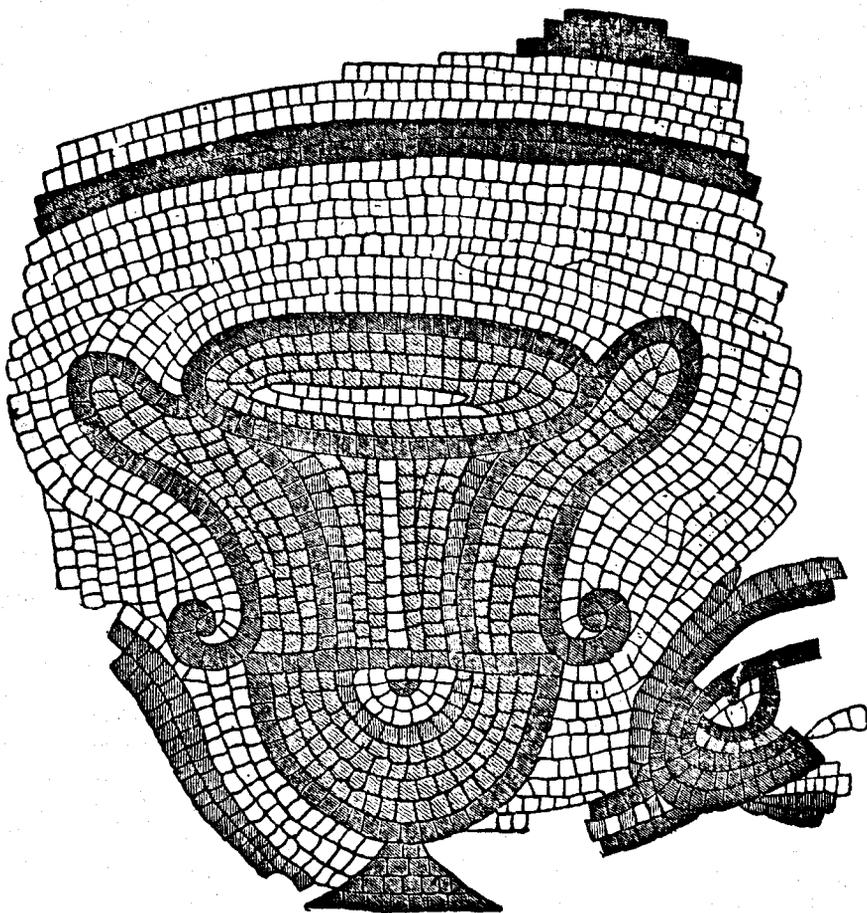


CAKE & COCKHORSE

The Magazine of the Banbury Historical Society



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(Tel: Bloxham 332)

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A.W.Pain, A.L.A.
c/o Borough Library,
Marlborough Road,
Banbury.
(Tel: Banbury 2282)

Hon. Editor "Cake and Cockhorse":

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* * * * *

The Society was founded in 1958 to encourage interest in the history of the town and neighbouring parts of Oxfordshire, Northamptonshire and Warwickshire.

The magazine Cake & Cockhorse is issued to members four times a year. This includes illustrated articles based on original local historical research, as well as recording the Society's activities. A booklet Old Banbury, a short popular history, by E.R.C. Brinkworth, M.A. price 3/6, has been published and a Christmas card is a popular annual production.

The Society also publishes an annual records volume. Banbury Marriage Register has been published in three parts, a volume on Oxfordshire Clockmakers 1400-1850 has been produced and South Newington Churchwardens' Accounts 1560-1662 is planned for 1964.

Meetings are held during the winter, normally at 7.30 p.m. at the Conservative Club. Talks on general and local archaeological, historical and architectural subjects are given by invited lecturers. In the summer, excursions are arranged and archaeological excavations are undertaken from time to time.

Membership of the Society is open to all, no proposer or seconder being needed. The annual subscription is 25/-, including the annual records volume, or 10/- if this is excluded. Junior Membership is 5/-.

Application forms can be obtained from the Hon. Secretary or the Hon. Treasurer.

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Issued to members four times a year.

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The countryside around Banbury has for long revealed signs of intensive rural settlement in Roman times; chance finds of coins and pottery, and, more recently, excavation and the study of place-names have all contributed to our knowledge of the area as it was under the Roman Empire. A glance at the Ordnance Survey Map of Roman Britain will show that north Oxfordshire and the neighbouring parts of Warwickshire and Northamptonshire were off the main lines of Roman development. Three great Roman roads, the Watling Street, Fosse Way and Akeman Street form a large triangle with present-day Banbury roughly in the centre. Such roads provided communication between the principal towns of Roman Britain, clearly the most important social institutions of the Province, but between them were large areas of less Romanised countryside: one such was the area with which this issue is concerned.

There is ample evidence of pre-Roman settlement by British tribes in the area and the general pattern of this settlement probably changed little after the conquest. The most common type of Romano-British site is rather vaguely termed a 'settlement' and while only excavation can determine the exact nature of a site, it seems that these settlements were British farming communities subject to considerable Roman influence. Of Roman 'villas', a term which implies a higher degree of Romanisation and of wealth, there are few known in the area, but excavation could reveal more. The Roman excavations which have been done have added greatly to our knowledge of the subject, but much remains to be done before the picture approaches completion. The importance of excavation in this context cannot be stressed too highly.

The two main articles in this issue will be valuable as points of reference to anyone making further study of north Oxfordshire in Roman times. Mr. Bromley has collected all the available information about Roman sites in the area, listed them by parishes and provided a map. Mrs. Wickham Steed's article on pre-Roman and Roman roads and trackways is based on much painstaking fieldwork and, apart from its own interest, can profitably be used in conjunction with Mr. Bromley's to give as complete a picture as is possible at present of Roman 'Banburyshire'.

R.D.J.F.

Acknowledgements: The two maps in this issue are adapted with permission from the 1" map of the Ordnance Survey. Our thanks are due to the Commissioners of the Ordnance Survey for allowing their publication. Mrs. Wickham Steed wishes to thank Mr. Charles Green for his work on the map for her article, and the Editor wishes to record his gratitude to Mr. A.W. Pain for checking some of the references.

SOCIETY NEWS AND ACTIVITIES

Forthcoming Meetings

Tuesday, January 28th. Dr. R. P. Beckinsale: "The Plush Industry of North Oxfordshire". Every local schoolboy knows that the Banbury area was once the centre of the plush weaving industry in England. But that is almost the sum total of our knowledge. Beesley gives us a few details from the report of the Parliamentary Commission on the hand loom weavers and refutes the idea, prevalent at the time, that the industry had declined. There are a few observations on weaving in The Shoemaker's Window and the importance in the trade of the village of Shutford is quite well-known. When the plush industry began in the area, when it reached its zenith, to how many people it then gave employment, how it was organised, when and why it declined, are all questions to which no decisive answers are as yet possible. For this reason the talk by Dr. Beckinsale, whose study of the subject is to appear in the next Oxoniensia, is likely to be particularly interesting and important. It should fill a large gap in our knowledge of the social and economic history of the critical decades in Banbury's history between 1830 and 1850. Anyone with personal memories of the industry will be particularly welcome.

Tuesday, March 24th. Lady de Villiers. "Unrest in Oxfordshire in the 16th and early 17th centuries."

Both of these meetings will be held in the upstairs reception room of Banbury Conservative Club, High Street (next to Martins Bank) at 7.30 pm. It is not, of course, necessary to belong to the Club to attend, and no political connections are implied.

November Meeting

The meeting on November 27th was one of the most successful yet held by the Society. Over 70 members and guests enjoyed the film "Twenty-Four Square Miles" which was introduced by Mr. L.W. Wood of the Oxfordshire Rural Community Council. The content of the film was described in the review of its companion book, Country Planning, in our November issue.

Subscriptions

Members are reminded that subscriptions for 1964 were due on 1st January, and if not already paid should be sent or handed to the Hon. Treasurer, Mr. A.W. Pain, c/o Borough Library, Banbury, as soon as possible.

CANONS ASHBY CHURCH

The many readers of this magazine who have visited Canons Ashby House since Peter and Dr. Christopher Woodard began its restoration will have had their pleasure at the beauty of the mansion marred by the sad appearance of the adjacent church. It is good news therefore that the Woodard brothers have now begun the daunting task of restoring the church, which is, apart from Peterborough Cathedral, the only surviving monastic church in Northamptonshire. It was formerly part of the monastery of the Black Canons of the order of St. Augustine, and parts of it date from 1250. The cost of the work will be about £13,000 and it will include a new roof and much plastering. The work will be done by the Woodards themselves with the assistance of local craftsmen and volunteers. This is a venture which deserves the full support of every member of the Society. Our next issue will include a fully illustrated article on the church and its history.

ROMAN 'BANBURYSHIRE'

Although 'Banburyshire' is rich in Romano-British remains (occupation sites or small finds have been found in or near most of the villages in the area) it seems strange that so few have been found in the town itself. There are but two original references to Romano-British remains having been found in the town, both far from original.

