

CAKE & COCKHORSE

BANBURY HISTORICAL SOCIETY





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Banbury Historical Society

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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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Abbreviations used in the articles

B&FC	Birmingham & Fazeley Canal
BA	<i>Banbury Advertiser</i>
BB	<i>Banbury Beacon</i>
BCN	Birmingham Canal Navigations
BG	<i>Banbury Guardian</i>
BUFA	Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit
C&CH	<i>Cake & Cockhorse</i>
FRS	Fellow of the Royal Society
GJC	Grand Junction Canal
IA	Iron Age
JOJ	<i>Jackson's Oxford Journal</i>
OC&RG	<i>Oxford Chronicle & Reading Gazette</i>
OJI	<i>Oxford Journal Illustrated</i>
OT	<i>Oxford Times</i>
SFB	Sunken-featured buildings
T&MC	Trent & Mersey Canal
TNA	The National Archives
VCH	Victoria County History
W&BC	Warwick & Birmingham Canal
W&NC	Warwick & Napton Canal

EDITORIAL

As you may be aware, Chris Day, the editor of *Cake & Cockhorse*, has been in hospital and I am very sorry to report that he died on 3 March. BHS owes him an enormous debt of gratitude for editing the journal since the summer edition in 2013, a task to which he brought erudition, good humour and tact. A tribute is included overleaf.

The articles in this edition have various themes running through them, and several complement each other; the sharp eyed will detect similarities and differences between two building companies which each served different clienteles in Banbury but whose interests and contacts clearly overlapped. Similarly, those who worked on or beside the canal, whether in warehouses or in operating lime kilns, were frequently in touch with those who needed building materials brought to the town from elsewhere. The waterways of the nineteenth century made a massive contribution to the development of the town linking Banbury with other centres and opening up new opportunities for business. Names and issues crop up in different ways which all contribute to the history of the busy centre that Banbury had become by the middle of the twentieth century. I make no apology for including an article on the plague by myself (accepted by Chris before he was ill) intended as a reflection on how other ages reacted to the threat posed by an unknown illness; written during the first lockdown it is even more pertinent now, given that the scourge later re-appeared; our ancestors must have experienced that same terror of inexplicable waves of a deadly disease.

As Chris noted last year, there is a new section entitled Notes and Queries intended for shorter pieces where the author can offer an affectionate look at family life, such as in Clare Jakeman's piece on the Orchard family or relate intriguing myths and legends, such as seem to have fascinated the inhabitants of Middleton Cheney in the last century; others are encouraged to reply, or add their experiences in subsequent volumes, or on the website. We really do appreciate articles and notes of all sorts; that is the stuff of local history and often lends colour to the merely factual.

I am grateful to all the contributors who have worked so hard on their contributions, to Barrie Trinder for assistance with the photographs and to Rosemary Leadbetter, Ian West and Brian Goodey who devised the pictorial quiz; I hope that it will encourage you to look around you in Banburyshire when we are all better able to do so. Finally, heartfelt thanks are due to Meriel Lewis who has expertly guided a tyro editor in the intricacies of the art of publishing a journal.

Helen Forde (Acting editor)

CHRISTOPHER JOHN DAY, MA, FSA

1946-2021

Tributes to Chris have been coming in thick and fast, emphasising his warmth, his support, his patience, his intellect and his encouragement for students to mention just a few of his attributes.

Others will have their own memories of him in differing roles, as a VCH editor, as a highly knowledgeable local historian, as an international tutor directing the Oxford Berkeley Program at Merton College, and as an author for the ODNB, ‘providing a characteristically meticulous survey’ for the History of the University of Oxford and contributing to numerous journals.

‘He was a brilliant teacher on anything from medieval to C20’

Chris was born in Stoke-on-Trent in 1946, obtained a first in history at Manchester University and began his local history career in 1975, joining the staff of the Oxfordshire Victoria County History. During his 20 years with the VCH he contributed to five volumes before going on to a second career in lifelong learning at Oxford University’s Department for Continuing Education in 1994. He joined as University Lecturer in Local History and eventually became Director of Studies for Local History, with special responsibility for the Master’s programme.

In 2006 he moved to the Department’s International Programmes Division, where he was Director of Academic Programmes. He was elected a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries in 1987 and a Fellow of Kellogg College in 1999, where he was Admissions Tutor (2002-5) and Senior Fellow in 2007.

Chris was also generous with his time in the local context – he was Honorary General Editor of the Oxfordshire Record Society for 25 years and had a long connection with the Oxfordshire Local History Association. He was President of OAHS from 2012 to 2017, and founded and chaired the Deddington and District History Society as well as being a longstanding committee member of the BHS and, since 2013, editor of *Cake & Cockhorse*.

We will all miss him enormously.



FOUR GENERATIONS OF THE KINGERLEE FAMILY IN BANBURY, 1841-1963¹

Liz Woolley

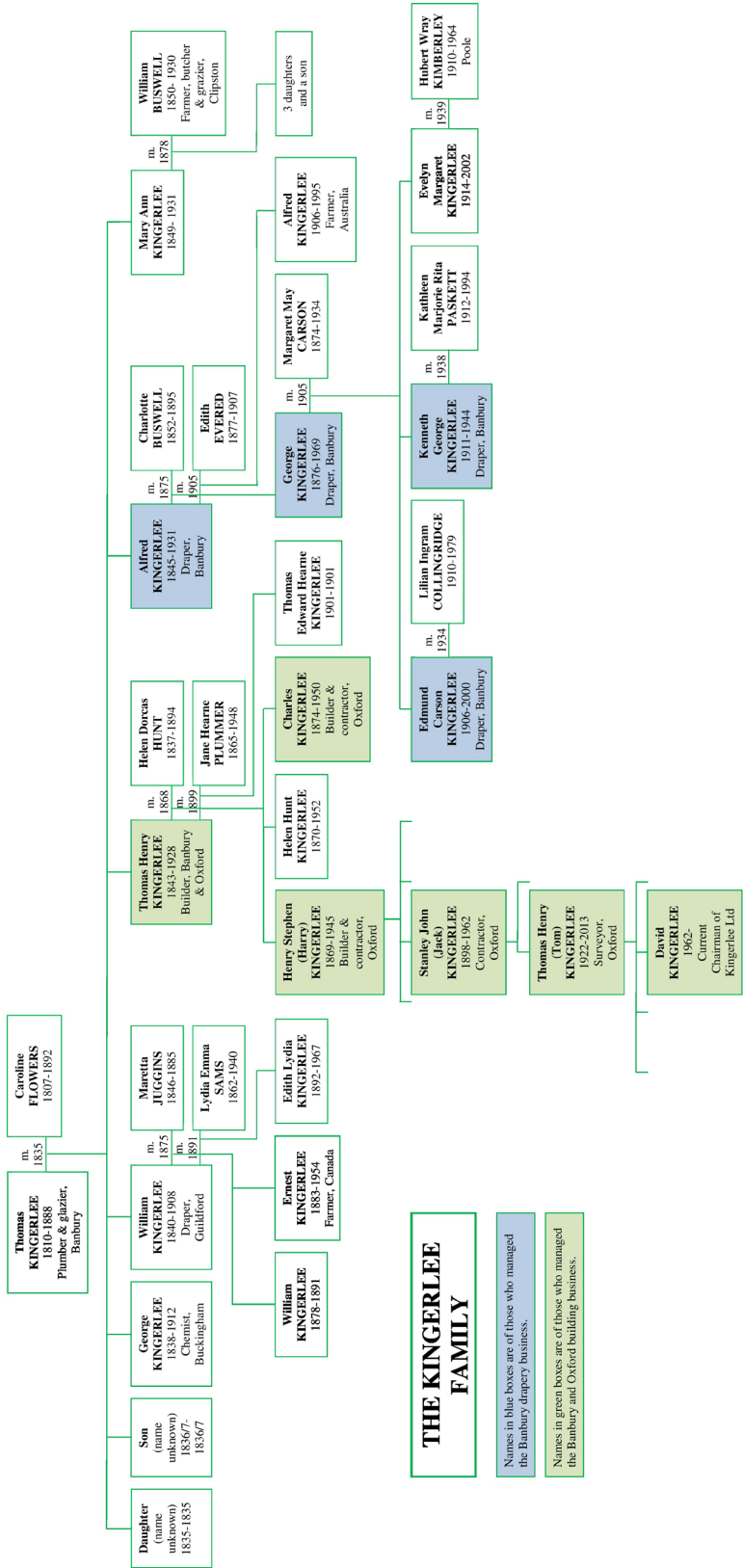
The family of Thomas and Caroline Kingerlee provides an interesting illustration of mobility – both geographical and social – during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Thomas and Caroline were born in small farming villages, set up home in Blockley and moved to the market town of Banbury. Thomas traded as a plumber and glazier and the couple were Nonconformists and Liberals. They were aspirational for their children, paying for them to be educated at the best schools and arranging good apprenticeships for their sons. The children inherited their parents' religious beliefs, their political views, and their concern for public service. Thomas and Caroline's daughter married a wealthy farmer and their sons developed successful businesses of their own. One of them, Alfred, set up a large drapery store in Banbury which traded under family ownership until the early 1960s. Another, Thomas, moved to Oxford and became one of the city's largest builders, employers and property-owners, and an influential local politician and churchman.

Thomas Kingerlee was born in 1810 in Kineton, Warwickshire, 11 miles north-west of Banbury. He was apprenticed to a Banbury glazier, John Bromley, and then moved to Blockley, a village near Moreton-in-Marsh known for its industry and in particular its silk throwing mills. In January 1835 Thomas married Caroline Flowers, the daughter of a mason. She had been born in 1807 in Nethercot, just to the east of Banbury, and the wedding took place in the parish church of St Mary's. The couple set up home in Northwick Terrace in Blockley, one of a number of terraces built in the early nineteenth century to house throwsters – the workers who twisted the silk fibres into thread – many of whom came from the great silk centre of Coventry.²

Thomas and Caroline's first two children died in infancy: a girl, born in November 1835, and a boy in 1836/7. Their third child George was born on 4 April 1838, followed by William (named after his paternal grandfather) on 27 July 1840. In the 1841 census George was staying in Banbury with his maternal grandparents John and Mary Flowers; Thomas, Caroline and ten-month-old William were at home in Blockley. Four months later, on 14 August 1841, the family moved to Banbury where Thomas took over the plumbing and glazing business of John Bromley, to whom he had earlier been apprenticed. Bromley, it seems, had recently died; he had been a freeman of Banbury, and his premises were in Parsons Street.³

Kingerlee was soon established: he was listed in *Pigot's Directory* of 1842 as a 'Painter, Plumber & Glazier'. In the same category, and also in Parsons Street, was Clement Bromley, John

1. This article is based on information found in numerous parish registers (of baptisms, marriages and burials); civil registrations of births, marriages and deaths; probate records; census returns; military records; electoral registers; telephone directories; and transport passenger lists. All this information is accessible by searching www.ancestry.co.uk using a personal name and date. To save space here, these primary sources are not referenced in full; however, any reader requiring more information on specific references is welcome to contact the author on liz@lizwoolley.co.uk. In writing this article, all on-line sources, including ancestry.co.uk, were consulted between 15 January and 15 February 2021.
2. George Kingerlee, hand-written "life story" 1858 (Kingerlee archives); 1841 census, Northwick Terrace, Blockley, Worcs (now Glos); Cotswold District Council, *Blockley Conservation Area Statement* (1998).
3. George Kingerlee "life story" 1858; 1841 census, St John's Street [Road], Banbury; 1841 census, Northwick Terrace, Blockley; RK Gilkes, 'The Chamberlain and his role in local government in Banbury, 1544-1835: Part 2', *C&CH* 10.3 (1986), 64, 67; Dorothy Mary Bromley, 'A Victorian childhood: Memoirs of Banbury during the early years of the life of Dorothy Mary Bromley', *C&CH* 17.9 (2009), 296.



Banbury Kingerlee family tree

Bromley's nephew and another of his apprentices (though later than Thomas Kingerlee, as he was eight years younger). It is possible that Kingerlee and Bromley shared John Bromley's Parsons Street premises for a while, or worked in the neighbouring buildings of nos. 10 and 11, both of which were later in Kingerlee's possession. By 1847, however, Clement Bromley had relocated to South Bar.⁴

The Kingerlees' move from Blockley to Banbury offered an opportunity for Thomas to expand his business. Blockley's silk throwing industry had been in decline since 1815, when the restoration of trade with Europe following the Napoleonic Wars released alternative supplies of silk on to the market. Although there were at least 15 other 'Painters, Plumbers & Glaziers' in Banbury in 1842, the population of the market town and its surrounding hamlets (c. 7,400) was almost three and a half times that of the parish of Blockley.⁵ Hence there was potentially considerably more business for tradesmen of all kinds.

Banbury was, moreover, a town with a long history of religious Dissent, and the Kingerlees were Nonconformists. When Alfred Beesley was writing his *History of Banbury* in 1841 there were eight Nonconformist places of worship in the town centre, several of them newly-erected. By 1851 the town's dissenting churches together attracted more people than the Anglican parish church; Dissenters possessed their own charitable and educational organisations and usually had a majority on the borough council. Although the Wesleyans were by far the strongest of the individual denominations, the Bridge Street Baptists and the Unitarians (formerly Presbyterians) on Horsefair had congregations of over 200 adults each. A new Congregational Chapel seating 500, with grand Doric façade, was built on South Bar in 1856-7.⁶

In politics Nonconformists, and in particular the Unitarians, were closely identified with the Liberal élite which was predominant in the town from the 1830s until 1860. Thomas Kingerlee voted for the Congregationalist Edward Miall, an Independent Liberal, in the Banbury by-election of February 1859, and for Independent Liberal Sir Charles Douglas in the general elections of April 1859 and July 1865. Douglas took the seat from the Whig (and Unitarian) Bernhard Samuelson in 1859, but lost it back to him in 1865; Samuelson (now a Liberal) went on to hold the seat for another 30 years. Thomas Kingerlee's sons Thomas and Alfred were later supporters of Samuelson, and in the early 1900s Alfred and his son George supported the Liberal Eustace Fiennes, who was elected Banbury's MP in 1906 and held the seat until 1918. Fiennes's success in 1906 was part of a landslide victory by the Liberals which reflected widespread hostility to the 1902 Education Act. Opposition was strong in Nonconformist circles and Alfred was active in the Banbury and District League which was formed to campaign against the Act.⁷

4. *Pigot & Co's Directory [of 12 counties including Oxon]* 1842, 341; Bromley, 'A Victorian childhood', 296; *Gardner's History, Gazetteer & Directory of Oxon* 1852, 443, 444.

5. Cotswold District Council, *Blockley Conservation Area Statement*; *Pigot's Directory* 1842, 341; in 1841 the combined populations of Banbury, Neithrop, Grimsbury, Nethercot and other nearby hamlets were 7,366; Alfred Beesley, *The History of Banbury including copious historical and antiquarian notices of the neighbourhood* (London, 1841), 561; in 1842 the population of the parish of Blockley was 2,134; *Pigot & Co's Directory [of 12 counties including Wors]* 1842, 864.

6. Barrie Trinder 'Schisms and Divisions: The Origins of the Dissenting Congregations in Banbury 1772-1860', *C&CH* 8.8 (1982), 207-21; Beesley, *History of Banbury*, 556-8; *Post Office Directory of Berks, Northants & Oxon* 1854, 525; 'Banbury: Churches: Protestant Nonconformity', *Victoria County History (VCH) Oxfordshire, Vol. 10, Banbury Hundred*, ed. Alan Crossley (London, 1972), 95-120, *British History Online*, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/oxon/vol10/pp95-120>.

7. 'Banbury: Churches: Protestant Nonconformity', *VCH Banbury*, 95-120; 'Banbury: Parliamentary representation', *VCH Banbury*, 89-95; *BA*, 05-05-1859, 4g; *BG*, 03-08-1865, 2d; 'Edward Miall', *Wikipedia*; Samuelson was the owner of the Britannia Works which manufactured agricultural equipment; it was by far the largest business in Banbury, employing 380 men and boys in 1861; 'Banbury: Economic history', *VCH Banbury*, 49-71; 'Banbury (UK Parliament constituency)', *Wikipedia*; *BG*, 27-11-1879, 6a; 12-11-1885, 7a; *BA*, 11-10-1900, 7d; 20-01-1910, 5e; many voters were alarmed at the abolition of popularly-elected and often progressive school boards, and the transferral of educational responsibilities to all-purpose local authorities – this, it was felt, would favour Anglican schools and militate against working-class pupils entering secondary education; NR Gullifer, 'Opposition to the 1902 Education Act', *Oxford Review of Education* Vol. 8, No. 1 (1982), 83-98; *BB*, 10-10-1903, 5b.



*The Original Cake Shop at 12 Parson's Street, Banbury, with the Kingerlees' house and business premises at no. 11 immediately to the left (from Alfred Beesley, *The History of Banbury* including copious historical and antiquarian notices of the neighbourhood (London, 1841), 569); the cake shop was demolished in 1968⁹*

Thomas and Caroline Kingerlee had been in Banbury for 18 months when another son, Thomas Henry, was born on 26 January 1843 at 10 Parson's Street. Soon afterwards the family moved into the neighbouring house, no. 11. This was next door to the famous Original Cake Shop, whose proprietor Samuel Beesley apparently sold an average of 5,400 Banbury Cakes a week.⁸ Living next door to such a shop must have been heaven for a child – or perhaps torture, depending on parental attitudes towards cake consumption. But Thomas's oldest brother George later wrote of 11 Parson's Street 'This house I remember with emotions of joy as the "Happy Home of my Childhood" from the doors of which I first tripped to school, and afterwards left to go into the world...'. The first school George attended 'when five or six years of age' was the infant school in Church Passage run by Mrs Frances Johnson. This had opened in 1835 and was supported by voluntary contributions and parents paying the 'school pence'; by 1840 there were over 260 pupils. From 'midsummer 1846' (when he was eight) until 'midsummer 1852' (when he was 14) George attended the Academy on Horse Fair, as a day pupil and, by 1851, as a boarder. This had been established in 1797 as a Presbyterian (later Unitarian) fee-paying school for boys. For much of the nineteenth century it was the leading educational establishment in Banbury, and many of its pupils went on to become prominent businessmen and civic dignitaries. In 1851 the headmaster Samuel Hill had eight live-in staff and 28 boarding pupils (including George). The majority were the sons of farmers; others of grocers, merchants and those in the building trades. Almost all were from Oxfordshire and neighbouring counties. Next door was a Ladies' Boarding School run by Miss Mary Hill, probably Samuel's older sister. This was a smaller establishment with four live-in staff and ten boarding pupils. Mr Hill retired in 1854 and William Hartley took over the Academy, serving as headmaster until 1883.¹⁰

8. George Kingerlee "life story" 1858; Beesley, *History of Banbury*, 568-9.

9. 'Banbury, Parson's Street, demolition of Brown's cake shop, April 1968', Oxfordshire County Council *pictureoxon*, ref. POX0123398, www.pictureoxon.com.

10. George Kingerlee "life story" 1858; *Pigot's Directory* 1842, 339; 'Banbury: Education', *VCH Banbury*, 120-4; Jeremy Gibson, 'Banbury Academy, 1797-1908', *C&CH* 19.3 (2013), 81; *BA*, 25-03-1897, 8a; 1851 census, Horse Fair, Banbury.



The Academy, 21 Horse Fair, where George, William, Thomas and Alfred Kingerlee were educated¹¹ (photograph courtesy of Clare Kelly)

A fourth son, Alfred, was born to Thomas and Caroline in 1845, sharing a birthday – 26 January – with his older brother Thomas junior. The arrival four years later of a perhaps hoped-for daughter, Mary Ann (named after her maternal grandmother), was announced in the *Banbury Guardian* and in *Jackson's Oxford Journal*: 'Births: May 2, the wife of Mr T. Kingerlee, of Parson's-street, Banbury, of a daughter.'¹²

The Kingerlees' oldest son George finished his studies at the Academy in the summer of 1852, when he was 14, and on 8 September that year left home to live with Mr James Lewis, a chemist of St Albans, to whom he was apprenticed for five years. George's father had arranged the apprenticeship by answering an advertisement in the *Evangelical Magazine*, a monthly periodical published in London from 1793 to 1904 aimed at Calvinist Christians. It was supported by evangelical members of the Church of England, and by Nonconformists with similar beliefs, and its editorial line included a strong interest in missionary work.¹³

George's younger brother William wrote to him on 26 September 1853, a year after George had left for St Albans. The letter, which survives in the Kingerlee archives, gives fascinating glimpses into life in Banbury, and of the Kingerlee family's interest in social issues. William, then 13, had spent the summer working 'very hard' as a farm hand for his uncle, 'my hands were blistered by work and my face by the sun'. For his birthday on 27 July 'Father and Mother made me a present of *Uncle Sam's Emancipation* a shilling book'. He makes no comment as to the desirability of this gift, but it tells us something about Thomas and Caroline's views and beliefs, as it was the latest work by the famous American author Harriet Beecher Stowe, a Congregationalist and anti-slavery campaigner, whose influential novel *Uncle Tom's Cabin* had been published the previous year. In 1853 Stowe undertook a tour of the British Isles; she does not appear to have visited Banbury or anywhere nearby, but the tour and her work would certainly have been known to local people: Banbury Quakers were officers in the national Anti-Slavery Society and the Friends' meeting contributed to the Campaign for the Abolition of Slavery. From 1852 the Female

11. Gibson, 'Banbury Academy', 86.

12. George Kingerlee "life story" 1858; *BG*, 03-05-1849, 3d; *JOJ*, 05-05-1849.

13. George Kingerlee "life story" 1858; papers relating to the business of James Lewis are held by Hertfordshire Archives: <http://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/details/c/F167425>; 'Evangelical Magazine', *Wikipedia*.

Anti-Slavery Society was active in Banbury, with Mrs James Cadbury (whose father-in-law was Richard Cadbury, the Birmingham chocolate-maker) as its secretary. That Society probably contributed to a petition containing the signatures of more than half a million British women, presented to Harriet Beecher Stowe urging American women to demand an end to slavery.¹⁴ It may also have made copies of Stowe's publications, including *Uncle Sam's Emancipation*, available to Banbury residents like the Kingerlees.

In his letter to George of 26 September 1853, William mentions 'a great fire at Neithorpe [Neithrop] on the premises of Mr Bolton and Shilson it burnt two or three barns down'. This fire, two weeks earlier, had indeed been a major event. Neithrop, a village immediately to the west of Banbury, had by the 1850s become a crowded working-class suburb of the town. On 13 September a fire was discovered in farmer Henry Bolton's barn, in which nine acres of barley had recently been stored. It quickly spread to the adjacent house of William Shilson, a wool stapler, and to his warehouse and outbuildings. The house's furniture and the wool were saved, thanks to the efforts of hundreds of 'men and women, professional gentlemen and tradesmen' who came to assist the town's two fire engines, but the buildings were destroyed and the barley ruined. The *Banbury Guardian* praised the attendees whose 'energies were well directed, not uselessly, but efficiently' but described one of the engines as 'a *thing* that seems little better than a toy' and the other as 'not a despicable engine, when at work, but its locomotive faculties are very defective'. The Local Board had become responsible for fire-fighting the previous year, and a new engine had been purchased to add to the existing two. However, the control of fires was still largely in the hands of untrained local residents, and it was not until 1870 that the Banbury Volunteer Fire Brigade was formed.¹⁵

William continues: 'They are getting on very well with the town hall and I think it will be [a] very pretty place'. (Banbury's town hall, designed by Edward Bruton, opened in October 1854.)¹⁶ He gives news of life at the Academy, the school previously attended by George, saying that he himself is getting on well there, and that their father 'talks about sending [Thomas] Henry' too. The headmaster Mr Hill is, however, 'as cross as ever'.

After almost three pages, William seemingly grew tired of writing, and his younger brother Thomas took over. For a ten-year-old's, Thomas's handwriting was remarkably assured, though he showed scant regard for spelling or punctuation:

'Dear Brother[,] William refuses to finish the note therefore father wishes me to do so for hime. Houre scole Master was married to Ms Bliss she is going to give up the Bridish scole. A litel girle of Neithorpe was burned to deth last weake we all give hour love Alfrede sens his love and Mary Ann wants to see you agen Frome thigh afecenet Brother, H Kingerlee'.¹⁷

The school master referred to was William Smith, who was one of the fifteen children of William Smith, founder of the Witney blanket makers W Smith and Co. The Smiths were Wesleyans and supporters of the Temperance movement. William taught at the British [Nonconformist] School on Crouch Street in Banbury – which is where Thomas was a

14. William and Thomas Kingerlee, letter to brother George, 26-09-1853 (Kingerlee archives); William's paternal uncle William Kingerlee who had a farm of 106 acres employing seven labourers at Willes Pasture near Southam, Warks: 1851 census, Willes Pasture, Upper Hodnell, Southam; Joan D Hedrick, 'Stowe, Harriet Beecher (14 June 1811-1 July 1896)', *American National Biography*, <https://doi.org/10.1093/anb/9780198606697.article.1601582>; Harriet Beecher Stowe, *Sunny memories of foreign lands, Vols 1 & 2* (Boston, 1854); 'Banbury: Churches', *VCH Banbury*, 95-120.

15. 'Banbury: Origins and growth of the town', *VCH Banbury*, 18-28; *BG*, 15-09-1853, 2b, 3e; 'Banbury: Local government', *VCH Banbury*, 71-89.

16. Banbury Town Hall, <https://banburytownhall.co.uk/about-us>.

17. As a child Thomas was known by his middle name of Henry, presumably to differentiate him from his father; hence he signed himself "H Kingerlee".

pupil – as did Mary Bliss, whose widowed mother ran the school. On 24 September 1853 William and Mary had wed at St Paul’s Church in Neithrop;¹⁸ as a married woman she would presumably have been obliged to give up teaching as Thomas said in his letter.

The ‘litel girle of Neithorpe burned to deth last weake’ was Jane Woodward, whose father was employed by Clement Bromley, painter and glazier (of whom we heard earlier). Jane was ten, the same age as Thomas, so it is understandable that her death had made such an impression on him. On 21 September her pinafore had caught alight as she lifted the kettle on to the fire at home. Despite the efforts of neighbours, the milkman, and Mr Pain – the unfortunately-named assistant to the surgeon Richard Grimby – who dressed her wounds, she died two days later. The jury at the inquest, held at the Crown public house in Neithrop, returned a verdict of accidental death.¹⁹

William, the original writer of the letter, finished his studies at the Academy the following year and in February 1855, aged 14, he left home to begin a five-year apprenticeship with a Scottish draper, Alexander McKenzie, in central Birmingham. A month later, the members of the Kingerlee family still in Banbury – Thomas and Caroline, Thomas junior, Alfred and Mary Ann – moved from Parsons Street to 5 Butchers Row off the High Street. Thomas senior continued his work as plumber, glazier and glass dealer in the new premises, the family living in rooms above. Thomas junior, now 12, was attending the Academy as his brothers had before him.²⁰

Thomas and Caroline’s eldest son George completed his apprenticeship as a chemist in St Albans in 1857, but decided to stay on as assistant to his employer, James Lewis, on £20 a year. It is likely that Thomas junior was finishing his education at the Academy around this time. How he was occupied immediately after school is unclear, but unlike his older brothers he does not appear to have taken up an apprenticeship elsewhere. In 1858 George wrote that Thomas (by then aged 15) ‘at present thinks of learning my father’s business of Plumber & Glazier etc with him’, which is indeed what he did. Around this time Thomas also began to volunteer at the Sunday School of the recently-built Congregational Chapel in South Bar, and was later appointed as deacon there. When he was 22 he became Superintendent of the Banbury Independent Sunday Schools, a role which he would go on to fulfil for 25 years.²¹

In 1858 the Kingerlees’ youngest child, Mary Ann, now aged eight, was attending Miss Caroline Pratt’s school at the southern end of Horse Fair and her brother Alfred (now 13) was a pupil at the Academy. Extra rooms had been added to that school two years earlier, presumably to accommodate a growing community: by the time of the 1861 census, the headmaster Mr Hartley had a live-in staff of ten and 49 boarding pupils.²²

The 1861 census suggests that the Kingerlee family was prospering: Thomas senior, now 50, was a ‘plumber, glazier and painter’ employing two men. Thomas junior was 18, still living at home at 5 Butchers Row, and working as a plumber, almost certainly for his father. Mary Ann, now 11, was at school, and the family had a live-in house servant, 16-year-old Elizabeth Clark who was originally from Dun’s Tew, a village eight miles south of Banbury. The

18. ‘William Smith’, *The Witney Blanket Story*, <http://www.witneyblanketstory.org.uk/WBasp?navigationPage=People&file=WBPPERS.XML&record=Smith.%20William>; as later reported in *BA*, 03-01-1929, 8b; 1851 census, British School, Crouch Street, Banbury; the British Schools (for boys and girls) were built in 1839-40 for c. 300 children: ‘Banbury: Education’, *VCH Banbury*, 120-4.

