

# CAKE & COCKHORSE

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BANBURY HISTORICAL SOCIETY



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# BANBURY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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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 annually. 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 thirty-six 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](http://www.ofhs.org.uk)

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

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

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

***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).

***Junctions at Banbury: a town and its railways since 1850***, Barrie Trinder (vol. 35).

***Banbury's People in the 18th Century: Accounts of the Overseers of the Poor, 1708-1797 and other records***, Jeremy Gibson (vol. 36).

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

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 significant location.

The annual subscription (since 2017) is £15.00 for one member, £20 for two members living at the same address, includes any records volumes published. Overseas membership, £20.00.

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.

The Banbury History Society is happy to record its gratitude to  
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BANBURY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

# **BANBURY HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

Charity No. 260581  
www.banburyhistoricalsociety.org

## **President**

The Lord Saye and Sele

## **Vice-President**

Dr. Barrie Trinder

## **Chair**

Helen Forde: helenforde1@gmail.com

## **Secretary**

Simon Townsend  
Banbury Museum  
Spiceball Park Road,  
Banbury OX16 2PQ  
01295 236162  
simon.townsend@banburymuseum.org

## **Treasurer**

Geoff Griffiths  
39 Waller Drive  
Banbury  
OX16 9NS  
01295 263944  
gs@gfgriffiths.plus.com

## **Membership Secretary**

Margaret Little  
c/o Banbury Museum  
bemelittle@btinternet.com

## **Committee Members**

Brian Goodey  
Deborah Hayter  
Clare Jakeman  
Rosemary Leadbetter  
Ian West  
Pamela Wilson

## ***Cake and Cockhorse Editorial Committee***

**Editor:** Chris Day, 37 Gaveston Gardens, Deddington OX15 0NX dotandcom@gmail.com

**Reviews Editor:** Helen Forde helenforde1@gmail.com

Deborah Hayter, Barrie Trinder

## Notes for Contributors

We invite contributions on all aspects of the history and archaeology of Banbury and its surrounding region. Detailed contributors' guidelines are available from the Editor.

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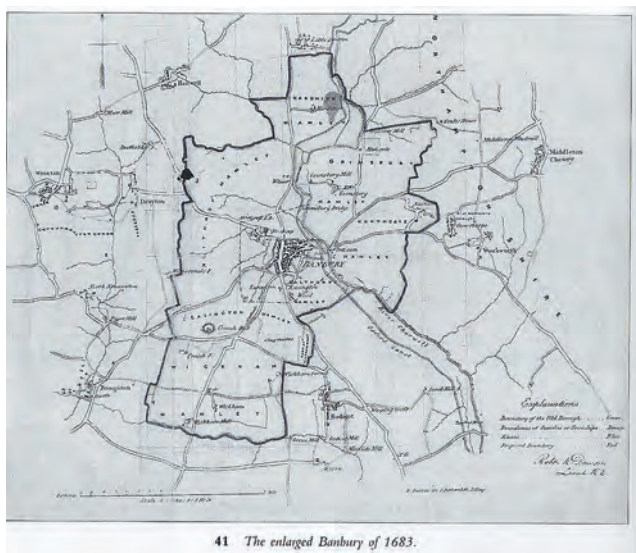
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# THE OPEN FIELDS OF NEITHROP, BANBURY, IN THE 17<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY

*Deborah Hayter*

On the 24 April 1675 Edward Vivers, a woollen draper of Banbury, paid £1000 to William Barber of Adderbury, Esquire, for some property and land in Banbury. The legal document describes what was being transferred: two messuages or tenements, which had been all one, known as the Three Swans, together with the adjoining tenement, with two ‘little closes of land’.<sup>1</sup> There was farmland that went with these, amounting to two and half ‘yardlands’ in the open fields of Neithrop, containing ‘Greensword Ground’ (grass), arable (plough), meadow (grass cut for hay), and pasture (grazing). This land lay in 110 separate pieces, strips scattered right round the system. There were also ‘two long meadows’ in the parish of Banbury, about 16 acres, and two closes called ‘Dry Closes’, containing arable and grass land. These plots are placed in ‘the parish of Banbury’ rather than in the fields of Neithrop, so it seems they are enclosed and outside the open field system. The meadows are likely to be near the river Cherwell: meadow was a technical term, meaning grass that was grown and cut for hay.



*Figure 1. E.R.C. Brinkworth, Old Banbury (BHS 1958, 3rd impression 1973), p. 0 (opposite p.1).*

<sup>1</sup> The Counterpart of Mr Barber’s Release to Mr Vivers dated 24 April 1675 and the accompanying terrier were purchased at a sale of documents by Mullock Auctions of Ludlow by our member Jonathan Mann, and are reproduced with his permission. The documents were transcribed in 2014 by Dr Barrie Trinder, our vice-president. The transaction is recorded on three pieces of parchment, the main indenture measuring 68x71cm with the final section on a separate piece, 28x71cm. The schedule (or terrier) is on another sheet, 33x73cm. Transcription of capitals follows the original as far as possible but some letters are ambiguous. The original has not been followed where some letters in abbreviated names are put in superscript. Spelling is as in the original, but some of the punctuation has been regularised in order to clarify meanings.



Very importantly, the yardland holdings in the open fields came ‘with appurtenances’, which generally meant a share in the commonly-held hay meadows and rights to graze animals upon any common pasture. Here the document spells out ‘commons and common of pasture for beasts (cows), sheep and horses and all other commonable cattle, at all commonable times in all and every the common fields and commonable places of and within Neithrop’. The farmers collectively decided every year or so what the ‘stint’ of animals was: there would be so many cattle, horses and sheep per yardland, so that each farmer could only keep animals on the common grazing, mostly the fallow field, in proportion to the amount of arable he was farming. The conveyance states that the number of commonable animals would be ‘after the rate stint and propocon there or within Three years now last past used’.



*Figure 2. Nos 85-7 High Street. Reproduced in B. Little, Banbury, A History (2003), p.40.*

Edward Vivers, a member of one of the substantial families in the town, was unlikely to farm his own land: he was increasing his property portfolio and his land would be let. (He built the handsome house in the High Street, nos 85 - 87, dated 1650, now Jenny’s Café.) Many of the landholders in the fields of Neithrop at this time held their land freehold, and all the hundreds of strips in the open fields were ploughed, sowed and harvested by their separate owners or tenants, but after the harvest, or when the field lay fallow, recovering its fertility, the flocks and herds of all those who had a stake in the arable would graze over everyone’s strips. At that stage the whole became ‘commonable’. This sort of farming could only work if the farmers were in agreement as to what was to be grown where and when, and how many animals everyone could keep: there appear to be no documents recording these communal decisions for Banbury



or Neithrop farmers, but there are many sets of 'bye-laws' from other places detailing how the system was managed.<sup>2</sup>

With the whole divided into four fields, they could have been working a four-course rotation with 1) autumn-sown wheat or maslin, (a mixture of wheat with other grains); 2) spring-sown cereals; 3) peas and beans; and 4) lying fallow, or possibly a double two-course rotation which would provide more grazing.

The acreage of the yardlands is not given but everyone would have known roughly what this amounted to: land was often measured out with a local 'customary' rod, pole or perch at this time (literally, a long measuring stick or 'yard') so an acre in Banbury might not be the same as an acre in Deddington, for instance. Two and a half yardlands was probably somewhere between 50 and 75 (modern) acres. It seems likely that when open-field systems were first laid out (probably at some stage between 750 and 1200) the land was equitably divided into holdings of approximately 25 acres, consisting of one strip out of each group of strips (called furlongs) right round the system.<sup>3</sup> However as time went on some people accrued land and others lost it, or divided it between daughters: a document of 1575 shows that there were seventeen tenants at that time, almost all with holdings of between two and a half and four yardlands.<sup>4</sup> By the late seventeenth century some farmers had done well and some had not, so the size of holdings varied from just a few strips to hundreds of acres, and by the time of enclosure at 1760 there were thirty tenants, with holdings ranging from  $\frac{1}{4}$  yardland to six yardlands.

In many places the church rates and the poor rate, which were in effect a local tax on land, were levied as so much per yardland, and this continued, with land being measured, inherited, bought and sold as so many yardlands until it was enclosed by Parliamentary Act in the late eighteenth century.

Legal language was even more repetitive and tedious in 1675 than it is now, so the rest of this very long document need not concern us, but attached to it is something much more interesting. Today a conveyance of property would contain an extract from the Ordnance Survey map with the house or garden or land outlined or coloured, to make quite clear what was being transferred. But before the Ordnance Survey most places had not been mapped, so the property had to be delineated in words, creating a verbal map. These were often called 'Terriers': nothing to do with dogs, but everything to do with *terra*, Latin for land. The terrier describing Edward Vivers' new acquisition travels mentally round the system from field to field describing and placing each strip. There were four great fields in the 1,398 acres of Neithrop's field system and within each field there were many 'furlongs', each of these being a group of strips all oriented in the same direction, and each having a name.<sup>5</sup> Not for nothing are these called 'open' fields, as within each field of several hundred acres the land would lie open and unhedged, the furlongs divided from each other by a few ditches and by the 'headlands', which were the last strips in each furlong where it met the next one.

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2 The only open-field system still in operation in England, in Laxton, Notts, is still managed by the Jury of the farmers meeting each year in the Manor Court, held in the local pub as it has been for centuries.

3 For more information about the open fields, see D. Hall, *The Open Fields of England*, OUP, (2014).

4 *Banbury, a History*, an abstract from *Victoria County History, Oxon.*, Vol. X, ed. A. Crossley (1984), p. 53.

5 The acreage of Neithrop is from the *VCH Oxon. Banbury Abstract*, derived from the Banbury tithe award, p. 49.



*Figure 3. This prospect of Banbury, dated 1724, shows the ridge and furrow of the open fields alongside the Oxford road, with the enclosed fields of Hardwick to the north: S. Townsend & J. Gibson, Banbury Past Through Artists' Eyes, BHS Record Ser. 30 (2007), p. 16.*



*Figure 4. A classic ridge and furrow landscape: Mursley (Bucks.): © Crown copyright. Historic England Archive ref: no. 4209/26.*





*Figure 5. Ridge and furrow at Upper Astrop (Northants): photo, Deborah Hayter.*

All this land would have been ridged up by the plough for drainage and would have lain in ridge and furrow, even where some of the furlongs had been turned over to grass. Farmers all over the Midlands had been reducing their acreage of arable and increasing their grazing throughout the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries, and it is very common by the late 17<sup>th</sup> century to find that a good deal of arable has been turned into ‘leys’, a term still used by farmers to describe land laid down to grass. The terrier describes the arable strips in the four fields first: Long Hefordside arable; Choakewell side arable; Forkham side arable; Blinde Pitts side arable; then he goes back to list the ‘Greensword ground’ in Choakewell side, Forkhamside and Blinde Pits side. Long Hefordside appears not to have any grass ley: perhaps it contained the best soil for growing crops.

The terrier is indented: it was written out twice on the same sheet of parchment and then the two copies were cut apart with a wavy line, each party keeping one half. This made it difficult to forge as only the originals would match.

(Below the names of the furlongs have been underlined for clarity and meanings explained in footnotes.)

The heading of the terrier begins:

*The Schedule or Terrier indented menconing & expressing the particular parcels and peeces of Arable, Meadowe and Pasture Ground Contayning by Estimacon & sett out for Two yard Lands and one halfe of a yard Land (bee the same more or lesse) meant and intended by the Indenture whereof this is Annexed.....that is to say:*

***In Long Hefordside Arrable Lands*** (vizt)

*One Land in Causeway Furlong, John Cleaver South, Shooting East & West.<sup>6</sup>*

*one more Land in Causeway Furlong, John Richards South, Shooting East & West.*

*one Acre in Causeway Furlong, Thomas Croke North, Shooting East & West.<sup>7</sup>*

*One Acre in Heford, hortons Land East, shooting East and West.*

*one Land in Long heford, John Webster East shooting north & south.*

*One Butt in over Bilsmore, John Youicke East shooting North & South.<sup>8</sup>*

*One Land in over Bilsmore, Elizabeth Collins East, James Southam West shooting North & South.*

*One Land in over hanging, James Southam south, shooting East and West.*

*One Yard in Lower hanging, Wheatley's land South shooting East & West.<sup>9</sup>*

*One land in Pillwell, John Youicke South, shooting East & West.<sup>10</sup>*

*One Land in Greate Blackwell, Samuel Bower South, Elizabeth Collins North, shooting East & West.*

*one Land in Little Blackwell, Elizabeth Collins North, shooting East & West.*

*one Land in Smith mead, William Gunn East, shooting North & South.*

*one yard in Smith mead, Glibe West, William Thorpe East, shooting North and South.*

*one ffor shooter yard in March ffurlong, John Webster East, John Austin West, Shooting North & South.<sup>11</sup>*

*One Land in March ffurlong, John Youicke East shooting North & South.*

*One Land shooting into the Little March, William Thorpe North, shooting East & West.*

*one Land shooting into the Bowling Leys, John Long East, Samuel Thorpe West, shooting North & south.*

*one ffour shooter Land att hanwell, Samuel Thorpe West, shooting North & South.<sup>12</sup>*

***In Choakewell side, Arrable Lands*** (vizt):

*one Land in the Middle Furlong upon Bucknell, James Southam West, shooting North & South.*

*One Land in horsepoole Furlong, Wheatley's Land West, shooting North & South.*

*One Land behind Bucknill, William Gunn West, shooting North and South.*

*One Land shooting into hanwell Way, Richard Colcutt West, shooting North and South.*

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6 Each strip is placed next to a neighbour or between neighbours; 'shooting East and West' gives the orientation of the whole furlong.

7 It is hard to tell why some strips are named as 'land' and others as 'acre' or 'yard'. (In some places they are called 'selions' or 'ridges' or a variety of other local names). The ridges would probably all be the same width throughout one system, but would be of varying lengths, according to the topography; those who farmed them appeared to be content to refer to them as though they were all the same area. An 'acre' here is unlikely to be a statutory acre.

8 A 'butt' would imply a strip shorter than the others. 'The butts' generally refers to a short furlong rather than anything to do with archery.

9 'over' and 'lower': this means Upper and Lower.

10 'Pillwell' and 'Blackwell' would originally have referred to springs rather than a built well (from the OE *wella*, a spring).

11 A 'foreshuter' was possibly one that was longer than the others.

12 This might provide a topographical clue as to where exactly this was: it is probably against the boundary with Hanwell's fields.

one ffour shooter shooting into Hanwell way, William Gunn west, shooting North & South.<sup>13</sup>  
 one Land in the middle Furlong upon Bucknell, John Richards East, shooting North & South.  
 one yard upon Lamcutt hill, John Youicke East shooting North & South.  
 one Land in March Furlong next the highway, William Gunn East, shooting North and South.<sup>14</sup>  
 one hadland in Nether Tutnell, John Richards West, shooting North & South.<sup>15</sup>  
 one Land in over Tutnell, Richard Colcutt West, shooting North and South.  
 one Land in middle Tutnell, Paul Nix west, John Richard west, shooting North & South.  
 one Land in dane Furlong, Paul Nix East & shooting North & South.  
 one Land & yerd lying together shooting into pinhill way, hortons Land south, shooting East & west.  
 one yerd in Bryer Furlong, William Thorpe West, John Youicke East, shooting North & South.  
 one Land in poppyland, Richard Colcutt west, John Long East, shooting North & South.  
 one Land in outlong, John Long North, James Southam South, shooting East and West.  
 one More Land in outlong, Widdow Graunt North, Thomas Wells south, shooting East & West.  
 one other Land in outlong, Thomas Wells south, shooting East and West.  
 one Land in Endebread, William Gunn South, Elizabeth Collins North, shooting East & West.  
 one hadyard in Bryer Furlong, Samuel Thorpe West, shooting north & south.<sup>16</sup>  
 one Land upon Chrismas wellhill, horley Quarter south, shooting East & West.  
 one other Land upon Chrismas Wellhill, Widdow Ricketts North, shooting East and West.

***In Forkham side, Arable Lands*** (vizt):

one Land shooting into Tallowes Lake, Elizabeth Collins East, shooting North & South.<sup>17</sup>  
 one Land in More Furlong, Elizabeth Collins East, shooting north & south.  
 one Land in Barly Furlong, John Webster North, shooting East & West.  
 One Butt shooting over Drayton highway, John Cleaver North, shooting East & West.  
 one Land upon Ruscott hill, John Long East, shooting North & South.<sup>18</sup>  
 one Butt shooting into Forham, John Long East, shooting North & South.  
 one Land shooting into Drayton Corner, Richard Colcutt West, shooting North & South.  
 one ffourshooter in sun Furlong, James Southam East, shooting North and South.  
 one Land in Paxon's Corner, Richard Colcutt East, shooting North & south.  
 one land in Forkham, John Cleaver west, shooting North & South.  
 one Land in six Acres, John Long south, shooting East and west.  
 one Land in Thonspitts, James Southam West, shooting North and South.  
 one hadland hadeing sun Furlong, William Gunn south, shooting East & West.<sup>19</sup>  
 One Land in hawkslowe, John Richards North, shooting East and West.

(Second column of document begins here)

One yerd in Hawkslowe, John Lond North, shooting West & East.  
 one Land in Blizard, shooting into James Southam's hadland, Elizabeth Graunt south, shooting East & West.  
 one Butt in poppyland, John Austin West, shooting North & South.  
 one hadland at paumer's Green next the Comon Baulke, shooting East & West.<sup>20</sup>

13 This would be meeting the road to Hanwell at right angles.

14 Another topographical clue: this must be one of the main roads either to Warwick or to Southam.

15 A 'hadland' was the headland, the last strip in one furlong against the next one.

16 A 'hadyard' was the headland in a furlong where the strips are referred to as yards.

17 This is unlikely to be what we would call a lake: it would be a pond or an area of very wet ground.

18 'Drayton highway' and 'Ruscott hill' give us topographical clues.

19 'Hadeing' = 'heading'.

20 A 'balk' (often a 'balk') was a strip of grass between two arable lands, generally for access.

one Land in Charwell streame, horley Quarter East, shooting North & South.<sup>21</sup>  
one other Land in Charwell streame, John Webster East, shooting North & South.  
one more Land in Charwell streame, John Long East, shooting North & South.  
one Land in porteway, James Southam East, shooting North & South.

**Arable Lands in Blinde Pitts side** (vizt):

one Land in Arlidge Furlong, John Webster north, shooting East & West.  
One other land in Arlidge Furlong, Glibe south, shooting East & West.<sup>22</sup>  
one Butt att old Gallowes, William Thorpe West, John youick east, shooting North & South.<sup>23</sup>  
one Land in Oatehill, Lowermost, shooting North & South.<sup>24</sup>  
one other Land in oatehill, William Gunn West, shooting North & South.  
one more Land in oatehill, Richard Colcutt West, shooting North & South.  
one Land in Roustimeere, Samuel Thorpe South, shooting East & West.<sup>25</sup>  
one Butt under Leeden, lowermost, shooting North & South.  
one yerd under William Thorpe's the hadyerd south, shooting East & West.  
one Land under Crouch, horton's Land East, shooting North & South.<sup>26</sup>  
one Land shooting down the hill towards Crouch, James Southam West, shooting north & south.  
one Butt in Long Furlong, John Long East, Richd Gunn West.  
one land in Long Furlong, Edwd Thorpe west, shooting North & south.  
one ffourshooter in Long Furlong, John Long east, shooting North & South.  
one whole ridg'd Acre in Bandyland, Widdow Ricketts west, shooting north & south.<sup>27</sup>  
one yerd in Bandiland, Richard Colcutt west, shooting North & South & into Wm Thorpe' hadyerd.  
one Butt in paumer's Green, Willm Thorpe south, shooting East & West.  
one Butt in Stony snare, John Richards East, shooting North & South.  
one Land in sunm Furlong, the Lowermost, shooting North & south.  
one hadland under Bandiland, Samuel Thorpe North, shooting East & West.  
one Butt in Stony snare, Richd Colcutt West, shooting North & South.  
one Land shooting into the Quarter Close Leys, Wheatley's land south, shooting East & West.<sup>28</sup>  
one Butt in the sands, Samuell Thorpe south, shooting East & West.

**In Choakewellside Greenesword Ground** (Vizt):

half the Ley upon Choakwell Leys, divided down the Ridge, paul Nix East, John Webster west, shooting North & South.<sup>29</sup>  
One Ley uppon dry Leys, Glibe East, shooting North & South.  
One more Ley uppon dry Leys, Jno Richards East, shooting North & South.  
one yerd uppon dry Leys, Willm Gunn East, shooting North and South.