The first appears in Camden's Oxfordshire (pp 4/5): '.... the town is now famous for its cheese and the ruins of a castle built by Alexander, Bishop of Lincoln (to whose See the town formerly belonged) below this (to mention it by the way) have been found many Roman coins, as also in the neighbouring fields; proof of the antiquity of the place'. Camden is not always accurate however, and the validity of this reference hinges on what he meant by the words '.... below this'. Did he mean 'beneath the castle' or 'south of the castle' or 'in the grounds outside the castle wall'? True, our own excavation into the castle mound produced two small fragments of Romano-British common grey ware, but these were of no value as evidence since the ground was made up and therefore the sherds could have been fortuitous inclusions in the fill imported from a site elsewhere.

The second reference appears in the manuscript copy of Beesley's History of Banbury (Vol. XVII p 80-1) and concerns the finding of a number of Roman coins in the gardens of various houses in the town. These chance finds cannot, without additional support, be classed as good evidence upon which to prove the existence of a Roman settlement or military post in the town.

Apart from the two references quoted, history is silent on this question, which has been the subject of much discussion over the years. The fact that no evidence has yet come to light is not proof that it does not exist, but until it is produced we must keep an open mind on the subject. It is not the purpose of this article to discuss all the ramifications of this problem, but of necessity it had to be ventilated.

If Banbury itself has not as yet offered evidence of occupation during the 400 or so years the Romans were here, the district I call 'Banburyshire' certainly has - and in great abundance! It is, therefore, the primary purpose of these notes briefly to survey the Romano-British finds that have been recorded (the list is not claimed to be exhaustive) from the area since local people began to take an active interest in what we now call 'archaeology'.

'Banburyshire' is a word coined many years ago by a Banburian who, long before the advent of motor transport, loved to travel the local highways and byways on foot. I use the word to cover pretty much the same district as this energetic pedestrian. It covers an area roughly within a five to ten mile radius of Banbury Cross and includes all those villages that look to Banbury as their principal local centre.

Starting from the north at Fenny Compton and proceeding in a clockwise direction, our area is bounded by Claydon, Aston-le-Walls, Chipping Warden, Culworth, Sulgrave, Helmdon, Farthinghoe, Aynho, Souldern, Great Tew, Duns Tew, Swerford, Rollright, along the Jurassic Ridge escarpment to Warmington and along the Burton Dassett hills to our starting point at Fenny Compton. Thus we see that 'Banburyshire' ignores county boundaries and includes almost the whole of north Oxfordshire, part of south Warwickshire and part of south Northamptonshire. Its boundary is a purely arbitrary one and it is stressed that it was not an organised unit of the Roman Empire. As yet we do not even know for certain where its administrative centre was.

'Banburyshire' lies almost centrally on the oolitic stone of the great geological feature known as the Jurassic ridge that stretches in a broad belt across England in a north-easterly direction from Dorset through Wiltshire, Gloucestershire, north Oxfordshire, Northamptonshire on to Lincolnshire and the Humber. The countryside hereabouts is undulating and beautiful and there is evidence that it has been populated continuously since Neolithic times.

Apart from a brief reference in Caesar's 'Gallic Wars', Britain does not come within the orbit of written historical records with a fixed chronology until the Roman 'conquest' of A.D. 43. Before this, however, Britain had many trade links with the Continent and the Mediterranean countries and by the time of the Roman invasion trade routes across the country were well

established. The Jurassic ridgeway was certainly one of them. It is possible that Banbury was a crossing point for at least two other important highways, one running from west to east, the other from south to north. Prior to the Roman invasions the country appears to have been divided up into a number of tribal areas. These tribes were the Iron Age folk, many of whose forebears had emigrated from the Continent due to the great westward migration of peoples from Central Europe. These people, who had brought with them new skills including the smelting and working of iron, probably absorbed the local populations they found, and gradually with increasing Continental trade a fairly high level of culture evolved. The Iron Age people of this country were far from being the painted savages that some of our school history books would have us believe.

Historians tell us that before the Roman invasions, 'Banburyshire' was in the territory of the Dobunni tribe whose principal centre was situated where Cirencester (formerly the fair Roman city of Corinium Dobunorum) now stands. At the time of the invasion of A.D. 43 the Iron Age tribes of Southern Britain were split by various political schisms, and while some forcibly resisted the armed might of Rome, others, including the Dobunni, apparently welcomed the invaders.

After several bitter conflicts the Roman legions fought their way northwards, conquering or being welcomed, until they finally arrived on the Jurassic ridge. As in other places, they quickly set to work to adapt or improve what they found. In 'Banburyshire' they found a number of Iron Age settlements defended by hill-forts, the inhabitants generally making a living from the land, for then as now, the land of the Jurassic ridge and to the south of it was good corn land, and with the decline of Rome's Granary - the Camargue in southern France - corn was at a premium. The legions very quickly established fortresses at Glevum (Gloucester) and at Lindum Colonia (Lincoln) and between these a number of garrisoned towns were strung along the ridge.

Beesley identifies the rectilinear earthwork known as 'Castle Banks' in North Newington parish (O.S. 145/409409) as a marching fort built by Ostorius Scapula. Romano-British in origin it may be, but an Ostorian fort, never! In the 1800's there grew up a legend that had its origin in a difficult passage in the Annals of Tacitus which held that Ostorius Scapula, Governor of Britain 47-52 A.D., built a number of forts on his marches through the Midlands to quell peasant uprisings - a nice story but with very shaky foundations. Incidentally, a similar rectilinear earthwork at Mancetter is cut in two by Watling Street. The southern half in Warwickshire is called 'Castle Banks' while the northern half in Leicestershire is known as 'Oufort Bank'.

Roadworks (either the building of new ones or improvement of existing tracks) went on apace, and before long 'Banburyshire' became flanked by the Fosse Way on the west and Watling Street on the east, both driving in a northerly direction eventually to cross at Venonae (High Cross), thus completely enclosing our area within a large triangle of roads. The points of the triangle are Venonae, Corinium and Verulamium (St. Albans); the base line between the latter two being formed by a section of Akeman Street with Alchester (near Bicester) situated midway between the two.

Until recently a puzzling archaeological feature of 'Banburyshire' was the relatively large number of Iron Age hill forts. For many years it was thought that these massive earthworks had been thrown up against the threatened Roman invasions. This theory, however, did not square with the Dobunnis' ready acceptance of Rome, unless they represented a last minute change of policy. However, the most likely answer to the problem has been revealed by the evidence obtained from Rainsborough Camp (O.S. 145/526348) by the Oxford University Archaeological Society. This hill fort produced evidence of having sustained attacks during the first century A.D., but there was nothing to show that the attackers were Roman. Interpreting the evidence, Mr. John Sutton, director of the operations, concluded that the attacks took place during the territorial expansion of the Catuvellanni c. 25 A.D. under the great Belgic king Cunobelin whose capital was at Camulodunum on the site of Colchester. It would seem therefore that 'Banburyshire' was on the north-eastern edge of the Dobunni territory and was thus subject to the depredations of expansionists from the east and the fierce tribes from the dense forest lands to the north of the Jurassic Ridge.

Did these same fierce warriors from the forest cause the legions to halt, choosing the Jurassic ridge as a good defensive position while consolidation took place in the south? If so, how long did the Romans stay in such a defensive position on the ridge? Does the fact that they fortified towns signify that this halt lasted a number of years before the legions again took up their standards and marched against the wood-painted warriors?

These are just a few of the broad questions that face the archaeologist in this area, and it may be many years before they can be answered accurately, for a tremendous amount of work must be done on site both on the ridge and north of it. To date no major archaeological work has taken place in the area on Romano-British sites and as each year goes by, sites are being lost due to open cast mining, building and land development work. Finds, when they are made on workings, are not reported for fear (totally unfounded) that work will be held up. If finds are reported to the proper authorities then the places where they are made can quickly be checked and recorded for Posterity. The great pity about the destruction of unrecorded sites is that future archaeologists will find gaps and anomalies where one piece of recorded evidence could fill an important part of the picture.

Romano-British occupation sites in 'Banburyshire' have several things in common: (a) a tremendous amount of potsherds - a great deal of it still to be found on the surface of the soil after ploughing; (b) the recurrence of the words 'Black', 'Town' and 'Cold' in the names of farms and fields often found to be associated with Romano-British remains (e.g. 'Blacklands' at Swacliffe and King's Sutton; 'Blackingrove Farm', Barford St. Michael; 'Town Ground' at Hanwell; 'Cold Harbour' at Middleton Cheney and Radstone, etc.); (c) below the topsoil a thick black layer of burnt material covering the foundation walls of occupation sites, and (d) the frequent occurrence of scattered human remains among or on top of the black layers.

These points would appear to indicate that (a) the sites were destroyed by fire - probably in late Romano-British times, either by the raiding Saxons or by peasants rising against their overlords, as happened in Gaul; (b) that the majority of the 'settlement type' buildings had thatched roofs, wooden walls and stone foundations; and (c) that the words 'Black', 'Town', 'Cold' etc. have come down to us through oral traditions, for the ruined townships would soon have become grassy mounds, many of which would be levelled over the years by erosion or cultivation or during the Enclosures.

A composite picture of 'Banburyshire' in Romano-British times would show the legions consolidating their gains, the onward march of the troops leaving behind them 'paid off' soldiers and civilian administrators; the return of the legions under Ostorius Scapula to put down peasant revolts; the gradual Romanisation of the life of the country until with the decline of the Empire and the increasing oppression by local overlords, the peasantry again revolted leaving many once-proud villas as smoking ruins. Such civil unrest would leave the country in a weak condition and a certain prey to the later marauding Saxons.

