

CAKE & COCKHORSE

The Magazine of the Banbury Historical Society



Broughton Castle Banbury

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BANBURY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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The Magazine of the Banbury Historical Society
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VOLUME I. NO. 10 NOVEMBER, 1961

PROGRAMME 1961/62

All Meetings are held at 7.30 p.m. in the Court Room of the Town Hall.

Monday, 27th November - The Bloxham Feofees and their Activities, by Mr. Clarence Butler, Townsman of the Lord of the Manor. The Bloxham Feofees are a very ancient charity with their origins possibly as early as the 14th century. They have operated in their present form since 1602, and possessing considerable property in the parish they have played a very great part in the local government of Bloxham. Mr. Butler has been one of the Feofees for over thirty years and has an unrivalled knowledge of their history. Members can be assured of a most interesting and entertaining evening.

IMPORTANT CHANGE From January, 1962, the meeting night for the Society is being changed from Tuesday to Friday. Time and place remain unchanged.

Friday, 26th January. - Medieval illuminated manuscripts in the Bodleian Library, illustrated by colour slides, by Dr. W.O. Hassall, of the Department of Western Manuscripts, Bodleian Library, Oxford.

Friday, 30th March - Local Church Architecture. An illustrated talk by Mr. G. Forsythe Lawson.

CHRISTMAS CARD

As announced in the September issue, the Christmas Card this year is taken from an old print of the Old Gaol and Bluecoat School. It has been redrawn for us by our member Mr. Walter H. Clark. It is now available to members @ 4/6d per dozen, including envelopes. Other cards published by the Society in past years are still available.

Banbury Cross, 1860 (two-colour)	6/- per dozen
Cornhill, 1857	4/6d per dozen
Broughton Castle	4/6d per dozen

Members are urged to support this venture of the Society. Unless a good number are bought it is impossible to continue to produce them at such a reasonable price. Cards will be on sale at the meeting on 27th November, or can be obtained direct from the Hon. Secretary, Humber House, Bloxham.

EXHIBITION AND RECEPTION

As the many members who attended the Reception and the Exhibition of County Records will know, it was a tremendous success and much enjoyed by all who came. Held in the Town Hall on Saturday, 28th October, it was opened at noon by the Mayor, Alderman J. Portergill. Over one hundred altogether attended the Reception, members and specially invited guests, and were welcomed by Mr. Ellacott, the Chairman of the Executive Committee. During the afternoon a further fifty passed through the Exhibition when it was open to the general public.

Before the Exhibition was opened officially, Colonel Sir Charles Ponsonby spoke briefly about the Oxfordshire Victoria County History. Work on the volume covering Banbury and Bloxham hundreds (the county north of Deddington and Hook Norton) is at present in progress, and it should be published within a few years. However the cost of research and authorship by the small team of experts under the Editor, Mrs. Lobel, is only partially covered by annual grants from the County Council and University Chest. The gap has to be covered by individual private subscriptions, and a campaign is being launched in the area to raise money in this way. All subscribers' names are included in lists published in each volume, and these in themselves are an important sidelight on current local history. Mr. Gibson, who is a member of the finance committee of the V.C.H., will be very pleased to hear of or from any potential subscribers.

Sir Charles was followed by the Mayor, who praised the work of the County Archivist and his staff. The preservation of old records was a wonderful thing, and was in essence the preservation of history. He appealed to Banbury people not to destroy old documents and papers, whatever their apparent lack of interest, but to give them direct to the County Record Office or to the Society, who would pass them on. He echoed the thoughts of many present when he said how sorry we were that the President, Lord Saye and Sele, was unable to be present and open the Exhibition himself - especially as it was he, as a member of the County Records Joint Committee, who had first suggested that the Exhibition

should be shown in Banbury. Apologies for absence had also been received from many members, in particular two Vice-Presidents, the Bishop of Dorchester and Lord Elton.

No report on the actual exhibition is being given, as the article by the County Archivist in the September issue fully covers this. We should however say how much we appreciate the terrific amount of work done by him and his staff, and hope that they feel that their effort was worthwhile.

