

CAKE AND COCKHORSE



BANBURY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Summer 2017

Volume 20 Number 6

ISSN 6522-0823

BANBURY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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www.banburyhistoricalsociety.org

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We invite contributions on all aspects of the history and archaeology of Banbury and its surrounding region, often referred to as 'Banburyshire'. Material from amateurs and professionals is equally welcome. The Editor will be pleased to send guidance notes to potential authors, so as to ease the process of submitting a piece for consideration.

Cake and Cockhorse

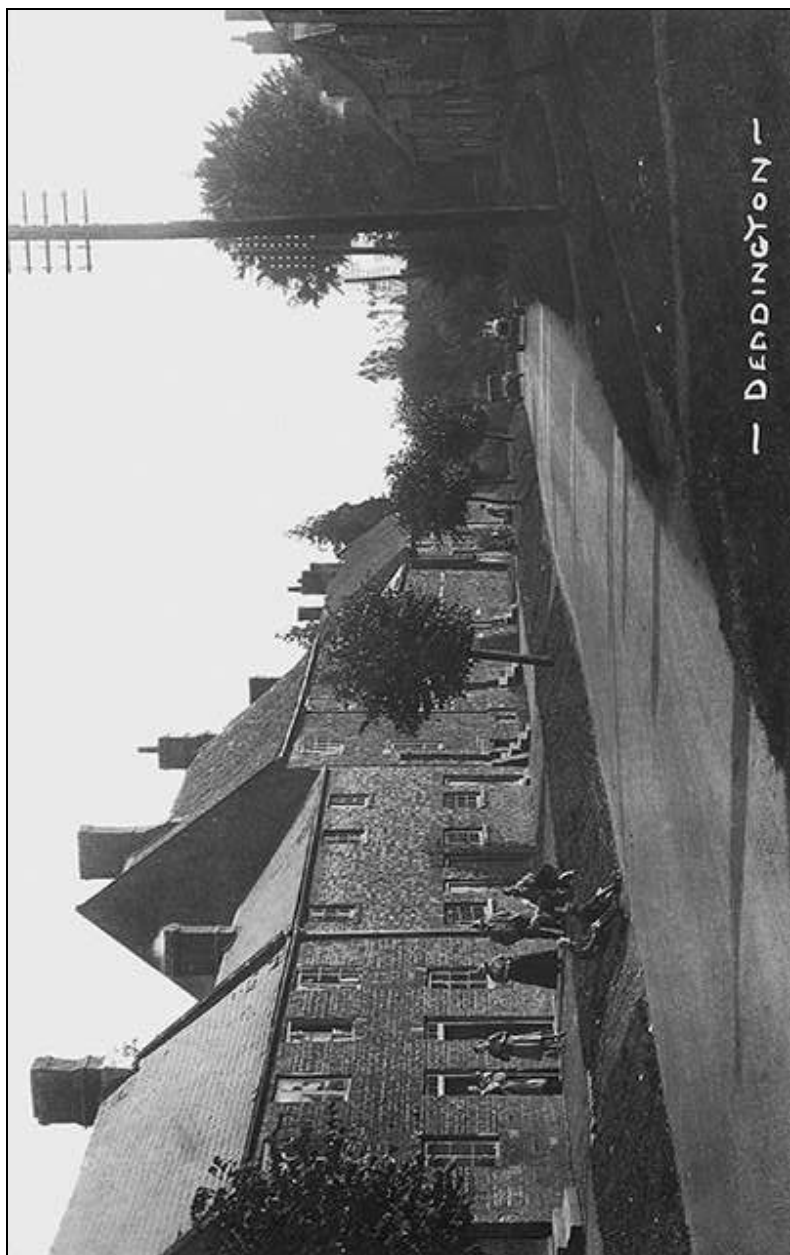
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These days August seems to be the only 'fallow' month in the Banbury Historical Society calendar, lectures, events and visits running from September through to July. The appearance of this latest issue of *Cake & Cockhorse* in time for the dog days of August will, therefore, ease members' withdrawal symptoms and help solve the problem of what to pack for holiday reading. I feel confident that members will look forward to reading the latest in our occasional examinations of what might be called the constituent parts of Banbury. The people of 'Notorious Neithrop' have attracted attention previously, not least in this journal, but Steve Kilsby's article takes a different, topographical, approach, providing the perfect introduction and guide to what he calls 'Banbury's Village'.

The programme of lectures for 2017-18 can be found on the back cover. As always, the lectures begin in September, a month that this year will include a significant bonus for our members: we are pleased to announce that the Society's new publication, Barrie Trinder's *Junctions at Banbury: a town and its railways since 1850*, will be published during September. It is a fascinating, important and substantial book (266 pages with more than 100 illustrations), of the same format as the Society's *Banbury Past*. Members will be able to collect their copies at the reception before the first lecture of the season on Thursday 14 September. If you are unable to attend that meeting you can collect your copy at the Banbury Museum shop until Saturday 30 September. If you have not collected your copy by the latter date you will receive it by post early in October. Extra copies of the book will be available for sale at the lecture on 14 September and subsequently at the museum shop.

Cover: aerial photograph of Neithrop, courtesy of Steve Gold (see pp.179-195).



— DEDDINGTON —

Quinke House, New Street, c.1926.

Deddington's Poor in 1795

Chris Day

Sir Frederick Morton Eden (1766–1809) published his remarkable three-volume survey, entitled *The State of the Poor*, in 1797. The book's full title (actually, more a catalogue of its contents) is *The State of the Poor, or an History of the Labouring Classes in England from the Conquest to the Present Period; in which are particularly considered their domestic economy with respect to diet, dress, fuel and habitation; and the various plans which, from time to time, have been proposed and adopted for the relief of the poor*. Besides being a political economist and writer, Eden was a man of business, co-founder of the Globe Insurance Company. He was drawn to study the conditions of the labouring classes by concern at the very high price of food in 1794-5. His was one of the first of a great series of surveys during the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries investigating just about every aspect of life in this country. He and a paid investigator carried out much research, but most of his information came from local correspondents, usually clergymen. Deddington was chosen for a case study. Below we reproduce the text of the Deddington entry. A few words of introduction may help readers make the most of it. In the late eighteenth century the generally compassionate and benign attitude adopted towards the poor during a period of affluence hardened as expenditure began to rise. The Napoleonic Wars produced shortages and high prices. Wages were static and, especially in the agrarian south of the country, lagged further and further behind inflation. The resulting unemployment (or, more precisely, underemployment) led to a sharp increase in poor relief and a financial crisis in many places. Relief at that time was not a national responsibility. Each parish was responsible for its own poor. On top of it all, the poor harvests of 1794 and 1795 led to shortages of basic foodstuffs – especially bread, which was the dietary staple. This, then, was the background to Eden's survey.