The list of sites and their associated finds that follows is arranged in alphabetical order, the name of the parish being given to those not in close proximity to a particular village. The six-figure references based on the popular Ordnance Survey 1" series Sheet No. 145 will help to pinpoint the sites or find spots where these are known, or the nearest village in the case of the find spot not being known. Some known sites immediately outside the arbitrary boundary have also been included (cf Map on Page 104). This list of sites is based upon the following main sources which I am pleased to acknowledge: The Victoria County Histories of Oxfordshire (Vol I), Northamptonshire (Vol. I) and Warwickshire (Vol. I), Beesley's History of Banbury, including Vols. I, II and XVII of the Manuscript Version in Banbury Public Library, the standard histories of Northamptonshire by Baker, Bridges and Morton, and, of course, my own notes and observations over the past ten years.

ADDERBURY, Oxon

458354: A small field north of the Adderbury-Bloxham railway line, and situated on a ridge midway between Adderbury West and Milton, has, over the years, produced large quantities of stone, tiles, potsherds and a small Roman coin. The potsherds are mainly of the 2nd century coarse grey ware. It was thought for many years that this was the site of a small Roman villa, but more recently the possibility of its being a small Romano-British settlement

site has been indicated. (Beesley, p. 610. VCH I.330., VB., Gepp: History of Adderbury.)

480357: One of the most interesting small finds made in the district was the discovery last century on the Aynho road near the turnpike gate of a small bronze bust believed to represent the Roman Goddess Venus. This object, some two inches in height, is in the Ashmolean Museum. It was thought to be the weight of a Roman steelyard. (Gepp: Op. Cit., VCH I.330, North Oxon. Archaeological Soc. Report 1853-1855).

475337: A bronze bodkin, apparently Roman, three indeterminate Romano-British sherds, teeth of ox and sheep and a few fragments of dressed stone were found when deep ploughing for the first time at Grounds Farm in 1952. (Oxoniensia Vo. XVII - XVIII, p 216). Roman coins have also been found in the village at 474356 and 475353 (O.S.).

ASTON-LE-WALLS, Northants

498509: In 1843 a pale buff-coloured urn was found near the church. It was covered with a stone, but there were no bones or ashes in it. (Journal of the British Archaeological Assn. I.337. VCH I 216).

ASTROP (King's Sutton), Northants.

506361: An iron knife and chopper and a denarius of Vespasian were found. (Journal of the British Archaeological Assn. XVII. 70. Beesley MS XVII., VCH I.216). Find spot not recorded.

515391?: An extensive Romano-British settlement site, overlying an earlier late Neolithic occupation and burial site, was identified during ironstone mining at Buston Farm, Astrop, and reported to the North Oxfordshire Archaeological Society in 1910 by Mr. W. Potts. Finds were made in several fields around the farmhouse. In one of the fields adjoining the Astrop-Warkworth road two tumuli were removed. The pottery found on the site fell into two main categories: the first was very coarse hand-made ware with comb markings and indentations made with a stick, and the second conformed to the wheel-made, well-known, common grey ware of the Romano-British period. The site is situated about one mile to the north-east of 'Blacklands'. In 1911 the Rev. Charles Overy contributed an article to the same journal on the additional evidence that had come to hand since Mr. Potts' article. This site was interesting in that Mr. Overy noted that the original ground surface had been excavated to form a considerable number of 'saucer-and boat-shaped' hollows. The depths of these hollows varied from 2 to 3 feet, some being only to the level of the ironstone, and in others the ironstone itself had been excavated. Mr. Overy went on to report that fragments of pottery occurred in the overlying soil in considerable quantity, but the greater quantity of finds occurred in the hollows. The earth in the hollows was blacker than the surrounding soil and contained calcined stone, ashes, sherds of pottery, bones of animals and occasionally lumps of chalk, all mixed together. 'The general character of the hollows and their contents suggest the pit-dwelling excavation as discovered at Hayes in Kent and the Cobham Pits in Surrey. But we do not think the measurements quite justify the conclusion that the Buston Pits were used as pit dwellings'.

The coins found in the area are interesting and include a British imitation of Claudius I struck c.50 A.D., a Numerian of 283 A.D., another British imitation placed in the second half of the 4th century, Tetricus 267-273 A.D., Allectus 293-296 A.D., Carausius - 287-293 A.D. and Constantine the Great 320 A.D.

Mr. Overy adds a note on the name 'Buston' which he claimed to be derived from the Latin 'Bustum' inferring that this indicated a Roman burial place. (Associated human remains were found here, but a more probable explanation of the 'pits' would be that they were kiln hollows. An aerial photograph in my possession shows very interesting crop marks extending over a wide area around the Farm. V.B.) (N. Oxon Arch. Soc. Reports, 1910/11).

ASTWICK, Northants.

564333: Coins, including a Constantius, were found in the 18th Century. (Bridges: Northamptonshire I. 168; VCH I.217).

BANBURY, Oxon

456447: Roman coins. (Beesley MSS I) Roman remains (Camden, Oxfordshire.)

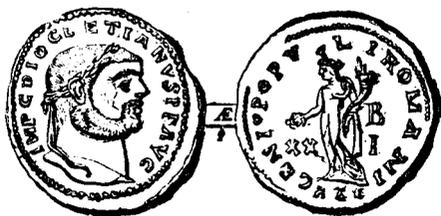


Fig. 1. DIOCLETIAN A.D. 284

Found at Banbury



Fig. 2. CONSTANTINE THE GREAT A.D. 306

Found at Drayton



Fig. 3. FAUSTA A.D. 307

Found at Black Grounds, Chipping Warden

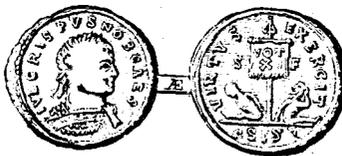


Fig. 4. CRISPUS A.D. 316

Found at Black Grounds, Chipping Warden

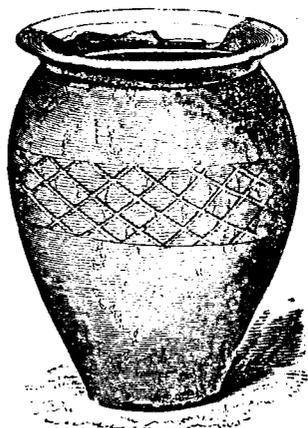


Fig. 5. ROMAN URN

Found at Black Grounds, Chipping Warden



Fig. 6. ROMAN URN

Found at Thenford

418325: Roman coin found at Buttermilk Farm. (Beesley MSS I)

420316: Gold chain found at Irondown. Exact spot unknown. (Beesley MSS I)

413316: Widespread scatter of potsherds, plaster and burnt stones. (Oxoniensia XXIV p. 98. V.B.).

451329: Blackingrove Farm. On the north slope of the hill rising from the river were found extensive Romano-British remains including coins, fibulae, pins, pottery and burnt stones and bones. 'And it is said', reports Beesley, 'a bronze image, two or three skeletons near one fragment of flint!' Also found was a stone coffin containing bones. (Beesley MSS XVII. VCH I. 331-2).

BLOXHAM, Oxon.

423348: Beesley records that in a field immediately to the north of the junction of the Bloxham-Chipping Norton and Milcombe roads, pottery and Roman coins were discovered, together with a structure which might have been the firebox of a hypocaust furnace or a kiln. (Beesley. p.609. VCH. I. p333).

423358: In a field immediately to the north of the junction of Courtington Lane with the Bloxham-Tadmarton road, a Romano-British occupation site was excavated in 1960 by members of the Archaeological Society of All Saints School, Bloxham. The remains of a foundation wall and the usual occupation debris were at a greater depth than is usual for this area owing to the fact that the site lies at the foot of Hobb Hill and is therefore subject to silting. (C & CH I. 106-7). Between 1929 and 1935 some 24 inhumations were recorded in a Romano-British burial ground on the south side of the Tadmarton road (opposite the occupation site). This was excavated in 1933 & 1935 by a master of All Saints School (Oxoniensia III. 41ff VCH.I.333. The Bloxhamist July 1933, July 1935.)

430360: A circular mosaic pavement was found during the removal of an old sewage drain from beneath Webb House, situated on the west side of the main street of Bloxham. One fragment of the pavement was kept but the remainder was filled in and concreted over. (C and CH. I.109.)

BLOXHAM GROVE, Oxon.

455372, 461368, 461370: The whole area around Bloxham Grove farmhouse has, over the years, yielded much evidence of Romano-British occupation, including coins (1835 and 1854) and pottery indicating a fairly extensive site. (North Oxon Arch. Soc. Rep. 1853-5. VCH.I.333, Beesley P.45).

BODICOTE, Oxon.

469372: 'Cotefield' and 'Nursery Ground' have produced considerable quantities of pottery, burnt stones and human remains, indicating an occupation site. (VCH. I.330).

BODDINGTON, UPPER, Northants.

482534: (No details of find spot) Urn containing about 300 'third brass' coins found in 'Whiteley's Field' in 1873. (150 of them catalogued A.D. 253-74. (Northampton Notes and Queries, III. 151, VCH.I.216).

BRAILES, Warwicks.

315394: Potsherds (no details of find spot). (VCH - information from Mr. R.F. Tomes.)

