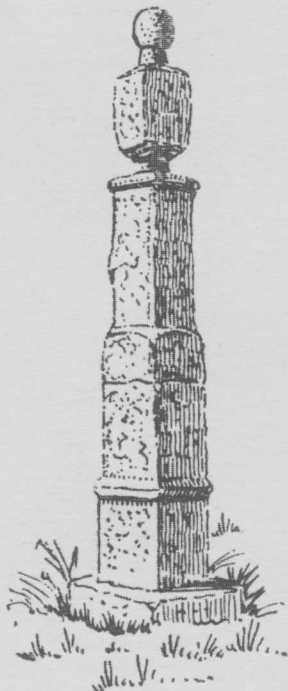


CAKE AND COCKHORSE



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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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We draw attention to two important announcements.

First (page 66), following the splendid response to our first Local History Prize last year, we are repeating this in 2011. Geoffrey Lane's article (Steeple Aston Village Archive) in this issue follows Tony Newman's late twentieth century Banbury printer and Peter Brookfield's 'Sydenham Quarries' (Aynho History Society). Others, as appropriate, have been published in *The Oxfordshire Family Historian*. The interest the Prize (or, rather, the entries it attracted) aroused was demonstrated by the capacity audience for the 'Local History Workshop' this Spring, when various contributors described their projects and the work accomplished.

Second, we now have a new and re-named Internet Website, vastly shorter and simpler: <www.banburyhistory.org>. Simon describes how to use it (page 100). Your editor (who, if he can misunderstand computer instructions, *does*) has tested it and finds it works! Grateful thanks to Simon and to Colin Cohen for their work.

We are also delighted to have Robert Caldicott's piece on the Wroxton Guide Post – just the sort of *minutiae* of research we wish other readers would emulate.

Finally, hurrah, *Turnpike Roads to Banbury* is at last published (page 95) – we hope most readers will by now have their copies. Grateful thanks for the patience shown over years of preparation, to them and in particular to the author.

J.G.

Cover: The Wroxton Guide Post, described as "Dick Turpin's Cross" (page 72).

BANBURY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

2011 PRIZE FOR LOCAL HISTORY

Last year Banbury Historical Society offered a prize for the best piece of local historical research submitted by an individual or a village society. Given the degree of interest that aroused, we are proposing to offer this prize again in 2011: for the best piece of local historical research submitted by 30 April 2011.

See the enclosed leaflet. For further information, please contact Helen Forde <helen.forde@lovells-online.co.uk> or Deborah Hayter <deborahhayter@hotmail.com>

VERA WOOD

Vera Wood, who died in March, had been a member of our Society for many years. In particular she undertook an enormous amount of transcription of north Oxfordshire parish registers (all available in microform or CD from the Oxfordshire Family History Society). She was also a dedicated historian of her home village of Adderbury. For Banburians her book *The Licensees of Inns, Taverns and Beerhouses of Banbury* (OFHS, 1998) is an invaluable directory, despite its frustrating lack of source references. Present and future local historians owe her much.

A lengthy Appreciation by Colin Harris has appeared in the *Oxfordshire Family Historian* (24.2, August 2010).

'Elizabeth Hands - Determined Mother'

Also in this *OFH* is an article by Roger Jennens about Elizabeth Hands (1752-1819), her children and her much older husband Isaac Margetts, of Radway. After his death she moved with her children (out of wedlock Hands) to Bloxham, and a daughter settled in Wardington. A cheering story.

Rusher's Banbury Lists (1795-1906) and Directories (183²~~7~~-1906)

Almost twenty years ago Penelope Renold, in 'William Rusher: A sketch of his life' (*C&CH*.11.9, 1991), described this wonderful source for Victorian Banbury and its inhabitants. It is (or should be) well-known to researchers, but the few bound sets are fragile and not easy to access. However, Banbury Museum has a little-known or used card index compiled by Mary Stanton. This we now hope to type on computer for eventual publication in our records series and/or online.

Is/are there any member(s) (preferably in the north Oxfordshire/Banbury area) with typing experience and the enthusiasm to help with this task? The work could quite easily be shared amongst several. There is the possibility of some modest remuneration, but it does need volunteers for whom the project itself is the attraction. Anyone interested, please contact Jeremy Gibson (as on the inside front cover).

THE WROXTON GUIDE POST

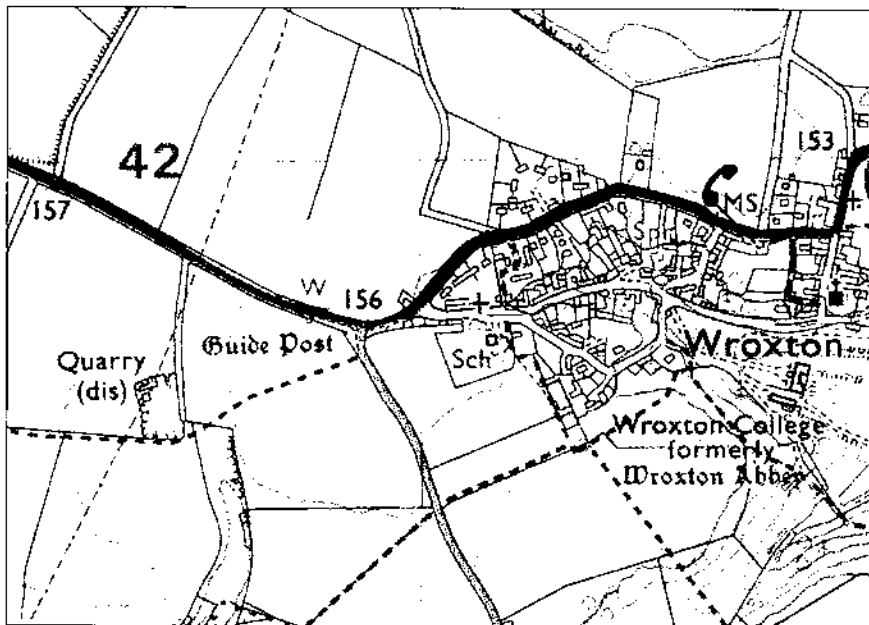
Robert Caldicott

(originally published by the author as an A4 coloured leaflet)

One of the treasures of Wroxton is its beautiful ironstone Guide Post or Pillar of 1686, one of the earliest of dated waymarkers. It indicates one of the ancient routes to London from Wales and the west, used by Droitwich salt merchants among others, as hinted at by the local field name Salt Furlong. The route turns off the modern A422 at Wroxton and continues to North Newington, then passes as a track skirting around the south of Banbury and marked on the Ordnance Survey as Salt Way.



The Wroxton Guide Post



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The modern footpath sign in the hedge behind the Post indicates a footpath to the neighbouring village of Balscote. The Ordnance Survey map (above) shows the position of the post, actually some distance from the main A422. The green dotted line from near the site of the Post is the footpath to Balscote. The road running south becomes the Salt Way.

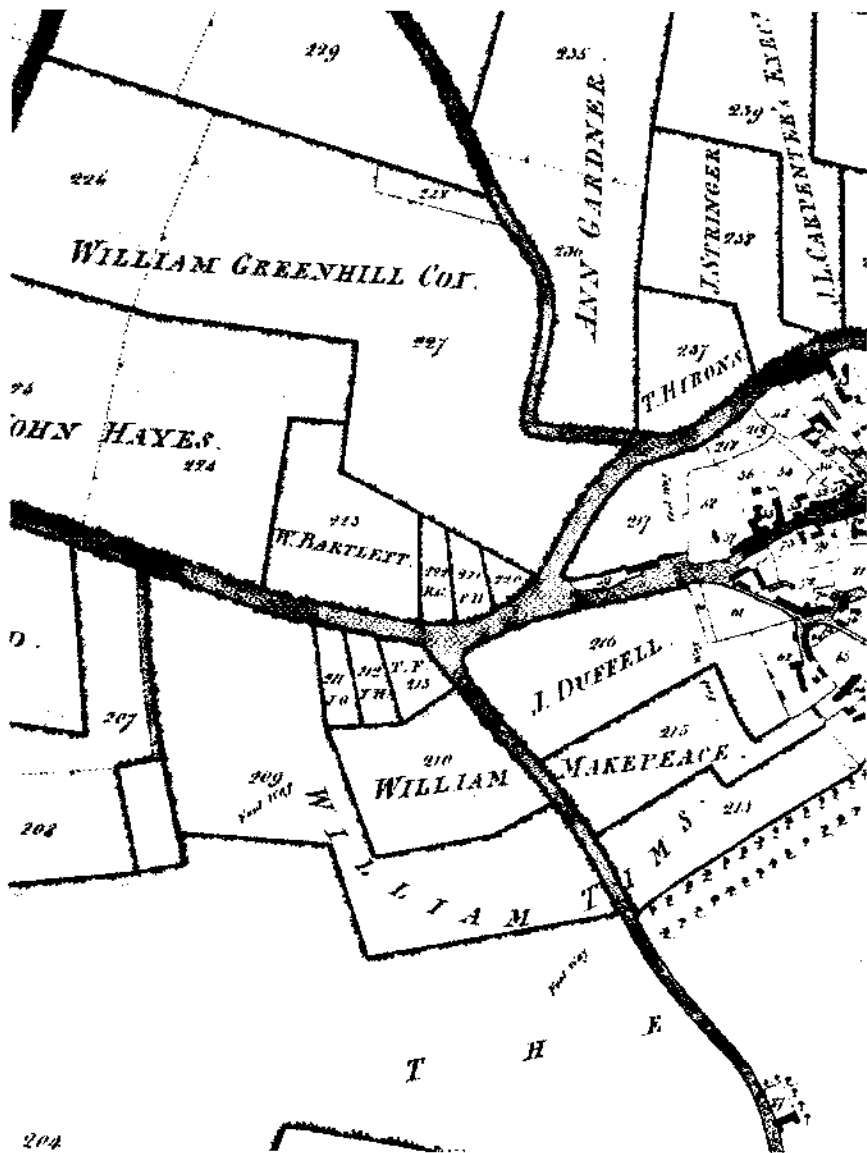
A 1768 map of the area (opposite) was made by Edward and Thomas Smith, of Shrivenham, for the landowner Trinity College, Oxford. Entitled "A Map of the Common Fields, Meads and Commons of Roxton in the County of Oxford", it is pre-Enclosure, and shows the furlongs or field strips and their owners. The Post is not shown, but the map of the junction (beside "To the Village") shows that the Balscote footpath was then an important thoroughfare. One of the four faces of the Post is inscribed "To Chiping Norton", and points to the southwest, along the former Balscote thoroughfare.

