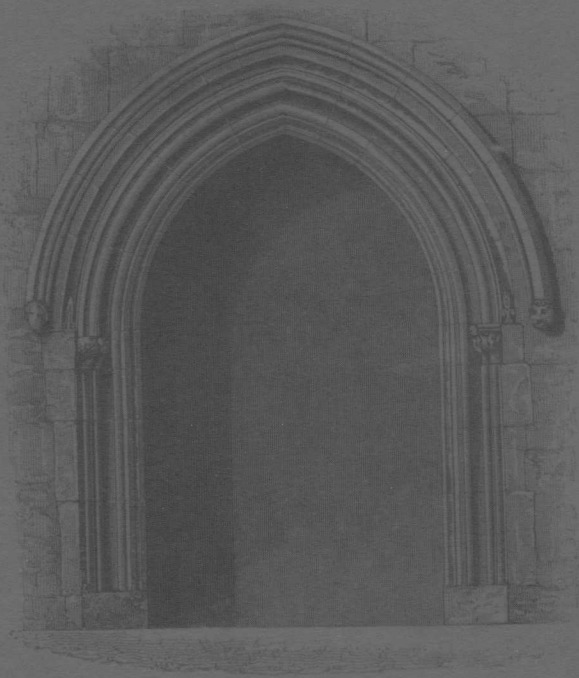


# CAKE AND COCKHORSE



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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.

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In October 2007 we celebrated the Fiftieth Anniversary of the foundation of our Society late in 1957. Now we have a similar cause for satisfaction, as the first issue of *Cake & Cockhorse* appeared fifty years ago, in September 1959, as did our first records volume.

The inspiration for its appearance and name was its editor Dr C.F.C. Beeson (distinguished antiquarian horologist and boyhood friend of T.E. Lawrence). Each volume has covered three years, apart from Volume 6, which for format reasons was restricted to two). From Volume Five on there have been three issues a year. Reduction from quarterly issues made a significant difference not only to cost of production and postage but also to the editor's workload (and the labour of actual despatch: inserting some 300 journals into envelopes, preparing and attaching labels and stamps, all takes time and energy).

That first volume was little more than a duplicated newsletter, but the journal was transformed when Barrie Trinder took over, from 1962 until Summer 1973. Ever since, our editors have striven to maintain the quality and interest he inspired.

As one who has been involved throughout to a greater or lesser degree in production and other aspects, my main regret is that we have only indexed the first six volumes and volumes 14 and 15. However, we have digitised all but the most recent volume (17). These should be available on-line and a form of search by name or subject should now be possible. We expect to publish a piece on using our website and the journal in our next issue, intended for the great many of our readers who are, we suspect, as computer-illiterate and easily confused as is your present editor.

**J.G.**

Cover: "Ancient doorway of the White Horse Inn" (Beesley, pl. XIX) (see p. 34).

## A BANBURY PRINTER

*Tony Newman*

*Being a personal history of the printing revolution of the sixties and seventies and the part played by firms in the Banbury area in the changeover from hot metal typesetting and letterpress printing to computerised phototypesetting and web offset machines, and the consequences for the printing trade leading up to the present day.*

*This article was submitted for consideration for our Local History Prize.*

The history of printing and publishing in Banbury goes back to the latter half of the eighteenth century, when John Cheney and later William Rusher started printing and publishing chapbooks together with the general stock in trade of printing. Their activities have been well documented and I for one do not intend to add another volume to the descriptions of the early years.

Shortly after this in 1838 the *Banbury Guardian* was first published and became the main source of news in the local area, a position it still holds to this day. One of the editors, William Potts, became a well-respected authority on local history and wrote and published his *History of Banbury*.

However history is not just about events and happenings of hundreds of years in the past, it is also a living thing and I shall attempt to bring the story of printing and publishing in the Banbury area more up to date; after all, things which happened yesterday could be said to be history the day after. If this should appear to be a very personal account I make no apologies for the fact as I was there at the time and involved in many of the events as they happened.

It should be understood from the outset that even as late as the second half of the twentieth century Banbury had a thriving and innovative printing industry. I have had personal experience of the technological changes which took place in the trade during this period of flux with movement from hot metal typesetting and letterpress printing to the very latest computerised phototypesetting and web offset machines capable of high volume colour-print runs.

When I look back on my life as a printer in Banbury, Oxford, Reading and Leamington Spa, I realise that practically my whole existence has been inextricably linked with the trade in one form or another. From my childhood as the son of a fine art colour printing machine minder at Stones the Printers I have had printing ink flowing in my veins.

As mentioned, my father Jim Newman was a machine minder at Stones and also Branch Secretary of the Typographical Association (later the National Graphical Association). He then became, because of an allergy to anti-set off powder, a proofreader, moving in the process to Papers & Publications (Printers) Ltd, printers of the *Banbury Guardian* (later to become WW Web Offset Ltd).



The offices of *The Banbury Guardian* in Parsons Street, somewhat before the author worked there! (reproduced by kind permission of *The Banbury Guardian*).

It has been largely forgotten that the *Banbury Guardian* was the first newspaper in the country to print a full-colour photograph in its normal print run, produced at the Swan Close works of Papers & Publications, which were at that time in the forefront of printing technology with the first Goss web offset litho cold set presses in Britain. Many revolutionary new processes were developed and patented there, and indeed parts of the camera and plate making rooms were restricted areas to protect the highly secret processes.

I started my involvement in the printing trade at Papers & Publications at the age of eighteen as a copyholder in the reading department. Two years later I was offered and accepted an adult apprenticeship as a compositor with the company. It is a proud boast of mine that I was one of the last apprentices to be trained in hand setting with metal type at the case, and also one of the first to be trained in photo setting. I also was trained in traditional make-up techniques on the stone as well as paper make up on the light tables. As you may imagine at a time of flux in the printing trade, with old methods giving way rapidly to new techniques, looking back I feel that I was taking part in living history.

In the first instance Papers & Publications origination was by Harris Intertype hot metal typesetting machinery, with galleys of corrected type being pulled up on chromo paper to be pasted up with hot wax on the light tables. Hand set metal type and artwork blocks were also given the same treatment, whilst half-tone photographs were made into bromides in the camera room. Spot colour separations were done on overlays on the light tables and colour photographs were processed in camera.

As technology advanced it became apparent that this method of working was inefficient and time-wasting and so it was decided to try various ways of typesetting using photo setting. The first trials were with headline setting machines to replace hand setting at the case. These met with mixed success and indeed some of the equipment tested turned out to be slower than the traditional method!

Then came the first forays into computerised typesetting using an IBM computer linked to some of their daisy-wheel printers. This dispensed with one operation but did not save very much time as any corrections had to be reset and because of having to fit the measure and justification this could be a long and laborious exercise!

Meanwhile the printing and processing side of the company was rapidly expanding with the purchase of new and more technologically advanced printing presses, and the research and development of more

sophisticated camera and plate making techniques. This resulted in the appearance of the latest heat-set web-offset litho printing presses, which in turn led to the first tentative steps in magazine printing.

One notable success was with the funeral of Sir Winston Churchill in 1965. This took place on a Saturday, and using all the various latest technologies of the day, we produced a full-colour newspaper which was on the streets of London by 5pm on the day of the funeral, and additionally had full-colour special editions of our local titles on sale by the Sunday, thereby beating all the national dailies as well as the Sunday papers. This fast turnaround could not have been achieved without the advances in printing technology pioneered and put into practice in the Banbury factory.

By this time our presses were running close to full capacity with in addition to our own local papers, such publications as *Record Mirror*, *Soviet News*, *Yachting & Boating Weekly* and two massive monthly papers, *Rail News* and *Coal News*, together with several other smaller weekly and monthly titles, quite a few of which were house newspapers for various companies; an ideal solution using cold-set web-offset litho, a cheaper and faster process than letterpress.

We next began printing on contract a Sunday newspaper for the Channel Islands called *The Island Sun*. Once again we were in the forefront of technology using all the latest communication aids including teleprinters, fax machines and even one of the first microwave links. Additionally we had a helicopter courier service from the Channel Islands for late copy and photographs, and once again we did a quick turnaround issue to cover the Jersey Battle of Flowers, having a full-colour special edition on the streets the day after the event. The paper itself did not last very long but it left us with its communication infrastructure, which proved useful in later years.

By now the situation in origination had progressed to experimentation with true computerised phototypesetting. After a brief and unsuccessful trial with one system it was decided to try the Harris Intertype system; a company with which we had built up a good relationship during the hot metal days. It was decided, at the instigation of the union, to retrain existing operators on the 'qwertyuiop' keyboard and further to train proofreaders to read and correct on editing terminals. To this end I and some other colleagues from the Reading Department were sent down to the Harris factory for a short three-day training course, after which we were trained on the keyboard in order to be able to type in our own corrections direct onto the screen.

The way that the Harris Intertype computer phototypesetting system worked was that typesetters inputted onto punched paper tape. This tape was then passed to the reading department where it was read through a tape reading head onto the screen of the Harris 1100 editing terminals. After the readers had read and corrected the text on screen a new punched tape was produced and passed on to the typesetting computer where it was printed out through a developer and fixer on photographic paper. Display advertisements and other more complicated setting were handled slightly differently in that they were produced without codes, read and corrected and then processed by the Harris 2200 display terminal where codes were added to give the desired effect before being processed through the typesetting computer.