BROUGHTON, Oxon.

431393: At Pike Farm an extensive scatter of Romano-British pottery on the surface led to a trial excavation by Banbury Historical Society in 1960. A foundation wall, two coins, a small brooch, a large quantity of potsherds and some scattered human remains were found. (C. & CH.I.109. V.B.)

CHARLTON, Northants.

528359: Gold coin of Titus found about 1720. No details of find spot. Other coins have been found whereabouts. (Bridges, I.191; Baker, I.666) 'Beesley mentioned a supposed hoard of gold coins but this is probably a reminiscence of the coin of Titus' (VCH.I.216).

CHASTLETON, Oxon.

Coin of Aurelius (some coarse potsherds with a fragment of Samian were found in a field north of Hill Farm, $\frac{3}{4}$ mile east of the village. (VCH.I.334).

CHIPPING NORTON, Oxon.

A large number of Roman coins have been found in and around Chipping Norton. (For details see Manning MSS, Ashmolean Museum, Plot's Natural History of Oxfordshire, p.341, Beesley MS XVII, VCH I.325.)

CHIPPING WARDEN, Northants.

505485: Edgecote estate. Fields known as 'Blackgrounds' have provided much evidence of occupation. A Roman well was re-discovered in 1960. Roman coins have been found on the site and potsherds are still found in plenty on the surface. (V.B.)

508483: 'Considerable traces of buildings exist half a mile east of the village on the north side of the Cherwell, on a sheltered site with a southern aspect sloping gently to the stream. Only one building has been actually excavated - a detached bath house, 36 ft. long by 18 ft. wide, found in 1849 close to the water in a field known as the Cauldwells'. This seems to indicate a Romano-British villa. (See Morton, p.256; Bridges, I.111, Gough, Add. to Camden, II.272; Baker, I.531; Journal of the British Archaeological Assn. II.346 (Coins), v.83/168 (excavation of 1849); Beesley, 27-9, Numismatic Soc. Proc. 23.11.1843; 27.1.1845, 25.2.1846. VCH.I.200.)

CROUGHTON, Northants.

535339: Romano-British pottery found at Warren Farm. (O.S.6" Series).

538343: Romano-British pottery, chiefly later red-colour-coated wares, has been picked up from surface of ploughed fields on the N.W. of the village. (Oxoniensia XIII, 66)

CULWORTH, Northants.

543471: Coin of Quintillus, actual find spot not known. (Beesley p.30. VCH.I.217).

548468: On February 2nd 1953, two shallow graves with inhumations were found during the building of the Council Houses. Unfortunately apart from a small unidentified object 'resembling a thin cylinder of coal' - a description given to me some weeks after the discovery by the local policeman - nothing was found by which the remains could be properly identified. I have included this find as the remains were adjudged to be 'Roman' - by what authority I cannot say. (V.B.)

DEDDINGTON, Oxon.

483333: In 1867 during drainage work at Hazelhedge Farm, the foundations of a large building were found in the rickyard. This was thought to be a villa site. (Manning; B.B.O.J. IV.15).

474319: 'A number of holes filled with broken pottery, ashes and charred bones, a few coins and a human skeleton were discovered about 1877 in the Parish Pit - a sunken field north of the Clifton Road about $\frac{1}{4}$ mile east of the trackway leading to Field Barn and Hazelhedge Farm'. (VCH I.298. Manning. *ibid.*)

"An aureum of Florian (A.D.276) was said to have been found recently at Deddington". (Numismatic Chronicle XV 1852-3. p.79. VCH.I.298.) (Find spot not known).

DRAYTON, Oxon.

428416: Roman 'fine coloured' tiles, a 'bath' and coins were found c.1770 on the south east side of the churchyard. (Beesley MS I.18).

'A great number of AE 2 and AE 3 coins from Maximinus to Julian are reported to have been found at Drayton. (Beesley p.44; VCH I. p329) (No details of find spot).

DUNS TEW, Oxon.

438405: In 1861 or '62 at a depth of some 18 in. below the surface of a field 'just below Ilbury Camp' a much weathered stone slab carved on one side with a figure in relief wearing a tunic and conical cap and holding in the right hand a hammer, and in the left possibly a chisel or tongs, and behind on the left, a small figure'. The dress and hammer suggest Vulcan, and the sculpture seems to resemble the reliefs and altars from Kings Stanley, Bisley and Withington, Glos. and now in the British Museum, and suggests a temple or shrine in the neighbourhood - even perhaps within the earthwork on the top of the hill! Also found with the stone (which measured 16 in. high and 9 in. wide) were 'stones and pottery and near it a coin, two jars, one Roman and the other sun-baked and apparently British.' The base of the Roman urn is in the

Ashmolean Museum. (Gents Mag. 1862, II 568/709, with illustration; Oxford Arch. & Hist. Soc. 1862 p.80; P.S.A. II (1862) 85; VCH - with illustration - I.336. The stone was the property of Sir Harry Dashwood, Bart., but a later member of the family, Sir Robert Dashwood, had no knowledge of it. Actual find spot not recorded.) A first brass of Aurelius (?) found below Ilbury camp (perhaps the coin mentioned in the Potts MSS - VCH). A denarius of Caracalla found in the Vicarage garden is in the Manning Collection at the Ashmolean Museum.

Wharton (Kiddington 2nd Ed. 1783 p.59) says that 'a Roman pavement was dug up here c.100 years ago' but probably it is that mentioned by Plot as found at Great Tew. (VCH.I.336). EVENLEY, Northants.

594357: Several hundred Roman coins, probably a hoard, were found in a field called 'Addington's Meadow' during drainage work in 1826. (Baker. I.617).

In 1854 another hoard was found in an earthenware urn; this included 2,448 '2nd brass of Diocletian to Constantius I, and 705 3rd brass of Valerian to Diocletian, apparently all mixed up together'. (Numismatic Chronicle XVIII (1854) 38; XI (1871) 174; VCH.I.217)

FARTHINGHOE, Northants.

Uninscribed coins. Find spot not known. (VCH. I.154).

FENNY COMPTON, Warwicks.

314519: A great deal of Romano-British pottery, including Samian, 'pelves' and grey-blue common ware, was found in 1881 during the draining of a field called 'Great Ground', situated about $\frac{1}{2}$ mile south of the village on the lane to Farnborough Fields: some pieces were said to resemble wasters from a kiln. (VCH.I.226, information from Mr. E.P. Knight).

409579: Gredenton Hill; Iron Age hill fort. Situated on the edge of the Jurassic escarpment. This site has produced pottery and small finds over the years. After ploughing the ring ditches and banks are very clearly defined showing alternate bands of dark and light soil. (V.B.) FRITWELL, Oxon.

538314: Roman coins were found in a field immediately east of Crooks Firs about $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles north east of the village, and south of Ockley Brook. (O.S., VCH.I.337). GREAT BOURTON, Oxon.

An AE 3 of Maximinus Daza was found in the parish in 1863 - find spot not known. (Potts MSS; VCH I.337).

GREAT ROLLRIGHT, Oxon.

Roman coins were found on Church End Farm c.1919, including AE 3 of Tetricus II (one); Carausius (one); Constantine II (one); Constans (one); Magnentius (one); Julian (?); Valens (?) and AE of Valentinian II. (Haverfield MSS; VCH I.337).

GREAT TEW, Oxon.

A courtyard type villa of considerable size and importance has been identified at Beaconsfield Farm. Finds, including a beautiful tessellated pavement (see cover) have been made over the years since the 17th century. Oxford University Archaeological Society excavated part of the villa in 1957. Shortage of space prevents a full description of this site, but references may be found in the following: Plot's Natural History of Oxford 1705, p.334; Brewer's Topography of Oxford (1813) p.462; Brayleys and Britton's Beauties of England XII pt.2; Gents. Mag. 1811; Beesley p.41; VCH I.310; Oxoniensia XVI.

GREATWORTH, Northants.

552425: Five urns (Roman?) were discovered in the village many years ago. The exact find spot was not recorded. (Morton 530; Beesley 32; VCH I.217).

HANWELL, Oxon.

428437: Field name 'Town Ground'. Villa site. Finds include tessellated pavement, urn, coins, pottery (mainly common grey ware) burnt stones and bone; 'chambers cut into rock, oven with pewter dishes'. (Beesley MSS XVII). Remains spread over 2 fields.

In October 1828 a Roman pot containing over 70 coins was found in a field south-west of the villa site: these included coins of Nero, Vespasian, Titus Domitian, Nerva, Trajan, Hadrian, Pius Faustina I, M. Aurelius, Faustina II, Verus and Lucilla. Some of these coins, which were in fine condition, were incorporated into the Ashmolean collection but cannot now be distinguished. (Beesley 45; Archaeologia LXXI. 224; Manning MSS in the Ashmolean Museum; VCH I.337).

436439: Field name, Camp Spinning. 'An oven containing several pieces of pottery' was found in 1895 during drainage work. The soil round the 'oven' was burnt red. The pottery was replaced in the hole and covered over. (Berks. Bucks and Oxon Arch. Soc. Journal, Vol. IV. 1898, 18; VCH.I.337).

For other Roman small finds in Hanwell, see Beesley 44-5 and Beesley MSS XVII.

HOOKNORTON, Oxon.

352331: An Iron Age site. (no details).

