

CAKE AND COCKHORSE



BANBURY HISTORICAL
SOCIETY

Spring 2010 £2.50

Volume 18 Number 2

ISSN 6522-0823

BANBURY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Registered Charity No. 269581

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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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Two months' removal from the 'real world' whilst I languished in hospital and then benefited from the TLC of kind friends during convalescence have not delayed the journal unduly – indeed it seems that winter is reluctant to depart. This issue is rather shorter than usual, as a major article intended for inclusion has instead had to be held over to our Summer issue. As the Cherwell District Council IT set-up is undergoing change, our own website, which hangs on its coat-tails, will also be effected, so the promised piece on its use is also delayed.

Simon Townsend's article on the mural which used to adorn the Original Cakeshop in Parsons Street will stir memories for the more elderly of our readers. I well recall joining our co-founder Ted Brinkworth there for coffee on Saturday mornings in the early 1960s, and the sense of betrayal by the County and Borough Councils' failure to prevent its demolition felt by all with Banbury's history and heritage at heart. It is splendid that the mural has survived and is now once again on display in the Castle Quay Shopping Centre. Simon's research shows that its artist was far better known in the field of stained glass.

It is appropriate that John Stanbridge, the grammarian and Founding Head of Banbury's first School, should be one of those shown in the mural, as 2010 marks the five hundredth anniversary of his death. More about his life and achievements appeared in Margaret Martins' article in *Oxoniensia* (2003/4) and by Professor Nicholas Orme in vol. 52 of the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (2004).

My illness has inevitably delayed still further finalising our next records volume, *Turnpike Roads to Banbury*, but it is expected that it will finally go to press soon after Easter.

J.G.

Cover: "The Original Cake-shop" (Beesley, p.569).

THE ORIGINAL BANBURY CAKESHOP MURAL

Simon Townsend

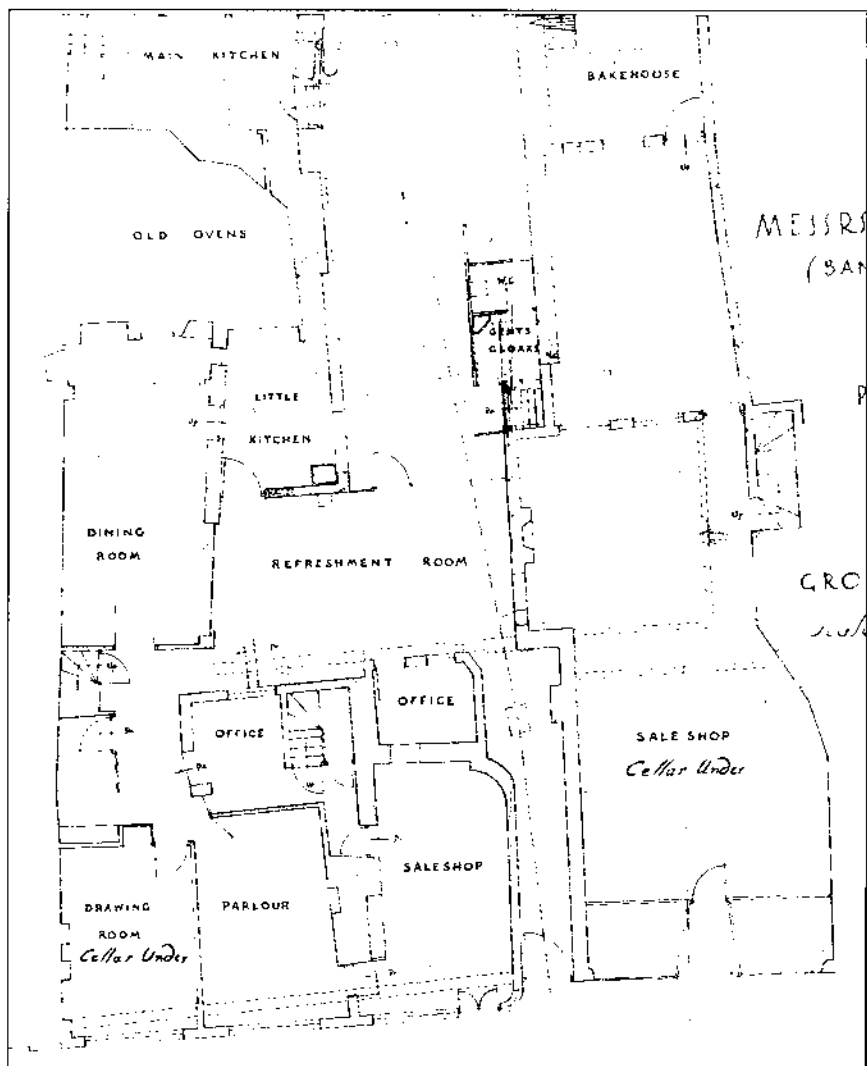
Numbers 12, 13, and 14 Parsons Street were demolished in 1968. Better known as "*The Original Cake Shop*", number 12 was a fine example of a medieval timber-framed building. Its layout, now fully understood following its demolition, was a single range lying along the frontage of its tenement, in three units. A cross-passage separated the units, the single one furthest from Cornhill. The chimney-stack was sited in the middle room, backing onto the passage. Behind this, a staircase gave access to the upper floors. The street elevation was decorated with pargetting of late seventeenth or eighteenth centuries in date, but the fabric of the building itself was much earlier. In the eighteenth century a rear wing in red brick was added, which included a stone stack containing an oven.

The loss of this architectural and social treasure has been discussed widely, both in this journal and in others. Even today the shop is remembered with affection and its rude departure recalled with annoyance. However, the subject of this piece is not the shop but the Mural, a survivor.