19. *BG*, 06-10-1853, 3a; *Post Office Directory of Berks, Northants & Oxon* 1854, 530.

20. George Kingerlee “life story” 1858; 1851 census, 24 Parade, St Mark’s, Lady Wood, Birmingham; *BG*, 15-03-1855, 3g; as later reported in *OC&RG*, 06-07-1895, 8a.

21. George Kingerlee “life story” 1858; as later reported in *OT*, 04-08-1883, 4b; *BG*, 20-02-1873, 2b; *BA*, 29-05-1884, 4c; *JOJ*, 31-05-1884, 8a; *BA*, 17-11-1898, 4f; ‘Banbury: Churches’, *VCH Banbury*, 95-120.

22. George Kingerlee “life story” 1858; 1851 census, Horse Fair, Banbury; *Post Office Directory* 1854, 523; Gibson, ‘Banbury Academy’, 86; ‘Banbury: Education’, *VCH Banbury*, 120-4; 1861 census, Horse Fair, Banbury.



William Kingerlee
(*photograph owned by Roy Kingerlee; reproduction permission sought*)

Kingerlees' eldest son George (now 23) had moved back to Banbury from St Albans and was working as a druggist's assistant, living with his employer Mr Faulkner above the shop at 12 Market Place. William (aged 21) had completed his apprenticeship and moved from Birmingham to Luton where he was employed as one of three assistants to a draper Henry Dowse. Alfred, 16, had left home and moved to Birmingham where he was working as an assistant to the Scottish linen draper Alexander McKenzie, with whom William had done his apprenticeship several years earlier. The fact that Alfred followed his brother into McKenzie's employ suggests that William was content to recommend McKenzie as a boss, and that McKenzie had been happy with William's work. McKenzie's business was prospering and he was now employing '3 females, 2 men and 1 boy [Alfred]' in the shop, as well as four domestic staff at home.²³

Whilst Thomas was learning his father's trade of plumber and glazier he also attended classes at the newly-founded Banbury Science School. This was established in 1863 by JH Beale with support from Bernhard Samuelson (proprietor

of the Britannia Works and sometime MP for Banbury), to provide science and art education for older children and adults. In 1864 Thomas was one of several students awarded a national prize – a Queen's medal – for mechanical and machine drawing. Later in life, when he was Sheriff of Oxford and employing several hundred men, Thomas 'attributed no inconsiderable part of his success to his early training' at the Science School.²⁴

By June 1866 George had apparently moved away from Banbury again, and was in financial difficulties. He wrote to his younger brother Thomas on 4 June and received a letter back later that day,²⁵ the contents of which show Thomas's great concern for his brother's situation, as well as his strong religious faith. He also alludes to long-term problems in George's life. Thomas begins 'Yours of this morning somewhat surprised us, as we like yourself had not the slightest idea of your casting yourself upon the world' and goes on 'You have had I am sorry to say a very rough journey hither too [*sic*] but trust that the day is not far distant when I shall see you quietly and comfortably settled in some nice little business all your own'. Thomas offers him £50 cash, and speculates as to whether he can get their brother William to give another £100, to help set George up in business. Thomas suggests that George should meet their father in Leicester to arrange matters – this presumably was where George was currently residing, or where he had identified a business opportunity. Thomas says 'I do feel in fact I always have felt for you & defended you when any one has spoken of your rough life knowing how you have suffered and worked... cares we always shall have that we expect but you from the commencement have had a double share though I doubt not for your good for whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth'.

In fact it seems that George settled in Buckingham; certainly he was in business there as a chemist by 1869, three years later. In the 1871 census he was recorded as living in Castle Street – unmarried but with a housekeeper – and working as a chemist and druggist. He remained there for the rest of his life, living with just a housekeeper and/or one servant, one of whom, Eliza Wilcox, worked for him for 20 years, from the age of ten. He died in

23. 1861 census, 5 Butchers Row, Banbury, 12 Market Place, Banbury, 144 Park Street, 24 Parade, St Paul's, Lady Wood, Birmingham.

24. 'Banbury: Education', *VCH Banbury*, 120-4; *BC*, 25-08-1864, 3c; *BA*, 23-11-1893, 5d.

May 1912, aged 74, leaving an estate worth almost £7,000 (about £408,000 today) to be administered by his younger brother Thomas. His 'valuable business premises and dwelling house' were put up for auction three months later. Prospective buyers were assured that as well as the buildings they would be purchasing 'the Goodwill and Stock-in-Trade' of an 'old-established and lucrative business'.²⁶

When Thomas wrote to George in June 1866 he mentioned that he hoped to get started in business 'in about 18 months' and indeed, in January 1868, when he was almost 25 (and his father was 58), he took over his father's business. In the spring of that year Thomas also got married, to Helen Dorcas Hunt, who was six years older than him and originally from Thame. She was the niece of William Johnson, later Mayor of Banbury. Helen moved to Thomas's family home at 5 Butchers Row and the couple's first son Henry was born a year later. A daughter Helen (known as Nellie) followed in the summer of 1870.²⁷

By the time of the 1871 census, Thomas, now 28, had expanded the plumbing and glazing business, and was employing two men and two boys. The household at 5 Butchers Row comprised him, his wife Helen and two small children, and a domestic servant, 14-year-old Mary Bagley who was from the Grimsbury area of the town. Thomas senior had retired and he and his wife Caroline had left Banbury – presumably the house was getting somewhat crowded with the arrival of the grandchildren – and gone to live with their sons William (now 31) and Alfred (now 26). Alfred had completed his training with Alexander McKenzie in Birmingham and he and William had bought a ladies' outfitters on the High Street in Guildford, and set up their own linen drapery business. William was to remain there for the rest of his life.²⁸

Alfred, however, was soon back in Banbury: in October 1872 he 're-opened' the premises at 10 Parsons Street, the Kingerlee family's original home, as a shop selling 'toys, Birmingham and Sheffield goods, haberdashery etc, and a large variety of fancy, woollen and other articles'. In May 1875 Alfred married Charlotte Buswell in the Baptist Chapel of her home village of Clipston, Northamptonshire. Charlotte was the daughter of a wealthy farmer, William Buswell. The couple's only child was born a year later, and named George, probably after his paternal uncle with whom he shared a birthday. In the 1881 census Alfred described himself as 'Haberdasher etc'; he was employing two young female live-in shop assistants and a 14-year-old domestic servant Charlotte Vials, who, like Alfred's wife, was from Clipston. Parsons Street was a busy shopping street: of the 64 properties listed in the 1881 census, almost all were shops, with the shopkeepers' families and assistants living in the rooms above. There were no fewer than eight drapery stores, most of them at the eastern end of the street, including William Baylis's at nos. 8 & 9, next door to Alfred Kingerlee's. In addition there were two hatters, an outfitter, a milliner and a tailor. On the other side of Kingerlee's, at no. 11, was John Wilks, one of the five grocers on the street. Despite the agricultural depression, which had slowed Banbury's growth since 1871, the town was still able to support large numbers of independent traders. In *Rusher's Banbury Directory* of 1882, Alfred Kingerlee's was listed as one of ten 'Toy Dealer & Fancy Shops' and one of eleven 'Ready-made Clothes Shops'.²⁹

25. Thomas Kingerlee letter to brother George, 04-06-1866 (Kingerlee archives).

26. *Post Office Directory*, Bucks 1869, 469; 1871, 1881, 1891, 1901 and 1911 censuses, (24) Castle Street, Buckingham; *Kelly's Directory for Bucks* 1911, 58; The National Archives, *Currency converter 1270-2017*, <https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/currency-converter/#>; BA, 29-08-1912, 4d.

27. Thomas Kingerlee letter to brother George, 04-06-1866; BG, 09-01-1868, 1d-e; as later reported in BA, 03-01-1929, 8b.

28. 1871 census, Butchers Row, Banbury; 1871 census, 145 High Street, Guildford; BA, 13-08-1908, 4f.

29. BA, 26-09-1872, 1e; 27-05-1875, 5d; William Buswell farmed 335 acres and employed three men: 1871 census, Clipston; 1881 census, Parsons Street, Banbury; 'Banbury: Economic history', *VCH Banbury*, 49-71; *Rusher's Original Banbury List & Directory* 1882, 31, 33.

Alfred's older brother Thomas and his family were also prospering. It appears that Thomas had acquired further property: in June 1873 he was advertising a 'Good HOUSE and SHOP with Plate Glass front to Let in Church Lane'. He and Helen had a third child, Charles, in June 1874 and sent their son Henry (and probably Charles as well) to the well-respected Ark House boarding school on the Warwick Road. Henry and Charles's cousin George, Alfred's son, was also educated there, and was a frequent prize-winner.³⁰

PAPER HANGINGS FOR 1878.
THE LARGEST STOCK OF
**New Drawing Room, Dining Room, Bedroom, Staircase,
Ceiling, Cottage, and other Paper Hangings.**
Borders, Centre Flowers, and Dado Decorations, &c., &c.,
at the Lowest Wholesale and Retail Prices.
2,000 REMNANTS OF PAPER HANGINGS AT GREATLY REDUCED
PRICES.
T. H. KINGERLEE,
5, BUTCHER'S ROW, BANBURY.
CONTRACTOR FOR ALL KINDS OF BUILDINGS, REPAIRS, AND DECORATIONS.

Banbury Guardian, 7 March 1878

By 1877 Thomas was occupying premises not only at his family home, 5 Butchers Row, but also a 'messuage and shop' at no. 11. In the summer of the following year he established 'Steam saw mills, and joinery works' at 41 North Bar and around the same time went into partnership with Edwin Pearce, a coal, hay, lime and salt merchant at the Castle Wharf. Involvement in a canal business would have been advantageous for a builder like Thomas: even in the railway age, many canal-side businesses still dealt in slate (probably from North Wales, transhipped on Merseyside); timber was delivered to the Banbury area from London docks by way of the Grand Junction Canal and Braunston; and it is probable that lime kilns along the canal were still providing lime mortar for builders in the 1880s.³¹

In the late 1870s Thomas was employing enough men on a regular basis to form a works cricket team and by 1881 he was describing himself as a 'master builder' with 20 employees. He certainly seems to have enlarged and diversified his business: in contemporary Banbury trade directories 'TH Kingerlee' was listed not only under 'Plumbers, Glaziers, House Decorators, Sign Painters etc' but also under 'Carpenters & Builders' (of which there were thirteen in 1882), 'Paper Hanging Dealers' (eight in 1882) and 'Timber and Slate Merchants' (five in 1882). Thomas was also taking on commissions – both for new buildings and for renovation works – outside the town: in 1878, for example, he restored the Wesleyan Chapel at Oxhill near Stratford-upon-Avon and in 1881 was erecting a block of houses in Aylesbury. In September 1883 his team of 40 workmen completed a temporary 3,000-seat hall in Reading for the forthcoming annual Church Congress, in the record time of nine weeks.³²

As Thomas and his brother Alfred became established as prominent Banbury tradesmen they also entered civic life, many of their activities reflecting their concerns as businessmen, their Nonconformism and their abstinence from alcohol. In 1881, for example, Alfred joined the committee of the newly-formed Banbury Ratepayers' Protection Society. He was a member of the Bridge Street Baptist Chapel and he, Thomas and Helen were on

30. BA,19-06-1873, 1f; BA,23-12-1880, 5a; BG,23-12-1886, 5e; BA,22-12-1887, 5b; 25-07-1889 4e; 24-12-1889, 4e.

31. BG, 17-05-1877, 4d;12-09-1878, 1b; 08-07-1886, 5a; *Rusher's Directory* 1882, 26; Barrie Trinder (author of *Victorian Banbury* (Phillimore, 1982)), personal communication with the author, February 2021.

32. BA, 12-09-1878, 4b; 1881 census, 5 Butchers Row, Banbury; *Rusher's Directory, Part 1: 1882-1889 and Part 2: 1890-1896*, various pages; BA, 27-06-1878, 4e; BG, 29-09-1881, 8c; the hall was on Valpy Street, Reading, designed by local architect FW Albury; BG, 20-09-1883, 5f; *JOJ*, 29-09-1883, 8d; Sidney M Gold, *A Biographical Dictionary of Architects at Reading* (self-published, 1999), 2.

the committee of the Banbury Band of Hope. Thomas often appeared on the platform at Temperance meetings whilst Helen took an active part in fundraising events, as did Alfred's wife Charlotte. Alfred sang with the Banbury Philharmonic Society, was for many years a member of the Banbury Sunday School Union (working particularly at Neithrop), served on the local board of the Overseers of the Poor, and was elected to the committee of the newly-reformed Young Men's Christian Association in 1900. He also tried his hand at local politics, but when put forward by the Liberals for town councillor in 1899, polled the lowest number of votes of the 11 candidates.³³

The Kingerlees' youngest child Mary Ann was away from Banbury when the census of 1871 was taken, and it has not been possible to find out where she was. She was 21, so may have been working elsewhere or – more likely – visiting a relative or friend. In May 1878, however, when she was 29, she married William Buswell at the Independent [Congregational] Chapel in South Bar in Banbury. William was the older brother of Mary Ann's sister-in-law Charlotte, Alfred's wife. William was a butcher and grazier and had a farm of 100 acres at Clipston in Northamptonshire, almost certainly inherited from his father. Mary Ann went to live with him there, and over the next eight years three daughters and a son were born. William's trade seems to have taken him to Wales, perhaps regularly: on the night of the 1901 census he was staying at the Belle Vue Hotel in Aberystwyth, an up-market establishment on Marine Parade. On census night 1911 he was there again, and of the fifteen guests that evening, ten were graziers, six of them (including William) from Northamptonshire. It is likely that these men were attending Aberystwyth's monthly cattle fair to buy young animals for fattening, and probably also for breeding, as Welsh heifers were known as good breeders; stock would then be sent to the Midlands by rail. When William Buswell died in April 1930 he left an estate worth just over £10,000 (about £460,000 today). He was buried in the graveyard of the Baptist Chapel in Clipston and when Mary Ann died the following year, aged 82, she was buried with him.³⁴

By 1881 Mary Ann's parents Thomas and Caroline had returned from their sojourn in Guildford with their second son William, and were living at 15 West Bar, Thomas (now 70) describing himself as a 'retired tradesman'. Their departure may have been prompted by William's marriage, in 1875, to Maretta Juggins, and the birth of the couple's first child, William, in 1878. Living with the family above the linen drapery shop in Guildford were two young women assistants, a boy apprentice, and a domestic servant. Maretta had another son, Ernest, in February 1883, but died two years later, when she was 39. William suffered a further loss when his elder son died in early 1891, at the age of 13. In October that year, he married one of his drapery assistants, Lydia Sams; he was 51 and she was 29. Five months later a daughter, Edith, was born. The family remained at 145 High Street until William died in 1908 from a heart condition. He was 68 and left an estate worth £3,890 (just over £300,000 today).³⁵

In the summer of 1883, when he was 40, Thomas 'having become well-known as a builder throughout the [Banbury] district' made a confident step forward by setting up a business

33. *BC*, 07-07-1881, 6d-f; 17-01-1884, 5c; 29-10-1874, 2d; see for example *BC*, 06-11-1879, 5e-f, 19-10-1882, 5c, *BA*, 29-03-1883, 5b; 14-02-1889, 8c; *BC*, 12-04-1883, 5e; *BB*, 21-03-1896, 7f; *Rusher's Directory* 1886, 3; *BA*, 07-03-1901, 8b; 13-12-1900, 5b; 02-11-1899, 8d.

34. *BA*, 23-05-1878, 5b; 1871 census, Clipston, Northants; 1881 census, 10 Gold Street, Clipston; Ethel Mary (born 1878/9), Winifred (born 1880), Alice C (born 1883/4), Edward W (born 1885/6): 1891 census, 8 High Street, Clipston; 1901 and 1911 censuses, Belle Vue Hotel, Marine Parade, Aberystwyth; Siân Bowyer (Secretary, Ceredigion Historical Society) and Tim Healey (Oxfordshire historian), personal communications with the author, February 2021; TNA *Currency converter*; 'Baptist Graveyard, Chapel Lane, Clipston, Northamptonshire', *Find a Grave*, <https://www.findagrave.com/cemetery/2243651/baptist-graveyard>.

35. 1881 census, 15 West Bar, Banbury; *BA*, 29-04-1875, 5d; 1881 and 1901 censuses, 145 High Street, Guildford; *BA*, 13-08-1908, 4f; TNA *Currency converter*.

in Oxford. The city was expanding rapidly – its population had increased by 42% over the previous 30 years – and so builders were in great demand. But it was a crowded field: when Thomas arrived in 1883 there were at least 36 other builders; by 1887 there were almost 50. However, Thomas's strategy was to offer not only building services, but also to act as a merchant supplying other builders and tradesmen, and to sell household fixtures and fittings directly to the public, as he did in Banbury. He took over the long-standing business of Alfred Wheeler at 16 Queen Street in the city centre. Wheeler was a successful plumber, painter, decorator, lead and glass merchant, and patentee of the Oxford flushing cistern. Thomas immediately began to advertise as a 'Wholesale and retail lead, glass and paperhanging warehouse...Dealer in all kinds of window glass, French shades, propagating and other glasses, paints, oils, and colours, plumbers' brass work...Builder and contractor, plumber and house decorator'.³⁶

While Thomas established his business in Oxford, he and his young family stayed in Banbury for several months before moving to a villa on the city's Woodstock Road in early 1884. Thomas entrusted management of the Banbury operation to John Booth, who had worked for him for the previous nine years. Soon, however, Kingerlee's saw mill and joinery works at North Bar were closed, probably to the relief of local residents, several of whom had complained repeatedly about the 'intolerable nuisance' caused by smoke emanating from a steam engine there. In June 1886 the partnership between Thomas and Edwin Pearce, the Castle Wharf coal merchant, was dissolved by mutual consent and Pearce continued trading alone.³⁷

Thomas's parents moved from West Bar to South Parade in Grimsbury, north-east of the town centre, in 1883. Thomas senior died in September 1888, aged 78, leaving an estate worth only £167. His wife Caroline remained in Grimsbury, 'living on own means' (i.e. with a private income) and with a young female servant, until her death 'after a life of constant devotion to her family' in January 1892, at the age of 84.³⁸

Whilst Thomas was developing his building empire, his younger brother Alfred was also doing well. By 1891 his 'fancy drapers' had expanded to occupy both 10 and 11 Parsons Street. He, his wife Charlotte and 15-year-old son George, plus two female assistants and a domestic servant, were still living above the shop. In 1891 he had the existing building demolished, and erected a new brick double-fronted shop with accommodation above. He agreed to set the building back an average of four inches, to assist with the Town Council's desire to widen the Parsons Street pavement; for this he was paid £5 in compensation, and allowed to have an overhanging cornice of 19 inches.³⁹

By 1893 Alfred's son George, now 17, had left the Ark House School and was attending the newly-opened Banbury Municipal School of Science and Art on Marlborough Road. This had been erected by his uncle Thomas's building firm as an addition to the existing Mechanics' Institute. Two years later George's mother Charlotte died in Birmingham, at the premises of Dr Lawson Tait, aged only 42. Tait was a pioneering gynaecologist and

36. As later reported in *OC&RG*, 06-07-1895, 8a; Malcolm Graham, *The Suburbs of Victorian Oxford: Growth in a Pre-industrial City* (University of Leicester, D Phil thesis, 1985), 2; *Kelly's Directory of Oxford* 1883; 1887; *JOJ*, 30-06-1883, 1a; Stephanie Jenkins, 'Alfred Wheeler (1829-1908), Mayor of Oxford 1882/3', *Oxford History*, http://www.oxfordhistory.org.uk/mayors/1836_1962/wheeler_alfred_1882.html; *JOJ*, 20-06-1883, 1a; the same advertisement appeared in *JOJ* and *OT* repeatedly over the following months.

37. *BG*.13-03-1884, 5d; *JOJ*, 31-05-1884, 8; "Allandale", 67 [later 117] Woodstock Road: Charles Kingerlee, 1884, in the City of Oxford Boys High School admission register, 1881-1966 (Oxfordshire History Centre, ref: S211/3/A5/1); the saw mill premises were taken over by WG Thomas, manufacturer of perambulators and bassinets: *BG*, 07-05-1885, 4f; but Thomas Kingerlee appears to have retained ownership of the property: *BG*.17-01-1901, 5d; see for example *BG*, 02-01-1879, 6c, *BA*, 27-03-1879, 5b; *BG*, 08-07-1886, 5a.

38. *Rusher's Directory* 1882, 22; 1883, 22; *BA*, 27-09-1888, 4d; 1891 census, 57 Middleton Road, Grimsbury; *BA*, 07-01-1892, 4c. 39. 1891 census, 10 & 11 Parsons Street, Banbury; *BG*, 15-10-1891, 6d-e.

pelvic and abdominal surgeon; Charlotte had presumably sought treatment from him. George probably left home around this time or soon afterwards; by 1901, when he was 25, he was working as an assistant at Gosling & Sons Ltd, a drapery store occupying several buildings on George Street in Richmond, Surrey. George was one of 11 assistants and apprentices living on the premises on census night; another was his 18-year-old cousin Ernest Kingerlee – William’s son – from Guildford.⁴⁰

George returned to Banbury to work with his widowed father in the shop at 10 & 11 Parsons Street. In the summer of 1905 he married Margaret Carson who was originally from County Monaghan in Ireland, the daughter of a wealthy farmer, and their first child, Edmund, was born a year later. George’s father Alfred, meanwhile, had retired and moved to Godalming, perhaps to be near his brother William who lived in Guildford, only four miles away. We saw earlier that following his first wife’s death, William had married one of his much younger drapery assistants; Alfred now followed suit. In December 1905 he married Edith Evered, who had worked for him as a milliner since at least 1901. She was from Thame, but the wedding was at the Congregational Church in Buckingham, where Alfred’s oldest brother George lived. Alfred was 60 and Edith was 28. A son, Alfred, was born exactly a year later, on 28 December 1906, but Edith died four days afterwards. In the 1911 census Alfred, now 66, was looking after his four-year-old son with the help of a housekeeper and a domestic servant. He and Alfred junior remained in Godalming for several more years, but returned to Banbury by 1919 and took up residence at 66 Broughton Road. Alfred junior was sent to the Municipal School where he found himself in the same year as his nephew, Edmund.⁴¹

Alfred senior’s older son George had taken over the drapery business at 10 & 11 Parsons Street when Alfred had moved to Godalming in 1905, and he and Margaret lived above the shop. They employed a nursemaid to look after the baby Edmund, and a domestic servant, Eliza Mawle. In April 1907 Margaret was charged with assaulting Eliza after a disagreement about the latter being late – at 7:10am – to start her duties. The lengthy reports of the trial in the local press give a sobering glimpse into the realities of life for some young female live-in servants. ‘If there was provocation’, said the solicitor for the prosecution, ‘the law gave power for immediate dismissal, but it gave no right to anybody to inflict corporal punishment on a servant – there was no such kind of servitude nowadays’. The solicitor for the defence described it as ‘a trivial case’ brought against ‘a most respectable woman’ and George testified to his wife’s innocence. Margaret was acquitted but ordered to pay both sides’ costs, an unusual decision on the part of the bench which suggested their acknowledgement that the assault had indeed occurred.⁴²

Margaret and George had a second son, Kenneth, in 1911 and a daughter, Evelyn, in 1914. Kenneth (and probably his older brother Edmund) attended Miss Bromley’s school in North Bar, and both went on to the Municipal School on Marlborough Road (which in 1923 became the Banbury County School)⁴³, where their father had been a pupil.

Meanwhile, the Oxford building business of George’s uncle Thomas had developed rapidly: by the late 1880s – within only five years of arriving in the city – he was employing several hundred men. Thomas quickly became Oxford’s largest speculative developer,

40. BA, 06-07-1893, 8a; 27-07-1893, 5b; 28-02-1895, 4d; ‘Lawson Tait’, *Wikipedia*; 1901 census, 81-78 George Street, Richmond, Surrey; the site was later occupied by House of Fraser, *House of Fraser Archive*, <https://houseof Fraserarchive.ac.uk/company/?id=c1407&type=Retail%20trade>.

41. 1911 census, 10 & 11 Parsons Street, Banbury; as later reported in BA, 02-04-1931, 8c; BA, 11-01-1906, 5c; 1901 census, 10 & 11 Parsons Street, Banbury; BA, 10-01-1907, 5a; 1911 census, Fairplace, Nightingale Road, Godalming, Surrey; Alfred Kingerlee, 1915 Electoral Register, Godalming; BG, 02-10-1919, 3c; 02-03-1922, 5e.

42. *Kelly’s Directory* 1907, 41; BG, 02-05-1907, 3e-f; Eliza was the daughter of George Mawle, a carter and shepherd from Barford St Michael; 1901 census, Watling Street, Higham, Leics; she does not appear to have been related to the well-known Mawle family of Banbury ironmongers.

43. BG, 29-07-1920, 8b; 07-08-1919, 6c; BA, 06-09-1923, 5e.

building hundreds of brick terraced houses in new estates all over the city, and especially in west Oxford, where Helen and Henry Roads, off the Botley Road, were named after two of his children. One of his developments in south Oxford – Kineton Road – was called after his father's birthplace in Warwickshire. Thomas kept many of the houses that he built, rather than selling them, and hence became one of Oxford's largest private landlords: by 1905 he owned almost 20% of the tenanted properties in West Oxford alone. At the same time his firm was erecting numerous public and commercial buildings in the city – hospitals, factories, hotels, shops, theatres, cinemas, and churches, including the Congregational Church in Summertown, which Thomas designed himself. The company also took on jobs in London, Reading, Basingstoke, Guildford (where his brother William lived), Bristol, Bournemouth and Chichester.⁴⁴



*A TH Kingerlee billhead of 1928
(photograph courtesy of Kingerlee Ltd)*

As Thomas's business prospered, he rose to play an influential role in Oxford's political and religious life. Nonconformity had begun to gain ground in the city in the early Victorian period and by the 1880s many prominent Oxford families, including Underhills the grocers, Buckells the auctioneers, and Salters the boat builders, were Congregationalists or Methodists. Thomas became a leading member and Deacon of the city's Congregational Church, whose main premises were on George Street. As a staunch teetotaler (and treasurer of the United Temperance Mission) he no doubt hoped for abstinence amongst his employees, and as well as a staff cricket team and Provident Society there was a Kingerlee Temperance String Band.⁴⁵

Like his brothers William and Alfred, Thomas was a Liberal in politics, and three years after arriving in Oxford he was elected as a city councillor representing the West Ward. The Liberals had achieved a majority on the council in 1853, and their influence pervaded all aspects of the city throughout the 1860s and '70s. The Tories regained control of the council in 1887 but Thomas remained a member for many years, sitting on numerous committees (at one time, 13 simultaneously). He became a Justice of the Peace, an Alderman, Sheriff of Oxford, and twice Mayor of the city.⁴⁶

At the 1895 general election Thomas was chosen by the Liberal Party to contest the Oxford seat, which was held by the Conservative Sir George Chesney. Concerns had been expressed that Thomas was 'not a man of high birth, has not received a university education,

44. *OC&RG*, 13-11-1886, 2a-b; Graham, *Suburbs of Victorian Oxford*, 309, 315; *OT*, 17-06-1893, 6e-f; see Liz Woolley & Siân Smith, *Kingerlee Ltd: Celebrating 150 years of craftsmanship in construction, 1868-2018* (Kingerlee Ltd, 2018).

45. 'Protestant Nonconformity and Other Christian Bodies', *VCH Oxfordshire, Vol. 4, City of Oxford*, ed. Alan Crossley and CR Erlington (London, 1979), 415-24; *OJL*, 04-02-1914, 3; *OC&RG*, 05-02-1887, 5g; 06-11-1886, 5g.