There are a few specifics in the survey that require explanation. Note the reference to 'culinary contrivances': Eden felt that with greater imagination poor families could manage their food supply much better. The distress of the poor was commonly blamed on their own fecklessness. Eden refers to 45 acres of common in Deddington. Families

might keep one or two animals and gather fuel there. This provided an important supplement to inadequate wages. Tithes: they were payable on all produce and belonged in Deddington to the Dean and Chapter of St George's Chapel, Windsor, whose farmer, unusually at this time, collected them in kind rather than in cash. Friendly societies were one way in which the poor could help themselves. Contributions were paid 'into the box', and sick members receiving payments from the society were said to be 'on the box'. The very poorest did not benefit, being unable to afford even the modest subscription of 8*d.* a month. The Act mentioned below was an Act of 1793 providing for the registration of friendly societies. 'The poor are farmed' means that a contractor undertook to maintain the destitute in the parish workhouse, as a business. In exchange he would be allowed to keep the profits of their labour. The workhouse is now Quinque House, towards the south-east end of New Street. 'Roundsmen' were out-of-work labourers sent to the parish's farmers on a rota basis. The parish subsidised their wages. 'The common field': until 1808 Deddington's fields were unenclosed. Farmers' land was scattered in strips across the parish, intermixed with the strips of other farmers. Decisions on cropping and grazing were necessarily communal. There was a great drive under way to enclose land and reallocate it in consolidated blocks. The result in the long term tended to be for small farmers to sell out to the larger and for labourers to lose their rights of common. The situation in Deddington was exacerbated by the fact that it was an 'open' parish (a multitude of freeholders, no single landlord in control), taken advantage of by the proprietors of 'close' parishes (e.g. neighbouring North Aston and Aynho) who strictly controlled the number of cottages in their own parishes. They drew on Deddington's surplus labour at harvest time and turned it off again afterwards. Eden's [edited] text follows:

'Deddington contains by estimation 4,000 acres. 102 houses pay tax, the number exempt near 300. There are 10 ale-houses, a few years ago 21. Farms are from £15 to £315 a year, chiefly £100. There are 45 acres of common. Tithes are farmed at £750 a year, and taken in kind.

'Prices of provisions: Beef and mutton and veal, 5*d.* per lb; bacon, 10*d.*, butter, 9*d.* and 10*d.*; milk, 1*d.* the pint; bread, 1*s.*10*d.* the half-peck loaf. Common labourers earn 7*s.* a week in winter, 8*s.* in spring, and 12*s.* in hay and corn harvest. Women are paid 6*d.* a day for weeding corn, 8*d.* for haymaking, and 1*s.* in corn harvest, without victuals.

‘There are two friendly societies with 120 members each. They pay 8*d.* into the box monthly, allow 6*s.* a week to sick members during the first twelve months and 3*s.* a week after that period. Both societies have taken the benefit of the late Act.

‘The Poor are farmed in the parish Workhouse for £1,000 a year. The parish, however, defrays all expenses arising from bastardy, small-pox, broken bones, dislocations and law concerns. The number of inmates in July 1795 was 18. Out pensioners receive about £7 a week, besides which the roundsmen (or labourers who cannot get employment) are often chargeable and supported by the parish. In winter their number is sometimes 40 or 50; the parish employs them in stone quarries in the neighbourhood. No regular bill of fare is observed in the Workhouse. The Poor were not all farmed till the present year (1795), but were chiefly supported by weekly pensions. In general, however, about 20 persons have been maintained in the Workhouse, under a contractor who was allowed 2*s.* 6*d.* a head for their weekly maintenance.

‘The expenditure on the Poor in 1795 was £1,343 odd. No account of receipts or expenditure before 1786, when the expenditure was £1,126 odd, could be found, but it is said that for some years before, the rates were as high as in that year. An old farmer adds that he had heard his father say that 55 years ago he paid £3.12*s.* Poor’s Rates for a farm which now pays £26, and that in 1740, the year after the great frost, 9 gallons of wheat at one time cost 11*s.*, but fell in a few months to 3*s.*

In the country between Oxford and Deddington the rates are from 1*s.* 3*d.* to 3*s.* 6*d.* in the pound, in several parishes which are almost entirely agricultural. The high rates in this parish (6*s.* in 1794, and 6*s.* 6*d.* in 1795, on nearly the full rental) are ascribed to the common field, of which the land principally consists, whereas the neighbouring parishes have been inclosed many years, and many small farms in them have been consolidated, so that many small farmers with little capital have been obliged either to turn labourers or procure small farms in Deddington or other parishes that possess common field. Besides this, the neighbouring parishes are, many of them, possessed by a few individuals, who are cautious of permitting newcomers to obtain a settlement.

‘The general opinion here is that canals are a great injury to the Poor, by enabling farmers to send their corn abroad. Such erroneous ideas do not merit a refutation, but the farmers are very apprehensive that they will produce serious consequences. A boat load with flour was lately seized by the populace, but was restored on the miller’s promising to sell it at a reduced price.

‘According to the present price of bread, a family here which consists of a man, wife and three children (the eldest 4 years old), will expend in bread alone £16.8s. in a year. The whole earnings of the man, provided he continues in health and can obtain constant work, will not exceed £22.15s., and as his wife and children can earn nothing, there will only remain £5.17s. to provide him and them with lodging, fuel, clothes, every other necessary of life, and his deficiencies must be made up by the parish.’

Almost forty year ago we published an article by the late Pamela Horn on Sir Frederick Eden and his three-volume study of *The State of the Poor*. This consisted of a short survey of his work and life, including his comments on the contrast of the diet of labourers in the south of England, such as ‘expensive’ wheaten bread, whereas in the north they consumed barley, oatmeal and oatcakes, as well as ... potatoes’.

This was followed by a facsimile of the reports on Banbury itself and on Deddington. An edited version of that for Deddington is reproduced above. A table of Baptisms, Burials, Marriages, and the Poor’s Rates was also provided.

The report on Banbury is considerably more detailed. For anyone wishing to follow this up it is printed in full in *C&CH* 7, no.5, Spring 1978, pp.127-136.

* * * *

Astrop Spa

An article in the April 2017 issue of *The Local Historian* includes (p.140) an article by James Hodson celebrating Cheltenham’s 300 years as a spa town. Its coat of arms incorporates the pigeons that allegedly first drew notice to the well.

Dr John Ruty in 1757 noted how pigeons were attracted to salty springs, with as an example *inter alia* of “Sutton Bog, near Banbury” – a rather denigrating reference to Astrop Spa, at King’s Sutton. Members will recall our 2008 A.G.M. at Astrop House (courtesy of Mr and Mrs John Ewart) and the 1813 illustration of the well by Thomas Rowlandson (*C&CH*. 17.6). Admittedly it does look as if it could have been boggy around the well, then as now. Are pigeons there still?

BANBURY'S VILLAGE

A Perambulation and Examination of What Remains of Neithrop Village

Steve Kilsby



Introduction: Where is Neithrop village?

As many readers will already know, Neithrop lies to the west of Banbury town centre. However, what is perhaps less well known is that the ancient village (or ‘township’) of Neithrop still survives, largely intact. Possibly, like me, you used to use the BP garage (now replaced by flats) at the junction of Foundry Street and Warwick Road in the 1970s and, whilst filling up there with petrol, wondered about the ancient houses running up Boxhedge Road opposite? In this article, I shall explore what is left of Neithrop village (for that is the location of those houses), and I shall attempt to give it its historical context.