Mr Wilfrid Brown, proprietor of The Original Cake Shop, returned from active military service in 1946 and straight away embarked on a project to enlarge the Cake Shop. The family already owned the adjoining properties, nos 13 and 14, the former being leased to Mr J Pilsworth who traded from the property as a grocer. Mr Brown commissioned Oxford architect *T Lawrence Dale* and builders *Hinkins and Frewin* to deliver his vision.

The detail from the plan facing is taken from the survey carried out by Mr Dale in December 1946; it shows clearly the medieval house plan described above (Drawing Room Cellar Under; Parlour; Saleshop on plan).

Mr Brown's vision was to increase the size of the business by extending into No 13 (Sale Shop Cellar Under on plan). This was to become a seating area for approximately 50 people. In addition, the passage-way, originally giving access to the Salt Warehouse and separating the original shop from the new seating, was to be incorporated into the original shop providing an internal space to accommodate the lengthy queue that formed in front of the counter.



Ground Floor plan of Premises in Parsons Street, Messrs. E.W. Brown (Banbury) Ltd., surveyed and Measured Dec. 1946, by T. Lawrence Dale FRIBA.

The new seating area was entered from the shop, through two glazed swing-doors. The thoughtful designs included two new Hornton Stone fire grates, worked by Mr Wilfred Stanley, manager of the Edgehill Quarries; oak chairs and tables designed by the architect; and electric light, delivered from fittings "of a simple pattern".

The redesign even extended beyond the interior to the street frontage, and included the addition of elaborate windows in the gothic style of intersecting tracery.



Number 13 Parsons Street was demolished over 40 years ago, and if one asked Banburians what they remembered, it would probably not be the fireplaces, exquisite lighting or the furniture, but the Mural, the *pièce de résistance* of the renovation.

The Mural was commissioned from Brian D L Thomas OBE (1912-1989). The choice of Thomas has been unremarked upon, and yet this choice is entirely remarkable. In 1947 Thomas would have been 35, his career about to take a new and exciting direction. The coming years would see his works incorporated into cathedrals, churches and livery halls, part of the rebuilding of London following the blitz. Thomas became a distinguished artist, appointed OBE in 1961, and is remembered for his stained-glass windows and murals which contributed to the restoration of St Paul's Cathedral, Westminster Abbey and churches throughout London. (See appendix 1)

Born in Barnstable in 1912, and educated at Bradfield, he won a science exhibition to Oxford but chose instead to go to the Byam Shaw School of Art. Here he won the Rome Scholarship in Mural Painting.

His travels led him not only to Italy, but to Spain and a lifelong interest in Velasquez. On his return to England he took up a teaching appointment at the Byam Shaw, a post he held until the onset of War. Afterwards he returned to the Byam Shaw as Principal.

The link between Thomas and Banbury can probably be found in Dale the architect. Dale had an interest in historic buildings, and from 1933 was a committee member of the Oxfordshire Archaeological Society. The Society's journal records excursions beyond Oxford, to visit historic churches and houses in the rural hinterland, and urban centres such as Banbury. From 1933 until 1938 Dale was responsible for the Architectural Notes following these trips, published in the annual report. It is likely that at least one of these excursions included a visit to the famous cake shop in Parsons Street and was perhaps the occasion when Dale met his future client, Mr Brown.

Dale also carried out ecclesiastical commissions, including St Michael and All Angels (1954), New Marston, Oxford; and St Swithun's Church (1958), Kennington, Oxford: both new build churches he designed. He also designed a tower screen in carved oak in Stratton Audley Church. Although these projects are a little later it seems entirely possible that Dale knew Thomas through their shared interests, and consequently introduced Thomas to the project.



The renovations were complete in July 1948, and both the Mural and Cake Shop received national press coverage.

The Mural (pages 52-53) should be viewed in the context of post war Britain. Although Banbury had escaped the fate of near neighbour Coventry, there were few Banburians who remained untouched by the horrors of the wars fought in the first half of the twentieth century. The painting offers a comfortable and secure local history, a noble lineage, a Banbury with a notable past and dependable future. Thomas' traditional style sat comfortably in a conservative town.

The Mural delivers a didactic narrative of Banbury's history, but one which is not necessarily strictly accurate and one which naturally revolves around cakes.

The chronology begins with the Roman Amphitheatre and battle fought in 556AD between Saxons and Britons. There was of course never an amphitheatre, although the bear pit was sometimes mistaken for one, and the great battle between King Cynric and the Britons was probably fought at Barbury in Wiltshire. The story then skips along through the centuries touching on the Bishops of Lincoln, Queen Mary's charter, Thomas Stanbridge and Banbury Grammar School and Sir Francis Walsingham, supposed Member for Banbury, who stands above an illustration of the Cake Shop. Ben Jonson follows on, with a reference to "Rabbi Zeal-of-the-Land Busy, who kept a cake-shop in Banbury".

Facing playwright Ben Jonson, a gentleman, possibly Lord Saye and Sele, in Civil War garb, introduces Banbury Castle, "a most important stronghold ... it changed hands several times". This as we know is a little exaggerated; 17-year-old Sir William Compton held the castle for the King valiantly through two sieges, from just after the battle of Edgehill until the tail end of the war. Moving swiftly on, Lord North is next to appear with reference to the loss of the American colonies.

The narrative approach then shifts, a strong-man supporting a plinth upon which stand livestock and the words "Banbury is an important Market Town and Agriculture Centre." Below are objects, examples of Banbury's industries, plush, agricultural tools and the words "the opening of the important aluminium factory began a new chapter in the history of Banbury." Painted fewer than 20 years after the Northern Aluminium Company came to Banbury, these words are especially poignant following Alcoa's recent closure.