As the technology of heat set presses improved so did the number we had, and because of this a decision was made to switch greater and greater proportions of our production over to magazines; unfortunately both the press crews and the origination staff had little or no experience of high quality magazine production, but nobody seemed to think this important enough to worry about. This meant that we were going from the full-colour newspaper field in which we were market leaders into the highly competitive world of contract magazine printing where we had to fight for our market share against highly experienced specialist firms with a reputation for high quality work.

Additionally the high cost of these more advanced presses meant the company was getting into quite high debt, but the work to service these loans was not forthcoming although we did briefly print some weekend magazines for insertion in Saturday and Sunday papers. Unfortunately the quality of our work was not as good as some of our competitors, and we could not compete on price as most of them were only printing contract work on downtime when not printing their own publications; our own local newspapers had been sold a few years earlier to pay off the owner's divorce settlement, a move which was now to prove disastrous for the company.

Because of the downturn in work and the high cost of interest on the loans a series of voluntary redundancy exercises then began. These continued over a period of about five years with reasonably high payouts to those who accepted the terms offered, with most of the casualties coming from the composing room, typesetting and proof readers, with the double day shift system coming to an end eventually for origination, leaving a straight day shift and a night shift. It soon became apparent that



this state of affairs could not continue indefinitely and in 1980 WW Web Offset went into receivership; it proved impossible to find a buyer for the company as a going concern and after six months it was liquidated with those of us who were still left working there being made redundant with the government minimum redundancy payment.

After being unemployed for two and a half years I obtained, through my trade union the National Graphical Association, employment at Eastern Press in Reading, travelling there each day. I was originally engaged in the copy preparation department, which involved marking up copy with the correct typesetting codes ready to be inputted onto the online system in use at that company.

However on my arrival for my first day's employment I was asked, because of my previous experience in Banbury, to work instead on the online vdu correction terminals, inputting corrections marked on printouts by the reading department. Due in no small measure to the poor English displayed by some of the overseas operators working in the typesetting department, I was afforded plenty of opportunity to hone my English, spelling and typesetting skills!

After about two months working in Reading I was "headhunted" by some colleagues who were working at Robert Maxwell's flagship publishing company Pergamon Press, based at Headington Hill Hall in Oxford. After an interview I was asked to join the style-editing department at Pergamon Press, which meant better working conditions, more money and a shorter journey to work each day.

The job entailed traditional proof reading against copy, and also final reading of typeset books without a manuscript to check for grammar, spelling, and context and to make sure illustrations appeared correctly. Also original manuscripts were checked to make sure they conformed to one style throughout and there were no obvious errors, to use the technical term, copy-editing.

The working conditions were the best I have ever worked in, with individual oak desks and special ergonomically designed chairs all set in the surroundings of an oak panelled library lined with books from floor to ceiling. Additionally there was a subsidised canteen in the main office block which not only served excellent meals but opened mid morning for hot bacon rolls. Also because we had worked in Banbury we made use of the flexitime system in use there to stagger our working times during the week, and also we were allowed to take our overtime work home with us to do. The work was not too onerous, as we all had an

ongoing final read project which we could work on when nothing else more urgent was needed; this we could work on at our own speed, and I was working on one of mine, an encyclopaedia of fossils, for four months on and off!

Additionally whilst working at Pergamon Press I represented the Banbury area on the executive committee of the Oxon & Berks Branch of the National Graphical Association, chiefly because no one from Banbury wanted to travel down to the branch office at Pangbourne for the meetings once a month! As I was working in Oxford it was easier to get there for me; I was already half way there! I also represented the NGA on the Banbury Trades Council.

But all good things come to an end, or at least they always seemed to throughout my life. Mr Maxwell decided to purchase the Nuffield Press in Oxford when it came up for sale, and further, to transfer the proof readers there en bloc. This would have meant a longer and more difficult journey to work through heavier traffic at rush hour, and so I decided, rather than having to undertake the more hazardous journey, that I would change my job.

As luck would have it a job came up at the Courier Press in Leamington Spa on the night shift as a proofreader. I successfully applied for this; it involved reading from computer printouts off a dot matrix printer, which were then passed back to the typesetters for correction. I found myself working with some of my old colleagues from my Web Offset days and one of the publications we dealt with was the *Banbury Guardian*, thus proving that it is indeed a small world. We also proofread patent specifications in English, French and German in between other publications such as the *Leamington Spa Courier*.

After a couple of years I left in order to become full time sales and distribution manager for Newhall Publications working for their Candis charity magazine. This position was in fact untenable so I eventually drifted into twelve years of taxi driving.

Whilst doing this I was once again headhunted by an ex-colleague who owned and ran Vogue Typesetting in Calthorpe Street, Banbury, to do two days a week proof-reading advertisements for some free newspapers for which he had the origination contract. This eventually fell through when the firm went into liquidation, and I briefly worked for another typesetters in Banbury sizing photographs for *Banbury Guardian* property advertisements.

During this period I also graduated as a Bachelor of Arts in English and Publishing at Oxford Brookes University, gaining a higher second class honours degree. Although I applied for several positions in the publishing industry I feel that my age at that time (50) was against me and so I remained a taxi driver.

I wrote several successful articles for the *British Archer* magazine, the oldest and at one time the only archery magazine in the country, since I knew the publisher through my long time involvement with the sport. Eventually he offered to sell me the magazine and I took it over, becoming owner, publisher and editor. I began to turn the fortunes of the magazine around making it more popular again, but unfortunately lack of funds and very little advertising revenue, plus the launch of a new more colourful competitor and at the same time an increase in printing costs meant that I could not afford to carry on with the publication.

The current state of the printing and publishing industry in the Banbury area is still one of flux. The oldest firm Cheney & Sons closed down several years ago, and Henry Stone & Son, at which my father worked, has moved to a new factory on one of the industrial estates, and is now mainly engaged in print finishing as a subsidiary of the Goodhead Press at Bicester. There are several instant print shops in the town, and some typesetting and design studios, some of which are owned and run by ex-colleagues of mine. As for newspapers, the *Banbury Guardian* is still published once a week, albeit printed a long way from Banbury now. Also there are two free newspapers, the *Banbury Cake* and *Banbury Citizen*, neither of which are owned or printed locally.

Of course with the advent of desktop publishing, for which I have a diploma, and the ever increasing influence and use of the internet, who knows what lies ahead? The only thing that seems certain is that further technological advances will mean more and even greater changes in the future. After all, nobody in the sixties could have foretold the extent of the exciting changes in technology which have taken place since then, which in turn have led to the gradual erosion of the role of typesetters, compositors and proof readers. We must ask ourselves, are these changes all for the better?!

***THE STRANGER'S GUIDE THROUGH BANBURY:***  
**including a brief sketch of its history, a summary of its public**  
**buildings, and a glance at its trade**

by *W.P. Johnson*

published Banbury: G. Walford, "Advertiser" Office, 72, High Street  
First edition, 1859. Second edition, 1866.

*Editorial note.* The editions are undated. However the earlier (entitled *The Strangers' Guide*) despite illustrations dated 1854 (the Town Hall) and 1858 (the Gas Works), also includes the Cross, formally opened in October 1859, so must post-date that. The engraving of the High Street, showing the *Advertiser* office, is dated 1 October 1859. Oxfordshire Studies possesses a photocopy of this first edition (on which much of this transcription is based). The location of that original or any other is unknown.

Johnson's *The History of Banbury*, also undated (mainly plagiarised from Beesley's *History*), was published by Walford from the "Advertiser" and "Beacon" office, so must post-date 1863 when the *Beacon* first appeared (it continued until 1905). As well as reusing illustrations from the first edition of the *Strangers' Guide* it introduces other familiar scenes: Bodicote House, Jan. 1860; Broughton Castle, May 1860; the Round House, Edge Hill, August 1862, and even Banbury Old Church, demolished in 1790.

A copy of the second edition (now *The Stranger's Guide*) is in the British Library. Very fortunately, another copy was recently discovered and acquired by Brian Little, from which most of the illustrations used here are reproduced. It can be firmly dated to 1866, as it concludes with a description of the new Wesleyan Chapel in Marlborough Road, opened 9 May 1865, and an engraving dated 15 January 1866. This edition also introduces an illustration of the Corn Exchange in Cornhill (dated 15 April 1858), but omits those (from the first edition) of the High Street, the Railway Stations and the Gas Works.

Apart from that of the Wesleyan Chapel, all these engravings will be familiar from frequent reproduction, most recently and together in *Banbury Past through Artists' Eyes*, and in many issues of *Cake & Cockhorse*, but also of course in histories by William Potts, Ted Clark, Brian Little and others. We owe much to Walford for first reproducing them.

