston Business and Trade and an analysis of census data; each receives a cheque for £50.

The fact that two societies are the winners merely reflects the work of many individuals sometimes working on their own but also working together collaboratively and we hope that the publicity which they receive as a result of the competition will encourage others to join in and contribute too.

We are very encouraged by the enthusiasm shown for this competition and the committee has decided that it should be held again in two years' time, partly to give intending authors or societies time to work on their projects and partly to allow the Society to enjoy the results of this year's competition. We have lots of ideas about how to involve members in this way and will be announcing some when the programme for 2009/2010 is published.

**Helen Forde**

*A Short History of King's Sutton Primary School 1909 - 2009*, June Smith  
*Aynho Village Tunnels Research Project*, Aynho History Society  
*Sydenham Quarries Research Project*, Aynho History Society  
*Dashwood School 1901-2008, a Souvenir History*, Rebecca Mileham  
*Banbury's Lost Castle*, E.M Sparkes, from *Times Gone By*  
*Lost Streets and Public Houses in Banbury*, E.M. Sparkes, from *Times Gone By*  
*Pre-war Babies, Post War Spenders, 1950s Consumerism*, E.M. Sparkes, from *Times Gone By*  
*Sir Winston and the Western*, Alan Donaldson  
*The Story of Mary Vane Turner* [Deddington historian], Jill Tustian  
*Holy Trinity Church, Sibford Gower*, Maureen Hicks  
*Bloxham Village Museum - Churchyard Project*  
*A Banbury Printer*, Tony Newman  
*Weedon Pinkney, September 1593*, David Adkins  
*Steeple Aston Business and Trade*, S.A.V.A.  
*The fiddle-making squire of Steeple Aston*, Geoffrey Lane  
*Steeple Aston census analysis and database*.

# SYDENHAM QUARRIES

## Aynho History Society Research Project

*Peter Brookfield*

*The Aynho History Society is joint winner of the Local History Prize initiated by Banbury Historical Society late last year. A purpose of this was to seek articles suitable for publication, so this research was a contributory factor in the award. Peter Brookfield, a resident of Aynho and a member of Aynho History Society, completed this research project. It follows earlier research into other ironstone quarries that previously existed near Aynho at Adderbury and Nell Bridge.*

*We are delighted to be able to publish this, especially as it effectively provides a sequel to Hugh Compton's 'The Oxford Canal and the Ironstone Business' (C&CH. 14.2, pp.27-36, Spring 1998). This concluded "In [1890] railway sidings were laid... Thereafter the story is one hundred per cent railway." Here it is.*

In 1998 *Cake & Cockhorse* published an article by Hugh Compton on 'The Oxford Canal and the Ironstone Business' which showed the important role played by The Oxford Canal Company in the development of the ironstone quarries, including Sydenham Quarry, and the distribution of their product.

The Aynho Census for 1901 shows that there were six ironstone miners living in Aynho at that time. They were:

George Butler, aged 30, of Main Road

Joseph Lambert, aged 49

Amos Lord, aged 22

Alec Williams, aged 26

Richard Savings, aged 46; and

George Williams, aged 41,

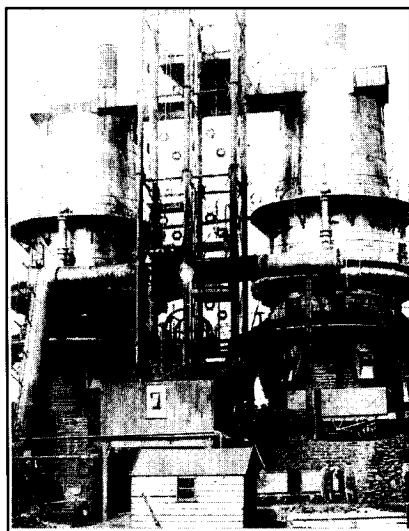
all of whom lived next door to each other in Brackley Road.

### **Sydenham Quarries**

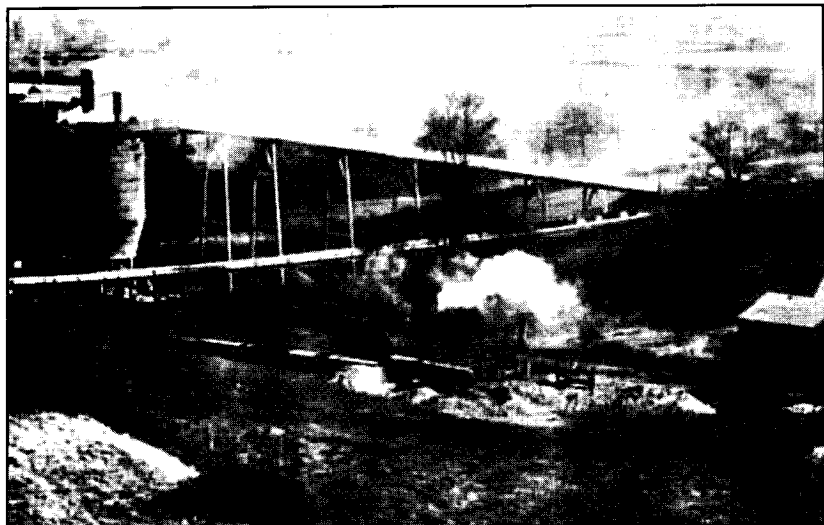
The quarries were situated in and around the area now occupied by the Banbury Business Park, adjacent to the Banbury and Cheltenham branch of the Great Western Railway. The original owner was Sir Alfred Hickman, who also owned a large steelworks at Bilston in the Black Country; ownership passed to Stewarts & Lloyds from April 1925.

Sydenham was a compact system named after the farm of the same name on land to the east of the Adderbury-Aynho road on the high ground bounded by a loop of the Oxford canal. It was near to the previously mentioned Adderbury Quarries, which were worked-out by the 1890s.

Leases were obtained and mining started by 1914, no doubt accelerated by wartime pressure, and they were rapidly developed by 1917. During development, the quarries were equipped with five calcining kilns which were an improved design of kilns used at Astrop ironstone quarries north of Kings Sutton. They were between fifty to sixty feet high. These kilns dried the iron ore over three days to get rid of water and other volatile substances, with impurities, including lime and phosphates, being drawn off to be used as manure. The quarried ironstone was put in wagons and taken to the top of the kilns via a steam-driven lift where they were tipped. After the calcining process, the stone was purer and lighter. It was then taken by railway to the Springvale furnaces at Bilston. The resultant smoke and steam from the kilns must have made the scene reminiscent of the industrial Black Country rather than a quiet country corner on the border between Oxfordshire and Northamptonshire.