Finally the painter returns to Banbury Cakes, Banbury Cross and the nursery rhyme. The Lady on the White Horse rides towards the cross, followed by medieval players, watched by two twentieth century children sitting astride hobby horses. "Banbury is really important because that is where they make BANBURY CAKES"

What happened to the mural after the 1968 demolition? Prior to the demolition, at the time Mr Brown sold the business, the mural was removed from the wall and stored, rolled up, in Mr Brown's house. The size of the work precluded its display and in 1976 it was given to Cherwell District Council. It was at this point that the work was restored and mounted onto a stretcher. The Castle Shopping Centre had opened in 1974, and the large spaces here allowed the work to be hung above the shopping mall, where it remained until 1995. It was then removed before the shopping centre was redeveloped and extended, becoming the Castle Quay Shopping Centre. Today the work has been re-hung in the shopping centre where it can once again be viewed by all.

Acknowledgments

I would like to thank Mr Philip Brown, Wilfrid Brown's youngest son, for providing me with access to source material, including the photographs and plans illustrating this article, which remain his Copyright. Mr Philip Brown still makes the original Banbury Cakes which are on sale in Banbury Museum, Café Quay and other locations in the United Kingdom.

Mr Neil Morgan of Touch Media, Cheltenham, was most helpful at a late stage with computerisation of the splendid colour illustration of the mural on pages 52-53.

Margaret Martins kindly reminded us that it was *John* Stanbridge who should have been named in the mural, rather than "Thos.". This Thomas, John's namesake and perhaps relative, was an usher at Banbury School in 1511. More about John's life and achievements appeared in Margaret Martins' article in *Oxoniensia* (2003/4) and by Professor Nicholas Orme in vol. 52 of the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (2004).

References

- 'The Original Cakeshop', J.S.W. Gibson. *Cake and Cockhorse*, Vol. 3, No. 8, Summer 1967, p.160. History.
- 'The Original Cakeshop', J.S.W.G., *C&CH*, Vol. 3, No. 12, Summer 1968, p.236. Public Inquiry.
- 'The Original Cakeshop', J.S.W.G., *C&CH*, Vol. 4, No. 1 - Autumn 1968, p.16. Epilogue.

Appendix 1 - Works by Brian Thomas

London

All Hallows by the Tower, London

Mural

The Last Supper

Church of St Sepulchre-without-Newgate, Musicians' Window, London

Stained Glass

Dame Nellie Melba, the composer John Ireland, conductor Sir Henry Wood and Walter Carroll

Innholders Hall - College Street EC4R 2RH

Stained Glass

Three Masters Window, it was designed and made by 3 past masters of the Worshipful Company of Glaziers - Brian Thomas, Michael Bell and Lawrence Lee.

St Andrew's, Holborn

Mural and Stained Glass

A dove over the altar, and a dove in the stained glass window at the East End.

St Edward, New Addington, London

Stained Glass

St. Edward

Symbols of Kingship, Top: Lt: Melchizidek. Rt; Hezekiah. Bottom: Lt:David. Rt: Solomon.

St John Priory Chapel, Clerkenwell, London

Stained Glass

Arms of Lord Webb-Johnson

St John the Divine, Kennington

Mural

Wall paintings around the apse dado 1965.

St John the Divine, Selsdon, London

Stained Glass

Scenes

St Mark's, Regent's Park

Stained Glass

St Peter and St Mark (1957)

St Mary's Church, Islington

Mural

Eight Attributes of Christ

The Last Judgement

St Michael, Sutton Court, Chiswick, London

Stained Glass

Samuel

St Paul's Cathedral, American Chapel

Stained Glass

St Vedast, Foster Lane

Stained Glass

Scenes from the life of St Vedast 1961

Westminster Abbey

Stained Glass

Outside London

All Saints, Compton, Hampshire

Stained Glass

Madonna and Child; Deposition

Bangor Cathedral, Lady Chapel

Mural 1934

St Andrew and St George, Stevenage

Stained Glass

The Christian Year

St Laurence, Tidmarsh, Berkshire

Stained Glass

22 scenes from life of deceased

St Margaret, Ifield, Kent

Stained Glass

Symbolic

St Mary, Long Ditton, Surrey

Stained Glass

Annunciation

St Mary, Maidenhead

Stained Glass

Serpent of Paradise; Serpent of Healing

Sword of Spirit; Local scenes & connections

Suffer little children; Prodigal Son

St Mary the Virgin, Twickenham

Stained Glass

Symbols of the Virgin Mary

St Paul's Church, Bedford

Stained Glass 1976

A Celebration of the 400th anniversary of the Harpur Trust

International

Cathedral of St Paul, Wellington

Stained Glass

St Paul at the Arcopagus

Appendix 2 - The Mural Text

There was a Roman Amphitheatre at Banbury

*In AD556 an important battle was fought at Banbury
in which the Britons defeated the Saxons and
for a time kept back their invasion
But the Saxons won in the end. They
called Banbury Beranbyius. In the
Domesday Book it was called Banesberie.*

*From 1225 to 1548 the Lordship of Banbury belonged
to the Bishops of Lincoln. But at the Reformation the
King granted it to the Duke of Northumberland.*

*When the Duke of Northumberland tried to make Lady Jane Grey Queen of
England, the men/
of Banbury stood out for Queen Mary, who in gratitude granted them a charter
making Banbury a borough, with the right to send a member to Parliament*

*Thos. Stanbridge made Banbury Grammar School so famous
that its statutes were used as a model for those of
Manchester Grammar School and of St Pauls School London.*

*One of the earliest Members for Banbury
was Sir Francis Walsingham, later to become
the great minister of Queen Elizabeth*

