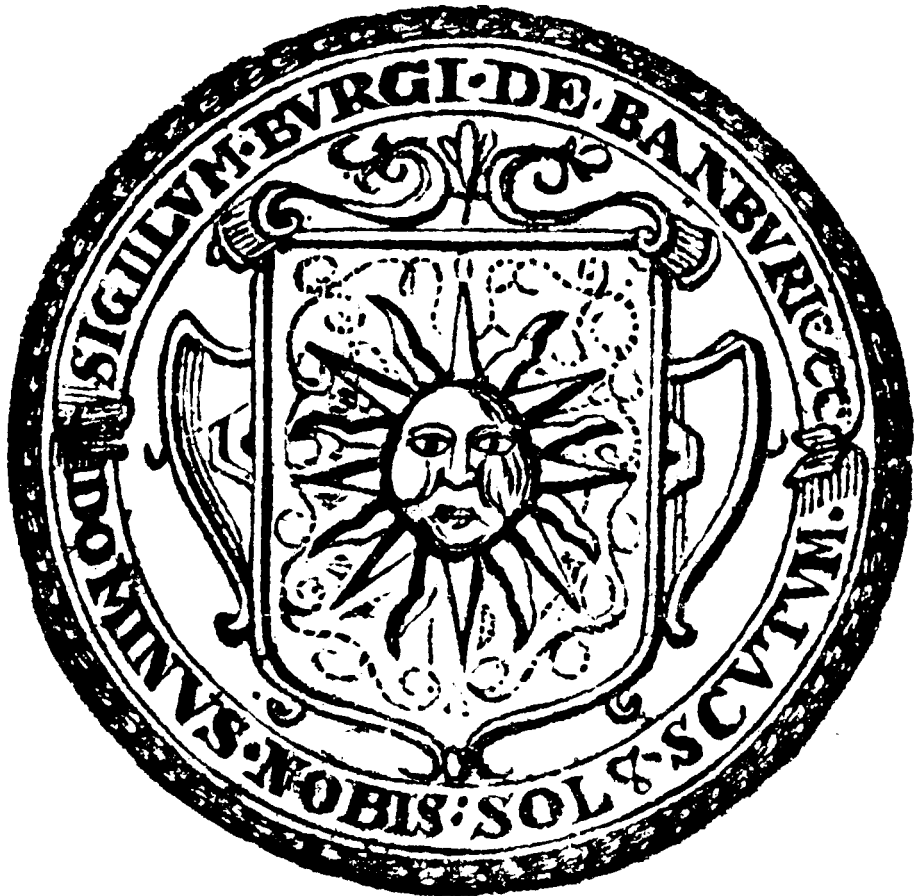


CAKE AND COCKHORSE



Banbury Historical Society

Summer 1974

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The Society was founded in 1957 to encourage interest in the history of the town of Banbury and neighbouring parts of Oxfordshire, Northamptonshire and Warwickshire.

The Magazine *Cake & Cockhorse* is issued to members three times a year. This includes illustrated articles based on original local historical research, as well as recording the Society's activities. Publications include *Old Banbury – a short popular history* by E.R.C. Brinkworth (2nd edition), *New Light on Banbury's Crosses, Roman Banburyshire, Banbury's Poor in 1850, Banbury Castle – a summary of excavations in 1972, The Building and Furnishing of St. Mary's Church, Banbury, and Sanderson Miller of Radway and his work at Wroxton*, and a pamphlet *History of Banbury Cross*.

The Society also publishes records volumes. These have included *Clockmaking in Oxfordshire, 1400–1850; South Newington Churchwardens' Accounts 1553–1684; Banbury Marriage Register, 1558–1837* (3 parts) and *Baptism and Burial Register, 1558–1723* (2 parts); *A Victorian M.P. and his Constituents: The Correspondence of H.W. Tancred, 1841–1850*; a new edition of *Shoemaker's Window*; and *Wigginton Constables' Books, 1691–1836. Banbury Wills and Inventories, 1591–1650, Bodicote Churchwardens' Accounts, 1700–1822 and Banbury Politics, 1830–1880* are all well advanced.

Meetings are held during the autumn and winter, normally at 7.30 p.m. in the Large Lecture Theatre, Banbury Upper School. Talks on general and local archaeological, historical and architectural subjects are given by invited lecturers. In the summer, excursions to local country houses and churches are arranged. Archaeological excavations and special exhibitions are arranged from time to time.

Membership of the society is open to all, no proposer or seconder being needed. The annual subscription is £3.00 including any records volumes published, or £1.50 if these are excluded. Junior membership is 50p.

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

CAKE AND COCKHORSE

The magazine of the Banbury Historical Society. Issued to members three times a year.

Volume Five

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As the local Historical Society we cannot let the demise of Banbury as a chartered Borough pass without a few words of valediction. But we will certainly not waste any on vain regrets, even should we feel inclined to do so. As historians we know that change has always been with us: we know that the advantages and disadvantages of change take time to manifest themselves and to assess: we just hope for the best.

At the moment let us take a lighter line. The Corporation of the newly chartered Borough started off its history in 1554 with a celebration dinner - at the public expense, of course. They did themselves well: capons, conies, geese, etc., wine, fruit, etc., etc., all galore. For the populace there was a pageant, with cakes and ale, held perhaps round the High Cross in the Market Place, or in the Horse Fair, traditionally the place which for centuries was the scene of May Day festivities and the Riding of the Lady on the White Horse.

Four hundred and twenty years later, in March 1974, with the nation-wide reorganisation of local government, the chartered Borough came to an end. Appropriately, this was marked in a much lower key than the high jinks and guzzling on that great day in 1554. Of public ceremonies, tradition and practicality were combined in a final beating of the Borough bounds. A more enduring mark of the end of the Borough will be the plaques placed near the sites of Banbury's three ancient crosses. Donated by Alcan Booth Ltd., and made of course of aluminium, the first of these, on the site of the Bread Cross, is on the wall of the Coach and Horses Inn in Butchers' Row. At a pleasing little ceremony outside the inn, the plaque was unveiled by Donald Fraser, the last Borough Mayor. Afterwards hospitality was dispensed within to all comers by the owner of the Hook Norton Brewery, that grand example of old English yeomanry, Mr. Tom Clark. Fittingly (for the plaques had first been suggested by our Society) we were prominently represented by members of the committee.

It was a happy notion, in Banbury as elsewhere, to institute the new office of Town Mayor. Thus, amid all the changes, we have been able to preserve in no small measure our municipal dignity. And certainly our first Town Mayor, Miss Florence Woollams, has shown to perfection that this is indeed a splendid reality.

E. R. C. B.

Our cover: shows the Banbury Town Seal, as illustrated by Alfred Beesley in his account of the reformed Corporation of 1835.

SOCIETY NEWS AND ACTIVITIES

The Society has a full summer programme and local members will have received details by post. The lecture season ended with Barrie Trinder's talk on 'The Impact of the Railways on Victorian Banbury' and a well-attended village meeting at Sibford, where Geoffrey Forsyth Lawson's ever-popular colour slides of village architecture were complemented by Leslie Baily's account of the history of the Sibfords. On 25th May Mr. G. C. J. Hartland conducted a party round the site of the former ammunition filling depot off Overthorpe Road. During June and July visits are planned to Deddington, Chipping Warden and Edgcote, Wigginton and Swerford, and Adderbury (any member who has not received full details and requires them should contact Dr. Gardam).

The A.G.M. (as already announced) will be held at Canons Ashby, by kind permission of Mr. Louis Osman, on Saturday 29th June, 5.15 p.m.

Railway History

Mr. R. T. Allen (of 20 Ulverscroft Road, Loughborough, Leics.) is Company Steward for the Stratford-upon-Avon and Midland Junction Railway, for the Historical Model Railway Society. He would be grateful for any information our readers can give him about the railway. In particular, he would like to know about wagons owned by Banbury firms (our front cover for Summer 1970 featured a Palmer & Son wagon), reminiscences of those who knew the line or who worked on it, photographs, etc.

Frank Willy

This issue of *Cake and Cockhorse* is the last to appear under the regrettably short tenure of the Editorship by Frank Willy, who is leaving Bloxham School and the Banbury area this summer. Frank has been a committee member since 1968, and Chairman for the past three years, presiding at meetings with an ideal blend of informality and authority. We are most grateful to him for his sustained devotion to and enthusiasm for the Society's activities, in face of many competing and time-consuming school interests. We wish him well in his new role at Leeds University.

J.S.W.G.

Mr. R. H. S. Crossman

It is with great sadness that we record the death on April 5th last of one of the most distinguished of our members. Richard Crossman's many achievements in public life have been fully recorded in numerous other obituaries. This is not the place to repeat them, but simply to acknowledge that Mr. Crossman was an exceptionally busy public figure who delighted to take part in the life of the area in which he made his home, and to give what help he could to local societies. The Historical Society is particularly indebted to him on two counts. In the summer of 1969 he generously showed a group of members around his beautiful house at Prescote Manor, and his hospitality on that occasion will be remembered by all who were present. In 1968 he kindly agreed to write a foreword to the Society's publication *A Victorian M.P. and his Constituents*, a most elegant essay which adds considerable distinction to the book. In many ways the Banbury area will be the poorer without Richard Crossman, and we extend our deep sympathy to his widow and family.

B.S.T.