*Photographs 1 (above) and 2 show calcining kilns in operation. Photo 1 shows the kilns in close-up and clearly shows the steam-driven lift used to take the loaded wagons to the top of the kiln for tipping.*



### *Calcining kilns at Hook Norton Quarries*

*Photo 2 (above) shows one kiln in the process of calcining. Sydenham had five of these kilns so it is not difficult to imagine the volume of smoke they must have produced.*

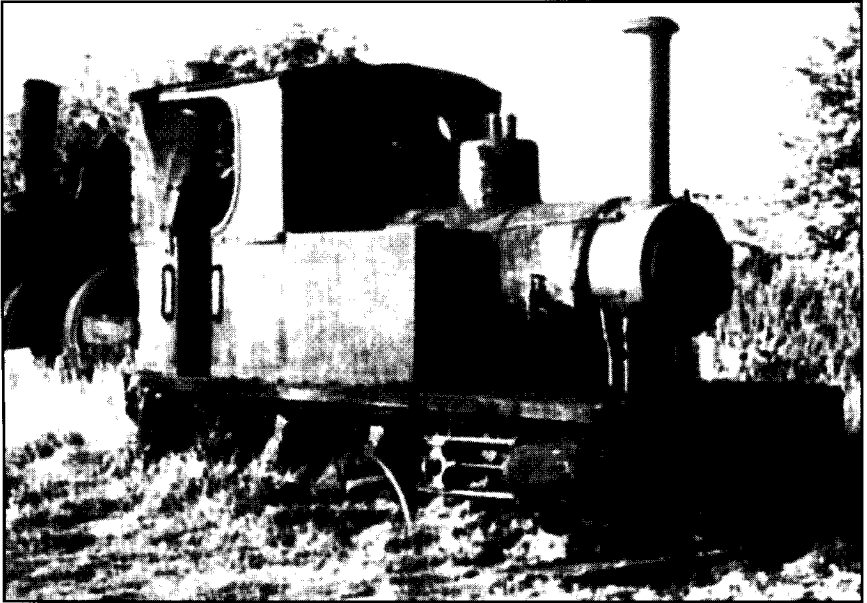
*We have been unable to find photographs of the kilns at Sydenham, but these are similar to ones in operation at Hook Norton Quarries.<sup>1</sup>*

An interesting point is that output from the neighbouring Adderbury quarry, the main source of ironstone for Sydenham, was taken the short distance by the Oxford Canal, which ran nearby the kilns. A report of the time says that, when fully loaded on the canal barges, the railway wagons had a clearance of only 1.5 inches to the sides of the barges. This awkward method of transport was not continued for long.

Another difference from Adderbury Quarries was the number of steam locomotives used for such a small tramway: four locomotives were purchased with expectations of working up to three-quarters of a mile from the kilns. Three of the locomotives were supplied by Andrew Barclay of Kilmarnock in Scotland and the fourth by the Hunslet Engine Company of Leeds. They were painted green with black and white lining. Two of the engines were named 'The Doll' and 'Winifred' and the others, called 'Margaret' and 'Gertrude', were named after the daughters of the quarry manager, Mr J. R. Owen.

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<sup>1</sup> See *C&CH* 3.12, p.227 (1968), 4.8, pp.138-40 (1970), 9.1, pp.14-22 (1982).

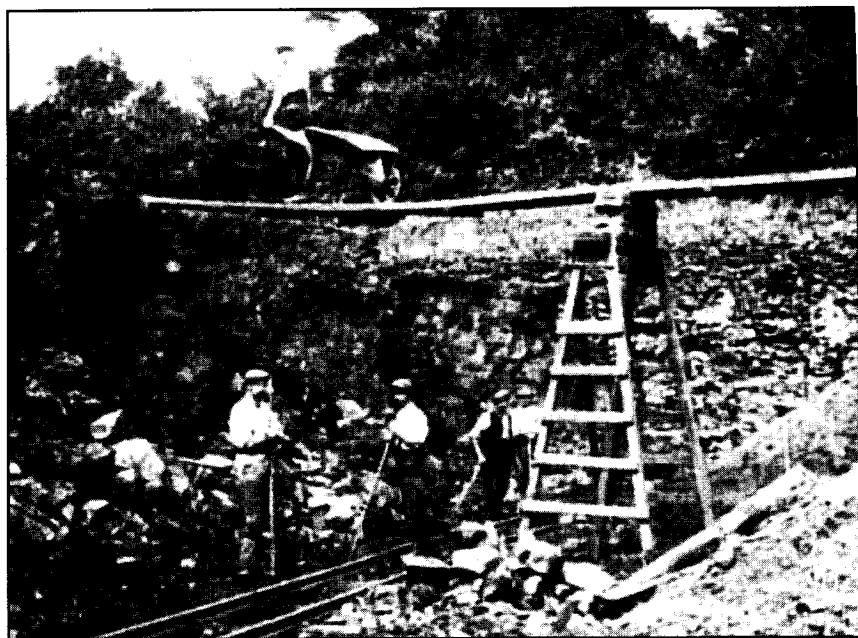


*Photo 3 (above) shows 'Gertrude' in retirement after the quarries closed. She was stored at Neville's Garage, Chipping Norton, in the early 1960s and was later privately preserved.*

A twenty-ton steam navy, or excavator, was purchased from Ruston Proctor in 1915, but was not an unqualified success due to the amount of rubbish taken up when loading.

As a result of this, hand-loading was introduced; this must have been a back-breaking experience, which involved removing the overburden or earth and then removing the stone with a pickaxe and chisel and finally loading the stone into the adjacent railway wagons (Photo 4).





*Photo 4 is a view of ironstone quarrying by hand. 'Toppers' are removing the overburden by hand and depositing it on the worked-out ground to the right. A job with a very high accident rate!*

The work was hard and the pay small. An idea of the rates paid is taken from the nearby Astrop quarries, also owned by Hickman. Four pence (in old money) per ton for wet ore and three and one-half pence for dry ore, with twenty tons per day being the average output per man. Three pence per yard was paid for removing the earth and an extra farthing for tipping wagons was also paid. However, in 1920 another twenty-ton steam navy was brought into operation, similar to the one in photo 5.

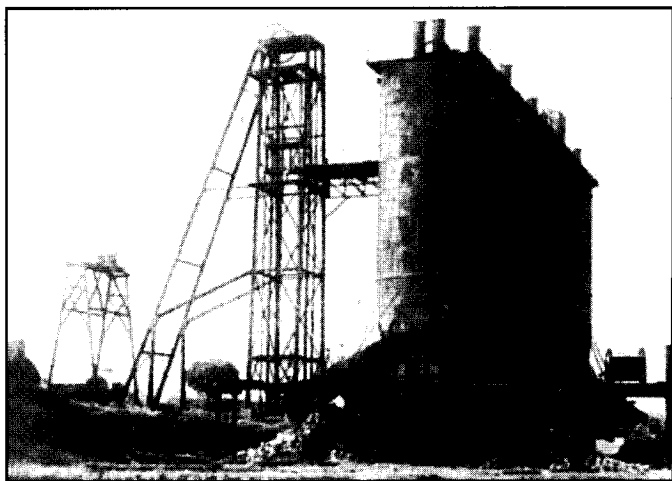


*Photo 5 above. The working faces of the quarry were gradually extended northwards and west under the Adderbury-Aynho road to Navy Pit Ground; there the formation of step faulting was encountered. Step faulting is where the layers of stone are at an angle. See Photo 6 below.*



*Photo 6 (above) shows step faulting at the deserted Sydenham Quarry in May 1949. The layers can clearly be seen to be displaced from the horizontal; this is quite rare in quarries.*

As a result of Alfred Hickman Ltd obtaining leases for large tracts of land served by the Oxfordshire Ironstone Co Ltd, in which company Hickman had a fifty percent interest, Sydenham quarries were shut down in June 1925, whilst the Oxfordshire Ironstone Co. Ltd. carried on working until 1967.<sup>2</sup> Indeed, when Stewarts and Lloyds, who took over Alfred Hickman Ltd., were looking for a site to build their new steel works in 1930, both Banbury and Corby were considered because of their adjacent ironstone fields, but of course Corby was chosen. The first steam navvy went to Oxfordshire Ironstone Co. Ltd., where, because they already had a digger called 'Jimmy', the new arrival, presumably because it came from Sydenham, was christened 'Syd'. The track was lifted at this time, although the kilns and various sheds were left standing and were dismantled, primarily for the metalwork, by James Friswell & Sons Ltd of Banbury, about 1932.