46. *BA*, 13-08-1908, 4f; 02-11-1899, 8d; *OC&RG*, 13-11-1886, 2a-b; 'Modern Oxford: The Corporation 1835-89', *VCH City of Oxford*, 230-2; *BA*, 17-11-1898, 4f; Stephanie Jenkins, 'Thomas Henry Kingerlee (1843-1929), Mayor of Oxford 1898/9 and 1911/12', *Oxford History*, http://www.oxfordhistory.org.uk/mayors/1836_1962/kingerlee_thomas_1898_1911.html.

and lacks any special oratorical gifts' but the *Oxford Chronicle*, a Liberal newspaper in which Thomas had shares, dismissed these criticisms and noted that he was 'the largest employer of labour in Oxford, one of the chief ratepayers, and very popular among the working classes'. In fact bricklayers had been on strike against Kingerlee and other master builders for several weeks, demanding higher wages, and Thomas had been accused of employing non-union workers in their place. Whether this affected the outcome of the ballot is unknown, but there was a nationwide swing to the Tories and Thomas was defeated (by 3,623 votes to 2,975) by the Irish peer Viscount Valentia, who was to remain as Oxford's MP until 1917. Except for one brief interval, the Conservatives continued to hold Oxford until 1966.⁴⁷



Thomas Kingerlee as Mayor of Oxford, 1898/99 (photograph courtesy of Kingerlee Ltd)

In January 1895 Thomas transferred his Banbury building business at 5 Butchers Row to John Booth, who had managed it for him for the last ten years. Although Thomas had left Banbury in 1884, he maintained a strong affection for the town, and an interest in its affairs. In 1900 he told a meeting of the Pleasant Valley Sunday Brotherhood at the South Bar Congregational Church that 'He should never forget the town of his birth, for it was here that he learnt everything worth learning' and 'the principles he had learned in that old town were the principles to build a life upon'. He also continued to carry out commissions in Banbury: in 1899, for example, he erected a new factory for WF Lucas & Co, underwear manufacturers, in Britannia Road (having built the firm's Oxford factory in 1890). In 1925 TH Kingerlee & Sons rebuilt the Palace Theatre, Market Place, to seat 1,000 and in 1931 restored St Leonard's Church in Grimsbury which had been partially destroyed by fire the previous year.⁴⁸

Thomas's wife Helen died in 1894, aged 57, after a long illness. In March 1899, towards the end of his first Oxford mayoralty, he married Jane Plummer, the daughter of a gentleman farmer from near Newbury; he was 56 and she was 34. A son, Thomas, was born on 2 July 1901 but he died only three days later. Following the death of Thomas's first wife, this was the third tragedy to hit the family in only a few years: Thomas's daughter-in-law Mary had died in childbirth in 1898.⁴⁹

Thomas's two older sons Henry and Charles had joined the business on leaving school, and by the late 1890s the firm was known as "TH Kingerlee & Sons"; they took over completely in 1911. Thomas was awarded an honorary degree by Oxford University in 1912, and sat as a Liberal county councillor (representing Headington) throughout the First World War.

47. *OC&RC*, 06-07-1895, 5b-c, 8a; *OT*, 15-06-1895, 6c-d; 06-07-1895, 3d; 'Modern Oxford: Parliamentary representation', *VCH City of Oxford*, 254.

48. *BB*, 19-01-1895, 1b; 03-02-1900, 5a; *BA*, 14-09-1899, 5a; *JOJ*, 11-10-1890, 6c; *BG*, 31-12-1925, 5g; *BA*, 02-04-1931, 2c.

49. *JOJ*, 25-08-1894, 8a; *BG*, 30-03-1899, 8c; 1871 census, 3 Frederick Place, Church Speen, Berks; Thomas Henry Kingerlee, Jane Hearne Kingerlee and Thomas Edward Hearne Kingerlee's gravestone, Botley Cemetery, Oxford; Helen Dorcas Kingerlee and Mary Rebecca Kingerlee's gravestone, Botley Cemetery.



Four generations of Kingerlee builders, c. 1927; (l-r) Henry Stephen (Harry), Thomas Henry, Thomas Henry (Tom), and Stanley John (Jack) (photograph courtesy of Kingerlee Ltd)

In 1919 he and Jane retired to Bath and Thomas died there just before Christmas 1928, aged 85, leaving an estate worth £34,000 (about £1.4m today). (Henry's son Jack took over management of the business in 1945, followed by his son Tom in 1962. The firm moved from Oxford to Kidlington in 1999, and is now chaired by Tom's son David.)⁵⁰

Thomas's elder son Henry was too old to fight in the First World War – he was 45 when it started – and anyway his job managing the Kingerlee building firm would have given him exemption. His younger brother and business partner Charles, however, did join the RAF, in the last months of the War, when he was 44. Following the introduction of conscription for married men aged 18 to 40 in June 1916, their cousin George (who had turned 40 in April) was one of dozens of Banbury men who appeared before the town's military appeal tribunal. He applied for exemption from service on business and domestic grounds and was granted it on condition that he continue as a special constable. Later in the War he applied for, and was eventually granted, an extension to the exemption on the grounds of serious hardship and ill-health. He was the sole proprietor of the drapery business at 10 & 11 Parsons Street, in which all his capital was invested, and if he 'were taken for military service' it would have to close, and could not be revived. George's argument that he was serving his country by acting as a special constable was accepted by the tribunal, and after the War he was one of 18 Banbury 'specials' awarded long-service medals by the Mayor on behalf of the King.⁵¹

George no doubt felt the effects of the War in terms of the availability of both customers and staff. Although he employed only female assistants, there were plenty of jobs for Banbury women at the munitions factory, National Filling Factory No. 9, which opened in April 1916 just east of the town. Over 1,500 local people, a third of them women, were employed there. Although filling artillery shells was dirty and dangerous work and

⁵⁰. Indenture between Henry Stephen Kingerlee and Charles Kingerlee, 17-04-1917 (Kingerlee archives); *OJI*, 17-07-1912, 24; *BG*, 20-02-1919, 8c; Thomas Kingerlee's will and probate (Kingerlee archives); *TNA Currency converter*; see Woolley & Smith, *Kingerlee Ltd*.

⁵¹. Charles Kingerlee, Air Ministry Airmen's Records; *BG*, 29-06-1916, 5f; 01-11-1917, 5d; *BA*, 29-11-1917, 6c; 06-05-1920, 8d.

employees became known as “canaries” because the picric acid coloured their skin yellow,⁵² the camaraderie and the satisfaction of assisting the war effort perhaps made it more attractive than assisting in a drapery shop.

The availability of war work meant that young women were also less willing to take up jobs in domestic service, and Margaret Kingerlee advertised at least four times between 1915 and 1918 for ‘a respectable girl’ who could expect ‘good’ or ‘liberal’ wages. It is possible that the assault allegation of 1907 also played a part in the Kingerlees’ difficulties in attracting and keeping staff. Moreover, living-in became less attractive to young women who had experienced more personal freedom during the War years, and by late 1918 George and Margaret were advertising for drapery assistants and domestic helpers who would live independently, rather than with them above the shop.⁵³

KINGERLEE BROS
 THE WALK ROUND STORE
 PARSON'S STREET, BANBURY.
 TEL. 2768

combine

THE BEST VALUE

with

THE GREATEST VARIETY

of inexpensive

TOYS and GIFTS

Long experience in the Toy trade enables us to specialise
 in Party Assortments.

TOY FAIR NOW OPEN

Banbury Advertiser,
 21 November 1951

Like his father Alfred, George was active in the civic life of Banbury, and took on voluntary roles both philanthropic and business-related. He served on the committee of the Mechanics Institute, on the Board of Overseers and on the Banbury Housing Committee. He had been on the committee of the Banbury Tradesmen’s Association since 1908, and after the War he became a founding member of the Banbury Chamber of Trade and, in the late 1920s, its president. Under his presidency the chamber promoted a scheme to attract industry to Banbury which contributed towards the successful establishment of several new businesses which revolutionised the town’s economy. Notable amongst these was the factory of the Northern Aluminium Co Ltd which opened in 1931; by the early 1950s it employed 24% of the working population.⁵⁴

George’s expanding drapery and fancy goods business meant that the upper-storey rooms at 10 & 11 Parsons Street were required for showrooms and stock, and by 1924 he and his family had moved to live at a house on West Bar. George’s son Edmund played for Banbury Cricket Club and his daughter Evelyn was a high-achieving pupil of Miss Ena Grubb, the renowned Banbury music teacher. Evelyn later became a pianist herself, and organised concerts in aid of the League of Pity (the junior section of the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children). She also trained as a shorthand typist at Mrs Broad’s Banbury Commercial School.⁵⁵

Edmund and Kenneth were working with their father George in the drapery business by the late 1920s, and Edmund entered civic life by joining the committee of the Banbury & District Textile Traders. In 1928 extensive alterations were made to the shop at 10 & 11 Parsons Street. A new ‘show case entrance’ incorporating seven display windows in a 45-foot-long covered arcade was built, and the main downstairs showroom enlarged by the removal of a spiral staircase. Upstairs, the mantle and millinery showroom and fitting room were completely refurbished and modernised. Elliotts “Quick Serving” fixtures replaced the old wooden

52. BA, 07-05-1914, 4a; 28-10-1915, 4a; ‘Former World War I National Filling Factory, Banbury’, Historic England listing, <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1409811>; Banbury Museum, *Banbury’s Role in WWI: National Filling Factory No. 9*, <https://www.banburymuseum.org/banburys-role-ww1/>.

53. BA, 27-05-1915, 4a; 28-09-1916, 4a; 22-02-1917, 4a; 28-11-1918, 4a; BG, 18-09-1919, 4b.

54. BA, 30-10-1913, 7c; 15-04-1915, 5d; BG, 24-02-1921, 7b; 02-01-1908, 9c; BA, 10-03-1910, 5d; 20-11-1919, 8c; 09-12-1926, 8d; 26-04-1928, 1c; ‘Banbury: Economic history’, *VCH Banbury*, 49-71.

55. “Dalkeith”, 30 West Bar; BG, 24-07-1924, 4b; BA, 05-05-1927, 8a; 29-12-1927, 5b; Julian Harris, *Banbury Choral Society*, <https://www.banburychoralsoc.co.uk/musical-director-conductor>; BA, 12-05-1932, 5e; 15-01-1931, 3e; 11-06-1931, 5b.

counters and, the *Banbury Guardian* blithely noted, ‘a very old and massive iron-studded oak door was removed which, it is assumed, was once a portion of Banbury Castle’. Following the refit Kingerlees advertised heavily in the local press, promoting a vast range of goods on offer – ladies’ clothing (including furs, ladder-proof stockings and ‘pure silk crepe de chine dance frocks’), leather goods, gifts, fancy linens, and children’s toys.⁵⁶

Edmund and Kenneth’s uncle Alfred junior, who was the same age as Edmund, did not get involved in the drapery business, but instead trained to be an electrical engineer. He stayed living with his elderly father Alfred senior at 66 Broughton Road, where they were looked after by a housekeeper who was required to be ‘quiet’ and to carry out ‘plain cooking’. Alfred senior died in 1931, at the age of 86. The local press described him as having been ‘a man of very retiring disposition who took little part in public affairs’ [though earlier newspaper reports, cited in this article, suggest otherwise], and his funeral was modest. Alfred left an estate worth £9,268 (about £424,000 today), which included the freehold of 20 Horse Fair, the house adjacent to the Academy (his former school), which he had bought in 1900. His son Alfred junior, now aged 25, continued to live in the house at Broughton Road until his marriage in 1933 to Kathleen Bovingdon. The couple took up farming in Chipping Norton, and they and their daughter Felicity moved to Australia in 1951.⁵⁷

Alfred’s older brother George carried on as president of the Banbury Chamber of Trade, but grew increasingly frustrated by what he saw as apathy, insularity, and ‘trade jealousy’ on the part of some of his fellows. There were problems, too, in the ‘none too happy’ relationship between the chamber and the town council, which had at times ‘received rather a warm handling from the mouths of some of the more irresponsible members of the Chamber of Trade’. George retired from the presidency in 1930, evidently weary of the role, though he remained a member for a short while. In the summer of 1932 he retired from running the drapery business as well, and he and Margaret, together with their 18-year-old daughter Evelyn, moved away from Banbury, to live in the Parkstone area of Poole in Dorset. George’s sons Edmund and Kenneth were now in charge of the business, which they re-named “Kingerlee Bros”.⁵⁸

Edmund had been stepping out with local girl Lilian Collingridge – and taking her for rides on his motorcycle – for several years, and in April 1934 they were married at St Mary’s Church in Banbury. The bride was the daughter of the Deputy Mayor and Mayoress and the lavish wedding, enjoyed by over 80 guests, elicited ‘considerable interest’ in the town. The couple went to live in a newly-built house on Dashwood Road. Edmund’s parents and sister had attended the wedding, but only three months later his mother Margaret died at a nursing home in Poole, aged 60, following a short illness.⁵⁹

Kenneth, Edmund’s younger brother, married Kathleen Paskett in the winter of 1938 and the couple took up residence in a new house, “Briar Close”, which Kenneth had recently had built off the Warwick Road near the village of Drayton. Edmund and Kenneth’s sister Evelyn was married in Poole in 1939, to Hubert Kimberley, whose family had been in the building trade in Banbury as long as the Kingerlees. Evelyn’s father George outlived her mother by 35 years, dying in Tavistock in Devon in 1969, at the age of 92.⁶⁰

56. *BC*, 09-02-1928, 4g; *BA*, 16-06-1927, 15d; *BC*, 10-05-1928, 5e; 29-11-1928, 7f; see for example *BC*, 05-07-1928, 8a; 06-12-1928, 5d.

57. *BA*, 08-10-1925, 4a; 12-11-1925, 4a; 02-04-1931, 8c; Alfred Kingerlee probate, 07-05-1931; TNA *Currency converter*; *BC*, 15-08-1901, 5e; Alfred made alterations and additions to the property in 1912: *BA*, 07-12-1911, 7c; *BA*, 11-06-1931, 1c; 1939 England & Wales Register, Southcombe, Chipping Norton; Outward Passenger Lists, “Orion”, Orient Line, London, 21-07-1951; Alfred, Kathleen and Felicity Kingerlee’s gravestone, Kangaroo Flat Cemetery, Greater Bendigo City, Victoria, Australia: *Find a Grave*, <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/211199576/alfred-kingerlee>.

58. *BA*, 13-12-1928, 6b-c; 23-01-1930, 3b; 03-04-1930, 1d; 12-02-1931, 1c; 19-05-1932, 4c; 09-02-1933, 3c; 03-05-1934, 1e.

59. *BA*, 10-07-1930, 1c; 12-04-1934, 1c-d; *BA*, 19-07-1934, 4f.

60. *BA*, 14-04-1938, 2b; 1939 England & Wales Register, Brier [*sic*] Close, Warwick Road, Drayton, Banbury; *Pigot’s Directory* 1842, 340; Sally Stradling ‘AT Kimberley Ltd, building contractors, Britannia Road, Banbury’, *C&CH* 15.3 (2001), 84-108.

Edmund served as an auxiliary fireman during the Second World War, latterly as a Section Leader in the National Fire Service. Presumably this, together with the fact that he was the proprietor of a business, gave him exemption from conscription. Kenneth, however, signed up, and served as a pilot officer navigator in 104 Squadron of the Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve. On 2 July 1944 he was in a Wellington Bomber when it was declared missing whilst on a mission to drop mines on shipping on the Danube River. He and his four crew mates were buried in a collective grave in Belgrade War Cemetery. Kenneth is named on the memorial in St Mary's Church in Banbury which commemorates 78 men from the town who were killed in the Second World War, and on the memorial plaque to 42 pupils at Banbury Grammar School (formerly the Municipal School), which Kenneth attended in the 1920s. Kenneth's widow Kathleen remained at "Briar Close" on the Warwick Road for the rest of her life; she married Harry Locke in 1966 and died in 1994, aged 81.⁶¹



Kingerlee Bros at 11 & 12 Parsons Street in the early 1960s, with the ground floor frontage installed in 1928 (photograph courtesy of Four Shires Magazine Ltd)

After his brother's death, Edmund continued to run the store in Parsons Street as "Kingerlee Bros". He employed several assistants, some of them very long-standing: Mrs Olive Whiteman for example worked at the shop for over 20 years, latterly as the manageress of the fashion department, until her death in 1952. The national move towards a different style of shopping – in which the customer browsed alone rather than being attended by an assistant – was signalled when the shop started to advertise as a 'walk around store' from the late 1940s onwards. Edmund continued to stock a wide range of products, and diversified further by offering a hosiery repair service, dry cleaning, and a Christmas toy club, whereby customers could reserve items in advance and pay for them in instalments.⁶²

The Banbury Board of Trade, which had ceased to exist before the War due to lack of interest, was revived in November 1946, and Edmund joined the committee of what was now called the Chamber of Commerce. He served as president twice, in a period of high immigration to Banbury, particularly from outside the immediate area. During his presidency the chamber dealt with issues including the need to attract further light industry to the town; provision of housing for workers; how to encourage motorists; the siting of a new bus station; the threat to independent traders posed by chain stores; and the vexed question of changing early closing day from Wednesday to Tuesday. Edmund seems to have faced the same apathy as his father George, however, and in 1954 he appealed for 'wide support, increased membership, and a very much greater interest from the rank

61. BA, 21-05-1941, 1e; 24-03-1943, 4a; Kenneth George Kingerlee, Commonwealth War Graves Commission archives, <https://www.cwgc.org/find-records/find-war-dead/casualty-details/2224247/KENNETH%20GEORGE%20KINGERLEE/>; 'Casualties in the CWGC Register for Wellington X MF137', Royal Air Force Commands, <http://www.rafcommands.com/database/serials/details.php?uniq=MF137>; BA, 09-06-1948, 2; 'Kingerlee, Kenneth George', *Banbury War Memorial*, <http://www.sjbradley.com/memorial/viewRecord.php?name=Kingerlee,%20K%20G>; BA, 15-11-1950, 3e-f.

62. BA, 05-03-1952, 4d; see for example BA, 21-11-1951, 3a; see for example BA, 30-12-1953, 3g; BG, 29-04-1954, 1h.

and file members in taking over offices and attending general meetings.’ Ironically, the chamber was reinvigorated the following year by the Borough Council’s controversial plan to reassess the rates, and to back-date them – a move dubbed the ‘soak the shopkeepers budget’ by the local press. A major protest against the proposals was led by Edmund, who himself faced a four-fold increase in his rates, and he addressed sometimes heated meetings of up to 400 traders. The protest was ultimately unsuccessful however, and Edmund retired as president of the chamber in March 1956.⁶³

In 1954 Edmund and Lilian moved to a new house which they had had built at Weeping Cross in Bodicote, two miles south of Banbury. In 1960 they moved further south again, to St Mary’s Road in Adderbury. “Kingerlee Bros” remained at 10 & 11 Parsons Street until around 1963; by 1965 it had become “Nursery Furnishings”. In 1966 Edmund and Lilian retired to Poole, to live near Edmund’s sister Evelyn Kimberley, who had been widowed two years earlier. She was living in the house in Parkstone which she and her parents had moved to when they first left Banbury in 1932. Lilian died in 1979, aged 68, Edmund in 2000, aged 93, and Evelyn in 2002, aged 88.⁶⁴

The building firm founded by Thomas Henry Kingerlee – now Kingerlee Ltd, based in Kidlington – still flourishes under family management, and celebrated its 150th anniversary in 2018. Four generations of the Kingerlee family, starting with Thomas Henry’s parents Thomas and Caroline, played a significant part in the economic, civic and religious life of Banbury over a 120-year period, and it is appropriate that in 2020 a new housing estate which includes “Kingerlee Road” was built to the west of the Warwick Road, partly on land previously occupied [I think] by Kenneth and Kathleen Kingerlee’s house “Briar Close”. Any readers who have memories of the Kingerlee family, or of their drapery shop which traded in Parsons Street for 90 years, are warmly invited to contact the editor of *Cake & Cockhorse*.

Acknowledgements

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A plaque in the pavement in Parsons Street commemorating local drapers, including Kingerlee’s (photograph courtesy of Keith Shackleton)

63. BA, 20-11-1946, 1h-i; BG, 16-01-1947, 6d-e; BA, 16-06-1948, 4e; 10-03-1954, 3b-c; ‘Banbury: Origins and growth of the town’, *VCH Banbury*, 18-28; BG, 11-03-1954, 7b-c; 03-06-1954, 8b-c; BA, 09-06-1954, 6b; 12-01-1955, 1c; 06-04-1955, 2b, 3b-e; BG, 15-09-1955, 5f; BA, 07-03-1956, 7b-c.

64. BG, 02-07-1953, 2b; *Telephone Directory, [incl Oxford]*, Volume 2A, Section 7, Jun 1955, 101; *Telephone Directory, South Midlands and Guildford*, Volume 3, Section 32, Aug 1961, 2130; *Telephone Directory, Oxford*, Aug 1964, 2125; *Kelly’s Banbury Directory* 1965; by 1973 it was “Bernard Smith” ladies’ wear; *Kelly’s Banbury Directory* 1973; *Telephone Directory, Bournemouth... Southampton*, Volume 5, Jun 1967, 177, 178; Evelyn and Hubert had been living at “Juan”, 60 Spur Hill Avenue, Parkstone, Poole since at least 1946; *Telephone Directory, Portsmouth...Swansea*, Volume 2b, Feb 1946, 73.

BANBURY'S ANSWER TO SIXTEENTH CENTURY PLAGUES AND INFECTIONS

Helen Forde



Plagues, or unexplained infections such as the sweating sickness or dysentery, were frequent in the middle ages and early modern period, especially in countries such as Italy, where overcrowding and poverty in hot conditions exacerbated the infection rate and caused panic, fear and misery. Where it was possible to introduce regulations to curb the infection, such as in the autonomous jurisdiction of the Italian city states, serious attempts were made to minimize the spread of disease and protect the public. Treatises on the management of the infections spread throughout Europe during the fifteenth century and a vernacular Spanish treatise in 1348 (Jacme d'Agramont *Regiment de preservacio de pestilencia*) was one of the earliest to provide suggestions about how to counteract the miasmatic vapours thought to be the cause of infections. Many texts urged the isolation of victims, the provision of food placed outside infected houses and the publication of lists of those who were suffering. By the late fifteenth century translations of a tract produced by John of Burgundy were available in England due to the exertions of a Dominican friar and medical practitioner, Thomas Multon, who set himself to

'gader this trefy and sette it in English that every man, both lerned and lewde, may the better understond hit and do thereafter, and to be his owne phisicien in tyme of nede ayenst the venym and malice of the pestilence'.¹

1. British Library MS Sloane 3489, fol.44r.

Fear of plague was widespread, given ignorance about the causes and the almost universal conviction that it was primarily divine punishment for sin.² Multon, whose work became very popular in the sixteenth century, urged those afflicted to ‘putte away the syn thorgh very sorowe and contricion’³ before attempting any medicinal cures, and there is no doubt that all through this period the church benefitted from alms and legacies given to ensure the salvation of souls from the sporadic plagues and infectious illnesses which appeared without apparent reason.

In England Henry VIII was particularly concerned about infection. Almost annual outbreaks of one type or another – descriptions varied from influenza, to plagues, to the French pox, to sweating sickness (known as the English sweat from its first occurrence in York in 1485 which tended to attack the rich and was almost always rapidly fatal⁴) or pestilence – forced disruption to life in London in particular, but also in Oxford, York, Chester, Canterbury, Durham and countless other places, if not as well documented. In 1517 the young king was especially concerned about Windsor Castle in advance of his anticipated stay there. Consequently the first known ordinances (November 1517) were drawn up by St George’s College in Windsor⁵ to ensure that inhabitants were quarantined and the doors of their houses shut up; single persons were to be allowed out to fetch food and drink but had to be identified by carrying a four foot long white pole and another pole, eight feet long, had to be fastened to the side of the infected house, with a wisp of straw attached to the end as a warning to passers-by.⁶ The period of incarceration was 40 days after the last sign of infection, thereby consigning those who survived to a lengthy period of isolation. Additionally, beggars or strangers from London were to be excluded from the castle precincts and sharing of bedding or clothing was prohibited. Crucially, it was the initiative of the king – ever aware of the dangers to the Tudor dynasty from his own potential death, or that of any heirs – together with his Chancellor, Thomas Wolsey, which prompted these types of regulations which are the start of a more coherent attempt to limit the spread of disease in England. Prior to that regulations in some of the larger cities had been drawn up to keep streets and markets clean and prohibit beggars but were not as drastic as the comprehensive efforts made in southern Europe.

Henry’s concern about infection led to him moving about and around London with his court during late 1517 and 1518; he stayed variously in Windsor, Abingdon, Ewelme, Woodstock and Bisham having enquired of Wolsey if

‘ony off hys palac[es] nere unto London be infectidde wyth the syknesse or no, or ony place nere unto them’.⁷

None of these places are far from Banbury and it seems likely that information about the spread of the disease was known quite widely. Nor can those in Banbury have been unaware of the frequent outbreaks of disease in Oxford where plague was reported in 1428 and intermittently for the next century, with at least 10 major outbreaks caused variously, it was reported, by flood water or the noxious air in student accommodation, resulting in considerable interruption to teaching and sometimes the dispersal of

2. References were frequently made to the various plagues detailed in the Old Testament which were attributed to sin.

3. British Library MS Sloane 3489, fol.44v.

4. ‘This sweat is a sickness which has taken hold here over the past four days, and is the easiest to die of; one has a slight headache & ache in the heart, suddenly one begins to sweat, and there is no point to calling the Doctor, because ..within four hours, or sometimes in two or three, one is dispatched without delay.’ Jokinen, Anniina, trans. “Two Letters by Monsieur du Bellay, June 1528.” Accessed 16/09/2020 <http://www.luminarium.org/encyclopedia/dubellaysweat.htm>.

5. Euan C. Roger ‘*To Be Shut Up*’: New Evidence for the Development of Quarantine Regulations in Early-Tudor England’. *Social History of Medicine*, 2019 demonstrates that the ordinances from St Georges’, Windsor predated the London ordinances by at least a couple of months.

6. *Ibid.*

7. The National Archives (TNA), SP 1/16, f. 156 (quoted in Euan C. Roger as above).



Charles Brandon, *third Duke of Suffolk who died together with his brother of the sweating sickness, 1551* (<http://www.luminarium.org/encyclopedia/sweatingsickness.htm>)

students to their homes, thus risking further spread of infection.⁸ Some colleges even had properties outside the city to which members could go when disease was prevalent. No doubt there were several different diseases circulating at different times but it is clear that the academic years were frequently disrupted, even after the adoption of the regulations circulated by Wolsey.

Evidence about the incidence of the plague in Banbury is limited until the registration of burials in the mid sixteenth century became mandatory. Prior to that the evidence is sketchy but the Black Death made its mark in the fourteenth century. The population of Banbury was about 1300 in the early thirteenth century rising to about 1600 in 1441;⁹ in between, in 1348-9, the Black Death ravaged the whole country and the fact that only 523 inhabitants of Banbury over the age of 14 paid the poll tax in 1377 suggests Banbury had not been immune. As in other rural communities many lived at a level of subsistence where the shortage of food, occasioned by a bad harvest, left families at severe risk when disease circulated. A report of sweating sickness in the area in 1531 appears to have had serious consequences and a subsequent outbreak of plague was noted by Thomas Brasbridge – ‘the towne of Banburie (I being a child) was very sore infected therewith’.¹⁰ Brasbridge was born 1536/7 and it is assumed that he was referring to some time in the 1540s.

In 1554 Banbury acquired its first royal charter, enabling a degree of local regulation and government to be put in place. Ten years later the Common Council, which included both aldermen and chief burgesses of the town, issued a series of bye-laws, many of which related to the maintenance of clean streets and the provision of unpolluted water. It seems likely that similar regulations had been issued on earlier occasions, but these had the authority of the Council behind them. Specifically, all inhabitants had to clean the streets in front of their houses annually, four middens or rubbish heaps were designated as the only places for depositing dung, the butchers’ shambles were to be cleaned weekly and the Cherwell and the Cuttle Brook were to be kept clear of rubbish or noxious activities like cleaning pelts.¹¹ Regulations were introduced prohibiting cattle and pigs from roaming and ducks and geese were to be kept out of the Cuttle Brook. While not unusual for the type of regulations which were beginning to become more common in England, these were comprehensive and demonstrate a good understanding of the importance of keeping the town clean against disease. Harbouring beggars or vagrants, who were frequently

8. A full list of reported outbreaks can be found in C. Rawcliffe *Urban Bodies, communal health in late medieval English towns and cities* (Boydell Press, 2013), 360-37.