OXFORDSHIRE RECUSANCY 1580-1640

(an edited version of a talk given by Dr. Davidson to the Society in October 1972)

In his recent study of the Popish Plot, John Kenyon lists Oxfordshire among the few 'notorious Catholic enclaves', to be compared with South Wales and Lancashire. 'Less well known,' he writes, 'is the strong Catholic enclave in Oxfordshire, headed by the Stonors in the south and the Mildmays of Ambrosden in the north; they and related Catholic families held between them one-third of the freehold land in the county.'¹ But if this community is less well known than some, as Kenyon rightly claims, its existence is no new discovery, as the source of his statement shows, for this was the second volume of the *Victoria County History of Oxfordshire*, published in 1907.² The Stonors, writes H. E. Salter in the passage cited by Kenyon, 'with their relatives, the Chamberlains of Shirburn and Clare, and the Symeons of Chilworth, Brightwell and Britwell, owned or influenced a tract of land 15 miles long by 5 miles wide. Adjacent manors were held by other recusant families: Stokenchurch and Kingston Blount by the Belsons, Swyncombe by the Fettiplaces, Waterperry by the Cursons, Great and Little Haseley by the Lenthalls, Huddlestons and Horsemans, Mapledurham by the Blounts; at Forest Hill and Sandford there were the Powells, at Thame the Wolfes and certain branches of the Wenmans and Dormers; at Whitchurch the Hides. Towards the north of the county were the old families of Fermor of Somerton and Browne of Kiddington. At Chastleton we meet with the names of Catesby and Ansley, and after the Restoration Mr. Sheldon of Great Barton and Sir Walter Mildmay of Ambrosden.' Salter in turn was able to refer to M. H. C. Stapleton's *History of the Post-Reformation Catholic Missions in Oxfordshire*, published in 1906.

The claim that Oxfordshire was a county strong in recusancy is easy to substantiate. Of the various lists drawn up by the authorities, one credits Oxfordshire with 151 recusants, broken down into 1 lady, 3 esquires, 30 gentlemen, 18 gentlewomen, and of the inferior sort, 68 men and 31 women.³ Only two other counties on the same list have more than 100 recusants: Lancashire has only 39; Warwickshire 3. Other lists break down in similar fashion. The list of recusant offers to compound in May 1586⁴ covers 26 counties, though no names are entered under one of these, Warwickshire. Oxfordshire dominates the list with more than 54 names (that is, not counting wives and unnamed children separately); Berkshire comes second with more than 42 names; Sussex is third with more than 37. Lancashire has only 9 and eleven other counties have less than 10. Another list giving the yearly rents and revenues of recusants in 1587 has 15 names for Lancashire and 22 for Oxfordshire.⁵ Clearly such figures are not even approximately correct as totals but they do convey a rough impression of the distribution of the recusant population. A last illustration: rather more than a third of the families entered in the Oxfordshire Visitation of 1566/74 were 'Catholic' and rather less than a quarter of those in 1634.

Oxfordshire has every convenience for the recusant historian. There were five Catholics martyred in Oxford, four in 1589 and one (George Napper) in 1610, several from Oxfordshire who were martyred elsewhere, notably Nicholas Owen, the Jesuit laybrother and builder of hiding-places for priests—there are, of course, hides in Oxfordshire, perhaps the most interesting being at Mapledurham, where the hide would seem to have been built at a time when it cannot be proven that the Blount family was Catholic and when some of the available evidence suggests that it was not.⁶ The many Catholic priests who worked in Oxfordshire include some of the great names of the early mission, especially Edmund Campion and Robert Persons, who set up a printing press at Stonor, William Weston and John Gerard, all Jesuits. And there were many more who had studied at the University, a major source of the infection of Romanism: the Earl of Leicester, Chancellor of the University, complained in 1582 of 'secret and lurking Papists amongst you, which seduce your youth and carry them over by flockes to the Seminaries beyond Seas'.⁷ Because of the University also, Oxfordshire can lay claim to more than its fair share of the considerable literature produced by the recusants—and, for that matter, by their opponents. The county is, for example, rich in biographies and autobiographies, the latter including several examples of a new literary form, the account of a conversion to or from Rome. One man, Theophilus Higgons, born in Buckinghamshire but of an Oxfordshire mother, and educated at Thame Grammar School and Christ Church, Oxford, produced both. William

Chillingworth, born at Oxford in 1602, was another who repented his conversion to Rome. While still a Catholic, or at least while still passing as one, 'for in him there seemed to be a kind of impossibility of agreement between his heart and his tongue',⁸ he entered the household of Elizabeth, Lady Falkland. Leaving Lady Falkland's house in a flurry of controversy, Chillingworth retired, as a Protestant, to that of her son, Lucius, 2nd Viscount Falkland, at Great Tew. Chillingworth alone has been the subject of three theses in recent years.⁹

What I propose to do, therefore, since it is impossible to treat all aspects of the subject, is to begin with at least part of the story of one of the Catholics imprisoned at Broughton Castle and to continue with an account of some of the Catholics, individuals and families, in the Banbury area, extending as far south as Chastleton, Great Tew and Somerton, and drawing on the rest of the county, and, indeed, on the rest of the country, for illustrative detail where necessary.

The two castles, Banbury and Broughton, both held by Richard Fiennes, were used as recusant prisons for some twenty years and more, to the indignation of Thomas Brasbridge, the deprived Puritan vicar of Banbury, who complained that the town was in danger 'because many recusants sojourn hard by . . . who notwithstanding their close keeping, may do much harm to the parishioners, if papistry be not diligently laboured against'.¹⁰ And to the more personal displeasure of Fiennes himself who, when a further visitation was threatened in 1592, wrote to Lord Burghley, 'for that some Recusantes seeke to have me to accept of them if they cowl'd procure to be comitted to me: I beseeche your L[ordship] that not one of suche their suites may prevaile for my L[ady] my wife dayly comynge to prayers and the last Sunday receavinge with me at Islington Church the Comunion I hoope if suche persons repair not to my howse of her increas of good disposition the rather for that we now live contentedlye'.¹¹

Sir Alexander Colepeper of Bedgebury in Goudhurst, Kent, was one of the prisoners sent to Broughton in 1590. He wrote a detailed account of 'all such troubles' as he had 'for the Catholike Religion since the second yeare of the Raigne of our Soueraigne Ladie Queene Elizabeth', which is now in the Bodleian.¹² His first 'trouble' came when, 'pretending the safeguard of my seate', he drove away the workmen who had come to complete the destruction of the roodloft in the church at Goudhurst. He was summoned to Lambeth where Archbishop Parker accepted his explanations. The roodloft was left undisturbed and so was Colepeper for another seven or eight years, when he was summoned to appear before Parker for not coming to church. He ignored the summons and the local justices of the peace were ordered to arrest him, whereupon one of them, Thomas Guildford, 'like a loving kinsman and a verie frend, secretlie aduerticed mee thereof, aduising mee speedelie to departe, for that they were to apprehend mee the next morning if I were not gone before their coming, and therefore willed mee to signifie vnto him by what howre I would be gone, lest he should happen to come before, which hee was loth to dooe'. Colepeper and his wife fled to Cowdray and the protection of the Catholic Viscount Montague: he and Montague had married sisters, daughters of William, Lord Dacre. One of Montague's sons, Sir Henry Browne, later settled at Kiddington and another, Sir George, owned land at Caversham, then in Oxfordshire. I should perhaps point out that Thomas Guildford was in no way a Catholic sympathiser but, as his will shows, a convinced Protestant.¹³

Having avoided immediate arrest, Colepeper was again left unmolested for some years and, indeed, on 12 April 1573 was actually knighted by the Queen after she had been entertained at Bedgebury. But with the arrival of the Jesuit missionaries in 1580 Sir Alexander ran out of friends powerful enough to protect him. In and out of prison for the rest of his life, on 26 March 1590 he was sent to Broughton. Before that, in 1588, he had been in 'the Pallace of Elie', where his fellow-prisoners included Sir William Catesby and Richard Owen of Godstow. This last a man who was described in 1591 with four others as 'the most markable Catholiques'.¹⁴ His companions at Broughton, as listed by himself, were Sir Thomas Fitzherbert of Norbury, Derbyshire, Catesby again, William Browne of Elsing, Norfolk, John Talbot of Grafton, Worcestershire, William Tyrwhitt of Kettleby, Lincolnshire, Thomas Throckmorton of Coughton, Warwickshire, Ferdinando Paris of Linton, Cambridgeshire, John Thimbleby of Irnham, Lincolnshire, who had been returned to Parliament as late as 1571, Edward Sulyard of Wetherden, Suffolk, John Towneley of Towneley, Lancashire, Samuel Loane of Sevenoaks, Kent, Gervase Pierrepont of Holme Pierrepont, Nottinghamshire and John Gage of Haling, Surrey. They were at first close prisoners but after three months 'they were permitted to goe

and ride abrode two or three myles with a keeper' and their wives were allowed to visit them provided they stayed at least one or two months.¹⁵ They remained at Broughton until 19 October 1590. It is only from a later episode in Sir Alexander Colepeper's career that we learn that throughout this imprisonment these gentlemen and their servants—the knights and 'the cheefest squyers' were allowed two servants, the rest but one—must have continued to wear their weapons. They had indeed refused to be bound to their good behaviour generally, saying 'that such a Condiicion was meeter to be offered to Roages and Vagabunds, then to Gentlemen. And the Gentlemen said farther, that they being but men of flesh and blood as other are, might happen to fall out, and strike one another, and then should their bonds be forfayted.' They were bound instead towards the Queen and the State. No wonder Brasbridge was worried.