*The text is based on whichever edition reads most felicitously and relevantly, but major additions or alterations between the two are indicated in square brackets. Minor changes in phraseology are ignored. The purpose of this transcription is to show Banbury as it was in the 1860s. Historical descriptions of the Charters and the Civil War, etc (probably based on Beesley) are omitted.*

### **THE STRANGER'S GUIDE THROUGH BANBURY:**

[The train draws nigh;] The engine-driver blows off the steam; the guard and fire-man apply their respective breaks [*sic*], with about as harmonious a noise as the sharpening of a saw; the panting, puffing, whistling, screaming substitute for a horse, which has been dragging that enormous load along, is brought to a stand-still; the carriages draw up at the precise spot where they are wanted; whilst "Banbury!" "Banbury!" tripping lightly from a porter's tongue, informs the traveller that he has arrived at the place of his expected destination – the far-famed Oxfordshire "Land of Cakes."

"Bus, sir?" enquires a civil conductor of one of those commodious vehicles of street traffic, which, among many other things with which we are perfectly familiar, were wholly unaware to the "wisdom of our ancestors" – whose ideas of "busses" were generally associated with pleasing reminiscences of quiet corners, rosy lips, and a suitable opportunity. "Bus, sir!" is repeated in a still more insinuating tone, as the conductor holds open the door of his vehicle by way of an inducement for the traveller to enter – an invitation with which he may possibly decline to comply.

"No, thank you! but if you will, you may take that luggage on to some inn – supposing you have such a thing as an inn in the town."

"Inns, sir, did you say? I should think we have! if you can find cash we can find comfort. There is the White Lion and the Red Lion, both first class hotels – you can't beat them in London, sir – so you make choice of either colour that you like best; or if you should prefer a horse to the forest king, we have the White Horse and the Flying Horse, both capital inns; and besides these, sir, there is the Plough, the [Buck and] Bell, the Coach and Horses, the White Hart, the Rein Deer [*sic*], the Wheat Sheaf, and the Bear, at any of which you will meet accommodation. Indeed from the Albion to the Case-is-Altered, and back to the Three Pigeons, you need be at no loss for a dinner, as you may get suited anywhere either according to your inclination or your purse."

"Then take these things to the Red Lion, I shall walk."

"All right, sir! drive on, Dick!"

Sauntering along the brief distance which intervenes between both railway stations and the east end of the town, the traveller crosses a sluggish stream dividing the counties of Oxford and Northampton. He must look out for it though, or he may happen to cross it without notice, and thus miss the river Cherwell, whose beauties were sung by Shenstone long, long ago: –

*“And sketch with care the Muse’s bower,  
Where Isis rolls her silver tide;  
Nor yet omit one reed or flower  
That shines on Cherwell’s verdant side -  
If so thou may’st these hours prolong  
When polished Lycon join’d my song.”*

But Shenstone wrote long before the ventilation of the subjects of drainage and sewage, things which came in with “Boards of Health,” and which certainly have not improved the sweetness of the Cherwell; so with “polished Lycon” we will pass on. [2nd edition; the 1st expresses much the same view, at greater length.]

At the eastern or Northamptonshire end of the bridge there stood a hermitage in former days, which must have dated back from a very distant period, as Baron Woodhull of Thenford, by his will dated March 29, 1531, ordered his executors sufficiently to repair the hermitage “at the Brigg foot at Banbury,” and when repaired, to place therein “an honest man, to pray for his repose, and for the souls of his friends.” But both the hermitage and hermit have long since ceased to have either “a local habitation or a name,” and the land is all that now remains to note this piety or superstition of the baron of Thenford.

The Oxford Canal, with its wharfs and warehouses, stretches away to the right and left, opening up a communication by water with the most distant parts of the United Kingdom. The act of parliament for its construction was passed in the session of 1768-9, and from the date of its opening down to the era of the reign of railways, the traffic, by this mode of transit was immense. Indeed, even now, when having to compete with so formidable a rival, numerous are the barges still plying on its waters, and the transport of heavy merchandise is by no mean inconsiderable.

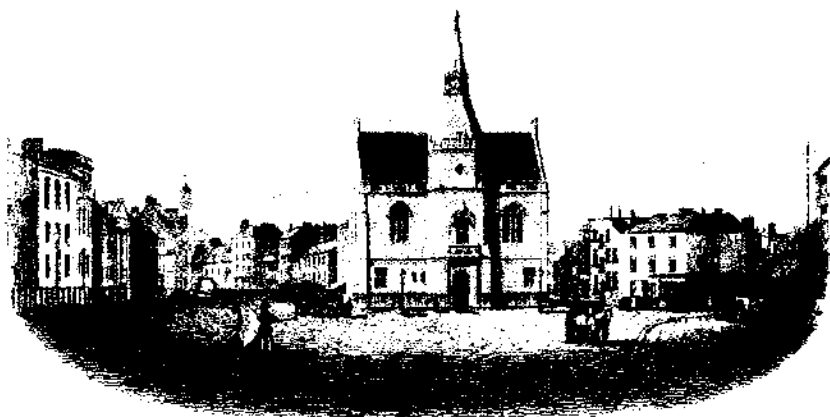
Here stood the Bridge Gate – for Banbury had in its former days both gates and walls, although neither of them seem to have been of sufficient strength for the purposes of military defence... [followed by a brief account of the Battle of Edgecote in 1469].

Having passed the gate, or rather the place where the gate once was, our traveller may be considered as now fairly in the town, with ample leisure to view the beauties of Bridge-street. But it unfortunately happens that Bridge-street at its entrance – or indeed anywhere else – possesses few “beauties” to present to his notice; for if we except a pillar letter box on one hand and a drinking fountain on the other, this part of Bridge-street offers little for either comment or commendation.

The street abruptly widens into what is dignified with the name of the Cow Fair, in the south-east corner of which may be noted the hostelry known as the Crown. So long ago as 1549, there was a Crown Inn in Banbury; for in the records of the Augmentation Office in Westminster, it is stated that in the year above named, the repairs of the tenement of Thomas Payne in Banbury, called the “Crownc” amounted to no less a sum than fifty-seven shillings and three-pence. On the 12th of July, 1859, this inn had as narrow an escape from destruction as it could possibly have met with during the several centuries of its previous hospitality; for on that day, a fire broke out in a carrier’s warehouse adjoining the extensive brewery of Messrs. Hunt and Edmunds, the tall chimney of which may be observed towering aloft behind that respectable-looking residence on the left. The warehouse where the fire originated was wholly destroyed, as were several back buildings between it and the Crown, the east end of which was also ablaze. Luckily, the conflagration was soon extinguished; and that without its having done a tithe of the damage which was at one time to be dreaded, although the public-house in question had a narrow escape.

## THE TOWN HALL

“Is that a dissenting chapel or a grammar school which stands across the street? our traveller may possibly be tempted to enquire, as he notices a semi-Gothic building which certainly possesses no great pretensions to architectural beauty, but which looks as if it were almost half-inclined to dispute his progress; whilst the dumpy little tower that disfigures its broadside – occasionally by way of courtesy designated its front – seems to hint that the builder had suddenly run short of materials, and was compelled to bring his labours to an abrupt termination. [This defect is now partially remedied; for, whilst the present (2nd) edition was preparing for press, this ornament of the hall was ordered to be surmounted by a public clock, and that to be “topped off” with a tapering spire, which makes it look more like a Chapel-of-Ease.]



“A chapel! – bless your life, no, sir! and yet it may almost be regarded in a kindred light, for several of our learned gentlemen may there be heard holding forth by the hour, and Blackstone’s Commentary is an authority not infrequently quoted within its walls. That, sir, is the Town Hall.”

The quarter sessions for the borough, the county courts of the district, and other transactions of an important nature are conducted in the large room up stairs, which, as it embraces the whole extent of the scope within the walls, may be supposed to accommodate a pretty numerous assembly. It is also admirably adapted for lectures – with the trifling drawback that very few of the audience can hear the half of what is said; but as most of the ladies who attend on such occasions go to enjoy the pleasure of criticising the others, aye, and not a few gentlemen are there also for the purpose of indulging in attending the ladies, the mere hearing what the lecturer is talking about, becomes, as a matter of course, an affair of comparatively minor moment. But for an election dinner, a tea party, a concert, or a dance, the Hall is really a capital place. A full-length portrait of Mr Tancred, who for a quarter of a century was member for the borough, graces one end of the Hall and the vacancy at the other yet waits to be filled up.

Passing on to the south front of this building, the arms of the borough may be seen carved in stone above the arched doorway, exhibiting a jolly round-faced sun throwing out crooked radii in every direction, with the



motto on a scroll above, "*Dominus Nobis Sol et Scutum*", by way of informing those who are ignorant of the fact how remarkably zealous Banbury has ever been in all that appertains to orthodox theology. Here is the police-office; but owing to the peaceful character of the people, the magistrates not infrequently assemble on a Monday morning and find that there is not a single case to try. They have a comfortable chat together ... and then take their departure in the proud consciousness that they have satisfactorily discharged an honourable and arduous public duty.

On the ground floor, besides the police office, there are six cells, an office [used as an armoury by the rifle volunteers], a retiring room, and a council chamber, where the meetings alluded to are held, and where summary justice is dispensed by their worships of the county bench once a fortnight in petty sessions. Here, too, the aldermen and common councillors hold their quarterly or special meetings, and discuss those weighty "matters of the law" as to whether the next borough rate shall be threepence-halfpenny or fourpence, and how many buttons and of what sort shall grace the next tunics of the borough constabulary.