Others have been here before: Barrie Trinder wrote about Neithrop in this magazine in 1966¹ and I am indebted to him. Both T.B. Gunn and George Herbert wrote nineteenth century memoirs which talk of the area (my perambulation, in fact, is based upon Herbert's *modus operandi*).² Also, and more recently, Rebecca Probert wrote of 'Notorious Neithrop' in the nineteenth century in *Cake & Cockhorse*.³

However, the point I am attempting to draw out in this article is that, where previous writers have, quite properly, concentrated upon the alleged slums and sins of Neithrop in previous epochs, I wish to demonstrate that the modern visitor will find a very pleasant village environment straggling up Boxhedge Road, rather than the den of iniquity some of the previous works may have led one to expect! Many of the houses still extant have a prosperous feel to them, and I shall elaborate on these below.

Alfred Beesley in his *History of Banbury* (1841), refers to Neithrop as having had Saxon origins.⁴ Neithrop is, then, an ancient village enfolded within a modern town centre; it is only fifteen minutes' walk from the Market Place in Banbury. In this it is unusual, e.g. Cowley, Church Cowley, Old Headington, Headington Quarry, Old Marston, Wolvercote and Iffley are all on the periphery of Oxford City.

The village of Neithrop (I shall cite historic precedent for this) is located on the side of a hill running to the south of the modern Warwick Road. To the east, the village was formerly served by the Cuttle Brook (now covered and re-layed), which roughly followed the line of the present Bath Road. To the north, Warwick Road forms the base of the hill upon which the village is located – but the road then passes the village and climbs another, steeper hill to the west as it leaves the village and moves out towards the modern suburbs of Ruscote and Hardwick.

Neithrop is also unique in Banbury owing to its diverse range of buildings of all periods from the medieval to the present. It contains several listed buildings, places of worship, businesses and the oldest surviving residential buildings in Banbury. Its medieval street pattern is largely unchanged. The old part of Neithrop still feels very much like an Oxfordshire village, and makes few concessions to urban life. Although

¹ Barrie Trinder, 'Banbury's Poor in 1850', *C&CH* 3.6 (1966).

² George Herbert, *Shoemaker's window* (BH Blackwell, 1948); ed. B. Trinder, *Victorian Banburyshire: Three Memoirs* (BHS vol. 33, 2013).

³ Rebecca Probert, 'Notorious Neithrop', *C&CH* 19.1 (2012).

⁴ Alfred Beesley, *History of Banbury* (Nichols and Son, 1841), p.2.

just off a main road in the middle of a town, it is barely touched by its urban setting, has little traffic travelling through it and retains much of its tranquility. Boxhedge Square can be seen as an open space, but it no longer functions as the village square it undoubtedly once was; the nearby Boxhedge Road allotments are now the only significant green lung in the village.

‘The Village’ is how Margaret Stacey styled Neithrop in her anonymised description of it, when using Boxhedge Road for one of her case study areas (‘Wychtree Road’) in her second sociological study of Banbury, *Power, Persistence and Change*.⁵

There are several indicators of Neithrop's agricultural past, as well as several nineteenth century houses originally built as workers' cottages. Unfortunately, virtually nothing now remains of the Vulcan Foundry, which was the site of Neithrop's industrial heritage, in and around Foundry Street. However, Vulcan Court, built in 2015, is named after it. The Oxfordshire County Council archive contains many pictures of the Vulcan Foundry buildings – albeit in their dereliction – many of them taken by Barrie Trinder.

In writing this article, I have divided the perambulation into two: the first part is an overview of the area, and the second part deals with the individual buildings in it. Before we perambulate, though, here is a little of the early history of the village.

Early history

There are no known prehistoric remains in the village of Neithrop, which was a Saxon settlement according to Beesley. The name derives from ‘Nether Thorpe’ (roughly, the Lower Hill – as opposed to Calthorpe, on the ‘coll’). It was known as ‘Nethrop’ or even ‘Nethorp’, as late as Beesley’s time in the early nineteenth century.

In the later Saxon period, the parish of Banbury also included the hamlets of Neithrop, Calthorpe, Wykham, Easington and Hardwick. Neithrop was originally a group of habitations lying in fields on the west side of Banbury. There was very little paving in Neithrop before the mid nineteenth century, and so refuse accumulated in the streets; for that reason, and because of inadequate drainage and polluted water supplies, mortality rates were high. That is possibly the reason for the extraordinarily high pavement outside numbers 1-4 Boxhedge Road,

⁵ Margaret Stacey, *Power, Persistence and Change* (Routledge Keegan Paul, 1973).

which existed up until the 1990s; it would thus afford some protection to the presumably slightly better-off inhabitants of that part of the village (and would also help when mounting horses). This ‘high causeway’ was removed in the 1990s when Oxfordshire County Council introduced the mini roundabout junction of Boxhedge Road and Boxhedge Square, around the same time that Millwright Close was developed in the former Birds Farmyard. The ‘old houses’ (nos. 1-5 Boxhedge Road), however, very much remain.⁶

For several centuries Neithrop consisted of a small group of dwellings where the Bishop of Lincoln’s agricultural tenants lived; it was then a rural hamlet of fewer than a hundred houses. Throughout the medieval period there were three great open fields to the west of Banbury, Neithrop Field being by far the largest: the boundaries of this field ran from Hardwick on the west of the Southam Road to the Broughton Road.



Detail of A. Moor's drawing of Banbury (1730) as reproduced by Alfred Beesley (1841); Neithrop and Boxhedge can be clearly seen about a field or so to the right of the church. The original drawing on which this engraving was based is in the Bodleian Library and is reproduced in S. Townsend & J. Gibson, "Banbury Past through Artists' Eyes" (B.H.S. vol.30., 2007), p.18.

A. Moor’s sketch of Banbury dated 1730 clearly shows a group of buildings straddling up the hill close to the line of the present Boxhedge Road; this is very probably the first visual representation of the village.

⁶ They are referred to in ‘EW’, *Pathways of Banburyshire* (Walford, 1900).

Victorian Neithrop

In 1801 Neithrop housed 26% of the population of the parish of Banbury, and by 1851 this proportion had increased to 48%. The increase in population was a cause for concern: the water supply was drawn from private wells (one at least of which survives at the rear of a house in Boxhedge Road) which were often polluted. When the population of Neithrop was almost 4,000 and entirely without sanitation, conditions were clearly appalling. The death rate by the mid-nineteenth century was 26 per 1000 with half of those dying aged under 20. Fever deaths in 1858, for instance, were 58.⁷

Before 1832, Neithrop had its own workhouse (although the 'Township' of Neithrop, which I am describing, should not be confused with the 'Parish' which covered the whole of the area lying outside Banbury borough except Grimsbury). It is believed that Richard Gould developed Gould's Buildings, fronting on to Townsend, which were created from the shell of the former Neithrop Workhouse. (Following the amalgamation of Banbury and Neithrop Unions, after the 1834 Poor Law (Amendment) Act, their respective workhouses were relocated to a far grander building further up the Warwick Road). Gould's Buildings and Gould's Row were unsavoury and overcrowded.⁸ There is now no trace left of Gould's Buildings, as they appear to have been demolished in the 1950s and council housing was erected in their place.

By the middle of the nineteenth century, the footprint of the ancient village had barely changed, although the development of Lampitt's Vulcan Foundry on the other side of Water Lane had given rise to development on that side of the road. The terraces of houses then developed were squalid and verminous and had been built by farmers and over-eager entrepreneurs such as Richard Gould in far too close proximity to each other.