Turning to a random selection of the recusants of north Oxfordshire, I begin, as a contrast to the troubled Sir Alexander, with the Appletrees of Deddington, a contrast in that they were a prosperous family who, despite their religion, rose in status from husbandmen to gentry.¹⁶ It may be worth noting that despite much meretricious rhetoric about the 'dispossessed' recusants, few Oxfordshire families collapsed and disappeared under the burden of persecution (at least within the period covered by my studies and this paper). Indeed, the only example that comes immediately to mind is that of the Owens of Godstow: Richard Owen was the only Catholic in the county to pay anything like the full fines imposed; at one time he was paying nearly £160 a year. But he had inherited a debt of £3265 to the Crown, owed by his father as receiver general for the Duchy of Lancaster, and this may be the true explanation of his family's failure to ride out the storm.¹⁷

The Appletrees leased one of the Deddington manors and in the seventeenth century also held the patronage of the vicarage.¹⁸ Jane, wife of Thomas Appletree of Deddington, gentleman, was the first to appear on the Recusant Rolls (in that for 1594/5) but several members of what I take to be the same family, including a Jane and her husband, Thomas, had earlier been presented and indicted in Warwickshire.¹⁹ Moreover, a John Appletree of Oxfordshire was ordained a Catholic priest at Laon in 1579.²⁰ In the seventeenth century their appearances on the Recusant Rolls become more frequent: Anthony of Ledwell, Richard of South Newington, Thomas of Deddington. There were a number of other recusants in Deddington, including members of the widespread Yate or Yates family, an indication of the identity of the priest John Appletree, since he used the alias *Yates*, but the most famous Catholic name associated with the parish is that of Sir Thomas Pope, founder of Trinity College, Oxford. Pope died on 29 January 1559 but he left his founder's right to nominate fellows and scholars to his widow Elizabeth Blount, who exercised that right on behalf of Catholics. Several members of Balliol College wrote on 25 June 1583 of the latest exodus from Oxford to the seminaries, which had included 'Sir Blunte, lately chosen out of our Colledg contrary to the counsels letters to be probationer of Trinitye Colledge. The man stode for prefermente in our howse, and for suspition of his religion was worthilye repelled. Yet he found such fauour with the Lady Paulett that one Trinitye Sunday last he was elected as a member of Trinitye Colledge.'²¹ Richard Blount was Lady Pope's (now Lady Paulet's) nephew and later became the first Jesuit Provincial.

Another prominent Catholic widow was Lady Babington, Margaret Croker by birth, daughter of John Croker of Hook Norton.²² The Crokers were not a Catholic family and I know of no evidence as to the religion of Margaret Croker's second husband, Sir William Babington of Kiddington, who died in 1577, one of the victims of the Black Assizes.²³ As for Lady Babington, on 7 August 1581 the Privy Council instructed Lord Norris, Richard Fiennes and Anthony Cope to examine Lady Babington and others 'in whose houses . . . Campion hath also confessed that he hath ben'. Later in the month another Privy Council letter revealed that Lady Babington had been Campion's hostess, 'in her house at Oxford and in the White Friars in London'.²⁴

In 1585 she was required as a recusant to pay £50 for the furnishing of two light horse, a very high assessment: in Oxfordshire only Thomas Vachell was asked to pay as much. It is as well always to remember how inefficient Tudor—and Stuart—government could be. These payments were to be made through the sheriff. Asked to obtain one light horse or £25 from Richard Clyfford, for example, the sheriff of Kent replied that 'there ys not nor hath not ben

knowne enie such Recusant in this Shyre, But yf yt be meante for Richard Gylford, he is & hath ben a fugitive beyonde the Seas these two or three yeares'. Several sheriffs were set upon Lady Babington. Robert Dormer of Buckinghamshire reported that she was not in the county 'these iij or iiij yeares, but remaineth as I vnderstande in Oxfordshire'. Owen Oglethorpe of Oxfordshire reported that she was 'either in Tuttle streate in Westminster at Mrs Cressbis or in the White ffryers neere fflett streete at my Lorde Dellawares'. Someone reported her in Essex but Henry Appleton of that county could not 'vnderstande of her Abode there'.²⁵ An examination of the religious history of the three sheriffs provides a possible explanation of their failure on this occasion. Dormer, 'a scismatick', is known to have entertained the same priests, including Campion, as Lady Babington.²⁶ The Babingtons remained Catholic but later sold their Kiddington estate. One of them married an Appletree of Deddington.

There was, incidentally, another Catholic family that held land in Hook Norton, the Dymokes of Scrivelsby in Lincolnshire, the Champions of England. Robert Dymoke died in prison as a Catholic in 1580. His wife was a Fiennes, Bridget, daughter of Edward, 1st Earl of Lincoln: she was a Catholic.²⁷

The Catesby manor of Chastleton, held for a time by a branch of the Throckmortons, kin to that Thomas of Coughton mentioned already as a prisoner in Broughton castle, passed at length to Robert Catesby, son of Sir William. Other Chastleton recusants were the Ansleys, who conformed in the seventeenth century, and the Osbastons. Robert Catesby was forced to sell Chastleton, 'the last estate which he could call his own', to pay his fine after the failure of the Essex rising of 1601. But he had already mortgaged the estate beyond redemption. Sir Robert Dudley, the Earl of Leicester's allegedly base son, later a Catholic exile, Ralph Sheldon of Beoley, Worcestershire and his son Edward of Steeple Barton, John Throckmorton of Gloucestershire, and Sir Thomas Leigh of Stoneleigh, Warwickshire, Protestant father-in-law of both Catesby and Dudley, were at various times among the mortgagees.²⁸

I always feel rather sorry for Sir Thomas Leigh and his family. Lady Dudley, repudiated by Sir Robert but created (or acknowledged) a duchess by Charles I, lived to suffer at the hands of the Parliamentary rebels, who are described as robbing her 'and blasting her reputation with their black *Tongues* not dreading to report she was a *Papist* or (as one said before a Committee) something like one: and why? Because she was loyal to her Sovereign. . . .'²⁹

Sir Robert Dudley, most of whose father's Oxfordshire connections were not hereditary, went overseas and settled in Tuscany because his claim to the earldoms of Leicester and Warwick, later recognised as valid by Charles I, was rejected by James I. Horace Walpole wrote of him, 'considering how enterprising and dangerous a minister he might have made, and what variety of talents were called forth by his misfortunes, it would seem to have been happy both for the duke and his country that he was unjustly deprived of the honours to which his birth gave him pretensions'.³⁰ It may be of interest to note that the great minister who, as it were, replaced Dudley, Thomas Wentworth, was also related to many of the Oxfordshire Catholic gentry.³¹

But to return to Catesby. . . . The sale of his estate, completed before the death of Elizabeth, does not seem to have driven him from Chastleton, for in January 1605 Thomas Winter wrote to John Grant asking him to come there and assuring him 'your acquaintance with my cosen Catsby will nothing repent you'.³² After the failure of the Gunpowder Plot, Robert Winter confessed that he and John Grant were 'acquainted by Mr Catesby in the presence of his Brother Thomas Wynter with the project of the powder' at the Catherine Wheel in Oxford, the same inn where the four martyrs of 1589 were taken.³³

There are other Oxfordshire names in the background to the Gunpowder Plot. When Thomas Percy came to obtain from John Whynniard the house previously leased to Henry Ferrers of Baddesley Clinton, he was accompanied by several gentlemen belonging to Henry Percy, 3rd (or 9th) Earl of Northumberland, the Wizard Earl, these including the Earl's secretary, Dudley Carleton, later Viscount Dorchester, son of Anthony Carleton of Brightwell Baldwin. Carleton was not a Catholic but at least one and probably two of his sisters were. The Percies themselves had some connection with Banbury. In 1586 Catherine, relict of Henry, 2nd Earl of Northumberland, settled part of a Banbury property on her second husband, Francis Fitton of Binfield, Berkshire. Six years later the whole was settled on one of her younger sons, Sir Charles Percy.³⁴

Another of the Earl's servants, Robert Newporte, said to be 'as arrante a papiste as any was in England' and to know 'much of this Conspiracy', lived with one William Mydwarde at Caversham (where incidentally he had never been troubled by the minister for his recusancy 'because yt Mydwarde hath the disposition of the parsonage').³⁵ I have already mentioned Sir George Browne of Caversham: his brother, Sir Henry, later of Kiddington, was married to Anne Catesby, the plotter's sister, whilst their nephew, the 2nd Viscount Montague, had discussed his attendance at Parliament with Catesby on 15 October and, some years earlier, had employed 'the miserable fellowe that shoulde haue ben the bluddy executioner of that woefull Tragedie'—Montague's own description of Guy Fawkes which he hastened to give to his father-in-law, the Earl of Dorset, as soon as he heard the plotter's name.³⁶ Dorset, incidentally, was then Chancellor of the University: most of his family were Catholics and he is said to have died a Catholic.

Mention of a famous letter written at Easter 1605 by Elizabeth Vaux to her kinswoman Lady Wenman, a letter which was thought to refer to the Plot, will serve to carry us from Chastleton to Somerton; for Lady Wenman was a Fermor by birth, though in fact of the Easton Neston, Northamptonshire branch of the family. Perhaps before going on, I might just mention that it was Lady Wenman's misfortune to have a mother-in-law who had read the letter and who, the moment the Plot was revealed, rushed to inform the authorities of it. This lady was born Jane West, daughter of William, Lord de la Warr. She married four times, her husbands being Sir Thomas Wenman, probably a Protestant or at least a conformist, James Cressy, a Catholic, Sir Thomas Tasburgh, a Protestant, and Ralph Sheldon of Beoley, Worcestershire, and it would be roughly true to say that, though far from being a woman without a character and will of her own, she adopted the faith of each successive husband.³⁷

Somerton, close though it is to Banbury, its market town, was easily the most recusant parish in Oxfordshire, at least by the not very reliable test of counting heads as listed in the Recusant Rolls. The Fermors themselves, however, although responsible for this concentration of popery, showed a remarkable skill in avoiding conviction. They had had a sharp warning in the reign of Henry VIII when Richard Fermor was imprisoned and temporarily deprived of his property for relieving an imprisoned priest. It was Richard's brother, William, who left Somerton to one of Richard's younger sons, Thomas. The senior line, of Easton Neston, eventually conformed, but the Fermors of Somerton, later of Tusmore, were always Catholic. Yet even early in the eighteenth century in a list which drew a distinction between 'Papists', 'Reputed Papists' and 'Popish Recusants', they could be described as 'Reputed Papists' only.³⁸ Thomas, the first of the line, was once delated as a papist by a Puritan busybody in Shropshire, where his first marriage had taken him and where he was a friend of Sir Thomas Stanley of Tong Castle, grandfather of Venetia.³⁹ But neither he nor his son, Sir Richard, was ever a convicted recusant. Sir Richard was listed as a non-communicant in 1612 'but he hath promised to receaue before Michaelmas next'.⁴⁰ His second wife was then a recusant convict but as a granddaughter of Sir Thomas Cornwallis she had a different tradition to follow. Her sister, incidentally, had then recently married Archibald Campbell, 7th Earl of Argyll, who, although apparently not a Catholic when he married, was one by 1618, an open Catholic in Spanish service and a proscribed traitor. And a little earlier, in 1608, Mary, daughter of Sir George Fermor of Easton Neston, married Robert Creighton, Lord Sanquhar. Brought up a Catholic, at that time Sanquhar was not, in his own phrase, performing the duties of one in any sort, but he declared himself one on the scaffold when hanged for murder in 1612;⁴¹ another reminder that the Catholics of those days were not all confessors and martyrs.