The ancient road to London runs south from the junction and is named on the map as "To Blocksham", the cartographer's guess at the spelling of Bloxham.



The 1768 map made by Edward and Thomas Smith of Shrivenham.

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Above is a map of 1805, also drawn for Trinity College. Thirty-seven years later than the previous map, it shows the post-enclosure landscape. All the strips of land in the old open field system have been

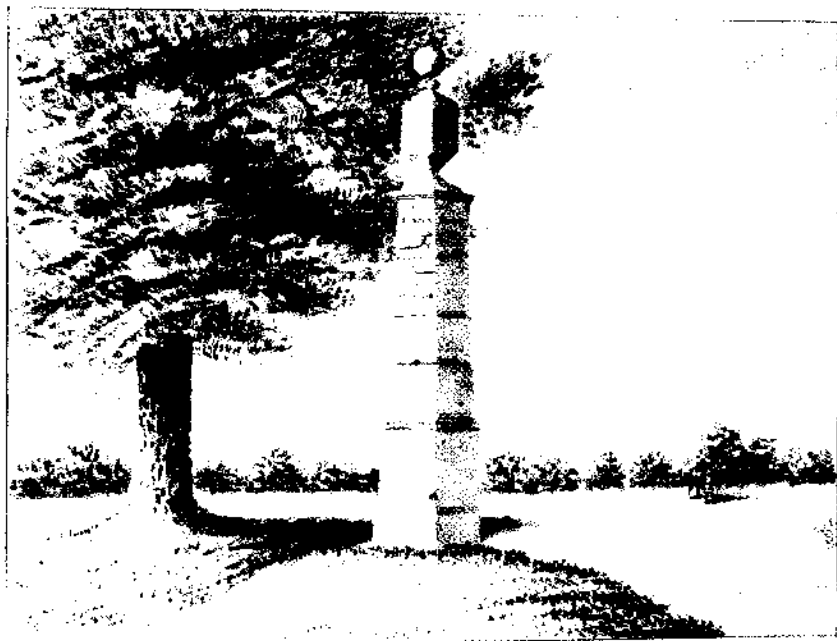
amalgamated into enclosed fields. The Enclosure Act also defined the course and width of public roads, and you can see that the Balscote road shown on the previous map has been relegated to what is referred to as a "Foot Way" (under "209"). The position of the Guide Post, offset from the modern road junction, may be explained by its respect for the pre-Enclosure Balscote road.



The Inscription on the Guide Post says "First Given by Mr. Fran[cis] White in the Year 1686".

Francis White of Wroxton is a rather obscure figure. There is a reference to him as steward to Lord North of Wroxton Abbey in 1680, among the North family papers in the Bodleian Library [MS North adds. b.7]. In Trinity College archives he appears as "Francis White of Wroxton, Gent.", co-lessor of Wroxton Abbey (with Sir Dudley North) in a lease of 1684, and again in leases of 1688 and 1692. Oxfordshire Record Office has little on him, but his name does appear in the Oxfordshire Quarter Sessions index. He was a signatory to two petitions by the inhabitants of Wroxton, in 1689 and 1690, against one John Lucas, a silk weaver, and Richard Hedges, a labourer, who are described as "nightwalkers, robbers of hen roosts, eavesdroppers and violent". John Lucas was further alleged to have "committed divers evils and disorderly acts within our liberties". The 1689 petition asks that "this honourable Court do take some order with said Lucas so to secure us from his evil doings". In other words, a seventeenth century 'ASBO'.

In The National Archives, at Kew, there is an Inventory of Francis White's goods for Probate purposes [PROB4 15663]. He died on the 24th January 1696, leaving the Inventory, now difficult to read, but including "wearing apparel & three hatts.... looking glasses.... press and cupboard... Large chest of drawers". Francis White was clearly an upright local citizen, maybe the Neighbourhood Watch man of his day.



PILLAR NEAR WROXTON.

© Images & Voices, Oxfordshire County Council

A C19 drawing of the Guide Post (above) rather exaggerates the size of the post or pillar in relation to its surroundings. It shows the smoothly tapering profile of the post before the later restoration, and the lines of the sundial on the top stone, but no sundial gnomons are in evidence.

A drawing of the Post (front cover) from a book of curiosities, again pre-1974 restoration, curiously refers to the Post as "Dick Turpin's Cross", the only such reference I know of, presumably dreamed up by romantics in the Victorian era.

The Wroxton, Balscote and Drayton Preservation Society in 1974 carried out a major restoration of the Post. It had become necessary

because of “accumulated damage from countless small boys, who had tried to carve their names, and to general decay of the stone”. E.R. Lester in his 1971 *Short Guide to the History of Wroxton* wrote “It is certainly in need of restoration if it is to survive another 300 years”. Money was raised locally, and the work was done by George Carter, a local stonemason for over fifty years. He cut back the face of the stone by $\frac{3}{4}$ ” to enable re-carving and cutting to take place and added his own touches, such as rings and different shapes, to signify the hands of a man and a woman. A post-restoration photo (below) shows repairs to the third stone up from the base, and the stone above it is possibly a new one. At the top the new gnomons enable the sundial to work. The restoration was the subject of an article in *Country Life* dated May 16, 1974 by G. Wilton, of Bodicote.

The Post now shows a little weathering since the restoration and, sadly, it has lost the gnomons on the sundials. Recently cleaned and gently refurbished by Wroxton and Balscote Parish Council, it looks in good shape, ready to face a world very different from that of its builder, Francis White of Wroxton, Gent.



THE FIDDLE-MAKING SQUIRE OF STEEPLE ASTON

Geoffrey Lane

In 1828 a London violin-maker inherited a quarter-share of the manor of Steeple Aston from a cousin of his mother. Within months he had set about building a new Manor House to reflect the change in his life-style, but the project bankrupted him, and cast a long shadow over his eldest son and heir. The author, a member of the Steeple Aston Village Archive, SAVA, charts the rise and fall of the would-be squire, Charles Harris.

The violin-maker's benefactor was John Marten Watson (1765-1828), who had spent his working life in the Northamptonshire village of Aynho, where he practised as a surgeon and apothecary. Watson had married Sarah, daughter of Edward Burbidge, a previous apothecary there, and had succeeded to Burbidge's house and business. But the couple were childless,¹ and Watson became increasingly concerned for the future of a far more ancient inheritance, his quarter-share of the manor of Steeple Aston, a few miles away in Oxfordshire.

The story goes back to 1501, when the last lord of the old undivided manor, John Dynham, also died childless. His various manors in Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire were divided in equal shares between his four married sisters or their immediate heirs. Some of the portions were later subdivided and sold off. In time Steeple Aston became an "open village" with numerous small freeholders, over whom the lords no longer had much control. However one division of its manor – the Watson share – survived more or less intact. In 1569 it was sold by Sir John Arundell to John Marten of Rousham and Edmund Hutchins. It then passed through several generations of Martens and Watsons, finishing up in the hands of John Marten Watson.