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21 Note spelling of the River Charwell; presumably these weren't actually in the river but in the furlong next to it and named for it.

22 This land in Arlidge Furlong is placed next to the Parson's glebe land.

23 Another topographical clue: this short piece is placed next to the old gallowes, presumably at a crossroads.

24 This strip doesn't need neighbours to place it, as it is the lowest one in the furlong.

25 Field names with 'meer', 'mear' or 'mere' could either mean 'boundary land', from OE (*ge*)*maere*, or land by or with a pool or marsh, from OE *mere*.

26 This furlong is named from its proximity to Crouch Hill.

27 All the strips would have been ridged, as this practice was ubiquitous in this area, so the stress on the 'whole ridg'd Acre' presumably means that this was a bigger piece than usual: possibly the strips/ridges were usually approximately half an acre.

28 This piece is heading towards a close of pasture (Leys).

29 This implies that the ridge is divided along its length.



***In Forkhamside Greenesword Ground (vizt):***

*one yerd in Tallowes Lake, Willm Thorpe west, shooting north & south.*

*One Ley att Coppermore, James Southam west, shooting North & south.*

*The Comonplott in Coppermore, shooting into Lamcutt hill, shooting east & west.*

*The picked Comonplott in Coppermore, John youick west, shooting north & south.<sup>30</sup>*

*one Ley at newditch Leys, shooting East & west.*

*one Ley att Keyley's spoute, Glibe west, shooting north & south.*

*half the Comon plot in fforkham.*

***In Blind Pitts-side Greenesword Ground (vizt):***

*one yard shooting into the pitts, Jno Cleaver west, shooting north & south.<sup>31</sup>*

*one yerd att Colcutt's Towne's end, Richd Colcutt west, shooting north & south.*

*one other yerd att Colcutt's Towne's end, Jno Richds west, shooting North & South.*

*one Ley att Broughtons Leys, Glibe west, shooting north & south.*

*one picked Ley att Broughtons Leys, Jno Youick East, shooting North & South.*

*one Ley att hopings Leys, Willm Thorpe south, Edward Thorpe North, shooting East & West.*

*one yard att the upper end of Blind pitts, Richd Gunn North, shooting East & west.*

*the sidelong att the upp end of Blindpitts, Thomas Croke north, shooting East & west.*

*one yerd shooting into the hopings Leys, James Southam East, willm Thorpe west, shooting north & south.*



Figure 6. Medieval Banbury.

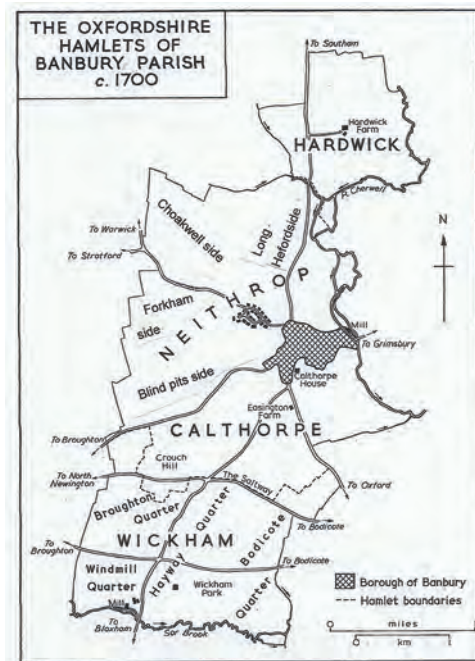


Figure 7. Banbury in the 18th cent.

30 'picked' or sometimes 'pike' means a triangular piece of land.

31 References to 'pitts' in this area often imply the diggings out of which building stone had been taken. This left an area full of ups and downs, only suitable for rough grazing.

*one Butt att the lower end of March Furlong, Jno Austin east, shooting north & south.  
half the poole Ley slitt down the middle, Richard Colcutt East, shooting north & south.  
half the Ley att paumers Green, William Gunn South, shooting East & west.  
one Ley in the further Burrowes Leys, Richard Gunn East, shooting north and south.*

There may in the very distant past have been one whole set of Banbury fields, as no early settlement such as Banbury would have grown up without an economic and agricultural base to support it, but Banbury's land was 'anciently divided', as the VCH has it, into three or possibly four separate field systems, centred on the hamlets of the town. Hardwick was to the north, Wickham to the south, both in the parish of Banbury; then there was Neithrop, to the north and west, and Calthorpe immediately to the south of the town. There are various clues which suggest that originally all these fields were one: in a deed of 1653 a 'precisely located holding' was said to lie in the fields of Wickham, Neithrop and Calthorpe, or 'in some or one of them'.<sup>32</sup> At various times claims were made by tenants from one hamlet to common rights in the fields of one of the others, and on enclosure in 1760 the two main proprietors in Calthorpe were given allotments of land in Neithrop in lieu of rights of common there.<sup>33</sup> In a rental of c.1225 (in the collection of the Queen's College, Oxford) 39 yardlands, 14 yardlands and 8 ½ yardlands, totalling 61 ½, are all said to lie 'in the fields of Banbury', but the establishment of a market place in the twelfth century would already have reduced the area of the Bishop of Lincoln's demesne, and the borough tenements had already been laid out before 1279.<sup>34</sup> It is likely that there was further major reorganization when the Bishop extended the town in the mid 13<sup>th</sup> century with plots south of the High Street along Newland, now Broad Street, leading to Newland Road. A further rental of the Bishop's tenants in 1441 shows 43 ½ yardlands in Neithrop and 16 ½ in Calthorpe, totalling 60; but in 1575 and also in the enclosure award of 1760 60 ¼ yardlands are described in Neithrop only. The fields of Calthorpe had presumably been swallowed up by the growing town, and possibly the farming tenants had been given holdings in the Neithrop fields back in the 13<sup>th</sup> century.

The open fields of Hardwick had been turned into a single enclosed farm by William Cope around 1500, not all at once, and the fields of Wickham were enclosed by the Chamberlayne family sometime between 1688 and 1746: this was possible because the Copes and the Chamberlaynes owned all, or almost all of the holdings there. The fields of Neithrop continued to be farmed in open field until they were enclosed by Parliamentary Act in 1760. Enclosure swept away the medieval landscape and the furlongs with their ridge and furrow, and replaced it with a series of farms each with its allotment of land: a more organised fieldscape, laid out on a map by a surveyor's ruler. The new field boundaries ignored the old ridge and furrow. Sometimes the old furlong names were carried through into the post-enclosure fields but many of them disappeared. Edward Vivers' terrier gives us information about a vanished medieval landscape.

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<sup>32</sup> *VCH Oxon.*, Abstract from Vol. X, p. 49.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 49 - 50 & 54.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 18 - 20 & 50. The 'demesne' was the lord's own home farm.

# THE CHINNERS OF CHACOMBE

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*George Hughes*

My first encounter with the Chinners of Chacombe was when my 5x great-grandfather Richard Wilkins (1743-1802), mason, of Middleton Cheney married Elizabeth Chinner (1747-1830) on 17 November 1769 at St Peter & Paul's church, Chacombe.<sup>1</sup> Elizabeth was the 2<sup>nd</sup> eldest daughter of Charles Chinner (1715-1763), victualler of Chacombe and his wife Ann Shepherd (1718-1762) of Cold Higham, a small village on the A5 between Towcester and Weedon Bec, Northants. This stimulated my interest in the family whose roots in Chacombe went back a further two generations to Charles Chinner (1643-1721) of Adderbury, who married Joan Bennett (1638-1718) of Chacombe *c.*1664 and took up residence in the village. My story centres on Charles' youngest son Henry Chinner (1682-1735) and his wife Mary Jeffs (1682-1747) of Middleton Cheney who married on 23 February 1707 at St Peter & Paul's Church, Chacombe<sup>2</sup> and their nine children, seven surviving to adulthood – each one interesting in their own way, but with several of them making their mark on the Georgian era, not just in Chacombe and Banburyshire but much further afield.

Three of Henry's children, William, Elizabeth, and Amos, through their spouses and connections, and in particular Amos' children, were of historical significance, and this is their untold story. We begin with the eldest son William, who was a yeoman in Chacombe, followed by young Amos who was also expected to be a yeoman farmer, but unexpectedly took a totally different route through life, moving from sleepy Chacombe to bustling London. Finally, we will look at the life of the eldest daughter Elizabeth, who married a very interesting character with close ties to the social and economic history of Banbury.

## William Chinner (1708-1763)

William married Mary Golborn (1708-1770), spinster of Westrop, on 15 December 1743 at Ss Peter & Paul Church, Chacombe<sup>3</sup> - Westrop being a hamlet just outside Marston St Lawrence (Northants.). Mary's elder sister Jane (1704-1748) married James Meredith (*c.*1705-1786), a Welsh gentleman from Powys.<sup>4</sup>

James' cousin Hugh Meredith (1697-1749), began his working life as a farmer in Pennsylvania, USA, and later decided to take an apprenticeship to learn the art of printing.<sup>5</sup> Around 1728 he formed a short-lived partnership with Benjamin Franklin (a Founding Father of the United States of America). Hugh's father Simon provided half of the money needed for the venture and together they bought *Keimer's Universal Instructor* along with the *Pennsylvania Gazette* in 1729.

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1 Ancestry: parish records of St Peter & St Paul's church, Chacombe.

2 Ibid.

3 Ibid.

4 Report from Richard Meredith USA and family tree.

5 Wikipedia entry for Hugh Meredith (1697-1749).

However, by the next year, Franklin bought out Meredith's interest and by May 1732 he had acquired complete ownership of the *Gazette*<sup>6</sup>.

The first record found for James Meredith is for renting a property in Parliament Stairs in 1723, found in the Westminster Rate books<sup>7</sup> (The rate books were an assessment of tax that was owed and are an excellent census substitute).

Parliament Stairs - James Meredith's first lodgings were to be found at the back the Old Palace Yard, adjacent to St Peter's Abbey - what we now know as Westminster Abbey. The next record found for James, in the National Archives for the year 1728,<sup>8</sup> refers to an application for money to defray the expenses of James's journey to the Hague on His Majesty's Service.



*Figure 1. John Rocque's 1746 map of London.*

In July James participated in the mission in the role of groom, a position in the second tier of management commanding a salary of £40 p.a.<sup>9</sup>.

The question that immediately springs to mind is why James Meredith, a young gentleman aged *c.*23 living in the unfashionable area of Parliament Steps, was ordered to visit the Hague? George II and his eldest son Frederick Louis were estranged, to the extent that the Prince had remained in Hanover while his father was crowned in 1727; he was unceremoniously brought to England in the winter of 1728 by Lieutenant Colonel De Launay of the Horse Guards acting under orders of the King, who had decided that enough was enough and that his recalcitrant son was to come home in readiness for his planned investiture as Prince of Wales on 8 January 1729. In fact, Frederick's departure was so sudden that he left a party in his honour at the Herrenhausen Palace in Hanover to start the 250-mile journey to the Hague.<sup>10</sup>

6 Wikipedia entry for Benjamin Franklin (1706-1790).

7 Westminster rate book for 1723 – Find My Past.

8 The National Archives (TNA), SP36/7/38, fos 38-9.

9 C. King & J. Stagg, *True State of England Containing the Duty, Business and Salary of Every Officer, Civil and Military in all Public Offices in Great Britain* (Kessinger Legacy Reprints, 2010), p. 13.

10 J. Van der Kiste, *George II and Queen Caroline* (History Press, 2013); A.C. Thompson, *George II King and Elector* (Yale Univ. Press, 2013), p. 84.



*My Lord*

*Whitehall 18. June 1728.*

*Mr James Meredith having been sent Express from the Hague, by the Earl of Chesterfield to Whitehall, on his Majesty's Service, and the said Mr Meredith being now ordered by my Ld. Townshend to go back Express to the Hague, his Lordship desires you to advance to Mr. George Gordon one of his Majesty's Messengers the Summ of twenty one Pounds, without any Deduction whatever, which Mr Gordon is to pay over to the said Mr Meredith for defraying the Expense of the Journey above mentioned.*

*I am*

*My Lord*

*Your Lordships  
most obedient humble  
Servant*

*Ewry,*

**Takes care of the Linnen for the King's own Table, lays the Cloth, and serves up Water in the Silver Ewers after Dinner ; whence the Office has its Name.**

*William Beager, Gent. 60 l. per Ann.*

*James Towers, Yeoman, 50 l. per Ann.*

**Grooms, 40 l. per Ann. each.**

*William Smith. James Meredith.*

It seems likely that this highly secret mission on behalf of His Majesty and the heir to the throne included James Meredith as part of the entourage and that James and the Prince being contemporaries formed a relationship. James later received letters patent and exchequer papers for King Street around the corner from St James's Palace, then the home of the Royal Family.

The Westminster Rate Books for 1735-1751<sup>11</sup> reveal James on an upward trajectory, moving up the housing ladder from the area at the back of the Old Palace Yard to the salubrious streets surrounding St James's Palace. He occupied a succession of houses, including Great Ryder

<sup>11</sup> Find My Past, Westminster Rate Books 1735-1751.

Street 1735-1737, Duke Street 1737-1745, and finally 10 King Street<sup>12</sup> (next door to what is now Christie's Auction rooms). The house in Great Ryder Street was recorded in 1736 as a property that 'belongs to His Majesty the King with nothing to pay'. It is also worthy of note that James' next-door neighbour was William Smith, his work colleague at the Ewry at St James's Palace. The property at 10 King Street is recorded as a Crown Lease (i.e. an agreement allowing a person or organisation to have exclusive right to occupy a specified portion of Crown land).



*Figure 2. Roque's Map.*

The Westminster Rate Books make no further reference to James living in King Street after 1751, even though it is fully referenced in his will and that of his daughter Jane Meredith in 1818, which would seem to indicate that James was absent from his property but still held it or leased it out to others. This is when he probably started his involvement with the Royal Navy. If James had profited from his acquaintance with the Prince of Wales, that must have come to a sudden end with the prince's premature death in 1751 from a pulmonary embolism, the incongruous result of being struck in the chest by a cricket ball.<sup>13</sup> Prince Frederick was not a charismatic personality, and he was not even the favourite child of his parents who much preferred their younger son William, the Duke of Cumberland (1721-1765), later to become known as the infamous 'Butcher Cumberland' after the bloody battle of Culloden in 1746.<sup>14</sup>

It is perhaps no coincidence that James Meredith made an unusual career change at about the time of the Prince's demise: he became a purser in the Royal Navy, the purser being the ship's accountant responsible for supplies. In those days a purser received no pay but was expected to provide for himself out of his buying and selling. A purser paid two sureties totalling as much as £2,100 to the Admiralty<sup>18</sup>, and in addition had to purchase a warrant for c.£65 - enormous sums for those days, but with potentially large profits to be made by a clever and resourceful man looking after every need of up to 800 men on a first-rate ship of the line.<sup>15</sup> James was purser on at least three naval ships in his later years: HMS Dolphin, HMS

<sup>12</sup> Listed in the Ancestry will of Jane Meredith, spinster of Bath, dated 1818.

<sup>13</sup> Wikipedia entry for Frederick Prince of Wales.

<sup>14</sup> J. Van der Kiste, *George II & Queen Caroline*.

<sup>15</sup> C. Buchet, *The British Navy Economy & Society in the Seven Years' War* (Boydell & Brewer, 2013), p. 234.



Invincible, and HMS Polyphemus.<sup>16</sup> There is a potentially interesting connection between James and his brother-in-law William Chinner's wife and family. Just as James Meredith was getting his feet under the Admiralty's table a certain Amos Chinner (see below) was getting involved in the cheese business at Blenheim Street in Mayfair. At that time storm clouds were forming over Europe and North America in the form of The Seven Years' War (1756-1763). The silver lining was the potential fortune to be made by each of them.

Staggering as it may seem to us, the jolly jack tars of the Royal Navy consumed vast quantities of cheese whilst carrying out blockade duty and fighting with just about everyone in the world. Naval records show that the 70,000 officers and sailors of the Royal Navy had an annual ration of 39lb of cheese per man, giving a total allowance of some 2,730,000lb, or 1,200 tons. This vast quantity had to be sourced from somewhere and the Royal Navy used 4 major suppliers who were all based in London. Initially Robert Barnevelt and Thayer Townsend shared the victualling contract for cheese supplies from the commencement of The Seven Years' War in 1756 until 1761 when a serious disagreement on the quality of their product led the Navy Commissioners to terminate their contract. Joseph Smith and James Copeland secured contracts to provide supplies for 1761 and 1762.<sup>17</sup>

These cheese oligarchs used up to sixteen of their own ships to transport supplies from the ports of York, Hull, Scarborough, Stockton, Newcastle, Suffolk, Chester and Liverpool directly to the port of London. It is inconceivable that Messrs Barnevelt, Townsend, Smith and Copeland could organise and transport these vast quantities entirely from their own resources and it seems likely that James Meredith and his associates would have had their finger in the cheese pie.

James died in Rochester, Kent, on 12 May 1786<sup>18</sup> and in his will, in which he is termed Esquire, he made the following bequest to his wife and daughter: 'I give and bequeath all that messuage or tenement with appurtenances situate and being in King Street, St James, Westminster which I hold by virtue of certain letters patent for a long term of years unto my dear wife Elizabeth Meredith and my daughter Margaret Meredith.' He also left 'To my daughter on the decease of my wife Elizabeth five hundred pounds.' Not bad for a simple purser - this equates to some £43,000 in today's money.

### Amos Chinner (1717-1800)

Amos Chinner moved to London in the early 1730s and made his fortune by investing in property in and around New Bond Street<sup>19</sup> (see later notes on his will below). Amos is recorded for the first time in the Westminster Rate Book for 1734 as a Chandler, a dealer or trader in supplies, living and working in Pedley Street, Mayfair.<sup>20</sup> He married Mary Maddox on 13 June 1742 at St George's Chapel, Mayfair and went on to have six children with her before her death in about 1754: Mary 1743, Elizabeth 1745, William 1745 (died an infant), Henry 1749, Sarah

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16 Report by Dr Stuart Blank of Military Archive Research, dated 2019.

17 Buchet, *British Navy*. p. 235.

18 *European Magazine* No.9 (1786), p. 382.

19 Wiki-tree site managed by Barry Heritage.

20 Find My Past, Westminster Rate Books.

1751 and Amos 1753.<sup>21</sup> Following his wife's death, with several children to raise, Amos went on to marry Elizabeth Lunn on 8 August 1756 at St George's Church, Hanover Square<sup>22</sup> and they had two further children Charlotte 1760 and William 1765<sup>23</sup>. Another interesting point to note is that Amos was a Constable of the parish of St George's, Hanover Square and is recorded working with his colleague William Hunter, certifying the burial of one William Bold on 5 April 1765 in the King's Highway near Marybone turnpike.<sup>24</sup>

Amos Chinner is further recorded in the Westminster Rate Book for 1762<sup>25</sup> living in Blenheim Street, London, and trading in business as a cheesemonger at 4 Blenheim Street – just around the corner from New Bond Street in the fashionable district of Mayfair (Pedley Street was renamed Blenheim Street, probably in tribute to Duke of Marlborough's victory some 50 years earlier). Records suggest that Amos had been in business as a cheesemonger since c.1750, a timely and fortuitous change of direction in his occupation, and it is thought that around that time he was introduced to James Meredith, another brother-in-law, and more to the point a naval purser in need of supplies.

As noted above, the cheese merchants of London were importing vast quantities of cheese into the port of London by ship from many locations around the coast of England. It is suggested here that a goodly part of the supply could have come from Banbury, referred to in 1756 by Richard Pococke as having a 'great trade in cheese'.<sup>26</sup> At that time Banbury was known more for its cheese than for its cakes, cheese being one of the town's most prestigious exports and Banbury being nationally famous for it.<sup>27</sup> Records show that the centre of the cheese making in Banburyshire was in the Northamptonshire hamlets, Grimsbury and Nethercote, though some producers were to be found in the town itself and nearby hamlets in Oxfordshire. As far back as 1600 some twenty-one residences in the parish of Cropredy housed cheese makers.<sup>28</sup> Amos Chinner and family were born and raised in Chacombe, right in the middle of the cheese triangle. The popularity of Banbury cheese only began to wane in the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century: Alfred Beesley noted in 1841 that 'the oft-recorded fame of the town for Cheese has departed from it.'<sup>29</sup>

It is likely that Amos would organise large quantities of Banbury cheese produced in the 'cheese triangle' to be stored in the town before being transported by local carriers to London – a fairly direct and relatively short journey compared with the days being taken by the oligarchs' ships from distant ports. In fact, the deeds dated 1807 for the Unicorn Inn at 20 Market Place list the buildings in the courtyard as 'on the south side, opposite the kitchen, were 'a double stable and the printing office or cheese room.'<sup>30</sup> (Likely to have been a cheese room prior to 1765, when John Cheney and his wife Elizabeth Treadwell, founders of the printing dynasty of Banbury,

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21 Baptisms found on Ancestry.