The Fermor family had, indeed, many interesting connections. The overseers of the will of Thomas Fermor, a fascinating document drawn up and proved in 1580, for example, included Richard Fiennes, whose mother was a Fermor of Easton Neston, and Sir Thomas Lucy. But the executors included another kinsman George Shirley of Staunton Harold in Leicestershire, who was earnestly requested to 'take into his Custodye and charge my saide Daughter Marye and doe his vttermoste endeavor that she may be broughte vppe in the honor, feare and service of god, and then bestowed in marriage to a man in like sort enclined, and somewhat agreeinge to her age and estate'. Mary Fermor later married Francis Plowden, a younger son but the eventual heir of Edmund Plowden the lawyer, which sufficiently shows what the inclination was to be.

Shirley was to have equal care of Thomas Fermor's heir, Richard, whose first wife, a Lacon, was also a Shropshire lass.⁴²

Sir George Shirley—he became the fourth English baronet in 1611, which was very proper even if he was a Papist, as his family invented the title—also held the manor of South Newington, near Banbury. One of his sisters, Elizabeth, was one of the founder-members of St. Monica's, the convent of English Augustinian canonesses at Louvain, a community in which she was joined by Sir Richard Fermor's daughter, Cornelia.⁴³ One brother, Ralph, studied at the English College, Rome, but died before he could be ordained to the priesthood; another, John, after studying at Trinity College and the Inner Temple, 'dyed, in the Warrs in fflaunders of a Shott in the knee, one the parte of the Kinge of Spaine'. Sir George studied at Hart Hall, Oxford, served under Leicester in the Low Countries, was sheriff of Northamptonshire in 1603 and had his arms and armour confiscated in 1612 on the ground that he was a recusant. Sir George was very indignant and, after some years, managed to obtain restitution, but for all that he died 'in the bosome of his Mother the Romayne Catholique Church' in 1622. He had married his eldest son, Henry, to Dorothy Devereux, daughter of Robert, 2nd Earl of Essex: Sir Richard Fermor and another Catholic kinsman, Sir Basil Brooke of Madeley, Shropshire, were parties to the marriage settlement.⁴⁴ Although Sir Henry and his eldest son, Sir Robert, were both Catholics, the next heir, Sir Robert's younger brother, was brought up a Protestant by his mother. He was a devout Anglican, sheltering sequestered parsons, including Peter Gunning, under the Commonwealth and re-building the church at Staunton Harold.⁴⁵

South Newington, meanwhile, had passed to a younger son of Sir George, Thomas, born about 1590 and knighted in 1622. Sir Thomas was, in his own words, 'a singular Louer and sercher of Antiquities': he wrote the family history from which I have derived much of this information. His wife was one of 'the Antient & Catholique ffamilie of the Harpurs of Rushall' in Staffordshire. The Harpurs also held land in Chinnor, Oxfordshire. Sir Thomas should be of special interest to local historians: with Sir Edward Dering, William Dugdale and Sir Christopher Hatton, he was a member of the *Antiquitas Rediviva* founded in May 1638. Sir Thomas's agreed tasks included the gathering of 'the names and armes of all (or as many as can be had) mayors, sheriffes, and aldermen of London and Yorke, and of all other cityes and townes, throughout all ages'. Dering, as Lieutenant of Dover, was, amongst other things, a priest-taker, and once, on discovering that a captured priest, although passing under the name of Good, was in fact a Leyburn (and therefore 'of allyance' to the Earl of Suffolk, Warden of the Cinque Ports and Dering's superior), settled to discuss genealogy with him.⁴⁶

I have tried to indicate some of the ways in which the Catholics of Oxfordshire and of England did not form a *gens lucifuga*, cut off from the life around them, despised and recreant. We come now to a striking illustration of this basic theme. Both Sir Richard Fermor and his guardian Sir George Shirley were among the many Catholics who helped in the foundation of the Bodleian Library, even though that library was, we are correctly told, 'designed from the first as a bulwark of extreme Protestantism'. Shirley gave £40 in 1601 and Fermor, who had originally spoken of 'a cart-loade of bookes' from which Bodley (or rather, Bodley's Librarian, Thomas James) was to make his choice, 'which he will cause to be newe bound', gave '11 volumes of which the greatest part are in fo. and manuscripts'. They ranged from an anonymous *Summa*, through 240 epigrams of Martial, to a Latin abbreviation of a medical work by Muhammed ibn Zakariyya al-Razi. (Towards the end of the seventeenth century Robert Plot found 'a good number of manuscripts' at Somerton 'betwixt the cieling of an upper room and the slats'.) Others whom I have mentioned also contributed: the second Viscount Montague gave 66 'costly great volumes in folio all bought of set purpose'; the Wizard Earl of Northumberland gave money, part of which was used to buy Chinese books. Most interesting of all, Bodley borrowed a 'cheine man' from Ralph Sheldon, who also gave £50 towards the extension of the Library.⁴⁷

I have already mentioned Great Tew and the Falklands. Elizabeth, Lady Falkland, daughter of Sir Lawrence Tanfield of Burford and Great Tew, became a Catholic soon after the death of her father in 1625. Sir Lawrence left Burford and Great Tew to his grandson, Lucius, because, said Henry, Lord Falkland, he foresaw the conversion or more probably, as Lady Falkland argued, he thought it wiser to keep the estate out of the hands of Lucius' parents because

neither of them was particularly adept in money matters. Lady Falkland, indeed, an eccentric, intelligent and learned woman, was not very adept in any of the affairs of this world: she was the very type of the absent-minded professor: money, time, clothing, place—all these were matters and concepts she never quite grasped though she read and rejected Calvin's *Institutes* when she was 12. 'This girl,' her father said, 'hath a spirit averse from Calvin.' At 20, she read herself 'into much doubt of her religion', Hooker leaving her 'hanging in the air'. Her brother-in-law, Adolphus Cary, who had returned from Italy 'with a good opinion of Catholic religion', persuaded her to read the Fathers. After much thought and consultation, she seems to have reached the position of a modern (by which I mean only post-Tractarian) Anglo-Catholic, although she belonged to the circle of a seventeenth-century High Church divine, John Cosin. There must be something in the air of north Oxfordshire which also produced, in John Danvers of Calthorpe, a seventeenth-century Anglican in the sixteenth century, and in the Great Tew circle itself, in Lucius Cary and William Chillingworth, an anticipation of the deism of the eighteenth century.⁴⁸

It was many years before Lady Falkland took the last step and was received into the Church of Rome, an event that took place 'in my lord of Ormond's stable'. And even at the last she was delayed for several months by Susan, Lady Denbigh, Buckingham's sister, who declared her own willingness to be received, later, when certain difficulties had been resolved—in fact, she delayed till 1651. Lady Falkland's conversion caused general consternation. Her husband, who was Lord Deputy of Ireland at the time, made the most fuss. So much so that the King, who had at first felt and shown great indignation at what, after all, was a capital offence, was soon devoting his energies and those of his Privy Council to reconciling husband and wife. Everybody rallied round, including the Catholic Lady Banbury. This was Elizabeth Howard, daughter of Thomas, Earl of Suffolk, and sister of the notorious Frances, Countess of Essex and Somerset; she was the second wife of William Knollys, Earl of Banbury, son and heir of Sir Francis the Elizabethan Puritan. Banbury himself was not a Catholic but he did belong to the 'Howard', 'Spanish' or 'Catholic' party in Jacobean politics, and it seems that, unlike Lord Falkland, he did not resent his wife's religion. One modern authority has even suggested that he may have been 'cajoled by his young masterful wife into tolerating a Catholic chaplain'. Sir Francis Knollys could not even tolerate Anglicans, witness his condemnation of Master Danvers. But another of his sons, Sir Thomas Knollys, sent his daughter to convents in the Low Countries, and a third, Henry, married a kinswoman of the Catesbys and the Sheldons.⁴⁹

The Falklands were finally reconciled and the family pattern eventually worked itself out in part as follows: Lady Falkland remained a Catholic and her husband became one (or wished to become one) on his deathbed, four of their daughters became Benedictine nuns, two of their sons, Henry and Patrick, became Catholics but, many years later, returned to Protestantism, and the eldest son, Lucius, became—what he became: he once acknowledged a work of controversy by his mother as 'a sufficient answer to his, though not satisfactory to him; and that it was certainly enough to confute a Protestant clearly; and to answer it again it would be necessary to go further, and deny more than he had done in his'.⁵⁰

There are other north Oxfordshire Catholics I might refer to if space permitted, the Ardens, the Bustards, the Greenwoods, the Raleighs. I have written elsewhere that 'the history of post-Reformation Roman Catholicism in England has been and is still sometimes held to concern only Roman Catholics themselves. It is as though the Norman Conquest were held to be of interest only to those of impeccably Norman descent and a fit subject of study for them alone.' I hope no student of Oxfordshire history would believe this.