9. *Banbury A History* (Victoria County History of the County of Oxford, Oxfordshire County Council reprint, 1984), 27.

10. Thomas Brasbridge *The Poore Man’s Jewel – or a treaty of the Pestilence* (1592).

11. Potts, W.A. *History of Banbury* (1958), 110.

suspected of carrying and spreading infectious diseases, especially those who had come from larger towns or cities, was prohibited. Penalties were fixed for those who did not comply though how effective they were as a deterrent it is not possible to tell. By this time Banbury had already suffered some sort of severe episode in 1558, resulting in over 67 deaths that year, and a bad harvest in 1562 followed by a plague in 1563. In that decade the median annual burials reported – probably not the total – was 42 per annum, a figure which was to rise to 65.5 in the 1640s.

However, by then Banburians would have had time to digest the advice given by their late sixteenth century vicar, Thomas Brasbridge,¹² the same who had commented on the infection in the town in the 1540s. Brasbridge was interested in the plague and its conditions, having studied both divinity and medicine at Oxford where he was a fellow of Magdalen College; he tended plague victims in an outbreak there in 1563-4 and later worked in Southwark where he was employed as a schoolmaster at St Saviour's. During this period, and following further experience of caring for those suffering from plague, he wrote *The Poore Man's Jewel, that is to say, A Treatise of the Pestilence* which was first published in 1578, with a second edition in 1592 dedicated 'To the Right Worshipfull Master Anthony Cope [a prominent Banbury supporter of the Puritans] and Mistress Francis Cope'. No doubt this was due to his presentment to the parish of St Mary's, Banbury in 1581 where, together with Cope he opposed those who adhered to the old faith. Clashes with the Danvers family, renowned as supporting papist views, led not only to a physical assault on Brasbridge but also to a petition in 1590 to deprive him of his living due to his aversion to Catholic orthodoxy and his extreme Puritan views. A counter petition was raised by 95 parishioners to support him to continue as preacher.¹³ At his death, in 1593, he left goods worth a total of £47 17s 3d, of which the most valuable items were his books, at £6 6s. The description of the contents of the rooms in the inventory led Ted Brinkworth, who transcribed it, to speculate that he was still living in the vicarage at the time of his death, despite the attempts to oust him.¹⁴ Did he die of the plague? 1593 was noted in the burial register of St Mary's as a plague year but there is no way of determining his actual cause of death.

What were his views on the causes of plague? His opening paragraph in the 1592 edition of *The Poore Man's Jewel* makes it clear that he regarded sin as paramount;

'...of all the rods wherewith almightie God useth to chastise his people, that stubbornly spurne against his ordinances: the sicknes called the Plague, is one of the sharpest. The which I have very oftentimes seen whisking about mine eares: but through the great mercie of God, it never touched my bodie'.

He discussed this and the other causes cited by contemporaries in his treatise but dismissed astronomy although it was widely cited by others. However he was clear that 'corruption of the air' was a major factor – caused by

'an evil constellation, by the filthy matter of a Comet...particularly in a few houses or Streetes through the stinke of channels, of filthy dung, or carion, of standpoint pudles and stinking water, of seeges or stinking privies, of shedding man's bloud and of deade bodies not deeply buried (which happeneth among souldiers), of common pissing places, and ...a gret company dwelling or lying in a small roome (especially if those roomes be not very cleanly kept and perfumed) do ingender a corrupt aire apt to infect those that are in it, which

12. *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*.

13. British Library; Lansdowne Mss 64, f. 45-6 Petition to Lord Burghley.

14. ERC Brinkworth 'The inventory of Thomas Brasbridge' *Cake & Cockhorse*, vol 3, no.5 (1965-8), 71-4.

infected persons and their infections, clothes may infect a whole citie... I say a venomous aire infected not all but those only whose bodies are apte to be infected’.

Additionally, plague was caused

‘by taking of meate and drinke out of measure, specially by feeding of many dishes at one meals, or by too much, lack of good nourishing meate, by too much sleepe or watching, by too much labour or ease. Finally by too much anger, grieve of mind and fears of the disease.’

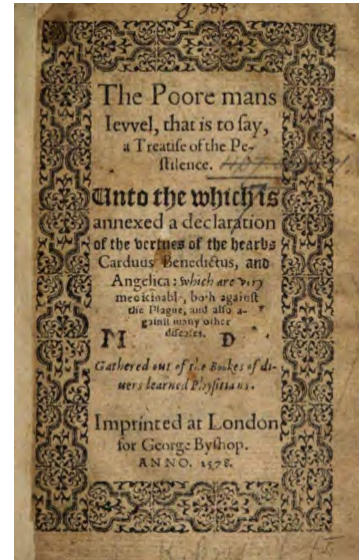
In other words, he, with his contemporaries, had identified situations in which disease flourished, many being still relevant today, such as poor sanitation, poverty, and overcrowding. He also noted the greater likelihood of catching disease if the body was already weakened, or if the victim was suffering from depression. Contemporaries were aware of the necessity to moderate the intake of food and to work and rest in proportion though that applied to those in a position to make a choice; the poor, the majority, had to manage as best they could.

His remedies for plague – if none of the above suggestions worked – was the use of *Carduus Benedictus* (Holy thistle) or angelica. He cites ancient texts where the benefits of carduus are described, and suggests that every part of the plant can be used; a tincture can be made from the juice, or a broth if the plant is boiled, the leaves can make a poultice or if ground up, a powder to be sprinkled on food.

‘Therefore I counsell all them that haue Gardens, to nourish it, that they may have it always for their owne use, and the use of their neighbors that lacke it’.¹⁵

Angelica was a substitute for carduus, the latter being in short supply and apparently not a common plant; Brasbridge stated that not only was angelica used in Germany to great effect against the pestilence but it also acted as a prophylactic when the juice, mixed with vinegar, was absorbed by a small sponge or ball of cloth placed inside a hollowed-out orange or lemon – a pomander. Many of the ways in which he describes the effect of taking the concoctions result in ensuring that the victim, wrapped up well in bed, sweats the fever out and the remedies, as such, were at least benign.

Banbury was not the only place to suffer repeated outbreaks of infections during the first half of the seventeenth century. Ordinances were repeatedly issued, especially in London where in 1629 ‘The Council were ... informed that the number of inmates and ale-houses was excessive’ and the following year the Lord Mayor was required to prohibit ‘all meetings and stage plays, bear-baitings, tumbling, ropedancing, shows, &c., in houses, and all other meetings whatsoever for pastime, and all assemblies of the inhabitants of several counties at the common halls of London, pretended for continuance of acquaintance, and all extraordinary assemblies of people at taverns or elsewhere.’¹⁶ More locally, 87 burials were recorded in 1593, the year of Brasbridge’s death, and four years later, 1597 was recorded as a



The Poore Man's Jewel, ... that is to say, A treatise of the pestilence, gathered out of the bookes of diuers learned physitians (Google)

15. Brasbridge *ibid*, 54.

16. <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/no-series/index-remembranca/1579-1664/pp329-349> [accessed 4 April 2020].

bad year for ‘the bloody flux and dysentery’ as well as a bad harvest; in 1603 92 burial entries were made, nearly 80 in 1623, 119 in 1637 and hundreds in 1643-5.¹⁷ Banbury’s population was swollen at that time with soldiers billeted in the town but there can be no doubt that the population suffered very badly from both plague and the general disruption caused by the fighting; the mayor and many members of the town council fled, leaving chaos behind them following the siege of the castle in 1644 and the ensuing devastation.

Whether those living in Banbury followed the injunctions of their vicar in the way they approached the scourge of plague is impossible to tell; his experience with treating plague victims no doubt convinced him of the efficacy of his remedies and he, and others, clearly had a fairly accurate idea of some of the ways in which the various diseases spread. The long-held theory about sin being the major cause of plague is no longer upheld due to the development of the understanding of infection, but many of the precautions Brasbridge and other contemporaries suggest, are remarkably similar to current practice. *Plus ça change, plus c’est la même chose.*

17. 255 in 1643, 295 in 1644 and 209 in 1645.

BANBURYSHIRE'S VICTORIAN BOATPEOPLE¹

Barrie Trinder



The Oxford Canal looking north from the Factory Street bridge, Banbury, in the early 1960s with Tooley's boatyard to the left

I. Background

Banbury is acknowledged to be a 'canal town'. Splendid views of the Oxford Canal are available from the bridge in the town's museum. Canal Days organised annually in October have attracted as many as 12,000 visitors. While the wonders of Tooley's boatyard are no more, the skills of boat building and maintenance are kept alive around an ancient working dry dock. Banbury's canal features in three books by the author L T C Rolt - it was at Tooley's that his voyage in *Cressy* began in 1939 - and Rolt is commemorated by the bridge that carries Cherwell Drive over the canal. The opening of the Oxford Canal was greeted in Banbury with exuberance and optimism, as was its extension to the county town in 1790, but for much of its history the canal and its surroundings comprised a secret world, known and understood by few people other than those who worked and unloaded boats. It is rarely mentioned in newspapers or other historical sources and the extent of what we know about the operation of the canal and of the people who worked it is limited.²

The object of this study is to examine the social history of people who worked the canal at Banbury, both those who lived in the area and those who passed through, from the time the canal was at its peak of prosperity in the early 1840s to the end of the century, when its economy was still lively.

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1. This article is an expanded version of a paper presented to the Banbury Historical Society in October 2015, and also draws on material from my book *The Midland Canals in 1871* (Boyd, 2019). I am grateful to Paul Hayter for proof-reading, to Geoff Gwatkin for maps and to Chris Day for encouraging me to put my lecture of 2015 into publishable form.
 2. L T C Rolt, *Narrow Boat* (1944, pb edn, Eyre Methuen, 1978), L T C Rolt, *The Inland Waterways of England* (2nd edn, Allen & Unwin, 1979), L T C Rolt, *Landscape with Canals: an autobiography* (Allen Lane, 1977).

Banbury is not located, like other notable waterways communities, at a junction between narrow and broad navigations. The Oxford Canal passes through Banbury's eastern fringe close to the River Cherwell. It was authorised by an Act of Parliament passed in 1769 (9 Geo III c 70), the year after the Act for the Coventry Canal (8 Geo III c 36) with which it was closely associated. The principal motivation for its construction was the carriage of coals into an area that was notoriously short of fuel, and its principal promoter was the Warwickshire coal owner Sir Roger Newdigate (1719-1806). The canal was opened in stages southwards from its junction with the Coventry Canal and commercial boats first reached Banbury in 1778 when construction ceased. It resumed from 1787, and the canal reached Oxford in 1789. The Duke's Cut in 1790, and the Isis Lock in 1796, made possible navigation through to the River Thames, and the canal became part of a notional waterways route from Manchester to London. A superior route from the Midlands to the capital, completed in 1805 with the opening of the Grand Junction Canal from Braunston to Brentford and Paddington, included the five miles of the Oxford between Braunston and Napton, the tolls on which sustained the company throughout the nineteenth century. The canal remained busy along its whole length. With other waterways it lost merchandise traffic with the coming of railways but retained its original function of delivering coals southwards, and gained new traffics in the 1880s and 90s. In 1929 the Grand Union Canal Co was formed with the aim of improving the waterways routes from London to Birmingham and the East Midlands, but the Oxford, although a part of the route to Birmingham, retained its independence, and did so until nationalisation in 1948.

2. Sources

L T C Rolt remarked in the 1940s on the dearth of literature on canals. He himself provided enlightening first-hand descriptions of what he saw and heard in Banbury and further afield, and wrote an invaluable survey of the canal system as it was around the time of nationalisation. Charles Hadfield's *British Canals* of 1950 represents the beginning of modern scholarship on the history of waterways which he developed as editor of the 'Canals of the British Isles' series. Hugh Compton published *The Oxford Canal* in 1975 as part of that series, and supplemented the book with several articles. Harry Hanson's *The Canal Boatmen* of 1975 was the first study of waterways to use census data. Wendy Freer's work of 1995 examines the education of the children of boatpeople. J D Porteous's *Canal Ports* of 1977 is a source of ideas about the history of all waterways communities not just those that he examined. Oxford's boating community was meticulously analysed by Mary Prior in *Fisher Row*. Oral evidence of the last years of commercial boating has been collected by Catherine Robinson, Christine Bloxham and Matthew Armitage.³

The records of the Oxford Canal Company analysed by Hadfield and Compton provide solid accounts of the company's history but relatively little about traffics carried and those who carried them, most of whom were not company employees. Canals were open to all who wished to use them and were willing to pay tolls and observe regulations. Boats might be owned by the individuals who worked them, by family consortia, by carrying companies or by industrial concerns. In order to understand Banbury's boatpeople it is necessary to look at those recorded on distant waterways as well as those resident in the town, and to

3. L T C Rolt, *Inland Waterways of England*, 109-10; C Hadfield, *British Canals: an illustrated history* (Phoenix House, 1960); H Compton, *The Oxford Canal* (David & Charles, 1975); H Compton, 'Two Canal Entrepreneurs from Banbury', *Cake & Cuck Horse (C&CH)*, vol 12 (1994), 230-38; H Compton, 'Staffing Oxford Canal around 1851', *(C&CH)*, vol 14 (2000), 230-46; H Hanson, *The Canal Boatmen 1760-1914* (Manchester University Press, 1975); W Freer, *Women and Children of the Cut* (Railway & Canal Historical Society, 1995); J D Porteous, *Canal Ports: the urban achievement of the Canal Age* (Academic Press, 1977); M. Prior, *Fisher Row: Bargemen and Canal Boatmen in Oxford 1500-1900* (Clarendon Press, 1982); C Bloxham, 'Working the Cut: Reminiscences of a Boatman', *C&CH*, vol 6 (1975), 19-29; M Davies & C Robinson, *Our Canal in Oxford* (Towpath Press, 1999); M Davies & C Robinson, *A Towpath Walk in Oxford* (Towpath Press, 2001); M Armitage, *Forging Ahead: a history of Tooley's Boatyard* (Windlass, 2018).



The Oxford Canal in the town and south of Banbury was characterised by lifting bridges, this example is at Thrupp

acknowledge that for boatpeople the canal held together a linear community. It is helpful to avoid stereotypes which portray boatpeople as romantic heroes or sinful wretches and to be aware that the practices of the last generation of commercial boatpeople in the 1940s and 50s were not necessarily followed in earlier generations. It is helpful to interject ‘when?’ and ‘where?’ in discussions of boatpeople which are inevitably influenced by George Smith’s *Our Canal Population*, published in 1878.⁴

Memoirs of journeys on waterways include John Hollingshead’s account in *Household Words* of a journey from City Road Basin in London to the Midlands in 1858 which brims with perceptive observations. *The Flower of Gloster*, Temple Thurston’s circuit by waterway from Oxford to Oxford, was published in 1911; David Blagrove showed that it was probably not based on a single journey, although its first-hand accounts of some sections of waterway are enlightening. It says nothing of significance about Banburyshire. By contrast Howard Williams, one of many young men who undertook voyages inland in the late nineteenth century, reveals interesting details about the canal at Banbury as do the splendid accounts of post-Second World War canal life by Tom Foxon.⁵

Newspapers reported enthusiastically on the building and opening of the Oxford Canal, but in the nineteenth century have little to say about it. In 1795 county lists were made of boats. Those for Oxfordshire and Northamptonshire are missing but the Warwickshire book throws some light on Banbury’s canal. The records generated by the Canal Boats Act of 1877 (40/41 Vic c 60), which made registration of boats compulsory from 1879, and subsequent legislation are enlightening sources. The registration books for Oxford and Daventry (Braunston) and the observations at Lower Heyford of George Dew, canal

4. G Smith, *Our Canal Population* (Houghton, 1878).

5. *Household Words* No 442, 11 Sept 1858; E T Thurston, *The Flower of Gloster* (1911, ed D Viner, Alan Sutton, 1984); D Blagrove, ‘The “Flower of Gloster” – fact or myth’, *Waterways World*, December 1972, 17-18; H Williams, *The Diary of a Rowing Tour from Oxford to London ... August 1875* (Alan Sutton, 1982); T Foxon, *Anderton for Orders* (Baldwin, 1997); T Foxon, *Number One* (2nd edn, Belmont, 2010).

inspector for Bicester RDC, have been published, and the lost Banbury registration book can be re-constructed from these sources.⁶

Much of this study is based on census enumerators' returns. Decennial censuses have been taken in the United Kingdom since 1801 (with the exception of 1941). The 1841 census is the first to provide information on boatpeople. Enumerators in that year and in 1851 were instructed to count the numbers of people sleeping in boats and to enter the totals in the preliminary pages of their books of schedules. Some exceeded these instructions and recorded the occupants of vessels as if they were normal dwellings. In 1841 an enumerator at Stratford-upon-Avon listed those sleeping on an Avon barge and eleven narrow boats and in 1851 enumerators recorded those on board eight narrow boats at Calcutt Locks, and on seven at Banbury. From 1861 enumerators were told to record people living on boats as if they were in houses, and they usually listed boats at the ends of books of schedules. Some did not adhere strictly to the instructions. No boats are listed in Banbury in 1861, which is scarcely credible, and on the Warwick & Birmingham Canal near Hatton only the numbers of males and female boatpeople were recorded.⁷

3. The first 70 years

The first generation of canals in England supplied coal to urban centres, the Bridgewater to Manchester, the Sankey Brook Navigation to Liverpool and the Birmingham, Derby, Nottingham and Coventry canals to their eponymous towns. In its early years the Oxford Canal followed this precedent. From 1778 it carried coal to Banbury and its hinterland, and from 1790 to Oxford.

Banbury lies 22 miles from the Warwickshire coalfield and about the same distance from Oxford, where in the eighteenth-century Thames barges delivered coal imported via London from north-east England. Banbury's hinterland comprised rich arable land and pastures, but not much woodland, no peat-yielding wetlands and only small areas of open common. More than a hundred probate inventories survive for citizens who died between 1690 and 1724, of which 39 (36%) record fuel, a higher proportion than in most towns. Twenty-seven refer unambiguously to 'coals', two of which value them at a shilling per hundredweight. Twenty-four inventories record firewood, seven refer to furze, five to faggots, others to broom and turfs. Coal evidently reached Banbury early in the eighteenth century, and its use was not confined to the wealthy, but it was expensive and people also burned fuels from local woodlands and commons. There was a substantial latent demand for coal in the region when the canal opened.⁸

The second phase of the history of English canals, the development of a national network of waterways that could distribute merchandise for retailers, was foreseen when the Trent & Mersey company was formed in 1766. The year 1789 saw significant steps towards this objective with the connection of the Oxford Canal to the River Thames, the opening of the Birmingham & Fazeley Canal and the junction of the Coventry with the T&MC at Fradley. Hardware from Birmingham which had been conveyed to Banbury by road was carried on canal boats from the first half of 1790. With these openings created, the canal through Banbury became part of a theoretical waterways route from Manchester to London although how many boats actually travelled this way is uncertain. Some vessels from Manchester and the Potteries reached Oxford in the 1790s and London-bound cargoes delivered by canal were awaiting transhipment to Thames barges in December 1797.

6. Eureka Partnership, *The Boatpeople of the Oxford Canal* (2002); Eureka Partnership, *The Boatpeople of the Oxford Canal Vol 2, Boat Registrations 1879-1921*(2006); Eureka Partnership, *Oxford Canal Miscellany* (2014).

7. B Trinder, *The Midlands Canals in 1871* (Robert Boyd, 2019), 8-12; E.Higgs, *Making Sense of the Census* (HMSO, 1999), 42-46, 104; S Lumas, *Making use of the Census* (PRO Publications, 2002), 40.

8. B Trinder, *Britain's Industrial Revolution* (Carnegie, 2013), 43.

Nevertheless, it seems that most long-distance traffic from 1801 used the Grand Junction Canal although transshipment on to the plateway between Blisworth and Stoke Bruerne was necessary until Blisworth Tunnel was opened in 1805. The completed Grand Junction Canal provided a superior route to London, but coal and some other bulk commodities were still carried from the Oxford Canal to and from wharfs on the Middle Thames.⁹



*Mill Lane in the 1960s with the boatpeople's pub,
The Struggler, is at the end of the row*

The national carrying network expanded. The fly boats of Pickfords, Crowley Hicklin and others conveyed merchandise in small consignments that were sorted at Braunston, Shardlow and other nodal points on the network. Fly boats worked through the night and most had crews of four youngish men, comprising two shifts, two men sleeping while one of the others led the horse and the other steered. They are readily recognisable on census returns.¹⁰

As early as 1793 boats belonging to Francis Joules of Stone on the T&MC were travelling twice weekly from Manchester through the Potteries and Banbury to Oxford. By 1812 an Oxford-bound boat operated by William Judd & Co called at Banbury on Mondays and Thursdays and the corresponding northbound vessels serving destinations across the Midlands on Wednesdays and Saturdays, but William Judd (1751-1832), who also operated road waggons, went bankrupt in 1814. In 1815 Pickford & Co, who employed William Arne as their agent in Banbury, offered fly boats on Tuesdays and Saturdays, with transshipment at Braunston '*from whence goods are forwarded with the greatest possible despatch to every part of the kingdom*'. The company suffered thefts, on 29 November 1830 at Banbury and on 15 January 1833 at Claydon. In 1821 Dean & Swaine worked boats twice weekly from Birmingham through Banbury to Oxford making road connections across southern England. Crowley Hicklin & Co offered weekly services to destinations across the Midlands and the North, and employed Thomas Page as their agent in Banbury. By the late 1820s flyboat services were provided just by Pickford & Co, three days a week north bound and southbound and by Crowley, Hicklin & Co, three times a week. A service offered by Parker & Co from 1834 of four weekly flyboats to Oxford with connections to London by the River Thames proved short-lived.¹¹

In 1840 Pickfords and Crowley Hicklin were between them providing daily flyboat services north and south, but Pickfords ceased to use canals for most of their traffic at the end of 1847. Crowley Hicklin operated four boats a week to Banbury in 1849, but two years later merchandise services were handled by the carrying company formed by the Grand Junction.

9. *Jackson's Oxford Journal (JOJ)* 31 July 1790; Prior, *Fisher Row*, 194-6; A H Faulkner, *The Grand Junction Canal* (Walker, 1993), 23-30.

10. Trinder, *Midlands Canals*, 102.

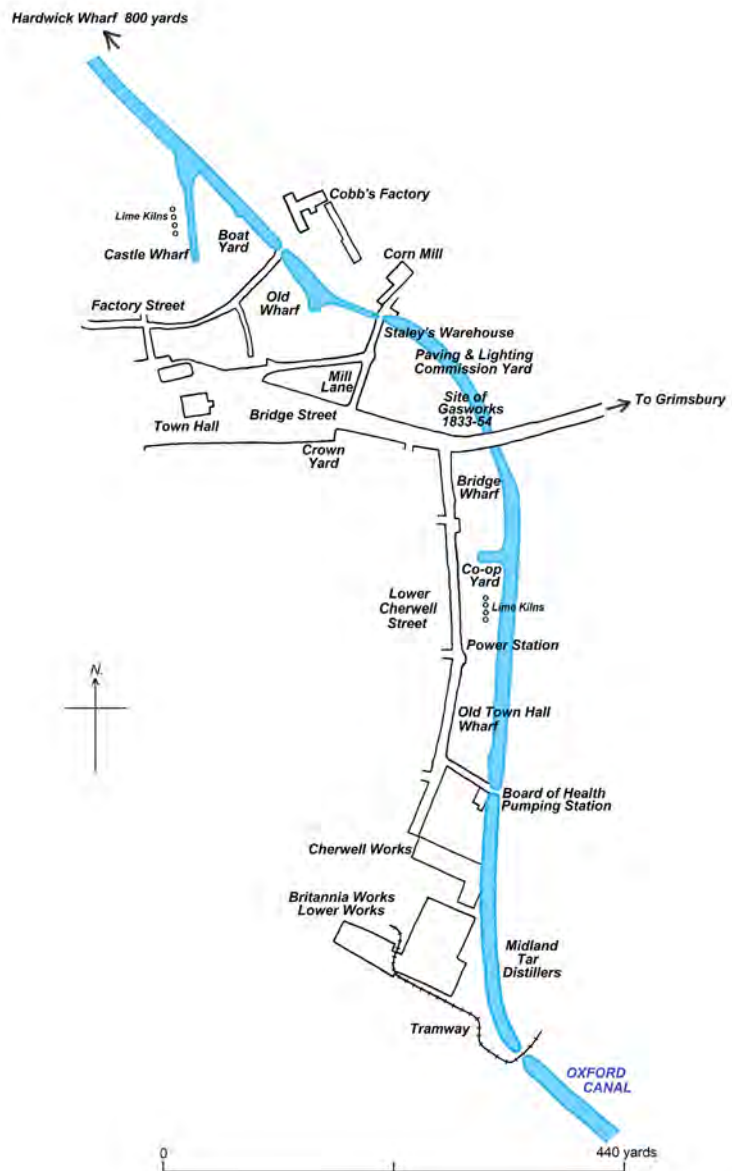
11. *Rusher's Banbury Lists & Directories*, passim; J S W Gibson, 'The Immediate Route from the Metropolis to all parts: Judd & Stone, Banbury carriers', *C&CH* vol 12 (1991), 10-24; P Renold, ed, *Banbury Gaol Records* (Banbury Historical Society, 1987), 6, 25; Prior, *Fisher Row*, 192.

That company proved unprofitable. Its lodging house for boatmen near the City Road Basin in London was given up during the 1860s, and carrying ceased altogether in 1876. By this time fly boats had disappeared from the canal at Banbury. Three boats with all-male crews recorded at Cropredy in 1851 were probably fly boats, and *The Derby* at Eynsham in 1861, crewed by three men and carrying 'Grand Junction traffic', was clearly a fly boat, but no subsequent traces of such workings can be found on the southern Oxford.¹²

4. The canal community

In the early years of the navigation the Oxford Canal company stimulated trade by carrying coal for sale at wharves in its own vessels for which it sought to purchase narrow boats in 1788. Traders in coal gradually emerged in Oxfordshire – the first reference to a coal merchant in the Banbury parish registers was in 1796 – and boating became an established trade amongst Banbury's working class.¹³

The first canal worker to be mentioned in the parish registers was Charles Large, a boat-builder who was married in February 1787. Five other boat-builders were recorded within the next six years. The first boatman recorded was Samuel Allen who was buried on 17 February 1794. Seven more were recorded in the 1790s, eleven between 1800 and 1809, 28 in the following decade, 23 in the 1820s and 29 in the nine years between 1830 and 1839. The census of 1841 listed 21 boatmen in Banbury as did that of 1851, but the number was reduced to 16 in 1861 and seven in 1871 and 1881. In 1891 only the wives of two men away



Banbury's canal-side

12. Faulkner, *Grand Junction*, 175-77; Trinder, *Midlands Canals*, 120
 13. *JOJ* 7 June 1788.

boating were recorded, and in the first census of the twentieth century there were just two active boatmen and one who had retired.¹⁴

It is not clear who were the first Banburians to work boats, but the coming of the canal certainly offered opportunities of employment to Banbury's poor. Most boatmen lived near the canal wharf, in Mill Lane and Bridge Street, an area well-known for its poverty and there was a concentration of boating families in the notoriously insanitary Crown Yard. Between January and June 1816 children of four different boatmen in the yard were baptised at the parish church.¹⁵



Banbury Wharf in the early 1960s

5. The canal-side

When Banbury's first gasworks was established in 1833-34 it was anticipated that its coal would come from Leicestershire and but by 1850 most coal that travelled to and through the town was from Warwickshire and Leicestershire, carried on boats whose crews were based on the Oxford Canal, although a few boats continued to travel from the Erewash Valley into the twentieth century. The qualities of coal from different seams varied, which explains why cargoes passing along the Oxford Canal had varied origins. Coal from Hawkesbury and Moira was regarded as good domestic fuel, but that from other collieries could better serve the needs of boilers, smiths' hearths, foundrymen's cupolas and gasmakers' retorts. In 1793 8389 tons of coal reached Banbury from the Coventry Canal, which would have included that from the Birmingham Canal Navigations travelling via Fazeley. In 1845 it was estimated that about 30,000 tons of coal was unloaded from canal boats for use in the Banbury area, that about 50,000 tons passed through Banbury to Oxford, and that 3,000 tons of general merchandise and 10,000 tons of grain and hay were despatched northwards by canal. Road stone from the Nuneaton area was being delivered to Banbury as early as 1837 when Mill Street was paved with Hartshill Riddlings. Another significant cargo was limestone. There were lime kilns at the Castle Wharf and Bridge Wharf and burning lime in canal-side kilns was still causing a nuisance in the 1860s. As in other towns, lime kilns went out of use in the late nineteenth century with the growing availability of Portland Cement.¹⁶

One of the factors that made Banbury a canal town was the Oxford Canal Co's wharf where William Holland was wharfinger by June 1793. Charles Neighbour (1823-98), who began work for the canal company as a junior clerk in Oxford at the age of 14, was wharfinger at

14. The genealogical references that follow are drawn from: J S W Gibson, ed, *Marriage Register of Banbury Part 3 1790-1837* (Banbury Historical Society, 1963); J S W Gibson, ed, *Baptism Register of Banbury Part Three 1723-1812* (Banbury Historical Society, 1978); J S W Gibson & N Fillmore, eds, *Burial Register of Banbury Part Three 1723-1812* (Banbury Historical Society, 1984); J S W Gibson, ed, *Baptism and Burial Registers of Banbury Part Four, 1813-1838* (Banbury Historical Society, 1988).