*When this shop was founded is not known, but it was a
flourishing concern early in the XVIIth Century.*

*In the XVIIth Century, Banbury was a headquarters of Puritanism
The terms Puritan and Banbury-man meant almost the same.*

*An old anti-puritan rhyme ran
To Banbury came I, O profane one
Where I met a puritane one,
Who hanged his cat of a Monday
For killing a mouse on a Sunday*

*Ben Johnson, who hated Puritans, ridiculed them in one
of his plays, and referred to "Rabbi Zeal-of-the-Land
Busy", who kept a cake shop in Banbury.*

*This "Busy" is an illusion to Busby, the man who at this period
kept this shop, where Ben Jonson is supposed to have eaten.*

*In the Civil War some of the first fighting took place around Banbury
Banbury Castle was owned by the family of the great Parliamentary
leader, Lord Saye and Sele, nicknamed "Old Subtlety".*

Banbury Castle was a most important stronghold during the Civil War. It changed hands several times and suffered two sieges. It was eventually demolished in 1646.

In the XVIIIth Century Lord North was returned to Parliament as member for Banbury thirteen times. His policy led to the American War of Independence.

Plush making was a Banbury Industry of long standing. Banbury Plush has been used in royal palaces and the House of Lords.

The opening of the important aluminium factory began a new chapter in the history of Banbury.

*So much for the History Books
But as every schoolboy knows*

*Banbury is really important because that
Is where they make BANBURY CAKES*

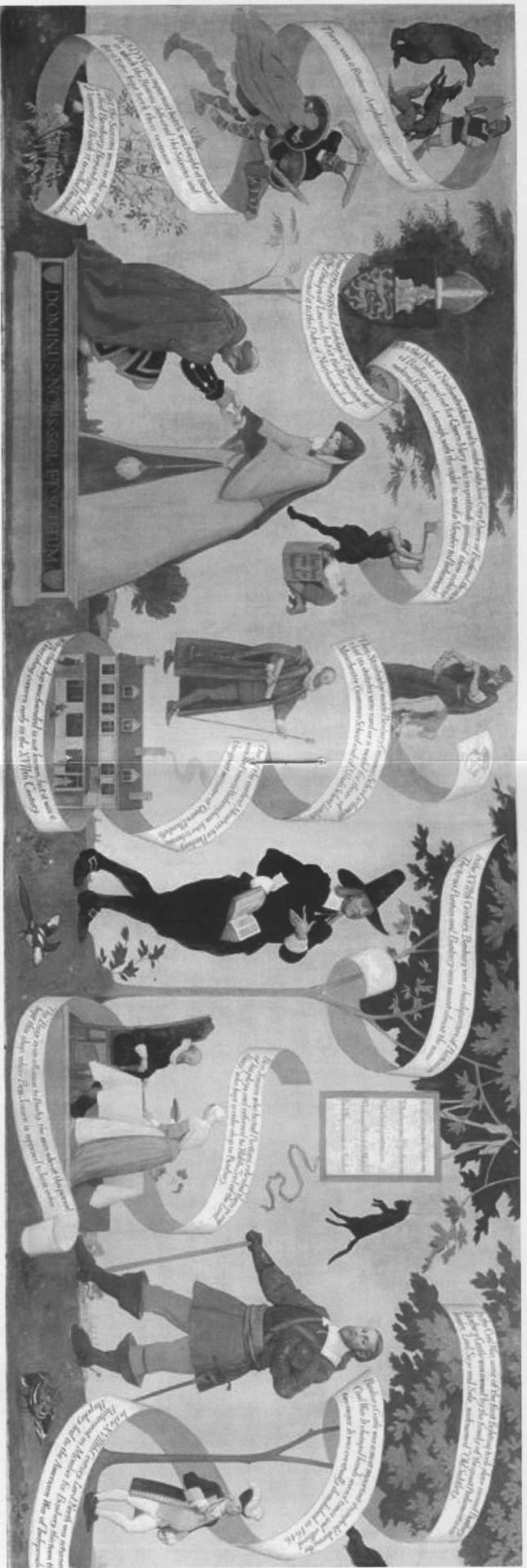
*And above all the name of BANBURY
Is known the world over because of the
IMMORTAL NURSERY RHYME.*

*Ride a cockhorse to Banbury Cross
To see a fine lady ride on a white horse:*

*Rings on her fingers and bells on her toes,
She shall have music wherever she goes!*

DOMINUS.NOBIS.SOL.ET.SCUTUM.

*BANBURY
Is an important
Market Town
and Agricultural
Centre*



The Original Cake Shop Mural, by B.D.L. Thomas, OBE, 1912-1989.
 Oil on canvas, originally applied directly to the wall of the Cake Shop with adhesive. Late removed and mounted onto a stretcher. 1600 x 8660mm.



BURTON DASSETT: Recent Archaeological Discoveries

Peter Christopher

Twelve years ago, just inside Fenny Compton parish, large quantities of second to fourth century Romano-British potsherds were found in a field. More pottery was found just a short distance away in Burton Dassett close to a small stream. The local landowner welcomed the suggestion of further investigation; a generous act that led to the founding of Feldon Archaeological Society.

Excavation commenced close to where a quantity of dressed building stone lay at the field margin and quickly revealed a very large foundation wall of local undressed stone, over one metre wide. Some fourteen metres of foundation were exposed before attention was turned to the interior of what was obviously a very large building. This had had three successive clay floors. In addition, very large stone lined post holes nearly one metre deep and one metre wide were discovered three metres from the wall and a similar distance apart, designed to take huge supporting timbers. Much Roman tile was found together with some window glass from what was evidently a large aisled building. Finds indicated mixed agricultural and domestic use extending over several centuries, deduced from the ceramic, bone, glass and somewhat limited coin finds made here. The full dimensions of the building were not established before the site was backfilled. A report was published (Eames 2005) on behalf of the Society detailing finds.