Nor must the museum of curiosities be forgotten. These are chiefly of a martial character, and are contained in a glass case at the end of the passage, so that every body who has business at the back door may see them. The museum, it is true, is not very extensive, nor are the relics of antiquity remarkable for their rarity. There are two battered breastplates... the broken fragments of a gigantic bombshell... balls of various sizes... cast in different moulds... a drinking cup... and a fragment of a stone pillar...

Such is the Town Hall and those who use it – judges and criminals, magistrates and thieves, lawyers and clients, policemen and prisoners, talkers, listeners, and short-hand scribblers. It was erected in 1853, at an expense of £5,737; towards which Mr Tancred gave a donation of £500, and Lord Saye and Sele, the High Steward of Banbury, £100. The sale of the corporation estates and funded property realised £4,887, leaving £250 to be taken from the borough general accounts.

[A description of the Borough's various charters is given.]

On leaving the Town Hall, the visitor may observe a rather elegant looking building on the south side of the street, with half-a-dozen pillars of the Ionic order in front, which if not otherwise informed he might mistake for a theatre. But for a very different purpose was its foundation laid, and the structure was erected with a higher aim. It is a chapel pertaining to the denomination of "Particular Baptists" and was built in 1841 on the site of what was formerly the Altar-stone Inn. The interior is

neatly and comfortably fitted up, and is capable of affording accommodation to 400 hearers. Behind the chapel there is a commodious school-room for between two and three hundred children, which was built in 1858 at the cost of a little over £200.

Above the gateway of the Old George, which closely adjoins the aforesaid chapel, there is the date of 1614, giving evidence of a somewhat venerable antiquity; and on passing this mark of the revelry of bygone times, the traveller is fairly in

## THE HIGH STREET

On the north side there stands a good specimen of an ancient building, of the Elizabethan order of architecture, which was probably erected about 1600.<sup>1</sup> Its projecting upper-storey, rounded windows, pointed gables, and ornamented verge boards differ widely from modern structures; whilst the old-fashioned sun dial with its quaint motto "*Aspice et abi*", mingles very good advice with precious little information, and says to the passer-by "See what's o'clock, and go about your business."

This street is generally considered as the chief emporium of trade in the town, as well as the leading thoroughfare from east to west. Almost anything that may be required in the way of trade, from a Banbury cake to a bushel of sweetmeats, from a lady's slipper to a jockey's "tops", from half-an-ounce of snuff to a hogshhead of sugar, from a Colt's revolver to a double-barrelled Manton, from a yard of tape to a web of broadcloth, from a lady's wedding ring to a gentleman's chronometer, may be obtained at one or other of the places of business. Is our traveller in want of law? he can get it here *ad libitum!* Does he require physic? here it is to be had in abominable abundance! Does he need refreshments? the principal hotels in the town are here! Is he in want of money? here are banks with cash galore!

The Old Bank is the first of these at which he will arrive, and he may notice it on his left hand as he proceeds up the street. It was established in 1785, and draws upon Messrs Jones, Lloyd and Co, 43 Lothbury, London. The business of the Bucks and Oxon Branch Bank is also conducted under the same roof and by the same firm.

Having got his cheque cashed, the visitor will naturally cross the road to the publishing office of the *Stranger's* [sic] *Guide*, from which the

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<sup>1</sup> This is the still-surviving building, built for Edward Vivers and actually dated 1650. A statement made in print is not necessarily correct!



*Banbury Advertiser* is issued every Thursday [a paper which stands at the head of the local press – and the *Banbury Beacon*, *Buckingham Herald* and *Aylesbury Free Press*, every Saturday morning – 2nd ed., quite an expansion on the earlier edition]. Having furnished himself with this and any other little matter he may require “in our line” the traveller in proceeding onward in his voyage of discovery will next have to weather the headland of the White Lion Hotel, which seems as if, at some time or other, it had intended to block up High Street altogether, in which laudable effort it had summarily failed. Having rounded the turn, he will find on the north side of the street the Banbury branch of the London and County Banking Company, which was established in the metropolis in 1836... [and] that in Banbury was opened in 1845.

Across the street the visitor may notice an unostentatious stone building with projecting windows – one to which it would have been unnecessary here to allude, had it not been for the circumstance of the local Floral and Horticultural Society being privileged to hold its annual exhibitions on the snugly-sequestered lawn in front of the house<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>2</sup> i.e. on its south, not fronting the street; the garden would have been adjacent to the grounds of Calthorpe House.

In passing along the street no one unacquainted with the fact would dream that he was in the vicinity of so lovely a spot, or one so thorough adapted for such a purpose. On one hand is to be seen an extensive range of hot-houses teeming with the productions of a sunnier clime, and on the other, parterres of the fairest flowers, delighting the eye and wafting their fragrance on the breeze of morning; here are whole hedges of geraniums of the brightest scarlet, and there, miniature fountains bedew the sward as they throw up their glittering waters amid the scorching rays of a summer's sun.

Crossing the street once more, we pass the White Horse Inn, founded, Mr Beesley conjectures, on the site of Trinity chapel,<sup>3</sup> which along with many other ecclesiastical endowments was despoiled of its revenues by Henry VIII; and a little higher up on the same side is a lane now called Church Passage, but formerly rejoiced in the euphonious nomenclature of "Tink-a-Tank". Here is a building for the accommodation of the Mechanics Institution, containing a well-furnished library and [commodious] reading room. [It numbers nearly 250 members, and about 5,000 volumes are issued yearly. In every respect, this institution may be regarded as one of a most praiseworthy description, and unlike many others of a kindred character, it is happily in a flourishing condition. For much of its prosperity it is indebted to the exertions of the indefatigable librarian, who in its behalf has laboured worthily and well – 1st ed. only]. Here the meetings of the Board of Health are held; and matters relating to lighting, paving, sewage, and *rating*, are discussed fortnightly in a most friendly spirit, and no doubt [greatly] to the town's advantage. Banbury was formerly renowned for its dirt – there being cart-ruts along the principal thoroughfares, from six inches to a foot deep; and even within the last 70 or 80 years, stepping stones were laid from side to side of the streets, to enable the pedestrians to keep out of the mud. All this is now changed; and although it cannot be said that we are indebted to this Board for so beneficial an improvement, there can be little doubt that they are endeavouring earnestly to follow out what their predecessors worthily began.

A little further up the lane there is a well-conducted Infant School, where about 160 children receive the first elements of youthful instruction, and the capabilities of infant minds, under the skilful direction of efficient teachers, find ample scope for enquiry and development. A congregation of religionists, styling themselves "Disciples", use the school-room on

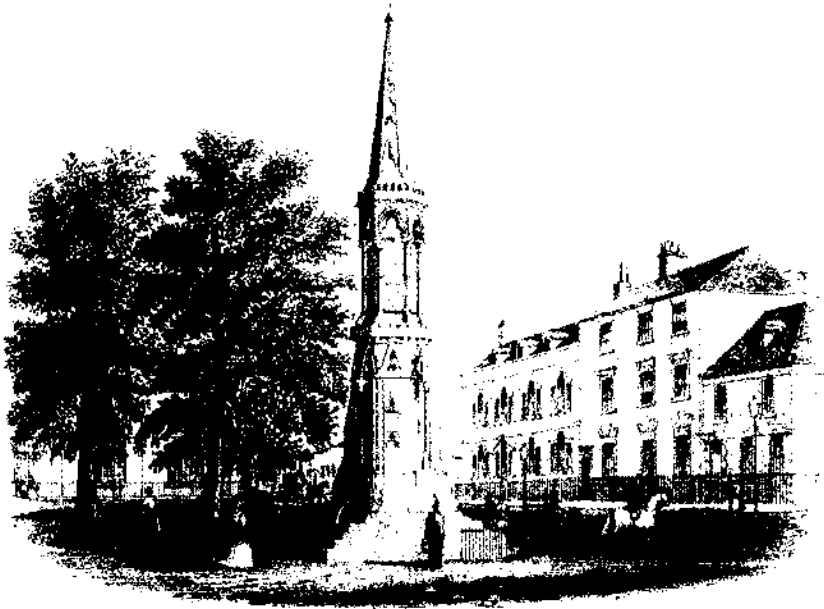
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<sup>3</sup> See page 34.

Sundays for the purposes of worship – their distinguished peculiarity consisting in the fact of their celebrating the sacrament of the supper weekly.

Returning again to the High Street, we meet with the Savings' Bank a short way on the right. This laudable institution was established in 1817; and in 1832, the sum of £49,000 was confided to the trustees by 1609 depositors. In November, 1860, the numbers availing themselves of this eligible mode of investing their savings had increased to 4,872 persons, and the amount so deposited nearly reached to £133,980 [1st ed.: 1858, 4,260, £120,000]. The Post Office, rendered conspicuous by its gilded lamp and flight of steps leading up to the doorway, closely adjoins the Bank for Savings, and should our visitor have business there, he will be certain of meeting with civility.