Friswell's took this photo (7) during demolition of the kilns at Sydenham Quarries in 1932. After World War Two part of the site was taken over by Portable Concrete Buildings Ltd., better known as Banbury Buildings, and when this company closed, the site became Banbury Business Park, mainly occupied by Vodafone. Traces of the quarry and tramway can be seen at the back of Vodafone and in the adjacent fields. The quarry on the west side of the Adderbury-Aynho road has been filled in and made into a golf-course.

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<sup>2</sup> See *C&CH*, 3.12, pp.224-5 (1968).



*Photo 8 (above) shows the remains of the kilns and the stone bases.*

In 1969, when Banbury Buildings occupied the site, they were demolished. In 1970, during the development of the Banbury Business Park, the Banbury and Cheltenham Branch railway track (in the foreground) was taken up.

The whole area was the subject of a planning application in April 1957 by Dowsett Mineral Recovery Ltd to resume quarrying, along with another area at Bloxham. It was estimated that there remained 1.8 million tons of ore on the site and the company planned to remove it over a period of eight years using lorries to transport it to new railway sidings to be constructed near the calcining kilns. However, this scheme came to nothing [*Thank goodness. Ed.*].

As regards the locomotives, two have been scrapped and two have been preserved after a rather chequered history. One, 'The Doll', has been fully renovated and is used on the Indian Hill narrow gauge railway tourist passenger service in Leighton Buzzard. See Photo 9.



Photo. 9, 'The Doll'.

*Sources:*

*The Ironstone Quarries of the Midlands, Part 11: The Oxfordshire Field*, Eric Tonks 1988.

*A History of the Railways of Oxfordshire, Part 1 The North*, Bill Simpson, 1997.

*The Banbury and Cheltenham Railway*, J.H. Russell, 1977.

## A VICTORIAN CHILDHOOD

### **Memoirs of Banbury during the early years of the life of *Dorothy Mary Bromley***

I was born on the 29th of December 1886 at 44 North Bar, Banbury and was baptized in St Mary's Parish Church, Banbury during the early months of 1887. The year of the Golden Jubilee of Queen Victoria.

My father and mother were married in St Mary's Church on February 24th 1886.

My father, Clement Bromley, was born at 43 North Bar in 1846 and was the eldest son of Clement Bromley, who came to live in Banbury when he was apprenticed to his uncle John Bromley, a builder, decorator etc who carried on his business in Parsons Street in the premises lately occupied by Kingerlee & Son. John Bromley and his family were buried in St Mary's Church Yard, a large square stone being visible from the path near until removed when the gravestones were removed to make a Garden of Rest. The piece of stone bearing his name now forms part of the curb opposite the Vicarage side door.

My mother Caroline Allen before her marriage was the only daughter of Samuel and Charlotte Allen. Samuel Allen was the son of the schoolmaster at Farnborough [?]. He was an ironmonger with one shop in [48] Parsons Street next to the Reindeer Inn and another in Bridge Street.

My grandmother Charlotte was a twin daughter of Henry Herbert who lived at the Reindeer. They were the youngest of a large family. The eldest, Henry, followed his father at the Reindeer, helped by his sister Maria. He was Assistant Overseer for many years. Later he retired to 48 [?45] West Bar and was elected Mayor but was taken ill and died before he could take office. One of his sisters married Joseph Malsbury who was Mayor of Banbury [1871-72] and after his retirement built and lived with his daughter for some years at the Limes now occupied by Reynaby[?] School.

My father and his brother and also mother's two brothers all attended the school called the Banbury Academy in the Horse Fair now divided into offices called Whateley Chambers. The Head Master from 1854 to 1883 was Mr William Hartley. I have the Menu and Toast list of a Centenary Dinner at the [f.2] White Lion Hotel on March 23rd 1897.



*The Banbury Academy: drawing on the Centenary Toast List.*

Many well-known names in Banbury are given as proposing and responding to toasts. My uncle, Hebert Allen, sang a solo and took part in glees with Messrs. Sykes, Johnson and Wells and another uncle William Bromley gave two recitations. The Chairman was the Mayor, Mr W. Lake and the Vice-Chairman Mr Alban Buller. Mr J.N. Durrant was the Headmaster from 1890. A pleasant little copy of a drawing of the school on this Toast List is unsigned. A list is given of the names of ninety-four old boys who were present.

Later on my father went to a school at Bilton near Rugby as a boarder in about 1868. I have an exercise book he wrote there containing very neat copper-plate writing and also drawings and plans. Also a knife and fork of horn in a case he used there. He said the boys were give meat, perhaps a chop and a mug of ale for breakfast.

Subsequently when he joined his father in business he joined the volunteers and also became a member of the Fire Brigade, the membership of which was voluntary and unpaid. I remember as a child more than once seeing a man on a farm-horse galloping wildly up North Bar to the Fire Station then in the Horse Fair next to the Woodlands, the home of the Brigade Captain, Mr Charles Fortescue, now the main part of the Whateley Hotel.



*Banbury Volunteer Fire Brigade outside the Fire Station in Horse Fair, 1890s.*

A large bell was fixed at the entrance by the gate which would be loudly rung and quickly the firemen would arrive buttoning coats and adjusting helmets as they ran, no cars or even bicycles in those days. Then out through the gate way came the fire engine drawn by two strong, excited horses, and off they went watched by an admiring crowd of people who had soon collected, all anxious to know where the fire was, the news of which was passed from one to another before dispersing.

I only remember seeing two spectacular fires in the town as a child. One was in some cottages near Edmunds and Kinch Mill, a good view of which was had from the Bridge over the Railways across the Park. That was in the daytime and the other, in the night, about 1900, some paint shops belonging to Mr Higgs in the corner of [f.3] North Bar where the Normer Tyre Co. now is. This caused a very fierce blaze and was watched anxiously from a bedroom window.

My grandmother and her companion were knocked up by the firemen in case the fire spread as sparks were flying over the roof of No. 43. My mother said they had great difficulty in getting my grandmother, who was nearly ninety, to understand the need to get up and she insisted on having her stays properly laced!



Directly after the firemen called to say the danger was over they found her back in bed again in nightdress and night cap not at all pleased to have had her night's rest disturbed.

I remember when I was four or five years old going with a maid we had then named Ellen White to see her parents and have tea with them. Their cottage was in Boxhedge Square and had a garden reaching down to Warwick Road at the bottom of which was a stream or pond from which Ellen picked water cress for tea. In a small work shop behind the cottage I was very interested to watch Mr White weaving at his plush loom. I remember clearly the beautiful cream coloured stretch of material completed and the shuttle being threaded in and out and I think his feet were working treadles.

At four years old I went to my first school in the mornings. It was a kindergarten school at the east end of St John's Road called the Lawn and it still looks just the same as it did then. It was kept by the Misses Maria and Fanny Harlock, the latter the Principal although the younger. Their father who lived with them then reached the age of a hundred and a painting of him hangs in the Town Hall as he was at one time Mayor of Banbury [1865-6]. It was the first school in Banbury to teach by the Froebel system. The Misses Harlock had studied in Germany and Sweden. They had a brother living in Sweden with whom they sometimes stayed and they were very keen on teaching Swedish drill and wood carving. Their teaching was good and they made their subjects interesting. I was there for six years and left in the summer of the year of the Diamond Jubilee. I have an exercise book with a little composition in it about the events of that day. During my last term the Children's Ward was added to the Horton General Hospital in aid of which we performed a small entertainment on Tableaux Vivants, a form of [f.4] entertainment then very popular. Each living picture represented a Nursery Rhyme. I was the "Lady on the White Horse" wearing a silk blouse and cut down green velvet skirt of Miss Harlock's youngest sister and a large leghorn[?] hat with ostrich feathers, my own best hat. A schoolfellow still has a photograph of us all taken in the garden by the schoolhouse. My steed was a large white rocking horse lent by a pupil.