15. B Trinder, 'The Wandering Flutes', *C&CH* vol 19, (2012), 26-29;

16. R Kinchin-Smith, R. 'Staley's Warehouse', *C&CH* vol 12 (1993); Compton, *Oxford Canal*, 46; B Trinder, *Victorian Banbury* (Banbury Historical Society/Phillimore, 1982), 25, 96; British Parliamentary Papers, 1845 XI, *Reports from Commissioners, Railways Gauges, Oxford, Worcester & Wolverhampton and Oxford & Rugby Railway bills*, 79, 208-09.

Banbury from 1851 when he was 28 until 1891, but other men were responsible for other wharfs. Four wharfingers were recorded in the town in 1881.¹⁷

By the 1860s about a dozen wharfs lined the canal bank between Castle Wharf and Swan Close Road. The most northerly installations were around the Castle (or Golby's) Wharf, laid out in 1792 by James Golby, shareholder in the Oxford Canal, grocer and later coal merchant, encompassing a small inlet on the west side of the canal, alongside which was a bank of lime kilns. The boat yard with its dry dock was in the corner of the wharf alongside Factory Street. The canal company's Banbury Wharf (or the Old Wharf) occupied the area framed by the canal, Factory Street and Mill Lane, and included a warehouse that straddled an arm of the canal. Beyond Mill Lane and swing bridge No 165 was the land bought in 1837 by Thomas Staley of the nearby Banbury Mill (now the arts centre) on which he laid out a wharf and built a 25 m x 6.5 m three-storey warehouse as an adjunct to his mill.

The land was purchased by the borough corporation in 1908, and was part of the Corporation Yard until 1974. The warehouse was demolished in 1989. The next plot extending to Bridge Street was purchased in 1825 by the newly-established Paving and Lighting Commission, which used it as a landing place for road stone, and built a stable and a cart shed. The adjoining site was used by the Banbury Gaslight & Coke Co, established in 1833, which began production in August 1834. The gasworks was replaced in 1854 by one built between the two railway lines after which this area was used for storage by an ironmonger. It was purchased by the borough corporation in 1942. Four pubs, the *Old Wharf*, the *Jolly Waterman*, the *Steam Packet* and the *Struggler* in Mill Lane formed the hub of Banbury's boating community.¹⁸

Bridge Wharf, on the south side of Bridge Street, probably dated from the 1830s. The canal-side part was known to twentieth century Banburians as the timber yard of Dalby & Co which opened about 1859. A bank of lime kilns lined the southern edge. The plot to the south became the property of the Banbury Co-operative Society which used it as a coal wharf, and from the 1930s, as a dairy. The Society began delivering coal to its members in 1868. It later acquired a dozen railway wagons but continued to receive much of its coal by canal into the 1950s. South of the Co-op premises was a malthouse which, apart from a small office, was replaced in 1901 by the Banbury Electric Supply Company's power station which was designed to receive coal by canal from the Baddesley pits, and did so until 1935 when it closed.¹⁹

The late eighteenth-century town hall which stood in the Market Place was superseded from 1854 by the Gothic building in Bridge Street. At the instigation of Thomas Draper, solicitor and alderman, it was removed in 1860 and re-erected in Lower Cherwell Street where the first of its many uses was for the storage of artificial manure (superphosphates). The adjoining Old Town Hall Wharf was used by the coal merchant William Palmer, who began his business in Lower Cherwell Street in 1867. His company became Palmer & Son from 1899. Like the Co-operative Society, Palmers owned railway wagons but they received much of their coal by canal. The company supplied coal to the nearby United Dairies depot established in 1920-21.²⁰

17. Compton, 'Staffing Oxford Canal', *C&CH*, vol 14, 233-34.

18. R Kinchin-Smith, 'Staley's Warehouse', *C&CH* vol 12, 147-71; Foxon, *Number One*, 112; Compton, 'Staffing Oxford Canal', *C&CH*, vol 14, 233; Trinder, *Victorian Banbury*, 9-10; J Ferris, P Leach & S Litherland, 'A Survey of Bridge Street and Mill Lane, Banbury', *C&CH* vol 12 (1992), 60-64.

19. W H Lickorish, *Our Jubilee Story or Fifty Years of Co-operation in Banbury and the Neighbourhood* (Banbury Co-operative Society, 1916), 7; W Potts, *Banbury through 100 years* (Banbury Guardian, 1942), 50; G C J Hartland, 'The Banbury Power Station 1901-1935', *C&CH* vol 4 (1970), 127-30.

20. Trinder, *Victorian Banbury*, 103; *Victoria History of the County of Oxford*, vol 10 (1972) 68. Foxon, *Number One*, 110-12.

The next canal-side site was occupied from 1867 by the pumping station built by the Board of Health whose steam engine, fired with canal-borne coal, propelled sewage to the irrigation meadows at Spital Farm. To the south were two engineering establishments, the Cherwell Works established by Thomas Barrow in 1861, and the Lower Works of Bernhard Samuelson's Britannia Works. The latter was constructed by 1861 and in 1870 was linked with the original works on Fish (now George) Street by a tramway that continued across the canal to the depot from which the company despatched agricultural machines by rail. In its early years the Lower Works received pig iron, coke for its cupolas and foundry sand by canal.²¹

The boatyard at Banbury, with its dry dock, was established by 1790 and drew many boat owners to the town. One of the first boat-builders to work in the yard, recorded in 1793, was Thomas Cotton who built at least eleven boats before 1805. He appears to have completed his last in 1811 when he was working boats trading from Banbury to destinations on the GJC. His fortunes apparently declined and he was probably the Thomas Cotton aged 71 who died in Banbury workhouse in 1837. John Sanders was recorded as a boat-builder in Banbury in 1788 but by 1800 was a working boatman. There are other instances of boat-builders trading on the canal, including the Tooley family (see below). For about a quarter of a century the boatyard was occupied by Birmingham-born Benjamin Roberts, who moved to Banbury about 1836 from Gayton on the GJC. In 1841 he was assisted by his father and his son who both shared his name. Five members of the family were boat-building in 1851, but in 1861 his labour force was reduced to two. By 1868 the business was in the hands of William Chard (see below), although two of Roberts's sons still lived in Oldbury and worked as boat-builders.²²

Many itinerant boat-builders worked in Banbury for short spells before seeking employment elsewhere. William Cotterell, born at Moreton-in-Marsh, was living in Boxhedge in 1841 with his Neithrop-born wife, four children, and his brother and sister-in-law. In 1861 his was one of three Cotterell households in the Sherborne Street area of Birmingham all of them including boat-builders. Richard Bew, son of a labourer from Bridge Street, was baptised in Banbury in January 1817 and took up boat-building. By 1871 he was widowed and lodging with a blast furnaceman at Windmill End in the Black Country. Reuben Roberts from Great Bowden near Market Harborough spent several years boat-building in Banbury in the 1840s during which he married a wife from Warmington. The couple lived in Oldbury and Tipton before being listed on the census of 1861 on Nechells Park Road in Aston. Their three sons were all boat-builders.

Detached from the rest of Banbury's canal-side businesses, about a mile north of Castle Wharf, was Grimsbury or Hardwick Wharf where John Fletcher was wharfinger in 1851. There was a boat-building establishment on the site worked by 38-year-old, Braunston-born John Peabody (*aka* Pebody) in 1851. In 1848 and 1855-57 he was recorded as landlord of an adjacent pub called *The Boat*. In 1861 Henry Peabody, also Braunston-born and perhaps his brother, was trading as a boat-builder employing two men, but John Peabody was living in Wood Lane, West Bromwich, where two of his sons were building boats.

Birmingham University Field Archaeology's review of Banbury's canal-side shows how the waterway influenced the town's economy. It also places canal-side developments in a chronological context. The canal reached Banbury in 1778, the Castle and Old wharfs were opened soon afterwards, and the boatyard was functioning by 1790. Yet it was not until the 1830s that Staley's warehouse, the Commissioners' yard and the gas works were built between Factory Street and Bridge Street. The wharfs and industrial concerns established to the south between the 1830s and the 1860s depended on road access from Lower

21. Trinder, *Victorian Banbury*, 83-85, 97.

22. Compton, 'Two Canal Entrepreneurs', *C&CH*, vol 12, 237; Armitage, *Forging Ahead*, 8-9.

Cherwell Street which was not laid out until the early 1840s. The canal had a profound impact on Banbury's economy, but much of that impact came, not in the 1780s and 90s but during the town's remarkable period of growth in the mid-nineteenth century.²³

6. The long view north

Most boatmen would have perceived that the canal north of Oxford led, not to Birmingham, as Temple Thurston assumed, but to coalfields further east. This is an examination of the journeys customarily undertaken by boatmen from Banbury or further south. The first junction north of Banbury was at Napton, where from 1801 the Warwick & Napton Canal provided access to Birmingham and the Black Country and later served the lime and cement works at Stockton and Long Itchington. The W&NC was linked at Kingswood to the Stratford-upon-Avon Canal, but the sizeable canal community at Stratford-upon-Avon had few connections with Banbury.²⁴

Much of the coal that reached Oxfordshire in the early years of the navigation came from mines in the central Black Country, travelling through Fazeley. The route via the W&NC was an alternative from 1801. Mary Prior showed that the *Boat* public house near Oldbury locks was frequented by boatmen from Oxford delivering grain and hay, collecting coal, and settling contracts. When Warwickshire boats were registered in 1795, 38 were recorded as journeying to Oxford from Tipton, one from Oldbury, three from Bilston, two from Wolverhampton and seven from Stourbridge, two from Tipton to Banbury, four to Fenny Compton and two to Marston Doles. By the 1860s traffic between the Banbury area and the Black Country had diminished. In 1861 John Wilkins's *Competitor* from Cropredy was delivering hay and corn at Aston and in 1871 William Hambridge took his boat on the Bentley Canal, but these were rare occurrences. Traffic in coal from the central Black Country had almost ceased, and its past importance was reflected in 1871 only in the presence of the 69-year-old Banbury-born boatman John White as landlord of the *Boat* at Oldbury.²⁵

The census returns for Warwick in 1841 are missing, and about 30 boats between Warwick and Knowle in 1871 were not fully recorded, which makes it difficult to measure activity on the W&NC. The chance inclusion of details of boats at Calcutt Locks in 1851 reveals the presence of three vessels from the Banbury area, captained by Charles Chard, William Grantham and Henry Markham. The 1861 census provides details of 52 boats between Napton and Solihull, including five with Banbury connections, George Hambridge from Eynsham at Stockton, William Goode, Bletchington-born but apparently resident in Banbury at Long Itchington, William Wilkins of King's Sutton at Fosse Wharf, William Humphris from Thrupp at Budbrooke and Charles Chard at Rowington. In 1871 there was a Wilkins vessel at Calcutt and William Burchell's boat was at Warwick. *Napoleon* at Knowle was in the charge of Banbury-born William Neal although his family were probably then resident at Polesworth. In 1881 James Hathaway's boat laden with grain, was at Fosse Wharf, but his was the only vessel from the southern Oxford among the 26 on the W&NC in that year. Again, in the 1891 census, 26 boats were listed of which possibly one came from the Banbury area and in 1901 there were three from Banburyshire among twenty on the canal.²⁶

From Napton the 5-mile section of canal to Braunston was, from 1805, part of the main route from the North and the Midlands to London. At Braunston boats from the Oxford

23. I Ferris et al, *Industrial Archaeology Survey of the Oxford Canal Corridor, Banbury, Oxfordshire* (Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit, 2001); I Ferris et al, 'A Survey of Bridge Street and Mill Lane, Banbury; C&CH vol 12, 60-64.

24. Thurston, *Flower of Gloster*, 7; Trinder, *Midlands Canals*, 48-49.

25. Prior, *Fisher Row*, 205-06, 225-28; Eureka Partnership, *Warwickshire Quarter Sessions: Boat Registrations 1795* (2009); Trinder, *Midlands Canals*, 20.

26. Trinder, *Midlands Canals*, 98.



The view north

Canal could bear right on to the Grand Junction which came to be the accepted waterways route from Banbury to London. That traffic is illustrated by two examples from 1861. Four boats, captained by Alfred Edwards and Charles Green from Oxford, Henry Berry from Eynsham and Ann Berrill from King's Sutton, passed through Great Linford on the GJC in present-day Milton Keynes on the night of 7 April. The following day another enumerator recorded the same four at Adderbury. On the same night *Sarah* of Banbury, carrying timber, was at Hunton Bridge on the GJC crewed by her owner Thomas Caldecott and his wife, while his son, 25-year-old Banbury-born William, was further north on the GJC near Blisworth, on a boat with 19-year-old Banbury-born James Booth as a mate.

Two miles beyond Braunston tunnel the GJC gives access at Norton Junction to the original Grand Union Canal, part of the 'Leicester line' which led to Trent Lock on the eponymous river, from where boats could head east to Nottingham, west to Shardlow and the T&MC, or north on the Erewash Canal. The long journey south with coal from wharfs in the Erewash Valley to destinations on the southern Oxford Canal was still undertaken by some boatmen in the 1940s. Some East Midlands boats were recorded south of Banbury in 1861 and 1871, but no Oxfordshire boats were listed on the Leicester line. In 1871 King's

Sutton-born William Wilkins was at Loughborough with *Sarah* and *Fanny*, but he was no longer resident in the Banbury area.

Most northbound boatmen remained on the Oxford Canal beyond Braunston, passing the company headquarters at Hillmorton, round the fringes of Rugby, past Brinklow and the wharf at Stretton-under-Fosse to Wyken, Sowe and Tusses Bridge in the Warwickshire coalfield. Three pits at Wyken were served by an arm of the canal. Hawkesbury Colliery from which coal was delivered to the Oxford Canal was developed from 1855. Eight boats were moored at Sowe in 1871, and four at Wyken Colliery in 1881, and the 1891 census records the presence of 25 narrow boats on this stretch of the Oxford Canal, three of them from the Banbury area. Nine were recorded on the same section in 1901, one captained by Alfred Grantham, another by Richard Hambridge.

The junction at Hawkesbury with the Coventry Canal was often called Sutton Stop after the Sutton family, toll clerks and coal merchants. Richard Sutton, then in his seventies, was toll clerk in 1841, assisted by his son Henry, then 45, who had been born at Stretton-under-Fosse. Henry and his son were recorded as clerks in 1871, but by 1881 the family had returned from Hawkesbury to Stretton-under-Fosse. The other notable family at the junction were the Sephtons, boat-builders. James Sephton, born at Stockwith on the River Trent, settled at Hawkesbury around 1840 after a spell living at Leighton Buzzard. In 1861 Francis Sephton, boatbuilder and grandson of James was landlord of the *Boat* public house, and ten years later his five sons were all involved in boat-building. In 1891 there were ten Sephton households around the junction whose heads were boat-builders, and other members of the family carried on the trade at Polesworth. Boats owned by the Sephtons regularly passed through Banbury, although most were probably vessels loaned to boatmen whose own craft needed maintenance. In October 1897 for example Samuel Beechey of Thrupp was working *Clematis* while his own *Prince Albert* was being repaired.²⁷

The Coventry Canal extends 38 miles from the Bishop Street Basin, near the centre of the city, to Fradley Junction on the T&MC. Bishop Street lies about five miles from Hawkesbury Junction, and one of the six vessels there in 1871 was in the charge of William Grantham (see below). Most census enumerators grouped together boats at the various coal wharfs in Foleshill and Exhall. There were 12 in 1861 including two from Abingdon, one from Oxford and one from Claydon, 21 in 1871 amongst them a boat from Priors Marston and one from Cassington. The ten on this stretch in 1881 included four from Abingdon and Charlton (Berks) on the Warwick and Birmingham Canal, and four from the Banbury area. There were nine on this section in 1891 and seven, including three from Banburyshire, in 1901. North of the junction the canal was joined by the branch serving the Newdigate collieries. It passes east of Bedworth, the perceived centre of the Warwickshire Coalfield, where there were always narrow boats collecting coal. North of the town was the wharf that served the Bedford Charity Colliery, the deepest in Warwickshire when it opened in 1831. The Hawkesbury & Bedworth Brick & Tile Co adjacent to the mine despatched vitrified engineering bricks by canal. Further north is the junction with the branch canal that served the Griff collieries on which three boats were moored in 1891, two of them from Oxford.²⁸

The canal served coal wharfs in Stockingford, Chilvers Coton and Nuneaton, where the six boats moored in 1861 included *Jimmy* of Banbury, in the charge of William Knight and his family, and in 1871 a boat worked by the Bonner family of Souldern. Hartshill was the principal source of canal-born road stone. The quartzite, often called granite, was worked by several firms, William Boon's Windmill Hill Co, operated from the late 1850s. Richard Jee's quarry at Hartshill was established as early as 1822. William Judkins & Co worked the

27. Trinder, *Midlands Canals*, 60-61.

28. M Kinder, *A History of Exhall and Hawkesbury Collieries, Bedworth* (Nuneaton Local History Group, 2010).

Tuttle Hill quarries and created the monumental pyramidal waste tip known as Mount Judd. William Garratt from Banbury was loading at Hartshill in 1891, and two boats from the southern Oxford were at Judkins's Wharf in 1901.²⁹

North of Hartshill the canal passes Mancetter and the locks at Atherstone where coal from Baddesley was being collected by William Grantham in 1901, and through Grendon where Charles Howe of Banbury was moored in 1891. Polesworth was a source of much canal-born coal. Eleven boats were loading there in 1861, including *Britannia*, captained by Bletchington-born William Goode. There were eight in 1871 including two from Souldern Wharf and *Sarah Ann*, owned by Henry Ward, the Oxford coal merchant, which was captained by William Jennings from Banbury. Of eleven boats at Polesworth in 1881, four came from Banbury and one from Abingdon and two were captained by George and Edward Neal, father and son, both born in Grimsbury, but then apparently resident at Hawkesbury. There were 13 boats at Polesworth in 1891 and six in 1901 including one crewed by Emanuel and George Tooley (see below).

The canal veers westwards beyond Polesworth through Alvecote, Alington and Glascote. Two boats were moored at Glascote in 1881, one of them from Oxford. After skirting Tamworth the canal reaches Fazeley and the junction with the Birmingham & Fazeley Canal. Fazeley never developed, as Arthur Young forecast that it would, into a prosperous town although its textile mills flourished. Its canal community comprised only a few clerks and maintenance workers. The census of 1861 recorded one boat at Fazeley in 1861, as did those of 1881 and 1891.³⁰

The Coventry Canal between the junctions at Fazeley and Fradley was notoriously quiet. The census records no boats around the junction with the Wyrley & Essington Canal at Huddlesford and those at Fradley Junction were all doing business on the Trent & Mersey Canal rather than the Coventry. Oxfordshire boatmen were not accustomed to use this gateway to the North of England, but an exception was 36-year-old Oxford-born Thomas Ashley who, with his family, was on a coal boat at Tunstall on the northern edge of the Potteries in 1861. Good coking coal was mined in North Staffordshire and he was probably collecting fuel for the cupolas of an Oxfordshire foundry.³¹

The 1861 census recorded 55 boats along the whole length of the Coventry Canal. There were 40 in 1871, 33 in 1881, 53 in 1891 and 34 in 1901. Many were locally-owned, and from 1879 one of the country's principal carriers, S E Barlow & Co, was based at Glascote. There was a substantial trade via the northern section of the Oxford Canal to Leamington, Warwick and other communities along the W&NC, and while iron ore was still being mined in the coalfield, it was taken by narrow boat, probably via the B&FC, to furnaces in the Black Country. Warwickshire coal and road stone were carried in considerable quantities to wharfs along the Grand Junction and even more went to Banburyshire and places further south.

At Marston Junction north of Bedworth the Coventry was joined by the Ashby-de-la-Zouch Canal, authorised in 1794 (34 Geo III c 93), which extends 26½ miles to terminate near the colliery at Moira, which was sunk in 1804 and provided excellent domestic fuel.

Census returns illustrate the fluctuating trade on the Ashby Canal. In 1861 31 boats were recorded at Moira and 13 at other places along the canal. Twenty seven of the 44 (61 per

29. E G Grant, 'Changing perspectives in the Warwickshire coalfield', Slater, T R, & Jarvis, P J, *Field & Forest: an historical geography of Warwickshire and Worcestershire* (Norwich, Geo, 1982).

30. M Stratton & B Trinder, 'The Foundations of a Textile Community: Sir Robert Peel at Fazeley', *Textile History*, vol 26 (1995), 185-201; A Young, *Towns in England and Wales* (London School of Economics, 1932), 272-73; B Trinder, *Britain's Industrial Revolution* (Carnegie, 2013), 57-58.

31. Foxon, *Number One*, 35-36; L T C Rolt, *Narrow Boat*, 169-72.

cent) appear to have been from Banbury and places further south. They included *Arthur*, *Coal Box*, *Fanny* and *Shamrock* from Abingdon, *Surprise* from Banbury, *Sarah Ann* and *Thomas* from Eynsham, *Halifax* from Lyneham on the W&BC, *Boyne* from Steeple Aston, and *Alfred*, *Bessie*, *Daniel*, *Edward*, *Jane Annie*, *Lancer*, two *Marys* and *Pride of the Ocean* from Oxford. Subsequently traffic varied, with a peak of 26 boats from the Banbury area in 1891, but there were only six ten years later.

Table 1: Boats on the Ashby-de-la-Zouch Canal

Year	Boats recorded on the whole canal	Boats from Banbury and places south	Percentage of boats from Banbury &c
1861	44	27	61
1871	34/(28) *	13	46
1881	16	5	31
1891	42	26	66
1901	11	6	66

No details of crew members were recorded on 6 boats at Measham in 1871.

Coal from the collieries along the Coventry and Ashby canals to wharfs on the Oxford was the dominant freight of boats on the canal at Banbury by the 1840s. Of the 51 boats registered in Oxford in 1879, 51 were said to be trading ‘on the Oxford, Coventry and Ashby-de-la-Zouch canals’, while only one was supposedly working from the Oxford to Birmingham.³²

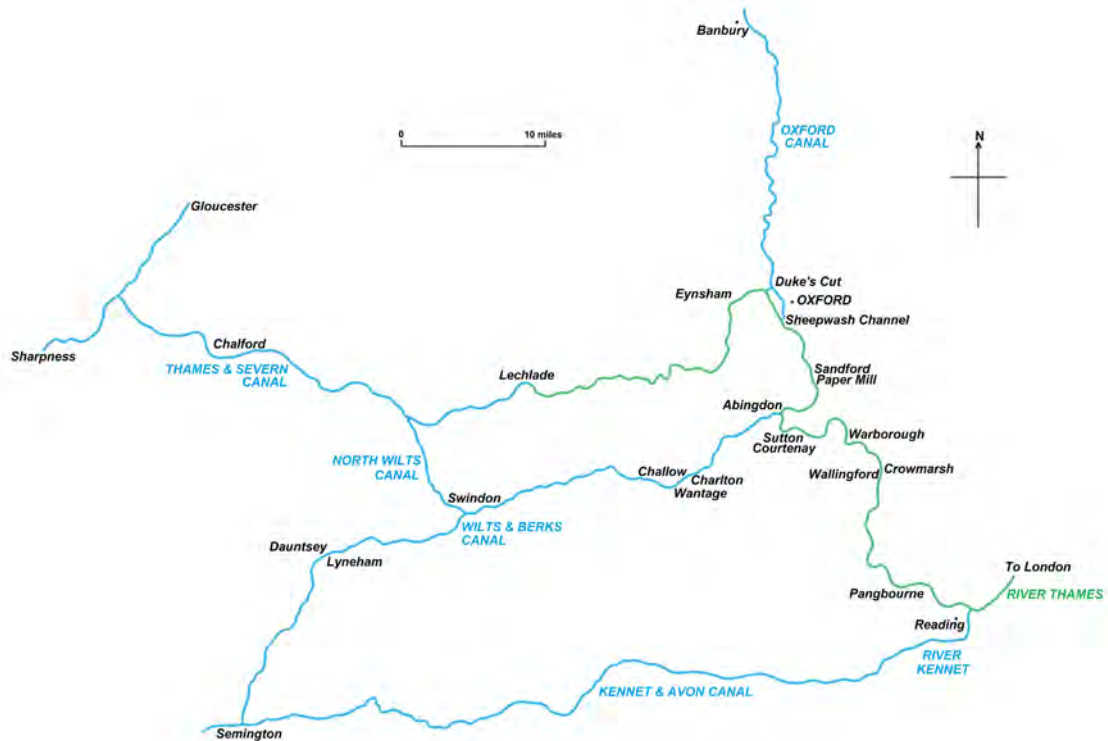
7. The long view south

Many boatmen from village wharfs, from Oxford and from places on the River Thames and its tributary canals, passed through Banbury en route to and from the coalfields.

The Duke’s Cut, a three-quarter-mile stretch of water near Wolvercote, linking the Oxford Canal with the River Thames, was opened in October 1789 and was the first link between the Midlands canals and the principal river of southern England. As a route for southbound long-distance traffic it was superseded by the cut through the Isis Lock to the navigable stream of the Thames in central Oxford in 1796 but it provided access to the boating communities at Eynsham and Cassington. Southbound vessels keeping to the Oxford Canal would have passed the coal wharf at Hayfield Hutt to reach the company’s wharf in Hythe Bridge Street where most traffic was handled by boatpeople from nearby Fisher Row. In 1871 the census enumerator called the vessels at Hythe Bridge Street ‘canal coal boats’, and their crews ‘canal coal boatmen’. There were thirteen boats at Hythe Bridge Street in 1861, eight in 1871 and thirteen in 1881, but only four in 1891 and another four in 1901. This decline was matched by the diminution of the canal community. In 1841 there were 38 boatmen and three bargemen (who worked the Upper Thames) living ashore in the parish of St Thomas, 27 boatman and one boat woman in 1851, 14 boatmen, a ‘boatmaster’ and two boatwomen in 1861, 14 boatmen and a boatwoman in 1871, five boatmen, a bargeman and a boatwoman in 1881, nine boatmen in 1891 and seven boatmen, a retired boatman and a retired boatwoman in 1901. A few canal boats unloaded at places in Oxford other than Hythe Bridge Street but most boats passing through the Isis Lock to the River Thames continued south.³³

³². Eureka in *The Boat People of the Oxford Canals*, vol 2, *Boat Registrations 1879-1921*.6-13.

³³. Figures for Oxford exclude watermen, and in 1891 include three boatmen working for the Local Board.