LECTURE

ANCIENT ROADS AND TRACKS IN NORTH OXFORDSHIRE

At a well-attended meeting of the Society on the 10th October Mrs. V.S. Wickham-Steed spoke about "Ancient Roads and Tracks in North Oxfordshire". She began by discussing the Cotswold Ridgeways which run for great distances without passing through any villages. These are of Neolithic origin, first used by a nomadic people continually wandering with their flocks. The ridgeways never cross water as pre-historic man always shunned boggy ground and he never had to make for any particular place. Mrs. Wickham-Steed went on to talk about Bronze Age tracks which did occasionally cross water but which usually avoided such formidable barriers as the Cherwell and the Upper Thames. These roads descend the ridges to such ancient settlement sites as Cassington and Standlake. Mrs. Wickham-Steed has traced the roads of this period from the Dorset coast to Lincolnshire and she showed how links ran from this route as it crossed the Cotswold Ridge to the Upper Thames area. The presence of the Peterborough Bronze Age culture on the west bank of the Cherwell, its westernmost limit, could be explained by the existence of ridgeways connecting the area with East Anglia and Lincolnshire. The Jurassic Way, known in parts as Banbury Lane, is of Iron Age origin, which is shown by the hill forts along its route. The road system of North Oxfordshire was probably so good when the Romans arrived that they needed to make few new roads, but two important additions which they did make were the road north from Dorchester-on-Thames across the hitherto impassible bogs of Otmoor, and the part of Akeman Street through the difficult country east of Bicester which linked pre-existing ridgeways to the north and south. Mrs. Wickham-Steed concluded by mentioning her own discoveries of Roman paving on the A34 at the New Inn, Wootton, (M.R.420191) and at Tadmarton, and revealed her theories about a Roman road running from the villas of the Upper Thames, through the Tew area to Tadmarton, and northwards past Shutford to the county boundary at Edgehill,

descending the ridge from near the Round Tower to Radway. Dr. Brinkworth expressed the meeting's thanks for a most enlightening talk.

B.S.T.

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL CHANGES IN BANBURY. 1830-70.

When Banbury ceased to be a parliamentary borough in 1885 it was a very different place from the "dirty ill-built town with a plush manufactory" where Lord Torrington suffered an indifferent inn a century before. The town's population was much greater, its communications with the rest of England much easier, its affairs less subject to outside interference and there were many new streets and buildings. New trades were flourishing and some older ones had declined. It is the purpose of this article to examine how and when changes in economic activity affected the life of the town.

The population of Banbury increased from 4,201 in 1811 to 13,026 in 1901, but this was by no means a uniform process and the rates of increase in different decades reveal much about the town's prosperity. First, it should be emphasised that in Banbury, as in England generally, the birth rate as early as the 1830's was very much higher than the death rate. Between 1831 and 1841 there were 1,269 burials of members of all religious denominations in the churchyard, while there were no less than 1,849 baptisms at St. Mary's, and there was a very high proportion of Nonconformists in Banbury. There is certainly no need to postulate any large scale immigration to explain the growth in the town's population. Moreover any immigration there was must have been just as extensive before the middle of the century as afterwards, for population increased at the same rate throughout the period from 1831 to 1871. The figure for 1851 was 137% of that of 1831 and the total in 1871 134% of that of 1851. During the 1870's the increase virtually ceased for there were only 359 more inhabitants in 1881 than in 1871, which means, when the high birth rate of the period is taken into account, that the town was on aggregate losing population through emigration. This was the period of the great depression in agriculture and it would seem that Banbury's prosperity at this time was firmly linked to that of the agricultural industry as a whole. It is significant that this was also the decade of the century during which the population of the Banbury Poor Law Union area declined most. The population of the Union began to fall after 1851, but there seems no reason to suppose that this was the

result of the attraction of large numbers of immigrants into Banbury. It is more likely that the coming of the railway and increased opportunities overseas were the chief reasons which made farm workers leave their villages. The standard of living of many agricultural workers in north Oxfordshire was as low as anywhere in England, with wages no more than six shillings a week in some villages in 1841, and the coming of the railway as a cheap and easy way of escape is likely to have stimulated a large scale exodus. Population trends therefore show that there was no great increase in the rate of immigration into Banbury after the middle of the century, and that in the 1870's the fortunes of the town were tied so securely to agriculture that the population ceased to rise at exactly the same time that the population of the surrounding countryside fell most rapidly.