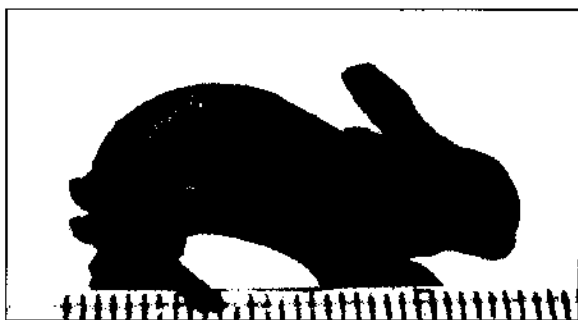
Warwickshire County Archaeology Department made equipment available allowing a resistivity survey to be carried out. This complemented the earlier extensive field walking and metal detecting surveys. A new excavation was undertaken ten metres to the west of the aisled building. This revealed an unusual cellar-like construct with carefully lined walls of dressed stone and a tightly cobbled floor, with a surround of puddled clay giving the impression that this structure had been designed to be water tight. That this was so was evidenced by the fact that the structure filled with rain water after every heavy shower, necessitating the Society purchasing a bilge pump; something which in later years has proved to a very useful item.

The function of this structure is still not clear. Possibly it was once very simply roofed which might have allowed for its use as some kind of below ground cool house for storage of e.g. dairy produce, amongst other things. Post holes which may have allowed for a lifting device were found. Very little in the way of dateable material was found inside this structure but the evidence indicated it had been used during the Roman occupation. It is hoped a report on this excavation will be published in the near future, since there were many interesting small finds made here, only recently recorded by the Finds Liaison Officer.

Subsequently, excavation a further ten metres to the west of the cellar-like structure was undertaken. This area, having previously shown very high resistivity readings, revealed a level area of closely packed stone forming a courtyard which fronted a well constructed rectangular Romano-British building. This building, measuring twelve by six metres, would have been a two storey construction, with a stone lower and a timber upper storey with a tiled roof. What was eventually shown to be an eighteenth century land drain ran diagonally across the building. The building was probably constructed in the late third - early fourth centuries. There was evidence of later squatter occupation possibly from the Saxon period in both the building and the courtyard. The courtyard extended some ten metres north from this building. At the far end in a shallow depression in the cobble the grave of a middle aged female was uncovered, aligned north/south. Artifacts found with this burial suggested a date in the late fifth to early sixth centuries. In particular two "long small brooches" were found with the skeleton. This type of brooch is quite rare this far west, most having been found in the east midlands. An Osteological report prepared by Kate Brayne suggested this individual was from a fairly high status family or community and that she had died at about 45 years of age. Particularly, comment was made concerning the many dental caries found on this female, suggesting frequent access to sweetened food; in this context, honey.

In early 2008, a new curator took over the site. Subsequently, Finds Quantities were tabulated revealing that the area around the cellar-like structure had double the percentage of animal bones of any of the areas examined on the site up until then and in addition, excavation there had yielded over 40% of all pottery sherds. The rectangular building yielded most of the roofing tiles and glass and by far the largest quantity of iron nails.

Two Finds discovered in 2009



An enameled, *Zoomorphic*, Brooch of the Roman period, associated with the second century CE, depicting a Hare. Recovered during excavation, September 2009, finder Peter Ellis.



Fine-ware jar, resembling a *Belgic* style pedestal jar.

Photographs by Peter G. Spackman, Dip.Arch. PIFA

Following backfilling of the rectangular building, an area that had once formed part of the courtyard was investigated. The cobble appeared to have been robbed of stone in part in this area, possibly in Tudor times as two sixteenth century coins were found in this context. However, this robbed out area was shown to overlay a thick deposit of ash and charcoal extending for several square metres, below which eventually were revealed what are now thought to be the remains of one Iron Age timber constructed roundhouse overlaying the remains of yet another much larger one. The dimensions of both have yet to be fully ascertained but the larger of the two could possibly be up to five or six metres in radius. This most recent phase of excavation has yielded many Iron Age potsherds including a fine example of imported Belgic ware. In addition two smelting hearths have been discovered in such close proximity to these remains that they could be easily envisaged as the cause of these two roundhouses burning down. Interestingly, some painted plaster, possibly depicting animal motifs, has been found in the thick ash layer here together with a zoomorphic enameled brooch in the *La Tenè* style, depicting a hare.

The site suffers from regular flooding and it may well be some time before excavation of these most recently discovered structures can be completed and a report produced. However, Feldon Archaeology's new Curator, Peter Spackman PIFA, has produced an interim report for the Society covering the 2008 season's activities and finds, now available on a Powerpoint disc. Without doubt this site in Burton Dassett is proving to be a fascinating and complex site, with evidence of occupation by people of different cultures from periods extending over six or possibly even seven centuries.

Reference.

Eames 2005: *Feldon Archaeological Society. Report. 2000-2003.* 2005.

*A disc containing the full report to date is available from:
Peter Spackman, Dipl. Arch. PIFA, Director of Archaeology,
49 Brinkburn Grove, Banbury OX16 3WX.
<trenchwo@yahoo.co.uk>*

Lecture Reports

Brian Little

Thursday 11th February 2010

The Hunting Transition: from Deer-hunting to Foxhunting

Mandy de Belin

This was a presentation with a strong regional focus, Northamptonshire and East Leicestershire, appropriately termed the 'Brush Shires'. The purpose of the talk was to discover the factors governing the popularity of the two forms of hunting as well as the reasons for the transition from the pursuit of deer to that of the fox over the period from 1500 to 1850.