22 Marriage Records found on Ancestry.

23 Baptisms found on Ancestry.

24 Ancestry: public member's scanned document for 5 April 1765.

25 Find My Past, Westminster Rate Book for 1762.

26 R. Pococke, *Travels through England* (Camden Soc. 1888), Vol. 2.

27 H. Forde, 'Banbury Cheese and its Conundrums', *C&CH* 21.2 (2019), pp. 45-55.

28 M. Thomas, 'As Thin as Banbury's Cheese', *C&CH* 18.8 (2012), pp. 274-6.

29 A. Beesley, *History of Banbury* (1841), pp. 567-8.

30 *Victoria County History, Oxfordshire*, Vol. 10, p. 33.

took over at the Unicorn).<sup>31</sup> Furthermore, Banbury had several carriers in the period under consideration who could have undertaken cheese deliveries to the capital:

- William Barrett (c1711-1783), mayor of Banbury, was a carrier and later gentleman,<sup>32</sup> and he had London connections having married Elizabeth Forrest in 1733 at St Andrew by the Wardrobe.<sup>33</sup>
- William Judd of Horley senior (1712-1783)<sup>34</sup> and his son William junior of Banbury (1750-1832)<sup>35</sup> who was thrice mayor of Banbury in 1798, 1804 and 1811.
- Samuel Roberts (1716-1763) carrier and landlord of the Unicorn Inn referenced above.

Now we turn to Amos' children, especially Sarah, born in 1751. Her husband, Joseph Trollope, paper hanger of Westminster is of great interest to historians of Georgian England. In his will Amos Chinner<sup>36</sup>, now termed gentleman of Kilburn in the parish of Willesden, a fashionable Spa area on the edge of London, made the following bequest: 'My house on the north-side of Blenheim Street to my daughter Sarah Trollope the wife of Joseph Trollope'. Joseph, of the parish of St Giles in the Fields, bachelor aged 25, married Sarah, of the parish of St George's, Hanover Square, spinster, aged 26, by licence at St Mary's Church, St Marylebone on 11 August 1782.<sup>37</sup>



Figure 3. Joseph Trollope.



Figure 4. John Rocque's map of London 1746.

Joseph Trollope was also a freemason, initiated on 24 November 1801 at the Old King's Arms Masonic Lodge No. 184, being a paper-maker at 15 Parliament Street, Westminster - just down the road from Downing Street in the heart of Westminster.<sup>38</sup> Joseph's family tree has him baptised on 22 August 1756 at St Marylebone, Westminster, the son of Thomas and Mary Trollope.<sup>39</sup>

31 V. Wood, *Licenses of Inns, Taverns and Beerhouses of Banbury* (Oxon. Family Hist Soc. 1998), p. 114.

32 Ancestry: PCC Will of William Barrett of Banbury, proven 10 October 1783.

33 Ancestry: parish records of St Andrew by the Wardrobe for 1733.

34 Ancestry: PCC will of William Judd of Horley, proven 1 August 1783.

35 Ancestry: PCC will of William Judd of Banbury, proven 16 August 1837.

36 Ancestry: PCC will of Amos Chinner, proven 19 November 1800.

37 Ancestry: film strip 935 of 1058 for their Marriage bond.

38 Ancestry: Freemasonry membership records.

39 Ancestry: Hitchcock family tree.

Joseph's claim to fame derives from founding the building company of Trollope & Colls, which can trace its origins back to 1778.<sup>40</sup> His sons enjoyed royal patronage and expanded into interior decoration and then estate agency. A separate branch of the company traded as cabinet makers and different branches of the company were by now working in property development that continued into the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In 1903 they merged with the builders Colls and Sons and won contracts with Harland & Wolff, builders of the Titanic, to furnish and decorate ships of the White Star Line.

Initially Joseph Tollope set up in business as a wallpaper hanger in St Marylebone, moving to St George's, Hanover Square, and then in 1787 to Parliament Street, Westminster.<sup>41</sup> He was a specialist in exotic wallpaper, especially Chinese painted paper, with work undertaken at Lullingstone Castle, Eynsford in Kent, The Vyne, and Burghley House.

George Trollope (1792- 1871), son of Joseph and Sarah, took over the running of the family business along with his younger brother Joseph Amos (1784-1856), the name Amos being given in respect of his grandfather. In 1830 he became paper hanger to King George IV, and in 1842 to Queen Victoria. The firm expanded into general interior decoration. Later, in 1849, it expanded into estate agency, letting and controlling property for the Grosvenor Estates. A separate branch of the family, cabinet-makers, opened at West Halkin Street, becoming known as 'The Museum of Decorative Arts' (run by George Robinson). In 1851, the firm became formally known as George Trollope and Sons.



*Figure 5. Trollope & Colls gaming table.*

The legs of the octagonal mahogany games table illustrated unscrew for ease of storage. The maker's name of Trollope & Colls is stamped to the underside and the back of the drawers. (*Information courtesy of Christopher Clarke Antiques*).

In 1968, Trollope & Colls was taken over by Trafalgar House Investments Ltd but retained a separate identity. Appropriately enough, the company was responsible for the new precincts at Guildhall, and the repairing of the roof of Guildhall (The home of the City of London Corporation) following a Luftwaffe raid in late December 1940.<sup>42</sup>

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40 TNA, B/TRL.

41 Ibid.

42 Wikipedia entry for The Guildhall, London.

## Chronology of Companies

- 1778 Joseph Trollope, wallpaper hanger
- 1800 Joseph Amos and George Trollope
- 1840 Benjamin Colls, painter and decorator
- 1851 George Trollope and Sons
- 1903 George Trollope and Sons and Colls and Sons Ltd
- 1918 Trollope and Colls Ltd
- 1969 Trollope and Colls Ltd, owned by Trafalgar House Investments Ltd.

## Some major buildings completed by Trollope & Colls

- Haymarket Theatre 1869
- Claridge's Hotel 1897 for Richard Doyly Carte
- Baltic Exchange 1903
- Liverpool and London and Globe Insurance Co., Bank 1904
- Lloyds Bank Head Office, Lombard Street, 1931
- Trinity House, Tower Hill, 1950s
- Daily Express, Daily Mail, The Times, Daily Telegraph, Fleet Street, various dates
- Debenhams, Wigmore Street, 1905-1908
- Northwick Park Hospital, 1970s
- New Stock Exchange, City, 1972-1975
- Trywsfynnd Power Station, 1962
- Interior work for *Queen Mary* (Cunard liner)

In his will of 1800, Amos Chinner bequeathed his house on the west side of New Bond Street to his son William (1765-1836) and his house on the south side of Blenheim Street to his daughter Charlotte, the wife of George Gow, tailor of George Street, Westminster.<sup>43</sup> This supports Barry Heritage's statement above that Amos was a property magnate with several houses in Mayfair and a property in the spa town of Kilburn, then just outside the metropolis of London.

## Elizabeth Chinner (1711-1774)

Within a couple of years of Amos Chinner moving to London, it is thought that his sister Elizabeth went to live with her younger brother, at first helping out in his chandlery and then later in his growing and popular cheesemonger business. Here one day she met a young gentleman, probably in the first state of fashion, well-educated and sophisticated. Romance obviously blossomed and soon Elizabeth Chinner was walking down the aisle with Francis Juba whom she married on 7 January 1745 at St George's Chapel, Mayfair.<sup>44</sup>

Who was Francis Juba - a very unusual surname, even for cosmopolitan London in those days? Perusal of the parish records for Westminster shows that Francis Juba had been baptised on

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<sup>43</sup> Ancestry: will of Amos Chinner, proven 19 November 1800.

<sup>44</sup> Ancestry marriage records.

10 March 1721, aged about 8 years old, at St Martin-in-the-Fields church.<sup>45</sup> The register goes on to show that Francis was ‘Lord Guilford’s black’, possibly named after his benefactor. In early Georgian London, the rich and powerful had black pages to show off their consequence and wealth. Lord Guilford was Francis North, 2<sup>nd</sup> Baron Guilford (1673-1729), son of Francis North who had married Lady Frances Pope in 1672. She was the daughter and co-heiress of Thomas Pope, 3<sup>rd</sup> Earl of Downe.<sup>46</sup>

Francis North inherited the Wroxton estate outside Banbury through this matrimonial connection to the Pope family and in 1685 Francis succeeded his father as Baron Guilford. In 1701 he was one of five peers of the realm who voted against the Act of Settlement (which excluded the House of Stuart from the English throne) and who felt strongly enough to enter written protests in the House of Lords Journal. Guilford was Lord Lieutenant of Essex 1703-5. In 1712, he was appointed to the Privy Council, and he was First Lord of Trade from 1713 to 1714. He married twice. In 1695 he wed Elizabeth, daughter of Fulke Greville, 5th Baron Brooke. His second wife was Alicia (1687-1727), daughter of Sir John Brownlow of Belton House, near Stamford (Lincs.), whom he married *c.*1703. Guilford was succeeded by his son by his second wife, Francis North (1704-90), 3<sup>rd</sup> Baron Guilford, who later became 1st Earl of Guilford.<sup>47</sup>



*Figure 6. Francis Lord Guilford.*

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45 Parish records for St Martin in the Fields, Westminster

46 Wikipedia entry for Francis North 1<sup>st</sup> Baron Guilford

47 Wikipedia entry for Francis North 2<sup>nd</sup> Baron Guilford



Francis Juba was the young page of Lady Alicia Guilford. Francis grew up in the North household and, probably draped in ruffles, lace and satin, was at the beck and call of his master and mistress, who took him everywhere.<sup>48</sup> He would have grown up and lived with the slightly older family heir Francis and his first two wives: Lucy Montagu (1709-1734), the only daughter of George Montagu, 1st Earl of Halifax, whom he married on 17 June 1728, was the mother of Frederick North the 2<sup>nd</sup> Earl and future Prime Minister of Great Britain; and Elizabeth, widow of George Legge, styled Viscount Lewisham, whom he married on 24 January 1736. After her death in 1745 the Earl went on to marry as his third wife Katherine, widow of Lewis Watson, 2<sup>nd</sup> Earl of Rockingham. Through that marriage the Earl inherited Waldershare Park in Kent.<sup>49</sup>



Figure 7. Francis Juba?



Figure 8. Alicia Lady Guilford.

Francis Juba is likely from an early age have been comfortable in the company of those people termed the ‘le beau monde’ or the ‘upper ten thousand’, and he would have thought of them as family and friends even though he was strictly a servant. He probably attended many functions, even those with royalty, in the company of Lord North and his wives and their entourages. Francis North was in 1730 appointed Gentleman of the Bedchamber to Frederick, Prince of Wales at a salary of £500 per annum.<sup>50</sup> In 1774 he was appointed Treasurer (Receiver-General) to the household of Queen Charlotte (1744-1818), the wife of King George III, an appointment that he retained until his death in 1790.<sup>51</sup>

Frederick North (1732-1792), 2<sup>nd</sup> Earl of Guilford was Prime Minister 1770-1782. He was born at the North family home in Albemarle Street, just off Piccadilly, though he spent much of his

48 TNA, ‘Black Presence: Servants, Ayahs and Alternatives in Employment’ ([https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/pathways/blackhistory/work\\_community/servants.html](https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/pathways/blackhistory/work_community/servants.html)).

49 Cracroft’s Peerage online.

50 King & Stagg, *True State of England*.

51 Wikipedia entry for 1<sup>st</sup> Earl of Guilford.

youth at Wroxton Abbey. His strong resemblance to George III suggested to contemporaries that George's father, Prince Frederick of Wales, might have been North's real father (and North therefore the king's brother), a theory compatible with the prince's reputation but supported by little real evidence. North's father was at the time Lord of the Bedchamber to Prince Frederick, who stood as godfather to the infant.<sup>52</sup>

An interesting point to note is that George Washington was born on 11 February 1732 in Westmoreland County, Virginia to Augustine and Mary Washington. Barely two months separating the infants, one destined to become the first President of the United States of America, the other to be forever known as the Prime Minister who lost America - an accolade given him by Horace Walpole. A second point of interest is that the relatives of Elizabeth Juba, née Chinner, hailed from Chacombe just a stone's throw away from the estate of George Washington's great-grandfather John Washington of Sulgrave, prior to his emigration to Virginia in the year 1656.<sup>53</sup>



*Figure 9. Wroxton Abbey.*

Francis Juba remained in the loyal service of the Earls of Guilford for the best part of 20 years, probably being based in Henrietta Place in Cavendish Square but visiting all the other family estates, including Wroxton Abbey, until he left the household in 1737 aged about 24 years old. No specific reason can be found for his leaving what must have been a charming

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52 Wikipedia entry for 2<sup>nd</sup> Earl of Guilford.

53 Wikipedia entry for George Washington.

and enviable lifestyle, but it was probably due to his age and the lack of a specific role for him in the household. Moreover, the Countess died in 1734 and the Earl's new wife in 1736 might not have wanted a 23-year-old page foisted upon her. Having reached adulthood it was probably decided that he should be set up in a 'proper' occupation and he was apprenticed out to John Hackett, barber and peruke maker, on 1 July 1737 for a period of 7 years. Hackett was originally based in Chandos Street, but he eventually moved his business to Bedford Street in the area of Covent Garden until his death in 1755. As we will see later the 1<sup>st</sup> Earl of Guilford was very much attached to Juba and his parting must have been heart-rending for them both. Household accounts<sup>54</sup> show that he was given an allowance of 2 guineas a year from when he left the Norths' household in 1737 to 1774 (a total of some £7,000 over the 37-year period).<sup>55</sup>

Extraordinary		£	s	d
1732	Gave Johnson	20	00	00
	Mr Oakley	05	05	00
	Gave Juba 4 Guineas to make four of the 8 years Allowance due to him at Lady's Day 1752	04	04	00
	Mr Poole	05	05	00

The accounts reveal some amazing spending on young Juba:

- 1730 – paid £11 8s 3d for Juba's clothing (equivalent to £1,350)

1730	paid for Juba's Cloaths	11	08	03
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- 1731 – paid £2 9s 6d for Juba's frock coat (equivalent to £290)
- 1731 – paid for Juba's clothing and schooling £16 2s 5d (equivalent to £1,900)
- 1733 – paid Juba's expenses £21 19s 3d (equivalent to £2,600)

1733	paid Broome for odd things	00	02	08
1733	Expenses of Juba P.C. acc: 1733	21	19	03
1733		01	14	01

- 1733 – paid 3 guineas for Juba's music master (equivalent to £375)
- 1734 – paid 2 guineas for Juba's French horn master (equivalent to £250)
- 1735 – paid 4 guineas for Juba's French horn master (equivalent to £500)

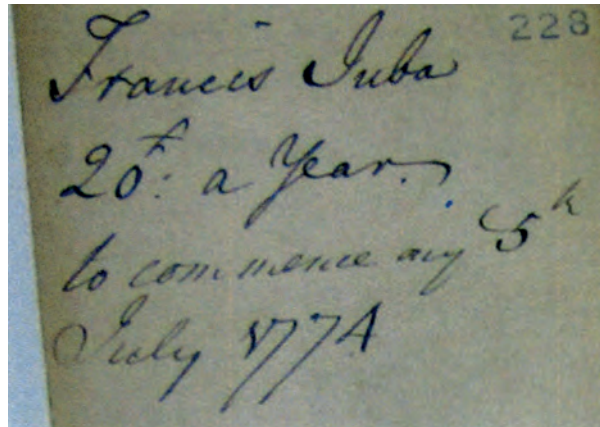
<sup>54</sup> Cathy Soughton, Report on the papers of Francis North in the Bodleian Library (privately commissioned, 2017).

<sup>55</sup> Four guineas paid to Juba on Lady's Day 1752: Soughton report.



The accounts for the years 1730 to the date he left, including the above specific costs, his quarterly pocket-money and shoe expenses, but excluding the cost of food and accommodation, record a total of £68 16s. 5d. (equivalent to £8,100). In 1730 the average annual salary of Lord North's servants ranged from £6 to £10 per year.<sup>56</sup>

No further record of Francis Juba has been found until the death of his wife Elizabeth in 1774. She was buried on 24 November, with an associated monument at the head and foot of her grave, at St Marylebone Church, possibly paid for by the North family.<sup>57</sup> St Marylebone Church is located in Marylebone Road, just half a mile away from the Earl's house in Henrietta Place, Cavendish Square



Francis Juba 228  
20. a Year.  
to commence any 5<sup>th</sup>  
July 1774

Just before Elizabeth's death Juba had been awarded a 'charitable allowance of £20 per annum' by order of H.M. Treasury.<sup>58</sup> The charitable award was certainly instigated by the Earl of Guilford as he had been appointed Treasurer to the Queen Consort in 1774.<sup>59</sup> She was Princess Sophia Charlotte of Mecklenburg-Strelitz, who married George III on 8 September 1762.<sup>60</sup> This charitable allowance was to be supplemented by the Earl's will of 1779 which states that 'I Francis Earl of Guilford do hereby direct my dear son Sir Frederick North commonly called Lord North and my other executors to add so much out of my personal estate to the charitable allowance of twenty pounds per annum now enjoyed by Francis Juba an Indian formerly in my service as will maintain him decently in the way he is, during the remainder of his life'.<sup>61</sup> Those words make it abundantly clear that Francis was not just a family servant but someone he cared about deeply, having shared most his early life with him. The will also makes it clear that Francis was an Indian not an African, probably being from Juba in Odisha Province, India, and not as previously thought Juba in South Sudan.

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56 Soughton, Report.

57 St Marylebone parish church records.

58 TNA, T1/580/228 dated 5<sup>th</sup> July 1774.

59 Wikipedia entry for Francis North, 1<sup>st</sup> Earl of Guilford.

60 Wikipedia entry for king George III (reigned 1760-1820).

61 Will of Francis North, 1<sup>st</sup> Earl of Guilford (1704-1790), written 9 April 1779.



*Figure 10. Waldershare Park.*

Francis Juba's mother probably came over to England as a female domestic servant or nursemaid, known as an Ayah, as was not uncommon at that time. Many accompanied East India Company employees and their families on the long sea journey back to England. This arrangement was attractive for many Asian women, as Ayahs were not generally paid a wage, whereas travel of this kind involved a fee.<sup>62</sup>

Unfortunately, Francis died in 1785 aged about 72 years old, some five years before the Earl, unaware of the plan to augment his allowance. He was buried on 29 May at Ss Peter & St Paul Church, Eythorne, near Deal (Kent),<sup>63</sup> the local parish church to Waldershare Park, taken into the ownership of the North family by the marriage settlement of Francis North's third wife Catherine, widow of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Earl of Rockingham. It is possible that Juba, having fallen on hard times after the death of his wife, was living in a grace-and-favour property belonging to the Earl of Guilford in the village of Eythorne. He lived out his days on the £20 a year charitable allowance made to him in 1774, and he ended them just a mile away from Waldershare Park, the home of his childhood friend.

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62 TNA: 'Black Presence'.

63 Parish records for St Peter & St Paul's Church, Eythorne.

# A SMALL-TOWN POLITICIAN: THE LIFE AND CAREER OF GEORGE CROSBY (1821-1886)

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*Alan G Crosby*

This paper is a biographical account of my great-great grandfather, who was mayor of Banbury in 1872-73. It looks at his life in general but focuses particularly on his public role and political career, as a member of Banbury Corporation from 1859 and the Board of Health from 1860. While on one level this is an exercise in family history, on another, as a historian by profession, I want to explore how his experiences reveal much about how small-town society and politics functioned in the Victorian period. The paper highlights the invaluable role of the local press, which provides very detailed accounts of the meetings of organisations and institutions, and the debates and arguments which raged over the burning issues of the day. Newspaper reports, while always to be treated with caution, are far more informative than the laconic record preserved in the minute books of the Corporation and the Board of Health. They make it possible to reconstruct some of the liveliest and most controversial issues in mid-Victorian Banbury, and to gain an impression of the personalities involved. Sometimes the names are familiar from other sources, but others have faded from public memory. Such was the name ‘Crosby’, for although their family had been in Banbury since at least the 1590s, my great-grandfather and his siblings left in the late nineteenth century and there was nobody with that surname in the 1911 census for the town.