Watson's nearest female relative was a cousin, Marian Dew, married to a London violin-maker, Charles Harris the elder. How this couple met is a mystery but they were married in the Oxfordshire village of Somerton in 1787; Marian herself had been baptised at Fritwell in 1762, and her parents, Richard Dew and Mary Watson, had been married at Godington, north-east of Bicester, in 1760. Possibly Harris, whose

¹ See Nicholas Cooper, *Aynho* (BHS 20, 1984) p.115, where it is stated wrongly that they died intestate. Probate was in P.C.C. Prob 11/1741 f.224 [TNA].

origins are unknown, also had some family connection with north Oxfordshire or south Northamptonshire – “Banburyshire” as its inhabitants like to call the region. (One of his best fiddle-making pupils, Samuel Gilkes, certainly had – he was born in 1787 in the south Northamptonshire village of Moreton Pinkney, and was taken there for burial in 1827 following his early death in London. Violin historians have suggested that Harris and Gilkes were related.)

Charles and Marian Harris had just the one son, Charles junior, born about 1791 and trained in his father’s trade; they were fine craftsmen, working in a fine tradition, and today their instruments fetch high prices, but at the time they were far from wealthy. Even though Watson’s Last Will and Testament naming Charles as his heir is dated 27 December 1827, Charles and Marian must have known for many years already that Watson was planning to make their boy his heir. He may even have invited the lad down to have a look around.

The move to Oxfordshire

What is certain is that in his mid-20s, Charles Harris junior settled in Oxfordshire with a wife named Elizabeth. Their marriage (not so far traced) had probably taken place in London about 1815. Early in 1816 their first child, a son, was christened at Woodstock. He was given the name John Marten Watson Harris – a pretty clumsy hint unless Watson’s intentions were already known, but more likely part of some understanding or agreement already reached. Though the parish register does not record the fact, Watson probably stood as godfather to the little boy. The entry for 7 February 1816, slightly mis-spelt, simply reads:

Harris, John-Marten Watton, son of Charles, musical instrument maker,
& Elizabeth.

The young family remained in Woodstock for about three years. This is shown both by local records and the inscriptions on various Harris instruments that have come on the market in recent years. Two more children, Mary Anne and Richard, were born in Woodstock between 1817 and 1819; three instruments made there have been logged from various sources including a viola helpfully labelled

Charles Harris Junr/Woodstock/Oxon/1817.

Some time around 1819 the Harris family settled in Adderbury, where Charles made more instruments and Elizabeth bore him more children – Sarah about 1821, Charles about 1822 and Elizabeth (c1825), although oddly their baptisms have not so far been found – the information comes

from later census returns. At least one of Harris's Adderbury violins was sold locally – a Banbury shoemaker, George Herbert, born in 1814, recalled in his memoirs that as a boy he always wanted a violin. He saved up all his pocket money and bought one, describing it as 'a fairly good one (it was one of Harris's make that used to live at Adderbury)'.²

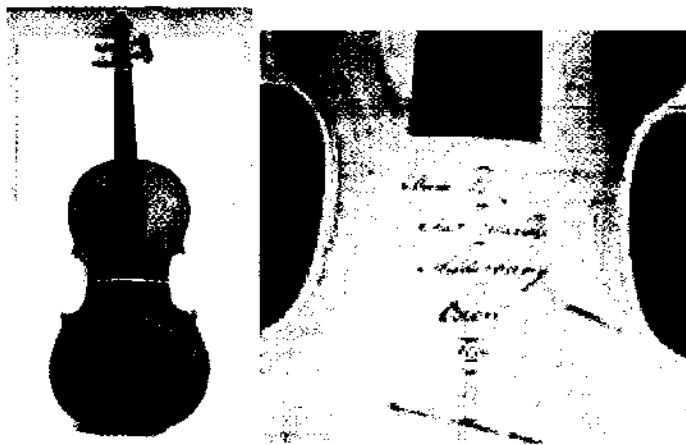


Fig 1: Adderbury violin, made by Charles Harris in 1820.

The Marten-Watson inheritance

John Marten Watson died early the following year, on 20 February 1828, and his will was proved on 28 May. Charles Harris the younger, now in his late 30s, finally moved to Steeple Aston to take on the role of a gentleman-farmer. But what exactly had he inherited? Though quite a lengthy document, Watson's will assumes a good deal of local knowledge, and does not tell us everything we might wish to know. From Harris's point of view it says enough: subject to certain conditions, it states, he is to inherit "all and singular my said Manors Messuages Farms Lands and Hereditaments in the parish of Steeple Aston".

In other words Charles inherited from his mother's cousin not only bricks and mortar, and farmland, but also the dignity, rights and privileges of a lord of the manor. These would have had little practical value, and it's

² The story is cited in *Adderbury: a Thousand Years of History*, by Nicholas Allen and others (BHS 25, Phillimore, 1995), p.85. Either this, or another Adderbury violin dating from 1820, is illustrated in the same book and, with Mr Allen's permission, is reproduced above in Fig. 1. See also George Herbert, *Shoemaker's Window*, 2nd edn., BHS 10, 1971, p.24.

not known how much importance the Martens and earlier Watsons attached to their “manor”, but for John Marten Watson it seems to have had an almost mystical significance, and he took as much care as he could to ensure that it should remain in the family along with its share of the village farmland. Both were to pass “from right heir to right heir for ever”, beginning with Charles Harris and his son John Marten Watson Harris. In 1837, when things had gone badly wrong for them, it was re-affirmed that the lordship and the land had been “united from time immemorial”.³

The land itself had been radically altered by the Steeple Aston Enclosure of 1766-7, under which Watson’s father, Jacob Watson, had been allocated two large areas of farmland lying on either side of the Heyford Road extending a short distance along Southside (the area now occupied by Harrisville) and alongside Paines Hill as far as the village stream. Jacob was awarded a total of 116 acres, making him the largest landowner in the village after the Rector, the Rev. John Noel, who had 305 acres. Sir Charles Cottrell Dormer and Mrs Lucy Buswell came next with some 83 acres each.

Jacob Watson had owned a similar acreage before the Enclosure, made up of strips or blocks in the open fields, and the Enclosure Map of 1767 shows that he also owned three closes (i.e. gardens, orchards or fields already enclosed in earlier years) within the central part of the village. However they seem to have been disposed of before Harris came on the scene. Jacob had been active among the village farmers, and his signature appears on many of the agreements by which the open fields were managed in the years 1762-5 for which records survive.⁴ To farm their land, store their crops and shelter their livestock, the Martens and Watsons must have had a farmhouse of some sort, with an assortment of barns and outhouses, conveniently situated within the village – their “manor house”, if they chose to regard it as such.

C.C. Brookes speculated that Edmund Marten and his successors had lived in the large farmhouse on Southside, known at various times as the Manor farm-house, or Southfields Farm. The editors of the *Victoria County History*⁵ rejected this theory, suggesting instead that in 1767 Jacob Watson occupied the cottage now known as Acacia Cottage, “a relatively small 18th-century building of two storeys, with a decorative lunette between its first-floor windows” which lay further east along

³ C.C. Brookes: *History of Steeple Aston & Middle Aston*, 1929, p 86.

⁴ i.e. the *Steeple Aston Parish Book*, now at the Oxfordshire Record Office.

⁵ *V.C.H., Oxfordshire*, Vol. 11, 1983.

Southside and closer to Watson's allocated land. However no documentary evidence has yet been found – the land behind Acacia Cottage is certainly labelled "Mr Watson" on the Enclosure Map, but it does not necessarily follow that he owned the buildings on the roadside.

In a slightly different context, the *VCH* offers a possible solution by remarking that when Steeple Aston was enclosed, no new farmhouses were initially needed:

The commissioners were able to set out a number of relatively compact farms with direct access from existing farmhouses.

But was that the case here? Both Brookes and the *VCH* may have been mistaken in searching for the Watson farmhouse among the buildings still visible in modern times. In the long history of the village the stock of houses must have been demolished and rebuilt over and over again.

Watson's will mentions a "house or cottage" in which he has recently been living, but provides no clue to its location. He clearly expects Harris to occupy the same house, because in a codicil he states: "My Italian pictures I give and bequeath to the said Charles Harris to remain in the same place they now are fixed". He also bequeaths to his housekeeper Ann Ell "my new stained bedstead with the furniture belonging thereto and a chest of ornaments in the small bedroom situate in the house or cottage at Steeple Aston marked with her name".

There are reasons for thinking that the old farmhouse of the Martens lay still closer to the lands eventually allocated to Jacob Watson, and inherited by Charles Harris. The evidence is to be found in the paperwork generated when Charles Harris's development schemes began to go sour. His projects were concentrated on the north side of the Heyford Road, along a short section between Paines Hill and the lane known as The Dickredge. Principal among them was of course the new Manor House or mansion which he built there for himself and his family. The house stands in an odd position some way along Heyford Road and set back from it on lower ground. It is partly obscured by the slightly later building which for much of its life accommodated the village shop, long known as Harris's Stores, but recently converted to residential use and re-named *The Old Manor House* (Fig 2).

The layout poses a question – why did Charles not build right on the corner, a prime site which would have stamped his authority more clearly on the neighbourhood? If we take a closer look at the Enclosure Map, the location of Harris's new Manor House begins to look less odd and more logical.