The view south

The Oxford Canal Company had shares in a wharf at Abingdon, and established wharfs at Wallingford in 1799 and at Reading in 1795. Coal was unloaded from canal boats at private wharfs at Sutton Courtenay and Culham on the River Thames.³⁴

From Abingdon the Wilts & Berks Canal extends 52 miles past Wantage, Swindon, Lyneham and Dauntsey to join the Kennet & Avon Canal at Semington near Melksham. It opened in 1810 but was never prosperous and in 1871 only eight occupied boats were moored along its whole length. Boats owned by the Edwards family from Charlton and Challow near Wantage, and vessels from Lyneham and Dauntsey regularly delivered coal from Warwickshire and Leicestershire. In 1871 *Oliver*, captained by John Edwards, and *Elizabeth* in the charge of Thomas Edwards were at Hinckley. John Seymour's *Halifax* from Lyneham was at Moira in 1861 and passed through Banbury on census day in 1871. *Margaret* and *Ann*, both owned and captained by John Edwards of Challow, passed Lower Heyford on four dates between 28 February 1893 and 12 August 1897. Some boats from further afield passed through Banbury. In the 1880s vessels owned by James Sharp of Chalford on the Thames & Severn Canal regularly carried imported timber from Gloucester docks to Reading, Oxford and other places on the Middle Thames using the North Wilts and Wilts & Berks canals. They usually returned by the same route but occasionally they headed north on the Oxford Canal to collect coal from Cannock Chase which they carried back to Gloucestershire along the River Severn.³⁵

34. Compton, *Oxford Canal*, 65-66.

35. Trinder, *Midlands Canals*, 85-87; Eureka in *The Boat People of the Oxford Canals*, vol 2, *Boat Registrations 1879-1921*.6-13; H Conway-Jones, *James Smart of Chalford* (Black Dwarf, 2020), 127, 131-33.



The Oxford Canal at Cropredy

The boating community at Abingdon included several families who regularly travelled north on the Oxford Canal. In 1861 *Shamrock*, *Fanny*, *Coal Box* and *Arthur* from Abingdon were recorded at Moira. Two boats from the town were on the Ashby Canal in 1871, when a flotilla of five boats with links to Abingdon was at Lower Heyford. Some 27 boats were registered in Abingdon between 1879 and 1886 of which at least ten were narrow boats. They included *Margaret* and *Ann*, belonging to John Edwards of Challow and *Enterprise* and *Melinda*, owned by Asher Arnold of Sutton Courtenay. Traffic from the Oxford Canal to the middle Thames continued after 1850. In 1871 two boats from Crowmarsh were at Moira, two from Measham were unloading at Wallingford, and the captain of *Anne* at the High Bridge Wharf, Reading was a native of Ilkeston who had probably brought his vessel along the Leicester line from the Erewash Valley. *Daisy No 1*, owned by James Green of Warborough, passed through Lower Heyford on 30 August 1892, and *Melinda* and *Enterprise* owned by Asher Arnold from Sutton Courtenay on 24 May 1894 and 4 August 1894.³⁶

Vessels belonging to the Ashley family, coal merchants and boatmen who had many links with Fisher Row, regularly passed through Banbury. Birmingham-born Thomas Ashley, aged 67, was recorded as the employer of four men, when his boat was moored in 1861 near Wallingford Castle. In 1851 his son Edward Ashley, also Birmingham-born with his wife, Oxford-born Mary (née Lewis), and three sons kept the *Swan Inn* at Pangbourne which they ran as a coal business. Coal was stored in a cellar which is now adapted for private dining. By 1861 Mary, now a widow, was recorded as a publican and coal merchant employing seven men. Her son Henry captained a coal barge while another son Joseph assisted with the coal business. She remained at the Swan in 1871, when her younger son George was still a waterman.³⁷

8. Village wharfs

A distinct canal community extended from Napton through Banbury to Eynsham. Those villages were at the limits of the hinterland from which country carriers travelled to

36. Eureka in *The Boat People of the Oxford Canals*, vol 2, *Boat Registrations 1879-1921*.6-13.

37. Trinder, *Midlands Canals*, 83-84; Prior, *Fisher Row*, 239-41.

market. Eynsham was served by the Abingdon carrier who journeyed weekly to Banbury between 1831 and 1837, while Napton's own carrier William Shepherd went there every Thursday from 1868 at least until 1907. There were links with the canal community around Fisher Row in Oxford, but that community had other connections within the city, with navigation on the River Thames, with fishing, with university and other pleasure boating. Fisher Row has been the subject of a masterly analysis, and is not examined in detail here. The canal-side communities of Banburyshire were linked until the 1850s by 'market boats', water-born country carriers. Couling's boat began to ply between Banbury and Oxford at least as early as 1796, and it was joined between 1802 and 1805 by a boat from Coventry, arriving on Thursday mornings and returning the same day. The Coventry service continued for at least a decade, while Oxford market boats operated until the 1850s.³⁸

A wharf might be established wherever a canal was crossed by a road. Some were no more than convenient points for loading and unloading, or for overnight moorings. Others developed into busy commercial communities. The first traders to appear were almost invariably coal merchants, some of whom purchased boats to fetch their wares. Having invested in boats and road vehicles and perhaps in a weigh bridge, a coal merchant might turn to trading in grain which utilised the same facilities and provide return cargoes. Hay and straw for urban horses might be carried in season. The availability of coal stimulated brickmaking whose impact is demonstrated in Pamela Keegan's study of Cropredy. Clay for brickmaking is found in most parishes along the Cherwell Valley. Lime, burned from



Canal communities in Banburyshire

38. B Trinder, 'Banbury: Metropolis of Carriers' Carts', *C&CH* vol 18 (2011), 232, 237; Prior, *Fisher Row*.

limestone delivered by canal to kilns at wharfs could be used by both builders and farmers. Particular types of coal could be used in malt kilns, and maltsters at wharfs might readily turn to brewing. The maintenance, even the building of narrow boats did not necessarily require dry docks, and some boat-builders successfully traded at village wharfs, while canal companies often based their maintenance facilities at such places. The centres of commercial wharfs, places for striking bargains and leaving messages as well as for refreshment, were almost invariably canal-side pubs.³⁹

The first village wharf north of Banbury was at Cropredy where the canal company employed a wharfinger who lived in a company house as well as several lock keepers. Coal merchants used the wharf which opened on 1 October 1777. The presence of a lime burner in 1861 suggests that there were canal-side lime kilns. Several boats were based at Cropredy, some of them owned by the Wilkins family (see below), and in 1871 *Guiding Star* was recorded at Fenny Compton in the charge of William and Edward Barnet of Cropredy. Most censuses recorded boats moored overnight at Cropredy, as many as nine in 1891. The canal company employed maintenance staff at the summit at Claydon but there is no evidence of commercial activity there except that Claydon-born members of the Duckett family were manning boats on the Coventry Canal in 1861 and 1881.⁴⁰

At Fenny Compton where the availability of coal was advertised in May 1776, a public house stands adjacent to the wharf where William Wilkins was wharfinger in 1861. Richard Guest Brown had a substantial business there, dealing in corn and coal and making bricks. In 1871 he employed his nephew as his clerk and was the owner of two boats, *Guiding Star* and *Wild Wood*, moored in the vicinity. Ten years later he had added brewing to his activities. His son had taken over the businesses by 1891.⁴¹

A toll clerk, a wharfinger and a lock keeper worked for the canal company at Doles Wharf, Priors Marston where the canal is crossed by the ancient droving route, the Welsh Lane. The wharf is overlooked by the *Doles Inn*, the home in 1841 and 1851 of King's Sutton-born John Lake, a coal merchant. Joseph Bottrell from Hillmorton, was recorded as wharfinger in 1861, as a coal dealer in 1871 and a coal and corn dealer in 1881. Brickmaking and trading in coal continued into the 1890s. David Tolley, from a well-known Oxford family of boatmen, combined the roles of wharfinger, farmer and coal merchant in 1891, but ten years later the only resident whose work was connected with the canal was a lock keeper.

South of Banbury, Twyford Wharf is located where the canal is crossed by the lane linking Banbury with the village of King's Sutton, which has connections with the canals through the Berrill and Wilkins families. The *Red Lion* at Twyford Wharf, was kept in 1881 by a coal merchant, James Chard of the Banbury boating family (see below). A coal merchant was trading at Nell Bridge wharf as late as 1907.

The wharf at Aynho, with the nearby railway station, was the centre of a commercial community which included coal merchants and brickmakers. The Oxford Canal Co owned the public house at the wharf, the *King Alfred's Head*, but in the 1860s they sold it to the railway company which re-named it the *Great Western Arms*. Its landlord in 1871 managed the local brickworks.⁴²

The wharf at Souldern, was accessible only from a lane from the village a mile to the east. It was the base for several boats that fetched coal from the Ashby and Coventry canals.

39. Trinder, *Britain's Industrial Revolution*, 245-46; P. Keegan, 'Cropredy – the Brick Era', *C&CH* vol 8 (1980), 68-75.

40. Compton, 'Staffing Oxford Canal', *C&CH*, vol 14, 230-46; *JOJ* 1 Oct 1777.

41. Compton, 'Staffing Oxford Canal', *C&CH*, vol 14, 240; *JOJ* 4 May 1776; 16 May 1776.

42. N Cooper, *Aynho: A Northamptonshire Village* (Banbury Historical Society, 1984), 227, 234, 237, 263; B Trinder, *Junctions at Banbury* (Banbury Historical Society, 2017), 59.

The coal business was operated in 1871 by Charles Clifford but previously it had belonged to John Bonner whose son, Samuel, had charge of a boat moored at the wharf, while Thomas Bonner, another son, traded in coal, hay and straw at Aynho. In 1871 two boats from Souldern were loading coal at Polesworth, one captained by Samuel Bonner, the other by Henry Coleman, recorded ten years earlier as a boatman living in the village. The brickyard at Souldern, worked in 1861 by George Golby from Napton, had closed by 1871, although the lock keeper's cottage was still called Brick Kiln House.



The canal-side village of Thrupp

The wharfs at Lower Heyford, which before the opening of the Buckinghamshire Railway in 1851 supplied coal to Bicester six miles south-east, was the centre of a significant canal community throughout the nineteenth century. The village was important as the home of the Grantham family (see below), although the Coggins family also owned several boats, and as late as 1907 the two wharfs were used by three coal merchants. The Canal Boat Inspector for Bicester Rural District Council, George Dew, lived in Lower Heyford and carried out there his duties relating to canals.

Enslow Wharf in Bletchingdon parish, best known by the name of the *Rock of Gibraltar* public house, lies four miles south of Heyford. Enslow bridge, over the River Cherwell was the meeting point of Oxfordshire's first two turnpike roads of 1719 and 1730 (5 Geo I c 3; 3 Geo II c 21), and the wharf was a convenient unloading point for coal destined for Woodstock two miles south-west and Witney nine miles south-west. It also served the nearby cement works. The canal company kept a warehouse at Enslow that was the subject of a robbery in 1833. Several Bletchingdon families became involved in boating. Most notable were the Tooleys and the Taylors (see below), but William Goode, born about 1810 and married to a King's Sutton woman, had children born at Banbury but appears to have been living at Long Itchington in 1861, when he was with his boat at Polesworth. Bletchingdon-born Charles Beesley was in his boat at Hillmorton in 1861 when his crew included his son Uriah, also born in Bletchingdon, who was in the charge of boats at Bedworth in 1871 and Foleshill in 1881.⁴³

A mile and a half south of Enslow, in Kidlington parish, is the picturesque canal-side community at Thrupp centred on a long stone terrace. The canal company had a maintenance yard there which usually employed a foreman, a carpenter, one or two labourers and sometimes a stone mason and a clerk. Thrupp was home to several boating families, and the coal business of William and Ann Hambridge was based there. Activities revolved around pubs, of which there were three in the 1880s and 90s, the *Boat*, whose landlord was a grocer, the *Britannia* and the *Three Horseshoes*.⁴⁴

The boating communities at Eynsham and Cassington had many links with Banbury. From the Duke's Cut vessels from the canal could proceed upstream on the Thames to a flash

43. C Dodsworth, 'The early years of the Oxford Cement Industry, *Industrial Archaeology* vol 9 (1972), 285-95; Renold, *Banbury Gaol Records*, 19; Compton, *Oxford Canal*, 44.

44. Census returns for 1861 for Kidlington parish, which includes Thrupp, are missing.

lock called the Clay Weir which gave access to Eynsham where, in 1792, the Oxford Canal Co took out a 101-year lease on a wharf and appointed a wharfinger. In 1845 the company bought the adjacent *Talbot Inn* and in 1849 purchased the wharf itself and the Clay Weir. The wharf attracted coal merchants, who supplied Witney and Burford, as well as brickmakers, a steam-powered flour mill, a rope business and a bark and timber merchant. The duties of wharfinger were undertaken by the landlord of the Talbot or one of his family. The wharf remained in business until the 1920s. The naming of the boatman Eynsham Harry in *Flower of Gloster* indicates the significance of the village on the waterways system.⁴⁵

Cassington lies near the confluence of the River Evenlode with the Thames two miles north-east of Eynsham. A cut three quarters of a mile-long was made by-passing Cassington Mill on the Evenlode, with a pound lock providing access to the Thames. It was completed by 1802 and initially handled boats from the Thames & Severn Canal as well as the Oxford. The Oxford company leased the wharf in 1834 and trade revived when Eynsham-born John Hambridge moved there in 1841 and remained for 17 years. Subsequently trade declined and the wharf appears not to have been operating by 1871. Southbound traffic through the Duke's Cut, chiefly to Eynsham and Cassington, amounted to 5488 tons in 1824, about 105 tons or five or six boatloads per week, while northbound traffic amounted to only 470 tons. The Duke's Cut provided the rather complicated access to Wolvercote Paper Mill which received coal by canal from 1811 until 1951.⁴⁶

9. Dynasties

The Wilkins family, active on the canal for more than 60 years, originated at King's Sutton, the home in 1841 of James I, born about 1811 and George, born about 1813 who were probably brothers. Another brother, John I, born about 1809, was probably absent boating. In 1851 James I, boatman and farmer of 10 acres, was living with his family at the home of his aunt, Mary Cockbill, in Church Lane, while George had apparently left his three children with a housekeeper while away boating. John Wilkins I was trading as a coal merchant at Cropredy where he lived with his wife, daughter and two sons, of whom one was Edward. By 1861 the Wilkins boatmen had left King's Sutton. Edward Wilkins had moved with his King's Sutton-born wife Elizabeth to a 40-acre holding near Fosse Wharf, Offchurch, where the W&NC was crossed by the Roman road. William Wilkins, son of George, was at Fosse Wharf with a boat which he operated with a Banbury-born mate. John Wilkins II, son of James, with his Cropredy-born wife Mary Ann, was at Aston, Birmingham, with *Competitor*, a Cropredy-based vessel, unloading grain. By 1871 James Wilkins I, having retired from boating, was again living in King's Sutton, in Church Street where his unmarried sons were recorded as boatmen. Edward Wilkins had left Fosse Wharf to be replaced by his father John I, his wife Mary and their Cropredy-born boatman grandson William. Another Edward, son of George, was the captain of a lime boat at Ivinghoe on the Grand Junction, and appears to have settled at Stratford-upon-Avon, birthplace of his wife, children and mate. William Wilkins, aged 37, another son of George, was with Sarah and Fanny at Loughborough, birth place of his wife, and had probably settled in north Leicestershire. In 1881 Sarah, widow of James Wilkins, was living in Wales Street, King's Sutton, with her sons George, a carpenter, and a third Edward, a boatman, and a grandson, also a boatman. Another George, William and James were crewing *Willy* at Cropredy. John and Mary Ann remained at Fosse Wharf, and shared their house with a live-in carter. By 1891 John had died but Mary Ann continued to live there. There is no evidence of the family at King's Sutton in that year but another King's Sutton-born John Wilkins aged 65 and his Banbury-

45. K Belsten & H Compton, 'Eynsham Wharf, Oxfordshire', *Journal of the Railway & Canal Historical Society*, vol 14 (1968), 44-46; Compton, *Oxford Canal*, 55-62, 117-18; Trinder, *Midlands Canals*, 70-72; Thurston, *Flower of Gloster*, 12, 14.

46. Compton, *Oxford Canal*, 60-62, 65, 104; Trinder, *Midlands Canals*, 73; Foxon, *Number One*, 117.

born wife were in a boat on the GJC at Blisworth. Ten years later the couple had retired to Lower Cape, Warwick. Frederick Wilkins, boatman, son of Edward, born at Offchurch, was living at Long Itchington, while Thomas Wilkins, son of George was at Shackerstone on the Ashby Canal.⁴⁷

The Grantham family were ubiquitous on the Oxford, Coventry and Moira canals on census night in 1901. William Grantham and his son John were in their own boat at Baddesley on the Coventry Canal. Alfred and Hannah Grantham and their 4-year-old daughter were at Wyken where Henry aged 15 served as a crew member in a boat captained by Richard Hambridge. Edward Grantham with his son Edward and brother Thomas manned a boat at Napton and probably owned its butty crewed by the brothers Lewis and Henry, and their nephew, another Henry aged 11. John Grantham was mate to his brother-in-law Henry Hambridge at Claydon Top, while William and Ellen and their four sons and two daughters were between them crewing three boats at Bletchington. John Grantham kept the *Struggler* at No 3 Mill Lane, Banbury and his brother Edwin Grantham the *Old Wharf* at No 5. At Lower Heyford Martha and Eliza Grantham awaited the return of their boating husbands while George was employed as a general labourer. In 1901 therefore 15 male Granthams were working boats, seven of which they appear to have owned, while two members of the family were mates on vessels belonging to others.

The founder of the dynasty was John Grantham, born about 1793 at Wolston near Coventry, who married Hester from Lower Heyford where from 1816 the couple occupied a 20 acre holding and had four sons and several daughters. The oldest, William, born about 1816 married Hannah from Middle Barton, and their family included seven sons, most of whom became involved with boating. The second son, John, born about 1818, married Elizabeth and had two sons, William, who lived for a time in Banbury, and Alfred. Thomas Grantham, the third son born about 1820 was living in Banbury in 1851 when he was a boatman and coal dealer, landlord of the *Steam Packet* and then of the *Royal Oak*. He subsequently left the canal, and was recorded in the 1881 census as a retired farmer living at Combe near Woodstock. The youngest son, George, born about 1832, was living with his parents in 1851 and working as coal dealer, and by 1881 had taken over the family holding which he probably gave up before 1901.

The Hambridge boatpeople were as numerous as the Granthams, and were involved with the canal for an equally long time. The family pedigree is complex. James Hathaway, boatman, probably born at Eynsham about 1805, married Elizabeth Lines, from a boating family, at Banbury in 1825. The couple lived in Crown Yard, then in Mill Lane, and had at least five children, two of whom died as infants, between 1826 and 1836. It is likely that by 1851 this James Hathaway had re-married and moved to Cassington, where John Hathaway, aged 51, born at Eynsham and perhaps his brother, was a coal merchant. James's new wife Elizabeth was from Cassington. James's sons, James and Banbury-born William were living with them, and the couple had four Vesey stepsons, several of whom were boatmen. In 1861 James was collecting coal at Moira in *Sarah Ann* of Eynsham, with George Vesey as his mate and his son William was steering the butty *Thomas*.

By 1881 William Hambridge was married to Eynsham-born Ann, with whom he had a large family. The census of that year records him at Napton in his boat crewed by his three sons, all born at Eynsham. Ann, with three other sons, a daughter and a charwoman, was keeping the *Three Horseshoes* at Thrupp. In 1891 William and Ann were recorded with two daughters in their own boat at Moira while their son George and two of his brothers

47. Material in this and following paragraphs is drawn from census returns and from Eureka Partnership, *The Boatpeople of the Oxford Canal* (2002); *The Boatpeople of the Oxford Canal Vol 2, Boat Registrations 1879-1921*(2006); *Oxford Canal Miscellany* (2014); Rusher's *Banbury Lists & Directories*, 1832-1906.

worked the butty. Their son Thomas was at Cropredy, with his wife, two babies and a mate, on *Gertrude*. Ten years later William and Ann were living in Langford Lane at Thrupp, where William made his living as a coal merchant and boatman. Of their sons Thomas was at Brown's Wharf, Nuneaton on a boat with his wife and six children, Richard with his sister Sarah and Henry Grantham had a boat at Wyken, while Henry with his wife, two babies and his brother-in-law John Grantham were at Claydon Top. William and his sons, all of Thrupp, were recorded during the 1880s and 90s as owners of *Formidable*, *Free Trader*, *Gertrude*, *Petrel*, *Providence* and *Sarah Jane*. The Hambridges also worked boats for other owners, Thomas was recorded as captain of vessels owned by the canal company, Henry Burdett of Foleshill, and William Boon the Hartshill quarry owner.

James Hambridge boatman, born at Cassington and married to Neithrop-born Fanny, was landlord of the *Jolly Waterman* in Mill Lane in 1851 where he remained until the early 1860s. In 1871 he was at Napton in a boat crewed by his sons Samuel and Thomas. Another James Hambridge, probably brother to William, born at Eynsham about 1842, was on a boat at Wolvercote in 1881, with his wife, Harriet and their five children. Another William Hambridge, born at Eynsham and aged 16, was mate on a boat at Hillmorton, while Thomas Hambridge, aged 22, born in Banbury, was crewman in a boat at the Town Hall Wharf. Thomas Hambridge, son of James of the *Jolly Waterman*, was at Warwick in 1901 with his wife and four sons, three of whom had been born in Birmingham.

Even after the coming of main line railways newcomers could take up boating and prosper. The Chards and Taylors by the 1870s were the principal boating families in Banbury. Charles Chard, a mason, married Mary Weston at St Mary's in 1813. The couple had eight children, three of whom died young. The two eldest sons, William and Charles initially followed their father's trade, and were both recorded as masons in the 1841 census. During the following decade they became involved with boating and the coal trade. By 1851 William Chard was married with four children and trading as a coal merchant in Broad Street, while Charles was master of a boat at Calcutt Locks on the W&NC. About 1857 William took over the former prison at No 2 Market Place where in 1861 he was trading as a boatman and mealman employing four men. His 16-year-old son William was a boat builder's apprentice, and his brother Charles with his wife and a crew man were on a coal-laden boat at Rowington on the W&NC. Ten years later William Chard, corn dealer and boatman, was employing eleven men and a boy and had taken over the Banbury boatyard which gave employment to his sons William and James.

Charles Chard has not been traced in 1871, but Ann, the younger sister of the brothers, had married another entrepreneur. Alfred Taylor, born at Bletchingdon in 1821, was the son of Richard, a stone quarryman. With his brothers Abel and Albion, he initially followed his father's trade but by 1871 he was landlord of the licensed premises at No 53 Bridge Street then called the *Black Horse* but previously the *Railway Inn*, and was recorded in the census as a canal boat owner and publican. He and his wife lived with four daughters, his mother-in-law, Mary Chard, a niece and 11 lodgers. His sons Alfred II, George and John were members of the crew of *Eliza*, moored in Banbury. About 1873 he moved to the *Fox*, No. 1 Market Place, next door to William Chard, his brother-in-law, and after 1877 traded as a coal dealer in Grimsbury, a business carried on after his death by his widow. In 1881 his brother Charles was master of a boat at his native Bletchingdon, and his son Alfred was moored at the drawbridge at Lower Heyford.⁴⁸

William Chard was listed in the 1881 census as a corn factor with four employees, and in 1891 as a corn dealer and coal merchant. His boats, *Rising Star*, *River Isis*, *Sarah Ann*

48. From about 1877 No 53 Bridge Street was occupied by Daniel Cluff, boot and shoe maker and leather cutter, whose family continued the business into the 1960s. Older Banburians may recall that the interior was laid out exactly like a pub.

and *Teuton*, registered at Banbury between 1887 and 1890, were worked in the early 1890s by Thomas Coles, William Burchell and Alfred Hone from Banbury, Abel and Mary Jane Lamsden from Oxford and Samuel Humphris of Eynsham, all of them seasoned boatpeople. Rusher's Directories record him as the owner of the Factory Street boat yard until 1899, although when there was a fire in the yard in 1897 it was recorded as Mr Neal's dockyard.

Chard's sons forsook boating for the licensed trade. William Chard II was landlord of the *Plough* from 1874 and then of the *Reindeer* where from about 1890 he was succeeded by his youngest brother Bernard Samuel Chard. James Chard in 1881 retained connections with the canal as landlord of the *Red Lion* at Twyford Wharf, where he traded in coal, but by 1901 the pub had passed into the hands of George Twynham, a farmer.

William Chard's eldest son, Joseph, born in 1846, appears to have had no connection with coal trading or with the canal but became a distinguished citizen of Banbury. About 1869 he established a tobacco shop at No 62 Parsons Street which apparently prospered since he moved his home during the 1890s from the rooms above the shop to St John's Villa. He was elected a town councillor in 1902, became an alderman in 1905, and served as mayor in 1909-10.

The Tooley family, like Alfred Taylor, originated at Bletchingdon. A member of the family owned a boat which delivered stone from Enslow to Banbury in 1830. Emanuel Tooley (1828-1917) was the son of Francis, who was probably a widower in 1841 when the census recorded both the father and his 13-year-old son as farm labourers. Several other Tooleys in the parish were paupers, and Thomas Tooley, probably his uncle, was in Bicester Workhouse in 1881. At some stage Emanuel took up boating and operated *Speedwell* and *Elizabeth* as a family concern. He was recorded in 1881 at Claydon Top with his wife, and three sons, aged 22, 18 and 12, the latter being George Tooley I (1869-1940). In 1891 Emanuel Tooley was in his boat at Napton, and in 1901 at Steam Mill Bridge near Polesworth, on both occasions with George as his mate. The 1901 census confirms that they were working on their own account. George Tooley I took over the boatyard at Banbury about 1900 after it had been damaged by fire on 25 November 1897, and it subsequently passed to his sons George II (1904-93) and Herbert (1913-87) who worked there into the 1980s. *Providence*, owned and captained by George Tooley, was registered at Banbury on 13 May 1893. He still owned her in 1906, along with *Trust To* and *Prosperous* and sold *Ernest* and *Three Brothers* to S E Barlow. Three other Tooleys managed pubs in Banbury in the first decade of the twentieth century: Frederick was at the *Struggler* from about 1904, and in 1907 John and Thomas Wilmot Tooley were landlords of beerhouses in Horsefair and Broad Street.⁴⁹

Other case studies would show similar patterns in the families of the Hathaways and Humphries of Eynsham, the Berrills of King's Sutton and the Hones and Burchells of Banbury. Boating families were certainly not isolated from the rest of society. They had homes on land. They kept public houses where boatpeople collected information about cargoes. They were involved with the coal trade and sometimes with corn, and in boat-building. Some kept smallholdings. Their family links were linear. The Wilkins family had connections with King's Sutton, Banbury, Cropredy and Offchurch, the Hambridges with Eynsham, Cassington, Thrupp and Banbury. The Granthams were as at home in Banbury as in Lower Heyford. The Taylors and Tooleys, two of several boating families in Bletchingdon, settled in Banbury. It was still possible for men with ambition to enter the boating trade even while it was declining, and, whoever owned the boat on which he was working, boating was always attractive to 'the adventurously minded young man who was not yet ready to settle down'.⁵⁰

49. Kinchin-Smith, 'Staley's Warehouse', *C&CH* vol 12, 158, 160; Armitage, *Forging Ahead*, 40-56.

50. Foxon, *Number One*, 121.

II. Boatpeople

Perceptions of boatpeople vary between two extremes. L T C Rolt saw them as ‘a unique and exclusive community’, with a distinctive culture, and fantasised that they were descended from gypsies fresh from the Balkans who happened to be encamped on Trafford Moss when James Brindley cut the Duke of Bridgwater’s Canal. George Smith, who successfully agitated for legislation to protect child brick-makers and to improve living conditions on boat, saw them differently:

‘...over 100,000 men, women and children, living and floating on our rivers and canals in a state of wretchedness, misery, immorality, cruelty and evil training that carries perils with it ... fathers, mothers, sisters and brothers sleep in the same bed and at the same time. In these places girls of 17 give birth to children, the fathers of which are members of their own family ... Ninety five per cent cannot read and write, ninety per cent are drunkards, swearing, blasphemy and oaths are the common conversation, not more than two per cent are members of a Christian church, sixty per cent are living as men and wives in an unmarried state...’

The study of census does not enable the examination of all the points Smith makes, which can be seen within a tradition of demonising boatpeople that goes back at least to the 1830s. *Table 2* shows that there were still in the twentieth century many family boats whose crews included young children, whose education was a cause of concern to many. Yet while many boatpeople admitted that they were ‘not scholars’, examination of returns on certain census forms shows that the proportion who were literate was much higher than five per cent. While boatmen made frequent calls in public houses, heavy drinking was inimical to the pressure to move on that characterised their thinking and was reflected in such common boat names as *Perseverance*, *Speedwell* and *Guiding Star*. Smith suggested that incest was prevalent on canal boats, but figures for the Oxford, as well as for other canals, show that many boatpeople seem to have ensured that their teenage daughters were removed from the temptations of confined life in narrow boat cabins.⁵¹

Table 2: Boats recorded on the Oxford Canal, Napton-Duke’s Cut

Year	Boats with all-male crews	Boats with crews aboard	Boats with children under 10
1871	24 53%	45 (137 people)	14 (25 children) 31%
1881	18 46%	39 (140 people)	13 (44 children) 33%
1891	21 58%	37 (104 people)	11 (20 children) 30%
1901	13 45%	29 (105 people)	14 (30 children) 48%

Table 3: Children recorded on boats between Napton and the Duke’s Cut

Year	Girls under 10	Boys under 10	Girls 10-19	Boys 10-19
1871	13	12	4	38
1881	25	19	5	25
1891	14	6	7	36
1901	17	13	6	18

⁵¹ Rolt, *Inland Waterways*, 175-77; Smith, *Our Canal Population*, 10-13; Trinder, *Midlands Canals*, 197-208.