On Sunday afternoons my mother took me to a children's service in St Mary's usually taken by the Vicar, the Rev. Charles Fleetwood Porter, later canon of Christ Church Cathedral, Oxford. We sat behind the Sunday School children with several other mothers and nurses with children.

Those who met Canon Porter are not likely to forget him as he had a striking personality. He was rather tall with white hair and side whiskers. At one time while on holiday abroad he injured the ligaments of a leg and after that he always carried a tall stick. I was interested last year to see this stick again, it now belongs to Mrs F. Arnold and was lent to Canon Porter by her father Mr John Fortescue and returned to him when no longer needed. Rather inclined to be irritable at times he would rattle and rap the ground with this stick when provoked by the lack of answers and slowness of the children.

Mrs Porter died when I was seven years old, very suddenly while praying on her knees in her room. She was a very sweet and saintly lady, very much loved in the parish. Two of her brothers were famous clergymen of the time. One of them, Canon Bickersteth Ottley, and another was Dean of Christ Church, Oxford. One of her sisters was Head Mistress of one of the High Schools. I have forgotten where though I read an interesting life of her a few years ago. I remember well coming back from a walk down the Southam Road and meeting the funeral procession. Very different from those we so often saw living in that part of the town, with the coffin carried in a large hearse drawn by black horses, mourners following in carriages dressed in black with wide bands of crepe and carrying handkerchiefs with black borders. This coffin was carried on an open bier covered in flowers, the Vicar and her brothers followed walking in surplices and scarlet hoods. Instead of the usual [f.5] sad tolling of one bell a full peal of bells rang, not muffled, so that it was indeed a joyful procession! This was the Vicar's wish to celebrate her entry into Paradise rather than the mourning of those left.

Canon Porter's sister was the wife of Bishop Mackenzie working in Africa. When they came to England they stayed at the Vicarage. This led many ladies of the parish to form a working party and take much interest in missionary work among the Zulus. I had a collecting box with a picture of a woolly haired boy on it and I remember sitting on Mrs Porter's knee after she had opened the box and that she told me about the little black children in the mission school and how they lay at night rolled up in rugs in rows on the ground looking just like little sausages.

I began teaching in Sunday School as soon as I left school at seventeen, two years before Canon Porter retired. We had preparation classes round the table in the bog room where we had prepared for Confirmation. He was rather an alarming old gentleman though we were all fond of him. He would talk for a long time with his eyes closed and

then suddenly open them and take us all in. On one occasion a young curate was sitting near him leaning back in his chair. The poor young man looked very uncomfortable however when quite suddenly a stern voice rapped out "Shall I fetch you a cushion, Kelto?" The curate's name was Harold Kelto[?], his mother and sister lived and worked in the parish for some years.

In 1898 and 1901 these were Fetes in what is now the 'People's Park' but then a field and grounds adjoining Neithrop House. These were in aid of St Mary's Church and were great events in the town and lasted from Monday to Saturday. Each day the opening ceremony was performed by notable people. On the first day the opener was the Duchess of Marlborough accompanied by the Duke. She was very tall and elegant, the former American heiress, Consuella Vanderbilt. Lady Gordon Lennox, the sister of the Countess of Warwick and then living at Broughton Castle, opened the Fete on one day of the 1898 date, looking very fair and beautiful. She was unable to come to the second Fete but sent her little daughter, the Hon. Ivy, to take her place – a very [f.6] pretty, daintily dressed, golden haired little girl of ten years old who won all hearts by the charm with which she performed the ceremony.

The chief event at each Fete was the performance by the Oxford University Dramatic Society and Mrs B. Irving of the Pastoral Plays "As You Like It" and "Twelfth Night". These were acted in the part of the Grounds where a stream, now filled in, and the surrounding trees made a delightful setting. They were beautifully performed. The chief actors with Mrs Irving were Frank Lascelles and Gwen Lally[?], later of Pageant-producing fame. Frank Lascelles or Stevens lived at Sibford and used to drive into Banbury with a tandem or horses. Gwen Lally, or Speets, was the elder daughter of the Vicar of Wroxton and curate at St Mary's when I was born. Lyall Swete[?] was an unforgettable Malvolio. The jester in "As You Like It" was a Mr Loveday, probably the father of the present Bishop of Dorchester.

Mrs John Cheney, a very musical lady, trained a troupe of children as Gypsies and Piccaninnies to sing songs accompanied by several older people, all living in a camp. A dummy house was erected filled with sticks and inflammable material. On a platform at the top were some children or firemen and others lighted by lime light and intended to be rescued by firemen before light being set to the house. By some mistake the fire was started before the children were all down causing some tense moments to the parents and the people watching, but they descended just

PRICE SIXPENCE.

In aid of the Funds of the Parish and St. Paul's  
Churches and Schools.

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PROGRAMME OF THE

# Fete al Fresco

TO BE HELD IN THE  
 GROUNDS OF NEITHROP HOUSE, BANBURY,  
 (By kind permission of COL. ROTHE,) from  
 Tuesday, July 26th, to Monday, Aug. 1st, 1898  
 (Bank Holiday), inclusive.

W. POTTS, PRINTER, BANBURY.

Fig. 1.



From the Programme of the Fete al Fresco held in 1898: The title page, and Miss Dorothea Baird (Mrs H.B. Irving) as Rosalind in the Pastoral Scenes from 'As You Like It'.

in time. One boy, Tommy Fortescue, a son of the captain's coming down last by himself was singed and scorched slightly. That exhibition was not repeated at the second Fete. It was Canon Porter who presented and arranged with Oxford friends for the Pastoral Plays. Mrs H.B. Irving stayed at the White Lion Hotel and was accompanied by an invalid sister and her little boy Laurence then about four years old. Her other child Elizabeth, Lady Brunner was not then born.

I would like to record here an incident concerning Canon Porter which was told me by my parents. They attended a series of Church History lectures given in [f.7] the Corn Exchange, Market Place, by the Rev. C.A. Lane, F.R.Hist.S., Lecturer of the Church Defence Institution. This would be about 1893. the Hall was large and had a stage and galleries each side and there were large audiences. The clergy of the town were invited to sit on the platform. Father Bowen, the priest at St John's Roman Catholic Church, was one of those who accepted the invitation. When the Vicar of Banbury, the Rev. C.F. Porter, discovered this he refused to sit on the platform with a Roman Catholic priest. When father Bowen heard this he left his seat and event and sat on the steps of the platform and remained there during the lecture and the Vicar sat in his seat on the platform.

My mother was educated at Oxford Lodge School owned by a Miss Eason who left while she was there and was followed by the two Miss Braileys. I also attended the same school as a day girl and later as a boarder. The Miss Braileys retired about 1908. They were excellent teachers and prepared pupils not only for the Cambridge Junior and Senior examinations but also successfully for the Higher Local, later succeeded by Matriculation. At that time it was the leading girls' school in Banbury, as a Private School. The Technical School in Marlborough Road admitted boys till about 1899 when girls were also admitted.