358329: Romano-British site. (no details).

A fine Romano-British brooch of the 2nd century from a field called 'Gooseacre' at Hook Norton, found during ironstone working, was exhibited by the late Mr. E. Thurlow Leeds, then Keeper of the Ashmolean Museum, at the March 23rd 1911 meeting of the Society of Antiquaries. The brooch, which was found with other objects and a skeleton in a jar, was said by Mr. Leeds to belong to a rare class of fibulae. The other finds included a bowl of Samian ware, fragments of similar ware, pieces of hand-made pot of plain, dark brown ware, a small double ring of iron, a small bronze 'scarifier' and the spring of another fibulae. (Soc. of Antiquaries XXIII. 406, VCH I.338). The brooch is in the Ashmolean Museum.

354324: Coins that may or may not be Roman were found with a skeleton in a garden at Southrop by the bridge. (Manning MSS Ashmolean Museum. VCH.I.338).

353319: Burnt wheat and two human skeletons (head to foot) oriented east-west found at South Hill, exact spot unknown. (Beesley MSS XVII.116) (Anglo-Saxon? V.B.).

HORLEY, Oxon.

416440: Roman gold coin. Find spot not known. (Beesley MSS XVII).

KING'S SUTTON, Northants.

The site of an extensive Romano-British settlement situated on rising ground $\frac{1}{2}$ mile north of the village where many remains have been unearthed over the years. The soil hereabouts is unusually dark in colour and foundations, pottery (including a curious colander), knife and other object in iron, and coins of the 2nd, 3rd and 4th centuries (the last being the commonest), have been noted by various writers. The site has never been explored. (Morton, 531 - 'the coins are called Blackland pence'; Baker I.703; Beesley, 33; Numismatic Soc. Procs. 23.11.1843; Proc. Soc. Antiquaries, ser.2, I.323, II.75; Journal British Arch. Assn. XVII.70; Worcester Congress of Arch. Inst. Catalogue of Museum, 11; VCH.I.218 - 'Mr. Dagley of King's Sutton has about 50 coins found mostly at Blacklands - a denarius of Domitian, another of Hadrian and copper of the 2nd, 3rd and especially the 4th centuries. Fragments of Roman pottery still lie about on the surface of the site').

Roman coins of 270-330 A.D. have also been found in other parts of the parish but the find spots are not recorded. (V.B.)

LOWER HEYFORD, Oxon.

Silver and other Roman coins found close to the junction of the road to the village and the Bicester-Enstone road, about $\frac{1}{4}$ mile east of the railway station and less than that south of the River Cherwell. (Manning MSS in the Ashmolean Museum). A silver coin of Valentinian I was found in a field about a mile to the south of the above at the base of the railway embankment and possibly therefore not *in situ*. (Ibid. Now in Ashmolean. VCH.I.340).

MADMARSTON (See Swalcliffe)

MARSTON ST. LAWRENCE, Northants.

535424: Roman finds in the village include 'urns', 2 coins and a skeleton. (Gents. Mag. 1843. p.338. VCH.I.218). Find spots not known.

543433: Marston Hill. Field name, 'Bar (or barrow) Furlong'. Site of late Romano-British? and early Anglo-Saxon Cemetery. First skeleton found 1842. Excavated 1843 by Sir Henry Dryden. (VCH I.228. Beesley MSS XVII).

MIDDLETON CHENEY, Northants.

515418: Field name 'Seabridge Close'. Romano-British small finds and burials near Coldharbour barn. (Beesley 31-2; Morton, 524; Bridges, I.203; Baker, I.717; VCH I.218).

NEWBOTTLE, Northants.

Pottery, plate of pewter or lead found in Newbottle Hill Spinney. Now in Northampton

Museum. (Beesley MSS XVII.142, 160-1; VCH.I.218).

NORTH NEWINGTON, Oxon.

409409: 'Castle Banks' - a large rectilinear earthwork thought by Beesley to have been an 'Ostorian marching fort' (See page). Situated on the edge of a deep cleft known as 'Padsdon Bottom'. This earthwork was more than likely the defence perimeter of a Romano-British farm and probably had a wooden palisade on top of it. A search within the earthwork produced no surface finds. (V.B.)

402403: Roman coins and pottery have been found near Tythe Farm about $\frac{3}{4}$ mile south west of Castle Banks. (Beesley MSS. XVII. VCH.I.341; Potts MSS).

RADSTONE, Northants.

Roman coins found in an urn, now in Northampton Museum. There is a Cold Harbour in the parish, but to date no trace of Roman buildings have been discovered. Find spot of urn is unknown. (VCH.I.220).

ROUSHAM, Oxon.

'In the reign of Charles II a tessellated pavement was found less than $\frac{1}{4}$ mile from the north west boundary of the parish where also were formerly the remains of a Roman bath'. (Annals of Rousham by W. Wing quoted in Blomfield's Deanery of Bicester V.7). Blomfield also records that human skeletons had been found 1 to 2 feet below the surface of the 'bath field'.

Roman coins of the later emperors have also been found in and near Rousham. (VCH.I.341)

SOULDERN, Oxon.

'Roman coins; a bead necklace; tesserae and a small bronze figure'. (Oxford Arch. Soc.

Notices of Souldern , 1887. VCH.I.342). Find spot unknown.

SWALCLIFFE LEA, Oxon.

390385: The site of a large Romano-British settlement lying at the foot of Madmarston Hill, an Iron Age hill fort. The site was partially excavated by the Oxford University Arch. Society in 1958. The fields over which this site spreads were called 'Blacklands' and 'Town Grounds'. It lies on the Roman Salt Way from Droitwich and over the years has been an abundant source of Romano-British finds. A villa is also believed to lie in the field just to the south-east of the township site, and immediately to the east of Lower Lea farmhouse. (Beesley MSS.XII; North Oxon Arch. Soc. Procs. 1853-1855; VCH.I.299/308/330).

SWERFORD, Oxon.

Coins found in a field south of the village. Find spot unknown. (VCH.I.343).

TADMARTON, Oxon.

404385: During the summer of 1963, a Romano-British burial was discovered. It consisted of a coffin of local dressed stone lined with lead. This was covered with a stone slab, 6ft. 5in. by 3ft 1in. The coffin contained a broken glass unguitarium (probably 4th century) and the skeleton of a woman in her 30's about 5ft high. The head lay to the S.S.W., feet to the N.N.E. (Information from Mr. David Sturdy of the Ashmolean Museum).

TADMARTON HEATH, Oxon.

390357: An area situated midway between Holywell Farmhouse (now the clubhouse of Tadmarton Heath Golf Club) and Tadmarton Camp, has in the past yielded quantities of potsherds, burnt stones and Roman coins. Foundation stones have also been dug up. Beesley recalls that 'not many years ago there existed the remains of a paved way made up of broad flags leading to the spring close to the farmhouse, from the Camp or the outwork near the entrance.' (Beesley p.12: VCH.I.344).

THENFORD, Northants.

525421: In fields called 'Flaxlands' and 'Stonegreen' on the top of a slope which falls away steeply to the westward, and immediately south of the walled garden belonging to Thenford House, has been found evidence of a Romano-British villa. A former owner of Thenford House, the late Mr. Severne, a keen antiquarian, excavated part of the site in the 1800's. The recorded remains include foundations, hypocausts, tessellated pavements, tiles, bricks and several coins - a denarius of Vespasian and copper of Tetricus and the Constantine period. The surface of the site is still strewn with bits of brick and pottery. An old labourer (reported in VCH) said he had ploughed along the top of a pavement and found one or two 'fireplaces'.

An urn was also said to have been dug up in Thenford Churchyard, but it was not possible to say whether this was Romano-British or not. (Beesley p.31: VCH.I.201).

WARKWORTH, Northants.

488405: Roman silver coins of Gaius, Lucius Caesar and Nero; a first brass of Lucilla, and 'other coins found sporadically'. (Beesley. p.23/32. VCH.I.221). Exact spots unknown.

WIGGINTON, Oxon.

394326: A Romano-British bath house and tessellated pavement, probably belonging to a villa, was discovered in 1824, together with coins and pottery. (Beesley MSS.XVII; North Oxon Arch. Soc. Journal: O.S.; VCH.I.309).

WROXTON, Oxon.

413418: Roman coin found in Vicarage garden in 1868. (Beesley MSS.XVII: Potts MSS; VCH.I.345).

399435: Hoard of 127 Roman coins found during ironstone working. No trace of pottery with them. The coins which were in good condition, ranged from Tacitus (A.D.275) to Licinius (A.D.308-324). Two coins suggested the date of burial as being sometime towards the end of A.D. 313. (Oxonienia XV,108;) Subsequent inspection showed traces of rubbish pits and pottery scatter in the vicinity of the hoard.

451433: Ordnance Survey 6" map shows find spot of 'Roman coins in pot'.

416429: Sherds of Romano-British coarse pottery in a hollow immediately to the west of the Wroxton-Drayton road. (Oxonienia XXVI-XXVII, 339).

WYKHAM PARK, Oxon.

When the kitchen gardens of Wykham Park were being made in 1851, Roman coins, pottery seven human skeletons, the bones of animals and fragments of coarse earthenware 'urns' mixed with shells were discovered, together with 'an oven' (possibly a kiln or hypocaust furnace), a vault and a well of uncertain date. Between the present house and the turnpike road (now the main Bloxham-Banbury road) were 'the remains of walls and a pavement'. (Beesley MSS XVII, VCH.I.331).