Alan Davidson

References

For the subject in general see Alan Davidson, 'Roman Catholicism in Oxfordshire from the late Elizabethan period to the Civil War (c. 1580–c. 1640)', Bristol University Ph.D. thesis 1970. The thesis is available in the Bodleian Library as a manuscript, MS. Top. Oxon. d.602.

1. J. Kenyon, *The Popish Plot* (1972), p. 26.
2. *V.C.H. Oxon.* ii (1907), 43. The Huddlestones of Haseley and the Powells of Forest Hill were not, in

- fact, Catholics. See also H. E. Salter, 'Recusants in Oxfordshire 1603-1633', *Oxfordshire Arch. Soc.*, Report for 1924, pp. 7-71.
3. SP 12/119/20.
 4. SP 12/189/54.
 5. B.M. Lansd. 53, art. 69.
 6. M. Hodgetts, 'Elizabethan priest-holes: II—Ufton, Mapledurham, Compton Wynyates', *Recusant History* xii, 3 (October 1973), 113-5.
 7. A. Wood, *The History and antiquities of the University of Oxford*, ed. J. Gutch (1972), ii, 212-3.
 8. *The Lady Falkland: her life*, ed. R. Simpson (1861), p. 55.
 9. One of these has been published: R. R. Orr, *Reason and authority: the thought of William Chillingworth* (1967).
 10. W. Potts, *A History of Banbury* (1958), p. 133.
 11. SP 12/241/120. In 1597 Fiennes again begged to be 'freed from having charge of the Recusants', *H.M.C. Hatfield*, vii.347.
 12. Bodl. Tanner 118, ff. 128 *et seq.*
 13. Thomas Guildford of Hemsted in the parish of Benenden, Kent, knighted with Colepeper, required his wife 'as she answer the matter before the terrible seat of God' not to bring up any of his children as Catholics and asked Leicester and Burghley to ensure that she did not, PCC 32 Pyckering. She did.
 14. SP 12/239/26.
 15. *A.P.C.*, xix.366.
 16. H. M. Colvin, *A History of Deddington, Oxfordshire* (1963), p. 85.
 17. E 377/11; DL 41/34/2, f. 70. Moreover, one of the family, John Owen, was condemned for treason in 1615 for saying at Sandwich, 'That the King being excommunicated by the Pope may be lawfully deposed by his Subjects and bee killed by them', B.M. Harl. 583, art. 14, f. 40. The sentence of death was not carried out and after three years' imprisonment he was exiled.
 18. H. M. Colvin, *op. cit.*, Appendix II.
 19. E 377/3; M. Hodgetts, 'Certificate of Warwickshire Recusants', *Worcestershire Recusant* v (May 1965), 21; vi (December 1965), 16.
 20. G. Anstruther, *The Seminary priests* i (1968), 10.
 21. SP 12/161/13. See also P. R. Knell, 'Lady Elizabeth Paulet—Recusant or Church Papist', *Essex Recusant* viii (April 1966), 1-10 and M. E. D. Blakiston, *Trinity College* (1898). John Appletree the seminary priest had been educated at Trinity.
 22. M. Dickins, *A History of Hook Norton* (1928), pp. 162 *et seq.*
 23. Bodl. Tanner 79, f. 182.
 24. *A.P.C.* xiii.164, 185.
 25. SP 12/200/61 where the assessment appears under Bucks.; SP 12/183/32 iv, 33 ii, 71 i; SP 12/184/52.
 26. SP 12/168/25 ii.
 27. M. Dickins, *A History of Hook Norton* (1928), pp. 160-1; *Catholic Record Society* xxii (1921), 53.
 28. M. Dickins, *A History of Chastleton, Oxfordshire* (1938), pp. 19-20.
 29. R. Boreman, *A Mirrour of Christianity and a Miracle of Charity; or a true and exact narrative of the life and death of the most virtuous Lady Alice Dutchess Duddleley* (1667), p. 12.
 30. H. Walpole, *Works* i (1798), 476. Dudley used his grandfather's title, Duke of Northumberland.
 31. Wentworth's maternal grandfather was Robert Atkinson, son of a mayor of Oxford and himself recorder of the city from 1566 until his death in 1607. The speech that Robert Atkinson made in the Parliament of 1563 against the proposed anti-Catholic legislation is preserved in J. Strype, *Annals of the Reformation* (1824), I, i.446-455. Of his children by Joyce, daughter of Humphrey Ashfield of Heythrop, one married a Stonor. See A. Davidson, 'Robert Atkinson, a famous lawyer', *Essex Recusant* xii (December 1970), 91-98.
 32. SP 14/12/39.
 33. SP 14/216/169.
 34. SP 14/216/39; J. M. Morrison, *The Underhills of Warwickshire* (1932), pp. 154-5; SP 14/36/40; *V.C.H. Oxon.*, x.42.
 35. SP 14/16/76 i.
 36. SP 14/216/74, 86.
 37. For Lady Tasburgh's behaviour in 1605 see G. Anstruther, *Vaux of Harrowden* (1953), pp. 286-332; for her own history see A. Davidson, 'The Second Mrs. Sheldon', *Worcestershire Recusant* xiv (December 1969), 15-21. She was perhaps the 'Mrs Cressby' (i.e. Cressy) at whose house Sheriff Oglethorpe thought Lady Babington might be found.
 38. *Oxoniensia* xiii (1948), 77.
 39. *Shropshire Arch. Soc.* ser. 2, ii (1890), 235-6.
 40. Trinity College Cambridge MS. R.5.14, art. 6.

41. Westminster Cathedral Archives, A series, 11, art. 104.
42. PCC 30 Arundell.
43. B.M. Add. 5813, f. 32.
44. B.M. Harl. 4928, f. 103, 108, 287v.
45. E. P. Shirley, *Stemmata Shirleiana* (Ed. 2, 1873), pp. 143-4.
46. B.M. Add. 47788, ff. 13v-18. I am indebted to Fr. Godfrey Anstruther for the information that Dering and his captive then turned to genealogical discourse.
47. A. Davidson, 'Catholics and Bodley', *Bodleian Library Record* viii, 5 (1971), 252-7.
48. *The Lady Falkland: her life*, ed. R. Simpson (1861), *passim*, written by one of Lady Falkland's daughters. See also K. Weber, *Lucius Cary Second Viscount Falkland* (1940).
49. M. J. Havran, *Caroline Courtier: the life of Lord Cottington* (1973), p. 47; T. B. Trappes-Lomax county files, Oxon. (*Catholic Record Society*); *Catholic Record Society* xxiv (1923), 17; W. P. W. Phillimore and W. F. Carter, *Some account of the family of Middlemore* (1901), pp. 37-39.
50. *The Lady Falkland: her life* (1861), p. 114.

The Oxfordshire County Survey

A meeting was held at Rewley House, Oxford, on May 12th to inaugurate the Oxfordshire County Survey. This is a vitally important long-term project, masterminded by the Oxford University Department for External Studies, in association with the Oxfordshire Archaeological Unit and the City and County Museum. The aim is to do a thorough survey of every parish in Oxfordshire, walking every field and noting field monuments such as barrows and traces of buildings, and collecting artefacts such as flint, pottery, metalwork.

A certain amount of work has been done already, and is in the Oxfordshire Sites and Monuments Record, which is housed at the Museum, but a great deal remains to be done, and if one takes the Cornish survey as an analogy, it could take up to ten years. Professor Charles Thomas gave a fascinating resumé of the work which has been done on the Cornish survey, and has obviously got some very enthusiastic workers.

The first step is to acquire all the relevant maps--this is being done by the Museum. Then all the field numbers from the 25" maps will have to be marked on to the 6" maps. Then each field will have its own reference number and maps can be distributed among those connected with the project. The next step is to examine the documentary evidence--look at tithe awards, enclosure awards, writings of early travellers such as Leland, who often mention sites which have now disappeared--Banbury's crosses for example. There is much information in the Museum's Sites and Monuments Record which needs to be looked at, and some references in the Ashmolean. This background work could be done throughout the summer when field walking is difficult.

The Oxfordshire area is obviously too large to be tackled as an entity, so it is being divided initially into the areas of the various districts, and societies within those districts are asked to co-operate. We come within the Cherwell district, which is a vast area. The districts will be subdivided into parishes, and each parish worked on separately.

To make this survey feasible, we desperately need your help. Ideally one needs one or two people in each parish, who can contact the farmers to ask their permission to fieldwalk the lands, and have other local contacts. Local information can be vitally important. Professor Thomas cited a survey on bee holes which was carried out recently. Bee-holes are holes built into walls to contain bee hives. They are seldom used now, and were not thought to be used in Cornwall. However, on asking local services, many were discovered tucked away behind houses and in gardens. Other people could work in teams augmenting the work of the local organisers.

There will be another meeting to discuss further details and set out a programme of activity in June. This will be followed by classes to teach people what to look for and how to record information. This survey cannot be conducted without your help. It need not take up a vast amount of time and it will contribute vitally important information to add to our knowledge of the county. It will tell us which archaeological sites are in urgent need of excavation, and which are disappearing--with deep ploughing or building. If you can spare a little time I am sure you will find the project interesting and rewarding. If you would like more details or are interested in helping *please contact*

Christine Bloxham, c/o Oxford City and County Museum, Fletcher's House, Woodstock, Oxford. Tel: Woodstock 811456.

Wills and Where to Find Them, compiled by J. S. W. Gibson. Phillimore (for the British Record Society), Chichester, 1974. xxii, 210 pp., 42 line maps, glossary, index of courts, case bound and jacketed. £3.50.