The Central Board of Health Inspector, T.W. Rammell, took evidence on the condition of the village in 1849. Thomas Pain, a solicitor, said that the back streets of Neithrop were 'inhabited by the poor and persons of bad character'.⁹

⁷ William Potts, *History of Banbury* (2nd edition, ed. E.T. Clark, Gulliver Press, 1978), p.275; Trinder, 'Banbury's Poor', pp.83, 85.

⁸ Ed. A. Crossley, *Victoria County History of Oxfordshire*, vol. 10 (Banbury), p.78.

⁹ Barrie Trinder, *Victorian Banbury* (Phillimore and B.H.S. vol.19, 1982), p.14; Trinder, 'Banbury's Poor', p. 83; Probert, 'Notorious Neithrop', p. 6.

Banbury's First Council Houses – Kings Road, Neithrop

In 1913 the Borough Council first began housebuilding activities under the Housing of the Working Classes Act 1890. Forty houses were built in Kings Road and these are, without doubt, the oldest council houses in Oxfordshire.



Kings Road council houses, built in 1913.

It was Herbert Payne, elected Councillor in November 1906 for the Independent Labour Party, who instigated the building of these houses. He spoke at length at a meeting in Boxhedge Square in 1907: ‘(there are)...in Banbury a number of rottenly bad houses with foul drains, leaky roofs, small windows and dirty walls, and these were only inhabited because the people had nothing better to go to’. Hodgkins notes that at the time of Payne’s death in 1922 local newspapers reported that ‘the houses built in Kings Road were largely [built] because of his [Payne’s] inspiration’.¹⁰ The building of those forty houses (with their distinctive red-tiled steeply pitched roofs) – was a considerable achievement for a semi-rural authority, several years before the great twentieth century council house building programmes commenced (from 1919 on).

¹⁰ J.R. Hodgkins, *Over the Hills to Glory* (Clifton Press, 1978), pp.81, 84-5, 89, 101.



Aerial view of Neithrop Village; Kings Road council houses' distinctive red roofs clearly shown in the foreground; the white render of Neithrop Villa and Cedar Villa also stands out.
Photograph courtesy of Steve Gold.

On the 8th August, 1912, the *Banbury Advertiser* carried a long report on the Official Inquiry at the Town Hall into the Banbury Housing Scheme, conducted by Mr Courtenay Clifton, an Inspector of the Local Government Board. Ultimately, though, the inquiry accepted the Council's plans.

All this points up the notion – odd to modern readers – that municipal housing (or, indeed, municipal initiatives of any sort, one might think) were undertaken with due gravity and concern, and were often seen as leaps into the unknown (which indeed they were). We may now consider our municipal machinery as prosaic and risk averse, but it was not always thus!

The fascinating story of how these houses were developed is fully chronicled in the pages of the *Banbury Advertiser* of the time (1910-1914).

Perambulation – 1: the area

A good starting point for a walk around Neithrop Village is the junction of Bath Road and Warwick Road, where Neithrop House stands grandly, if slightly sadly, facing this junction, denuded of its outbuildings, which were demolished a few years ago.

This part of Bath Road was called Paradise until the early twentieth century. It comprised small cottages, rather ironically deemed very poor and deprived. Nevertheless, the Lampitt family, founders and managers of the successful and innovative engineering works (John Lampitt is the probable inventor of the traction engine gearbox in the 1840s), the Vulcan Foundry in Foundry Street, lived here and so that is perhaps open to question. There was, however, at least one larger house in Paradise, on the site of the twentieth century Florence House.

Kings Road is the first right hand turn off Bath Road and runs parallel with Boxhedge Road to the west and Queens Road to the east until all three form junctions with Park Road at the top of the hill. Kings Road, Boxhedge Road and Townsend provide the main access roads out of the village to the south and west, towards the modern suburbs of Ruscote and Bretch Hill. Queens Road and the remainder of Bath Road lie outside the scope of this perambulation.

Half way along Kings Road are the forty distinctive red-roofed council houses of 1913 described above.

From the final Kings Road council house, we retrace our steps to the Bath Road junction with Warwick Road. This part of Warwick Road was previously called Water Lane; Neithrop village originally straddled both sides of it. Most of the older buildings on the north side of Warwick Road have been demolished and replaced by modern developments, but several buildings of interest remain, including St. Paul's Church and the Methodist Mission Hall.

Walking west along the Warwick Road, past the modern Bennetts furniture store and the adjacent garage, we take the next left hand turn into Boxhedge Road, where we come to the heart of Neithrop Village. 'E.W.' in *Pathways of Banburyshire* (1900) did a similar but shorter perambulation and describes Boxhedge Road and its offshoots as having 'three turns like the crooks of one of a Manxman's legs'. He continues; 'from the point of the toe, a footway springs for Ruscott [*sic*] Hill and Horley. Fine chestnut trees mark the entrance of Boxhedge Road, and its high causeway flanks old houses with carved stone windows.'

The 'point of the toe' is likely to be the point where Townsend has its junction with Hilton Road and Wimborne Avenue. This would then identify the path as the one that followed the line of the present Hilton Road, and eventually led to the Golden Villa – which is still extant, half way up what is now known as Bretch Hill.



Fifteenth-century window at No. 2 Boxhedge Road

Perambulation 2: the buildings

1, 1a and 2, Boxhedge Road. These buildings, which are the first three of eight consecutive listed buildings running up the hill, are the first you come across in Boxhedge Road on the left as you climb the hill from the Warwick Road, and almost certainly have medieval origins. The scholarly and erudite Beesley identified them as such in 1841 and, whilst there is evidence of a range of changes in the stonework, much of this can be put down to patch repair work to the very porous Hornton stone.

There is no doubting that their Listed Building description cites them as seventeenth century cottages – but there is no reason to suggest that the early fifteenth century windows that Beesley refers to on these houses are not in situ. Beesley only mentions one window, but there are actually two medieval reveals. The extreme thickness of the walls of these houses assigns a considerable age to them. The rear of the properties have windows that are almost certainly seventeenth century; their other windows appear to be relatively modern.

Rose Cottage, 3 Boxhedge Road This is the building at the end of the same terrace and appears to be of early seventeenth century origin. It is also listed.

Bird's Farmhouse, 4 Boxhedge Road The modern Millwright Close lies between Rose Cottage and Birds Farmhouse, but until the late twentieth century this was previously the entrance to the farmyard itself. This seventeenth century farmhouse became one of the main buildings in the village in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Thomas Butler Gunn, in his *Diary* of 1863¹¹ refers to his time spent living there (which he did not enjoy) as a relative of the owners. The farmhouse is listed.

5 Boxhedge Road next door is a substantial seventeenth century town house. It is perhaps odd to modern eyes that a semi-detached property should have been attached to the slightly earlier Birds Farmhouse. The history of its owners or occupiers is not recorded, but one can only assume that relatives of the Boltons or the Gunns, who occupied the farmhouse, must have lived at number 5. This also is listed.

¹¹ Trinder, *Victorian Banburyshire: Diary of Thomas Butler Gunn, 1863*, p.217.



Part of No. 5 Boxhedge Road; '1920'; Chapel Cottage

'1920' Boxhedge Road and 18 Boxhedge Road ('Chapel Cottage'). Beyond another small lane (previously the site of another cottage, or of outbuildings) lies this pair of golden ironstone cottages. These houses were occupied as four dwellings in 1850. Both are listed.