One major supposition has been that landscape changes have been of paramount importance. These have included woodland losses and developments in agriculture that impacted on habitats for deer. By the time of the Civil War there was also a perceived crisis in the size of the deer population.

Part of Mandy de Berlin's talk was devoted to different styles in deer hunting. These included the use of dogs, the deployment of bows and arrows and the inclusion of sufficient men on foot to drive the deer. In certain instances hunting took the form of coursing with greyhounds.

By the nineteenth century although the fox had largely replaced the deer as the object of each hunt, old allegiances to the pursuit of red deer stags still persisted.

The speaker devoted a major part of her presentation to variations in fox hunting. These embraced control of hounds, horsemanship with an emphasis on galloping as well as a stress on the pursuit aspect.

As in the earlier period of deer hunting dominance, her research focussed on landscape changes especially within the Royal Forests such as Rockingham and Whittlewood. The eighteenth century enclosure movement was also significant in the way it led to the use of fencing and hedges giving the opportunity for an exhilarating ride with jumps. Other agricultural developments resulted in fields with faster surfaces but at the same time a shortage of foxes to chase was a growing concern.

Mandy de Belin's overall conclusion was that the transition from deer hunting to fox hunting was less to do with numbers and more about horse riding techniques linked particularly to the emergence of a squirearchy.

Email List

If any other members of the Banbury Historical Society would like to add their email addresses to the members' list, we can send reminders and extra information about forthcoming lectures, and other events of which we are notified that we think might interest you.

Send your email address to <deborahhayter@hotmail.com>.

Book Reviews

Flora Thompson's Country: The real villages and towns of 'Lark Rise to Candleford', David Watts and Christine Bloxham. Card covered, 7¼ x 9, 280pp., lavishly illustrated. Robert Boyd Publications (260 Colwell Drive, Witney OX28 5LW) (ISBN 978 1899536 96 2), £12.95.

This handsomely produced volume is the most recent publication in the Flora Thompson industry which has been stimulated by the BBC television adaptation first screened in 2008. The TV series was 'based on' Flora Thompson's autobiographical novels which were published in three parts between 1939 and 1943 before being re-issued as a trilogy. Thompson's memories are based on her childhood and young adulthood in the three adjacent settlements of Juniper Hill, Cottisford and Fringford in the border parishes between Oxfordshire, Northamptonshire and Buckinghamshire and under eight miles from Bicester, Brackley and Buckingham. This was deep country when Flora was born in 1876 and the three market towns had populations of only 2798, 2239, and 3849 respectively in 1871.

David Watts and Christine Bloxham have drawn on a very wide range of sources to provide an illustrated guide to the wider district where Flora grew up. The many illustrations show us the villages and houses where the family and their connections lived and worked, as well as many other more general topographical and contextual photographs. While some of the photographs have their origin in postcards there are many others drawn from family and other collections. The authors have been able to draw on their detailed research and knowledge of Flora Thompson and the Bicester area to put the illustrations in context. The geographical scope of the book, bounded by Banbury, Buckingham and Brackley, is much wider than, say Martin Greenwood's *In Flora's footsteps: Daily Life in Lark Rise Country 1879-2006* (Charlbury, 2009) which confines itself to the ten Shelswell parishes but which looks in more detail at the issues of life and society at the end of the nineteenth century.

One of the strengths of this volume is the mapping which includes extracts from the early Ordnance Survey large scale mapping for many of the villages described. This shows very well how small most villages were before the end of the nineteenth-century. The front and back 'endpapers' which are extracts from the copper engraved one inch to the mile mapping are excellently reproduced. However, for those without grounding in the world of Lark Rise it would have been helpful to have had a small-scale map indicating the key places in the books.

It would be hard to fault the production of this book and the quality of the reproductions. There is a bibliography and index but unfortunately no guidance as to the source of the illustrations (other than those with specific acknowledgements).

Tom Forde

Mad Dogs and Englishmen: An expedition round my family, [Sir] Ranulph Fiennes [Bar], Hardback, xii, 386pp., genealogical table, colour plates. Hodder & Stoughton (ISBN 978 0 340 92502 4), £20.00.

Above all this book is a good read. And it is obvious from the author's description of it as "a simplified squint at the history of my country, England" that it is not to be taken too seriously. Ranulph Fiennes manages to cover an astonishing range of English history from its beginnings (around the fifth century, according to him) to 1944 when he was born, and he mixes it with walk-on parts for many of his ancestors. Since he can, and does, trace his ancestry back to Charlemagne, and being a Twisleton-Wykeham-Fiennes can incorporate the Twisletons, the Wykehams and the Fiennes into his narrative, as well as numerous Sayes, Seles and Saye & Seles, he has a prodigious number of ancestors to include. Among them are a King of Jerusalem, three signatories of Magna Carta, the grandmothers or mothers of several medieval English kings, William of Wykeham (of Winchester and New College fame), important Puritans in the Civil War and a host of owners and occupiers of Broughton Castle. Given how dull family histories can be, it is a major achievement to keep up the reader's interest across more than ten centuries of the author's relations. Since the Fiennes family originated in France, there is a fair smattering of French history as well, not least when in the Hundred Years War sections of the family were fighting on opposite sides.