Professor Hamilton Thompson, one of that band of great scholars who in the earlier years of this century made the study of local history 'scientific', said of Wills that they are 'perhaps the most fascinating of all sources of evidence for the explorer'. Their use for the genealogist is patently obvious. Almost as obvious is their use for history in nearly all its aspects. Wills exist in large numbers in a bewildering variety of repositories all over the British Isles; and an immense amount of work has been devoted to indexing them, abstracting them and in other ways making them easy of access to the student (and still a very great deal remains to be done).

How can the student find his way to and among these sources? From 1963 he has had A. J. Camp's revision and extension of S. G. Bouwen's *Wills and their Whereabouts*, published in 1939. But since 1963 there has been much systematisation of our local historical records, including Wills. There have been some changes in location and arrangement, the work of indexing, abstracting etc. of Wills has gone forward apace. A new Guide was urgently required.

This huge task has been admirably accomplished by Mr. J. S. W. Gibson in the present work. Mr. Gibson is a well-known expert of wide experience in this field and he has had in mind throughout the practical problems which the searcher is likely to encounter. Wisely, a new arrangement, county by county, has been evolved to suit the changed conditions. There are clear outline maps showing the boundaries of the several jurisdictions which dealt with Wills, and alphabetical lists of parishes which were outside the main courts. In every case is given the location of the appropriate record repositories (now mostly Record Offices) and details of all existing indexes, abstracts, etc. With characteristic energy and thoroughness Mr. Gibson has himself visited almost all the Record Offices, thereby adding much to the value of his book. In short, he has left few stones unturned or avenues unexplored in his production of a Guide which, while not entirely superseding Camp and Bouwens, is nevertheless quite indispensable to all in search of Wills. It might have been said that while the great majority of Indexes, abstracts, etc. are reliable, being made, as a rule, by careful enthusiasts well aware of a special need for accuracy, there are yet some which are not entirely and uncritically to be trusted. This applies even to a few volumes in the august Index Library of the British Record Society. One remembers the assessment and grumble of the famous old antiquary J. Charles Cox: 'Of two volumes with which we are acquainted, Northants. is distinctly good and Lichfield as distinctly inaccurate.'

But this short notice must end with unreserved commendation of Mr. Gibson's fine work. The publishers, too, have made a particularly good job of the production; and the price is relatively modest.

One feature is surely a unique bonus: the listing of car-parking facilities, traffic regulations, lights, meters and all, prevailing around the various record repositories. Gentle smiles from those looking up their Gibson *circa* 2000 A.D., and after.

E. R. C. Brinkworth

Medieval Pottery of the Oxford Region, by David A. Hinton. Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, 1973. 32 pp., illustrated. 20p.

This is a most useful little booklet to have in your pocket when you are fieldwalking—and at home afterwards, to help you decide whether the sherds you have washed are or are not medieval. There is no entirely satisfactory book on medieval pottery, and here we have a series of descriptions of typical products found in and around Oxford. They range in date from the eleventh-century High Street pitcher, through the practical-joker's 'Puzzle Jug' of c. 1300, to the fifteenth-century pottery bottles, which were perhaps used to hold herbs or oils for cooking. Though the excellent photographs are of complete vessels and not the fragments we commonly find, the descriptions given of fabric and coating are clear enough to make identification reasonably certain. Altogether, a most worthwhile production.

Frank Willy

EXCAVATIONS AT BANBURY CASTLE 1973-74

An Interim Report

An exceptionally large area of Banbury Castle was made available for excavation when the buildings north of the Market Place and south of Castle Street were demolished prior to redevelopment. On the evidence of the former street pattern it was thought that parts of the southern and western defences, including the outer gate, would occupy the site, but there was no precise information on the form these might have taken: this could only be established by excavation.

Accordingly excavations were carried out by the Oxfordshire Archaeological Unit for a period of 3½ months from November 1973 to February 1974, and a watching brief was maintained on the site during the contractors' excavations in April 1974. Initially a series of eight relatively small trenches was opened to establish the basic layout of the castle and two of these were subsequently extended. Machinery was used extensively to remove semi-recent foundations. Though cellars had completely destroyed parts of the site, some areas (notably area II) were remarkably undisturbed.

A great deal of additional information was recovered from the watching brief. Prior to piling the site was levelled, an operation which lowered the ground level by between 1 and 3 metres, and which consequently obliterated all trace of the castle, except the ditches and the bottoms of the deepest wall foundations. As a result of these excavations and observations the castle can be seen to have had quite a complex history.

The Pre-Castle Period

Beneath the earliest castle buildings was a buried soil layer which extended right across the site. This indicates that the castle was built on open land and not on the site of any pre-existing settlement. However worked flints, including part of a leaf-shaped arrowhead, and some sherds of Roman pottery suggest that there was prehistoric and Roman habitation somewhere in the vicinity.

The First Castle

The castle was built after 1125 by Alexander Bishop of Lincoln, but excavations have shown that it was subsequently completely remodelled and its development can therefore be split into two major phases.

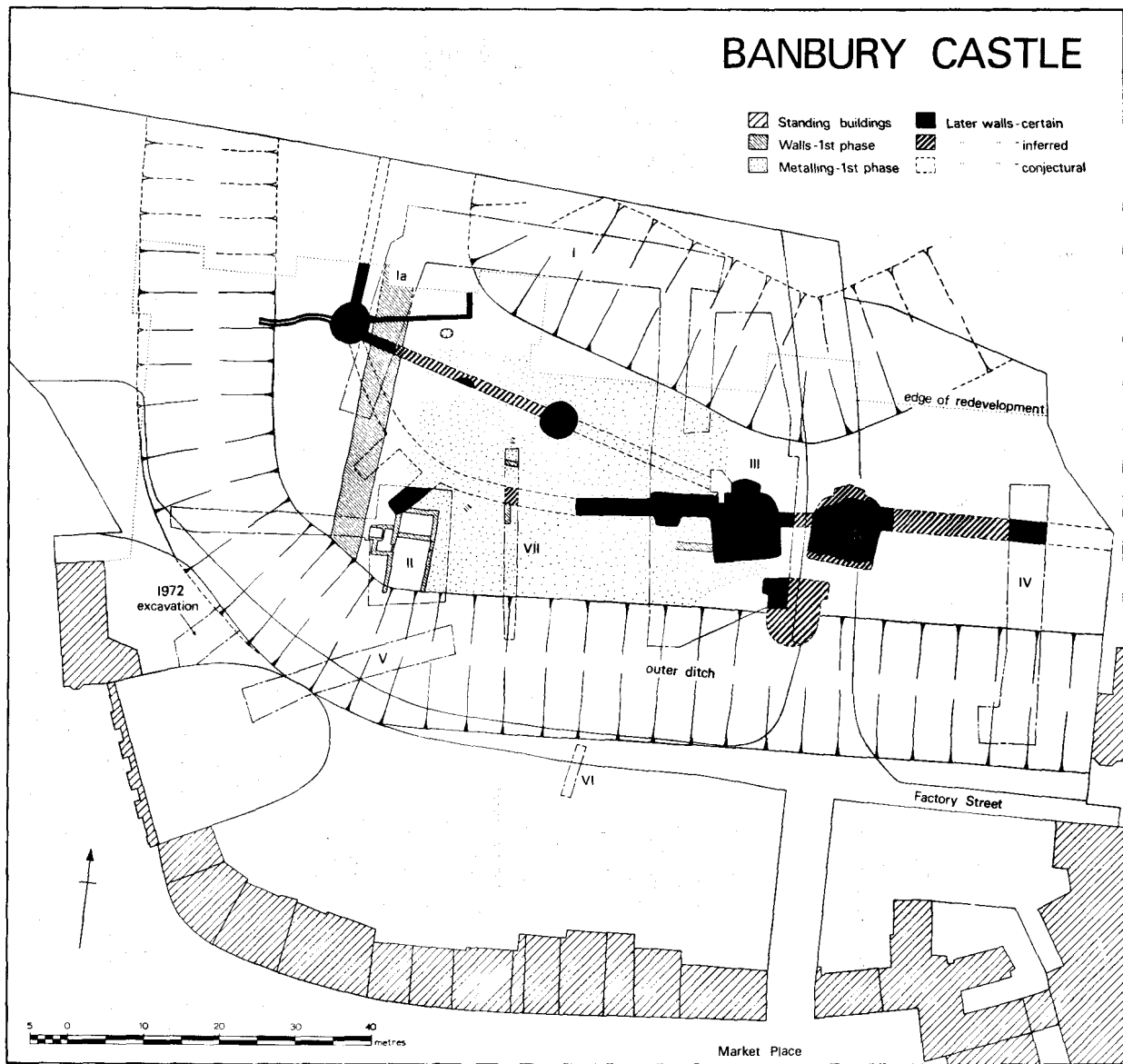
Much of the first castle was destroyed by the later alterations, but part of the western defences, some internal buildings and an associated courtyard were excavated or observed. The defences consisted of a wide wall set in an earth bank. This was demolished when the castle was rebuilt and the foundation trench filled with sand. The southern defences, including the earliest gate, were engulfed by the outer ditch. No evidence for an early ditch was found and there may not have been one.

Much of the interior seems to have been an open yard, metalled with small lumps of ironstone, but there was a range of buildings along the south side of the castle enclosure. The best-preserved and most extensively excavated of these occupied the extreme south-western corner of the castle and had quite a complicated structural history. It was rectangular with unmortared ironstone rubble walls and measured 4.5 metres by at least 11 metres. The southern end of the building had been removed by the outer ditch. The doorway was in the east wall and gave access to the yard. Inside there was an earth floor with traces of a central hearth.

Following a severe fire which baked the earth floor and reddened the internal faces of the walls, the building was extended and a garderobe chamber, built within the castle bank, was added on the west side. A stone-lined cess pit 1.3m deep was constructed in the north-west corner of the room. Most of a large sandy-fabric pitcher was recovered from the fill of this pit. A new doorway was inserted to link the two rooms; it had fine dressed stone jambs and was preserved to a height of 1.2m, but was subsequently blocked up again when the garderobe chamber went out of use. The main room was subdivided by a partition wall at some time after the fire and the hearth moved to a position against the east wall of the building.