Neithrop Methodist Chapel in Boxhedge Road, the next building and the last on the left side of Boxhedge Road in our perambulation, was built in 1887-8. The Wesleyan Methodists erected it in the poorer area of Boxhedge Road. Some old cottages at the entrance to what was then known as Bolton's Lane (now a rough narrow footway that serves the allotments behind the chapel) were cleared away to form the site. William Mewburn, the owner of Wykeham Park, laid the foundation stone. He was a prominent local Wesleyan, and the whole project followed a survey by Kendrick Kench, whose brief was to preach to those in Neithrop whom no-one cared for.



Neithrop Chapel and Chapel Cottage



Boxhedge Allotments and Neithrop Chapel



Neithrop Villa / 'Mereth'

Slightly farther up Boxhedge Road on the right hand side lie **Cedar Villa** and **Neithrop Villa** (the latter including '**Mereth**'), in fairly close proximity. Both of these are listed, and are separated only by a modern bungalow. These were built in the immediate vicinity of some particularly insanitary cottages; there were several infilled folds throughout the village where small fields or stackyards appear to have been randomly filled with ironstone cottages.

Neithrop Villa is an Early Victorian stuccoed villa built in the classical style. A brick extension to the right-hand side of the house provides the entrance to 'Mereth', which is formed from the left-hand third of the frontage of Neithrop Villa, plus a more modern extension.

Adjacent to Neithrop Villa, but slightly further up Boxhedge Road, and set back from the road is Cedar Villa, which was also built in the classical style. Cedar Villa is now converted into flats and it has lost some of its features which are likely to have been similar to those of Neithrop Villa. There is a representation of Cedar Villa as it was in the early twentieth century in Marjory Lester's book, *Memories of Banbury*. Marjory lived in Cedar Villa as a child in the 1920s, and mentions the house's location at the end of Boxhedge Lane, adjacent to the fields, but with poor quality and probably insanitary housing hard by.¹²

¹² Marjory Lester, *Memories of Banbury* (Marjory Lester, 1986), p.20.

Moving back down the road, we come to **11 and 12 Boxhedge Terrace** ('Robins Island', as the lane adjacent was once styled) and **12a-15 Boxhedge Road**. These are attractive terraced cottages now, of piecemeal styles, and are probably all nineteenth-century in origin, but certainly 15 is the location of some (probably 2) of the 'insanitary cottages' aforementioned. Number 14 was almost certainly a bakery, and 12a appears substantial enough to have had a middle class occupant. The social diversity of the area thus appears to have its roots deep in the nineteenth century. The retaining wall between numbers 14 and 12a Boxhedge Road contains an old field gate post, which presumably separated the village from the fields, or perhaps acted as the entrance gate to Cedar Villa and to Neithrop Villa.



Boxhedge Terrace in 2015

Boxhedge Terrace proper (nos 1-10) is a good example of a late Victorian workers' cottage terrace where some original features have been retained. It is set back on a bank, and is of the later nineteenth century, not appearing on the 1882 OS Map. We now turn off to the left as the hill gently dips, into Boxhedge Square, and then we turn left again into Townsend.

Gould's Row and Gould's Buildings (off Townsend). A stone wall behind Neithrop Villa and Cedar Villa, and accessed from Townsend (which is parallel with Boxhedge Road, to the west), now bounds an area containing some Housing Association garages and the car park for Yule Court, but this large and substantial wall was originally a structural – probably rear – wall for the notorious Gould's Row. It is made of brick and stone, and still features distinctive markings where chimneys and fireplaces have been removed. Richard Gould was a property developer whom one might see as being opportunist in erecting small groups of tightly packed dwellings in Neithrop which, when packed with families, rapidly became slums.

49 Union Street. This house is a good example of an early nineteenth-century Neithrop cottage. Built in ironstone in the local style, it has survived the slum clearance of the early twentieth century and retains much of its original style. It is tucked away behind the council-built bungalows and low rise flats that make up most of Union Street. It is almost certainly one or both of the 'Woodfields Cottages' identified on nineteenth-century maps.

The Duke of Wellington, Warwick Road. This former public house dates from the 1820s and its early twentieth century reconstructed frontage is a good example of the architectural style used by the brewers Hunt Edmunds. In *Rusher's Trade Directory 1837* it was placed in a category of licensed premises called 'Taverns, Inns and Public Houses' which was a higher order than the beer houses in Boxhedge Square. It served the villagers from the Boxhedge and Union Street area as well as attracting village carriers returning home after market day in Banbury – which may account for the large parking/waiting area in front of it.

By the earlier nineteenth century the rural poor saw the introduction of new farming methods and machinery as a conspiracy by the landlords to deprive them of work. In 1830 there was a spate of riots in Neithrop. A mob smashed the machines belonging to the farmer John Pain. According to George Herbert his fields were on the north side of Water Lane, close to where St Paul's church now stands.

When the yeomanry rode into Neithrop from Banbury they were repulsed with pieces of burning machinery. The riot was finally quelled by the 14th Light Horse, called in from Coventry. The alleged rioters gathered around the Duke of Wellington pub, then on the edge of Neithrop village. The Duke of Wellington is currently being converted into town houses.



The Duke of Wellington in 2015

St Paul's Church, Warwick Road. St Paul's Church was completed in 1851-2 to meet the 'wants of a large portion of the poor.' The Rev. William Wilson, the vicar of St Mary's Parish Church in Banbury, acquired a site known as Armitt's Garden on the north side of Warwick Road. St Paul's was built there as a 'chapel-of-ease' to St Mary's. St Mary's had adopted a system of rented pews and only wealthier families could afford them while poorer people had to stand throughout the church services. Miss Elizabeth Wyatt of Linden House in South Bar laid the foundation stone of St Paul's on 24 May 1852. The inscription records the reason for the church's construction and that all 423 seats were to be 'free and unappropriated for ever'.

The Church was designed by Benjamin Ferrey (1810-80) who was renowned for his work in the English Gothic Revival style. The chancel, nave and north aisle are in a simple Early English style. The low aisle has a four-bay arcade with round piers. In the chancel and west windows of the nave there is excellent stained glass from the 1850s in very brilliant colours. The original porch is pretty and unchanged.

There can be no doubt that St Paul's was intended as, and served as, the village's Church of England church, as the war memorial to the right of the front porch is dedicated to the men of Neithrop who gave their lives in the Great War 1914-1918. The memorial is cut from Portland stone, and is the work of A.W. Sturley. A dedication service was held on 24th October 1920. Inside the church there is a roll of honour mounted in a wooden frame. The names of soldiers who gave their lives in the war are listed with their street addresses and these include Boxhedge Square, Union Street and Paradise.

In an additional response to the level of deprivation among the Neithrop villagers during the nineteenth century, the Wesleyan Methodists co-operated with other denominations to build the **Mission Hall** (now a house) in **Warwick Road** in 1873, as evidenced on the datestone.

'Masters House', Warwick Road (north side). A few hundred yards beyond the Mission Hall, on the same side of the road, lies this splendid pair of gothic cottages, which it is believed was built as the residence of the Master of the amalgamated Workhouse, located next to it.

This ends our perambulation which, it is hoped, gives any interested parties a flavour of what still remains of what was once a distinct village just outside the town of Banbury.

* * * *

Aerial photographs by Steve Gold www.stevegold.co.uk. All other photographs are by the author.