The manufacture of the fabric known as plush now demands a passing notice. At the top of High Street, fronting the open space where the sheep fair is held, there is a low gateway leading to a court where this branch of industry is chiefly carried on. Many a strapping footman has mounted the box proud of those crimson inexpressibles which were woven here, and many a sturdy carter has fancied himself somebody, when sporting his figure in a new plush vest. The embossed patterns of this material are truly ornamental, and under the name of Utrecht velvet, this description of fabric is extensively used for the covering of sofas and couches. Few of their possessors have the most remote idea that they are indebted to Banbury for the glossy substance on which they recline, or that it is made of the mohair of the Turkish goat, which takes a more brilliant colouring and is of more enduring wear than any other ordinary materials. The manufacture gives employment to about two hundred persons.



### BANBURY CROSS,

Which has been visible for some time, is at length arrived at, and is an elegant structure of the hexagonal form, erected from a design by Mr Gibbs, of Oxford. It is fifty-two [1st ed. forty-nine] feet in height, of Bath stone, and is divided into three storeys or compartments. The panels of the centre compartment are richly ornamented with the foliage of the rose, ivy, acacia, chestnut, hollyhock, and vine, and graced with the arms of queens Mary and Victoria, kings Charles I and George I, the Princess Frederick William of Prussia, the earls of Banbury and Guilford, Viscount Saye and Sele, Sir William Cope, Sir William Compton, the Bishop of Lincoln, and the Rev. W. Whateley, who was vicar of Banbury from 1610 to 1639. Banbury was for centuries without a cross – the old ones having been demolished at the period of the reformation – and it was not until the occasion of the marriage of the Princess Royal of England with Frederick William of Prussia, that it was resolved to restore the Cross as the most graceful memorial of the event. When little folks are out of temper, how often good humour is restored by setting them cantering on the nurse's knee to the tune of

“Ride a cock-horse to Banbury Cross.”

That Banbury should be without a Cross was unreasonable to think of as Coventry should be without its "Peeping Tom", or Canterbury shorn of the shrine of A'Beckett... – to think of Banbury without a "Cross" is to run counter to all the reminiscences of childhood and sets at defiance all the records of legendary lore. The subscription lists were opened on the occasion referred to, and the structure erected in 1859.

At present we shall take the visitor no further up the Green, but cross over to West Bar Street. This was formerly called Sugarford Bar, and subsequently Bull Bar Street. Here is a small chapel capable of accommodating about 150 persons, erected for the use of a congregation whose members have espoused the tenets of Calvin. One of the town gates stood at the Western entrance, with an arched gateway for carriages and a smaller postern for foot passengers. The gateway was standing within the last eighty years, and the inscription "except the Lord keep the city, the watchman watcheth but in vain", with the date "1631", both of which were carved over the arch, lead to the inference that it was erected after the great fire of 1628.

[A description of Broughton Castle follows.]

Having returned to the West Bar [where several genteel mansions have recently been erected,] we shall take the traveller up that lane to the south leading to the west end of Crouch Street, [and if he will look into the field on his right, he will see a memorial to times long gone by... There too, at periods less remote, both bears and bulls have been put to torture; from which the field in question got the name of Bear Garden, a title which it retains to the present day].

The British Schools in Crouch Street have now been established upwards of twenty years, and attended with an unprecedented degree of success. For the year ending in Mid-summer, 1861, the children's pence amounted to £230.7s.5d.; and in the course of the same period, there were upwards of 222 boys and 189 girls in actual attendance [1st ed.: 1859, £223.15s.0d., 200 boys, 150 girls].

## THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHAPEL

On returning to South Bar Street at the top of the Green, the first object that arrests attention is the "Catholic Church of St John the Baptist". It is a handsome edifice, surmounted at the end fronting the street by a square battlemented tower, 100 feet in height, which forms a pleasing feature in the surrounding landscape. The design for the building was furnished by Mr Derrick of Oxford, who superintended the



*Catholic Schools, Church, Presbytery and Convent of St John, Banbury*

erection until it was completed in 1838. Above the altar, at the east end, there is a stained glass window much admired, and harmonising well with the tone and general character of the building. On the north side are the schools, attended by about 120 children, and on the south is a commodious residence for the officiating priest.

That venerable-looking building fronting the street is now used as a convent by the Sisters of Mercy, and was formerly the Hospital of St John. It was on the outside of St John's Bar, and the charity can be traced as far back as 1209. The present building was at one time in possession of the Dashwood family, who sold it in 1803, and at a period less distant than that, it even descended so low as to be devoted to the ignoble purposes of a barn, from which state of degradation it was rescued by Mr Williams, a medical gentleman then practising in the town. The gateway itself was only removed about seventy years ago, and in ancient records styled South Bar, occasionally Oxford Bar, but more generally St John's Bar.

### ST JOHN'S TERRACE

After passing the road to Chipping Norton, which branches off to the right, the visitor arrives at St John's Terrace – an elegant row of suburban villas, to which the fortunate tradesman may retire after a life of industry, and enjoy in peace the evening of his days. Here he may possess all the advantages of a residence in the country, combined with





*St John's Terrace*

the accustomed comforts of the town. His church or his chapel is close at hand – his old companions are in his immediate vicinity, and it by far the most pleasant of the whole; and when a promenade is required, this is the direction that is generally chosen.

The cricket ground is situated a little further on the left, and has been the scene of many an exciting contest. The reservoir of the Water Company is nearly opposite, and is easily distinguished by its hydraulic tower, which a wag of our acquaintance appropriately designated “the town pump”. The paid-up shares of the company amount to nearly £7,000, and the money borrowed to a rather larger sum. As yet there has been no dividend among the proprietors; but the company is only of recent formation, and that is one of the good things pertaining to the future.

[A note on a Civil War skirmish at Adderbury follows.]

Retracing our steps past the Catholic Chapel, Calthorpe Lane may be noticed on the right; and a few yards along that lane, is a postern leading to Calthorpe House. This was formerly a seat of the Dashwood family; and in 1754, a time when party politics ran high in the district, there was

a keenly contested county election, in which Sir James Dashwood had the misfortune to be one of the Tory candidates. He lost the day, and £40,000 in hard cash besides, so the upshot was that Calthorpe House found another owner.<sup>4</sup>



## THE GREEN

The broad and expansive carriage drive, the convenient footpaths on which we are entered, the convenient footpaths on each side of the way, the umbrageous foliage of the trees causes this to be a street which is considerably resorted to, and a very comfortable place to stroll on a summer's day. The Independent Chapel is just round the corner, standing a short way back from the street. It was erected in 1857 and is capable of accommodating about 500 persons. There are schools in connection with it for 300 children.

Returning by the Cross, the traveller enters upon the broad expanse of the Horse Fair, and sees before him

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<sup>4</sup> Calthorpe House was sold by its seventeenth century owners, Hawtens and Morgans, in 1680 to Sir John Read. It was leased to the Cobb family from 1723 and was only inherited and immediately mortgaged by Sir James Dashwood around 1754. He never lived there, and it was never a "seat" of the family. It was eventually sold by the Dashwood estate in 1801 to its lessee Thomas Cobb.



## THE CHURCH AND VICARAGE

The date over the vicarage porch, 1649, informs us that it has already braved the blasts of upwards of two hundred years; whilst the solidity of its masonry and its unshaken front seem to indicate that it would not have the slightest objection to withstand the tempests of a few more centuries. Considerable additions have recently been made, fronting towards the churchyard, where a large hall has been erected, used by the choristers for the purposes of tuition, and where concerts are given by the choral society.

The Old Church, a very handsome edifice and one of the largest in the country, was taken down in 1790, under the authority of an act of Parliament, and the present ungainly structure erected on its site. That part of the building used for the celebration of Divine service was opened in 1797, but the edifice was not completed until 1822. The tower is the only portion having the slightest pretensions to architectural taste, 133 feet in height, encircled at the base of the upper compartment with a stone gallery from which is obtained a commanding view of the surrounding country. This gallery is supported by eight Corinthian pillars which somewhat relieve the sober dullness of the pile. The church will accommodate a congregation of 2,300 persons, including 500 free sittings for the poor and 150 for the school children. In the chancel are

two monuments to members of the Piggott family, and on each side is a compartment of the noble organ, opened at the beginning of 1859, which is contained in two cases, each 24 feet high by 16 wide, and having an interval of 30 feet between.

Opposite the church are the Unitarians' chapel and the meeting-house belonging to the Society of Friends, the latter being capable of containing about 300 persons. Between these buildings is an educational institution [Banbury Academy] which has now been established nearly half a century, and has at present nearly seventy boarders.

Passing the site of the North Bar, which was standing until 1817, the traveller turns off to the left, and leaving St Paul's Church and the Union on his right, he is on the high road to Wroxton and the scene of the Battle of Edgehill [followed by a description of the battle].

Returning once more to the town we find the National Schools nearly in our front, and the public cemetery, with its two little chapels erected in 1860, a short way towards the left, out the Southam Road. But leaving these, and returning along Parson's street – another hive of trade – the traveller will pass the Temperance Hall, used as a place of meeting by a denomination who designated themselves "the Brethren," and on his right will leave Church Lane, where he may find the Wesleyan Chapel a building much too small for the requirements of the congregation.<sup>5</sup> In this street also stands the Rein-deer Inn, which would well repay the antiquarian for a visit, were it only to inspect its venerable gates, the timber of which must have come to full growth upwards of three hundred years ago, the inscription bearing the venerable date 1570. In the interior is a grotesquely-panelled room, with mermaids and other objects artistically delineated in the richly moulded ceiling, which, if the inscription above the window is to be credited, has stood there since 1537.<sup>6</sup>

Emerging into Corn Hill, the first object that will attract the visitor's attention will be the Corn Exchange, which takes its name from the little square where it is built. This was erected in 1857, and in 1861 was used as a fitting receptacle for a Fine Art Exhibition. On the left of the quadrangle, in the Bank of Messrs. J., C. and A. Gillett, established in 1786, and drawing upon Glynn and Co., Lombard street, London.