V. Bromley

TWENTIETH CENTURY HISTORY

One of the greatest difficulties which faces students of 19th century Banbury history is the almost complete lack of documentary evidence of the industries of the period. Fortunately no such problem is likely to face the historian of Banbury in the second half of the 20th century. An outstanding feature of the industrial history of this period will be the transfer to Banbury from Birmingham of the food factory of Messrs. Alfred Bird and Sons. We have recently been privileged to see the vast dossier of press cuttings and company directives concerning the move being prepared by the firm's community relations staff. They seem determined that no fact about the new factory should go unrecorded and will earn the gratitude of future historians.

A NEW COLLECTION OF BANBURY DEEDS

The report of the Oxfordshire County Records Committee to the County Council meeting held on November 22nd mentions the deposit in the Record Office of thirty-two large tin trunks of deeds from the Banbury solicitors, Aplin, Hunt, Thomas and Brooks. Owing to shortage of space they are being stored for the time being in the Bodleian Library. The documents range in date from the 16th century to the 19th and promise to be of great historical interest.

The Oxford University Archaeological Society dug for the 3rd year at Rainsborough Camp, Charlton, thanks to the generosity of Mr. Bull, the owner.

Work in 1961 and 1962 (see Cake & Cockhorse, Vol. I No.11, January, 1962, page 153) revealed that Rainsborough began as an undefended settlement in the 5th or early 4th century B.C.; defences were erected probably in the 1st century B.C. Outside the present bank and ditch were found an outer ring of bank and ditch, now invisible; while the inner bank consisted of a core of packed limestone rubble, faced front and back by a sheer wall of limestone slabs. This bank had been heavily burnt on all sides of the camp, and the outer facing had fallen into the ditch. A Belgic pot of a decade or so before the Roman conquest was found in a layer of rubbish in the outer ditch: clearly the camp had been destroyed by then.

The 1963 investigation was devoted to the western entrance through the inner bank: this is the only original one. It had been an outstanding structure. The outer stone facing of the inner bank extended right to the narrow passageway of the entrance. This passage (16 feet wide, 40 feet long) was faced along either side with timber walling supporting the ends of the inner bank. Trenches had been dug down both sides of the passage, sleeper beams laid, and vertical beams jointed to these at intervals. Halfway along were the two massive posts that held the double gates, opening outwards. Holes had been dug for trunks two feet in diameter. Immediately behind the gates were immense posts that probably held up a bridge over the passageway to enable defenders to dominate the area in front of the gates. A central supporting post of the bridge was offset to the south side of the entrance, leaving a wider carriageway along the northern side and a narrower footway along the south.

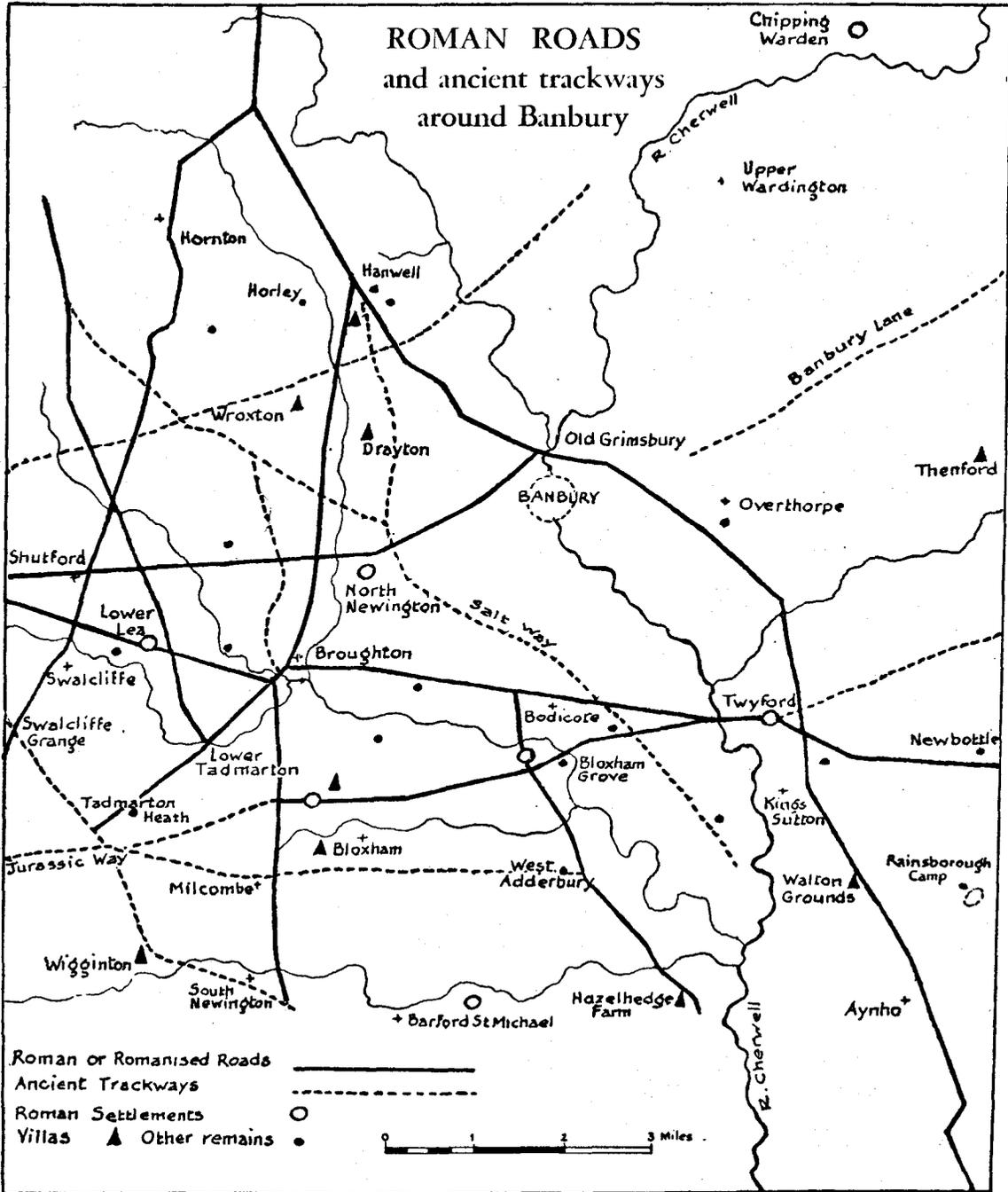
Behind this gateway were the most unusual features of the camp, invisible before excavation. On each side of the passageway, and joined in one structure with the ramparts, was placed a C-shaped room, the entrances facing one another across the passage. These guard rooms (12 feet in internal diameter) were faced inside and out with dry stone walls, with a core of limestone rubble between them. About 2' 6" height of these walls still stood: stone slabs in the debris showed they once stood 1 or 2 feet higher. The care with which these rooms were built and the amount of stone walling is exceptional in this area. The nearest parallels seem to be in the forts of the Welsh Marches.

The entire passage was paved. A section at the guard rooms showed that here it was originally with thin cobbles, much worn, later with thick stone, several slabs deep. The guard rooms seem to be later than the first road, earlier than the second. It was not possible to do enough to be sure if the rooms are a latter refinement of the defences.

Distinctive pottery was found on and under the stamped floor of the guard rooms, suggesting they belong to the 1st century B.C. Little sign of wear appears on the upper road, and little rubbish in the corners of rooms and passageways - probably the structure was destroyed soon after construction. The thoroughness of Rainsborough's burning suggests it was deliberate, for the entire entrance had been burnt and the bank ends where the wooden walling supported them had collapsed and the rooms were filled with signs of burning - presumably they were roofed. The debris fills the hollow of the entrance almost to its present level. On it lay Roman pottery which came from an occupation of the area immediately outside the entrance. On the filling of the inner ditch was a Roman building, dated by pottery to the 4th century A.D.

Rainsborough was then not entirely abandoned in the Roman period. It stood then, as today, as a ruined monument to the past grandeur of the baron who built it.

ROMAN ROADS and ancient trackways around Banbury



Before the Romans came there were already numbers of trackways in the neighbourhood of Banbury. These were the natural ridgeways which were in use in pre-historic times, many of which we are using to-day. In their earliest form they crossed no water, but followed the high ground where the going was good and firm. Already in pre-Roman days the smaller streams with firm banks and hard bottoms would have been passable, so that there was also a secondary pattern of natural ways.

In this district we have the great curve of the high ridges from Rollright and Over Norton by Edgehill to Preston Capes and Cold Higham. From Preston Capes a ridgeway zigzags south as far as Islip. Many natural ridges come off the main one on both sides, some of which are linked by easy fords. This gives us the system of many tracks going in a general direction of south-west to north-east, which was an old trade route from Bath to Lincoln, now referred to as the Jurassic Way. Crossing it is another group of natural ways with a general north and south direction, which in several places have been called 'Port Way'. In different parts of the country there are many other old roads with this name, which are certainly not connected; but at least it means the way was recognisable as an important road from Saxon or earlier times, and some, but not all, were Romanized. (1)

The River Cherwell is a great natural barrier, like the Thames and the Lea; they are boundaries because they are so hard to cross. A number of ridges concentrate on Somerton and North Aston, and at Somerton Mill there is a natural stone bottom to the ford; this makes it likely to have been an early crossing, probably pre-Roman. Wide, wet meadows and muddy banks and bottoms make it unlikely that the other Cherwell crossings were usable before the Romans improved them. The clues to the road system are Cherwell mud and the steep, deep, sudden valleys. It was quite possible to get about by going round by an easier way, or simply to keep to one's own neighbourhood, so that there are separate track systems on each side of the Cherwell.