The 1830's and 40's were the critical decades in the development of manufacturing industry in Banbury in the nineteenth century. In the long term the weaving industry seems already to have been declining in the 30's. In 1838 many of the workers had other occupations such as gardening, the strict regulations of the trade suggest that it was contracting and the bitterness between masters and men suggests a falling market. Ironfounding was already important in 1841 when Alfred Beesley wrote "there is a very considerable manufacture of agricultural implements" and at the Liverpool show of the newly formed Royal Agricultural Society in that year there was a notable exhibition of the work of Banbury inventors. In 1840, Richard Edmunds, the Banbury ironmonger was awarded the silver medal of the Royal Scottish Agricultural Society for a turnip cutter which he had invented. Machine making was thus well established in Banbury before the middle of the century, and the expansion of the trade in the 50's and 60's, in which several firms shared, was merely the continuation of a long term process which was paralleled in other market towns like Northampton, Peterborough and Ipswich.

It seems however that throughout the nineteenth century trade was of much greater importance to Banbury than manufacturing industry. It is significant that the chief supporters of the Savings Bank in 1838 were not foundry workers or weavers but servants and petty tradesmen, and it is probable that traders and small scale craftsmen were economically the most important groups in the town. Between 1840 and 1870 the numbers of craftsmen in the town remained more or less stable and Banbury continued to supply the neighbouring countryside with clothing, shoes and furniture as it had done for centuries. In most retail trades there was no very startling increase in the number of active businesses in the three decades after 1840 but there was a notable

increase in the supply of services. There were only eleven insurance agents in 1841, for example, but in 1865 there were forty two. Numbers engaged in building seem to have remained almost the same though there was a slight but significant rise in the numbers of businesses active during the period 1845-50. Altogether it seems that Banbury's middle classes between 1840 and 1870 were growing increasingly prosperous as the population of the town increased and the general level of incomes rose, while the numbers engaged in established trades remained steady and new occupations flourished. The many new shops, the Town Hall, the two corn exchanges and the two large Nonconformist chapels built in the 1850's and early 60's are impressive witnesses of this prosperity.

The built up area of Banbury was considerably extended during the nineteenth century and, like the rise in population, this was a gradual process and not the result of some economic "revolution" around the middle of the century. Parts of the Castle Street area were built during the 1830's and Constitution Row by 1847. In the early 40's there was much building activity around the Monument: Beargarden Terrace, Monument Street, New Road, Bath Cottages, Crouch Street, Blenheim Place and Prospect Terrace all appearing in the directories before 1846. The Cherwell area was developed quite early in the decade for deeds in Banbury Public Library show that Upper and Lower Cherwell Streets existed in 1844 and the directory of 1848 listed no less than thirty-two traders resident in Cherwell Street. Victoria Terrace and Spring Cottages were also mentioned in the directories by 1847 and the Windsor Terrace area was so populous by 1851 that the Wesleyan Sunday School opened there soon attracted over a hundred children. Further expansion in the area, the building of Gatteridge Street, Upper (or South) Windsor Street, Britannia Road and Canal Street followed early in the 1850's. There was certainly no great increase in the rate of building in the town after the middle of the century.

The development of Grimsbury seems to have been a direct result of the coming of the railway. When the G.W.R. purchased the meadows and race course through which their track was to pass, the land to the north of the Middleton Road which belonged to the same owner was sold to the Banbury Freehold Land Society, a company backed by Cobb's bank. The company sold plots for building, but it is clear that construction of houses took place only slowly and many plots were used for some time as gardens. Some were not built upon until the early twentieth century and a few remain

empty today. Most of the first houses built in modern Grimsbury seem to have been essentially middle class in character and not of the sort likely to have been occupied by industrial workers. It would seem rather that they reflected the growing middle class prosperity and that they were occupied by prosperous traders like James Cadbury and Richard Coffe who no longer wished to live at their places of business.

Meeting to consider railway schemes, which brought such high Tories as Colonel North of Wroxton and Rev. Francis Litchfield of Farthinghoe into public agreement with the Nonconformist reformers who ruled Banbury, show that the prospect of the coming of the railway was enthusiastically anticipated in the town in the 1840's. Furthermore a Railway Inn was opened in Bridge Street by 1847, three years before any railway was opened in the area. The railways doubtless profoundly influenced the development of Banbury as the town became a railhead for a very wide area and its trade grew at the expense of that of smaller towns. The coal trade was greatly stimulated and it seems that most coal came to the town over the L.N.W.R. line from Bletchley, though the Oxford Canal continued to be an important source of supply. The supply of meat and dairy products to the London and Birmingham markets had long been one of the chief occupations of local farmers and the railway is likely to have attracted more of this sort of trade to the town. The increasing use of chemical fertilisers and prepared stock feed in the 1840's and 50's is also likely to have increased the trade of a railhead like Banbury. Such expansion as there was in Banbury after 1850 is therefore likely to have been caused as much by an increase in trade after the coming of the railway as by the growth of manufacturing industry.