Going back to my early childhood one of my first recollections is of the cry in the streets of "All hot, All hot" on Good Friday mornings from about six o'clock, as the bakers' boys went around with trays or baskets of hot cross buns. Each year I went with the maid to Betts, the bakery in Butchers Row, to fetch the buns for breakfast. We watched the great trays of brown buns, smelling deliciously, being drawn from the oven and then scuttled home with a bag full to eat while still hot.

On Easter Sunday the volunteers in their scarlet uniforms always attended Matins. They assembled in Bridge Street and marched with their band up Parsons Street. At the side of them but by himself marched

a soldier in Scottish uniform and kilt. This was a Mr Sullivan who lived in Banbury with his family for many years. The Service was very joyous and colourful. The hymn "Onward Christian Soldiers" was always sung in procession with the Cross leading and a blue banner with a white cross.

[f.8] One Sunday service that stands out in my memory was an occasions when the Crown Prince of Siam who was then an undergraduate at Oxford came accompanied by Sir Garnet Wolseley or Sir Evelyn Wood and sat in the pew that Mayor occupies on Mayoral Sunday. In those years the Confirmation Service was always held on Palm Sunday afternoon. I was confirmed in 1903 by Bishop Francis Paget of Oxford. He was followed by Bishop Gore. When Canon Porter left and was followed by the Rev. A.J. Jones in 1906, Bishop Paget lent his chaplain, the Rev. J.M.C. Crum, to help in the Parish for several months. He later married the Bishop's daughter.

To go back to old remembered customs. Every May Day morning children went about the town from door to door carrying May garlands. These were made with two small hoops, tied together and covered with flowers and greenery and the Queen of May, a decorated and crowned doll sat in the middle. The whole was covered by a small sheet and on payment of a copper or two out into a tin box the sheet was slowly raised for the garland to be viewed and admired, the owners always very proud of their pretty handiwork.

There were frequently quite exciting events to be seen in the streets. Sometimes a Swiss or Austrian man in national costume would bring a bear, which would stand up on its hind legs when its mater played some sort of instrument and clumsily dance. At other times a German band would appear and play really well, music by good composers. An occasion for wonder was a one man band, the one man having various instruments attached to different parts of him and somehow managed to play them all at once, drum sticks to his elbows, triangles, cymbals, bells on his ankles, pipe to blow and so on. Barrel organs or hurdy gurdys made weekly rounds playing topical tunes. Often accompanied by dark pretty Italian women wearing bright coloured head-scarves and shining ear rings. On or by the organ would be a cage with also colourful "love birds" which we now know as budgerigars. If not birds then there would be a small monkey wearing [f.9] a little suit of scarlet and perhaps a feathered cap. He would hold a tin cup and chatter when a copper was put in.

Every circus that visited the town had a procession round the street at one o'clock before the afternoon performance. A children's favourite grandstand to view this from was the wall of St Mary's churchyard, then much higher than it is now. All the performers, clowns, elephants and so on followed one after the other and finally two very high decorated vans, the last bearing a lady representing Britannia, complete with a live lion lying at her feet. After a rather alarming episode when one of these big carriages with lady and lion became stuck outside Potts' Guardian Office and was released with difficulty these exciting processions were discontinued.

Notices of lost property and announcements of coming events were often advertised by the Town Cryer. The last one I remember was Mr George Hutchings. He would stop at intervals and ring a large bell and then shout the announcement as loudly as he could. There were no amplifiers then, yet what he said could be distinctly heard which tells how much less noise was made by the traffic. Yet when there was serious illness in a house the road outside was covered with straw to deaden the noise from traffic and horses' hooves.

The roads were dusty and in dry warm weather a "water cart" went round the streets from the back of which pipes sprayed showers of water to lay the dust. I remember watching from my grandfather's windows in North Bar the first horseless carriage I had seen go by in the road. He doubted whether they would ever come into public use and watched it with some disfavour. That would have been in 1894 or '95.

On Market days from all the villages round came carriers' carts carrying passengers and goods. There were covered carts with seats along the sides and crossways on which villagers sat packed close together. I once came back from a short holiday at Edge Hill in one. We stopped at cross roads, some wayside houses, and gates leading to farm-houses, to pick up passengers. All the passengers knew and greeted each other as they clambered or were pushed up with their babies, [f.10] bags and baskets. Family news was discussed as they went along. It was stifling and very smelly but no one seemed to mind or notice. All these carrier carts were left for the day outside the inns and public houses each keeping to a particular one. The horses were stabled inside.

The town itself was the centre of the market before the Midland Marts was opened. Cows were driven from the farmers around by men called drovers using shorts sticks. The poor beasts were tied to rails and posts which extended down both sides of Bridge Street, more often then called

the Cow Market. Pigs were sold by auction from pews near the Leathern Bottle in the Market Place. Sheep were herded in pens in the Horse Fair where the public conveniences now are. As children we liked to reach over and feel those thick woolly fleeces. The hurdles forming the sheep pens were taken down after the market and stacked in the Wool Pack yard.

In the middle of January a large horse fair was held covering the whole space of the Horse Fair from the Church House to where the Cinema now stands. For a few days the town was full of horse dealers in leather leggings and high bowler hats with jolly weather beaten faces and loud voices. On one morning prancing show horses drawing high light gigs, two wheeled, were driven round and round a clear space. One of the cleverest drivers with the finest horse was the wife of the doctor, Dr Tyndal Johns, who lived in the house now part of the Whateley Hotel, so that she drove in great style out of her stable gateway into the ring.

Once a year in April Steeplechases were run round Crouch Hill which formed an excellent natural grand stand. Crowds of race goers came into the town to attend this and it must have been quite a pretty sight to watch. Every Whit Monday Bank Holiday the Banbury Harriers had sports where the Spencer Football ground is now. This was well attended and valuable cups and prizes were presented by notable people. I can remember Lord Willoughby De Broke and Lady Caroline Jenkins as names of these.

[f.11] The first royal event I remember was the marriage of the Duke of York and Princess Mary of Teck, later King George V and Queen Mary. There were no picture postcards then but cabinet-sized photos were sold in the shops of the royal pair. There were two of them in the second and third pages of the family album, the first being occupied by Queen Victoria in plumed bonnet, order of the Garter and many medals as she appeared at the Golden Jubilee seven years before in 1887.

I remember two events of the wedding day. In the morning there was a procession. I must have been standing among the crowd watching on the Green because great excitement was caused by a horse drawing a waggonette carrying several men with important posts in the town suddenly bolting, frightened by the music of the bans and the number of people. I was astonished to see a curate of St Mary's, named Spurrel[?], jump out head over heels. I had probably only seen him before in church wearing a surplice. He was not hurt but a boy who lived on the Green



named Dick Thomas was knocked down and had his arm broken. At night there were fire works in the Horse Fair ending with a picture of Duke and Duchess in fire which I was held up to see.

The next royal event was the Diamond Jubilee in 1897. In commemoration of this a new clock with Westminster quarters and three additional bells with a carrillon machine to play twenty-one tunes were placed in the tower of St Mary's Church. This was the memorial of the whole town to the event. The opening of their new clock and chimes was the actual event of the day. I remember looking out from an upstairs window in the house where we then lived, now part of the Cromwell Hotel, facing Parsons Street, and watching the Procession go by with the Lady on the White Horse with attendants on cock horses.