This work is based upon a Conservation Area Appraisal presented to Cherwell District Council by my wife Jane and myself. Due to the parameters of that exercise, some noteworthy buildings, such as Neithrop House, are not given much attention in this article as they are already within the Conservation Area of Banbury (and, as in the case of Neithrop House, may also be listed). A consultation upon the proposed expansion of Banbury Conservation Area is believed to be imminent (June 2017).

* * * *

Steve Kilsby lives in Neithrop (Boxhedge Road), and is Banbury Town Councillor for Park Road, though he contends that it should really be called Neithrop Village! He is the Service Manager for the Royal Voluntary Service in Banbury. He worked in social housing for thirty years and is a past Chairman of Cherwell District Council's Housing Committee, as well as being a long time member of BHS.

The Sor Brook Saga

Nick Allen

Having read Robert Caldicott's splendid paper on Shenington Mill in *Cake and Cockhorse* (20.3, Summer 2016) it brought back memories of my battles with the Ordnance Survey over the correct location and naming of the Sor Brook – my sad story is told below.

Sometime in early 2002 I came into the possession of a copy of Wilfred Foreman's, definitive book *Oxfordshire Mills* (Phillimore, 1983). In it he records well in excess of two hundred watermills and just under seventy windmills in the county, many of them mentioned in Domesday Book in 1086, which suggests that they were of Saxon ancestry.

Of the watermill sites listed in Foreman's gazetteer there are remnants of one hundred and thirty-five still to be seen, albeit humps and bumps only at times, sometimes backed-up with shadows of the water-system that powered them. In his book there is an outline map of Oxfordshire showing where all these mills are sited on the rivers and brooks that have powered them. In North Oxfordshire there is a very high concentration of watermills, ten of which are sited along the Sor Brook.

It was Foreman's book that led me, in early 2002, to set about researching the history of these ten watermills. The Sor Brook flows through Adderbury forming much of the parish boundary to the west – then dropping due south, cutting south-east across the parish – dividing East and West Adderbury to eventually join the River Cherwell.

The 1953 Banbury One-inch to the Mile map, Sheet 145, shows a small brook rising just north of Alkerton (Foreman labels it on his map 'Sor Brook'); forming the boundary between the parishes of Shenington (once in Gloucestershire) and Alkerton. Progressing downstream the mills in order are: Alkerton, Balscote, Wroxton, Hazelford, Broughton Fulling Mill, Wykham, Upper Grove (Bodicote), Bodicote, and Lower Grove (geographically in Bloxham but the then owners got it transferred to the jurisdiction of Bodicote Parish Council). This OS map labels the brook south and east of Broughton Castle as the Sor Brook.

There is also a small brook which rises north and west of Hornton, then drops due south, flowing through North Newington; it is the feeder brook to the moat at Broughton Castle draining, via a sluice, into the Sor Brook. This is the brook shown on later OS maps as the Sor Brook. The *Victoria County History of Oxfordshire (VCH)* Volume 9, covering Bloxham Hundred, states that 'Horley and Hornton lies in the extreme north-west of the county on the Warwickshire border; and is largely bounded by streams which eventually flow into the Sor Brook, a tributary of the Cherwell.' (p.123)

The *VCH* very firmly states that the Sor Brook is a boundary marker to two parishes: 'Until Shenington was incorporated in Oxfordshire in 1845 the Sor Brook marked both Alkerton's western boundary and the Gloucestershire border.' (p.49)

In July 2002 I wrote to the Ordnance Survey office at Southampton quoting chapter and verse from the *VCH* pointing out that their maps post-1953 all seemed to have the small brook rising near Hornton shown, incorrectly, as the Sor Brook. After some time I had a reply saying that they were in agreement with my supposition and that they would correct future editions of Banbury maps as and when they were published.

Satisfied, I then forgot the matter until 2013 when I found myself in the map department of Waterstone's. Thinking that I would update my Banbury map, I looked at the latest edition of the Explorer Map 191. Lo-and-behold, the stream running north-south feeding Broughton Castle's moat was still labelled Sor Brook. So I launched off another letter reiterating what I had written before, pointing out that someone at the OS office at Southampton had already agreed that future maps showing the course of the Sor Brook would be corrected.

Their reply was properly twenty-first century: an email informing me that they would pass on my letter to their technical team! They then added, to be helpful I guess, what they called an 'interim response' telling me that there was an entry in the BBC web page *Domesday Reloaded* quoting a set of map references that made no sense at all as there was no reference to a map sheet. Then they told me that there was an entry in *Wikipedia* (again not much help). They quoted the Environment Agency (what on earth is a query of the historic naming of a river to do with them, I wondered?) mentioning another stream that I have never heard of. Finally suggesting that I look at something called *Geograph* plus a flurry of map references that didn't seem to have any

relevance to anything. They also informed me that they had emailed the Environment Agency saying hopefully they would reply in ten days' time.

All this was from a prestigious and once venerable government department that has, over the years, made a religion of accuracy. I do wonder what Royal Engineer Captain William Mudge of the Board of Ordnance, the fellow who was the first person to do a triangulation of North Oxfordshire in 1799, would have said if a member of his staff had given such an unprofessional reply to a serious query related to the correct name of a river.

In due course I receive another email telling me that the Environment Agency confirmed that the Sor Brook rises at Ratley north of Hornton. To quote the young lady from the OS, 'so the Ordnance Survey has the source of Sor Brook in the correct location'. She goes on to say that she has done some research 'and that it seems that the brook close to Alkerton is also known as Sor Brook' – we're getting there – but no, she says that the other brook coming from Hornton is also called the Sor Brook. She goes on to say that the OS is not the authority on names on our mapping and that 'we do rely on outside agencies for information'.

I then resorted to writing a proper letter to explain in detail the problem. I'm afraid that I did say, rather facetiously, that the OS saying that as the Environment Agency is a government department it must be correct was rather on a par with the late Jim Hacker in 'Yes Prime Minister' saying 'it's in the papers, so it must be true'.

This evinced a splendid reply that 'Due to the frustration you express in your email (it was a letter) it was passed on to me in the Customer Complaints Team'. Eventually they said that they had investigated the matter and that they couldn't provide any more information – Oh, and they 'trusted I would find their correspondence helpful'. Again they reiterated that I should talk to the Environment Agency about my query. I knew in my heart that it would be a waste of time but nevertheless I rewrote a letter laying out the whole sad story yet again to the EA. Later I had a phone call from a very charming and apologetic lady who said, as expected, that their remit is the maintenance of Britain's rivers and lakes and that they are not arbiters of historic information. To date five different OS Customer Service people have provided a variety of 'answers' to my query; if there was a professional historian or a trained researcher or even a cartographer among them I fear it didn't show!

The last paragraph in their penultimate email to me said ‘In respect of the application of proper names, the Ordnance Survey is the arbiter regarding the names appearing in its mapping; it is not an authority on place-names and its remit does not extend to reviewing the ‘accepted usage’ typically established and recorded when adding those names to its maps for the first time in the nineteenth century. For this reason the name Sor Brook will not be changed.’