It has often been maintained that the taking over by Bernhard Samuelson of James Gardner's iron foundry in 1848 transformed Banbury into an industrial town bringing "several hundreds of families" into the town and causing the building of the Cherwell area and Grimsbury, but there seem to be many serious objections to this hypothesis. The expansion of the built up area of the town and the boom in the building industry of the late 40's clearly began before the arrival of Samuelson and at the time when railway schemes began to be discussed seriously, and the rate of building does not seem to have increased during the fifties: there was rather a noticeable decline in the number of active building firms. The foundry did not at all increase the rate of growth of the population but rather there was a fractionally slower rate of growth in the 50's and 60's than in the two decades before 1851. Immigration was not a notable factor in the growth of the town in the 30's and 40's and all evidence suggests that it did not increase in the

50's. The Britannia Works, together with other manufacturing concerns, may have contributed to the prosperity of the 50's and 60's by reducing the high poor rates, of which Alfred Beesley complained in 1841, and by creating a greater capacity to consume among the working classes, but Banbury remained throughout the nineteenth century a market town dependent chiefly on trade with the surrounding countryside. There was no economic revolution in 1848 and the many changes of the nineteenth century were due to a rising population and expanding trade and not merely to the establishment of one particular factory.

B.S. Trinder. B.A.

PRINCIPAL SOURCES

Beesley, History of Banbury.
 Bodleian Library. Cuttings relating to Banbury.
 (GA Oxon. Octavo. 989-995)
 Herbert. Shoemaker's Window.
 Potts. Banbury through 100 years.
 Report of the Secretary of the Assistant Hand.
 Loom Weavers' Commissioners. 1838.
 Rusher's Lists and Directories of Banbury.

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EXCAVATIONS AT SULGRAVE, NORTHANTS. 1960 - 1961.

Among the more common monuments in the midlands of England are the earthwork "castles", which in many cases mark the site of the former administrative centre of the eleventh or twelfth century manor and the residence of its lord. While the predominating form of such castles is the "Motte-and-Bailey", in Northants four sites - Farthingstone, Long Buckby, Culworth and Sulgrave - stand out from the rest of the county by virtue of the circular or oval enclosures which here replace the mottes. Of these, Sulgrave shows a well-preserved rampart some eight to ten feet high, enclosing an oval area one hundred and twenty feet in diameter from crest to crest. The site lies immediately to west of the parish church, on the end of a low, flat spur running down the axis of a wide valley: although the church itself is predominantly of early fourteenth century date, this close association of church and manorial centre is one that is repeated in many parts of England

and Wales.

Until recently, surprisingly little work has been done on eleventh and twelfth century earthworks of this class. Accordingly, a trial excavation was carried out in 1960 by the present writer on behalf of the Department of Archaeology, Queen's University of Belfast; the information thus obtained was augmented by a second season during July of 1961.

The excavations carried out so far have shown that the site is of considerably greater archaeological importance than previously imagined. The limestone subsoil has preserved perfectly the foundation trenches and post-holes of a large Hall, some eighteen feet wide by at least sixty feet long: this is of heavy timbered construction, the former positions of the main walls being indicated by sill-beam trenches two feet wide by one foot deep. Approximately one quarter of the building is divided from the rest by a cross-passage leading between two opposed doorways and flanked by a cross-screen, while what may be thought of as the "solar" end appears to have been built from the first of dry-stone walling. The pottery from this Hall includes imported E. Anglian glazed wares and local imitations of the St. Neot's type of pottery, and shows that the building was in use during the earliest part of the eleventh century.

Subsequent modifications of this structure date from the later eleventh century, while a complete re-organization of the interior layout of the site, involving the abandonment of the original siting of the Hall, seems to have taken place before occupation of the site finally came to an end in the second quarter of the twelfth century.

So far, work on the site has aimed at recovering the plan of the eleventh century Hall, which is virtually unique at present by reason of its early date and the wealth of structural detail recovered. It is hoped that a third season's work will be carried out in the summer of 1962 to determine the exact relationship between the Hall itself and the ditch and massive rampart which at present enclose what appears to be one of the very few pre-Conquest Late-Saxon Manor Houses to be discovered in England to date.

OXFORDSHIRE RURAL COMMUNITY COUNCIL.