12. The end of the century

Banbury's canal may have been in decline but it remained busy in the late nineteenth century. Registration of canal boats under the Canal Boats Act of 1877 began in 1879, in Banbury in January of that year. Seventy eight boats had been registered by the end of March, more than 100 by 1883 and more than 200 by the end of the century. At Oxford 33 boats were registered on the first day, but the total by 1900 barely exceeded 60. While canal traffic in Oxford appears to have been diminishing in Banbury traffic generated by new customers such as the power station, the tar distillers and the Co-operative Society was sustaining the livings of boatpeople who lived along the length of the canal. John Langley recalled that the canal in the 1890s and early 1900s was busy, carrying coal, particularly for the new power station, as well as limestone, grain in sacks, granite chippings from Hartshill and barrels of brewers' sugar from the London docks. He recalled that the trade centred on the pubs in and around Mill Lane, and that once education became compulsory some boating families settled in Factory Street so that their children could attend St Mary's School.⁵²

Industrial customers who used the canal in the 1890s included William Judkins, the Windmill Hill Company and the Hartshill Quarry Company who quarried road stone around Hartshill, Charles Nelson & Co and Greaves, Bull & Lakin, who made cement at Wolverhampton and Stockton, and the alkali works of Chance Bros. at Oldbury. Large carrying companies, particularly Fellows, Morton & Clayton, Thomas Clayton Ltd and the Samuel Barlow Coal Co had an increasing influence on activity on the Oxford Canal.

The carriage of the by-products of gasworks to refineries where they were processed to make creosote and materials for roadmaking expanded from the 1860s. William Clayton (1818-82), a canal carrier in Birmingham, came to specialise in carrying tar and gas water from London and Birmingham to refineries in the Black Country. Under the management of his son Thomas (1857-1927) the family's general carrying business was merged with that of Fellows, Morton & Co in 1889 while the bulk carriage of gasworks products continued as a separate concern, Thomas Clayton Ltd, with its headquarters at Oldbury. Cargoes were conveyed through Banbury to Oldbury from the gasworks at Oxford, and in 1912 Banbury became a destination for by-products with the establishment of the works of Robinson Bros, later Midland Tar Distillers, alongside the canal. Traffic was received from Oxford and Leamington amongst other places.

Samuel Barlow (1847-94) grew up at Exhall alongside the Coventry Canal and, with his wife Mary Ann, from a boating family at Tipton, began carrying as an owner boatman in the 1860s. In 1879 he moved to Glascote, where from his house of 1890 in John Street, and from a wharf at Kettlebrook, no longer used by the eponymous colliery after its closure in 1885, he established a carrying and coal business. After his early death the company prospered under the management of his widow and sons. It became a limited company in 1916 and was operating nearly 50 boats by 1914. Until 1957 it had an office at Sutton Stop (Hawkesbury Junction) where boatmen were directed to collieries along the Coventry Canal. Several of the company's contracts took their boats through Banbury, supplying coal to the Huntley & Palmer biscuit factory at Reading, the power station in Oxford and the paper mills at Sandford and Wolvercote. The company was involved from the late 1880s in buying and selling boats with both the Grantham and Tooley families.⁵³

Fellows, Morton & Clayton originated when James Monk (1800-49) began a carrying business at West Bromwich. After his death his family established a base at neighbouring

52. Eureka in *Boat People of the Oxford Canal vol 2. Boat Registrations 1879-1921*; J L Langley, 'Further Memories of late Victorian and Edwardian Banbury', *C&CH*, vol 3 (1966) 42-44.

53. A H Faulkner, *Barlows* (Rothwell: Wilson, 1986), 3, 5, 9, 13.

Tipton from which they were working 50 boats in the 1850s. New capital was introduced in 1876 when Fredrick Morton became a partner, and in 1889 the company, then managed by Fellows's son Joshua, absorbed the general carrying business of Thomas Clayton. The company's chair was one of the most respected figures in the Black Country, Alderman Reuben Farley (1826-97) of West Bromwich. Fellows, Morton & Clayton were working 11 steam and 112 horse boats from the time of the merger and their boats were working through Banbury at least as early as April 1895 when their Wolverhampton-based *Italy* was in the area.⁵⁴

This study concludes in 1901, but Banbury's canal fulfilled the commercial purposes for which it was built for more than another half-century. Activity diminished in the 1950s, not least because collieries were closing. Twenty were still working in Warwickshire when the mines were nationalised in 1947 but that number quickly declined. Hawkesbury closed in September 1948, Exhall in 1949, Pooley Hall at Polesworth, Amington and Alvecote in May 1951. At Griff the Clara pit closed in 1955 and No. 4 pit in 1960, while Newdigate continued until 1982, and Baddesley until 1989.⁵⁵

Tom Foxon described a declining waterway in 1955 while en route from Griff to Morrell's Brewery in Oxford. He saw no working boats after he left Napton until he reached Banbury where a pair of Thomas Clayton boats had taken by-products from Leamington gasworks to Midlands Tar Distillers, and the last horse-worked boat, Joe Skinner's *Friendship* which had delivered coal to Lampreys and Palmers. He found the canal increasingly silted and generally in decline, although there was a spurt of activity in 1955 during the ASLEF strike on the railways, when Banbury's coal merchants turned to boatmen pleading for deliveries. Nevertheless trade continued to decline and few commercial craft were passing through Banbury by 1960.⁵⁶

II. Conclusions

This study has shown the continuing economic importance of the canal for Banbury and its hinterland through the second half of the nineteenth century. The canal ceased to be the principal distributor of goods for retailers from the 1850s, and was essentially a carrier of coal to Oxfordshire from the Warwickshire and Leicestershire coalfields, with some additional traffics including road stone and by-products from gasworks. A substantial proportion of boats on the canal were worked by the 'dynasties' described above, families who owned boats and worked boats for others, and were also involved in coal dealing, the corn trade, public houses, and in some cases with smallholdings. Analysis of census returns cannot reveal every detail of boatpeople's lives, but it does suggest that they conformed neither to Rolt's romantic imaginings, nor to George Smith's assumptions of deepest sinfulness.

A range of topics await investigation by historians, the settlement of boatpeople in Banbury and elsewhere, activities on the canal during two world wars, the impact of the great freeze of 1947, and the relationship between traditional commercial canal carrying and the new recreational boating industry that grew up from the 1950s. The history of the waterway is far from finished.

54. A H Faulkner, *Claytons of Oldbury* (Rothwell: Wilson, 1978), 3-8, 23-4.

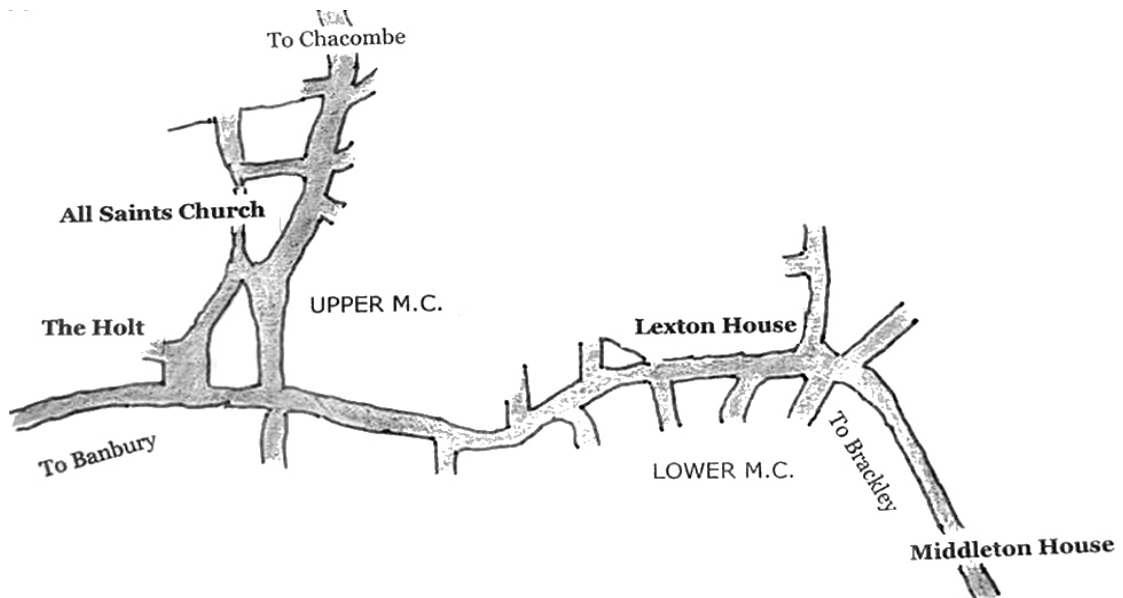
55. Trinder, *Britain's Industrial Revolution*, 268-89; A H Faulkner, *FMC: a short history of Fellows, Morton & Clayton* (Rothwell: Wilson, 1975).

56. Foxon. *Number One*, 12, 120-21, 128.

CHARACTERS IN SEARCH OF A RUMOUR, 1940-43: THE HOLT, MIDDLETON CHENEY

Brian Goodey

The Holt, a Victorian country house was one of three substantial local residences, around which rumours have swirled from time to time. It marked the western, historically 'Upper', end of the community, with Lexton House eastward near the Middle Green, and Middleton House marking the eastern entry to the 'Lower' village.



Location of houses mentioned: Overthorpe House is located further to the left (west)

None of these houses could lay claim to 'manorial' titles or functions, but at times all were the source of local leadership, charitable works and inevitably, word-of-mouth rumours and 'goings on.' Some are still circulating...

The Holt

The first rumour revolved round The Holt, built at the instruction of Miss Mary Ann Horton (1780-1869) in her flurry of late life activity in the village in the 1860s, which was designed by William Wilkinson of Oxford but demolished in 1973. The owner at the time of this story was Mildred Stewart-Savile, who had been there since 1927.

It was alleged that Charles de Gaulle visited The Holt during the time he was in England – June 1940 and May 1943 – the unstated implication being of secret wartime negotiations with un-named local residents. Was there a connection with Francois Coulet, a French



*The Holt, air photo from the south c. 1960
(source unknown)*

diplomat committed to the Free French, who was in England for nine months between October 1942 and June 1943 undertaking missions for de Gaulle?² Natalie Antoinette Sullivan was married to Quintin McGarel Hogg (later Baron Hailsham of St. Marylebone) who returned home, wounded, in 1942 to find his wife's lover in his home.¹ The lover was Francois Coulet.

Middleton House

Douglas McGarel Hogg, 1st Viscount Hailsham (1872-1950), father of Quintin Hogg, lived at Middleton House from or before 1929. From 1950 to her death in 1964 his second wife, Mildred Margaret, Viscountess Hailsham, lived there and even ten years after her death her social and political presence was a major factor in how the village worked. Whilst The Holt



Middleton House from the garden 2021 (Brian Goodey)

1. Lewis, Geoffrey (2002); 'Lord Hailsham of St Marylebone' *Biog.Mem. F.R.S.*, 48 221-231
 2. Little, Brian (2018); 'Look Back with Little: Hall Stories Highlight Community at Best,' <https://www.banburyguardian.co.uk/news>

might have been seen as 'The Manor', any social power was certainly surrendered by then to Lady Hailsham, as she was known. Her reputation remained attached to the Village Hall, opened in November 1948, which she had built in memory of her first husband, Clive Lawrence. It was a wooden hut with a tin roof, relocated from RAF Chipping Warden, not popular throughout the village. 'Amongst the hall's many uses were Conservative Party meetings that were often disturbed by sods of turf landing on the roof'.² Possibly generational change had reduced the underlying political conflict in Middleton by 1995 when a new group of substantial houses, built on the site of a former garage nearly opposite Middleton House, was named Hailsham Court.

The Search Continues

Substantiated historical evidence seldom enhances the quality or survival of a rumour. De Gaulle's intervention in explanation of the behaviour of a senior member of staff is an attractive image but unlikely, although the available cast of characters is enticing. If so, then why involving The Holt? There is evidence that earlier local press reports managed to confuse residents of Middleton's three big houses – The Banbury Advertiser (1:IV:1920) moved (Sir) Harold Smith, then resident at Middleton House, to The Holt. In 1924 his widow, Lady Smith, did move to Lexton House.

The presence of a Special Operations Executive women's training facility at Overthorpe Hall (now School) just to the west of Middleton offers proximity but there is no evidence of de Gaulle (or indeed any other significant) visitors. This rumour may be fading with current generations but as part oral culture, part local history any further contributions would be welcomed by the author.



Lexton House 1980s (Brian Goodey)

THE ORCHARD FAMILY'S SOJOURN IN BANBURY, 1857-1967

Clare Jakeman

My connection with the Orchard family is through my husband, Stephen Jakeman, whose grandmother was an Orchard. Her father, Stephen Orchard, arrived in Banbury in 1857¹ and, in partnership with his brother, Thomas Orchard, set up T&S Orchard at Bridge Bank, Banbury.



Bridge Bank yard

The first Orchard building of which I have found a record, was referred to in the *Northampton Mercury* (22 November, 1856):

‘THE LOCK-UP HOUSE AND POLICE STATION AT MIDDLETON CHENEY. The Messrs Orchard have now completed their contract for the erection of this house and Mr James Milne (County Surveyor, 1790-1863), the architect, has expressed his satisfaction at the manner at which the contract has been carried out. It will be used for the magistrate’s meeting for the first time on Monday.’

Ecclesiastical Buildings

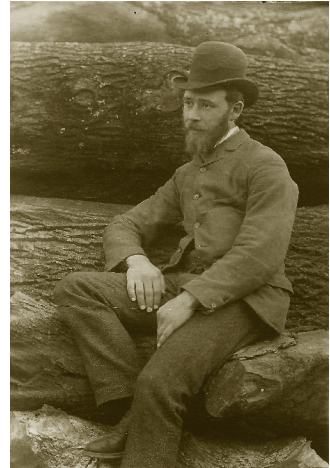
Four years later T&S Orchard erected two cemetery chapels (since demolished) at the Municipal Cemetery at Southam Road. The architect was Charles Hutchinson Edwards (1832-1900) of London and the two chapels were recorded in photographs in 1985 prior to demolition by Cherwell District Council. *The Council for British Archaeology Newsletter* (1979) has the following details about the chapels:

‘The more northern was an Anglican mortuary chapel, the southerly one was a Nonconformist mortuary chapel but has recently been used as a store. Both are of identical design and are three cell buildings consisting of a nave,

1. *An Alphabetical Digest of Rusher’s Banbury Directory to Trades and Occupations 1832-1906*. Introduction by Barrie Trinder. Ed. Jeremy Gibson (BHS Vol 34. 2014), 93.

chancel and porte-cochere. A feature of note is the sculpted corbels and capitals with naturalistic leaves carved on them...The exteriors of the buildings show considerable ingenuity and idiosyncrasy.²

Orchards did a lot of work for both the Anglican and the Non-Conformist churches (Stephen was Anglican, Thomas, Baptist) including the New Wesleyan Chapel, Avon Dassett (1861)³ and the Baptist Chapel and School Rooms at Chipping Norton (1862-3). This was a big project valued at £2300⁴, but they also undertook small jobs such as the Baptist Sunday School Room in Middleton Cheney⁵. The firm did restoration work at Brill Church⁶ and on the chancel of Lower Winchendon Church.⁷ The Diocesan Architect for this project was John Oldrid Scott (1841-1913), second son of Sir Gilbert Scott, who also worked with the Orchards in 1903 on the New Chapel at Bradfield College.



William Stephen Orchard

Local authority work

Orchards built the New Wesleyan School, at a cost of £6000, at the eastern end of Dashwood Road Grounds⁸ and other local authority work which included sewer and irrigation works under the Great Western Railway (1867)⁹, the washhouse, laundry and mortuary at the Horton Infirmary (1875-6)¹⁰, works for the Banbury Water Company (1877-8)¹¹ and additional buildings for Banbury Town Council, near Banbury Cross (1891)¹². They also constructed the bridge over the river Cherwell connecting Mill Meadow and Bath Fields (1894)¹³ and were responsible for the reconstruction of the swimming baths in Bath Road (1899)¹⁴.

Housing

Orchards mainly built modest houses in Banbury, many of them designed by Great Uncle Will (William Stephen Orchard) who became a partner with his father in 1888 when Great, Great Uncle Thomas Orchard retired. They developed a large tract of land at Bridge Bank, and built houses in Middleton Road, Centre Street, West Street, Howard Road, Avenue Road, West Bar and Oxford Road. Most of these houses were not sold but let, sometimes to their own employees, or Dalby's (acquired by Stephen and Will in 1893) or Hoods (acquired by Will in 1917). They were also responsible for extensive additions and alterations at Hanwell Castle¹⁵, one of the projects they had with the Banbury architect Walter Edward Mills (1850-1910) who taught at the Mechanics Institute and Technical School Banbury which he himself designed.



135-7 Middleton Road

2. Council for British Archaeology, Regional Group 9, Newsletter no. 9 (1979).
3. *Banbury Guardian*, 10 October 1861.
4. *Oxford Journal*, 10 January 1863.
5. *Buckingham Advertiser*, 10 June 1871.
6. *Bicester Herald*, 17 August 1888.
7. *Leighton Buzzard Observer and Linslade Gazette*, 26 May 1891.
8. *BG*, 1 January 1903.
9. *BG*, 3 October 1867.
10. *BG*, 4 May 1876.
11. *BG*, 14 March 1878.
12. *BG*, 17 September 1891.
13. *BG*, 10 May 1894.
14. *BG*, 28 December 1899.
15. *Banbury Advertiser*, 13 August 1903, *BG*, 19 February 1903.

An exceptionally large house built in the 1860s was Bignell House, Chesterton, near Bicester. It was valued at £5500¹⁶ and the architect was William Wilkinson, also responsible for the development of North Oxford from 1860-1888 including the building of the Randolph Hotel.¹⁷ Maybe it was this collaboration which led to Orchards getting the contract to build St. Edward's School in Summertown¹⁸ at which they worked for eighteen years which was described as a conspicuous building in red brick in the Early English style. The firm specialised in ornate and beautifully patterned brickwork much of which is extant in Banbury, but stopped building houses in 1917.

Orchard family

Stephen Orchard (1834-1896) married Mary Martha Edwards, a farmer's daughter, in 1856 at the Church of St Mary Warkworth. They had six boys and three girls. By the nineteenth century most children were surviving to adulthood and the problem for the men was how would they earn a living. This should not have been a difficulty for William Stephen Orchard (1858-1949), the eldest son, because he could expect to inherit. However, as a young man he emigrated to Manitoba but it was not a success¹⁹ and he returned to join his father and uncle. The 1881 census described him as a builder, aged 23, and in 1888 he became a partner. Like so many of the Orchards he lived to a great age – 91 years.

The next brother was Thomas Edward Orchard (Ted), (1862-1950). In 1881, aged 19, he was described as a builders' apprentice but ten years later he was described as a joiner in his father's building business. On the 12 July 1902 he married Helen Green (Aunt Nellie). Sadly, they, like all their siblings bar Ethel, had no children. In 1911 they lived at 65 Middleton Road, Grimsbury. During the 1914-18 War he taught woodwork at the old Municipal School in Marlborough Road. He also made the oak altar rails presented to St. Hugh's after the war. Uncle Ted was still living at 80 West Bar at the time of his death.

The third brother was John Henry Percival Orchard (Harry) (1864-1899), but there was no space for him in the family building business and at 16 he was apprenticed for 5 years to Merryweathers engineers. In 1889 he contracted with Messrs. Ivy Gillanders & Co., Agents for the Rangoon Steam Company; he was 25 years old. He was appointed Foreman Mechanic for a period of two years with free accommodation provided and his pay was 200 rupees per month (roughly £13), going up to 400 rupees by 1894.²⁰ Harry worked in Rangoon for nearly 10 years before he died of enteric fever aged 35. During that time, he travelled home at least once as he was photographed with his siblings in 1896, the year his father died.



Stephen and Mary Martha Orchard

16. *Northampton Mercury*, April 1866.

17. Saint, Andrew 'Three Oxford Architects' *Oxoniensia* (vol. xxxv, 1970).

18. *OJ*, 12 October 1872.

19. Copy letters from William to his family lodged in Manitoba.

20. Contract (counterpart) between John Harry Percival Orchard and Ogilvy Gillanders & Co in possession of Stephen Jakeman.

The fourth brother was Frank Clewes Orchard (1866-1917); he also left Banbury and worked as a grocer's assistant and then as a commercial traveller for a timber merchant in Lewes, Sussex, at a starting salary of 35 shillings per week. His wife, Edie Annie Tickner, was a Sussex girl and they lived in Lewes for the rest of their lives.



Orchard siblings 1896; back, l-r Ethel, Harry, Ted, Frank, Will, Edie; front Fred, Beth, Ernest

Fred Orchard, the fifth brother (c. 1868-1903), went into an ironmongery business which Will, his brother, bought for him in Wales but due to lack of effort on his part it was not a success. He sold it just before he died, aged only 28, having, according to the purchaser, inflated the price.²¹

Ernest (1873-1931), the sixth and youngest brother did not leave Banbury; he was described in the 1891 census (aged 17) as a builder's apprentice, but in 1901 as a timber and coal merchant. In fact, *Rushers* between 1900-06 described him as a coal dealer at the GWR Coal station.²² In the 1911 census he was described as a timber merchant. He must have been doing well as in 1909 he became a Freemason, joining the Cherwell Lodge. He was the only brother to serve in the Great War as a driver with the RASC and served in Belgium. He ran the Red Cross at the Banbury GWR station before he joined up, thereafter training at Oakwood Camp in Beckenham and writing to his siblings that he hoped he would be settled in an office but a 2nd Lieutenant wanted him as a servant. Ruefully he wrote 'I don't know that I am enamoured of the job but, as one of the officers at Grove Park told us, the first duty of a soldier is to obey'.²³

His last letter in the possession of the family, on Salvation Army writing paper, is dated Wednesday January 1919; he was still working in the army. He wrote "We are having a sharp frost which makes it cold driving and colder still to clean the lorry out in the open". Charmingly the letter finishes "much love to Ethel, Edith and Love & kisses to Boy & Girlie".²⁴

Acknowledgements

My thanks to Sally Strutt for research contributing to this article.

21. Family letters seen by Stephen Jakeman, not now extant.

22. *Rushers*, *ibid*.

23. Letter, undated, from Ernest Orchard in possession of Stephen Jakeman.

24. 'Boy and Girlie' were Kenneth and Evelyn, the children of Ethel and Richard Jakeman who lived with their uncles and aunts in Banbury during their childhood.

SNIPPETS FROM THE ARCHIVES

Deborah Hayter

Trust Deed establishing the site for a church school in Charlton, 26th April 1870.

(from the Archives of Newbottle & Charlton Church of England Primary School, by kind permission.)

I, William Cornwallis Cartwright of Aynhoe in the county of Northampton Esquire, under the authority of the Acts of the 5th & 8th years of Her Majesty for affording facilities for the Conveyance and Endowment of Sites for Schools do hereby freely and voluntarily grant and convey unto the Vicar and churchwardens of the Parish of Newbottle cum Charlton in the County of Northampton and to the Archdeacon of the Archdeaconry of Northampton ...and their respective successors

All that piece of arable Land situate at Charlton aforesaid in the said County containing by Statute Measure Two roods and thirty eight perches or thereabouts now forming part of a close of arable land near the village and occupied as Garden Ground or allotments by several poor persons ... and upon trust to permit the said premises and all buildings thereon erected ...to be forever appropriated and used as and for a School for the education of Children and Adults or Children only of the labouring manufacturing and other poorer classes in the parish of Newbottle cum Charlton... and for no other purpose'.

The Elementary Education Act 1870 set the pattern for the education of all children from the age of 5 to 12 and The Church of England was keen to maintain or increase its influence by providing education where it could. Landowners were encouraged to give plots of land on which schools could be built, and many Church of England schools were founded with documents like this one. Later Acts of Parliament made it clear that landowners could get their land back if the school closed, or outgrew its site and had to move elsewhere.

The Trust Deed ensured that the school would make itself open to inspection and went on to lay down how it was to be managed. The Incumbent was to have charge of the 'religious and moral instruction of all the Scholars', but the 'control and management' of the school was to be vested in a management committee. The first two managers were a Baronet and an 'Esquire' from two neighbouring big houses, one was a 'Gentleman' and three were local farmers. They had to continue 'to be contributors in every year to the amount of twenty shillings each at the least to the funds of the said School and to be members of the Church of England' and have an interest in property in the parish.

Electors to vacancies were those who contributed at least ten shillings to the funds of the school annually. Disagreements, particularly about 'defective or unsound instruction of the children in religion', could be sorted by one side making a 'request in writing to the Lord President of Her Majesty's Most Honourable Privy Counciland to the Bishop of the Diocese...' who would appoint an Inspector of Schools to arbitrate, with a clergyman from elsewhere and a Justice of the Peace. It seemed as if they were anticipating difficulties.

Interestingly, although the role of the Church of England is enshrined in this Trust Deed, and the children's religious education was of first importance, the children of 'parents not in communion with the Church of England' could attend the school, and could be withdrawn both from public worship and from religious instruction, if the parents so desired.

ANGLO-SAXON ARCHAEOLOGY OUTSIDE BODICOTE

Deborah Hayter

In 2018 MOLA (Museum of London Archaeology) excavated a site on the outskirts of Bodicote before more housing development. This was a roughly rectangular block of land (3.9 ha) off the Oxford Road, south-east of Bodicote (grid ref. SP 4671 3731). Few remains had been recorded in this area in the Oxfordshire Historic Environment Record before but geophysical survey, and subsequent trenching, revealed several stages of human activity between the Iron Age and the middle Anglo-Saxon period. In the middle to late IA there appeared to be a large enclosure, possibly for stock, but no evidence of domestic occupation. A small assemblage of Romano-British pottery, very fragmented, also suggests that no-one was actually living there between the 1st and 4th centuries AD. The Romans used lots of pottery, which lasts well in soil, and sites of Romano-British habitations generally produce buckets of potsherds, though finds like this suggest it was a manuring scatter: broken pots, thrown onto the midden were then transferred to the fields when the manure was spread.

More interesting was the evidence of Anglo-Saxon settlement; four 'sunken-featured buildings' (SFB), two probable sites of buildings from the evidence of the post holes, and four storage pits. SFB describes a type of building found all over Northern Europe consisting of an excavated shallow pit with a flat floor and posts at either end supporting the roof. As the floor was lowered fewer building materials above ground were needed and the buildings were probably used for storage, as workshops or as living accommodation. The group here (dating evidence indicates they were from 6th-8th centuries), could have been part of a bigger settlement, or might have been a single farmstead.

The artefacts found at this site reveal a small community with some evidence for pastoral farming and also iron-working (there's plenty of ironstone nearby), though there is no information about the fields associated with the settlement. A whalebone comb was found, (remarkable evidence of long-distance trade, Bodicote being in central England), a bone awl or needle, some iron teeth from a wool-comb (used in the process of preparing wool before spinning), and a pin-beater, used in weaving with a warp-weighted loom. Other finds included knives, some cereal grains, some iron-working slag, bones of cattle, sheep, goats and pig, and evidence of both dogs and cats on site. The plant remains consisted of bread grains and barley, the latter probably for brewing. A few personal items were found: one was a copper-alloy hooked tag (part of the fastening of an item of clothing) and another an incomplete cast gilded silver-gilt mount.

Other small mid-Anglo-Saxon settlements have been found in Oxfordshire. By 1086 Bodicote was a substantial village, split between three manors. What had happened to the small settlement near Cotefield Farm which had disappeared under the open fields? Had there been other small hamlets or farmsteads scattered over the landscape? Probably, yes, as sites have been found in other areas in the Midlands. Either they dwindled naturally, as one of the settlements grew into the Bodicote that we might recognize today, or at some stage the inhabitants decided that they would group together and embark on the communal adventure of the open fields.