The Mayor and Corporation escorted by the Banbury troop of the Queen's Own Oxfordshire Hussars and Volunteers were received at the church yard gate by the clergy and choirs of the four churches St Mary's, St Paul's, Christ Church and St Leonard's, at 11.45. We could hear the hymn sung in Procession in the Church Yard. Then the National Anthem was played on the bells by Mr Sykes, the Manager of the Westminster Bank, a member of the committee for the erection of the chimes. After this followed a short service and then the cutting of a ribbon by the Mayor, Mr Lake, at twelve o'clock, the hour [f.12] chime being played by the clock. Following a short ceremony in which this time the ribbon was cut by the Vicar, the chimes were started and all twenty-one tunes were played. Crowds of people had gathered in the Horse Fair and North Bar to hear the chimes for the first time. the clock chimes continue but the tunes are no longer played. After some years they became out of tune and constantly needed repairing. They played every three hours night and day and there were complaints from people staying in hotels and houses near who found the chimes disturbing. The old machine is still in the tower, perhaps beyond repair by now.

A series of Entertainments which gave pleasure to a number of people was given on Saturday nights in the Cadbury Memorial Hall in Bridge Street. They were known as the "Penny Pops" for only a penny was charged. Quite a good class of entertainment was given by musical people in the town.

In my early days children living in cottages in the streets of the town and having no gardens or park to play in always went out into the street to play. The games varied according to the season, skipping ropes by girls and marbles and tops by boys came out with the Spring. Tops were

kept spinning and driven along by whips. Most children possessed hoops, wooden ones with sticks by girls and iron ones with iron sticks and a loop attached to the hoop were driven along at great speed and a clanking noise by the boys. I remember a collection of hoops hanging up in an outhouse of different sizes which I had outgrown one after another. They accompanied one to school and out for walks. Later scooters gradually took their place and fairy bicycles.

Another game favoured by girls and some boys was hop scotch, a small stone had to be kicked from one numbered square or paving stone to another without putting the other foot down. Toy reins were often taken out by smaller children to play horses. Some had bright coloured knitted ones with round bells run on the wide strip across the chest between the arm holes, sometimes there was a whip covered with a piece and a bell at the end. Older children owned reins made of leather. It was usual to take turns at being driver or horse.

[f.13] I had a large family of dolls of which I was very fond. Some were jointed with pretty faces, others had bodies made of kid which we liked but the most unsatisfactory had faces made of wax. These were pretty when new but soon lost their colour and if exposed to sunshine melted and caused much grief. I had a little musical box with a coloured picture on it which played two tunes when the little handle was turned. One tune was "Believe me of those endearing young charms" which was one of the tunes played by the church chimes.

Every Thursday evening during the summer months the Band of the Volunteers, later called the Territorials, used to play either in the Horse Fair or North Bar from seven o'clock for about two hours. If not in the town they played in the grounds of one of the big houses near. I remember being taken to hear them in several of these gardens. In the Bloxham Road at the house "Springfields", now a school, then lived in by a family named Vanner. Two houses in the Oxford Road, one South Bank, lived in then by Mr Stockton and family, later by Dr Penrose and now a Nurses Home, and also in the grounds of Windmill House then known as "Perrys Nursery". On the north side of the town they sometimes played in the grounds of Neithrop House. The other large house with suitable gardens would be "Woodgreen" in the Broughton [Road] but I do not remember going there. The town concerts were spoilt by children who ran screaming round the band stand. This wooden structure was erected earlier in the People enjoyed visiting the gardens as well as listening to the Band, which played very well. The latter part

of the time the conductor was Mr Barrett whose wife and daughter had a nursing home on South Bar till about five years ago.

Before the days of Wireless in people's homes news of events of special interest was telegraphed to the Banbury Guardian Office in Parsons Street and immediately pasted up on the windows. Crowds assembled in the street eagerly awaiting results. I remember seeing the announcement of the Relief of Mafeking and Ladysmith in this way during the Boer war. After each of those two events large bonfires were lighted at night in the Cow fair in front of the Town Hall.

*Editorial Note.* Photographs of pupils at Miss Dolly Bromley's school in the 1920s and 1930s, published in *C&CH*. 13.3, 4, 5 (1995-6), inspired more interest from readers (former pupils) than any of our more learned articles. Moreover, in November 1970 our Society itself created history, with a quartet of Banburians contributing their memories of the town at the turn of the nineteenth/twentieth centuries, chaired by no less than Ted Brinkworth. One of these was Miss Bromley (recorded in conversation with Ted), followed by Fred Anker (insurance broker and fire brigade enthusiast), Don Braggins (timber merchant) and headmaster N. Scroton. Fortunately the anecdotes were recorded and duly published in *C&CH*, 5.2, Spring 1972, its fiftieth issue, still then under the inspirational editorship of Barrie Trinder (all available via our website on the digitised version of our journal).

So it was with delight that quite by chance I discovered that Miss Bromley had herself written her memories of her childhood, and that these had been typed by another of our members, the redoubtable Miss Mackay of Hightown Road (now deposited in Oxfordshire Record Office). As two of our earlier members, I am sure they would approve of the appearance of these recollections here. The major part is published above, but a further section, describing the outskirts of Banbury about 1895, will appear in due course.

An article on the Banbury Academy is in preparation.

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## THE SIMMONDS FAMILY IN BANBURY

*Rodney Lucas*

Relaxing in a holiday cottage in the Spring, my friend invited me to look through the *Genealogists' Magazines* he had taken, to catch up on his reading. By chance I picked up the December 2007 issue, which started a chain of events. In it I found the article about Banbury and bells immediately started to ring. Both the article and the cover had pictures of the junction of Parsons Street with North Bar Street, in both of which I knew some of my wife's relatives had had businesses. In the interest of dating the cover picture I wrote to the editor, who published my letter. This was seen by Jeremy Gibson who suggested that I write this article.

Thomas (Tom) Simmonds was not native to Oxfordshire; he was born in Aston Clinton in Buckinghamshire in about 1829. I next find him in the 1851 census (goodness knows where he was in 1841) lodging in Union Street, Marylebone, and working as a ladies' shoemaker. There he met Ellen Savage, working as a servant in Weymouth Street, Marylebone. There are many ways in which they could have met; I like to think he made shoes for her or her mistress. They married in July 1851 in St. Anne's, Westminster. Ellen was of similar age to Tom and had been born in Banbury. In 1841, at the reported age of 12 (later censuses suggest she may actually have been 14), she was working as a servant to Mrs Bays, a confectioner in High Street, Banbury. Doubtless Ellen influenced the couple's decision to move to the area of her birth.

That move took place some time between 1853, when their second child was born in London, and 1858 when the birth of their third was registered in Banbury. 1861 sees the family living in East Street, Grimsbury, which was at that time part of Northamptonshire. Tom's occupation was described by that delightful old word, cordwainer. They probably stayed in Grimsbury until after the birth of their seventh child, whose birth certificate shows him to have been born there in August 1865. At this stage Tom seems to have been employed rather than having his own business since he was described as "cordwainer journeyman". Two years later, the eighth child was born in Banbury, indicating that by then the family had probably moved to the address found in the 1871 census, Castle Gardens, Banbury.