Local History Committee.

One of the standing committees of the Oxfordshire Rural Community Council is concerned with local history in the county, in all its aspects, and serving upon it, among others, are representatives of the Bodleian Library, the Ashmolean Museum, the County Record Office,

the W.E.A. and the various local archeological and historical societies.

One of the committee's activities has been the sponsoring of local history exhibitions in villages, and so far about twenty-five have been held. We are able to help with publicity, with an insurance scheme, in providing speakers and lending the epidiascope for the display of old pictures and photographs, and especially perhaps, by the support of members of the committee at the exhibitions themselves. These exhibitions not only rouse interest in the villages concerned, but there is a "two-way" traffic whereby the treasures which come to light may be of great interest to us. For example, when old documents are produced, we can, if the owner wishes it, offer to record them at the National Register of Archives, and to try to find a place of safety for them. With material of other kinds, we can record its whereabouts in order to support the claim that a museum is needed unless these treasures are ultimately to be lost.

A few years ago, a Village Scrap Book competition was organised by the committee, for which the Oxford Times most kindly provided prizes. Over thirty entries were received and a panel of judges from outside the county decided upon their relative merits. Each of the books submitted had its own particular interest, and a really large amount of information was gleaned from them. It is hoped that it may be possible for their owners to add to them as time passes, and so to keep the village history up to date.

Apart from these special efforts, the committee is trying to find, in every town and village in the county, a local correspondent who is asked to let us know when anything of interest - from the discovery of a Roman coin, to the widening of the old bridge - occurs in the village. This information is typed onto special forms, which are kept at the Headquarters of the County Library, in Oxford, and so are available for anyone who wishes to consult them. From time to time, we ask our correspondents to undertake a particular piece of work, and just now they are engaged upon recording the inscriptions on gravestones, memorial tablets and old buildings. A further project may be the recording of types of farm gates, many of which are rapidly disappearing to give place to modern gates which make the entrance to fields easier for tractors.

We now have about seventy correspondents, but we should be glad to have many more, and if any reader of this article would

care to help in this way, will he or she please get in touch with the Local History Organiser, O.R.C.C., Hadow House, 20, Beaumont Street, Oxford, who will gladly supply more details about the scheme.

Finally, a small committee has been deputed by the Local History Committee to deal with the local work of the National Register of Archives. We are most concerned to record for the Register, all kinds of documents - parish papers, family papers, documents relating to estates, especially maps and plans, local trade and business records, old diaries, etc. All the information we receive is treated as confidential, and we should be very glad to hear from owners of documents, if they would allow us to list their papers for the Register. If there is any difficulty about their safe-keeping, we will gladly advise on this subject also. Please write to the Local History Organiser, as above.

G.M. Hutchinson.

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Local History Exhibitions

<u>Adderbury</u>	Wednesday, 28th March, 1962 at 7.30
<u>Swerford</u>	Tuesday, 23rd January, 1962 at 7.30
<u>South Leigh</u>	Thursday, 15th March, 1962 at 8.0

The Oxfordshire Rural Community Council would be very glad to welcome members of the Local History Committee at the above meetings, and if possible, will help them with transport.

I M P O R T A N T

Please note that the November meeting is a day earlier than originally announced. It is now on Monday, 27th November as a concert is being held on the Tuesday.

C O R R E S P O N D E N C E

Sir,

I was very interested in the Queries on page 130 of the September number of Cake & Cockhorse, and looked through some old letters in my possession. John Chamberlin, the father of William Hunt Chamberlin, leased Cropredy Lawn and died in 1816. I do not know when W.H. Chamberlin followed his father at the farm. The earliest letters from Cropredy Lawn belong to the late 1820's or early 1830's and I do not know the date when W.H. Chamberlin went there or left it. He was residing at Adderbury House by 1841 and I believe remained there till his death in 1851. In 1843 he made an agreement with a younger relative, William Chamberlin, to farm at Cropredy Lawn but the latter went away in 1847. I believe the owner at that period was Sir John Cope. I do not know who followed William Chamberlin. I am afraid the amount of information I have is very scanty.

M.G. STOKES (Miss)

63, Mount Drive,
N. Harrow,
Middx.

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, Oxoniensa. The Society also endeavours to preserve and safeguard local buildings and monuments. Full membership (to include Oxoniensa) one guinea. Ordinary membership ten shillings. Apply Hon. Treasurer, O.A. & H.S., Ashmolean Museum, Oxford.