Ranulph Fiennes's view of history owes much to the school of *1066 and All That*, with a strong emphasis on kings and queens, most of whom are labelled good, bad or mad, and plenty of derring-do and violent deaths, and statements such as "the peasant could not win, so he naturally revolted" (in connection with the Poll Tax of 1380). The author is prone to make overblown claims for the importance of some of his ancestors – for instance describing William Fiennes, 1st Viscount Saye and Sele, alias "Old Subtlety", as "undeniably the chief architect of the Puritan movement to which the United States looks for its origins and to which England owes three centuries of constitutional government"; and Major General Thomas Twisleton who played an important part in quelling the Gordon Riots in 1780 as the one man who "in the face of imminent catastrophe....held the line between revolutionary madness and democracy" – and he perpetuates the myth that Celia Fiennes was the original "fine lady on a white horse" who rode a cock-horse to Banbury Cross [she wasn't]. He also has a taste for fruity mixed metaphors, such as "hoist by her own rapacious petard"; "civil war flickered on in see-saw fashion"; "armies like snarling cats"; and "like worms at dawn, a clutch of claimants surfaced".

As long as you don't mind that sort of thing, any reader from Banbury with an attachment to Broughton Castle and the Saye & Sele family (which must include most members of the Banbury Historical Society) is likely to enjoy the book. Ranulph Fiennes clearly enjoyed "rootling about with the history of my ancestors, of Broughton and of my country" and he urges others to follow his

example. Few of us could hope to be able to take our family tree back 42 generations, as he can. But I would not encourage anyone to follow his example too closely. Ultimately I came to the conclusion that the structure of the book was mistaken: by trying to be both a history of England and a history of the Twisleton-Wykeham-Fiennes family, it fell between two stools and finished up being neither.

Paul Hayter

Warwickshire Hearth Tax Returns: Michaelmas 1670 with Coventry Lady Day 1666, ed. Tom Arkell with Nat Alcock. Hardback. xiv, 566pp., colour illus. and demographic maps, indexes (2 col. x 88pp.). The British Record Society and The Dugdale Society (c/o Shakespeare Centre, Stratford upon Avon CV37 6QW for price), vol. 43, 2010.

This is the seventh in the magnificent B.R.S. series of Hearth Tax volumes, but the first for a midland county. Whilst for most local and family historians the main value of the tax is its listing of all householders, providing the nearest we have to a country-wide census for the seventeenth century, the aim of the project is also to investigate the demographic information which can be extracted. An earlier attempt at publishing Warwickshire HTs had been made by the late Philip Styles, but only one volume (Tamworth and Atherstone Divisions of Hemlingford Hundred) was published. Due tribute is made to this pioneering work. Our own Society also published the 1663 lists for ten parishes near Banbury (*C&CH* vol. 1, 1960-61). This wonderful coverage of the entire county is very welcome.

J.G.

Oxford Quarter Sessions Order Book, 1614-1637, ed. Robin Blades, intro. by Alan Crossley. xxviii, 206pp., indexes (48pp.). Oxford Historical Society, N.S. vol. 29 and Boydell Press (price from PO Box 9, Woodbridge, Sfk IP12 3DF), 2009.

Though of course almost entirely relating to the city, there are county references, including in 1623 to one William Ryme, indicted for having two wives, one of them Jane Mayor in Banbury. Although the petty jury of Oxford men discharged him as not guilty, having little interest in the troubles of a woman in distant Banbury, there may have been more to it. We have no surviving civil court records for the borough, but we do have the Peculiar (or 'Bawdy') Court (1625-38) [BHS vol. 26]. A Mary Rine or Ryme died in October 1634. 'The occupier' of her goods (ie executor) 'appeared Anne Owen, daughter of Elizabeth Maior', alleging goods listed in her inventory 'are in the custody of the said Elizabeth Maior, sister of the said deceased who is old, poor and impotent and could not go abroad.' and not worth above £6.10s. What's more, John Ryme had married Anne Mayor back in 1610.

William Ryme may not have been a bigamist (and we hope he wasn't incestuous) but it seems likely that he did have some family connection with the Mayor family. Court records show us tantalising glimpses of wider stories that are rarely revealed, but do not necessarily confine themselves to single locations.

J.G.

BANBURY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

52nd ANNUAL REPORT, for 2009

The Society has continued to flourish with Thursday lecture meetings regularly filling, or even overflowing, the room at the Banbury Museum. Changes in the fees agreed last year may have caused a slight drop in membership numbers but attendance at the meetings has averaged at least 50 and a record number, also over 50, attended the AGM held at Edgcote House in July by kind permission of Mr and Mrs Allen. Members are also being kept much better in touch with Society news and other related information through the e-mails sent out regularly by Deborah Hayter.

The series of lectures opened with a revealing account of funeral practices in medieval England by Rowena Archer who both fascinated, and possibly repelled, members of the audience with her revelations of the ways in which our ancestors dealt with the disposal of human bodies. This theme of burial was partly carried on by Judith Toms in February who talked about excavations near the site of Pompeii which had revealed massive devastation by an eruption nearly 1800 years before the famous destruction of the town in AD 79. The March lecture related more to the Banbury area being an account of the Oddfellows and other Victorian Friendly Societies given by Ron Greenall. He revealed the extent to which Victorians were dependent on these mutual societies for help in times of need and the very local character which many of the Sick and Benefit Societies retained up to the middle of the twentieth century when they were displaced by the government's National Health scheme.

The summer programme, organised by Beryl Hudson and Fiona Thompson, included a visit to the museum in Charlbury, run entirely by volunteers, followed by a walk round the village to look at some of the more important properties. In May members were given a tour of the Oxford University Press and in June a trip was organised to Chenies Manor House and garden, a semi-fortified brick house built by Sir John Cheyne about 1460. The final event in the summer was the AGM held at Edgcote House, after which Sally Strutt gave a short history of the property before leading members round the main rooms with the owner, David Allen who took tours round the garden.