Just for the hell of it I rang the owner of Brook Cottage at Alkerton. I’m sure that every Oxfordshire gardener worth his or her salt will have visited that delightful garden and had tea at Brook Cottage. A lady with a splendid county voice answered the phone; I explained my dilemma – then, sticking my neck out, I said ‘I presume that the little brook that flows through your garden is the Sor Brook?’ There was a pause and she said ‘Of course!’ Being a lady she didn’t quite do a Captain Mainwaring by qualifying her remark with ‘you stupid boy’. There the matter remains and age has, I’m sorry to say, withered the cartographic passion, so I’ve given up!

I have, however, done some research on the origins of the name Sor Brook. It would seem likely that it is an ancient Celtic name. Some place-name authorities consider that Sor is cognate with the continental river name Saar deriving from the Latin ‘ser’ to flow; there are three other river Soars, in Leicestershire, Warwickshire and Northamptonshire.

It is also possible that the name may have derived from the, local to Shenington, Sor family. It is equally possible that they took their name from the brook. The Sor family were under-tenants of the earls of Gloucester who were overlords of the Manor of Shenington in the twelfth century. Shenington was an enclave of Gloucestershire until 1844 when it was incorporated into Oxfordshire. The Gloucester manor at that time was parcelled-out into five small estates and the Sor family farmed the one next to the brook near Alkerton up until at least the middle of the fourteenth century.

This was a story that I thought was finished but then fairly recently I acquired an elderly volume of the Oxfordshire Record Society, *Saxon Oxfordshire* (Vol. 15, 1933), which I wish I had had when I was to-ing and fro-ing with the OS. It contains charters of land transactions concerning forty-one Oxfordshire towns and villages. Tadmarton is one of them. There are four charters surveyed by the editor, Dr G.B. Grundy, all dated AD 956, concerning land granted by King Edward to three named thegns with one to the Abbey at Abingdon; all have boundary marks described and some are identifiable.

Two of the Tadmarton charters (B964 and B966) are shown as bordering a *Woh Burna* ‘a crooked stream/brook’; an *Eald Ford* (‘old ford’) was mentioned. Grundy identified this old ford as Hazelford and the crooked stream as the Sor Brook. He does say in his notes to Survey B966 ‘Thus the *Woh Burna* of the second charter is now Sor Brook, which forms the [north-east boundary] of the parish and runs along the south edge of the grounds of Broughton Castle’. That is to say, this ford was in AD 956 already an old river crossing for the locals walking between Tadmarton and Broughton. Some time later a Saxon watermill was built on this site. It kept working for the best part of 900 years, until 1851. There is still much above-ground archaeology to be seen.

I visited the site on a hot summer afternoon in 2002. It is very isolated now and well off the beaten track. It was pure magic, so full of atmosphere one could almost hear the miller’s children playing in the mill pond. Tantalisingly, there is still a hazel tree just about where the ford would have been.

* * * *

See also ‘Hazelford – A deserted village’ by Margaret Taylor, (*C&CH*, 15.1, Autumn/Winter 2000, pp.2-4) who lived Broughton Grounds Farm, near the ruins of the old village of Hazelford. She mentions the mill-stream, without naming it! *Ed.*

Book Reviews

The Island that Disappeared: Old Providence and the Making of the Western World, by Tom Feiling, Explore Books, 2017. xvi, 382pp. £14.99. (www.exploretravelwriting.com; email [explore books@outlook.com](mailto:explorebooks@outlook.com))

The year 1976 was memorable to the Society for two reasons (*inter alia*): our AGM, held at Kirtlington Park, was on one of the hottest days of the century; and David Fiennes (unsurprisingly, a cousin of our President) gave a talk on ‘Banburians and Providence Island’. Many are familiar with the tower room at Broughton Castle, used by Lord Saye & Sele ostensibly for discussing affairs of the colonisation of the Providence Island Company, but in fact plotting against King Charles I. National history ignores the very real activities of the colonists.

David Fiennes, already historian of the family, had also researched records in the P.R.O. and elsewhere, and revealed the fascinating story of the islanders’ experiences and tribulations in the 1630s, the decade that saw an English puritan settlement on a tiny island off the coast of Nicaragua. This was brought to an end in 1641 when over-run by the Spaniards.

Unsurprisingly, with Lord Saye’s involvement, Banburians were part of a group persuaded to emigrate there, led by a former mayor of the borough, one Henry Halhed. Records of the Corporation listed members, elected for life – but Halhed’s name had disappeared by 1632, just after his year of mayoralty. This solved the mystery – he had emigrated. Eagerly, in collaboration with David, I researched the familiar Banbury records and followed up the archives he had used and others. The outcome two years later was our article ‘Providence and Henry Halhed’ (*C&CH.7.7*, Autumn 1978). This, I believe, was the first account of any detail to be published devoted solely to describing the short life of the colony; I consider it some of the most interesting research I’ve ever undertaken.

This lengthy prologue accounts for my continuing interest, which was later enhanced by the publication of *Providence Island 1630-1641: The Other Puritan Colony*, by the American Professor Karen Ordahl Kupperman, Cambridge University Press, 1993. To my delight I found she had known of our article and made good use of it, duly acknowledged. Her scope was much wider than ours, concentrated as we were on the Banbury connections.

More than twenty years on I was surprised and pleased to be contacted by Tom Feiling, who was also keenly interested in the island, not just its brief spell as an English puritan colony, but in what had happened in the following years and centuries. I was able to introduce him to the Reindeer Inn in Parsons Street, that would have been familiar to Halhed, and to our President and Martin Fiennes, who gave him a personal tour of Broughton Castle showing the room where the island was discussed. His enthusiasm was such that (already a Spanish speaker and familiar with Columbia) he was proposing to spend some months there, which in due course took place, and this book is the result.

Tom describes the island as having ‘disappeared’, and certainly after 1641 there were no official English contacts there. What has disappeared is any subsequent documentary history of the place. Later in the seventeenth century it continued to be used by buccaneers or privateers, especially the well-known Henry Morgan, and Tom has done his best with the scanty records of their activities. They are few, and for most of the eighteenth century non-existent. What records of the past two centuries there may have been, held on the island, were destroyed by fire in 1953 when the *intendente*’s house burnt down.

In the circumstances Tom has built bricks without straw to an impressive extent and deserves congratulation on what he has achieved, especially with interviews and friendship with numerous current Providencia islanders. David Fiennes had made a brief visit to the island in 1977, when he discovered that English was still after all those centuries the accepted language, despite belonging to Columbia. So it is today.

The island is described as beautiful and fertile, but the early colonists and their successors always seem to have struggled to grow enough to support themselves – even with slaves to do the work. Yet how the supporting soldiers and population managed to survive all those centuries is unexplained.

However, to our Society it is those years of the 1630s that matter, when it had an English population from around Banbury and Warwick. Their lives were hard and their puritan convictions clashed with the military efforts of governors and soldiers whose main interest was defence and the erection of forts to hold off the Spaniards. Spanish and other sources have become available since the 1970s and Tom has made use of these to build up the story. He also gives attention to the puritan politics of the sharer-holders of the Providence Island Company. Unfortunately for historians who expect to work from documentary sources, he reveals ‘I referred to few primary sources’, relying on Kupperman’s research. Thus his footnote references are slight and erratic. They include a couple to other *C&CH* articles by Nick Allen and Nelson Ford. However, several pages on Halhed’s Banbury background are lifted straight from her book, which had itself been based on our article, but the Banbury and other sources so carefully listed are now ignored. The references to the article that are given are only to a couple of quotations from the diary of the governor Captain Nathaniel Butler (in the British Library), of which there is already a full transcript, more suitable as a source than our brief extracts. I only mention these minor quibbles to demonstrate how easy it is to accept anything in print, without wondering how it has been interpreted.