## **Family background**

George Crosby was born on 7 August 1821 and baptised at St Mary’s on 28 September,<sup>1</sup> the second child and second son of George Crosby (1800-1879), a baker of Broad Street, and his wife Susannah née Boscott. The family’s name was very complicated. His 5 x great-grandfather in the direct male line was Richard Essex, born *c.*1580, who in 1604 married Margaret Holloway at St Mary’s. The original surname was therefore not Crosby; but Richard, a tailor, was apprenticed to Thomas Crosby of Banbury and, as was often the case, he adopted his master’s surname. This caused much confusion among his descendants, who variously called themselves Crosby, Essex Crosby, Essex alias Crosby, Essex-Crosby, or Essex, sometimes interchangeably within one group of siblings. My direct forebears eventually adopted the simple form ‘Crosby’ but, for example, George’s grandfather (1754-1819) was generally known as John Essex Crosby. During the eighteenth century most men in the family worked as plush-weavers, but by the beginning of the nineteenth they had moved into a variety of other crafts and trades.

George’s mother, Susannah Boscott, was born in 1796 at Kington, though her parents were married in 1790 at Hanwell. She and George eventually had thirteen children (ten sons and three daughters), of whom two died in infancy and one as a teenager. The last, Henry, was

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<sup>1</sup> Henceforth the subject of the paper is referred to simply as ‘George’. ‘George senior’ is his father and ‘George junior’ his son.



born in 1839 when Susannah had been more or less continuously pregnant for two decades. By then they had moved to premises in High Street, owned by John Haddon. When the bakery there was sold in January 1842 it was described as having a 27 foot 6 inch frontage to the street, four bedrooms and two attics, a parlour and a sitting room, the shop, kitchen, cellar, larder, back-kitchen and bakehouse, two meal-rooms, a salt-room, brewhouse, drying-room and stable for two horses, two pigsties, a 'bush hovel' (outdoor privy), a walled garden and a pump of good fresh water.<sup>2</sup> It was a spacious family house in the very centre of the town – an admirable location in which to become completely familiar with Banbury and its people, a familiarity reinforced by the bakery business run by George senior.



*Figure 1. F.J. Toole, Conjectural reconstruction of Banbury, 1828. Originally published in the Banbury Guardian, reproduced in S. Townsend & J. Gibson, Banbury Past Through Artists' Eyes, BHS Record Ser. 30 (2007), cover.*

<sup>2</sup> *Jackson's Oxford Journal* [hereafter *JOJ*] 3 September 1842.

When George senior married at St Mary's on 20 October 1819 he signed with a good clear hand, spelling his surname 'Crossby', but Susannah made her mark. A writ dated 25 July 1837 and issued by Philip Thomas Herbert Wykeham (High Sheriff of Oxfordshire) and Thomas Tims, the mayor and returning officer for Banbury,<sup>3</sup> is the official return of Henry Tancred as Liberal MP for the borough and was witnessed by George Crosby, the distinctive signature making it clear that this was George the baker. Its importance is that, perhaps unexpectedly, it places him at the centre of the political life of the borough: he was present at the declaration of results and was sufficiently respectable, and respected, to be involved in the electoral process. In a small, tight-knit borough such as Banbury at the beginning of Victoria's reign it was perfectly possible for a tradesman to play such a role. The document indicates a serious personal affiliation to the Liberal Party, an allegiance which was passed on to his son George.

The 1841 census records 'George Crossby', baker of High Street, with his wife, six sons and two daughters, for none of whom was an occupation given. George was absent, but I tracked him down: aged 20, he was living at Long Ashton, on the outskirts of Bristol, as a clerk in the household of James Chadwick, a solicitor. This explains much about his subsequent career and reputation in Banbury. Barrie Trinder observed that 'Many political activists in nineteenth century Banbury were lawyers, and George Crosby fits into this pattern, even though he lacked formal qualifications and made his living through the drink trade'.<sup>4</sup> By 1847 George had become the Banbury agent for Hopcraft's brewery, marking the end of his formal role in the legal world, but during his 27 years as a member of Banbury Corporation he was regarded as an oracle and source of wisdom on all matters to do with the law. A little learning went a long way.

His personal circumstances changed. On 4 January 1845 he married Elizabeth Hannah Ashmore Hyde at Broughton. Her father John, born in 1799 at Hatfield, Hertfordshire, was a papermaker who moved to Norfolk and in 1823 at Swanton Morley near Dereham married Ann Elizabeth Ashmore. Elizabeth, their only surviving child, was born there in 1824. John then shifted to Oxfordshire, working at the paper mill at North Newington. George and Elizabeth had six children: a stillborn daughter (1846); sons Edwin John (1847), George (1848) and William (1854); and daughters Elizabeth (1851) and Clara (1856). His wife is a shadowy figure, rarely appearing in documents or newspaper reports. An exception was in April 1852, when Miss E. Crosby was listed among the ladies who contributed funds for the building of Christ Church, South Banbury.<sup>5</sup> Elizabeth was the only woman of that name in the town: clearly the title 'Miss' was an error.

By virtue of having nine living siblings, George was widely connected in Banbury society, a source of potential problems at certain stages in his career. His family did not always behave themselves respectably. Thus, in April 1850 his sister-in-law Mary Ann, wife of his older brother John, testified in the borough court concerning a robbery in the yard behind the *Catherine Wheel*, where her mother lived 'at the bottom of the steps' – not a connection or location to be relished by someone with social aspirations. The alleged thief was her brother, Joseph Howe.<sup>6</sup> In August 1857 George's brother Joseph, then working as a porter at Messrs Austen's in High Street, was

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3 Oxfordshire History Centre [hereafter OHC] BOR2/XIX/v/27.

4 Personal communication 17 January 2019.

5 *Banbury Guardian* [hereafter *BG*] 15 April 1852.

6 *BG* 11 April 1850.

convicted of being drunk and disorderly near the Britannia Foundry in Fish Street,<sup>7</sup> and in July 1864 the same Joseph was stabbed in the face with a pocket knife during a fight with Charles Blackwell of Neithrop, a case heard at the assizes.<sup>8</sup> Even more colourful was his dissolute brother Edward who, after working as an engine driver in Bermondsey, moved back to live with his parents. In August 1866 Edward brought a case against Constable Tustain of the borough police, accusing him of assault during a brawl in the street: the case was dismissed and Tustain was commended for his actions. This seems to have rankled: just over a year later Edward was alleged to have emptied the contents of a chamber pot over the head of Constable Bagnall, in the darkness of an October night. Susannah Crosby, the loyal mother, testified in support of her son, saying that he had been home all the time, while George senior stated that he had slept in the same bed as Edward that night.<sup>9</sup>

Individually, of course, these episodes were not particularly significant, but George had to distance himself from his brothers, particularly after he became a member of the town council. His sisters, in contrast, married respectable tradesmen and were not at all troublesome. Charlotte married John Nelson, a master stone and marble mason, at St Mary's on 4 January 1845 (the same day as George's own wedding, at which she and John were witnesses) and lived for many years in Gatteridge Street, where in 1891 she lived alone and was described as a grocer. In 1848 Susannah, who had an illegitimate son Joseph Richard in 1846, married Joseph Claridge at the Independent Chapel. He was a carpenter and joiner, and in 1891 a 'builder's foreman of joiners'. They had at least nine children and lived first in Calthorpe Lane and later in Warwick Road. Their son Charles, born in 1865, made the coffin in which his uncle George Crosby was buried in September 1886.

## **Business ventures**

George had aspirations. In the early 1840s, having returned to Banbury with some legal experience, he worked as a clerk for John Francis Wylde, attorney of Parsons Street and then Church Lane. His name appears on many writs and summonses issued by Wylde during this period,<sup>10</sup> indicating that he did much of the routine work of the practice, but without formal legal qualifications it is doubtful if he could have progressed. It is therefore unsurprising that he sought other work. When he married in 1845 he described himself as a 'commercial traveller', and in about 1847 became the Banbury agent for the brewery which had been established by Alfred Hopcraft at Brackley five years before. This was a splendid opportunity, for the company grew fast: by the time the firm was incorporated as a limited company in 1895 it had 119 tied houses and in 1871 it already employed 40 men in the brewery, as well as ten clerks and representatives (of whom George Crosby was one).<sup>11</sup> The 1851 census records George as 'clerk and traveller to brewer and spirit merchant', and in 1861 he was described as 'ale and porter agent employing two labourers'.

This move into the world of commerce gave George a taste for entrepreneurial activities of all sorts: directories and newspaper advertisements chart a series of undertakings in which he was

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7 *BG* 27 August 1857.

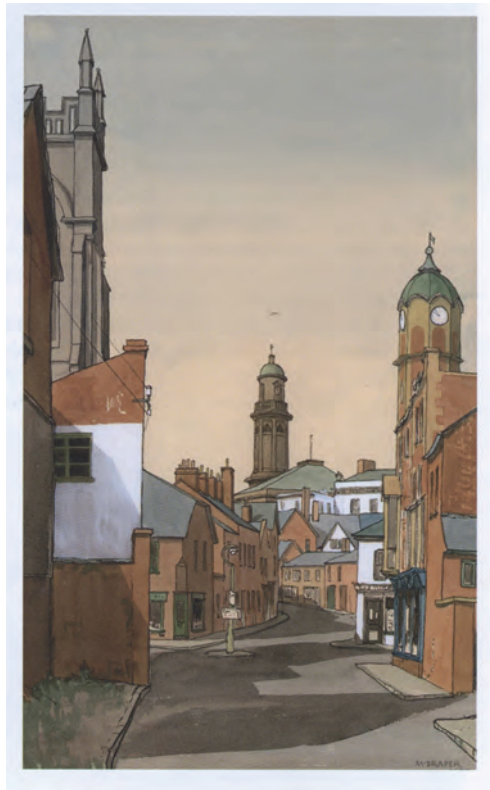
8 *BG* 14 July 1864.

9 *BG* 16 August 1866; 1 October 1867.

10 For example OHC BOR/2/XX11/xi/61 (12 writs June-August 1843).

11 My thanks to Barrie Trinder for making this point.

involved. Many centred on the unregulated financial enterprises of a small town, in a period when small capitalist ventures proliferated and often came to naught. In November 1852, for example, he was listed as a director of the new Banbury Permanent Benefit Building Society, with Colonel North, JA Gillett and AR Tawney as trustees, Henry Stone among his fellow directors, and his friend John Kilby as secretary.<sup>12</sup> The Permanent Benefit Building Society was probably simply a loan agency, lending to house-builders—unlike many mid-Victorian building societies it does not appear to have developed housing in its own right.<sup>13</sup> Four years later appeared the first of many advertisements referring to George as the agent for the Westminster and General Life Assurance Company, from his address at ‘The Brewery, Fish Street’.<sup>14</sup> In November 1860 he was described as ‘resident manager’ of the Banbury Provident Permanent Building Society, Savings Bank and Discount Company, whose offices were 64 Fish Street (in other words, his home), and from January 1861 his Building Society advertisement made a feature of offering small loans (£5, £10, £15, £20 and upwards) on personal security.<sup>15</sup> None of these various organisations is adequately documented, and it is difficult to ascertain their legal basis, constitution or terms of business, but George, in a private capacity, had evidently become a money-lender.



*Figure 2. George Street, formerly Fish Street, by M. Draper. Reproduced in Banbury Past Through Artists' Eyes, p.80.*

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<sup>12</sup> *BG* 25 November 1852.

<sup>13</sup> Barrie Trinder, personal communication 17 January 2019.

<sup>14</sup> *BG* 2 October 1856.

<sup>15</sup> *BG* 29 November 1860; 3 January 1861.



In parallel with this developing financial interest, he was increasingly involved in the property market, particularly in the context of the licensed trade with which he had an obvious connection via the brewery. Thus, in September 1852, as owner, he applied for a licence for the *Coach and Horses* at Adderbury, duly granted by the county licensing magistrates with the proviso that ‘its continuance would depend on the manner in which the house was conducted’.<sup>16</sup> In July 1855 he purchased the *New Inn* at Shutford and in 1869 the *Horseshoe Inn* at Shipston on Stour.<sup>17</sup> He also acquired residential properties. In September 1862 he bought 4 and 5 West Bar Street from James Stockton, converted them into shops and the following year sold them on,<sup>18</sup> and in September 1867 was named by the Board of Health (of which he was a member) as one who ‘ought to mend his ways’ because of his ownership of seven insanitary cottages in Calthorpe Lane—he retorted that he was already improving these premises and this was subsequently confirmed.<sup>19</sup> From 1875 onwards he frequently advertised as a letting agency, offering properties in the town for rent, a sideline which continued until his death in the autumn of 1886.

Given his close personal interest in money and property, it was inevitable that George should also be involved in speculative private companies set up to provide amenities for Banbury. In January 1857, for example, he signed up as shareholder in the controversial Central Corn Exchange Company, a project enthusiastically supported by the town’s Liberals in opposition to the Cornhill Exchange promoted by the Conservatives. This pointless duplication of facilities was described by Barrie Trinder as ‘an awful warning of the waste which could occur when political and religious rivalries intruded into commercial affairs’, but for George it was a very public way of demonstrating his adherence to the Liberal cause.<sup>20</sup> A decade later, when he was a member of the Corporation and the Board of Health, George was a founder-director of the Banbury Recreation Ground and Bathing Company—in September 1868, when the Corporation sold land to the Company, he had to declare an interest as a shareholder,<sup>21</sup> with 50 shares (John Kilby had 2000 and members of the Gillett family a total of 75).<sup>22</sup> He had a personal interest in bathing: T.W. Boss reminisced in 1903 that Bath Road was so named because ‘When the new road was first laid and the name was under consideration, Mr George Crosby, chairman, and Mr Thomas Garrett, surveyor, having, when boys, bathed in the Spring Fields, suggested the name of Bath Road’.<sup>23</sup>

More important was his involvement in the water company: in December 1863, as a member of the Board of Health, he was on the committee which determined the contract for the purchase of the company and, like some other members, at acrimonious meetings had to admit to owning shares (describing them as ‘a bad speculation’). The proposed municipal takeover of the water company was a particularly divisive issue in the town, and in May 1864 accusations were made at a public meeting that Councillor Crosby had sold his water company shares to his

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16 *BG* 30 September 1852.

17 OHC SL37/2/D/12; Shakespeare Birthplace Trust (Stratford upon Avon) DR165/646.

18 OHC NQ1/1/D15/90 and 91.

19 *BG* 19 September 1867.

20 *BG* 22 January 1857; Trinder, *Victorian Banbury*, 92.

21 *BG* 12 September 1867; 2 September 1868.

22 OHC BOR/2/VIII/i/1 Minute book of the BRG&B Company.

23 Barrie Trinder (ed), ‘Thomas Ward Boss, *Reminiscences of Old Banbury*’, in *Victorian Banburyshire: Three Memoirs* (Banbury Historical Society vol.33, 2013) 189.

mother-in-law in order to escape accusations of involvement, and had thereby ‘crept out of the mess’. Trinder notes that ‘the considerable degree of common membership between the Board of Health and the Water Company in the 1860s raised suspicions of corruption’, and indeed in January 1865 Conservative members of the Corporation expressed doubts as to the propriety of George and other shareholders voting on the proposed takeover. However, as Trinder also observes, ‘such situations were almost inevitable, given the intimacy of society in Banbury’.<sup>24</sup>

Nevertheless, throughout the period from the late 1840s to his death in the autumn of 1886, the brewing trade was at the heart of George’s commercial activities, and this frequently came to the attention of his colleagues during council meetings. The 1871 census described him as ‘town councillor, brewer’s agent, money lender’, and he was perceived as personally representing the interests of the brewing and licensed trade. This sometimes led to mirth. In January 1873, for example, complaints were made in a meeting of the Board of Health about government interference with local affairs, and the way that Westminster was ‘putting burden after burden upon the community’. Councillor Brazier declared that ‘I am so sick of their creeping that I hate the very sight and name of it’. George, the mayor, replied ‘So do I; that last Licensing Bill was enough for me (loud laughter)’. But there might be barbs: only four months later, in April 1873 during a discussion of licensed premises in the town which focused on the need to suppress unruly houses, George argued that Neithrop and Grimsbury should not be a financial burden upon Banbury. Brazier, one of the town’s most prominent temperance campaigners, retorted that ‘Banbury would not be of much use without Neithrop and Grimsbury. You would not sell so much of your drink if it was not for them’.<sup>25</sup>

Such banter continued throughout his long career as a member of the Corporation. At the meeting on Christmas Eve 1879 the new Petroleum Act was discussed, with its requirement that local authorities should test petroleum as part of the licensing process. Councillor Johnson suggested that ‘it should be left to the two aldermen’ (George, and Joseph Osbourne, a wine and spirit merchant). Councillor Griffin agreed: ‘They know more about the strength of spirits than anyone’. The following August the Board of Health received the public analyst’s report on gin sold in the town, one sample being 78 parts gin and 22 parts water: ‘Mr Crosby: “Rather weakish that is” (laughter)’. In February 1883 the Corporation’s stonebreaker, who worked at the canal wharf, was reported to be drunk more than half the time. The mayor commented to George, chairman of the Board of Health, that ‘You see how this drink stops everything (laughter)’, to which the reply was ‘It is very good if properly used. It is like everything (renewed laughter)’. A month later, having discussed the sale of putrid fish in the market, the Board briefly considered a circular memorial from the National Union for the Suppression of Intemperance, about banning the sale of drink at race meetings. George commented that ‘This is worse than the fish (laughter)’ and expressed disapproval of the town of Malvern, where only ginger beer and water were sold at the races.<sup>26</sup>

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24 BG 3 September 1863; 3 December 1863; 28 January 1864; 12 May 1864; 25 January 1865; Trinder, *Victorian Banbury*, 106.

25 BG 2 January 1873; 10 April 1873.

26 BG 24 December 1879; 12 August 1880; 1 February 1883; 15 March 1883.



It was all good fun, but there was a serious side. The link between the brewing and licensed trades and political influence was a major issue in later Victorian Britain. It was especially prominent in parliament, where the clout wielded by the ‘beverage’ in the upper house was widely held to ensure favourable treatment for the drink business in all its aspects. George’s career in local government shows that during his lifetime it was perfectly possible to work in the drink trade and to play an active part in Liberal politics. This was not so in the next generation: Margaret Stacey shows that the attitude to drink was a key divide between Anglican/Conservative and Nonconformist/Liberal Banburians in the first half of the twentieth century.<sup>27</sup> At a local level councillors might have a conflict of interest between, for example, allowing the longest possible licensing hours and the need to maintain law, order and public calm. The more censorious elements in Banbury, and George’s political opponents, suspected that he was overtly partisan in the exercise of his roles as councillor and member of the Board of Health. An exchange in August 1872 with his sparring partner, Brazier, touched humorously on the question of self-interest, when the state of the footpath in Fish Street was discussed: ‘Mr Crosby “It is very uncomfortable”, Mr Brazier “Self, self” (laughter), Mr Crosby “No selfishness in that. I have to walk over it often (renewed laughter)”’.



*Figure 3. Third town hall, built c.1801.  
Image reproduced in Banbury Past Through Artists' Eyes, p.105.*

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<sup>27</sup> Margaret Stacey, *Tradition and change: a study of Banbury* (Oxford University Press, 1960); my thanks to Barrie Trinder for this point.



*Figure 4. Fourth town hall (1854). Photo taken 1878: © Reproduced by permission of Historic England Archive ref: CC66/00770.*

### **Small town politician**

As we have seen his father, George senior the baker, was politically aware. His being a witness to the writ which returned Henry Tancred as MP for the borough is a striking example of a man who, while in a modest trade, played a public role in the politics of a small borough. George senior had clear political views: the poll books for the 1837 and 1841 general elections show that he and his brother Thomas (chairmaker of Bridge Street) voted for the Liberal candidates, and in September 1841 George the baker was among the burgesses of the town active in a public meeting convened to petition parliament, urging decisive measures to relieve the ‘alarming distress of the industrious part of the community’.<sup>28</sup> There was therefore a family background of political involvement and support for a progressive agenda.

George himself first appeared in a political role in mid-March 1849, when he was 28 years old, had been agent for Hopcraft’s brewery for two years, was a married man with two small sons, and had achieved a certain respectability. His debut was the annual dinner of the Banbury Reform Association, an organisation founded in 1837 and dedicated to electoral reform; the repeal of the window tax, the soap tax and especially the Corn Laws; and the abolition of church rates, an agenda which could be summarised as ‘Civil and Religious Liberty’.<sup>29</sup> The evening passed with numerous long and turgid speeches about taxation and tariffs and, as with almost every Victorian gathering of middle-class males, many songs and

<sup>28</sup> OHC BB/XIX/iv/10, 11.