[The preceding two paragraphs are from the 2nd edition.]

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<sup>5</sup> See page 33.

<sup>6</sup> Perhaps Mr Johnson mis-read '6' for '5', as the room is dated to the 1630s.



*Cornhill: Gillett's Bank and the Corn Exchange*

The Market Place adjoins, and will be found to contain about as picturesque a confusion of architecture as the greatest lover of variety can desire. From the reign of Elizabeth, down to the modern Flemish school, every era and nearly every style will be found to have at least one representative. The Unicorn, the carved gates of which bear the date 1648, presents us with a specimen of the former; and the place of business recently erected in front of the Central Exchange furnishes us with an example of the latter. Here a Telegraph Company have established their office, so that should our visitor be taken ill, he can at once communicate the fact to his heir. At the Angel corner stood the "half-moon battery," defending the entrance to the castle gates, and on the site of that large new red brick house close at hand, in former times was to be found the "Cucking Pool," where scolding wives met with summary immersion. [2nd edition].

[There is another building for the same purpose (Corn Exchange), the entrance to which leads from behind the old Town Hall, in the adjoining Market-place; and on each side of the covered entrance, a handsome place of business is in course of erection, which are also the property of the company - 1st edition, omitted from the 2nd.]

## THE CASTLE

[The castle] stood north of the market place, and the buildings covered nearly an acre of ground. Its site is still known as "the castle gardens" [and] in accordance with the utilitarian principles which regulate the transactions of modern times, has been devoted to the ignoble but exceedingly useful purpose of nourishing cabbages and cultivating cauliflowers.

[Here follows a lengthy description of the Civil War sieges of Banbury Castle.]

Returning to the market place, the visitor crosses Factory Street, at the east end of which is a manufactory for the fabrication of worsted girths, roller webs, and summer horse clothing – a species of manufacture that has been carried on in the town, by different members of the same family, for nearly a century. A short way westward from the point of intersection is a rope-walk and factory for the fabrication of rick sheets, tents, and sacking, which has also been established nearly fifty years.

Crossing the market-place and High Street, a little to the west of the Town Hall, a stranger will find himself in what is now called Broad Street, the houses consisting chiefly of the dwellings of the working classes. On the east side he may notice a plain and unpretending little building, erected in 1838 for the use of a plain and unpretending people, wherein they may worship their God in their own way. That is the chapel of the Primitive Methodists, and is capable of comfortably accommodating nearly 200 persons. A little further on is Christ Church which, if it ever should be finished, will be calculated to form not only a commodious but elegant building, and is already attended by a numerous congregation of the adherents of the established church residing in the southern district of the town. It was erected in 1852-3 by Mr Joseph Hope, under the superintendence of Mr Benjamin Ferry, the Incorporated Church Building Society contributing the sum of £400 towards the expense of the structure, on condition that 694 of its sittings, out of 944, should be free.

It was probably near this place – although it is now impossible precisely to say where – that the fifth gate, called Cole Bar, formerly stood. It marked the boundary of the town on the direct line of communication from the Castle gate to the Oxford Road; but when it was erected, or how it disappeared, there are no records extant to show.

## THE BRITANNIA WORKS

form the next object possessing a claim to the notice of a stranger, and have contributed of late years to render Banbury as deservedly celebrated for the manufacture of Implements of Agriculture, as it was wont to be for its cakes and ale. But lest it should be supposed by those who are unacquainted with the town that such a description of these works as the author of this brochure might be tempted to give, was too highly coloured, or of a more flattering character than their importance deserves, he will take the liberty of extracting the following graphic account from the *Official Guide to the London and North Western Railway*: –

“Great credit is due to the enterprising energy of the proprietor, who has, in ten years, raised the Works from the limited extent of a few small shops, employing two or three dozen men, up to its present eminent position, of one of the most extensive and justly celebrated manufactories in England, employing nearly 300 work-people, many of whom it must be remembered are attending steam-worked machinery which does the work of many times their number. The ceaseless activity of all concerned reminds one of a hive of bees; there is apparently an incessant transferring from one department to another, of the different component parts of machines with the same regularity that bricklayers’ labourers unload and stack their bricks; every thing is orderly and systematic, from the moment the workman enters the premises on Monday morning, and sees his ‘number’ entered by the door-keeper, up to mid-day on Saturday, when the paymaster, by an excellent plan, pays the wages to all employed in less than five minutes.

“The buildings are on two separate plots of ground of more than four acres, the iron-foundry in one division, and the other shops occupying the second.

“The engine is centrally situated, transmitting its wonderful power to the range of machine tool shops which form one side. In this department will be seen numerous self-acting and other lathes; planing and shaping machines, – slipping through and cutting plates of iron with the same apparent ease that a lady pierces and clips the fabric with her needle and scissors; screwing and tapping machines giving ‘threads’ to bolts and nuts; and the everlasting ‘whir-r-r’, at fearful velocity, of immense grindstones, imparting sharpness and brightness to the wonderful quantities of machine-knives made here. Power is given from the same source to the lofty wood-working shop, 200 feet long, where the hissing circular saws are cutting their rapid way through the hardest masses of

timber; from whence, after being seasoned, it is handed to the morticing and tenoning machines, which shape and cut it about as easily as Hodge's boy can cut his cheese. The same power hurls a blast of air, such as Boreas himself might crack his cheeks in vain to produce, through subterranean channels, to some two score blacksmiths' roaring forges, in the smiths' shops forming the third side, where the wrought iron is formed by the followers of Vulcan into rough shapes ready for machinery to finish. The fourth side of the quadrangle consists of offices, painters' shops, and goods-despatching warehouses. Hundreds of tons of bar and pig iron, and what appears to be whole forests of felled timber, are piled in disorderly order, waiting to be sacrificed at the shrine of art to purposes more useful, after transformation, though perhaps not so ornamental."

Here may be seen in course of manufacture, the Britannia Self-Raking Reaper, an invention well calculated to lighten the harvest labours of the husbandman, the supply of which, notwithstanding all the means and appliances at command, can barely at present keep pace with the requisitions; turnip cutters, turned out at the rate of nearly six thousand a year, and of which above 80,000 have been despatched from these works to all quarters of the globe; root-pulpers, food-preparers, chaff-cutters, and cake-breakers, in abundant profusion and almost endless variety; lawn-mowing machines which crop the grass and roll the sward to such perfection as no workman can ever hope to attain; hay-making machines for scattering abroad the produce of the meadows, and horse-rakes for the purpose of drawing it together; clod-crushers, rollers, horse-hoes, and harrows, for pulverising the soil and fertilising the teeming earth. Throughout every ramification of these extensive works there is abundant evidence of the presence of a master mind; and when it is remembered that nearly 18,000 of these Implements are annually sent out to aid the scientific agriculturist in his labours – each bearing the name of "Banbury" – that fact will furnish a 'material guarantee' for the continued prosperity of the borough to which its inhabitants may point with becoming pride.<sup>7</sup>

Our traveller is now returned within five minutes' walk of

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<sup>7</sup> This description of the Britannia Works was reprinted in *C&CH*.4(4), pp.60-61.





### THE RAILWAY STATION

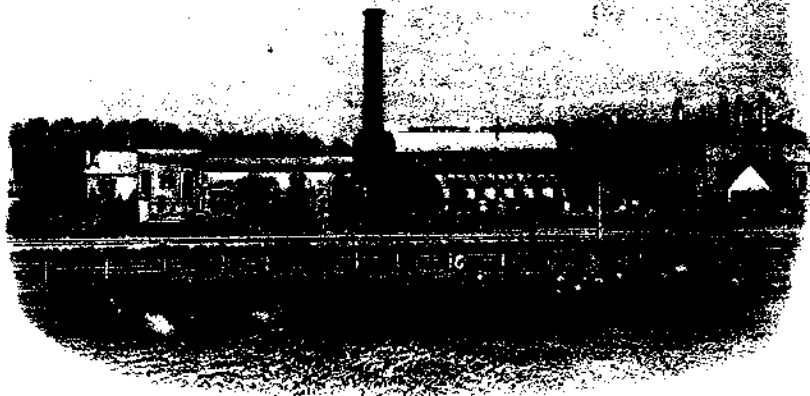
To which we will take the liberty of conducting him at once, and which the preceding engraving will leave him at no loss to recognise. The Buckinghamshire branch of the London and North Western Railway was constructed at the enormous expense of about £30,000 a mile; but it was done in a hurry, and the proprietors were doubtless charged extra for haste. It joins the Oxford branch at Winslow,  $23\frac{3}{4}$  miles from Banbury, and  $7\frac{1}{2}$  miles farther on, it is connected with the trunk line at Bletchley. It was opened to Banbury for public traffic on the 1st of May, 1850. The Great Western line was not opened until about two years afterwards, when it afforded a much more direct line of communication to the north, and abridged the journey from Banbury to the South Western districts of the kingdom by something like fifty miles. It has brought us within a two hours journey of the metropolis, and a ride of 28 minutes will convey a visitor from Oxford hither.