When the Romans conquered Britain they made the big military roads, and numbers of less important but very necessary local roads for the needs of general communications. The Romanized Britons learnt how to make good surfaces, fords and small bridges, so that a network of local roads was developed, probably more or less on the lines of previous tracks. This means that there is much variety in the local structure and width even of the same road; and although some roads were superbly engineered by experts, others were natural tracks merely improved by trial and error until the best way was found. Although technically a Romanized track may not rank as a Roman road, when we want to understand life in Roman Britain we must include every section that shows the possible communications between settlements. We cannot believe that the people who lived in such well-built houses would be content to flounder in mud.

Three major Roman roads, Watling Street, Fosse Way and Akeman Street make a triangle just outside our area, but we have to account for the day to day communications of the considerable populations of our countryside. The Port Way from Kirtlington to Souldern was known in the 17th century and is a Romanized ridgeway. From Souldern to Walton Grounds a stretch of typical road has been known for many years. The Ordnance Survey map of Roman Britain shows a road from Droitwich and Stratford-on-Avon coming up from Whatcote by the ridge on the south of Compton Wynyates, crossing the Edgehill ridgeway at the White House and slanting down the side of the valley to Swalcliffe Lower Lea. This goes straight on by a lane but diverges from it on the hill-top to keep south of the stream which it crosses by an existing remnant of road to a bridge and fine sweep through Broughton Park and under the church to Bodicote and Twyford Mill, on through Astrop Park and up the hill to Newbottle Spinney and along the southern boundary of Hinton-in-the-Hedges. The country beyond has been heavily ploughed, but it probably kept to the high ground to Finmere. The easy gradients are well-engineered and a section in Astrop Park show a magnificent cambered structure 18 feet across. Twyford is therefore proved to be a Roman crossing. (2)

The Salt Way is certainly very ancient, but I doubt if it crossed the Cherwell before the Romans made the Twyford fords, and Nell Bridge is more likely to be a medieval crossing.

After Walton Grounds the road from Souldern goes straight over the hill between two knobs to King's Sutton, east of the present road, crosses the village, and then goes north keeping above the very wet valley, crosses a little stream in the same place as the road up from Twyford, then over the hill and down to a ford beside a bridge, touching the present road again near the southern end of Overthorpe and down to Grimsbury. The road pattern of this area has changed completely since a map of 1821, and that again was quite different from one of 1790, but scraps of former roads and numerous small signs piece themselves together into a very convincing line. (3) Grim is a name for the devil that the Saxons gave to large works that they had not made themselves. Old Grimsbury is a decided knob, where fences, walls and lanes may disguise an old settlement. The high ground each side of the Cherwell probably leaves as narrow a belt of flood-land as could be found, and the present causeway from the water-works to the wharf had apparently been there a long time before it was made so high. I studied directions and landmarks from many places, and then went to Hanwell Grounds, where a superb piece of Roman road survives, taking deliberate engineered angular bends so as to avoid steep ground as far as the top of Hanwell village, heading straight for the main road to Warwick along the ridgeway. There is no doubt that Grimsbury was the other big Roman crossing, and Banbury Lane comes down to it much straighter than it does to Banbury.

So far no Roman remains have been found in Banbury town, but a great deal in the country round about. Banbury Lane is undoubtedly very ancient, and is three pieces of ridges connected by natural ways. It certainly linked up with the routes to the north, but I doubt if there was a pre-Roman crossing at either Banbury or Grimsbury.

To the west of Oxfordshire the Jurassic Way was probably in use very much earlier than the north-eastern portions. From the Rollright Stones the ridge goes right on to Milcombe, coming down by two spurs, the more northerly of which was 'made' by the Romans and goes through the north of Bloxham to Bloxham Grove and Twyford.

From Tadmarton Heath the main ridge turns north-west past the Stour Well and Tyne Hill and up Edge Hill, to curve round by Nadbury Camp, down by Hanwell, Drayton and Crouch Hill to Twyford and Nell Bridge. The whole of this line still has roads or tracks on it. Another ridge turned off near Sunrising to Wroxton and North Newington, with a branch to Horley. An easily-found early track went down from Edgehill to Lower Tadmarton, which was made in Roman times without being given the typical engineered look. From just west of Wroxton an easy way joined the Salt Way above Withercombe, and it was not difficult to cross from Horley to Hanwell or Wroxton.

The pre-Roman route to the north-east probably started from a group of old tracks on the high ground west of Epwell and went across Epwell Grounds, north of Balscot and over a landscape now obliterated by iron-stone mining to Hanwell and Great Bourton. Keeping to the west of the Cherwell it crossed the smaller stream somewhere near Prescote and went up the still-used ridgeway to Appletree, Aston-le-Walls and on to Byfield. This way goes on to Daventry and Naseby and is a more natural line than Banbury Lane and Northampton.

From Brailes, Whatcote and Tysoe a number of steep but simple ridges come up to the extraordinary plateau surrounding Shenlow and the other round-topped hills. It was easy to pass between them south of Shutford. A good Roman road runs from Shutford eastwards along the upper side of North Newington and across the valley to the top of the hill south-east of Withercombe, where it takes a sharp turn down a straight line through Neithrop towards Grimsbury, to join Banbury Lane.

Many of these early ways are parallel and to make access convenient a road across was needed. 'Port Way' on an old map of Bloxham (4) gave a clue to such a road crossing over the lowest part of the ridge due south of Broughton. It comes from Akeman Street by the Chipping Norton road to beyond Kiddington, then down to Radford Bridge, across the Tew valley to the Deddington Road, takes a turn to the east, goes down the parish boundary to Buttermilk Farm and across to the Bloxham boundary. It approaches the south-west corner of Broughton Park by a double-ditched hedge to a fine junction with the road from Lower Lea and a sharp-angled turn by a fine piece of road leading to a wooden bridge. Instead of turning east, the Port Way goes north across the Park and remains as a footpath to North Newington. It can be traced faintly

towards Wroxton, where it seems to go under the dam of the lake. It is easily visible between the two bye-roads west of Hanwell, slanting up the hill from the ruined mill below the settlement to join the ridgeway.

Another entirely engineered road takes a short cut from Over Norton to Warmington, going by Hook Norton, Nill Farm, Swalcliffe Grange (where it is 10 foot wide), Swalcliffe Park, Shutford, Balscot, Hornton (where it is pack-horse width), and, at the edge of the hill beyond, it takes a sharp turn and goes straight to Warmington. The curious curves and angles are evidence of skilful planning across difficult country.

The main ridge from Tadmarton Heath comes down to Lower Tadmarton and was a made road going straight over the hill to share the bridge with the other two roads coming from either side to the road junction in Broughton Park. There its traffic could take the roads already described and go either to Grimsbury or Twyford. From the latter the ridgeway was made in parts and went up by Farthinghoe Lodge to a stretch of country full of old tracks and wide-verged drove-ways, some of which will probably turn out to be Romanized.

From Preston Capes the easiest gradient to the South went by 'Oxford Lane' to Helmdon and Brackley. In 1768 the turnpike from Brackley went by Ardley, Middleton Stoney and across an obliterated line below Bletchington to Gosford and Oxford. The road originally went straight across Middleton Park past the church and castle. As far as Middleton it could be a natural line, and is the sort one would expect to be Romanized. (5)

Several other ways from the north go down to 'London Ford' below Croughton, and so to 'Port Way' in Heyford and Ash Bank.

The known Roman road from Towcester through Bicester to Alchester across Otmoor appears to be roughly parallel; in reality it comes from quite a different part of the country. An old way, certainly made in parts and called Bucknell Port Way, leaves it at Fringford and goes to Middleton Stoney.

From Somerton a real ridgeway goes by Ardley and Stoke Lyne to Fringford and then along that old drove way through Poundon to the Claydons. This would also be linked with the north across Baynard's Green and Cottisford Heath, which was still open country in 1768. There was certainly an old road from Souldern through Fritwell and Ardley to Bicester. The last part of it was extraordinarily straight and can be traced right through Bicester into the road coming in from Akeman Street. This would have linked all the cross roads with Akeman Street and the east. Beyond Bicester the country is so wet that it must have been impassable till it was opened up by Akeman Street.

This shows communications on both sides of the Cherwell. There is one more important link across the Jurassic and Port Ways from north-east to south-east. This is the 'Welsh Way' that comes into our region at Wormleighton and has been found to be a real Roman road, going by Lower Boddington, Aston-le-Walls, crossing the Cherwell at Trafford House, through Culworth, Sulgrave, Stuchbury, Faulcot, along the high road and through Biddlesden and north of Buckingham to Stewkley and all the way to Verulamium. (6)

Probably there are more pieces of Roman roads to be found, and there are still many details to be explored with possibilities of unexpected discoveries. Meanwhile this gives some idea of the communications between the most populous parts in Roman times.