<sup>29</sup> Trinder, *Victorian Banbury*, 54-55 discusses the Reform Association in some detail.

recitations of verses. George served as a steward for the evening.<sup>30</sup> Events such as this were crucial in cementing political alliances, enmeshing participants in political activity—crucial for someone such as George who came from a humbler background than most of Banbury’s Liberal political elite.

**Banbury Annual Reform Dinner.**

**T**HE Reformers of Banbury intend dining together in the Great Room, at the Wheatsheaf, Mr. John Hearn's, on Tuesday, the 13th day of March, at Four o'clock precisely.

**T. R. COBB, ESQ., CHAIRMAN.**

**STEWARDS:—**

<p>MR. SAMUEL ALLEN. MR. JAMES ALLGOOD. MR. JAMES BATTLE AUSTIN. MR. RICHARD BAUGHAN. MR. JOHN BAZELEY. MR. FREDERICK BEARSLEY. MR. EDWARD BENNETT. MR. GEORGE BEERE, <i>Horse Fair</i>. MR. THOMAS BEERE. MR. HENRY BOLTON. MR. THOMAS CAYE. MR. JOHN CHENEY, SEN. EDWARD COBB, ESQ. MR. ROBERT COCKERILL. MR. GEORGE CROSBY. MR. EDWARD CURTIS. THOMAS DRAPER, ESQ. MR. ROBERT FIELD. MR. GEORGE FRENCH. MR. R. GARDNER. MR. JOHN GAZBY. MR. CHARLES JOHNSON GIBSON.</p>	<p>MR. SAMUEL GLAZER. MR. RICHARD GOFFE. MR. JAMES GOLBY. MR. JOSEPH GRAYE. MR. THOMAS HATHAWAY. MR. CHARLES HAYWARD. MR. HENRY HERBERT. MR. WILLIAM HERBERT. MR. JAMES HILL. MR. W. KIBBLE. MR. CHARLES LAMPITT. JOHN MUNTON, ESQ. WILLIAM MUNTON, ESQ. MR. C. PAGE. RICHARD HENRY ROLLS, ESQ. MR. WILLIAM STEVENS. THOMAS TINS, ESQ. MR. D. STUTTERD. JAMES SIBLEY WHITTEN, ESQ. MR. T. SHARPE WILLETTS. JOHN WISE, ESQ.</p>
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H. W. Tugred, Esq., M. P. for Banbury, will attend; and other Gentlemen have expressed their intention of being present.

Tickets, 2s. 6d. each, may be had of the Stewards; and at the Bar of the Wheatsheaf Inn.

☞ Gentlemen intending to take Tickets, are requested to do so on or before Friday next, the 9th of March.

*Banbury, March 3rd, 1849.*

*Figure 5. Banbury Guardian, 10 March 1849*

Elections to Banbury Corporation were contested relatively infrequently, most councillors being returned unopposed, but the election in early November 1850 generated some modest excitement: as the *Banbury Guardian* reported, ‘the only contest was one set up by some of the licensed victuallers [to] secure the return of Mr George Crosby, agent to Mr Hopcraft, brewer of Brackley: Walford 120; Allgood 118; Hunt 107; Prescott 82; Crosby 74 (for the last hour of polling the contest between Mr Prescott and Mr Crosby was a very close one, sometimes the one and sometimes the other being one or two votes ahead, and it was not until five minutes before the clock struck four that it was evident Mr Prescott would be returned)’. Though unsuccessful, this first venture into electoral politics, with open hustings and public voting, marked George as an ambitious young man seeking a higher public profile—and the intimate

<sup>30</sup> BG 10 March 1859.



connection with the licensed trade, a hallmark of his later political career, was flagged up at the very start.<sup>31</sup>

George bided his time, dutifully voting for the Liberal candidate Henry Tancred in general elections, until 1 November 1859, when he was elected as a town councillor at the age of 38. The *Banbury Guardian* reported the voting figures: Henry Cowper, draper of High Street (143 votes); William Rusher of High Street, actuary at Banbury Savings Bank (121); George Crosby, ale and porter agent of Fish Street (107); and William Caless, farmer, auctioneer and estate agent (94). Just over a year later, on 15 November 1860, Councillor George Crosby was elected by his fellows to membership of the Banbury Board of Health, a body legally separate from, but in practical terms inextricably intermeshed with, the Corporation.

Once there, he was unmoveable in a town where, as Barrie Trinder notes, the Liberals exerted an almost unchallengeable control over local government. At the expiry of his first term as a councillor, in November 1862, he was returned unopposed, and three years later, with 122 votes, he topped the poll of six candidates, all of them Liberal. It would be wrong to suppose that this was a sinecure. There can be no doubt that George was dedicated to hard work and was genuinely committed to serving his town in the best way he could. When in November 1865 he was re-elected to Board of Health he was described as ‘one of the most efficient members’. At the same time he was appointed to the Watch & Finance Committee of the town council, the ‘inner cabinet’ of Liberal members; and on 18 January 1866 for the first time chaired a meeting of the Board of Health. At that stage there was no fixed chairman and meetings of the Board could be headed by anybody who was proposed. Barrie Trinder notes that the Board of Health had a rapid turnover of membership and that ‘only one member served without a break through the 1860s’: he does not name the man, but he meant George.<sup>32</sup> When in November 1870 it was suggested that the Board of Health should have a standing chairman the mayor argued against the idea, claiming that it was a heavy burden and a lot of work, but George Crosby retorted that he had ‘attended all the committees and have not had half the honour (a laugh)’.

Small-town politicians were as eager or as reluctant for high office as their city colleagues. Being a member of Banbury Corporation and Board of Health gave George a good deal of local influence.<sup>33</sup> He was a large fish in a small pool, and inevitably made enmities as well as friendships. As a staunch Liberal, he potentially incurred the disfavour of Conservatives in the town and on the Corporation, and in a world limited in physical and demographic size it was unavoidable that he might be talked about disparagingly. In April 1869, when he had been a member of the Corporation for a decade, a new alderman had to be chosen. George was forced to declare at a meeting of the town council that although the rumours were that ‘he was in the field himself and had been asking votes’, that was quite untrue.

Indeed, he was still only a councillor and the greatest prize awaited him. On 14 November 1872 he was chosen by his fellow-members of the Corporation as mayor for the coming year, and

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<sup>31</sup> *BG* 4 November 1850.

<sup>32</sup> Trinder, *Victorian Banbury*, 95.

<sup>33</sup> George was also for many years a member of (and chairman of) the Banbury Burial Board, an offshoot of his role as member and chairman of the Board of Health.

on 21 August 1873 was elected as standing chairman of the Board of Health. On that occasion he was described by Councillor Flowers as ‘a gentleman who ... had done a vast amount of work for the town. He did not know anyone who would fill the office better or discharge the duties more thoroughly’, while Councillor Osbourne considered that ‘They could not have a member better acquainted with the details of the work of the Board’.<sup>34</sup> On 9 October 1873, while still mayor, George became an alderman, filling the place left vacant by the death of James Grimby. The year 1872-1873 was an *annus mirabilis* for his political and social career, although an *annus horribilis* personally: his wife Elizabeth died in April 1872, aged only 48.

There can be no doubt, therefore, that much of his later life was devoted to the town of his birth and the institutions of its government. In mid-November 1871, re-elected as a member of the Board of Health, it was said that ‘he had been a very active and efficient member for some time past (hear, hear) ... they all knew the business tact of Mr Crosby; his thorough knowledge of the Board; and the interest he took in what was done there’.<sup>35</sup> This was not idle flattery: as the length of his service grew, and his intimate knowledge not only of Banbury and its people but also of aspects of the law and finance was increasingly clear, his role as a solid and reliable townsman became more prominent. He was somebody to be consulted, whose opinion carried weight, whose wisdom was that of an elder statesman. This might seem exaggerated, but the reports of Corporation meetings and the regular sessions of the Board of Health make it clear that George, despite his modest background but by virtue of his experience, practical approach, and financial and legal sagacity, was highly influential in Banbury’s political and social circles.

The latter aspect – his role in Banbury society – is harder to pin down, because it was often private. There are no newspaper reports of small dinners among friends, convivial evenings at the tavern, or quiet meetings in the parlour of 63-64 Fish Street where George and Elizabeth lived. But passing references in the *Banbury Guardian* show how, in the years before he became a councillor, he carefully developed a public role. In December 1853 it reported a housewarming dinner at the *Buck and Bell*: George, as ‘agent to Mr Hopcraft at Banbury’ presided over the festivity. Five months later, at the inquest into a ‘Shocking suicide in Banbury’, he was foreman of the coroner’s jury. The press regularly printed subscription lists and lists of those present at public events. In mid-December 1854, a year into the Crimean War, George gave ten shillings to the ‘Patriotic Fund’ which raised money for the war effort. Almost two years later, victory being assured, he was a member of the committee which organised the peace celebrations in Banbury, and of the committee appointed to arrange the grand public tea and two bands to provide music.<sup>36</sup>

There was no shortage of opportunities to play a public role and to reinforce his image as a worthy citizen. At the general election held at the beginning of May 1859, shortly before he was elected to the Corporation, George was a special constable stationed in front of the *Red Lion* when a mob of about 100 men burned a straw effigy of Sir Charles Douglas, the candidate supported by a curious alliance of Conservatives and radical Liberals. Presumably George, as a mainstream ‘traditional Liberal’, sympathised with the malcontents but had a

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<sup>34</sup> *BG* 21 August 1873.

<sup>35</sup> *BG* 16 November 1871.

<sup>36</sup> *BG* 1 December 1853; 6 April 1854; 14 December 1854; 29 May 1856.



different role to play. At the end of May 1860 he was appointed corporal of the 1<sup>st</sup> Banbury Company of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Oxfordshire Rifles; in late February 1863 he was on the organising committee for the celebrations to mark the marriage of the Prince of Wales to Alexandra of Denmark, including the arrangements for the grand ball in the Central Corn Exchange; and in July 1870 he subscribed a guinea to the Banbury Volunteer Fire Brigade, heading the list but for the local gentry. In April 1872, at a turning point in his domestic and political circumstances, he donated a cask of stout as a prize for the Spring Shooting Competition held by the Rifle Corps.<sup>37</sup> His eldest son Edwin John Crosby was a competitor—the blurring of boundaries between his personal, social, political and legal roles was characteristic of anyone in such a small world.

The one aspect of Banbury society with which George had apparently no identifiable affiliation or involvement was its religious life. Barrie Trinder comments that ‘It would be possible to name the churches or chapels attended by almost all the other individuals ... who were active in local government in Banbury – John Kilby and William Edmunds were Wesleyan; Henry Stone and the Gilletts, Quakers; James Stockton, Anglican, Richard Brazier, Primitive Methodist, Joseph Osbourne, Calvinist. It is quite remarkable that such a public figure as George had no obvious attachment to any church or chapel’.<sup>38</sup> The only reference to a member of the family being involved in any religious cause, during the whole period from 1850 to 1886, was in 1852 when Elizabeth Crosby donated to the Christ Church, South Banbury, building fund – and that might clearly have been imply a social gesture. George never seems to have attended religious events of any denomination, and neither was he involved in the Sunday Schools and other ancillary activities of the town’s churches, or with church or chapel fundraising. Given the large number and variety of causes, events and public activities with which his name *was* associated, there seems no doubt that he deliberately and consciously eschewed involvement with religion. Overt religious affiliation was a powerful force in Victorian middle-class society, but George was able to achieve his goals without it – perhaps a further sign of a forceful personality who commanded widespread respect.

George’s reputation and social status were not damaged by a minor scandal in the autumn of 1872, when James Bliss, a shoemaker of Brackley, accused him of assault and demanded £30 damages. The plaintiff stated in the borough court that on 19 September he visited George at his house in Fish Street in relation to a property dispute, and that George hit him several times and drew blood. Much murky evidence was revealed about Bliss, his bad character and his pestering of George, but the latter admitted to having taken him by the scruff of the neck and thrown him out, during which the plaintiff ‘slipped on a step’, and that he had kicked Bliss. George was fined 10 guineas for using excessive force in removing the man from his house: the impression is of a man with a short temper who did not shy away from physical confrontation, but ‘much laughter’ in court suggested that those present sympathised with him. The *Guardian* report carefully failed to mention that he was the mayor of Banbury at the time. Perhaps a Liberal paper would not lightly expose a defect in the character of a prominent local Liberal politician?<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> *BG* 5 May 1859; 31 May 1860; 12 February 1863; 28 July 1870; 18 April 1872.

<sup>38</sup> Personal communication 17 January 2019.

<sup>39</sup> *BG* 24 October 1872.

<b>THE CORPORATION DINNER.</b>		
The Corporation Dinner took place at the White Lion Hotel on Monday evening. The Ex-Mayor presided, and Messrs. H. Walford and G. Stevens were the vice-chairmen. The Mayor elect was unable to attend through indisposition. Upwards of one hundred gentlemen sat down to a dinner of a most sumptuous character, and which reflected the greatest credit on Mrs. Croed. The general arrangements were efficiently carried out, and left nothing to be desired. The following was the bill of fare —		
<b>SOUPS.</b>		
Turtle.		Julienne
<b>FISH.</b>		
Red Mullett	Turbot	Cod Fish.
	Fillet-de-Sole.	
<b>ENTREES.</b>		
Curried Rabbits.	Orster Patties.	Stewed Kidneys.
	Mutton Cutlets and Tomato Sauce.	
<b>REMOVES.</b>		
	Haunch of Venison.	
Roast Turkey.	Roast Beef.	Boiled Turkey.
Ham.	Goose.	Tongue.
Roast Fowls.	Boiled Beef.	Boiled Fowls.
Ducks.	Pigeon Pie.	
	Saddle of Mutton.	
<b>GAME.</b>		
Pheasants.	Partridges.	Hares.
<b>SWEETS.</b>		
Blanc Mange.	Garibaldi Pudding.	Italienne Cream.
Plum Pudding.	Apple Tart.	Mincee Pies.
Punch Jelly.	Custards.	Genoises a la Reine.
	Massideo of Fruit.	Lemon Jelly.
Marrow Bones.	Swiss Pudding.	Parmesan Straws.
<b>DESSERT.</b>		

Figure 6. Dinner for George Crosby as out-going mayor, *Banbury Guardian*, 13 November 1873

After his mayoralty ended in November 1873 George, now an alderman, could appear on other public stages, including those that were overtly political. Shortly before Christmas 1874 he was present, on the top table with the MP Bernhard Samuelson, at a dinner for 300 people which was sponsored by the Australian Meat Agency to promote the import of cheap Australian meat for the working classes and to expand the food supply of the nation. In September 1876 he presided over the dinner at the *White Lion* which marked the retirement of William Thompson, for many years the superintendent of police. George was supported on his left by Bernhard Samuelson MP and on his right by the mayor, Henry Stone. Truly he had, through his own strong personality, reached the upper echelons of Banbury society.<sup>40</sup> A man in his position was also on the guest list of many other events and occasions. In May 1875 he was a judge at Banbury Athletic Sports Day; in September 1876 was among the dignitaries present at the annual dinner of Banbury Agricultural Association; and in 1878 was one of the important guests at the annual dinner of the Banbury Working Men's Liberal Association. Just after New Year 1880 he was present at a private dinner in the *Unicorn*, given by William Edmunds (the ex-mayor, and senior

40 *BG* 17 December 1874; 7 September 1876.

partner in Hunt Edmunds brewery, the fierce rival of Hopcraft's). The celebration was for borough officials, members of the borough police force, and personal friends, and it is recorded that 'Wines were placed upon the table without stint'.<sup>41</sup>

Of course, other local politicians performed very similar roles, as patrons of events, guests of honour, and 'networkers', and likewise a very important dimension to a public role was that good causes must be supported. In February 1881, for example, George subscribed half a guinea to the fund for coals for the poor, in September 1881 he gave 10s. to the fund to purchase new uniforms for the fire brigade, and in June 1884 donated a guinea to the appeal for the new Mechanics' Institute. Local pride and local independence were significant motives for action: in November 1881 George and his second son, George junior, were listed as members of the Neithrop Association for the Prosecution of Felons, an organisation founded in 1819 and counting most of the town's elite among its members. In July 1884, reinforcing the notion of a fiercely independent civic identity, George vehemently opposed the proposed amalgamation of the borough police force with the county force: 'we shall lose all control over the police in this borough if we amalgamate'.<sup>42</sup>

By this time, however, there were disturbing signs of ill-health and exhaustion. During the autumn of 1877 George (aged 57) missed three meetings of the Board of Health, and in March 1879 he announced that he proposed to stand down as chairman because of pressure of work. He resigned on 24 April, to the accompaniment of numerous tributes from colleagues, but a fortnight later agreed to resume the chairmanship for six months, a period which expired unnoticed so that he carried on in the role. During 1880 he was absent because of an unspecified medical condition in January and February and again in late August and early September. On 11 November he was re-elected as an alderman and to the Board of Health, nominated by Alderman Edmunds who was sure he 'would serve them as well in the future as he had done in the past (applause)'. A week later, when he was yet again re-elected chairman of the Board, one member declared that 'we would all be very sorry to lose Mr Crosby, and I am sure I am only expressing the wish of all present when I say I hope his health is re-established and that he will still be able to carry on the business'. George replied that he 'had feared that he would not be able to carry out the duties as his health had been very indifferent of late but he would endeavour to attend as often as he could and do the duties as well as he could'.<sup>43</sup>

By now he apparently chaired the Board by right, as his personal fiefdom, and in 1882 real signs of opposition to this unending tenure became apparent. The matter was brought to the fore by a campaign to achieve 'proper' representation for Grimsbury and Neithrop, whose combined population now exceeded that of the old borough but whose increasingly vocal inhabitants felt marginalised and ignored. George, as chairman, acted as returning officer for the election of Board members and should therefore have been impartial, but critics pointed out that he had publicly made comments in favour of specific individuals, and had personally nominated Mr White, 'of whom it could be said that "he never said a foolish thing and never did a wise one"'. Josiah Shepherd of Neithrop declared that 'Mr Crosby, having been dictator of the Board of Health for so long, sought to impose his will on the electors of this district; but

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41 *BG* 6 May 1875; 21 September 1876; 24 October 1878; 8 January 1880.

42 *BG* 10 February 1881; 8 September 1881; 17 November 1881; 19 June 1884; 17 July 1884.

43 *BG* 11 November, 18 November 1880.

if he [Shepherd] had read the electors of this district aright, they would not be led away by what Mr Crosby said'. Mr Hankinson was no less outspoken:

'if he knew anything of the Grimsbury people, he knew that they would not have men thrust down their throat by the chairman of the Board ... they had been told that it was very unnecessary to have any change of men, and very unnecessary to run to any expense in the matter, for they had now capital men – men who had served on the Board of Health for twenty years ... he could not put his finger on anything special that they had done for the town. He was not there to find particular fault with anybody, but he did say that when men had been on the Board of Health for twenty years ... then the time had come when they should have some new blood (cheers) and did not believe in men sitting at any Board and saying "Yes, sir" and "No, sir" to what might be proposed'<sup>44</sup>

The poll was held at the beginning of April and returned Shepherd (930 votes) and Hankinson (920), with White receiving only 408 votes. The old guard had been effectively challenged, or so it seemed, but later in April George was unanimously re-elected as chairman, saying that 'his health was better now than it was last year'. The election was followed by a heated debate about method and conduct of elections, during which Shepherd emphasised that his criticisms were not aimed at George but at the system as a whole. The equilibrium, or perhaps the suffocating inertia, had been restored.<sup>45</sup>

Despite his claim to be in improving health, George was deteriorating. When he was re-elected as chairman in April 1883, members spoke of him being 'so thoroughly acquainted with the duties of the Board that they would be at a loss without him ... from his long experience of it, and his knowledge of legal matters, they could not do better than to reappoint him'. He replied that 'as they wished he could serve them, he would endeavour to do his best as he had done for the last three and twenty years ... he thought he knew their business well, and he had no doubt that they would all work harmoniously together'. During 1883 and 1884, 'through indisposition', he was frequently absent from meetings of the Board and the Corporation, and on 28 February 1884, introducing a report on waste disposal, he wryly observed that 'One of the horses [at the sewage farm] was nearly thirty years of age [and] it has been in the service of the Board as long as I have been (laughter)'. Two months later he was lauded by colleagues because his 'general knowledge of men and things, in addition to his knowledge of legal matters, had been in past times exceedingly valuable to them', Councillor Flowers adding that he 'hoped for many years to come'.<sup>46</sup>

But his powers were starting to fail: newspaper reports of meetings reveal his irritability, forgetfulness and bad temper. Thus, in July 1885 during a discussion of a visit to inspect the footpath on Southam Road, 'the chairman [George] said he did not know the committee was going' and he had to be put right by Mr Hankinson: 'it is on the minutes that they were to go'. That autumn a fractious meeting discussing the proposed site of a new contagious diseases or isolation hospital was marked by prolonged bickering between George and Messrs Shepherd and Hyde. Just occasionally, flashes of the old liveliness reappeared: in February 1886, debating

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<sup>44</sup> *BG* 30 March 1882.