### THE GAS WORKS

Only remain to be noticed.<sup>8</sup> The company was established in 1833, with a capital of £3,500. The works at that time were situated in the town, and the price to the consumer was charged at the rate of 15s. per thousand. This was gradually reduced to 6s.8d.; but in 1853, by the advice of Mr Hedley, the engineer of the company, the works were removed to the

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<sup>8</sup> See 'Gas-Making in Banbury' G.C.J. Hartland, *C&CH*.4(4), 1969, pp.47-49.



*The Gas Works*

present eligible site, and the price was still further reduced to 5s. per thousand. These reductions were attended with satisfactory results, not only to the public but to the proprietors; for the income which in 1839 amounted only to £955, with gas at the rate of 15s a thousand, increased to £3,255 in 1859, after the price had been lowered to five shillings. The capital of the company is £10,000, divided into a thousand shares, and on that invested capital a dividend is paid at the rate of 7½ per cent per annum.

The works are commodious and well adapted both for the manufacture and distribution of the particular commodity which they are intended to supply, and consist of a large and well-ventilated retort-house, containing thirty clay retorts, 14 in. by 8 ft. 6in., with coal stores running parallel with the retort beds, a powerful condenser and scrubber, three large purifiers for dry lime, station meter, two gas-holders, and a station governor.

These works form a conspicuous object on the left, as the train leaves the Great Western station for Oxford; whilst the tastefully laid out garden in front of the residence of the company's engineer, and closely adjoining the works alluded to, satisfactorily demonstrate that when similar

works are suitably situated and properly conducted, they may be carried on without either becoming a nuisance or in the slightest degree destructive to vegetable life.

But the train draws nigh – the bell rings – the whistling, creaking, jarring noises are renewed – so all that remains is to shake hands with the purchaser of our Guide, and heartily wish him

“A PLEASANT JOURNEY”

## ADDENDUM



### THE NEW WESLEYAN CHAPEL

This magnificent structure for the worship of the Most High was designed by George Woodhouse, Esq., of Bolton-le-Moors, who officiated as architect, and was erected by Messrs. Albert Kimberley & Son, builders, Banbury.<sup>9</sup> The site is well chosen in Marlborough Road, a new street leading through the grounds of Dr R.S. Wise, from the upper part of High Street to the new Police Station for the county in New Land. The contract for the work amounted to £3,400, that for

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<sup>9</sup> See 'A.T. Kimberley Ltd., Building Contractors', Sally Stradling, *C&CI* 15.3

the gracefully tapering spire, £300 more, and the extras and cost of the purchase of the land brought the whole expence up to above £6,000. On Easter Monday, 1864, the first steps were taken to clear the ground for the erection of the edifice, and on the 17th of May in the same year, the corner stones of the building were laid. It was opened for public worship on the 9th of May, 1865, when the Rev. Dr. Waddy preached...

In approaching the north entrance from High Street – that shown in the accompanying engraving – the visitor is scarcely able to realise the capacious dimensions of the structure, although he can hardly fail to notice the elegance of the large window in that end of the building, and the fair proportions of the carved stonework below. The archway is a fine specimen of architecture, the polished pillars of red Mansfield stone contrasting well with the fair white freestone employed in the general erection. The chiselled part of the walls are of Bath Stone, the quarries at Brackley furnishing that for the less ornamented portions of the work, and the rings which give such a pleasing variety to the spire are composed of stone from Hornton quarries. There are 1100 sittings in the Chapel, of which 430 are free, and the latter are placed in some of the best parts of the edifice. The pulpit is a massive structure of carved oak, with alternate pillars of ebony and mahogany, and placed on a pedestal of white freestone, inlaid with alabaster and green marble.

Since the present edition of "The Stranger's Guide" issued from the press, the Primitive Methodists have disposed of their old chapel in Broad Street, and have purchased and repaired that formerly occupied by the Wesleyan Methodists in Church Lane.

## APPENDIX

Alfred Beesley, *The History of Banbury*, p.158, quoting Leland, "There is a chappel of the Trinity in the middle of the town". Beesley conjectures that this might have been on the site of the White Horse, an ancient doorway to the premises having survived until perhaps the 1830s. This is illustrated as Plate 19 (see front cover). See also Dr Tennant's note [*C&CH*.17.5, p.176] where it is described as having been built "in the com[m]on street". Beesley's footnote 45 tells that Corporation records of 3rd Jan. 1677 [lost before BHS.15 was prepared] stated that Thomas Robins should pay "for the wast ground wch. was the alley that leads from Edward Vivers his howse downe towards the Chappell being three foot & a half broad & fower score and twelve foot long..." Vivers' house was the well-known three-gabled building at the eastern end of the High Street, and the alley described sounds like the Great Tchure leading to the Market Place, though it is hard, in 1667, to place a chapel anywhere near.

## BANBURY'S OUTSKIRTS AROUND 1895

*The late Dorothy M. Bromley*

[f.14] It would have been quite possible to walk all round the outskirts of Banbury in a short time during the 1890s [Miss Bromley was born in 1887]. I propose now to describe such a walk starting from the entrance to Castle Street West, lately having become so very much widened by the removal of all the cottages on the south side. At the end of four of these cottages was Hayden's shoeing forge and I can remember looking in to see horses being shod and the clang of the anvil and smell of the hot metal with sparks flying.

There is very little difference on the north side right along to the next part called Castle Street East. The backs of all these houses look over the fields called the Marches. Between West and East Castle Street a narrow lane called Rope Walk led down to the Marches with a small stream running down to the canal in which a small quantity of minnows could be seen. Castle Street East continued to Castle Street North and, keeping still to the outskirts instead of turning into the Market Place from Castle Street North, we keep straight on down Factory Street at the back of Hoods the ironmongers which was and still is [until 2006] in Bridge Street. Factory Street ends with a drawbridge over the canal and on the north side the mills of Edmunds and Kench.

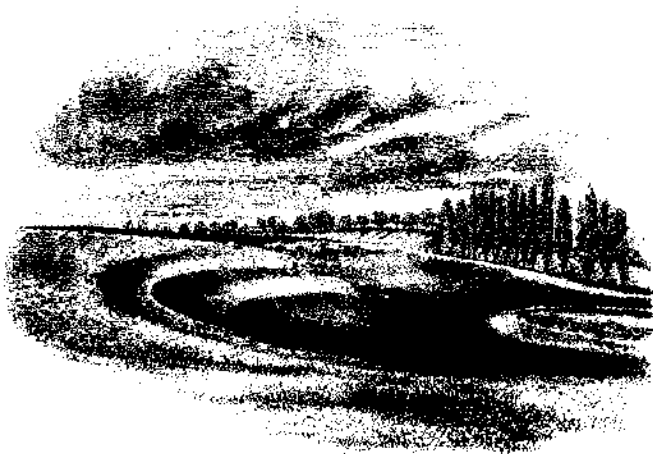
We must now turn to the south into Bridge Street. This leads on over the Railway Bridge to Grimsbury, but we cross the road into Lower Cherwell Street on the west side of the canal, on the other side of which is Station Road leading to the Great Western Railway Station. On the other side of the bridge was the terminus station of the London and North Eastern Railway.

After leaving Cherwell Street we follow the street nearest to the canal by Stones Factory on the right to the bridge over the canal and then up the steep road to the east end of High Town Road. There were no houses here then till Foscothe on the left, then lived in by Mr Barford JP and his daughter. After that there were no houses on the right but on the left the houses were there as now to South Bank. The only house between there and Bodicote was the Lodge leading by a long drive to the house occupied by Mr Samuelson and family and Bodicote Grange beyond.

Mr Samuelson was the son of the founder of the iron [f.15] Foundry, Sir Bernard[sic] Samuelson. Many of the streets of houses in Cherwell lately demolished were built to house the workers in the Foundry. Sir Bernard Samuelson was at one time Member of Parliament for Banbury.

There were no houses on the west of Oxford Road except a farm house [Easington Farm] occupied by Mr Denchfield and family, so from High Town Road we will turn towards the town. The Horton General Hospital, although so much has been added to, had much the same appearance at the entrance.

I can just remember the next four houses being built, the first larger one by an architect named Mills who married Miss Perry of the Nurseries. All the houses following except one between the big house called Lismore and Calthorpe Lodge were there as today. Opposite the houses at the bottom of Oxford Road was a row of cottages with gardens in front, some still remain. We now cross the road to the Inn called the Case is Altered. There were no houses on either side of Bloxham Road except Springfield half a mile up on the right.



There were fields on both sides and occupying a large space inside the field bordered by Bloxham Road and Bear Garden Road there was the remains of an old out door theatre, and open space in the middle at the bottom of a hollow surrounded by raised seats as it would be a circus and a steep sloping path leading down from the top to the hollow with the approaches to seats on either side. This hollow was used to entertain

people by bear baiting which gave its name to Bear Garden Road leading from Bloxham Road to Broughton Road. There were then no houses on the left hand side but all those on the right were standing except the bungalow at the top of Crouch Street.