Fig 2: Former corner-shop and residential premises, now renamed The Old Manor House; the New Manor House, built by Charles Harris in 1836, is visible behind the hedge to the right.

The map shows, although not as clearly as one might wish, that by 1767 there was already the beginnings of a group of buildings spreading along Heyford Road from the Paines Hill corner towards The Dickredge (Fig 3).



Fig 3: Extract from 1767 Enclosure Map, showing at least one lost building (arrowed) on the corner of Paines Hill and Heyford Road.

Between 1767 and 1828, other buildings sprang up along this section. But by the time William Wing drew up his simplified version of the Enclosure Map, "with owners in 1860 added", the existence of these earlier buildings had been forgotten, and he failed to include them (Fig 4).

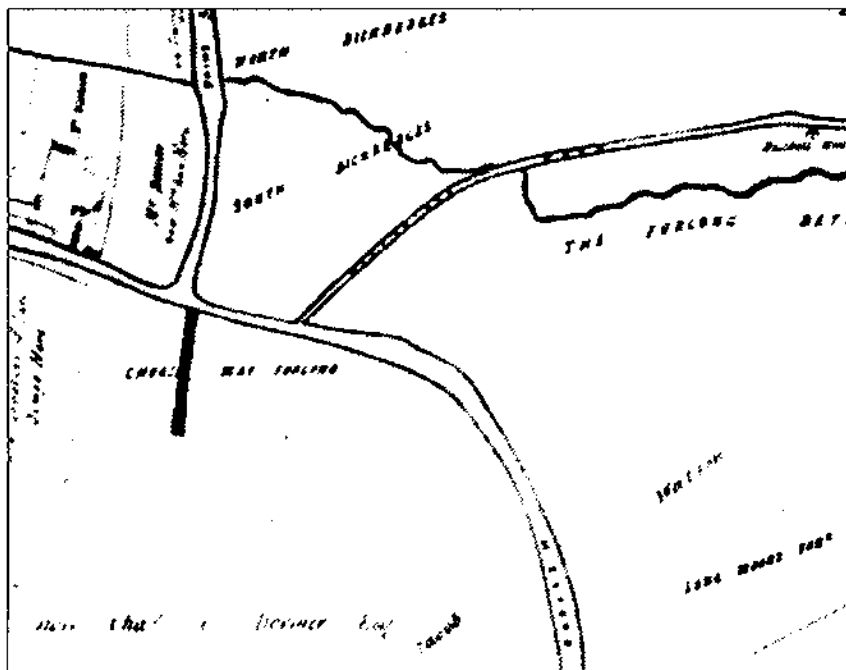


Fig 4: Part of Wing's Enclosure Map updated to 1860 showing no buildings in Heyford Road

They had in fact disappeared beneath the later development. The location of Harris's new Manor House makes better sense if we assume that some of them were needed while it was being built. What actually happened can be reconstructed from a series of Deeds relating to the former shop building next door. Although the oldest surviving Deeds date from 1837 and 1840, *after* the new Manor House was finished, they cite earlier documents relating to lost buildings on the same site.

Apart from various barns and other outbuildings there were in fact three residential properties on the site when Charles Harris took it over in 1829, but only one was immediately accessible to him. We need to consider each in turn:

1) The Old Farm House

Not long after settling in, on May 29 1830, Charles Harris raised a mortgage of £150 with Ann Shirley, wife of John Shirley, Gentleman, on a farmhouse and its land. The house and associated outbuildings are described as follows:

All that Messuage Tenement or Farm House with the Barns Stables Outbuildings Yards Gardens Orchards Backsides and appurtenances thereto belonging situate in Steeple Aston aforesaid and all new Erections and Buildings erected upon any part of the ground belonging to the said Messuage or Tenement and premises by the said John Marten Watson deceased and then in the possession of the said Charles Harris.

This description does not reappear in later documents, no doubt because the house itself disappeared in the course of rebuilding by Harris. The reference to new buildings already erected by John Marten Watson suggests that Watson had begun to make improvements to this property in his later years, perhaps in anticipation of the handover to Charles Harris. The land mortgaged with the farmhouse is described as follows:

... all that plot or parcel of Land situate in the Fields of Steeple Aston aforesaid containing by statute measure Ninety two acres three roods and three perches and which allotment has since been estimated to contain one hundred and fourteen acres (more or less) including the Roads and ways going through the same ~~allotment~~ allotted and awarded to Jacob Watson upon the Inclosure of the said Fields of Steeple Aston and bounded as therein mentioned and then in the occupation of Richard Prentice with the Appurtenances.

Between them, these two paragraphs describe in detail the house and land which Charles inherited from Jacob's son John Marten Watson, and show that the land remained the same, give or take a couple of acres. It is impossible to tell from the description how old the Watson farm-house was, but it is at least possible that it represented the ancient manor house of the Martens. Since they had migrated from Rousham, they might well have chosen to settle on this side of the village. Equally, the existence of a farmhouse at this point might well have influenced the allocation to the Watsons of the farm land to either side of it.

The farm became subject to several further mortgages over the next few years, as Harris ran into financial difficulties. In 1836 he also raised a separate loan of £260 from Weston Aplin of Chipping Norton, by mortgaging two adjacent properties which had only come into his control since his arrival in Steeple Aston.

2) Blizzard's Cottage

This cottage stood on or very near the corner of Paines Hill and Heyford Road, its garden bounded on the other two sides by land Harris had inherited from John Marten Watson. It may well be the building shown on the Enclosure Map. Watson's father, Jacob Watson, had detached this crucial site from the estate and sold it to Thomas Blizzard. Although of different social status the two men seem to have been friends – Jacob Watson was a witness at Blizzard's marriage to Anna Maria Hester in 1775. The description reads as follows:

All that plot piece or parcel of ground upon which lately stood a Messuage Cottage or tenement outbuildings and premises erected and built by Thomas Blizzard deceased and by him purchased of Jacob Watson Gentleman but which has lately been pulled down and removed by him the said Charles Harris situate lying and being in Steeple Aston in the County of Oxford and being formerly part of a certain field or inclosure in the liberties of Steeple Aston aforesaid called the South Duckeridge [*sic*] which said piece or parcel of ground and premises contain Five poles and a half of ground (That is to say) Two poles and ten feet from East to West and two poles one foot from North to South and are bounded on the North and East by land late belonging to the within John Marten Watson deceased and on the South by the public road and heretofore in the tenure of Thomas Waine and Ann Clark but now in the tenure or occupation of the said Charles Harris.

Harris had had to wait until October 1835 to buy this property, by which time his new Manor was already far advanced. As the description shows, he quickly demolished the cottage and began some sort of building activity on the site.

3) The Blacksmith's Cottage and Shop

The exact location of this property is not made clear, but it seems to have lurked somewhere between the other two. Unlike Blizzard's Cottage it remained part of the estate, and was leased to the Plumb family of blacksmiths. Under his Will, however, John Marten Watson bequeathed the cottage to his housekeeper Ann Ell for life, apparently to provide her with a retirement income out of the rent the Plumbs paid for their shop:

I give and bequeath unto my Housekeeper Ann Ell that Cottage commonly called the Blacksmith's now in the occupation of Elizabeth Plumb with hovels adjoining gardens and orchard excepting the Cow Hovel which I reserve for the use of the Estate and the Occupier.

Ann Ell also received a small annuity. She married shortly afterwards but died in 1831, when the cottage reverted to Charles. When mortgaged in 1836 it was described as follows:

All that cottage or Tenement with the Hovels Gardens and Orchard thereto adjoining and belonging situate and being in Steeple Aston aforesaid commonly called or known by the name of the Blacksmiths lately belonging to the said John Marten Watson deceased and by him devised to the said Charles Harris ... and heretofore in the tenure of Elizabeth Plumb ... **Together with** such part of the Messuage or dwelling house or other buildings lately erected and built by him the said Charles Harris and now standing or being thereon or any part thereof

The last sentence suggests that Harris's new Manor House extended into part of this site, although the smithy evidently continued to operate for a while. The 1851 census shows Elizabeth Plumb, her blacksmith son Frederick, and her unmarried sister Mary Rogers, living just around the corner in Paines Hill, right next to the corner-shop.

The presence of these two properties at the western end of the Heyford Road site – both initially outside Harris's control – must have influenced his decision to build at its eastern end, away from the junction of the village streets. But why was his new house set back from the road, on lower ground, further reducing its prominence? Although there is no direct evidence, it seems likely that the position of the old Farm House played a part in determining this arrangement. Given the sharply sloping site, it probably stood alongside the road, like other old houses in the village (for instance Grange Cottage in Southside). If so, and Charles needed it to accommodate his family while building went on, he had little option but to place his new mansion *behind* the existing house. The view from the east shows that there was (and is) just room for a house in front the same depth as the shop building next door. Charles gained just enough space for a short unimpressive drive in front of his new home (Fig 5, page 84).