<sup>45</sup> *BG* 6 April 1882; 20 April 1882.

<sup>46</sup> *BG* 19 April 1883; 28 February 1884.

a proposal to cut down trees on The Green, Hankinson said that ‘They are such precious treasures to some people. Let them stand’, and George responded ‘Appoint a committee’. Councillor Gibbs was ‘rather pleased to see the trees standing last season, even though we passed a resolution to cut them down’, to which George declared ‘Let them stand. “Woodman, spare that tree” (laughter)’.<sup>47</sup>

His last years were clouded not only by deteriorating health, but also by the embarrassing behaviour of his son George (my great-grandfather). The death of Elizabeth in 1872 left George a widower with a son, Edwin John, and two daughters, Elizabeth and Clara, living at home. The third son, William, had already left—he was an apprentice ironmonger in Wisbech in 1871, and an ironmonger’s shopman in Warwick in 1881.<sup>48</sup> Elizabeth married George Frederick Wiggins, auctioneer of Broad Street, Oxford, in the spring of 1876; Edwin married Eliza Mary Davis of Banbury in August 1880; and Clara married Richard Loxley of Hong Kong at St Pancras Church, London, in September 1884.

However the second son, George junior, became a lawyer, which at first must surely have pleased his father. Aged 21, he received special commendation in the Law Society examinations, when articled to Thomas Wallace Goldring, a prosperous London solicitor, and in October 1873 married Thomas’s sister Kate. They came back to Banbury, living at West Street in Neithrop. George junior went into practice as a solicitor: his name frequently appears in reports of local court cases and also (with that of his wife) in local social news. But in January 1885 he did not show up at a case to represent his client, although he had already pocketed the fee. The judge described it as ‘a flagrant piece of misconduct ... it is simply scandalous and should be represented to the Law Society or the Public Prosecutor’. Only a month later, in a different case, George failed to deliver the case papers on behalf of his client, and another judge felt that ‘I am sure we must all regret much the melancholy position Mr Crosby appears to be in’.<sup>49</sup> These misdemeanours were probably the result of his disastrous personal life: in May 1884, when they were living at 30 Horsefair, Kate had sued her husband for divorce or judicial separation, giving vivid details of his physical abuse and ill-treatment of her and their four children. She failed, probably because he had not committed adultery. But in his will written on 14 October 1879 George had expressly excluded George junior from inheriting anything. A clause states that this was ‘because in my lifetime I have advanced to and paid for him sums of money which much exceed the portions ... given to my [other] children herein named’. His second son had proved to be a feckless, dishonest and frequently violent drunkard and spendthrift.<sup>50</sup>

Re-elected as chairman of the Board in April 1886, his 27th year as a member, George ‘hoped the members present might live to be members of the Board for 27 years, but he doubted it very much’.<sup>51</sup> At the end of August he was among those who expressed condolences on the death in office of the mayor, William Johnson, but his own last public appearance was at the special meeting of the Corporation on 23 September 1886 when the successor to Johnson was chosen. A week later the *Banbury Guardian* reported his sudden death from heart failure.

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47 *BG* 30 July 1885; 11 February 1886.

48 William emigrated to British Guiana: in February 1889 was appointed first lieutenant in the Volunteer Company at Georgetown; and died there on 31 October 1890 (*BG* 14 February 1889; <https://www.vc.id.au/tb/bgcolonistsC.html>).

49 *BG* 29 January, 19 February 1885.

50 The National Archives divorce court files J 77/319/9558.

51 *BG* 22 April 1886.



George was buried in Southam Road cemetery alongside his wife Elizabeth, on 6 October 1886. The *Banbury Guardian* reported that ‘a number of the shops in the High Street and Fish Street were closed, whilst the blinds were drawn in many other places of business and private residences. The Mayor and Corporation, the members of the Board of Health, and a number of private friends followed the funeral cortege (a hearse and two mourning coaches) from the deceased’s residence in Fish Street to the cemetery. The coffin, which was of polished oak, with massive brass furniture, was carried from the cemetery gates to the chapel by a number of employees of the deceased’. At a private meeting of the Corporation on 4 October his death was marked by a resolution in tribute: ‘Mr Alderman Crosby ...continuously for more than a Quarter of a Century has been a Member of the Council, had served the Borough as Mayor, and for the past thirteen years as one of the Representatives of the Council had been Chairman of the Local Board of Health, and desires to record its high sense of the valuable public services rendered by him in the various public offices which he filled so acceptably, and with so much ability and zeal’.<sup>52</sup>



*Figure 7. Monument of George Crosby in Southam Road cemetery.*

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52 *BG* 7 October 1886; OHC BB/II/i/7 Corporation minutes 1881-1889.

Two weeks later the newspaper advertised that Messrs Kilby and Mace, solicitors to the executors, sought anybody who might have claims upon the estate, and on 16 November the contents of 63-64 Fish Street were auctioned. When the will was proved on 22 December 1886 by Harry Kilby and Edwin John Crosby the gross personal assets of the deceased amounted to £703 0s 9d, but debts stood at £1454 8s 5d. George Crosby died financially burdened, his public image as an affable, hardworking and devoted citizen having concealed deeper troubles.

In 1891, five years after George died, there were 301 boroughs in England and Wales outside London, ranging in size from Liverpool with 517,000 people to minnows such as Bishops Castle, Shropshire (population 1,586) and New Romney, Kent (1,366). Banbury, with just over 12,000 people, was characteristic of a large category of historic boroughs which were important commercial and service centres and had grown significantly during the century – others were, for example, Stratford-upon-Avon (8,300 people), Kendal (14,400), Faversham (10,400) and Beverley (12,500). In these smaller towns taken together, thousands of men had been councillors and aldermen in the period since the reform of municipal corporations in 1835. Many, like George, saw this both as a civic and political service and also as a key to social status and prominence in the community. Of course there were plenty who were indolent, inept, incompetent or even venal but George - hardworking, dedicated and committed to public service - had his counterparts in every borough up and down the land.

Yet such men have been neglected by historians, who have tended to study the large towns and great cities and to focus primarily on the high profile and influential figures such as the Chamberlains in Birmingham. The role of the Georges of Victorian Britain has been largely ignored, despite their vital role in the transformation of the lives and lifestyles of millions of people. When George died in 1886, Banbury had gas, piped clean water, improved medical care, public amenities such as the baths and parks, street-lighting, paving and properly surfaced roads, sewerage and drainage, refuse disposal, a well-managed burial ground, nuisance inspection, building standards, and much else. Almost none of that was evident when he was born in 1821. The Corporation after 1835, and especially the Board of Health from 1852, had been instrumental, during their long and tedious meetings and with their exhaustingly close attention to the minutiae of policy implementation, in raising the standards of the town's environment and improving the quality of life of so many of its citizens. I am proud to be able to claim that my great-great grandfather exerted a powerful influence in that process, and in doing so played a prominent role in the creation of the modern town.

# BRIAN LITTLE REMEMBERED

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*Barrie Trinder*

Brian Little lived in Banbury for nearly 60 years. He taught from 1961 until his retirement in 1995 at what is now Banbury and Bicester College, and was Chair of the Banbury Historical Society between 1995 and 2004, but is best-known for his weekly columns on local history in the *Banbury Guardian*, about 1,200 of which appeared between December 1995 and his death in March 2019. His column was a hub of local history in Banbury and district. Residents and far-flung native Banburians set him letters, some with dubious tales of ‘what they had always been told’. He drew on the memories of many local people whom he interviewed, and had a particular skill in drawing the historical significance from printed ephemera, auction and exhibition catalogues, programmes for dramatic productions or fetes, collections of menu cards or old guide books.

The Banbury Historical Society’s next records volume will be an anthology of about 100 of Brian’s articles, entitled *Banbury Remembered: Looking Back 1995-2019*. The book is arranged in five chapters, ‘Market Town Business’, ‘Localities’, ‘Schools & Colleges’, ‘Pastimes & Sports’ and ‘World War Two’. The articles in the volume have been selected because of their originality – they are based on interviews, letters from readers or the analysis of ephemera, and include material that is unavailable elsewhere. The collection, edited by Dr Barrie Trinder, extends to 250 pages, with numerous illustrations and a comprehensive index. The book went to the printer before the current Coronavirus crisis and will be distributed as soon as possible.

As a foretaste of the book we are producing the article on Hoods the Banbury Ironmongers, one of many about the town’s principal shops. It was decided at an early stage in editing to concentrate on articles about Banbury itself, but Brian Little did sometimes write about villages in the vicinity. We are therefore including his article on the sale at Broughton Castle in 1837 which is not in *Banbury Remembered*. It is nevertheless a good example of how Brian could bring out the historical significance of printed ephemera.

## **Hoods, the Banbury Ironmongers.**

This year is exactly 80 years on from when Stephen Hood and Edward Henry Hood – ironmongers and co-partners – entered into an agreement with William Stephens Orchard and Ernest Walter Orchard. The outcome was that the two Orchards secured the business and the goods which went with it. In effect this means 35 and 36 Bridge Street – of which the latter was occupied by Walter Richard Sansbury. Their deposit was £200 and the rest of the money was due to be made in instalment by July 1, 1920.

Banbury people have not only cause to celebrate an anniversary but every reason to treasure a unique part of the town’s trading fabric. Few customers can ever have emerged from Hoods empty-handed even if what they carried away was but a single nail. In some delightful jottings about the shop, an unnamed employee has recorded memories of the old Hoods, a place of numerous rooms of varying sizes split up by passageways that turned shop heating into a nightmare occupation.

The Banburyshire that this this business was structured to serve was largely rural lacking in many amenities we now take for granted and lived in by a dwindling number of blacksmiths, wheelwrights and saddlers. There was paraffin in abundance and no shortage of Duplex lamps with spares. Grates and ranges catered for the numerous coal fires while tin kettles for repair nearly equalled tin kettles for sale. Shoeing iron went to blacksmiths over an area that ranged from Ettington to Waddesdon. Kittle did it matter that the wheelwrights were left only with repair work by the 1940s – Hoods held the materials for the job.

A significant part of the Hoods reputation tag has been attributable to the long service combined with civility. Someone who typified with was Percy Miller who gave over 50 years and saw the workings of most aspects of the firm's activities. Like several other members of the shop and office staff down the years, Percy entered fully into the wider life of the town. He kept goal for Stones and played in the Black Diamond Dance Band that gave pleasure to many in the 20s and 30s. Length of association was also true of the management level. A good example was the Stanleys, Fred and his sister. When the *Banbury Guardian* photographer caught them lifting glasses charged with something good, they were able to lay claim to 108 years between them – 1953 was his 60<sup>th</sup> year in the shop. Much later, in 1993, the paper recorded the passing of Cyril John Baylis. Full- and part-time Cyril gave 60 years to the Hoods brand of ironmongery and this included a spell as manager. He finally departed the shop aged 80. So great had been his involvement that the shop closed on the day of his funeral.

Richard Edmunds's [ironmongery business] in Bridge Street was acquired by S and E H Hood in 1872. Sixty-five years later an advertisement appeared in a 1937 Coronation supplement that included the proud statement, 'Through 5 Reigns we have served the Public well'. This claim is no less true today than it was when George VI came to the throne. ... In an early 1930s directory ... the firm emphasised that its stock could not be 'excelled anywhere in the district' nor could service be anything less than 'second to none'. The advertising style of the time permitted them to add 'our prices, too, give us a right to solicit your orders'. An impressive list of potential customers showed that they confidently expected to hear from country houses, estates, farmers, motorists, builders, wheelwrights, plumbers, painters, engineers and shopkeepers. They were even visited by Banbury Fair showmen.

Since 1948 the business has come under the able direction of the Jakemans, first Kenneth and now Stephen. Remarkably both had the same background of education and work experience in metallurgy before turning to the retail trade. Stephen first became involved in 1972 ... Hoods then became even more a family business when Stephen's wife Clare joined him in the running of the firm and later their daughter Elizabeth helped out in her school and university holidays. During the Jakeman era several members of their staff have continued the good old tradition of long service. With closure looming many people are reflecting on the old shop. In this context some notes written by former manager Cyril Baylis make fascinating reading. He stressed the large number of rooms of varying sizes with nearby passages and the need to moisten wooden floors before dust could be removed. A wander through this emporium would reveal the paraffin lamps associated with country establishes, grates and ranges, horseshoes for blacksmiths, spokes for wheelwrights, as well as cast-iron pumps. His recollections covered the now famous drawers for the likes of nails and screws and confirmed that whether you wanted fork handles or four candles you always got them on a shopping trip to Hoods.



In 1983 a new version of Hoods rose from the ashes of the old store. A change of style and presentation with the coming of the Castle Centre made this necessary. Fortunately many of the old trading practices remained. Stock size and variety were undiminished. There was still a willingness to sell items in small quantities, and on hand was the ever-present Jimmy to cut keys and repair locks, even though from the late 1980s his workshop had moved upstairs.

The closing of Hoods, as many letters to the *Banbury Guardian* have revealed, is the end of an era. Certain items will be more difficult to acquire and there is the inevitable concern that the disappearance of this fine old family business is one more step along the road to town centre cloning. Over many years the confident title Hoods the Banbury Ironmongers generated a sense of place, purpose and pride. In a recent Operatic Society programme for *Oklahoma*, Hoods' advertisement included the shrewd observation that this shop is 'where every visit is filled with a sense of discovery'. You can't get nearer the truth than that....

The recent closure of Hoods the ironmongers on March 10 [2007] has been an occasion for sharing nostalgic memories of this wonderful old family business. Among those people with a tale to tell is Brian Hilton of Banbury. He first worked for Hoods at the outset of the 1950s when he was still at school. Two hours in the evening combined with being a Saturday boy earned him 25/- (£1.25) a week. This early experience probably explains why Brian opted to work for the Bridge Street ironmongers when his school days were over. Hoods needed an errand boy and Brian soon became familiar figure on his trade bicycle. ...In 1952 Brian was upgraded to the trade department of Hoods, a move that was worth a mere 5/- (25p) a week extra but did make him more aware of who was who at Hoods. In particular he made the acquaintance of the firm's commercial traveller, a Mr Gill, who travelled everywhere in his familiar Morris Minor.

During four years spent on Hoods's pay roll Brian got to know the regular customers, many of whom were farmers and plumbers. Much requested items included rolls of netting that were stored in a warehouse in Factory Street. One hundred yards of wire mesh could be rolled out along the roadway and a mark on the wall of a building ensured that this measure was accurate. Factory Street and the way it was orientated in relation to the shop meant that the canal was but a short distance away. Here, Tooleys at their boatyard sharpened tools and overhauled lawnmowers. Mr Plester, the associated blacksmith at the boatyard, burnt out handles of forks and replaced them. When wheelwright customers arrived on Hoods doorstep this same combination of forge and yard provided the expertise for coping with spokes and rims.

A feature of Hoods day-to-day trade in the 1950s that has remained long in the collective memory was the incessant queues despite the availability of up to four or five shop assistants. Maybe the fact that all the money had to go through one till was responsible for this. This arrangement certainly ensure that all those who served the public had a part to play even though they might not have much to do with senior staff whose contributions were almost entirely office-related. Such people remained figureheads to most – theirs was a world apart.

*Banbury Guardian* 2 July 1998; 8 March 2007; 12 April 2007.



*Figure 8. A trade display by S & E H Hood, probably at a local agricultural show.*



*Figure 9. Broughton Castle. Photo, Chris Day.*

## **The Great Sale at Broughton, 1837**

A recent programme in the series for television entitled 'Antiques Inspectors' was devoted to the Banbury area. Appropriately, a niche was found for some of the current treasures of Broughton Castle. One hundred and sixty years ago the castle was the scene for the sale of the century. During 12 days of July in 1837 the castle was indeed the venue for the disposal of items which Messrs Enoch and Redfern described as rich and costly effects of taste and virtue. These ranged from a portrait of Isabella (Queen of Spain) to a full-size canoe with paddles said to have been brought to England by Captain Cook. All people participating in the sale were supposed to abide by certain conditions.

Naturally the highest bidder was deemed the purchaser but in the event of a dispute the auctioneers demanded re-sale. At each and every stage, five per cent was the minimum advance per bid with no permitted retraction. On purchase of an item there was an expected five shillings in the pound deposit. Failing this, items could be re-sold, so buyers had to ensure collection of their gains within two days. This also implied prompt payment and possibly forfeiting of deposits in the event of unclaimed items.

The opening day of the sale was Tuesday, July 4, and was on a magnificent scale with a large and valuable collection of paintings. Highlighted especially was an early picture of two Capuchin Friars, painted and finished in the early style of Titian and judged to be by the Master. There were also numerous portraits, whole and half-length of distinguished and eminent people from different historic times. Included in these were Cromwell, Charles II, Horace Walpole, Hogarth, Sir Christopher Wren and Queen Charlotte.

Not surprisingly furniture was prominent in the sale with a valuable assortment of ancient carved Elizabethan items together with a state bed bearing all the trimmings, crimson silk damask hangings and richly ornamented carved canopy. There was, in fact, a whole drawing room suite in the style of Louis XIV and secured from the Palace of Versailles and Lacken. For those into chinaware, a Spode dinner service was on offer and embraced tea and breakfast items.

Opportunity for the public to see these wonders occurred during the period from June 26 to the day of the sale. 1/6d secured a descriptive catalogue which was available at the castle, Slatters, the Oxford booksellers, Bloxham of Banbury, Mr Williams, the Cheltenham librarian, Stanton, the auctioneer at Northampton and the sale auctioneers themselves, either at Warwick or Leamington.

An exciting aspect of the first day of the sale was evidence of trophies of various hunts abroad. Cape Buffalo horns and the fin of a whale contrasted sharply with a stuffed and very fine full-grown Cape male lion, together with the jacket worn by the captor which was greatly damaged and marked. Amongst the other souvenirs of travel, pride of place must go to a full-sized canoe, perfectly carved in curious ornamental characters on the sides with grotesque figured heads. The canoe originated in the Sandwich Islands and was first secured at the sale of Captain Cook's widow. As the description justly states, here was a striking memento of that celebrated navigator's perilous expedition.

For those with a keen interest in the new autumn fashions, it is interesting to note item 17 of the list consisted mainly of rare and fine old bronze medallions but also one square-toed, high-heeled shoe together with red Morocco slippers of a former Lord Saye and Sale.

On the 12<sup>th</sup> and final day of Enoch and Reffern's sale the outstanding features were a small and compact greenhouse, a fountain with lead pipes, two alores, a miscellany of garden trolls and a range of livestock including two milch cows, two Chinese sows, a bay pony a swan with cygnets and a peacock.

Named rooms and their striking contents were the focus of attention on Saturday, July 15<sup>th</sup> 1837. Sir Thomas Lucy's room had a Spanish touch with its wardrobe and was home to a Brussels carpet, but recognised Oxfordshire skills in the shape of Witney blankets for the mahogany four-post bedstead. Lord Eardley's and Lady Hawk's rooms both contained four-post bedsteads but had contrasting carpets, eight yards of Brussels differing from 17 years of Kidderminster. Amongst the trays kept company by a brass bracket lamp and a bronze tea urn was the highlight of the butler's pantry, namely a large and handsome blue and white best Spode dinner service.

Alfred Beesley in his 19<sup>th</sup> century *History of Banbury* refers to an account of Broughton Castle by J H Parker of the Oxford Society for promoting the study of Gothic architecture. It says 'The appearance of this fortified mansion with its moat and tower gateway is exceedingly picturesque from every point of view'. As this brief description and today's photograph demonstrate, Broughton was a superb setting for those days of mid-summer madness when so many outstanding effects came under the hammer.

*Banbury Guardian* 2 October 1997.



## NOTES AND QUERIES

(This new item will, we hope, become a regular feature of *Cake & Cockhorse*. We welcome from anyone questions or conundrums which you hope a reader might be able to explain. Or perhaps you have historical material that is intrinsically interesting and significant but that does not stretch to a full article; or you might have suggestions for research. Please submit any such material to the Editor.)

## ORIGINAL SOURCES FOR LOCAL HISTORY

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*Helen Forde*

The following list of sources for local history is by no means definitive but offers a start for those who are wondering what they are and where they can be found. While many of the sources can be found locally (local archives, history centres etc.) there are also national sources which give a great deal of information about people and places. These can be daunting but the Discovery Catalogue at The National Archives (TNA) has an astonishing number of entries (32 million) from more than 2,500 archives all over the country and is well worth investigating (<https://nationalarchives.gov.uk/>). The site also includes useful information leaflets on sources for all kinds of research. The British Library (BL) and other major research libraries with manuscript collections are also worth checking for family history, maps, plans and printed material.