ARCHAEOLOGY IN AND AROUND BANBURY 2020

Pamela Wilson

Over the past year archaeological work has revealed a number of significant findings around Banbury. Some of these have already been featured in BHS lectures, namely Hanwell Castle gardens, HS2 excavations and the Lidar study of the Chilterns.

Within Banbury itself Oxford Archaeology have been excavating south of the Salt Way, uncovering Neolithic pits, Iron Age roundhouses and cremations;¹ by contrast they also found a complete 19th century stoneware spirits flagon in Calthorpe Street among terraced housing remains.² Meanwhile in Bodicote important evidence of an Anglo-Saxon settlement has emerged (see report in this journal). West of Banbury a geophysics survey of the scheduled Chipping Norton Castle revealed details of the Castle's structure.³ There is documentary evidence of its medieval presence but the banks and ditches now revealed suggest an earlier Iron Age (IA) origin. Nearby in Hook Norton a multiphase Roman settlement was confirmed,⁴ ranging from the 1st to late 3rd century, where farm buildings with arable and animal farming and several burials were found. Just north, further evidence of a Roman road and probable settlement has emerged between Swalcliffe and Epwell.⁵

Helen Wass, Head of Heritage at HS2, chose to concentrate in her September lecture on major findings at each end of the line in London and Birmingham. Excavations along the proposed route, have revealed a landscape of multiple ancient settlements at Boddington, dating from IA to medieval times.⁶ This part of South Warwickshire was densely occupied in the medieval period with villages such as Wormleighton deserted and surviving only as grassy earthworks, and it now appears that in the IA, Roman and Anglo-Saxon periods it was also densely settled. At nearby Blackgrounds Farm just north of Edgcote a large IA/Roman agricultural complex adjacent to a scheduled Roman villa has been discovered. South of the battle of Edgcote site (1469), which has been comprehensively recorded with the aid of drones, systematic excavation has revealed indications of agricultural structures, field systems and trackways dating from IA to post-medieval period.⁷

Around Banbury miscellaneous projects include examination of vestiges of the late 19th century Great Central Railway Station at Charwelton, including tunnels and signal box;⁸ a comprehensive programme of historic building recording at Canons Ashby House in order to understand its stages of development over the past 500 years;⁹ the discovery of extensive evidence of a large-scale Roman vineyard at Symmetry Park in Bicester,¹⁰ and further excavations at Steane Park near Brackley of its Romano-British agricultural complex. Another Roman villa, with a mosaic floor, has recently been confirmed at Tackley,¹¹ and there has been a resurgence of interest in the Grim's Ditch, an enigmatic late IA bank and ditch complex between the Cotswolds and Thames which formed a protective boundary around significant IA hamlets.¹² Described later as a 'territorial oppidum' it came to be transected by Akeman Street¹³ and the shielded IA structures were subsumed into a number of Roman villas. Was Grim's Ditch defensive? Possibly against "Banbury" hordes?

1. Coddington, H. and Oram, R. 'Archaeological Work in Oxfordshire' in *Oxoniensia*, 85 (2020), 254.

2-5. *South Midlands Archaeology* (2019), 113², 124³, 116⁴, 105⁵.

6. Wass, H. 'HS2: The largest archaeological investigation ever undertaken in the UK' in *British Archaeology*, 166 (2019), 32-41.

7-11. *South Midlands Archaeology* (2019), 83⁷, 71⁸, 75⁹, 96¹⁰, 133¹¹.

12. Copeland, T. 'The North Oxfordshire Grim's Ditch: an enigma within an enigma'. Lecture, Gloucestershire Archaeology, 26/10/20.

13. Copeland, T. 'The North Oxfordshire Grim's Ditch: a fieldwork survey' in *Oxoniensia*, 52 (1988), 277-292.

DAVID PARTRIDGE

25 January 1933-29 April 2020

Barrie Trinder

David Partridge was one of the first people to join the Banbury Historical Society in 1958, and retained his membership for more than sixty years. We are grateful to acknowledge a generous legacy which he left to the Society, following a donation that he made several years ago and extend our condolences to his three sons, his brother Clive, and their families.

David grew up in Banbury. His parents lived at No 23 Castle Street East from which they operated a drapery business serving chiefly rural customers. His father, Alderman Frank Partridge OBE, was a long-serving member of the borough council, and was mayor in 1947-49, while his mother was a borough magistrate and active in many good causes. The family were members of Marlborough Road Methodist Church.

David attended Banbury Grammar School after which he joined the staff of Banbury Borough Library. As Senior Assistant his genial manner and wide knowledge of books made him popular with readers. He was an assistant scoutmaster in the 2nd Banbury (Methodist) Group, and, with his future wife, sang with the Banbury Co-operative Choir. In June 1960 he married Marlene Flint and soon afterwards the couple moved to Collier Row, Romford where he worked for Essex County Library. He became a chartered librarian, and for more than a decade until his retirement in 1993 served Havering as Borough Librarian and Arts Officer. He and Marlene retained their interest in choral music and David his love of reading, especially about Banbury's history.



David Partridge at the Christmas party of the 2nd Banbury (Methodist) Scout group, December 1950

BERYL HUDSON

Beryl Hudson, a librarian who was a member of the BHS committee from 1992-2015, has died aged 93. She organised the summer excursions for much of that time and was a stalwart proof reader of BHS publications as well as compiling various indexes. We extend our condolences to her family.

Notes & Queries

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.

BOOK REVIEWS

The English Civil War: An Atlas and Concise History of the Wars of the Three Kingdoms 1639-51 by Nick Lipscombe (Osprey Publishing, in association with the Battlefields Trust and the National Civil War Centre, 2020) 368 pp. illus. £50 ISBN 1472829727

This is a sumptuous and very well-presented book, but it has a serious purpose in presenting this period of history through the medium of more than 150 colour maps, with careful documentation and indexing. The author, building on his own career as a professional soldier, appreciates the issues at stake, including the importance of the ground itself; and his commentary is brisk but always informative.

This book confirms visually the central position of Banbury in these wars, with smaller-scale synoptic maps always revealing its status on the front-line between the King's capital at Oxford, and the Parliamentary strongholds in the east and most of the midlands. Yet the war was largely one of movement, and many of the maps portray complex patterns of movement and manoeuvre across the whole sweep of the country. The importance of force strengths and joining actions to give local superiority is well-emphasised.

At the same time, though perhaps described in less detail, both sides held much of their strength in garrison strongholds, which were subjected to (intermittent) sieges in parallel with the wider movements of armies. After a battlefield victory, the successful commander would often turn to 'mopping up' remaining local points of disaffection. The book is also invaluable in emphasising the importance of conflicts conducted in parallel in Ireland, with a complex mix of sectarian and political differences; and of Scotland, where the emergence of the Covenanters as the predominant force in alliance with Parliament was to prove a decisive factor in the denouement of the conflict.

The author shows commendable determination in sticking to his brief to provide a history through maps and supporting commentary, and not to divert into other related issues. I would have appreciated a little more on some military specifics, including the importance of battlefield archaeology, notably of the incidence of shotfall; and of the role of intelligence, which is referred to obliquely, but where it seems that Parliament gained an advantage. It would have been useful to know more about the contribution of the New Model Army, and perhaps more about the qualities of leading commanders. Tensions on both sides are acknowledged here, but the gradual emergence of Cromwell is not fully drawn out.

Perhaps wisely, Lipscombe steers well clear of the underlying politics of the conflict, although he rightly rejects any simplistic interpretation as a 'class war'. Apart from casual references, we hear little about the war's effects on the general public. To many less directly or politically committed, it must have seemed a shocking event, a smaller if less destructive version of the Thirty Years' War, in which incidentally many commanders had picked up their military experience.

I wonder perhaps whether the internecine nature of the struggle has rather led to its tacit airbrushing from local and national history. Nearly four centuries have eroded the visual evidence, and perhaps the account of the confused interregnum which concludes the book displays our unease at a rare excursion into violence as a means of conflict resolution.

Tim Boswell

Banbury Remembered: Looking Back 1995-2019 by Brian Little, Barrie Trinder ed. (Banbury Historical Society, Vol.37) £19.95 ISBN (BHS) 978 0 900129 36 0, ISBN (RBP) 978 1 908738 37 0.

This volume contains an anthology of 91 articles taken from Brian Little's weekly columns in the *Banbury Guardian*, 1995-2019, looking back at Banbury's history. In his Introduction, the editor Barrie Trinder, offers a tantalising glimpse into some of the rich local history nuggets contained within the volume, conveniently divided into five main sections, *Market town business, Localities, Schools and colleges, Pastimes and sports* and *World War Two*; supported by three very useful maps.

The combination of sources but particularly the personal memories of those who lived and worked in Banbury provide a number of links to the five sections. Change over time is a major thread as Banbury moved from a slowly expanded medieval town by the late nineteenth to early twentieth century and into the more rapid pace of change during the second half thereafter, highlighted by the construction of the M40. The latter affected the town significantly, changing it from a 'market town into a magnet for distribution, high-tech firms' and massive housing expansion.

As a market town Banbury's retail activity had centred on a diverse range of family-run businesses. The disappearance of these traditional family shops is well recorded, as one by one familiar names disappeared – Hoods', ironmongers' emporium, seedsmen Lamprey and Son, and Ekins outfitters. Small regional companies and larger national retail chains emerged such as Banbury Co-operative Society, Woolworths, Littlewoods and Debenhams. Competition between the diverse and vibrant retail trade is to be expected but one of the revealing aspects is the underlying co-operation and inter-dependence as retailers supported one another with goods and services.

Similarly, the variety of local trades and industries grew ever bigger in size, demanding larger work forces. Banbury's Industrial Exhibition (1951) highlighted the scale and diversity of Banbury's post-war industrial scene. These developments meant a demand for employee housing, services, entertainment and retail outlets. Ultimately, with the increasing loss of farmland as Banbury was targeted for larger housing estates the town entered into a new era of regionalism beyond Banburyshire. The pace of development quickened from the 1970s with slum clearance, road developments, the Castle Quay Shopping Centre and the GPOs Castle Street telephone centre. Educational provision also followed - Harrier's Primary School (1949) being the first to open in the town since 1919 on land sold by Easington Farm. A technical college followed (1950s) and Drayton School in 1973.

The thread of philanthropy and social activities of local shopkeepers, businessmen, then larger industrialists and their companies also joins the sections of this volume. Many sought political office in the Town Council or joined social organisations such as Rotary or Masons; Samuelson, the Britannia Works owner, was a significant benefactor for sporting life, to municipal buildings and to the Britannia Road School. The Banbury Co-Operative Industrial Society generally had a significant impact on local life with cottages and allotments to let and support for the Workpeople's Hospital Fund.

Amongst the other fascinating aspects included in this volume are for example, the use of the Banbury Workhouse as a stopping off point for the Jarrow Marchers and the housing of Banbury's unemployed young ex-serviceman post 1919; the arrival of 2,000 children from London as refugees in 1939 with a further 2,200 for the surrounding villages; tanks along Horton View as D-Day approached in 1944 and who could forget sledging down Crouch Hill in the 1980s?

This is a balanced account of a transformation from medieval market town through to the rapid changes and expansion of the mid-twentieth into the twenty-first century. The personal memories of people who lived and worked in Banbury, which cross all sections of the volume, make it not only an excellent piece of local history but also a joy to read.

Graham Winton

Agent Sonia; Lover, Mother, Soldier, Spy by Ben Macintyre (Viking, 2020) 400 pp. illus. £25 ISBN 0241408504

Ride a Cock Horse to Banbury Cross – to see two spies exchanging notes

At the end of WW II, Stalin and the Soviet Union went very quickly from being allies to being Cold War enemies and an important part of that story was the development of nuclear weapons, in which the United Kingdom and the United States were indisputably far ahead; however, the Russians caught up very quickly, largely due to the treachery of some of those working on the UK Nuclear Programme. Several of the key meetings to facilitate this treachery took place in 1941 in and around Banbury and the story is told in full in Ben Macintyre's book.

Ursula Kuczynski, codename "Sonya", was born a German Jew. In time she became a dedicated communist, a colonel in Russia's Red Army, and a highly trained spy. Sonya ended up living in Kidlington and then in Great Rollright, described as "Mrs Burton", seemingly a devoted wife and mother of three, who cycled around the village, made jam, and symbolised rural domesticity. In practice, she was cycling through the Oxfordshire countryside gathering scientific intelligence from one of the country's most brilliant nuclear scientists, secrets that she would send to Soviet Intelligence Headquarters via a radio transmitter she was hiding in her Oxfordshire outdoor privy. Her contact, Klaus Fuchs, was a German physicist but also one of the world's most dangerous spies. The Fuchs family had suffered multiple tragedies at the hands of the Nazis and in Fuchs' view you had to be either a Nazi or a Communist. So, Fuchs became a Communist.

He had come to Britain in 1933 and in 1941 was invited to "take part in theoretical work involving mathematical problems of considerable complexity" at Birmingham University, where he began working on the Atom Bomb; in his view, to achieve a balance of power, the USSR should have its own bomb and he wanted the intelligence on the work being done in the UK "placed on Stalin's desk". He needed somewhere to hand that over to his agent, Sonya, and Banbury seemed the ideal, sleepy location. As a consequence, Sonya met Fuchs near Banbury station, "and they strolled into the countryside, arms linked in accordance with the old-established principle of illicit meetings, to outward appearances lovers on a secret tryst". The next year, every few weeks, on a weekend morning, Sonya would catch a train to Banbury and leave a written message at the dead-letter box stating when and where to meet that afternoon. Fuchs caught the afternoon train from Birmingham. Their meetings were always in the "country roads near Banbury", never in the same place twice, and each lasted less than half an hour. Two days later Sonya would cycle to a rendezvous site on the road from Oxford to Cheltenham with a Soviet agent from the Embassy. Amazingly, she was never caught, and went on to live a life in Eastern Germany, to see the fall of the Berlin Wall and the reunification of Germany.

Ben Macintyre's book is an interesting insight into the whole interaction between Nazism, Soviet Russia under Stalin, the Cold War, the realignment of Allies so soon after the Second World War and in due course, the collapse of the Berlin Wall and the disintegration of the Soviet Union.

Rt Hon. Sir Tony Baldry

The Promised Land; the story of emigration from Oxfordshire and Neighbouring Buckinghamshire, Northamptonshire and Warwickshire 1815-1914 by Martin Greenwood (Robert Boyd publications, Witney 2020) 140 pp, 33 illustrations, £9.95 ISBN: 9788 1 908738 40 0.

Martin Greenwood has written an account which gives an idea of what it must have been like to take a brave step into the unknown in the nineteenth century; local historians will be grateful for his insights and the names of some of the villagers from Oxfordshire and surrounding areas who took that step. He recounts the issues confronting the whole movement which perhaps makes the book rather more general than the title suggests, but others will find it useful when considering emigration from elsewhere.

The initial chapters are scene setting, before the narrative moves to an assessment of the progress of emigration from Oxfordshire between 1815 and 1850. The population figures given (1801-1911) show how the towns of Oxford, Banbury, Bicester and Chipping Norton grew, at the expense of the agricultural areas where the Poor Law Unions were in many cases actively encouraging and assisting emigration as more advantageous than continuing to support rural unemployed agricultural families.

Similar assessments follow for sample villages bordering Oxfordshire from Buckinghamshire, Northamptonshire and Warwickshire; initially it is clear that many of the emigrants were families, eager to start a new life in better circumstances, but increasingly it was young men who took advantage of offers of free or assisted passages from the governments of Queensland, New Zealand and Canada. The following period, 1850-1914, known as the Great Exodus, was not all due to emigration abroad; it was also a period of movement from the villages where agricultural work was increasingly scarce.

Listing the expenses for the would-be emigrants demonstrates what a huge total this movement of people must have cost the country as a whole; parishes regularly paid for clothing, travel to the port, lodging and even pocket money. One of the hardest things to bear must have been all the uncertainty, though the advent of steam shipping in the 1880s regularised departure timetables and reduced travel time. But even on board, there were still the dangers of disease, delay and even catastrophic shipwreck; 42 villagers from Tackley are amongst the 399 commemorated from the wreck of the *Cataraqui* in 1845.

Journals and letters from emigrants reveal the thoughts of the would-be settlers, recounting the difficulties of the voyage but also, on occasion, the welcome for nervous newcomers by vague acquaintances or friends of friends. Citing these offers a flavour of the emigrants' emotions and their success, or possibly failure, to change their lives for ever.

Helen Forde

ANNUAL REVIEW, 2020 -2021

As I write this report we have just had the sad news of Chris Day's death; he had been a member of BHS for many, many years and will be greatly missed by all who knew or were in touch with him. A tribute appears on page 6 in this issue.

To say that this has been an unusual year would be stating the obvious but it has been one in which the Society has risen to the challenge of the epidemic, and as a result managed to enhance contact with many of the members who live outside the immediate area. Thanks to Simon Townsend and the IT team at Cherwell District Council the lectures have been delivered remotely, either from the museum or from the speakers' own homes where they possess the appropriate technology. It has been a fine cooperative effort and even those who live in Banbury have benefitted, since they avoided having to trek out in the winter weather and dark nights.

We had to cancel the summer outings and AGM due to the first lockdown which was disappointing but we plan to hold them all this summer, though with a revised timetable. As for the lectures, the subjects included several on archaeological themes, Helen Wass on the HS2 route, Stephen Wass (no relation) on the 17th century gardens at Hanwell Castle and Wendy Morrison on her prehistoric Chilterns project as well as Liz Woolley talking about an Oxford dynasty, the Kingerlee family which started business in Banbury, Chris Day exploring the extraordinary career of Thomas Walker, man of business to the Duke of Marlborough and civic dignitary, Toby Purser on the fate of the Anglo-Saxons at the hands of the Normans, and Steve Kershaw on barbarians; we are so lucky to have such a talented group of lecturers and many thanks must go to them and to Deborah Hayter, who works tirelessly to produce the programme and keep everyone up to date with news. The showing of the film *24 Square Miles* on its 75th anniversary was a great success, not least since we were able to include the subsequent film, made in 1992; it is good to be able to vary the format of the meetings from time to time and the committee is always glad to receive suggestions for either talks or other events.

We had hoped to launch *Banbury Remembered* last year but this event had to be cancelled as well; restrictions permitting we plan to have a celebration of its publication as an alternative in the next season. Similarly, we have been unable to progress our plans for making the library more accessible, though during the year the room has been refurbished to a high level, thanks to the generosity of Rosemarie Higham.

As usual none of this could be done without the work of the committee to whom I am enormously grateful, and in particular to Simon and the museum who continue to support the Society and its work; together the two are a strong and influential part of Banbury's culture.

Helen Forde, Chairman

ACCOUNTS

Banbury Historical Society
Registered Educational Charity 260581
Income & Expenditure Account for year ending 31 December 2020

	<u>2020</u>	<u>2019</u>
INCOME	£	£
Subscriptions	3,305	3,535
Gift Aid tax refund	688	612
Sale of publications	1,675	230
Visitors' fees and other income	41	140
Donations	0	332
Grants towards cost of <i>Banbury Remembered</i>	2,200	2,000
Total Income	7,909	6,849

EXPENDITURE

Cake & Cockhorse	2,299	1,408
Meetings	1,017	1,150
Postage and other administration costs	1,431	1,336
Archiving <i>Cake & Cockhorse</i>	325	0
Bookshelves	0	519
Records Volume	5,429	4,618
Total Expenditure	10,501	9,031

DEFICIT for the year	(2,592)	(2,182)
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Balance Sheet as at 31 December 2020

Balance of funds at 1 January 2020	8,840	11,022
Deficit for the year	(2,592)	(2,182)
Balance of funds at 31 December 2020	6,248	8,840

Represented by:

ASSETS

NatWest Bank Current Account	1,136	4,061
NatWest Bank Reserve Account	5,002	0
Leeds Building Society Account	0	5,992
Cash	27	22
Sundry Debtors - Museum sales	1,188	0

TOTAL ASSETS	7,353	10,075
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LIABILITIES - Subscriptions in advance	(1,105)	(1,235)
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NET ASSETS at 31 December 2020	6,248	8,840
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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 2020.

Howard Knight FCMA, CGMA

5 March 2021

PICTORIAL QUIZ



1. Where? Which century? Why is it significant?



2. Where? What is sold here?



3. Where? Which English king adopted the 'Sun in Splendor' as a motif?



4. Erected 1857, on what building? Where?



5. Why does this street-name sound medieval?



6. Who was IHON KNIGHT, who IHONE KNIGHT, and who DAVID HORN?



7. "Licence to crenelate" granted to whom, when?



8. Where is this? Tithes for whom? Built when?



9. This 15th C glass shows St Anne and whom? Where?



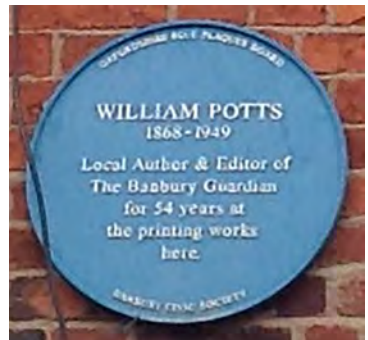
10. What is this? In which town was it sculpted?



11. Ambrose Holbech bought this in 1684, with adjacent land in which 3 counties?



12. What was the building, and where was the flood?



13. Where is this plaque?



14. Which noted family is remembered in this street-name?



17. Virgin and Child, in which village, and on whose shield?



20. Where is this doorway? Who works here?



15. Stone-, bronze- or iron-age? In which county is this piece of oolitic limestone?



18. Is this 15th C or 19th C Gothic? Where was the 3rd town hall? Where is it now?



21. Designed by the Oxfordshire Diocesan Architect who later turned to the law. Where and by whom?



16. Where can you find this?



22. Where was this pub located before demolition, and who used it?



19. Why is 11 Market Place sometimes called "Lincoln Chambers"?

**Brian Goodey,
Rosemary Leadbeater
and Ian West**

ANSWERS TO PICTORIAL QUIZ

1. Cornhill House, Market Place; 18th century, one of the earliest examples of the use of brick in the town.
2. Abraxas Cookshop, Market Place, of 1866 by William Wilkinson, after the style of Keble College and Randolph Hotel, Oxford.
3. A pretty little reminder at the entrance of Butcher's Row of the Town Logo, embedded in the coat of arms granted to Banbury Borough Council in 1951.
4. The repeal of the Corn Laws in 1846 led to a frenzy of corn trading throughout England. Banbury opened two competing Corn Exchanges on the same day in September 1857. The 'Cornhill' corn exchange never functioned effectively and was taken over by the pre-existing Vine Tavern, but eventually the fine façade, designed by W. Hill of Leeds, became the entrance to the Castle Quay shopping mall. The figure on top represents the goddess 'Ceres'.
5. Beargarden Road; bearbaiting took place here "... occupying a large space inside the field bordered by Bloxham Road and Bear Garden Road there was the remains of an old outdoor theatre, and open space in the middle at the bottom of a hollow surrounded by raised seats as it would be a circus and a steep sloping path leading down from the top to the hollow with the approaches to seats on either side." *C&CH*, vol 18, 36-7.
6. John Knight was a baker, but by 1570 he had extended his property on Parsons Street eastwards to form the *Reindeer Inn*. He married Joan, and was three times bailiff (mayor) of Banbury. Little is known of David Horn, but it has been suggested that he was the innkeeper (See *C&CH* vol 2,159).
7. Broughton Castle was bought (in 1377) by William of Wykeham (1324-1404, bishop of Winchester). His great nephew, Sir Thomas Wykeham, was granted "licence to crenelate" in 1406.
8. Swalcliffe Tithe barn was built in 1401, for the Rectorial manor of Swalcliffe, by New College Oxford. BHS held its AGM here in 2017.
9. 15th century stained glass in Thenford Church, showing St. Anne teaching the Virgin.
10. Cloak of the 'Fine Lady' statue on South Bar, sculpted in Stoke-on-Trent and cast in Llanrhaedr Ym Mochnant. The butterfly in her hair was originally part of an attempt to attach two moths and a butterfly to the headdress to represent the dark and light periods of the year, before it melted and fell off during the casting process.
11. Farnborough Hall, bought by Ambrose Holbech from the estate of George Rayleigh in 1684, lies on the border between Warwickshire and Oxfordshire. The house was enlarged in 1700 by William Holbech I, and extensively remodelled in 1749 by William Holbech II.
12. One of an array of structures assembled around Banbury Livestock Market, which closed on the day of this photo in 1998, after a thousand years of history.
13. Blue plaque at 16 Parsons Street, the site of the Banbury Guardian offices where William Potts (1868-1949) was owner and editor, as was his father John Potts and grandfather William Potts who founded the paper in 1838.
14. Dashwood Road, Dashwood family. Sir Robert Dashwood, the 1st Bt., was M.P. for Banbury and could ride from his home in Kirtlington to Banbury on his own land.
15. One of the 77 (or thereabouts) 'King's men'. This stone circle is south of Cross Hands lane, near Rollright, Oxfordshire. (The King's Stone, 76 metres further north, is in Warwickshire; and even more mysterious than the stone circle.)
16. Frog under the statue of the Fine Lady. The frog – which sits in a puddle after rain - was cast in Birmingham and stuck on. It is there because, in mythology, the frog was the first creature to communicate on land.
17. Virgin and Child in the church at South Newington. Below them is a shield bearing three lions passant argent, the arms of Thomas Giffard (the probable donor, c. 1330.).
18. The "Revival Gothic" town hall (1854) served as the meeting place for the borough council till 1930. Its predecessor, the third town hall, was built in brick in 1790 on Cornhill, but was moved in 1860 to Lower Cherwell street to serve as a warehouse on the canal.
19. 11 Market Place (c. 1650), is called "Lincoln Chambers", but is also sometimes referred to as "Bishop's Palace". Banbury was in the diocese of Lincoln for many centuries but there is no evidence that it served as the bishop's palace.
20. Spratt Endicott Solicitors, at 55 The Green, South Bar, built, together with adjoining houses on West Bar, c. 1734 by a local builder incorporating some older buildings.
21. Middleton Cheney Primary School by George Edmund Street (1824-1881), who also designed and built the Royal Courts of Justice in London.
22. *'The Struggler'*, Mill Lane, adjacent to the canal dock. See article on the Oxford canal by Barrie Trinder, this issue.

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BANBURY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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.

Publications

The journal, *Cake & Cockhorse*, is issued to members annually and includes illustrated articles based on original local historical research, as well as recording the Society's activities. They have been digitised and are available on the Society's website, www.banburyhistoricalsociety.org.

In addition, the Society publishes a Record Series of which there are now 37 volumes. These are published intermittently, usually once every two or three years. Those still in print and available from Banbury Museum & Gallery include:

Banbury Remembered. Looking back 1995-2019 by Brian Little, ed B Trinder (vol 37)

Banbury's People in the Eighteenth Century; from Records and Accounts of the Overseers of the Poor, 1708-1797 ed JSW Gibson (vol 36)

Junctions at Banbury; a town and its railways since 1850 B Trinder (vol 35)

Rusher's 'Banbury Trades and Occupations Directory' 1832-1906 (with DVD facsimile) ed JSW Gibson (vol 34)

Victorian Banburyshire: Three Memoirs ed B Trinder (vol 33)

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Early Victorian Squarson: the Diaries of William Cotton Risley, vicar of Deddington Part 1 1835 – 1848 ed G Smedley-Stevenson (vol 29)

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The Banbury Chapbooks LJ De Freitas (vol 28)

Kings Sutton, Northamptonshire Churchwardens Accounts 1636-1700 ed P Hayter (vol 27)

Current prices and availability of other back volumes, and of *Cake & Cockhorse*, from the Society, c/o Banbury Museum & Gallery. The Society is always interested to receive suggestions of records suitable for publication, backed by offers of help with transcription, editing and indexing.

Lectures and events

Talks are given by invited lecturers on general and local historical, archaeological and architectural subjects during the autumn and winter at the Banbury Museum & Gallery, on the second Thursday of each month. These are also available online. During the summer excursions are arranged and the AGM is usually held in a place of historic interest.

Membership

The annual subscription in £15.00 for one member, £20 for two members at the same address and for overseas members. All members' names and addresses are held securely on the Society's database for subscription and mailing purposes only.



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