Watson's other bequests

To appreciate the position Charles Harris found himself in, we need to look at the other bequests in John Marten Watson's Will, supplemented where possible from other sources, and try to establish what other properties Harris did, or did not, inherit from his mother's cousin. Firm evidence for only two has come to light so far, in the form of entries in an isolated Rate Book for 1837. This shows that rates were paid on just three properties belonging to Charles Harris, including his new mansion:

<i>Occupier</i>	<i>Owner</i>	<i>Property</i>
Charles Harris	himself	house buildings & land
Stephen Belcher	Charles Harris	cottage & hovel
William Gilkes	Charles Harris	cottage



Fig 5: If the lost farmhouse lined with the shop building on Heyford Road (left), Harris's new Manor (far right) could have been built behind it; the rearward extension to the shop building (centre) may incorporate parts of the former smithy.

Belcher and Gilkes are listed consecutively in the 1841 Census, both apparently living in the Paines Hill/Cow Lane area. Neither property was of any great rental value.

Some uncertainty remains over Acacia Cottage in Southside and Jacob Watson's close shown attached to it in 1767, but as there is no sign of it in the Rate Book it must in any case have been disposed of between then and 1837, either by one of the Watsons or by Harris himself.

One piece of property which the Watsons had clearly disposed of before Harris came on the scene is the extensive garden which still goes with Paines Hill House – known in former times as the Doctor's House (Fig 6). Its grounds have been somewhat reduced by later infilling, but their overall outline is exactly that of another close shown on the 1767 Enclosure Map as belonging to Jacob Watson. (It is possible the Belcher and Gilkes cottages also stood on the fringes of this close.)

The imposing house to which this land was and is attached is said to date from about 1806, its fine pair of bays reportedly constructed using stone from the façade of Middle Aston House, which was itself being rebuilt at the time. The exact circumstances in which Watson's land passed to new owners remain to be discovered. Brookes tells us (p.161) that the house was built by the father of Dr Thomas Perry (of Spalding,

Fig 6: The Doctor's House – now Paines Hill House – built about 1806 on former Watson land and home to first cousins of Charles Harris.



Lines.) who was one of his informants. But this cannot be right, since the father, Dr John James Perry, was born about 1802 – either the date or the generation is wrong.

The Perry family are intimately connected to this story, however, because John James Perry's wife Avice, and her sister Louisa Mary (later Mrs Louisa Mary Cheere), were Charles Harris's first cousins, the daughters of his mother's brother, Marten Dew, gentleman, only son of Richard Dew, farmer, both of Somerton. Avice and Louisa Dew were John Marten Watson's co-heiresses at law; in other words, they would have been entitled to inherit his estate if Charles Harris failed to produce an heir. Had Marten Dew produced a son rather than two daughters, John Marten Watson might well have left the estate to him rather than to Charles Harris. As it was they and Avice's daughter received substantial money-bequests:

To Mrs Avice Perry wife of Mr John James Perry of Steple Aston the sum of one hundred pounds independent of the said husband ... To Mary Louisa Perry their daughter the like sum of one hundred pounds ... To Miss Louisa Mary Dew the sister of Mrs Perry the like sum of one hundred pounds.

Watson made several similar bequests, mostly financed by the sale of properties he owned in other places – at Chipping Norton and in Northamptonshire. The residue of his estate was left to yet another cousin – Mary Burge, wife of William Burge, of Launton, with her husband and their children as substitutes if she died too soon.

All this no doubt seemed a fair division of the spoils from Watson's point of view, but it meant that Charles inherited little in the way of ready money. His income from rentals, as we have seen, was very modest, while the entail on the estate meant that he had nothing apart from his violins that he could easily sell, if he needed cash. Watson evidently expected Harris to support himself and his family from farming, and it is possible he had coached him a little in this over the previous decade. But Harris had been brought up in a very different world and may have run into problems with his farming – unwise choice of crops, poor harvests, bad advice and so on. He seems to have given himself airs – he was known locally as “Lord Harris” – which probably did not help. Whatever difficulties he faced, there can be no doubt that he compounded them by choosing – at a very early stage – to build an imposing new Manor House.

The new Mansion goes ahead

Did Harris really need a new house? His fateful decision to build before he was financially secure as a farmer may have been prompted partly by pride in his new-found position, but there were pressing practical considerations, not least the size of Charles and Elizabeth's family. Brookes says they had seven children, but eight are recorded and all were living in 1841 at the time of the first census (Elizabeth was absent for some reason but turns up in 1851 living with her brother Richard):

1 John Marten Watson	baptised Woodstock 1816	aged 25 in 1841
2 Mary Ann	baptised Woodstock 1817	aged 23 in 1841
3 Richard	born Woodstock c1819	aged 22 in 1841
4 Sarah	born [Adderbury] c1821	aged 20 in 1841
5 Charles	born [Adderbury] c1822	aged 19 in 1841
6 Elizabeth	born Adderbury c1825	aged 25 in 1851
7 Ruth	baptised Adderbury 1827	aged '13' in 1841
8 Jacob	baptised Steeple Aston 1830	aged 11 in 1841

At some point the family had also been joined by Charles's mother, Marian. All we have is a bare entry in the burials register, recording that a Marian Harris was buried on 19 March 1833, aged 69. (This tallies

closely enough – by my reckoning she was actually 70). She had presumably moved to Steeple Aston after losing her husband. His own death has not been found, but probably took place in London some time between 1820 and 1830. Add to this a couple of live-in servants – they had only one in 1841, when their finances were more precarious, 19-year-old Mary Martin – and it becomes easy to imagine that the Harris family needed more accommodation than the old Farm House (Watson’s “House or Cottage”) could provide.

The double-pile building was completed, at least externally, in 1836, the date displayed below Harris’s initials CH on its façade:



Figs 7 and 8: Charles Harris’s new Manor House, with the plaque on its front bearing his initials and the date 1836.

Though contemporary documents refer to it as a “mansion” or manor house, its four-square appearance is oddly institutional (it has been likened to a workhouse, or even a factory). No details of the actual building-work have come to light so far, but its progress can be followed through Charles Harris’s growing debts as he tried to keep pace with his builders’ invoices:

<i>date</i>	<i>details</i>	<i>total debt</i>
May 1830	farmhouse and land mortgaged to Ann Shirley for £150	£150
October 1832	Shirley mortgage transferred to William Borton of Fewcott and increased by £350	£500
February 1834	mortgage with Borton increased by £300	£800
November 1834	another £350 borrowed from Borton	£1150
July 1836	another £650 borrowed from Borton	£1800
October 1836	Blizzard’s Cottage and Blacksmith’s mortgaged to Weston Aplin of Chipping Norton for £160	£1960

Weston Aplin had already loaned Harris £100 against his “bond” – an I O U – but Harris had been unable to repay the money. When Charles asked for more, Aplin agreed, but demanded better security, hence the new mortgage. The problem is clear – the debts just kept on growing, and Charles had no way to manage them. By the time his mansion was finished, he was up to his ears, and people knew it.

A Private Act of Parliament 1837

The solution was provided by the owner of Rousham, Charles Cottrell Dormer. He was happy to acquire the Watson/Harris land which lay on his side of the village, adjoining land that he already owned. At his prompting (so Brookes tells us) Harris obtained a private Act of Parliament to break the entail. He then sold Cottrell Dormer the entire 116-acre estate, apart from the land on which his own buildings stood and a small parcel of land across the Heyford road which Cottrell Dormer sold back to him.

The Act required Charles Harris to obtain land elsewhere for his son to inherit, but only enough to reflect the value of the estate when it originally came to him, not the considerably higher price Cottrell Dormer was willing to pay for it. Brookes rather plays down this aspect of the arrangement, but William Wing, who was an eye-witness to these events, clearly thought it a shabby deal, and said so:⁶

In the first year of the reign of Her present Majesty, namely on the twelfth of July, 1837, a private Act of Parliament .. received the Royal Assent. This unique statute recites that John Marten Watson, who died in 1828... directed by his will that neither his manorial privileges nor his estate should be alienated by Charles Harris, his devisee, but should continue from right heir to right heir of his family *for ever*: but that as the intrinsic value of the estate had been valued at £4,335, and Mr. Cottrell Dormer was willing to purchase it at the larger sum of £5,800, in order to make his property more compact, Watson's will might be deviated from and the privileges and property alienated by Watson's devisee, upon the condition of his purchasing other land elsewhere at the lesser sum, and retaining the difference, upon the astonishing figment that the next heir was entitled to the intrinsic value and no more. This private Act was carried out, but the attendant expenses and difficulties were so great that instead of benefiting it ruined the person whom Watson intended to do good to.