Although the following are divided into groups to make identification easier, many can be used for information on more than one subject.

<b>Subject</b>		<b>period</b>	<b>sources</b>
<b>Population and genealogical records</b>	Domesday book	1086	Original at TNA but widely available in print in facsimile, in the Phillimore edition of individual counties with translation or online at <a href="http://www.domesdaybook.co.uk/">http://www.domesdaybook.co.uk/</a>
	Parish registers	Mid sixteenth century to 1832	Many parishes have records of baptisms, marriages and burials held in local archives. Some have been published by local record societies or are available through <a href="https://www.ancestry.co.uk/">https://www.ancestry.co.uk/</a> or <a href="https://www.findmypast.co.uk/">https://www.findmypast.co.uk/</a>
	Bishop visitations	Medieval and early modern	Ecclesiastical records which include estimates of parochial populations. Held in local archives or in print form, usually published by local record societies.

	Census returns	1841 and decennially to 1911	Online at <a href="https://www.findmypast.co.uk/">https://www.findmypast.co.uk/</a> and <a href="https://www.ancestry.co.uk/">https://www.ancestry.co.uk/</a> Available free to personal researchers at TNA.
	Electoral registers	1832 to present	British Library.
<b>Manorial records</b>	Manorial documents	Medieval to 1925	Manorial Documents Register maintained at TNA and accessible online; <a href="https://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/manor-search">https://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/manor-search</a> gives brief descriptions of court documents and details of their locations.
<b>Taxation records</b>	Lay and clerical subsidies	Medieval and early modern period	Details of taxation levied by the government or the church are on the TNA database <a href="https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/e179/default.asp">https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/e179/default.asp</a>
	Hearth Tax	1660 - 1689	Lists of householders with taxable properties as well as those exempt. Available at TNA, some local archives or in publications by the British Record Society, see <a href="https://www.britishrecordsociety.org/">https://www.britishrecordsociety.org/</a>
	Land tax	Late 18 <sup>th</sup> century to 1832	Assessments for voting rights in local archives held at TNA and some local archives.
<b>Personal records</b>	Wills and probate records	Medieval to 1858	Wills and probate records are available in local archives or in print form, usually published by local record societies. Wills of those with property in more than one diocese are found in the Borthwick Record office (York) or TNA (Canterbury). Many of the latter are available online from TNA through the Discovery catalogue.
	Letters, papers, diaries	All periods	British Library or other main libraries with mss collections; county record offices; private archives; TNA.
<b>Land and agriculture records</b>	Terriers	Medieval to early modern period	Church and landed estates often compiled records of holdings; local archives, British Library or other libraries with mss collections.
	Estates	Medieval to modern period	Landed estate records often contain accounts, correspondence, maps and plans; found in local archives, libraries, TNA and British Library.

	Tithe Commutation Act	1836	Tithes in kind to be converted to more convenient monetary payments called tithe rent charge. Apportionments, maps and files at TNA, copies in local archives.
	Parliamentary Enclosure awards	From 1845	Held at TNA. Catalogue of all the parliamentary and non-parliamentary enclosure are listed in Kain, Chapman and Oliver <i>Enclosure maps of England and Wales 1595-1918</i> (Cambridge University Press, 2004).
	Valuation Office survey	1910-1915	Survey of all properties in the country with notebooks and maps detailing worth, ownership and use in TNA.
<b>Parish records</b>	Rate books	16 <sup>th</sup> -19 <sup>th</sup> century	Assessments for poor rates, repair of the highways and the repair of the church. Held in local archives.
	Churchwardens' Accounts	16 <sup>th</sup> -20 <sup>th</sup> century	Parish financial records and routine expenditure held in local archives. Printed versions published by local history societies.
	Vestry minutes	16 <sup>th</sup> -19 <sup>th</sup> century	Records of parish meetings, decisions on rates to be levied and appointments held in local archives.
	Overseers of the poor	Pre 19 <sup>th</sup> century	Accounts including costs of removal, settlement certificates, held in local archives. Quarter Session records often include material on the poor law, held in local archives.
<b>Transport records</b>	Railways	19-20 <sup>th</sup> centuries	Initial documentation is held in the Parliamentary Record Office. Records of private railway companies held in TNA up to nationalization.
	Canals	18-19 <sup>th</sup> centuries	Initial documentation is held in the Parliamentary Record Office. Some canal companies records are at TNA, others in local archives or the Canal and River Trust <a href="https://collections.canalrivertrust.org.uk/browse">https://collections.canalrivertrust.org.uk/browse</a>
	Roads	18 <sup>th</sup> -20 <sup>th</sup> century	Initial documentation for Turnpike Trusts is held in the Parliamentary Record Office. Records of the Trusts are also held there, in TNA or in local archives. Thereafter records for Highway Districts and following bodies are in local archives.

<b>Education records</b>	Schools	Pre 19 <sup>th</sup> century	School records are often found in ecclesiastical or charity records in local archives. Endowed schools usually hold their own archives.
		19 <sup>th</sup> century onwards	Pre 1870 Education Act records held in local archives and TNA; post 1871 Educational census parish files held at TNA together with other later Board of Education information.
	School log books	19 <sup>th</sup> century onwards	Records of local schools kept by head teachers in local archives.
<b>Law and order records</b>	Assize records	1559-1971	Serious criminal case records held at TNA.
	Chancery	Late 14 <sup>th</sup> century to 1558	Civil cases heard in Chancery held at TNA. Much local and individual information available by using the Discovery catalogue.
		1558-1875	Civil cases heard in Chancery held at TNA as above.
	Criminal registers	1791-1892	TNA or Ancestry.co.uk
	Old Bailey Trials	1674-1913	<a href="https://www.oldbaileyonline.org/">https://www.oldbaileyonline.org/</a>
	Petty Sessions and Quarter Sessions	Medieval to 20 <sup>th</sup> century	Held in local archives.
	Poor Law	16 <sup>th</sup> -19 <sup>th</sup> centuries	Parish records and Quarter Sessions records held in local archives.
	Prisoners		TNA and <a href="https://www.findmypast.co.uk/">https://www.findmypast.co.uk/</a>



## FLINT AXE FOUND NEAR THE LEYS FARM, MIDDLE BARTON

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*Christine Edbury*

One afternoon in October 1990, a near-perfect flint axe head dating from about 4,000 years ago, was found by Robert Knight whilst inspecting the crops in one of the fields near Leys Farm. As he did not know what it was, he took the axe to the County Museum in Woodstock, where it was identified by David Dawson, Assistant Curator. He dated the axe to the Neolithic period (4,000-2,200 BC). Neolithic simply means Neo (new) and lithic (stone).

The Neolithic people were the first of the farmers, settling in small groups and growing crops. Before that, the people were 'hunter/gatherers', always on the move to find food and shelter. So far, no remains on anything earlier have been found in our area.

Flint is not found in our part of Oxfordshire, the nearest source being the Chilterns. David Dawson, however, suggested that the flint used to make this tool was of very high quality, and may have come from the area around Ibstone Down, Wiltshire.

Ground and polished stone and flint was used to make tools for grinding, cutting, chopping and adzing. To make our axe, a large lump of flint would have been chipped into shape and then polished, using sand. Smaller flakes would then have been taken off the larger end to make a serrated, sharp edge. The finished axe would then have been hafted (attached to a rough wooden handle) and bound into place, possibly with lengths of hide or leather. The edge of our axe is still quite sharp – in fact the axe looks hardly used and may have been lost rather than discarded. The actual size of the axe is 22cm high and 7cm at the widest – the cutting edge.



*Figure 1. Both sides of the axe  
Photograph from the Bartons' History Group Archive.*



*Figure 2.*

*The axe, kindly donated by the Fleming family, and currently on display at The Oxfordshire Museum, Woodstock. Photographed in March 2010 by Christine Edbury, by kind permission of The Oxfordshire Museum, Woodstock.*

In 1976 pieces of flint were found and recorded from the field near the fishponds at Steeple Barton and it has been suggested that this could have been a flint working site. A tiny broken arrowhead was also found in a field near the Leys Farm. The arrowhead is from the Bronze Age, slightly later in date than the axe. A similar, but broken, Neolithic axe head was found in the 1970s, just over the parish boundary near Kiddington. So we now know that our Barton ancestors have been inhabiting the area around Steeple Barton for a very long time.

Our Barton Neolithic ancestors buried their dead in the long barrow, the remains of which can be seen up near Hopcroft's Holt, on the right side, heading towards Oxford. It looks like a pile of stones on a small mound now, with a fir tree at either end. It is marked as a 'hoar stone' on old maps.

In 1843 the tenant farmer of Barton Abbey blew up the large limestone slabs which made up the barrow for road stone, scattering the now small stones across the field. Subsequently, Mr. H. Hall, the new owner of Barton Abbey, gathered up the stones and surrounded them with metal railings, which have since been removed.



*Figure 3. The remains of the long barrow as seen from the Banbury to Oxford road, just past Hopcrofts Holt on the right-hand side  
Photograph from the Bartons' History Group Archive.*

There were two hoar stones recorded as far back as 1210. The other large stone, to be found in the woods near Barton Abbey, and marked as a Hoar Stone on the maps, is not so easy to date. Information from the Sites and Monuments Record, Oxfordshire County Council, County Archaeological Services, suggests that it might be part of a cromlech or dolmen – a portal grave. The remaining stone may have been the top or capstone. No dating evidence has been found around it. This, and the site near Hopcrofts Holt, has never been excavated.

The medieval field names such as Stanlow, Wistaneslawe (probably Whistlow), Langlawe, Nordlanglawe and Succelawe, are all evidence that there were more standing stones in the area.

### **British Archaeological Periods (approximate)**

<u>Palaeolithic</u> (Old Stone Age) 50,000BC=	<u>Mesolithic</u> (Middle Stone Age) 8,000BC =	<u>Neolithic</u> (New Stone Age) 4,000BC =			
<u>Bronze Age</u> 2,200BC =	<u>Iron Age</u> 800BC=	<u>Roman</u> 43AD=	<u>Anglo-Saxon</u> 450AD =	<u>Medieval</u> 1066AD =	<u>Post-Med</u> 1500AD

### **Bibliography**

*Archaeological Journal*, Vol. VI (1849), p. 290.

W. Potts, ‘Demolition of Cromlech’, Article of 1841 in Potts MSS, Banbury Museum.

‘Ruin of Druid altar’, articles in *Gardner’s* and *Kelly’s Oxfordshire Directories*.

Other information on sites in our area may be found on the website of the Ashmolean Museum: [www.Ashmolean.org/Research and Conservation/Antiquities/British and European Archaeology/Preserving and Enhancing Historic Oxfordshire/Site Information](http://www.Ashmolean.org/Research%20and%20Conservation/Antiquities/British%20and%20European%20Archaeology/Preserving%20and%20Enhancing%20Historic%20Oxfordshire/Site%20Information).

**[Editor’s note: the above article first appeared in *Bygone Bartons*, the journal of the Bartons History Group, Vol. 1 (2011), pp. 11-14. We thought that it merited a wider circulation, not least as an encouraging example of research being carried out by local groups within Banburyshire.]**

# King Henry VII's Visits to Banbury

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*Jeremy Gibson*

Henry VII tends to be overlooked in England's history. We all know he became King by his victory over Richard III in the battle of Bosworth in 1485. He was the first Tudor King, notoriously avaricious. Unlike his predecessors (and successors), his power rested on his acquiring and retaining great funds. 'A wealthy king was not necessarily strong, but a poor one would inevitably be weak' – a contributory factor to Henry VI's downfall. Henry VII achieved his riches by selecting advisers who were competent and loyal.

We had a glimpse of these in Bill Cope's article on 'William Cope of Hanwell' (*C&CH* 20, 5, pp.133-59, Spring 2017). Cope's career began in service to Lady Margaret Beaufort, the mother of Henry Tudor, in particular under Reginald Bray. This Bray became one of the king's foremost tax-gatherers, working with John Morton, the Bishop of Ely.

Though he is mainly remembered for 'Morton's Fork', a wily tax device, a recently published biography<sup>1</sup> counters Morton's denigration by former authors – after all, tax-gatherers have always been unpopular.

Originally a Lancastrian, after Henry VI's death Morton had been recruited by Edward IV. On his death Morton's loyalty was to his son. He was one of those present at the meeting when Richard Duke of Gloucester arbitrarily arrested Lord Hastings, immediately having him executed (Shakespeare, *Richard III*, act 3, scene 4). Imprisoned in the Tower, Morton escaped to exile and support of Henry Tudor.

With Henry's victory, he became the new King's Lord Chancellor and Archbishop of Canterbury, remaining in this powerful and intimate rôle until his death in 1500. To ensure taxes were paid and to counter possible rebels, Henry VII spent much of the earlier years of his reign on itineraries throughout England. Bradley includes Appendices of the King's itineraries and Morton's to 1500 – the latter demonstrating his normal residence in or near London dealing with administrative matters.

The King's first brief visit to Woodstock palace or hunting lodge was in July 1488, together with days in Oxford and Abingdon. However from 1494 until 1498, he regularly stayed at Woodstock, usually between July or August and September or October. Only in 1497 was he joined by Morton. In 1499 he was there for July. In 1500 he arrived in September, just before Morton's death. Unusually he stayed until December.

Early in the reign Henry VII's countrywide visitations tended to be to the north and midlands. Banbury didn't happen to be on his route until April 1493, on his way from Buckingham to Warwick. Banbury Castle belonged to the Bishop of Lincoln, who stayed there regularly.

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<sup>1</sup> *John Morton: Adversary of Richard III, Power behind the Tudors*, Stuart Bradley, 288pp., Amberley, 2019.



Presumably the King did so too. William Smith, one of the group previously serving Lady Margaret Stanley (formerly Beaufort), became Bishop of Lincoln in 1496. William Cope's Banbury home was in 'the great house on the Barkhill', just outside the entrance to the Castle. Although neither are mentioned in Bradley's biography, they must have formed part of the select group of Henry's financial operatives.

Further *en route* visits occurred in on 15<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup> September 1495, two nights on the King's way from Northampton to the now favoured Woodstock and on 10<sup>th</sup> June 1497, from Buckingham, again to Woodstock. On 15<sup>th</sup> September the same year he paid another specific visit, presumably spending the night, as he came from and returned to Woodstock again.

However, much the most intriguing visitation was in September 1498. Coming from Northampton, Henry VII appears to have stayed in Banbury on 15<sup>th</sup>, visiting nearby Edgcote on 16<sup>th</sup> (overnight), returned to Banbury from 17<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup>, though making another visit to Edgcote on 18<sup>th</sup>, before at last carrying on to Woodstock on 20<sup>th</sup>, where he stayed until mid-October.

He was very probably visiting Sir Reginald Bray, a close financial adviser to the King, occupant of Edgcote from 1492.<sup>2</sup> The manor and advowson of Edgcote was acquired, in 1535, by Thomas Cromwell. Later it was escheated to the Crown and granted to Anne of Cleves. She demised it to William Chauncy, in whose family it remained in the following centuries.<sup>3</sup>

### **Banbury**

1493 April 25	<i>en route</i> Buckingham to Warwick
1495 Sept 15-16	<i>en route</i> Northampton to Woodstock
1497 June 10	<i>en route</i> Buckingham to Woodstock
1497 Sept 19	from & back to Woodstock; there July-Sept
1498 Sept 15	Northampton to Banbury
Sept 16	Edgcote
Sept 17	Banbury
Sept 18	Banbury; Edgcote
Sept 19	Banbury
Sept 20	Banbury – to Woodstock (for rest of Sept/Oct)

### **Woodstock**

(1488 July 15 Oxford from Windsor; July 16 Abingdon)  
1488 Jul 18-19  
1494 Jan 22; Aug - Oct  
1495 June 23 - June 30; Aug 31; Sep 19  
1496 Aug 28 - Sep 6  
1497 July 28 - Sep 25; John Morton Aug 1 Sept 17  
1498 Sept 20 - Oct 18  
1499 July 7- July 23  
1500 Sept 5 - Sept 28; Oct 7 - Dec 13

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2 G.T. Baker, *The History and Antiquities of the County of Northampton*, vol. 1 (1823), p.493, and also Terry Breverton, *Henry VII: the Maligned King*. See 'William Cope of Hanwell', mentioned above, for Sir Reginald Bray.

3 C.F.C. Beeson, 'Edgcote House in 1585', *C&CH* 3.1 (Sept 1965) 19-22.

## SNIPPETS FROM THE ARCHIVES

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*Deborah Hayter*

From the Calendar of State Papers Domestic, 1673-5,<sup>4</sup> comes this summary of a petition from Joseph Stockle(y) to the King: *‘the petitioner was forced by his losses in the fire of London to repair to Banbury, his birthplace, where he has carried on the trade of a draper for about eight years, often requesting the magistrates for his freedom and offering to pay the customary dues, which has been hitherto denied, by means whereof he is often disturbed in his said trade, and praying a letter to the corporation for his freedom. July 1674<sup>5</sup>’*

We know that the intensity and devastation of the Great Fire of 1666 was such that many Londoners could not even work out where their own properties had stood or even where the streets had been, quite apart from the loss of all their possessions and stock-in-trade, so it is perhaps not surprising that some went back to their birthplaces, which they would have left to become apprentices in the city. Joseph Stockle was at first successful in his petition as a letter went from the King to the Mayor and Corporation of Banbury, directing them to make Joseph Stockle ‘who was forced by the late fire in London to repair to Banbury his birthplace’ a freeman of the town, ‘he paying the usual fees’. (From Windsor, 8 July 1674).

However, the story goes on with a letter back from the Mayor and Corporation of Banbury to the King ‘praying him to withdraw his letter of 8 July last, for making J. Stockley a freeman of the town, his statement that he had been a great sufferer by the fire of London and had retired to be a draper at Banbury, of which he was a native, being false, and he having misdemeaned himself during his residence there’. (August 1674)

The next letter is from Just(inian) Angell to the mayor of Banbury, presumably at the King’s direction: the letter rebukes the corporation for their non-compliance with his Majesty’s letter concerning Mr Stockle, and for prosecuting him instead, and declares there was no misinformation as to his birthplace, ‘he having been born near Banbury and having been a sufferer in the fire’.

Unfortunately, the story seems to end there so we don’t know who won, but probably at the receipt of the second letter the Mayor and Corporation may have thought it sensible to comply with the King’s direction.

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<sup>4</sup> Pp. 299 -300.

<sup>5</sup> This little story is among the large pile of notes, photocopies and transcriptions of original documents accumulated by Dr Paul Harvey while he was writing the history of medieval Banbury for the Victoria County History. He has kindly donated these to the society for the benefit of future local researchers. They can be consulted in the BHS library in Banbury Museum.

# WILLIAM MORRIS AT ALL SAINTS, MIDDLETON CHENEY:

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## *BANBURY CONNECTIONS*

Illustrations from R. Wheeler, D. Thompson, B. Goodey and R. Bellamy, *William Morris at Middleton Cheney: The Stained Glass in All Saints Church* (Fircone Books, 2019. Price £10 from bookshops, online suppliers or [info@firconebooks.com](mailto:info@firconebooks.com)). The book precedes a fuller account by Brian Goodey of the social and architectural circumstances of the Morris firm's early work at Middleton and its many links with the religious and social life in nearby Banbury. The present study provides a very detailed examination of the design and significance of All Saint's windows, together with a scriptural consideration of their intention. The illustrated and fully referenced larger volume should appear in 2021.



*Figure 4. East Window (1865)*

*Dedicated to the Croome family, Banbury physicians. Detail shows St. Peter, probably a Morris self-portrait.*



*Figure 5. West Window (1870s)*

*Detail of 'The Fiery Furnace' by Burne-Jones. The window is a memorial to William Horton, and to his last surviving child, Mary Ann Horton, benefactor of Banbury's Horton Hospital.*



*Figure 6. The Ceilings (1865)*

*Painted to William Morris's designs by Charles Cottam, 'painter, decorator and gilder' of Banbury. He was also the organist to Christ Church, Broad Street, Banbury, since demolished.*



## Book Reviews

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*Banbury's People in the Eighteenth Century: from Records and Accounts of the Overseers of the Poor 1708-1797 and other Lists and Sources*, transcribed and edited by Jeremy Gibson. Hardback, 365pp including biographical index of personal names, 2019 Banbury Historical Society vol 36 , ISBN 978 0 900129 35 3.