*29½ Parsons Street (now 29a) is the creeper-covered first house that can be seen in the street at its junction with North Bar Street. Postcard c.1930.*

Some time between then and 1881 Tom, Ellen and at least six of their nine (known) children had moved to No.29½ Parsons Street, where Tom set up business in his own right. In every year from 1882 to 1896 Tom is listed in *Rusher's Banbury List and Directory* as a boot and shoe maker at that address. Interestingly, in 1885 and 1886 *Rusher's* also includes him in the list of private residents, at 29 Parsons Street. Does this mean that he had acquired the other half of the premises? No.29 was occupied by a cycle agent in 1891 and is shown as unoccupied in 1901. In that year, at the age of 72, Tom is a widower (Ellen died in 1896, aged 69) and still working on his own account at No.29½. His youngest three daughters were living there too. *Kelly's Directory* of 1903 shows him still there, but he probably gave up working soon afterwards. He is not listed in *Kelly's* in 1907. It is probable that on retirement he moved to 9 North Bar Street with at least two of his daughters. As an aside, when his son William married in 1889, the marriage certificate describes Tom as "Leather Merchant". Did he, I wonder, use that description because it sounded posher than bootmaker? Tom died at 9 North Bar Street in January 1912, aged 83.

Tom and Ellen, as mentioned, had nine known children. Of these, at least six worked in and around Banbury for greater or lesser periods.

The eldest, Burnham Wilson Simmonds, was born in 1852 in London. He married Emily Firth, a Lancashire girl, in Manchester Cathedral in 1876. He and Emily seem to have moved around, as their first child was born in Scotland in about 1877 and their second in Oxford about a year later. He became an excise man, and is listed in the 1881 census as "Civil Servant, Inland Revenue", living in Bloxham. *Rusher's List* includes him as "Inland Revenue Riding Officer" in Bloxham in 1882, '83 and '84 and then in Tadmarton in the following three years. His home was in Paisley in 1896, when he registered Ellen's death in Banbury, and the 1901 census also counted him in Paisley, still as "Civil Servant Inland Revenue".

Children two and three disappear from the Banbury scene. Ellen, born 1853, was with her parents in 1861 but there is no record of her thereafter. She may have been in London in 1871, but her name is too common to be certain of the correct identity. Catherine, born 1858, married Job Shufflebottom Morriss in 1883 and moved to London, where her husband was a journalist.

The next of Tom and Ellen's children was James, born 1859, who followed his father's trade. In 1881, at the age of 22, he was working with his father at 29½ Parsons Street. Later that year he married Kate, who had been born in Sheen, in Surrey. James only worked in Banbury for a few years. In 1888 his first known child was born in London. Six further children were also born in London and James was recorded there in 1891 and 1901.

Eliza was the fifth child, born early in 1861 in Grimsbury. She is recorded with her parents until 1881, when she was a dress and mantle maker. She married in 1887.

The next sister was Rose Anne, born in Grimsbury in 1863. She is found living with her parents in each census until 1901. She also became a dressmaker, her census descriptions progressing from "machinist (seamstress)" in 1881, to "mantle maker" in 1891 and "dressmaker (employer)" in 1901. *Kelly's Directory of Oxfordshire*, 1895, lists the Misses R. & M. Simmonds as dress and mantle makers at No.29½. Under the heading of Milliners and Dressmakers, *Rusher's* of 1895 and '96 includes "Miss Simmonds" (no initial) at No.29. This is a second suggestion that the family may also have occupied No.29 for a while. After working in the town for well over 20 years, Rose Anne married in 1903, at the age of 40.

Child No.7 was William Thomas Simmonds, 1865-1947, grandfather of the writer's wife. He moved to London, where he married Clara Stevens in Hammersmith in 1889. He was still there as an elementary school teacher in 1891 before moving to Rugby, where he ran his own school. For a while after retiring he remained in Rugby before finally moving to Hove, to a flat in the same building as his sisters Minnie and Carrie.

The two youngest of the family both had their place in Banbury business. Minnie Elizabeth, known in the family as Min, was born in 1867 and Carrie in 1870. They both became dressmakers like their elder sisters Eliza and Rose Anne. Both remained at home with Tom and Ellen and both were described as "mantle maker" in 1891 and "dressmaker (employer)" in 1901. No doubt the dressmaking sisters were glad to have the Singer Sewing Machine Company just a few steps away at No.20 Parsons Street for at least part of the time they were in business there. At some time just after the turn of the century Minnie and Carrie moved to 9 North Bar Street, opposite the end of Parsons Street, where they continued their dressmaking business, and it is likely that Tom retired there with them. The latest trade directory available on line seems to be *Kelly's* of 1911, where they are listed at that address and that was also Minnie's address when she registered Tom's death in January 1912. Unfortunately, we do not know when Minnie and Carrie gave up trading in Banbury, but telephone directories indicate that by 1935 they had retired together to a seafront apartment in Hove. Carrie died in 1945 and Minnie in 1958. Neither married.

#### **A footnote on the buildings:**

Over the years building numbers containing "½" have become unfashionable, so 29½ Parsons Street has become 29A. The building where Tom and his family lived and worked still stands, though no longer covered in creeper. The building opposite was known as "Dossett's Corner" as it housed the well-known grocers; now demolished and replaced (see 'Portrait of a Country Grocer', *C&CH*, 11.3).

The premises where Minnie and Carrie worked exist no longer, but can be seen (on the right) in the painting by W. Matthison now displayed in Banbury Museum. It is illustrated in *Banbury Past through Artists' Eyes* (BHS 30, 2007), page 52. The detail of this used on the cover of the *Genealogists Magazine* (vol.29, No.4) omits that side of the street. Today the Cromwell Lodge Hotel occupies 9-11 North Bar Street.

## Book Reviews

*The Music Room*, by William Fiennes. 216pp. Picador 2009, £14.99.

This book will delight all those who know and love Broughton Castle and the Fiennes family. It is a poignant book, written by William Fiennes, one of the younger sons of our President the current Lord Saye and Sele. In it he documents his childhood recollections of life in the castle – in many respects a world away from the life of wealth and ease one imagines is led by the aristocracy – and his relationship with his much-loved elder brother Richard, who suffered from a severe form of epilepsy.

It is a very personal book, tackling a difficult subject. Many people shy away from talking about subjects such as epilepsy, but William Fiennes has it as a theme running through the book, looking at how epilepsy has been seen through history and in superstition, and giving fascinating snippets about efforts to understand the workings of the brain over the centuries. For example William Fiennes writes that in ancient times epileptics were forbidden from taking baths, wearing black clothes or goat skins, crossing their hands or feet and they must not eat red mullet, eel, goat, deer, mint, garlic or onions but eating seal genitals, tortoise blood and hippopotamus testicles was recommended! He goes on to describe early attempts to produce electricity and the recognition that the brain worked using electrical currents. He makes complex scientific ideas accessible to the layman.

Richard's severe epilepsy had a profound effect on the rest of the family. The drugs he took affected his behavioural patterns, sometimes causing uncontrollable aggression which was far from easy even for the professionals to deal with, but he is shown as a much-loved member of the family, with endearing qualities and a passion for Leeds United!

Another fascinating aspect of the book is the minutiae of life in an important historical building. William was born in Broughton Castle and lived in the family's private apartments but a large building with centuries of history can hold its terrors for a small boy:

*"I had a castle to explore whenever I wanted. But I was still afraid of the other end. I had to dare myself to leave our familiar quarters.*

**Christine Bloxham**

**The Story of Deddington**, Mary Vane Turner, 1933. Reprinted 2008 by Deddington Map Group for Deddington & District History Society, with an introduction by Christopher Day. Card covered, 96pp. £9.00.

This book was first published in 1933 after submission by the local Women's Institute founded in 1925, in a countrywide competition where "more historical collections than analysis" were sought, Setting aside those primary sources, and use of previous local historians' published work such as Wing and Marshall,



and the value of rendering it generally accessible once more, the interest of the reprint lies in its being a primary historical source of itself, both in the aspirations of its compilers and their use of oral testimony.