The original deal between Cottrell Dormer and Harris was struck on 16 March 1837 – three months before Queen Victoria succeeded her

⁶ William Wing, *Annals of Steeple Aston*, 1875, p.81.

uncle, William IV – when the two men met to sign a formal “Contract or Agreement”. This paved the way for the Act of Parliament, passed in the first year of Victoria’s reign. Among other things it required the assent of Harris’s Dew cousins to renounce for ever any residual claim they might have had on Harris’s estate. In December 1839 the entire estate was sold to Cottrell Dormer, who was required to safeguard the £5,800 purchase money by lodging it with the Bank of England “with the privity and consent of the Accountant General of the High Court of Chancery”. Local trustees were also appointed. The process was concluded on 1 February 1840, when the new Manor House and other properties were conveyed back to Harris for £300. Both transfers were effected by the cumbersome two-day process of Lease and Release, shortly to be replaced by Conveyancing as we know it, and much of the detail in this article comes from the 1840 Deed of Release.

Among other things, it reveals one important difference between the Private Act and Cottrell Dormer’s earlier Agreement with Harris. The Act specifically excluded the manorial rights and privileges, but they had been included in the Agreement, and Cottrell Dormer appears to have insisted on this part of the bargain. His immediate forebears had already acquired the rights (such as they were) to the other three manorial divisions, in 1706, 1739 and 1806 (see Brookes pp.82-3); he now became not only a prominent landowner in Steeple Aston, but also the first lord of the whole manor since the reign of Henry VII.

The 1840 Deed also gives us an update on the state of play regarding the buildings and land abutting Heyford Road. In place of Blizzard’s Cottage we have a “Messuage or Tenement ... late in the occupation of Charles Harris and now of Edward Hall”. Hall was a baker, and this seems to be the first reference to the building that replaced the cottage Harris had acquired in 1835 and then demolished. Next we have “all that other newly erected Messuage of Tenement ...adjoining to the last mentioned Messuage in Steeple Aston aforesaid at present unoccupied”. This seems to be the new mansion, fully built but apparently still not fit for habitation, which leaves a puzzle – where were the Harris family living at this point? Finally, separated from the rest, we have “all that Blacksmith’s Shop and premises near to the said premises hereinbefore described now in the occupation of [blank] and which is also further delineated in the said plan and coloured blue”.

As far as the land is concerned, it reveals that Harris’s estate had been reduced from 116 acres to just seven. He still had two pieces behind the

buildings – Little Dickeridge, the close (one acre three roods and thirty perches) nearest to Paines Hill, earlier probably the garden and orchard that went with Blizzard’s Cottage – and part of the Great Dickeridge which adjoins it to the east, a section now fenced off and given the new name of Middle Dickeridge. This was still pasture-land, but perhaps envisaged as the garden of the new mansion, and amounted to two acres and thirty-two perches (both measurements include the sites of the buildings). Harris also had a “piece of Nursery Ground lying across the road in front of the said newly erected Messuage (and which was heretofore part of the Deans)”, which measured two acres three roods and eighteen perches. This appears to be the site of the future “Harrisville”, a street of modest cottages opposite the end of Paines Hill erected in Harris’s lifetime, since they appear in the 1851 census.

Another mortgage

Despite the lifeline thrown him by Cottrell Dormer, Harris was not out of the woods: within a month, on 11 February 1840, he had raised a new loan of £1,200, by mortgaging all the above properties to a Mrs Ann Osmond, an Oxford widow – with power of immediate sale if he failed to keep up his repayments. But it soon becomes clear that Harris was out of his depth. Two months later, on 7 April 1840, he signed an agreement to sell the remaining estate, subject to the existing mortgages, either to or through three local businessmen, George Wakelin, a Bicester plumber and glazier, Alexander John Scott, an Oxford hatter, and James Wickens, an Oxford wine and spirit merchant. This seems to have been merely an agreement in principle, and was not immediately acted upon.

We learn two other details from this April deed – first that Harris himself has retreated to Oxford: he is introduced as

“Charles Harris late of Steeple Aston ... but now of No 1 Broad Street in the City of Oxford, Musical Instrument maker”

– second that he has been negotiating to buy an estate at Chetwode, Bucks., from one Henry Wyatt of Barnstaple, Devon. This was presumably intended as a substitute estate for his son and heir, John Marten Watson Harris, something Harris was obliged to find under the terms of the 1837 Private Act of Parliament. The Chetwode estate evidently fell through, but as will be seen below, Harris did eventually manage to acquire one at Charlton, Northants.

Over the next few months the Mansion must finally have been made ready for the family to move in, because the census taken on 7 June 1841 (by William Wing, as it happens) appears to show all of them in

residence, apart from one daughter, Elizabeth. One must say “appears to show” because the sequence of households in the census is never entirely clear – they were certainly near neighbours of Edward Hall, baker, and Elizabeth Plumb, blacksmith.

Bankruptcy and foreclosure

Less than two years later, with Weston Aplin pursuing Harris and his son John for the repayment of his mortgage, Harris applied to the Court for Relief of Insolvent Debtors. In March 1843 the court appointed Scott, Wickens and Wakelin as assignees of Harris’s estate, and in September Weston Aplin agreed to convey his interest in the properties to them. Soon afterwards they sold the Mansion to a new owner, George Robert Stratton, a currier (leather-finisher) from Bicester. Its subsequent fate is not yet known in detail, but in 1851 it was occupied by an elderly spinster, Charlotte Newcombe, described as a fundholder, from South Weald, Essex. In 1861 and 1871 it was similarly occupied by a Miss Catherine Dandridge, from Beaumaris, Anglesey. By 1881 it had become the premises of the Steeple Aston Co-op. (it is now split into three dwellings).

On 25 April, 1844, the house and bakery next door, with stable and garden, was auctioned at the Red Lion, Steeple Aston, and bought for £200 by John Louch, a Lower Heyford baker born in Fewcott. With the concurrence of Stratton and the assignees, the money was split 2:1 between the mortgager, Mrs Osmond, and a Mr Tredwell, who she said had put up a proportion of her loan to Charles. In 1847 Louch bought the site of the disused blacksmith’s shop from Frederick Plumb, at the same time taking out the first of a series of mortgages. This enabled him to extend his premises over the smithy site, although the details are far from clear.

Meanwhile other buildings were springing up on other former Harris land. A Decd relating to the last period house on the north side of Heyford Road – now Lansdowne House – shows that it was built by 1846 on land sold by Mrs Osmond and Mr Tredwell in 1843, so enabling them to recover a little more of their mortgage money. The house next to it (now Spring Vale) was also built and occupied by 1846.

Farming at Charlton

By 1851 the eldest son of the family, John Marten Watson Harris, had settled in Charlton, across the Cherwell Valley in south Northamptonshire, farming the land that had been bought for him under the terms of the 1837

Private Act of Parliament. He seems to have spent much of his earlier life in and around Steeple Aston. The 1841 census places him first, as the apparent head of the family at the new manor-house, describing him as a farmer aged 25. (Charles himself is listed second, and described as "independent"). William Wing identified both Charles and John as former managers of the "Manor farm, now dismembered and absorbed into other holdings", so it appears that Cottrell Dormer kept John on as tenant for a while after buying the farmland in 1840.

John was supposed to carry the hopes and ambitions of the family's benefactor, but seems to have been dogged by bad luck from the start. He was married in 1840 to Jane Mary Hore, daughter of a farmer, Thomas Hore. But Jane died less than a year later, aged only 33, and was buried at Steeple Aston. In 1844, the young widower was married again, this time to Sophia Hollis, daughter of another farmer, Edward Hollis. (He must have been related to William Hollis, tenant of the Rectory farm, who witnessed the marriage.) A year later, Sophia presented him with a son. He was christened at Steeple Aston on 28 September 1845, and named John Marten Watson Harris like his father. A daughter, Fanny, followed two years later in July 1847.



Fig 9. Holly House, Charlton, undergoing extensive refurbishment, 2009.

Some time during these years his father Charles, or the trustees appointed for the purpose, purchased the estate to which he was entitled under the 1837 Private Act of Parliament. Thanks to the researches of the Charlton and Newbottle History Society we know that his land lay to the south-west of the village. It was farmed from Holly House, tucked

away down a side road, Drury Lane, a house with “an elegant Georgian façade facing the open countryside” (Fig 8, page 19)). Both the land and the house had previously belonged to one Richard Gilkes, whose initials with the date 1790 appear on the guttering.

John Marten Watson Harris is listed in the 1851 census as a farmer of 140 acres, but bad luck continued to pursue him, and he died two years later, aged only 38. His widow and children continued to live there until the 1870s – his son, the younger John Marten Watson Harris, described himself as a landed proprietor but apparently rented his fields to other farmers.⁷ Like his grandfather, he came to the attention of the Chancery Division of the High Court,⁸ between 1852 and 1855 and again after 1859; the papers remain to be examined; but their subject-matter sounds ominously familiar.