A gate at the bottom of Bear Garden Road on the left led to open fields with a pathway leading to Crouch Hill which was a very pleasant walk but now completely covered by roads of houses. The fields belonged to the farmer Mr Denchfield who lived in the farm on the Oxford Road next to a water tower opposite to the Elms, a large house then occupied by John Padbury Gillett and family.

Having reached the bottom of Bear Garden Road we are now at the join [f.16] of West Bar and Broughton Road. I can just remember when there were no houses except one cottage on the left leading towards the west. Berrymore Road was not built but there was a rough track leading to another cottage right at the top.

The fields were steep slopes each side with the path to the hill running along the bottom and a small entrance gate of each field in a sort of trough as a drinking place for cattle kept in the separate fields. A shooting range for practice by the volunteers was used on certain evenings. A target was always in place and a red flag hoisted to warn people that shooting was going on from a railed mound a certain distance across the fields. From Bath Road up the hill there were houses all the way, as now, to the lodge by the gate of Woodgreen, then occupied by Mrs Gillett, who lived to be a hundred, and her daughter. This row of houses was then called Constitution Hill. The few cottages further up the hill on the right were called the Brickyard cottages and on the opposite side there were only two cottages some distance apart. Bath Road has not altered very much except the row of houses which are new between the West End Tennis ground and the Park entrance. There was a picturesque but very poor collection of cottages enclosed in a court named Paradise Court. I remember seeing a picture of them by a local artist Charles Windsor. I think they were demolished before the ground was used for part of the park.

Leading from Bath Road on the north side was Park Road with a long line of houses on the right side; part of the way up a side street led down again into Bath Road, named Queen Street. At the top of Park Road a lane led to a group of houses, Golden Villas[sic] and a farm house. The lower end of Bath Road led into the Warwick Road. Following this road away from the town were houses and a few small shops.

On the right some distance up was the Work House, a big bare building which housed men, women and children unable to keep themselves and there was also a hospital for the aged. They all wore uniform clothes, men in corduroy trousers, little girls in round hard hats, aprons and [f.17] plain dresses.

Except for one old cottage there were no houses beyond till at the top on a long hill, Rustcote[sic] Hill, was the public house called the Barley Mow.

Leading from Warwick Road on the left, soon after leaving Bath Road, was a turning leading to a part of Neithrop called Boxhedge Square, a wide square of cottages out of which Union Street led down into the Warwick Road at the Inn called the Duke of Wellington.

Turning from Bath Road into Warwick Road towards the town, where an entrance to the Park now is, was a large house now used for a clinic and gardener's house; this was Neithrop House, once occupied by Captain Beynon[sic] and family, son in law to Lord North of Wroxton Abbey. At the entrance to a passage called the Leys leading into the Horse Fair, West Bar and Bath Road, was a long low house called Leys House with a walled-in garden. Except for a row of houses on the left there were no houses leading into Warwick and Southam Road but a builders' yard on the right and an open space of allotments on the left. Further up leading from the left were two streets joining up at the top and leading to a lane at the back of the Cemetery, these were called Foundry Street and Green Lane with Foundry Square joining the two.

We are now back again at the entrance to Castle Street and have completed the walk surrounding the town as I remember it in my earliest childhood.

*Editorial Note:* This account of Banbury's outskirts around 1895 concludes the Memoirs of Miss Dolly Bromley, the larger part of which were published in our preceding issue, Vol. 17, pp. 296-309. The typescript is deposited in the Oxfordshire Record Office.



## OBITUARY

### *Martin Allitt, 1945-2009*

On Friday 27<sup>th</sup> March 2009 one of the largest congregations seen at Marlborough Road church assembled for a Service of Thanksgiving, a chance to say farewell to Martin Allitt. Here was someone who was not only Banburian, spending a lifetime in the Leys near the Peoples Park, but who touched the lives of so many people whether through his work at Banbury Library or in the world of music, especially because of his piano teaching and organ playing at the Baptist, United Reform and Methodist Churches.

Martin started his education at Dashwood Road School where he first developed a liking for history. From his first day there he shared a desk with former policeman Tony King who became a lifelong friend.

After leaving Easington Boys' School Martin worked briefly at Twyford Seeds in Adderbury before joining Banbury Library in 1966. Here a period in excess of 40 years culminated in his becoming Head of Banburyshire Studies. In Martin's own words, 'That was the climax of my career. I love local studies and family history'. His actions matched those words so exactly that countless people furthered their knowledge because of what he knew and because his organisational skills turned the Centre into a treasure trove of history.

Martin was a modest man whose early life was influenced by his parents. Membership of the Baptist Church-based Boys' Brigade gave him a code of Christian beliefs, the basis of a strong faith that stood him in good stead. This, his marriage to Wendy, and his family provided all he wanted from life.

In 2006 his colleagues organised a meal at the Farnborough Inn to celebrate his 40 years at Banbury Library. During that occasion the Red Arrows formation team flew overhead. With a smile on his face Martin enquired if this had been specially arranged. Even though the answer was negative, this chance happening was no less than Martin deserved for a life of service to others yet so cruelly cut short.

**Brian Little**

### **Lecture Reports**

Following our usual season-opening reception on **10th September** we learnt from **Liz Woolley** about the parish of **St Thomas**, Oxford, close to the Castle and the railway station. On **8th October** **Nick Hill**, English Heritage project manager, told us of the gigantic restoration project at **Apethorpe Hall**.

Both were well-attended and absorbing talks, dependent on the fascinating and appropriate illustrations of buildings, their present use and the major craft work involved in their preservation. No merely verbal description would do justice to them.

Members are reminded that the meeting on **Thursday 10th December**, by Adrian Shooter on **Chiltern – A Railway Success Story**, will be held at the **Marlborough Road Methodist Church**, as usual at 7.30pm.

## Book Reviews

*A History of King's Sutton Primary School 1909 -2009*, by June Smith. Card covered, A5, 90pp, 55 illus., £5. Available from the Post Office, Kings Sutton; The Banbury Museum Bookshop; and the Old Hall Bookshop, Brackley.

This is a delightful 90 pages of local school history. Using a variety of sources – school log books, HMI and OFSTED inspection reports, personal memories and photographs – June Smith has conjured a fascinating account of the development of schooling in King's Sutton over the last century, and placed it within the broader framework of changing government priorities and educational practice.

The early days are full of freezing classrooms, learning by rote, high absenteeism due to illness, weather and the Banbury Fair (!), and punishment books where stealing fruit from trees and chewing gum (post 1945!) feature prominently. The book then charts the effects of the Depression, the Second World War and the social changes of the 60s on the school until we reach our modern times of child-centred education, small classes, technology and the National Curriculum.

The ups and downs of every day life are here – jokes played by staff on pupils – and vice versa, country dancing and cycling proficiency, boilers breaking down, classrooms bursting with wartime evacuees, raising money and sports days. Much has changed and much, it seems, remains the same.

The views of a number of headmasters and inspectors chart the varying fortunes of King's Sutton's school. From 1919 when the 'work of the school is in a critical state' to 2006 when OFSTED described the school as 'outstanding', 'a very special place', and all points in between, June Smith's small history is a repository of facts and memories which will fascinate local people for many years to come.

**Rona Rowe**

The new issue of *Northamptonshire Past and Present* (no. 62, 2009, £3.50 + p&p, Northamptonshire Record Society, Wootton Hall Park, Northampton NN4 8BQ), includes an amusing transcription of 'The Letters of Jane Pope (1744-1818) of Astrop', by Avril Pedley. She was a well-known actress who played at Drury Lane from childhood to old age. In the summer when the theatre was closed she left London for her home in Astrop, living quietly and visiting members of local society. Over twenty letters (1805-1814) survive and are well worth reading for their entertainment as well as for the occasional local references: "Farmer Goff is just arriv'd from Banbury Market Day, ... ready to unlode contents from that great mart of Business..."

Other articles maintain the journal's usual high standard. A highlight for our members will be the very flattering review of *Banbury Past through Artists' Eyes*, and a well-deserved commendation of Paul Hayter's recent 'Assisted Emigration to Canada' (*C&CH* 17.8)

**J.G.**



# BANBURY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

## Autumn 2009/Winter 2010 Programme

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

*Thursday 10th December 2009, 7.30 p.m.*

### **Chiltern: a Railway Success Story**

*Adrian Shooter (Chiltern Railways)*

[In view of the popularity of railway talks,  
this will be held at the *Marlborough Road Methodist Church.*]

*Thursday 14th January 2010, 7.30 p.m.*

### **Women workers in war and peace: The General Post Office, 1914-1939**

*Helen Gow*

*Thursday 11th February 2010, 7.30 p.m.*

### **The Hunting Transition: from Deerhunting to Foxhunting**

*Mandy de Belin*

*Thursday 11th March 2010, 7.30 p.m.*

### **Cresswell Crags: inspiring visitors for 50,000 years**

*Ian Wall*

*Thursday 15th April 2010, 7.30 p.m.*

**Local History Workshop – reports on recent local research** (in particular projects entered for the Banbury Historical Society prize).