The book will remain a wonderful account of an island whose history was thought to have ‘disappeared’ and, with Kupperman’s book, of the utilisation of those early records that still survive. Satisfaction remains that the late David Fiennes and myself were the first to describe our Banburian contribution to this early puritan colony, founded so few years after the Pilgrim Fathers landed in the continental New England: now part of the United States of America.

Jeremy Gibson

Protestant Paths. A Story of Dissent, by Pauline Ashridge. Paperback, vii +151 pp., illustrated, Kershaw Publishing, 2016, ISBN 978-0-9546632-5-4, £6.99. Available from bookshops, online ordering and from the publisher.

The opening chapter in this book, which covers the story of several dissenting families from north Oxfordshire, is arresting, outlining the issues involved in managing emigration from this country to South Africa's Cape colony. Having set the scene for the way in which the book will progress the author then goes back to trace the seventeenth-century history of the Somerton/Summerton family from Chipping Norton and Hook Norton who first emerged as reasonably well-to-do Quakers resisting the law, subsequently becoming Baptists, and the persecution of the Harris family, also quite prosperous Quakers, and their subsequent adoption of Wesleyan Methodism.

The impact of enclosure in the following century on those who were either just above or below the breadline in Hook Norton is discussed and the consequences in terms of the rise in Poor Law rates. The Somerton and Harris families, who had by this time intermarried, were amongst those who had come down in the world. Fifty or so years later the opportunities offered from emigration were enticing to those who scraped an agricultural labourer's living in rurally deprived areas such as north Oxfordshire and the Somertons favoured the Cape of Good Hope as a destination; three sons of James (a Methodist preacher) went, the last being John Summerton in 1876 with his common-law wife and three children. There the brothers enjoyed a lifestyle which would have been familiar to their earlier ancestors, one being a yeoman farmer, another supporting his family on the produce from his land and the third working as a skilled tradesman and builder.

The Cape was strongly Protestant, Methodism playing a large role in education, including the foundation of Heald Town Mission School, from which Nelson Mandela was later to benefit. The Summertons settled down, integrated and married African women, continuing to work for toleration and the right to education for all. As late as the 1950s the staff of the liberal-minded *Eastern Provincial Herald* included two Summerton descendants, proclaiming the anti-apartheid message in defiance of the law.

The author has produced a lively story of the families, intertwined with explanations about different faiths and the difficulties encountered in making a living in agriculture. Her detailed research is evident in the substantial bibliography and the number of original sources consulted; this may be a result of this publication being a reduced version of her longer book – *Children of Dissent* (2010) – but it is impressive. For greater clarity an index would have been helpful, particularly in tracking the stories of the main families, and some of the references require a bit more explanation – eg RG which is indeed the Class prefix for the decennial census records but should be entered under the umbrella of The National Archives, which is more widely recognised as TNA,

rather than NA. However, overall the reader will gain a great deal of information about parishes in North Oxfordshire and the families which prospered, changed faiths and ultimately decided that there was a better life elsewhere.

Helen Forde

Northamptonshire National Schools, 1812-1854, by Rosemary Dunhill. H'back, x, 438pp. Northamptonshire Record Society (Wootton Hall Park, Northampton NN4 8BQ), vol.50, 2017. ISBN 978-0-901275-75-2. Free to members.

Rosemary Dunhill was Deputy Chief Archivist at Northamptonshire Record Office from 1976 to 1982 before moving on to Hampshire, so this book, like many of our own best publications, has been decades in preparation. The wait has been well worthwhile. It is based on the records of the Northamptonshire branch of the National Society, closely affiliated to the Church of England. A lengthy introduction describes the development of primary school education and its administration. Of particular interest are the individual schools. Details are given of around 120 schools throughout the county, often over several pages. At least eleven of these are in the southern tip of the county, near Banbury

Aynho. Long established, supported by the Cartwright family. The frontispiece shows a charming watercolour of the interior of the National School, by Maria Elisabeth Cartwright in 1846.

Brackley. Early years from 1817 well documented.

Byfield. A school there in 1818, rebuilt in 1842, 36 boys and 40 girls in 1846/7.

Chipping Warden. A school from the 1830s. Named list of scholars (no date).

Croughton. Mainly a Sunday School, but some attended at Aynho.

Culworth. School dating from 1789. In 1818 30 to 40 children.

Eydon. In 1833 a school with 28 boys attending. Notes at NRO by S.J. Tyrrell.

King's Sutton. Erratic existence. Support from the Willes family at Astrop.

Middleton Cheney. Established from 1815. Considerable information.

Moreton Pinkney. School from 1822. Clergy, very active. Reminiscences of Thomas Mozley (see *C&CH* 19.3, 2013, 'A very rough place', pp.97-109).

Syresham. In 1833 a school for 36 boys. Troubled relations with John Dandridge, rector, over accommodation.

It is impossible to give any details of the progress of the schools in question, as minutes, correspondence, survive erratically. Still, for anyone interested in any of these villages, the book is well worth consulting. It reveals a wide range of the administrative records available and the constant problems occurring. What is obvious is the vast amount of research undertaken over the years, much of it into records unlikely to be known to amateur local historians.

Jeremy Gibson

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. Over one hundred and fifty issues and five hundred articles have been published. All but the most recent volumes 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 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).

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

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

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

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

Part 2. *Mid-Victorian Squarson, 1849-1869* (vol. 32).

Victorian Banburyshire: Three Memoirs, ed. Barrie Trinder (vol. 33).

Rusher's 'Banbury Trades and Occupations Directory' 1832-1906

(Alphabetical Digest and DVD facsimile) (vol. 34).

Current prices and availability of other back volumes, and of *Cake and Cockhorse*, from the Society, c/o Banbury Museum.

In preparation:

Junctions at Banbury: a town and its railways since 1850, Barrie Trinder.

Georgian Banbury before 1800: Banbury Vestry Book, 1708-1797 and other records.

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 or location.

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.



Autumn 2017 / Winter 2018 Programme

Meetings are at Banbury Museum at 7.30pm, Entrance from Spiceball Park Road

Thursday 14th September 2017

Compton Verney: Past, Present and Future

Professor Steven Parissien

Thursday 12th October 2017

Westgate Oxford: Initial results from Oxford's largest excavation – a prehistoric floodplain, a medieval friary, civil war defences and Victorian terraces.

Ben Ford

Thursday 9th November 2017

The Edgehill Light Railway

Andrew Baxter

Thursday 14th December 2017

Wychwood Forest and Cornbury: Recent work by the Victoria County History

Dr Simon Townley

Thursday 11th January 2018

Nation and Region: Banburyshire in the *Dictionary of National Biography*

Dr Mark Curthoys

Thursday 8th February 2018

“Old Obadiah, sing Ave Maria: the strange case of Obadiah Walker, Master of University College, Oxford, 1676-1689

Dr Robin Darwell-Smith

Thursday 8th March 2018

What can economic historians learn from medieval farmers?

Dr Ros Faith

Thursday 12th April 2018

Workshop session