Death of Charles Harris

Charles Harris himself lived on until July 1851, when he died at the Oxford Infirmary. His body was brought back to Steeple Aston for burial on 7 July, although no headstone marks his grave. Little is known of his final years, which cannot have brought him much joy. Despite describing himself variously as a farmer and a gentleman, he had never completely abandoned violin-making, as the inscriptions on some of his later instruments show, although relatively few from this period have surfaced in recent years. His move to Broad Street, Oxford, in 1840, and his description of himself then as a musical instrument maker, may have marked an attempt to return to what he did best, following his failure as a farmer. He evidently encouraged his second son, Richard, to take up the craft. The 1851 census shows Richard – described as a musical instrument maker – sharing a cottage on South Side with his sister Elizabeth, the only Harris children still in the village. Richard later moved to “Old Tom’s” in Northside where he continued making violins, married his landlady Martha Spittle, and ended up as a corn and hay merchant. The shop built by Wall and Louch on the corner of Paines Hill eventually became “Harris Stores” in the hands of Richard’s son, John Watson Harris.

⁷ *Charlton and Newbottle. The History of Two Villages*, Charlton and Newbottle History Society, 2000, pp 69, 71.

⁸ National Archives. C17/2, dating from between 1852 and 1855, catalogued “In the Matter of the Estate of John Marten Watson Harris, an infant”; and C30/1480, simply labelled “Re John Marten Watson Harris” from a series described as “Receivers’ Accounts covering dates 1859-1901”.

MORE ABOUT MARK COOKE

Banbury-born cotton master

Barrie Trinder

In 1993 (Vol 12, pp 146-47) we published a short note on Mark Cook(e), the Banbury-born cotton master, who was one of the partners who took over from the Peel family the Old Mill at Fazeley which had been established by the first Sir Robert Peel (1750-1830) as part of a wide-ranging series of improvements on the estate which he purchased in 1790. On another part of the property Peel built Drayton Manor, which became the family mansion, and was inherited by his eldest son Sir Robert Peel (1788-1850), the prime minister. Cooke was baptised in 1788 and the 1993 note showed that he sprang from a family of poor labourers and shoemakers.

Kevin Cooke, who is descended from Mark Cooke's younger brother, James Cooke (1809-69) has passed on some information that he has gathered during research on his family's history. The *London Gazette* of 18 April 1848 includes a notice that a cotton-spinning partnership in Ashton-under-Lyme between Isaac Thorniley and Mark Cooke was being terminated, but that the former would be continuing the business. It seems likely that this was the same Mark Cooke. The Old Mill at Fazeley was taken over sometime after 1841 by Mark Cooke in partnership with Christopher Norton Wright (1789-1875), bookseller and auctioneer, who had married his sister Anne Cooke at nearby Tamworth on 12 February 1839. The *London Gazette* also records the dissolution of the partnership on 11 July 1855 after which, it appears, the Old Mill was taken over by William Tolson, a smallware manufacturer from Yorkshire whose family built the imposing Fazeley Mill in 1883, and continued in business until the late twentieth century. Kevin Cooke has also passed on the account from *The Times* (10 July 1850) of the funeral of Sir Robert Peel at which Mark Cooke was, with the steward of the Peel estate, one of the two horsemen who headed the two-by-two file of principal tenants at the head of the funeral procession which conveyed his coffin to the parish church at Drayton Parslow.

We are grateful to Mr Cook for this information which sheds more light on the career of an interesting Banburian.

Book Reviews

Turnpike Roads to Banbury, by Alan Rosevear (with additional text and indexes by Jeremy Gibson), Banbury Historical Society, Vol 31, x + 214 pp, illus. (ISBN 978 0 900129 29 2), 2010. £15.00 (+ £3.00 p&p) (free to members).

This long-awaited publication fills cavities in the history of Banburyshire that remain open in most comparable regions of England. The role of roads in the social and economic changes of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries has increasingly been recognised by historians, but there are few detailed studies of the changes that turnpike trusts brought about in particular areas. Turnpike trusts were entrusted by Parliament, usually in response to petitions from local people, with the duty of maintaining particular stretches of road, and were granted the right to collect tolls from road-users, from riders of horses and drivers of horse-drawn vehicles or groups of beasts, but not from pedestrians, nor from various exempted groups. A trust's powers usually lasted for 21 years, after which they had to be renewed by a further Act of Parliament. While the first trust was designated in 1663, most were created in the eighteenth century. The routes from London to the principal regional cities were mostly under the control of trusts by 1760. From 1750 many Acts were passed for networks of roads based on market towns, for Tetbury, Bishop's Castle and Lyme Regis for example, but no such Act related to Banbury where the roads leading into the town were managed by six different trusts. New trusts continued to be authorised into the 1830s and even the 1840s, particularly in industrial regions, but the last of the roads serving Banbury, the route to Brailes and Shipston-on-Stour, was turnpiked in 1802.

The study of turnpike roads poses numerous difficulties. Trusts were private bodies and the rate of survival of their archives is uneven; those that remain are usually in the collections of solicitors, or in some cases in the papers of great estates. While it is not too difficult to trace copies of the first Acts of Parliament for particular roads, finding copies of those renewing trusts' powers can be difficult, and tracing the progress of parliamentary bills can involve much laborious toil. Newspapers reveal some information about turnpikes, particularly when trusts annually advertised the leasing-out of their tolls, listing their tollhouses in the process, but not every trust did so, and the proceedings of meetings of trustees were rarely reported.

Alan Rosevear's book will save future historians of Banbury and Banburyshire an enormous amount of fatigue. It concisely summarises the development of each of the turnpike trusts that were of consequence to the town, many more than the six which actually passed through or terminated there. The quotations from petitions calling for roads to be placed under the control of trusts recorded in the *Journal of the House of Commons* are particularly useful and throw light on many aspects of Banbury's eighteenth century history.

It is evident that in Oxfordshire, as in other counties, plans were made by the magistracy to submit integrated proposals in particular parliamentary sessions for lengthy routes. In 1755 there was a co-ordinated attempt to turnpike the road between Oxford and Coventry, and when powers were granted it was managed as two divisions, north and south of the route of the earlier Buckingham-Warminster (or Weeping Cross) trust, which was responsible for the road between Adderbury and North Bar in Banbury. The splitting and merging of trusts is well-explained, and due attention is given to road management and to the winding up of trusts in the third quarter of the nineteenth century. The survival rate for milestones and tollhouses in Oxfordshire is not good, but information in the book will be valuable for students of local topography. Above all this is a book that will be welcomed by family historians. It provides a wealth of detail about those involved in the road system, whether gentry petitioning parliament, making investments and actively participating in the management of trusts, surveyors working on the roads, or men hired to collect tolls, who were often able to follow such trades as shoemaking in their tollhouse homes. The text is meticulously indexed with numerous references to other genealogical sources.

The book is copiously illustrated with newly-drawn and historical maps, facsimiles of newspaper advertisements, copies of engravings and watercolours, and sketches (modern photographs, where possible, would have been preferable) of surviving tollhouses and milestones. The attractive dust jacket is in full colour. The production makes an interesting contrast with the Historical Society's first records publication, the *Index to the Banbury Peculiar Court Wills*, of 1959, which extends over 76 pages, was set in type, and had no illustrations.

In some respects the book fails to engage with modern scholarship on turnpike roads, and its bibliography is particularly disappointing. It omits the two works that laid the foundation of modern turnpike studies (W Albert, *The Turnpike Road System in England 1663-1840*, Cambridge University Press, 1972, and E Pawson, *Transport and Economy: the turnpike roads of eighteenth-century Britain*, Academic Press, 1977), as well as the standard work on the legal aspects of the road system (S & B Webb, *The King's Highway*, Longman, 1913), and the most enlightening original source on road construction and management (Sir Henry Parnell, *A Treatise on Roads*, Longman, 1838). Arthur Cossons, chronicler of the history of roads in many Midland counties (Neil Cossons, 'A Nottinghamshire Historian: Arthur Cossons [1893-1963]', *Transactions of the Thoroton Society*, vol 113, 2009) is not accorded an initial in the bibliography nor in the footnotes. Local sources that are surprisingly omitted include Arthur Young, *A General View of the Agriculture of Oxfordshire*, Sherwood, Neely & Jones, 1813, which testifies to the improvements brought about by turnpike trusts in Oxfordshire, and J Drinkwater, *Inheritance, being the first book of an autobiography*, Benn, 1931, a superb family history that describes the coaching activities of the author's ancestors.

D Gerhold's *Carriers & Coachmasters: Trade and Travel before the Turnpikes* (Phillimore, 2005), which vastly illuminates road travel before 1750 and includes important material on Banbury, might also have been included. [This omission is a result of the book's long gestation in production. *Ed.*] One error requires correction. On p 134 it is suggested that the railway north of Banbury opened in 1850 and ran to Rugby. It was opened in 1852, and went not to Rugby, as was intended, but to Birmingham.

This is an attractive volume which will appeal to everyone interested in the history of Banburyshire. It will be a quarry of valuable information for many future local and family historians and its publication is to be warmly welcomed.