V. Wickham Steed.

REFERENCES

1. The Port Way is mentioned in Dr. Plot's Natural History of Oxfordshire.
2. Map Ref. 366512.
3. 1" Ordnance Survey Map, 1st Edition, 1820.
Eyre and Jeffrys Map of Northamptonshire. 1779, revised 1791.
4. Bloxham Enclosure Award Map, 1801.
5. Thomas Jeffrys, Map of Oxfordshire, 1768.
6. Traced by field work of Charles Green of Wolverton and his colleagues, and in this area by myself.

THE OXFORD CITY AND COUNTY MUSEUM

It is notorious that Oxfordshire, a county well-endowed with local historical societies, lacks a museum for the display of the tangible records of the past. It is true that the university museums do include some local material, but their primary purpose is to aid teaching and research in the university. Their scope is international, and in such museums parts of Cotswold cottages and Victorian water colours of Otmoor rightly have to give place to the Arundel Marbles and the drawings of Leonardo da Vinci and Michelangelo. It is therefore most pleasing to record the decisions of the city and county councils at their respective meetings on November 18th and 22nd to set up in the near future a joint museum in accordance with the recommendations of Mr. M. A. Havinden, who has been investigating the problems involved. A possible obstacle is the county council's lack of statutory powers to delegate executive responsibility for a museum to a joint committee, but this should not prove a lasting difficulty as a number of local authorities co-operate in such matters as police and fire services.

Mr. Havinden has discovered over 3,000 suitable items for the museum, including a seventeenth century blanket loom from Witney, a collection of glove-making tools from Woodstock and a 1913 Morris car. There are, of course, considerable numbers of local items in the reserve stocks of the various university museums which will be transferred to the new museum. Mr. Havinden has suggested that displays of industrial and agricultural items should follow the pattern of the admirable museum in York Castle, with all the exhibits of a particular trade gathered together in a typical workshop. Other suggested facilities include a room for temporary exhibitions at which displays from the Record Office, the great houses of the county and the colleges will be possible, a schools service and a large scale display map relating geology to vernacular architecture.

The ultimate site of the museum will be in the re-development area around Oxford Castle, but for the next ten to fifteen years the use of Fletcher's House, Woodstock, shortly to be vacated by the Fire Service, has been recommended; but since this property was originally acquired by compulsory purchase, the County Council feel that the former owner should have the first option of re-purchasing it. The use of the former remand home at Thornbury House, Kidlington, has also been suggested, or an old school in Oxford could be used.

Of particular interest to members of this Society will be the suggestion that Banbury Museum should be a branch of the city and county museum. The present display hardly merits the title of museum, but the wealth of material already available in Banbury Library was shown in the Society's exhibition Banbury 1790-1837 in August last. It is possible that there will be further legal obstacles here as the responsibility for Banbury Museum is that of the Borough Council, which, as yet, has no place on the joint committee for the new museum. The advantages of the course proposed seem obvious; it would be possible to show the new museum's temporary displays at Banbury and the town's remains would be dealt with by a more expert staff than any which the Borough Council is ever likely to be able to employ. It is to be hoped that action can be taken soon, if only to save some of the large exhibits now rotting away in the cellars of the Municipal Buildings. These include a plush weaving frame, perhaps the only surviving example in the country, and it would be disastrous if a few years' delay made restoration impossible.

OXFORD ARCHITECTURAL AND HISTORICAL
SOCIETY

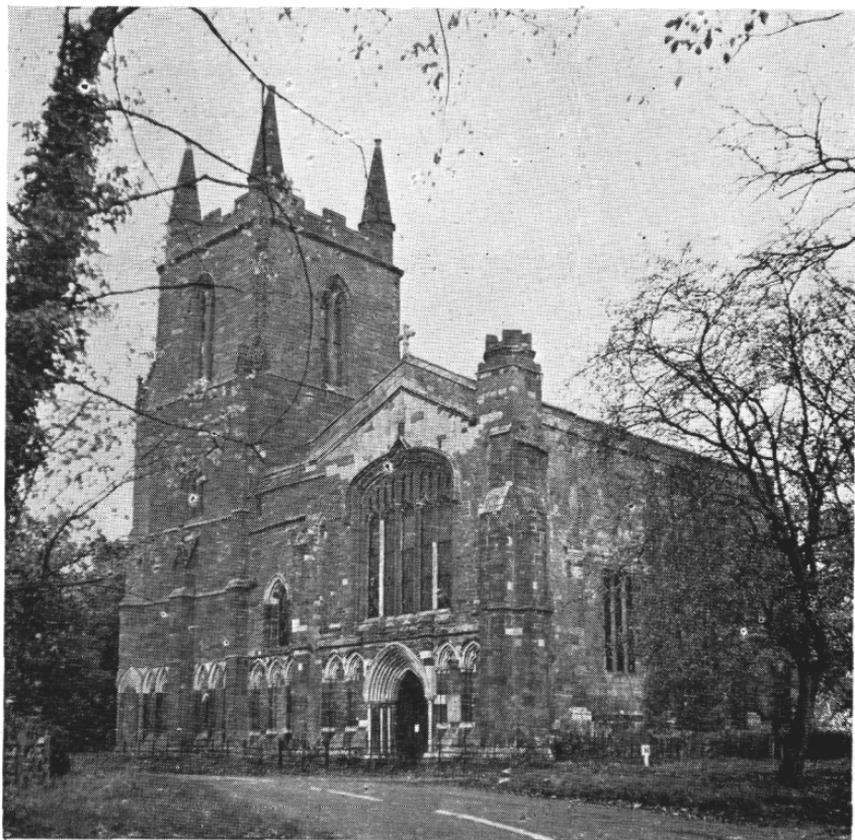
The Society is concerned with the archaeology, history and architecture of the Oxford region. Its activities include lectures, excursions and the publication of an annual journal, Oxoniensia. The Society also endeavours to preserve and safeguard local buildings and monuments. Full membership (to include Oxoniensia) one guinea. Ordinary membership ten shillings.

Apply Hon. Treasurer, O.A. & H.S., Ashmolean Museum, Oxford.

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CANONS ASHBY CHURCH RESTORATION FUND



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This Church is mainly a Western portion of the Church of the Monastery, which was founded for Black Canons of the Order of St. Augustine, and dedicated to the Blessed Virgin Mary.

The earliest known benefactor was Stephen de Ley, in the reign of Henry II, 1154-89. No part of any earlier Church than the present one now remains.

The Church at present existing consists of a Nave (part of which is used as a Chancel), a North Aisle, and a Tower attached to the North side of the Aisle.

Of the present Church the Western doorway and the Arcade on each side of it are the earliest parts, probably about 1250. The Tower was built about 1350 and the original West window was removed and the present one inserted about 1450. The Tower is said in Bridge's "History of Northamptonshire" to have formerly contained six bells, but the Tower falling into ruin, five of them were seized and sold in the time of the Civil War.

Probably Sir John Cope, about 1540, took down a large portion of the Church and built the present East end of the Nave and also that of the Aisle. The former East end of the Church is shewn by a break in the ground in the Churchyard, and the total length of the original Church was probably about two hundred and seventeen feet. The South Wall was rebuilt on the original foundation around 1710, about which time a large portion of the monastic buildings was taken down, and the materials used in the house, etc. The present roofs of the Nave and Aisle were then made, with a coved ceiling under the Nave roof. This ceiling was taken down in 1843.

The beautiful East window, in memory of Mary J. S. Dryden, who died on August 28th, 1916, appropriately enough depicts Isaiah, St. Luke, St. Augustine and St. Bernard, standing around the Holy Family.

Of the sixteen monastic houses existing in Northamptonshire, the Churches of only two have wholly or partially survived. One is the Benedictine Abbey of Peterborough, appointed by Henry VIII as the Cathedral of the newly created See of Peterborough in 1541; the other, over fifty miles away, is the remnant of this Priory at Canons Ashby.

The Church contains several monuments to the Dryden family who lived at Canons Ashby for nearly four hundred years. It also contains eleven funeral hatchments, and the most elaborate funeral Achievement in this County, and perhaps one of the most perfect in England.

This Achievement was no doubt for Sir Robert Dryden, the Third Baronet, who died on the 19th August, 1708. Shafts, mouldings, encaustic tiles, roofing slates, stone coffins, fragments of glass, and a chalice and paten, no doubt belonging to the Church and Monastery, have been dug up at various times. The Monastery well, fishponds, garden, cloister and other remains, can still be seen.

The Church is a "Peculiar" and there is no endowment for its repair or for maintenance of the Service. It is twenty five years since regular services were held there, and it is our intention to restore it to its former glory and to hold regular services in it, at the very earliest opportunity.

The Church officially comes in the united benefices of Lois Weedon and Moreton Pinkney, and we are very fortunate in having in the new Vicar, the Rev. Edward Lewis, one who shares our vision for the future of Canons Ashby. For the restoration of the Church we need £13,000, and we appeal to you to help us to achieve our purpose.

Our aim is that Canons Ashby, with its beautiful house and Church, should become a Healing centre; a place where Priests and Doctors, and all who come for help, should work together for good, and find the real power of the Healing Christ, and go on their way rejoicing.

To have Faith is to Create.

To have Hope is to call down Blessing.

To have Love is to work Miracles.