One of the main items at the AGM was the announcement of the winner of the prize offered earlier in the year for the best local history publication or research. This had excited considerable interest and a total of 16 entries ranging widely from single page articles to complete binders full of data. Jeremy Gibson, Deborah Hayter and Helen Forde formed the judges panel and had been most impressed by the quality and range of the entries.

The final result was a tie between the Aynho History Society and the Steeple Aston Archive and they shared a prize of £100. The Society is delighted to have forged links with these and other local history societies as a result and to have encouraged individual historians. Some of the work has already appeared in *Cake & Cockhorse* in the shape of articles and all the entrants and others will be encouraged to share their skills at a special workshop in 2010. The committee is hoping that the competition will be repeated in 2011. A full report has already appeared in *Cake & Cockhorse* vol 17/9 (summer 2009).

The autumn programme began with a talk from Liz Woolley outlining her research on the parish of St Thomas the Martyr in west Oxford from the twelfth century to the present day. This offered the opportunity to explore a relatively unknown part of Oxford and its development and appreciate the changes, some quite dramatic, that have occurred. It was followed by Nick Hill in October who regaled the audience with an account of the triumphs and pitfalls for English Heritage in the work done to restore the magnificent Apethorpe Hall, a major Northamptonshire country house dating back to the 15th century. Alan Crawford's talk in November on the Arts and Crafts Movement in the north Cotswolds centred on Chipping Camden, where there is now a museum dedicated to the work of the movement and the final talk was given by Adrian Shooter, Chairman of Chiltern railways. He started with the history of the early development of the line out of Marylebone, indicated the changes that had taken place and gave indications of the further developments to come.

The normal three issues of *Cake & Cockhorse* included contributions from Christine Bloxham, the late Dorothy Bromley, Peter Brookfield, John Duncan, Helen Forde, Chris Hall, Sir Paul Hayter, the late W.P. Johnson, Rodney Lucas, Tony Newman, Rona Rowe, Geoffrey Smedley-Stevenson and from regulars Brian Little and the editor himself. It was a frustrating year for publications as nearly completed work on *Turnpike Roads to Banbury* had to be put on hold due to the general editor's other commitments. However, the book has now effectively been completed and is ready to go to the printers. Publication of the second part of Risley's diary, to 1869, awaits the completion of indexes.

For our finances, 2009 was an uneventful year. The increase in subscription income reflects the new rates implemented in 2009. The closing balance on the General Fund, together with promised grants from the Greening Lamborn Fund, should be sufficient to meet the costs of the two records volumes in the pipeline. The prizes for the history research projects were met from the Brinkworth Museum Fund.

Banbury Historical Society

Income & Expenditure Accounts for year ending 31 December 2009

GENERAL FUND	2009	2008
	£	£
INCOME		
Subscriptions	3,055	2,672
Income Tax refund	383	0
Building Society interest	36	258
Sale of publications	558	2,303
Other	62	403
Total Income	<u>4,092</u>	<u>5,636</u>
EXPENDITURE		
Cake & Cockhorse	2,341	1,733
Records Volumes costs	600	0
Publications - postage & packing	359	329
Meetings	461	687
Reception & AGM	186	136
Administration costs	185	305
Total Expenditure	<u>4,132</u>	<u>3,190</u>
DEFICIT from (SURPLUS to) the General Fund	<u>(40)</u>	<u>2,446</u>

BRINKWORTH MUSEUM FUND

INCOME		
Building Society interest	<u>16</u>	<u>128</u>
EXPENDITURE		
Prizes for history research projects	<u>100</u>	<u>250</u>
DEFICIT from the Brinkworth Museum Fund	<u>(84)</u>	<u>(122)</u>

Banbury Historical Society

Balance Sheets as at 31 December 2009

	2009	2008
GENERAL FUND		
Balance at 1 January 2009	9,574	7,128
Less Deficit (<i>Plus Surplus</i>) for the year	<u>0</u>	<u>2,446</u>
Balance at 31 December 2009	<u>9,574</u>	<u>9,574</u>
BRINKWORTH MUSEUM FUND		
Balance at 1 January 2009	4,213	4,335
Less Deficit for the year	<u>(84)</u>	<u>(122)</u>
Balance at 31 December 2009	<u>4,129</u>	<u>4,213</u>
TOTAL BALANCE at 31 December 2009	<u>13,703</u>	<u>13,787</u>

Represented by:

ASSETS

NatWest Bank Banbury - Current A/c	756	558
Leeds Building Society - General A/c	9,456	9,419
Leeds Building Society - Brinkworth A/c	4,129	4,213
Cash	15	30
Sundry Debtors	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
TOTAL ASSETS	<u>14,356</u>	<u>14,220</u>

Less LIABILITIES

Subscriptions in advance	693	433
NET ASSETS at 31 December 2009	<u>13,663</u>	<u>13,787</u>

GF Griffiths, Hon Treasurer

I have reviewed and examined the books and records of the Banbury Historical Society and confirm that the accounts prepared by the Hon Treasurer represent a fair and accurate summary of the financial transactions completed in the year ended 31 December 2009

RJ Mayne, 08/02/2010

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

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 (since 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

Spring/Summer 2010 Programme

Wednesday 28th April, 5.45 p.m.

Steeple Aston Village Walkabout, with members of the Steeple Aston Village Archive. Meet at the Village Hall (the old school, opposite the church), plenty of car-parking space at the hall.

Thursday 20th May, 2.00 for 2.30 p.m.

Mapledurham House and Corn Mill (near Caversham, Reading).

Thursday 24th June, 2.30 p.m.

Burton Dassett archaeological excavations and church.

Friday 2nd July, 5.00 for 5.30 p.m.

at **Ditchley House** (south of Enstone, west off A44):
Annual General Meeting.

Autumn meetings as usual, second Thursday of the month from September,
at Banbury Museum