This volume provides a wealth of detail on the inhabitants of Banbury in the eighteenth century. The introduction provides a succinct overview of the civic landscape of the town, its responsibilities towards the parish poor in relation to its legal obligations and a look at the administration of the local workhouse. Its core comprises a transcription of the Accounts of the Overseers of the Poor (also referred to as the Vestry Book), from 1708 to 1797, previously unpublished and now held by the Oxfordshire History Centre at Cowley. It is indeed rare that such a detailed volume as this has survived, offering us a valuable insight into the lives of Banbury's people in the eighteenth century. What is even more noteworthy is that the volume is transcribed from the original handwritten material, which is a feat in itself, making the Vestry Book more accessible to demographic researchers, family historians and those with a wider interest in social history.

The volume is not only about the poor, however. Light is also thrown on a broader social spectrum of the town with space allocated to two events in the century; the building of the canal (1768-78) and the demolition of the parish church in 1790. It comprises lists of names of the better off, such as those assessed for land tax and rates (from which relief for the poor was paid), the names of pew owners (1691-1788), shopkeepers (1785-9) and overseers of the poor. A copy of the legislation for taking down the church is also included and the book is interspersed with appropriate excerpts from the *Jackson's Oxford Journal* where relevant. Finally, a comprehensive Biographical Index of personal names brings together the 2000 or so Banburians whose names appear in this volume.

The Vestry comprised the 'middling sort' of Banburian who acted as vestry members and as actual overseers. One of the roles of the Vestry was to help and sustain the poorest people of the parish. As the author explains in the book's introduction, particularly vulnerable inhabitants were the sick, aged, orphaned and illegitimate children and widowed mothers with young families. The overseers were responsible for distributing poor relief in the form of money, clothes (or, more likely, cloth and sewing thread) and shoes, and local women were employed by the parish as nurses for the sick and women in childbirth. The Vestry was also responsible for the appointment of the Governor of the workhouse and the setting out of his/her responsibilities. The parish clothed the poor upon entry to the workhouse, thereafter it was the responsibility of the Governor to clothe and maintain inmates, pay for funeral expenses should they die in their care and, with the exception of those with smallpox, pay for any medical care. The 1760s appeared to be particularly concerning for the Vestry when Governor, John Grant was discharged from his office after being 'complained against by the Overseer ... for supplying the said Workhouse with unwholesome Food for the Maintenance of the said poor' (p137).

A particular strength of this section of the book is the extensive footnotes which make the linkage between parish expenditure and the life events of some of those named. This has been done by cross-referencing detail from parish registers (proven in themselves to be a robust demographic study source), other primary documents and secondary material. This enables the reader to help build up a rounded picture of the lives of Banbury inhabitants and helps to 'humanise' those whose lives had been met with adversity. For example, in September 1749 the Vestry recorded that '... the affair relating to the late Thomas Allen's children be pursued in the best method they...the Overseers think proper' (p105). The author then provides supplementary information drawn from parish registers, informing us that Thomas was a victualler. He married Mary Maice by licence in May 1744. Their daughter, Mary was baptised in August 1746. Thomas died in November 1747 (when Mary was about a year old).

With reference to the building of the canal, the book includes several extracts from the diary of Sir Roger Newdigate (held in the Warwickshire Record Office), promotor of the canal project. From this source we learn that several local dignitaries pronounced their disapproval for the scheme 'without one reason' in 1768 (p145). However, ten years later, the *Jackson's Oxford Journal* demonstrated the impact on the community by reporting that the wharf would be constantly supplied with coal 'of an exceeding good Quality' ... so rejoiced are they [the inhabitants of Banbury]... the boats are intended to be ushered in, with Bells ringing, Colours flying, and a select Band of Music for the Occasion' (p178).

This book is a remarkable achievement encompassing a wide range of sources; there is a wealth of material here to explore and analyse and the writer is to be congratulated on what is the culmination of five years' work. It will, undoubtedly, encourage further research. For example, the abundance of known occupations of inhabitants over a long period can help to build further detail on shifting social patterns, and as the author suggests, publication of accounts spanning a period of 90 years opens the way for comparisons on poor relief spending.

It is an attractive book with an eye-catching cover. The current mayor of the town is noted for each year over the period and the names of all individuals are in bold type for easy reference. I'm sure it will inspire members of the Society and others to embark on further research into the workings of the parish and its people in the eighteenth century.

**Rosemary Leadbeater**

*B. Trinder, The Midland Canals in 1871: the Evidence of the Census* Robert Boyd Publications, Witney, 2019. 232 pp., illus. £14.95. ISBN 978-1-908738-35-6

As an historical tool the census is most used by genealogists. Barrie Trinder puts it to a different use, taking the data of the 1871 census to find out where people lived, particularly boat people. Since theirs was a nomadic existence, they are difficult to pin down. But the census enumerators did their best, even trying to cope with fly boats which operated through the night. Moreover, if one can record how many boat people there were on the Midland canal system in 1871, it is also possible to compare returns with 1861 (for instance) and track the rise and fall in the numbers of the canal population. We know that the canals suffered from competition from the railways and this research confirms when the decline began to set in about 1871.

Barrie Trinder summarises the object of his study as ‘to use the census returns to produce sound data on the canal system, to re-animate canals and rivers, to show which waterways were prospering and which were in decline, and to analyse what the schedules reveal about the lives of boatpeople, hoping to do something to rescue them from the condescension of those who regarded them as romantic heroes and vilification by those who despised them as sinful’. In this he is very successful, finding an impressive wealth of detail and recording it with as light a touch as the material will allow. It is a book of reference rather than a “good read” but it is well written and will please canal historians. The amount of detail accumulated by the author is truly amazing.

The book adopts a very elastic definition of the Midland Canals, stretching from Birmingham to Bristol, Wigan, Gainsborough, and London. The catalogue of names and facts across so wide an area is sometimes indigestible but for anyone interested in the fortunes of the canal system this is a price worth paying. Of particular interest is the light which Barrie Trinder sheds on a matter of public debate which was flourishing at the time, namely the alleged overcrowding of canal boats and the claims of licentiousness among men and women who were obliged to live in close proximity to each other in the confined space of canal boat cabins. These allegations were particularly made in a campaign orchestrated by George Smith of Coalville which led to the statutory requirement for registration and inspection of working boats in 1877 – a requirement which survived until the nationalisation of the canal system after the Second World War. The census evidence suggests that the allegations were significantly overstated.

The book is enlivened by a wealth of photographs, which are refreshingly different from the standard illustrations and line drawings of many canal publications. Who takes the credit? The book does not say. But I understand that Barrie Trinder was his own photographer and these reflect 50 years of happy snapping. The only criticism I would make is that photographs of Hatton locks and the Grand Union canal show views not of 1871 but of the present day; the locks were widened in the 1930s.

**Paul Hayter**

*Providence Lost: The Rise and Fall of Cromwell's Protectorate*, by Paul Lay, An Apollo Book, Head of Zeus, xx, 2020. 326pp., £30.00. ISBN 9781781852569 or 76

‘Providence’ dominated Oliver Cromwell’s life and that of many of his colleagues. Paul Lay’s ‘witty and incisive book’ reveals that although he was needed as the head of state after the King’s execution, he was only maintained in the position by the support of the large army. Even the remains of parliament disagreed with him. His own record of victories was blemished when he promoted an expedition to the Caribbean. This was disastrously defeated in its attempt to invade Hispaniola. That Jamaica was taken instead was largely coincidental, only becoming a valuable possession many years later.

However, the interest for Banbury historians came earlier. The Providence Island Company was established in 1630 by a wealthy Puritan clique to colonise this tiny island off the coast of what is now Nicaragua. In 1632 ‘Henry Halhed, formerly mayor of the Puritan bastion of Banbury’ led an expedition there of like-minded people (including his own family). For the rest

of the 1630s they disputed with the buccaneers who used the island as a base for raiding the Spanish settlers on the mainland. It all ended in 1641 when at their third attempt the Spanish successfully conquered the island and ejected the English colonists.

For the actual life on the island, Paul Lay mainly relies on Professor Kupperman's *Providence Island 1630-1641: The other Puritan Colony* (1993). His prologue interestingly relates in general to the wealthy puritan clique, such as Lord Brooke, in whose London home they met to establish the Providence Island Company. Passing mention is also made of Lord Saye and Sele and the supposition of meetings at Broughton Castle. 'The grandees had little practical experience of the Caribbean... they were armchair adventurers...'

Fifteen years earlier we'd published an article, 'Providence and Henry Halhed' by the late David Fiennes and myself (*C&CH* 7.7. Autumn 1978). So far as I know this is the first (and best) description of colonists' life on the island: for Banbury's (and other) puritans, and, in stark contrast, the buccaneers who used it as their base. It reveals the constant differences too of the various sects led by the feuding ministers. The Spaniards' fleets sent to eject the colonists were twice rebuffed by the puritan islanders. The second time is described in exciting detail. It's a great pity that, despite a footnote in Kupperman's book, Lay does not appear to have consulted it (available on the internet). Our own original vibrant sources would have enlivened accounts of what was actually happening on Providence Island during its English colonisation.

Unfortunately the index is selective. It names Henry Halhed, but not Banbury or Broughton Castle. Of course the book is mainly about Oliver Cromwell, as indicated by its sub-title. This is certainly interesting, but with no further direct relevance to Banbury.

**Jeremy Gibson**



# **JERICHO WALK, LED BY DAVID CLARKE**

## **13 JUNE 2019**

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*Simon Townsend*

Oxford owes much to the classical world, and vice versa perhaps, a stroll around the university city leading you to the Mesopotamia delta, the Tower of the Four Winds, and the temple-like St Paul's Church, designed in 1836 by Henry Jones Underwood, now Freud's cocktail bar. It is near here, at the Oxford University Press on Walton Street, where our tour of Jericho began.

David Clarke deftly led our party around this prosperous, lively and fascinating corner of Oxford, once known for prostitution and under threat of demolition only 60 years ago. His tour highlighted numerous buildings of interest, leaving our members to choose their own highlights.

The Oxford University Press was complete by 1832, and at that time stood alone in open fields just north of the city. An impressive building, a statement on its status as the largest university press in the world, and its ancient foundation in 1586, just a little younger than its competitor in the other place, founded in 1534.

Jericho has a wealth of building styles and periods, from the recent Blavatnik School of Government, designed by Herzog and de Meuron 2015; the Synagogue by David Stern and Partners 1973, the Italianate St Barnabas Church of 1872; to the Phoenix Cinema of 1913.

The visit concluded in St Sepulchre's Cemetery, neglected until 2005 when the Friends of St Sepulchre's Cemetery were formed. The cemetery is now a well-loved quiet corner of Jericho. Opened in 1848 it was fully reserved by 1855, although later extended. In 1887 The New York Times noted its disgraceful state, where bones were lying around on the surface; today it is the recipient of the Green Flag Award, a mark of quality for parks and green spaces.



## **Banbury Historical Society Annual Report 2019-2020**

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The annual report, which is required for the Annual General Meeting has to be prepared well in advance and normally this would include notice of the summer outings – this year, however, I regret that we have had to cancel those due to the Covid-19 lockdown, so the report will not be quite as complete as I would like. However, the Society has been active up to this point and has made considerable progress on a number of projects.

The full lecture programme was completed, with the exception of the Historical Artefacts Quiz which was due to take place in April; we hope to reinstate this at some point in the future. Deborah Hayter started the season with a talk about the Old Poor Law and how it worked in the 18<sup>th</sup> century; this was followed by a detailed account of the preparations for and subsequent battle of Edgecote in 1469 by Graham Evans of the Northants Battlefields Society, outlining the movement of troops and identifying the presumed location of the action. Unfortunately, Helen Wass had to cancel her November lecture on the archaeological activity along the route of HS2 due to the announcement of the general election but her place was ably taken, at very short notice by Wendy Morrison, who braved appalling weather and spoke about her archaeological work at Steane. December's lecture by Ewan Fernie on Lost Prophets; the unfinished dream of the 19<sup>th</sup> century centred on Thomas Carlyle and George Dawson and their views on equality and the opportunities of improved urban life while the January lecture on Peter the Great by Chris Danziger portrayed a man with some of the same ambitions for his citizens and who laid the foundations of modern Russia. The two final lectures were complete contrasts – in February Claire Millington spoke about the family details discoverable from the extant letters between soldiers of the Roman Empire living in Great Britain, many of whom were from other parts of the empire, and in March Frances Kerner of the Open Spaces Society explained the background to the concept of common land and the work currently being undertaken to register land previously overlooked when the register was first compiled. All the lectures were well supported with between 50 and 70 attenders, despite the upsets caused by the elements, the election and Covid-19. We look forward to seeing everyone again when it is possible to recommence the programme.

The museum library, holding the local history volumes given to the BHS by Jeremy Gibson, was open on Wednesday afternoons during the autumn and volunteers sat there to assist any readers who ventured in. The take-up was not great but those who did come found much useful information; just before Christmas the room was closed as the museum had received a generous donation from Rosemarie Higham for refurbishing and upgrading it. Unfortunately, this took longer than anticipated but it is now complete and when the museum re-opens the library will, too, but on Thursday afternoons which are more convenient for those attending BHS lectures. Before the lockdown we were poised to start cataloguing the books, which is much needed; it is hoped to restart this later in the year. The room will be renamed the Rosemarie Higham Library in recognition of her generosity.

You will have received this report with the new version of *Cake and Cockhorse*, which now appears as an annual journal in a rather larger size, making it much easier to reproduce maps and illustrations. As ever, it is a publication for members to read and contribute to and Chris Day, the indefatigable editor, would be delighted to receive articles and comments. Many thanks are due to him and to the designer, Jen Stephens; they have worked very hard to produce an attractive publication worthy of the BHS.

As I am writing this report 600 copies of the latest BHS publication are sitting in my hall, awaiting the end of the restrictions on movement for transfer to the museum. *Banbury Remembered: Looking back 1995-2019*, edited by Barrie Trinder, celebrates the work of the late Brian Little, a member of the BHS committee, chairman from 1995-2004 and weekly author for the *Banbury Guardian*. The book contains just under a hundred of his columns recording Banbury and its inhabitants in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Brian had a knack for extracting memories of Banbury in the past and he illustrated his articles with photographs and pictures, many of which are also reproduced. This is a publication which will appeal to all those who knew Brian, or read his articles and the committee is extremely grateful to Barrie Trinder who undertook the task of selecting the articles – from a number of different sources – editing the volume and indexing it in a very short space of time. A launch had been planned in May but will now take place in the autumn, when members will receive their copies. It is a pity that it has been delayed but I am sure the wait will be worthwhile. This is the 37<sup>th</sup> volume in the BHS Record Series, a total of which we should all be very proud; by no means all local history societies are able to produce such a distinguished and wide-ranging set of volumes.

Finally it is my pleasure to record my thanks to all those on the committee who work very hard on your behalf; they include Barrie Trinder, who has done so much work as above, Deborah Hayter who produces the e-newsletter and arranges the lectures, Chris Day who edits *Cake and Cockhorse*, Ian West who manages the website and who has been helping with the start of cataloguing the books, Rosemary Leadbeater who organises the summer outings, Brian Goodey who has arranged this year's AGM, Pamela Wilson who keeps an eye out for interesting archaeological work in the area, Geoff Griffiths, the treasurer, Margaret Little who manages the membership list, Clare Jakeman who sends out *Cake and Cockhorse* and last but not least Simon Townsend who is the society secretary, writes the minutes of committee meetings and sets up the room for the lectures. It's an excellent team and BHS would not function nearly so well without them.

Helen Forde

Chairman, April 2020

# HOW WELL DO YOU KNOW YOUR BANBURYSHIRE?

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A fun quiz to test your local knowledge. Sadly, no prizes this time but you do get the chance to earn bragging rights.

1. Who caused Banbury Castle to be built in the 12th century?
2. Why is the Tramway Estate in Banbury so called?
3. Which British Prime Minister lived within 10 miles of Banbury?
4. Which part of Banbury used not to be in Oxfordshire?
5. What did Banbury's Filling Factory No 9 fill?
6. What battle took place on 29 June 1644?
7. When was St. Mary's Church, Banbury, opened?
8. What pub is closest to the site of North Bar, Banbury?
9. Which writer lived at Juniper Hill?
10. What Banbury landmark was damaged by a bomb in the Second World War?
11. What was the Banbury Peculiar?
12. How many Iron Age hill forts are there within 15 miles of Banbury?
13. Which station was built to keep the Cartwright family happy?
14. The Borough of Banbury in 1832 consisted of how many acres: 81, 204, or 341?
15. When was E W Brown's Original Cake Shop demolished?
16. The Banbury Guardian was founded in 1838 to explain what law?
17. In what year did the Oxford Canal reach Banbury?
18. What was the first station out of Merton Street?
19. What connects Slat Mill and Broadmoor?
20. What Banbury brewery closed in 1972?
21. What is a Caracole?



# ACCOUNTS

## Banbury Historical Society

Registered Educational Charity 260581

### Income & Expenditure Account for year ending 31 December 2019

	<u>2019</u>	<u>2018</u>
	£	£
INCOME		
Subscriptions	3,535	3,677
Gift Aid tax refund	612	418
Sale of publications	230	225
Visitors' fees and other income	140	91
Donations	332	487
Records Volume - Grant Greening Lamborn Trust	2,000	0
Total Income	<u>6,849</u>	<u>4,898</u>
EXPENDITURE		
Cake & Cockhorse	1,408	1,215
Meetings	1,150	1,056
Postage and other administration costs	1,336	694
Bookshelves	519	4,431
Records Volume	4,618	0
Total Expenditure	<u>9,031</u>	<u>7,396</u>
	-	
DEFICIT for the year	<u><u>2,182</u></u>	<u><u>-2,498</u></u>

### Balance Sheet as at 31 December 2019

Balance of funds at 1 January 2019	11,022	13,520
Deficit for the year	-2,182	-2,498
Balance of funds at 31 December 2019	<u><u>8,840</u></u>	<u><u>11,022</u></u>

### Represented by:

ASSETS		
NatWest Bank Current Account	4,061	5,386
Leeds Building Society Account	5,992	5,989
Cash	22	47
TOTAL ASSETS	<u>10,075</u>	<u>11,422</u>
LIABILITIES - Subscriptions in advance	<u>-1,235</u>	<u>-400</u>
NET ASSETS at 31 December 2019	<u><u>8,840</u></u>	<u><u>11,022</u></u>

Geoff Griffiths, Treasurer

I have reviewed and examined the books and records of the Banbury Historical Society and confirm that the accounts prepared by the Treasurer represent a fair and accurate summary of the financial transactions completed in the year ended 31 December 2019.

Howard Knight FCMA, CGMA

23 March 2020

# HOW WELL DO YOU KNOW YOUR BANBURYSHIRE: ANSWERS

1. Who caused Banbury Castle to be built in the 12th century?  
**Alexander, Bishop of Lincoln.**
2. Why is the Tramway Estate in Banbury so called? **A tramway connected the two halves of the Bernhard Samuelson Iron works.**
3. Which British Prime Minister lived within 10 miles of Banbury? **Lord North, at Wroxton.**
4. Which part of Banbury used not to be in Oxfordshire? **Grimsbury.**
5. What did Banbury's Filling Factory No 9 fill? **World War I artillery shells.**
6. What battle took place on 29 June 1644? **Cropredy Bridge.**
7. When was St. Mary's Church, Banbury opened? **1797.**
8. What pub is closest to the site of North Bar, Banbury? **Three Pigeons.**
9. Which writer lived at Juniper Hill? **Flora Thompson.**
10. What Banbury landmark was damaged by a bomb in the Second World War?  
**Banbury Lock.**
11. What was the Banbury Peculiar? **A parish under the jurisdiction of the Bishopric of Lincoln, not the diocese of Oxford in which it was located.**
12. How many Iron Age hill forts are there within 15 miles of Banbury? **Nine.**
13. Which station was built to keep the Cartwright family happy? **Aynho Park station on the Marylebone line.**
14. The Borough of Banbury in 1832 consisted of how many acres: 81, 204; or 341? **81.**
15. When was E W Brown's Original Cake Shop demolished? **1968.**
16. The Banbury Guardian was founded in 1838 to explain what law? **The Poor Law Act, 1834.**
17. In what year did the Oxford Canal reach Banbury? **1778.**
18. What was the first station out of Merton Street? **Farthinghoe.**
19. What connects Slat Mill and Broadmoor? **The Oxford Canal.**
20. What Banbury brewery closed in 1972? **Hunt Edmunds.**
21. What is a Caracole? **A circular staircase in the wall of a Banburyshire house.**

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