Chris Day has supplied a powerful eight-page new introduction emphasising the state of local history study in the 1930s to which, in a brief six months' exercise, Mrs Turner, mother of Muriel Jones, the first local WI president, could turn. No County Record Office, and no recourse to personal census details beyond 1841, yet there was access to a private diary of William Risley, extracts of which are given without comment in an appendix, and presumably access to the mass of local ephemera collected by "lawyer Coggins" of the Hermitage. It is clear that time would not have allowed extensive use of either of the two last mentioned sources, but clarity, and sometimes contradiction, of the oral testimony is available there. For instance, the platefuls of meat relished by centenarian William Hiron in his youth relate, one would guess, to an eight year-old at the ox-roasting occasion in 1840 recorded in Risley's diary, though not quoted in the selection in the appendix. Also, the story of the Pavilion in the Castle Grounds is adorned with fascinating unacknowledged detail which ties in very well with William Risley's extensive accounts which lie in *Mid-Victorian Squarson*, the second and as yet unpublished [but forthcoming] volume of his diaries.

It is significant that research was required to familiarise readers with Mary Vane Turner after 75 years, for the feel of the book is in turn that many characters of the mid-nineteenth century are similarly little-known to the writer. Crucially, the centenarian had witnessed the shrinking of the town from over 2,000 to only 1,234, which is a great deal of outward migration and decline. The WI was in a sense an attempt to compensate for declining institutions, and its seventy members represented perhaps a quarter of the female adult population of the town (the same proportion that Risley considered "respectable" in the 1850s). Would those in the 1930s having to go to Banbury, rather than the eleven miles to Woodstock, to gain relief feel that their "cruel" situation was "somewhat mitigated" or might they have put it more strongly? It would depend upon one's perspective, and the WI account is in a sense a subjective one.

Perhaps it too led to respecting the adage *de mortuis nisi bonum* in that lawyer Lamb's absence from the 1852 Gazetteer is noted, but not explained by his flight to America (like lawyer Henry Churchill later) to escape his debts, leaving a wife to take in lodgers to promote her children's welfare. Printer Hiron is mentioned, but not that he was driven out of business and out of town when scarcely forty. Chapel is lightly mentioned, whereas both Wesleyan Reformers and Congregationalists played a major role in discordant times before Thomas Boniface's incumbency. Further social history of the town depends on a wider canvass being explored. There is every evidence of this being done in the wider activities of the Deddington & District History Society: the "Story" was work-in-progress at a certain time, not a bible of local fact to be taken whole.

**Geoffrey Smedley-Stevenson**

***Business and trade; 300 years of commerce in Steeple Aston.*** Steeple Aston Village Archive, 54pp. Numerous illustrations. £6.00, available from SAVA Chairman Martin Lipson, West Grange, Grange Park, Steeple Aston OX25 4SR, tel. 01869 347046

*Business and Trade* is a most attractive booklet covering many village activities during the last 300 years including those connected with the canal and quarries as well as the more common village occupations such as the undertakers, the bakers and the publicans. Other occupations included many of the usual requirements of a community such as coal delivery, brick making and the delivery of services including goods carrying, transport by horse and bus and the delivery of letters. Not surprisingly the majority of the entries are for the nineteenth and twentieth centuries since earlier businesses were rarely recorded in detail. And many enterprises were small and ephemeral, being family businesses which frequently closed down when the main worker either retired or died. Additionally, many inhabitants sold sweets, vegetables or beer from their homes to supplement meagre incomes but could hardly be described as shops. However, many recent incomers to the village and their contributions as publicans, guitar makers or village shop owners are noted, ensuring that the record is up to date. The list of occupations at the back of the book, taken from various sources, indicates the changes over the past two centuries from what was preponderantly a farming community to a service-based village with many different occupations ranging from decorators to travel agents but few farmers.

The layout of the booklet is attractive and it is very well-illustrated with photographs of both people and places; it is a pity that there is no map to indicate the location of those who contributed so much to the village. Steeple Aston inhabitants will no doubt be able to work out what was where but for those with less knowledge of the area it would have been helpful. It is also a pity that no sources are cited for the information, making it difficult to ascertain where, for example, the lists of occupations come from and how one source relates to another. This unfortunately limits the value of the booklet for comparison against other village research which would build up a picture of not only Steeple Aston but other similar communities in north Oxfordshire. It also needs information about price and availability on the cover if it is to attract a wider audience but that, all said, the Steeple Aston Village Archive must be congratulated on producing an interesting and attractive booklet which many other communities would envy.

**Helen Forde**

This is the last issue of Volume 17. Regrettably it has not been possible (at least at present) to compile any indexes, although a Table of Contents is being provided. We expect to digitise this volume (as with earlier volumes) and this will in due course be made available on our website. **Ed.**

# 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. Approaching one hundred and fifty issues and five hundred articles have been published. All but the most recent issues have been digitised and are available on the Society's website (see inside front cover). Most back issues are also still available in their original form.

There are now thirty volumes in the records series. Those still in print include:

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

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

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

The earlier registers, *Marriages 1558-1837*, *Baptisms and Burials 1558-1812*, are now out-of-print, but are available on fiche and CD from Oxfordshire Family History Society, website at: [www.ofhs.org.uk](http://www.ofhs.org.uk)

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

*The 'Bawdy Court' of Banbury: The Act Book of the Peculiar Court of Banbury and Cropredy 1625-1638*, ed. R.K. Gilkes (vol. 26).

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

*The Banbury Chapbooks*, by Dr Leo John De Frietas (vol. 28).

*Early Victorian Squarson: The Diaries of William Cotton Risley, Vicar of Deddington, Part One, 1835-1848*, ed. Geoffrey Smedley-Stevenson (vol. 29).

*Banbury Past through Artists' Eyes*, compiled by Simon Townsend and Jeremy Gibson (vol. 30).

Current prices and availability of other back volumes, and of *Cake and Cockhorse*, from the Hon. Editor (Harts Cottage, Church Hanborough, Witney OX29 8AB).

In preparation:

*Turnpike Roads to Banbury*, by Alan Rosevear.

*Selections from the Diaries of William Cotton Risley*, ed. G.W. Smedley-Stevenson:

Part 2. *Mid-Victorian Squarson, 1849-1869*.

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. The annual subscription (from 2009) is **£13.00** which includes any records volumes published. Overseas membership, **£15.00**.

All members' names and addresses are held on the Society's computer database for subscription and mailing purposes only. Please advise if you object to this practice.

# BANBURY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

## Autumn 2009 Programme

*Meetings are held at Banbury Museum,  
entrance from Spiceball Park Road.*

*Thursday 10th September, 6.30 p.m.*

Start-of-season Reception (wine and nibbles) preceding

**The Parish of St Thomas the Martyr in West Oxford, from the 12th century to the present day.**

*Liz Wooley*

*Thursday 8th October, 7.30 p.m.*

**Apethorpe Hall: The Rescue Project** [a gigantic Northamptonshire house dating from the 15th century-on, now under the care of National Heritage].

*Nick Hall*

*Thursday 12th November, 7.30 p.m.*

**The Arts and Crafts Movement in the Cotswolds.**

*Alan Crawford*

*Thursday 10th December, 7.30. p.m.*

**Chiltern: a Railway Success Story**

*Adrian Shooter (Chiltern Railways)*

[In view of the popularity of railway talks, this may be held at a different location. Information on this will be given with the Autumn/Winter issue and by email].