Finally the building was partially demolished and the remains buried in the outer bank of the remodelled castle. This act ensured its subsequent preservation from stone robbers and explains why the walls still stood 1.4m high in places.

BANBURY CASTLE



It is difficult to date this building precisely as it was kept very clean throughout its history and consequently very little pottery or other finds are associated with it, but it was in all probability constructed in the twelfth or, at latest, the early thirteenth century. It appears to have been a domestic building and, by the standards of its time, it would have been reasonably luxurious.

The Second Castle

In its replanned form the castle consisted of two concentric enclosures defended by wet ditches c. 18m wide and c. 7m deep. The outer ditch was sub-rectangular in plan but the inner was pentagonal with an apex on the south side. The spoil from the former was used to construct a bank between the ditch and the curtain wall, whilst the spoil from the latter was spread across the castle interior, raising the ground level by over 1 metre.

The curtain wall and the outer gate were constructed mid-way between the two ditches, but they survived only as robbed-out foundation trenches. All usable stone was dug out of them at the time of the demolition. It became evident that the surviving remains represented more than one period of construction, the interpretation of which poses a number of problems. Consequently the following interpretation is only provisional.

The first circuit seems to have consisted of a curtain wall, 2.2m wide with relatively shallow foundations, linking cylindrical corner and interval towers. Two of these, which had deeper foundations than the wall, were recorded during the watching brief. Some stonework still survived in the base of the corner tower, from which a stone drain ran to the outer ditch. It was constructed of squared blocks of ironstone set on a base of stone slates and roofed with thick stone slabs. An iron grating closed off the west end where it opened into the ditch, presumably to prevent rats from entering.

In their final form the gate-towers were square-fronted, but the curious shape of the tower backs suggests that they may originally have been circular towers which were subsequently refaced. Evidence for a curtain wall linking the gate and the interval tower was slight, and its point of junction with the former was obscured by a nineteenth-century well, but the resultant circuit mirrors the shape of the inner ditch and indicates that the castle was redesigned symmetrically. The space between the curtain wall and the inner ditch appears to have been open, except for a building in the south-west corner erected against the curtain wall.

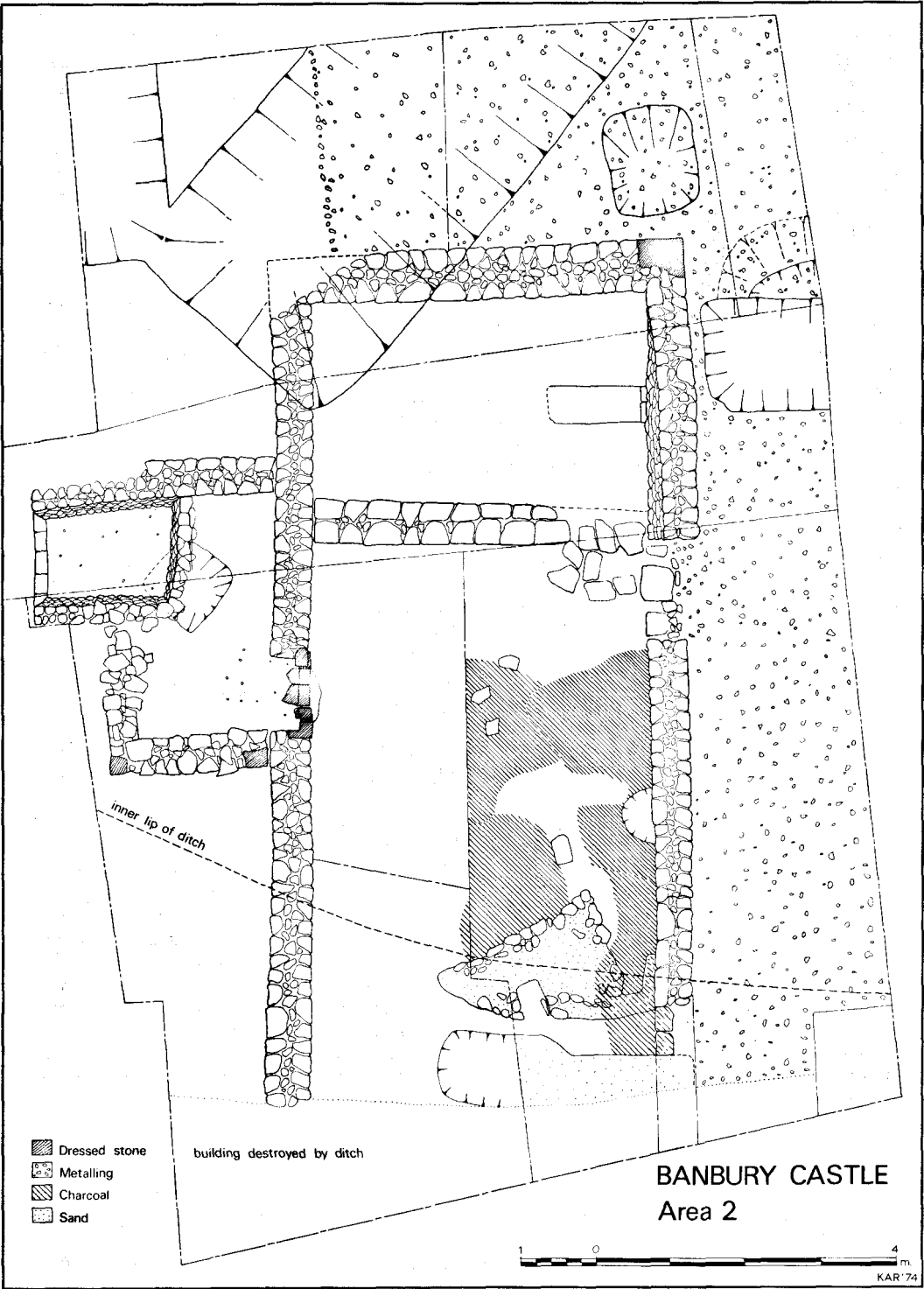
Part of a foundation was excavated south of the gate towers, which, from its position, must have been connected with bridging the moat. It could perhaps have been the half-moon shaped barbican mentioned in one of the references to the castle. No similar structures were observed on the south side of the outer ditch.

An exact date for these alterations is difficult to determine, due to the paucity of associated finds. However a similar sequence of early buildings buried by 1m of gravel was recorded in the 1972 excavations north of Castle Street, and there the deposit was dated by a buckle to the late thirteenth-early fourteenth century. This would also be a suitable date on architectural grounds.

There is some evidence to suggest that the south wall of the castle was subsequently demolished and rebuilt closer to the outer ditch. A deep foundation trench for the curtain wall west of the gate and a much shallower robbed wall in area II both appear to belong to this phase. The latter cut away the corner of the early building and seems to have been part of a corner tower of some kind. The gate towers may also have been refronted at this time, but the course of the wall north of the corner tower appears to have remained unaltered.

There is no direct archaeological dating for this reconstruction but on purely documentary grounds it could well have been as late as the Civil War period, when the castle was besieged twice. In 1646 the castle was described as having been 'revived by art and industry unto an incredible strength much beyond many places of greater name and reputation', bulwarks and sally ports were added and a great stretch of curtain wall fell down and had to be rebuilt. This event could well have been the cause of these alterations, though it cannot be conclusively proved and they may have taken place much earlier.

The outer ditch was recut during the Civil War and possibly greatly enlarged, for no traces of any earlier ditch cuts survived. A reference to the excavation of a third ditch at this time may refer to this event for there were certainly no other large ditches on the site. Probably the



Cuttle Brook, which ran across the north side of the market place, was erroneously included amongst the castle's defences, as the intervening buildings north of the market place were demolished after the first siege, and this would have given the superficial impression that the castle had three wet ditches.

After the second siege the castle was demolished and the ditches filled in. The stone was used to rebuild houses in the town. The site was divided into garden plots and was ultimately built over in the nineteenth century.

Finds and Building Materials

Quite a lot of indirect information was obtained about the building materials used in the castle. The major walls and important internal buildings were built of the local ironstone, lesser buildings were wooden, and limestone and brick were also used in a few buildings. There is documentary evidence for a building roofed in lead, but stone slates were the predominant roofing material, though fragments of clay ridge tiles and peg tiles were also found. These were often partly glazed. Some of the earliest castle buildings may have been thatched or roofed with shingles, though there is no direct evidence for this. Some buildings had latticed windows, in the later periods at least, for both diamond-shaped panes and window-leading were found. Fragments of an elaborate stone moulding from a large window also had glass grooves.

Medieval pottery was quite scarce and the only other medieval finds of any note were three lead tokens. The majority of the finds were seventeenth century and came from the robbed wall trenches and the backfilled ditches. These included pottery and glassware; dozens of clay pipes; domestic items like scissors and pins, buckles, tokens, keys and a thimble. Relics of the sieges were abundant; lead musket balls were very common and one cannon ball was found, but the most dramatic discovery was a cannon. Part of the gun carriage and four pieces of the barrel were recovered. The largest piece was nearly 2m long and ran from the muzzle to one of the trunnions, but the other three pieces, comprising the second trunnion and fragments of the barrel, were much smaller. The fragmentary state of the cannon suggests that it misfired and the breech blew off. When complete it would have been about 3m long.

Acknowledgements

Many people assisted directly or indirectly with the excavations. Thanks must go to the Department of the Environment and Banbury Charities (including the Historical Society) who provided grants for the work; to Banbury Borough Council, particularly the former town clerk Mr. J. S. T. Williams for permission to excavate, provision of office accommodation, and ready co-operation whilst work was in progress; to the contractors, Hinkins and Frewin, particularly the site agent, Mr. F. Albuta, and to others connected with the redevelopment for their co-operation, especially during their own excavations on the site; to members of the Oxfordshire Archaeological Unit, who actually undertook the work or who assisted in other ways, especially the director, Mr. T. G. Hassall; to all other volunteers, and to the staff of Banbury Museum, who washed and marked all the finds.