Barrie Trinder

A Shining Light: 150 years of Bloxham School, by Simon Batten. Hardback and jacket. 8¾" x 11", 152pp., lavishly illustrated in colour. James & James (Publishers) Ltd., 2-5 Benjamin Street, London EC1M 5QL (ISBN 978 1 903942 97 0), 2010. £35.00.

The title of the book is derived from the inscription carved into the memorial archway to the school, "Justorum Semita Lux Spendens" being the school motto – The Path of the Just is a Shining Light. The school motto was devised by the Reverend John William Hewett who opened All Saints' Grammar School at Bloxham in the vicarage in 1853.⁹ Hewett's school opened on the present site in June 1855 and eventually went into bankruptcy in 1857. It was this derelict school that Philip Reginald Egerton saw in 1859 and was able to purchase at auction on 15 September 1859.



⁹ See an article by J.S.W. Gibson in *C&CH*.2.6 (November 1963); a two-part abridged version appeared in *The Bloxhamist* for Nov. 1963 and March 1964; see online.

This splendid account of the school by Batten follows earlier histories by the Reverend Sidney Boulter covering the years 1860-1910, a supplement by the Reverend G. H. Ward covering 1910-1925 and then a comprehensively revised history by Brian Smith in 1978. With a further thirty years to record, as the author says, full advantage has been taken of 'developments in publishing and technology' enabling 'the present book to include a far greater range of pictures and photographs'. And as such this history, written to celebrate the 150 years of the school's existence, is a visual delight, providing a succinct synopsis of the history of the school from its beginnings up to the present time. Arranged in the historical periods of each headmaster, it is fascinating to read how the school developed over the years and how each has met the challenges of the time. For anyone with an interest in the village of Bloxham, of which the school has played such a central role, I commend this book.

D.W. Harrington [Wilberforce 1959-63]

Ed.note. As the author acknowledges, this book complements rather than competes with the detail and scope of Brian Smith's 1978 *History* of the school. However, it is well indexed and future researchers will value the names listed in the School Roll at January 2010.

Of particular interest is a photograph of Egerton with fellow Deddington curates in 1858. We hope to include this in the forthcoming Part Two of William Cotton Risley's diary, in which all three curates feature prominently.

In addition to *The Bloxhamist*, due to the efforts of a Bloxham Old Boy, Peter Barwell, over 14,000 photographs have been added to the website <<http://oldbloxhamist.bloxhamschool.com/>>. These include a considerable amount of historical material which is now housed in a room in the Vallance Library for the use of the Old Bloxhamist Society and the school archives.

Welchman Chronicles: The descendants of John Welchman of Deddington (d.1591), by John David Welchman. Card covered, x, 542pp, illus., indexed. Privately published by the author, 2010 (about £35 incl. UK p&p, Church Cottage, Goosey nr Faringdon, Oxon. SN7 8PA; <john.welchman@goosey.co.uk>).

The Welchman family had a major role in Banbury affairs in the seventeenth century and at Brackley in the eighteenth. It was the original John's gt.grandson Edward (c.1610-85) who moved to Banbury in 1638. There he established himself as a baker in Parsons Lane in the building that became known as "The Original Cake Shop", also acquiring the Bell nearby. He was on the Corporation from 1652, later serving as Mayor. He married twice, confusingly having sons named John by both wives. The first (c.1637-1713), an apothecary, was also on the Corporation, and was deeply involved in the political controversies of the 1680s and subsequent decades. The second John (b.1681, when his father was about 70) became a surgeon, again a Corporation member, Mayor in 1721 and 1727, marrying twice, dying in 1730.

In an article on 'The House at Pye Corner' (*C&CH*.13.8, 1997), the present Castle House in Cornhill, an advertisement of 1758 named a 'Mr Welchman' as a former resident. It was and is assumed it was John the surgeon who first lived there. Not surprisingly the two Johns were confused, wrongly suggesting this was the elder, born in 1667, rather than the one who died in 1730. We now learn that a descendant of the baker Edward's first family, yet another John (1702-73), whose attorney father had moved to Brackley, himself came back to Banbury in 1730, just-married and also an attorney. On the death of his father he returned to Brackley in 1745. The likelihood is that Pye Corner was occupied successively by cousins, both named John Welchman. The other named resident, 'Dr Mac Aulay' did not move to Banbury until 1745 just as Pye Corner conveniently became available. Although the book does not mention the Pye Corner connection, but for the author's patient disentangling of family relationships we would remain confused.

I have laboured this in a severely factual way, but this book shows how a wealth of imagination can turn 'who-begat-whom' into an absorbingly readable narrative. Mr Welchman has looked at the dry documentary records and interpreted what they implied, why they were created, what happened before and after. Inevitably some of this has to be speculation, but well-based. Deaths in the family suggest why the young attorney from Brackley set up and lived in Banbury for fifteen years before returning to his home town. It is all too easy to assume people stayed in the same place all their lives. This book is a testament to their constant mobility, both in the close neighbourhood and much further way.

I have concentrated on the first hundred pages and how they affected Banbury. There has been gratifying use of our Society's publications, precisely footnoted (our website shows ten separate *C&CH* articles naming Welchmans, as well as records volumes). The bibliography and indexes are excellent. To anyone in the family the gigantic research into later centuries will be invaluable too.

Local historians tend to research one place or area: a family history like this is a good reminder that ancestors and descendants are always coming and going, they have lives elsewhere too.

J.G.

Broughton Castle and The Fiennes Family, by Nicholas Allen, Wykeham Press (ISBN 978 0 9566059 0 0). A5, card covered, c.90pp, 20 illustrations/maps. Available late August 2010, £7.50. Obtainable from the shop at Broughton Castle; mail orders (adding £2.00 p&p) from BHS members, with cheque, to Nick Allen, Barn End, Keyte's Close, Adderbury OX17 3PB99.

A review will appear in the next issue of *Cake & Cockhorse*.

How to Access *Cake and Cockhorse* Online

Simon Townsend

Access the site using the new address <www.banburyhistory.org> .

This will take you to a page of information about the Banbury Historical Society's events. This page is being currently redesigned, and we hope that the new version will be much more attractive.

To search *Cake and Cockhorse*, go to the search option at the top right hand corner of the page. Click on **Advanced**.

This will bring up a new **Advanced search** page.

Next, type the word or words that you wish to search for in the box titled

Enter your keyword.

For example type **The Original Banbury Cross**.

Then you must state how you want the search carried out. You have a choice:

Find any word – will look for all references to **The** and **Original** and **Banbury** and **Cross**.

Find all words – will look for all combinations of the above

Find exact phrase – will only look for **The Original Banbury Cross** written in that order. This is generally the most useful option.

Then you must tick, amongst the options offered, the bottom right hand box

Banbury Historical Society - Cake and Cockhorse.

Then click the **Search** button.

A new page will then open with a list of all the issues of *Cake and Cockhorse* where your requested subject has been found. This list may be quite long. Be sure to scroll down to see all options.

Click on the relevant listed issue of *Cake and Cockhorse* to open this.

The words that you have requested will appear in a box on the left of the page. Click on these links and you will be taken directly to the text in the issue.

Ed. Note. After following the guidelines above and accessing any relevant information in *Cake & Cockhorse*, readers may like to expand their search over the larger Cherwell District Council website of which the Banbury Historical Society pages are but a small part. To do this follow the same procedure but don't tick the **BHS-C&CH** box. I realised this by chance (forgetting to do this tick). As a result I discovered that Sir Richard Saltonstall (d.1619), mentioned in 'The Original Banbury Cross' article, also occurs in a Wardington Conservation Area appraisal – the Saltonstall arms are on a 1665 datestone on Wardington Manor (based on *VCH Oxon* 10, 215). One thing leads to another... **J.G.**

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 over 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

[*Index to*] *Administrations and Inventories of the Archdeaconry of Northampton 1711-1800* (vol. 17, with British Record Society).

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

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).

Turnpike Roads to Banbury, by Alan Rosevear (vol. 31).

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: *Mid-Victorian Squarson, 1849-1869: Selections from the Diaries of William Cotton Risley, Part 2*, ed. G.W. Smedley-Stevenson.

Index to Rusher's 'Banbury List' 1785-1906 and 'Directory' 1837-1906.

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

Autumn 2010 Programme

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

Thursday 9th September 2010

Preceded by Reception at 6.30pm for 7pm

Women workers in war and peace:

The General Post Office, 1914-1939

Helen Gow

Thursday 14th October 2010

Oxford's Historic Waterways:

The River Thames and the Oxford Canal

Mark Davies

Thursday 11th November 2010

The Cartwrights of Aynho:

The building of a dynasty

Jim McDermott

Thursday 9th December 2010

Archaeology and the Restoration of

Stowe Landscape Gardens

Gary Marshall

Banbury Museum and Cherwell District Council are offering three special events in September to coincide with Heritage Open Days. The first is a guided tour of **Wroxton Abbey** on **Saturday 4th September** at 2.30pm. Contact Simon Townsend for further information on 01295 753781

or email <simon.townsend@cherwell-dc.gov.uk>.