K. A. Rodwell (Mrs.)
May 1974

Excavation at Hanwell

For the past month the Oxfordshire Archaeological Unit has been excavating a deserted part of the Medieval village of Hanwell prior to house building. The site lies in a meadow at the east end of the village on the south side of the Wroxton-Bourton road. The topography of the field suggests the remains of buildings, enclosure walls, minor hollow ways and boundary ditches. These remains are enclosed on the east and south sides by a small but abrupt escarpment, the remains of a ditch and bank boundary. To the south and east of this boundary can be seen the remains of ridge and furrow ploughing which suggests that the boundary separated the village from the fields. The purpose of the excavation is to examine some of the building remains and to date selected boundaries.

The excavation is confined to the northern-most third of the present field next to the Wroxton-Bourton road. Work began with the excavation of a 73m-long exploratory trench that sectioned several topographical features. The west end of the trench revealed a coursed ironstone rubble wall one side of which had been destroyed by a modern service trench. In the

centre of the exploratory trench a second wall marked by a pile of brown ironstone rubble over a shallow, robbed foundation trench was encountered. This wall which shows as a low, linear bank in the field, runs north-south and appears to have formed the west wall of a large rectangular enclosure. Further north an area excavation on the line of this wall has revealed several substantial wall footings varying between 0.7m and 0.85m wide from one or more buildings and these remains are still being investigated.

A low, circular mound centred approximately 20m to the west of these wall footings is also being area excavated. The mound, approximately 10m across and which had a slight depression in the centre, is contained in an excavated area some 12m square. This area has been stripped of top soil and an almost circular line of wall rubble has been uncovered. At the time of writing only a small area of this rubble has been systematically removed to reveal the patchy remains of a pre-destruction external ground surface. The line of the wall foundation is confused. Contained within the rubble were several pieces of dressed stone of various thicknesses with chamfered edges which suggest stone from vertical slit windows typical of large stone-built barns. The remains suggest that this may have been a circular, drystone walled enclosure with shallow foundations, partially or completely built of re-used stone.

The finds to date include several glazed, late Medieval jug handles from the fill of the ditch that separates the settlement area from the fields. A scatter of Medieval domestic pottery has come from the main excavation areas though *in situ* dating material from the structures is still awaited. A tanged, iron arrow head of an early Medieval type was recovered from the top soil.

R. A. Chambers, Field Officer

Somerton

During the autumn of 1973 the Oxfordshire Archaeological Unit kept a watching brief over the installation of main drainage in the village of Somerton. Continuous observation of the open trench sections provided material from the medieval village and also enabled a reappraisal of the sixteenth-century cemetery at Castle Yard. The cemetery which had served the sixteenth-century Roman Catholic Chapel may, in view of its apparent size, have previously served the chapel in the Medieval castle that is alleged to have stood in the vicinity.

The full report will appear in the forthcoming edition of *Oxoniensia*.

R. A. Chambers, Field Officer

Banbury Historical Society—Sixteenth Annual Report—1973

The Committee have pleasure in submitting the Sixteenth Annual Report and Statement of Accounts, for the year 1973.

Membership: There has been a small increase in membership, to 366. Professor C. R. Cheney, a Vice-President since the Society's foundation, resigned at the end of the year. We record with regret the deaths, during 1973, or early in 1974, of our members the Rt. Hon. Richard Crossman, the Rt. Hon. Lord Elton (a former Vice-President), the Rev. Canon A. J. S. Hart, Miss Dorothy Loveday, Mr. W. G. Turnbull and Miss Joan Wake.

The year was marked by the loss of two officers of long-standing: Barrie Trinder retired after 11 years' editorship of *Cake & Cockhorse*, and George Fothergill resigned as Secretary on his departure from Banbury. The Society owes an incalculable debt to both. Mr. Trinder was elected a Vice-President, and a picture of old Banbury Church was presented to Mr. Fothergill. They were replaced by Frank Willy as Editor and Christine Bloxham as Secretary. In addition, Julian Barbour was elected to the committee. Mr. Willy continued as Chairman.

Lectures and Meetings:

January: The Roman Villa at Thenford—Mr. I. Saunders

February: Shakespeare and the Bawdy Court of Stratford—Dr. E. R. C. Brinkworth

March: The Excavation of Banbury Castle—Mr. P. Fasham

June: Village meeting at Shenington—The Rev. R. Hannah and Mr. G. Forsyth Lawson

A.G.M.: Wykham Park

September: Cardinal Wolsey—Professor J. J. Scarisbrook

October: Nicholas Hawksmoor—architect—Mr. J. E. Pilgrim

November: Church and Chapel in Nineteenth Century Local History—Mr. R. L. Greenall

As always we are most grateful to our speakers, all of whom gave their services without charge.

By kind invitation of the Headmistress, the A.G.M. was held at Tudor Hall School (Wykhams Park). Mr. Alan Donaldson once again organised an interesting round of summer visits. The annual dinner, in November, was held at the Whately Hall Hotel, when the toast of the Society was proposed by Professor R. Sargent of Warwick University, whilst our Vice-President, Mr. B. S. Trinder, replied.

The hard work of Mr. Fothergill and Miss Bloxham in securing speakers and organising meetings, and of Mrs. Brinkworth, our Hon. Press Officer, is recorded with much appreciation. **Research:** The Society continues to answer numerous enquiries on the local history and genealogy of the Banbury area.

Archaeology: Activity during the year was concentrated largely on assistance with the Banbury Castle excavations and survey work on the projected M40 route. On the departure from the district of Peter Fasham, who planned and supervised the first series of excavations with skill and enthusiasm, his place was taken by Mrs. Kirsty Rodwell. Her first task was to organise a large-scale excavation to be undertaken when the land behind the Market Place became available in 1974. An interim report on this highly successful work appears elsewhere.

Following the announcement of the likely line of the Banbury section of the M40 motorway, the Society was invited by the M40 Research Group to co-operate in examining and recording archaeological sites on or near the route. A public meeting was held in Banbury Town Hall in June to recruit volunteers and a programme of field-walking was prepared, to start in Spring 1974 and continue until the whole of the route had been thoroughly checked.

Assistance is still urgently needed and members willing to participate in this interesting and useful work should make themselves known to any member of the committee.

Cake & Cockhorse: Contributors to the year's three issues have included (in addition to the Editors and other committee members): Messrs. N. Cooper, P. Fasham, R. K. Gilkes, R. Humm, Mrs. Pamela Horn, Mrs. Sarah Markham, and Mr. W. Price. An offprint, 'Banbury Castle—A Summary of Excavations in 1972' was also issued. During the year the Index to Volume Four was belatedly issued, and our thanks once again go to Mr. R. C. Couzens and to Mr. J. S. W. Gibson for their work on its preparation.

Printing costs continue to spiral upwards, and in spite of sales and a grant of £50 from Banbury Borough Council, the net cost now exceeds the ordinary subscription revenue from members. Continued and increased support from the new local government authorities is essential if the quality and number of issues per year are to be maintained.

Publications: Once again we regret that no records volumes have been issued during the year. *Wills and Inventories* continues to lag, but is expected before the end of 1974. A further volume, including wills from the Prerogative Court of Canterbury, to 1723, is promised by Professor R. T. Vann. Mr. J. H. Fearon has completed editorial work on the eighteenth-century Bodicote Churchwardens' Accounts, and the transcript is now being typed. It is hoped to issue to members a *History of Aynho*, to be published by Roundwood Press in 1975. Once again a grant of £50 was received from Banbury Borough Council.

Old Banbury was reprinted, and as the Society now has a large stock, any help members can give in encouraging sales would be much appreciated.

Banbury Museum: Under Miss Bloxham's lively supervision there have been several exhibitions, including 'Banbury—A Victorian Exhibition', and attendance and interest continue to grow.

Accounts: The very serious excess of expenditure over income (on the revenue account) only underlines the necessity for the increases in subscriptions that came into force in 1974, and it is a matter of concern that they may not in fact offset ever-increasing costs of all kinds. A Society of this nature is particularly hit by increases in postage rates. The publications reserve has had to be 'raided', to the extent of £200, to keep the capital account in credit, and with the prospect of several volumes going into production, all these reserves will soon be needed. The high cost of the stock of *Old Banbury* also causes concern, and it is to be hoped that this can soon be recovered from sales.

BANBURY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Revenue Account for the Year ended 31st December 1973

1972		Expenditure		1972		Income	
488		Cake & Cockhorse	504	530		Subscriptions	538
	66	Less: Grant	50			Less: Proportion attributable to records	190
	<u>101</u>	Sales	<u>78</u>	<u>175</u>			
<u>167</u>			<u>128</u>				
321			376	355			348
6		Newsletter	—				
6		Subscriptions	6			Sales:	
144		Lecture and meeting expenses, printing, stationery, postages, telephone and sundries	172	2		Christmas cards	—
				<u>8</u>		Postcards and pamphlets	<u>12</u>
				10			12
	162	Annual dinner and other social events	220			Old Banbury:	
	<u>143</u>	Less: Receipts	<u>211</u>	9	28	Sales	62
19		Banbury Castle excavation	20			Remaining stock, written down	<u>290</u>
10		Research	12				352
5		Other grants and donations	—			Cost of reprint	375
11						Less: reserve	<u>25</u>
				28	28		<u>350</u>
				—		Donations	2
				14		Deposit account interest	27
				115		Excess of expenditure over income	<u>200</u>
				—	—		<u>595</u>
<u>522</u>			<u>595</u>	<u>522</u>			

Publications Account for the Year ended 31st December 1973

		Production costs:				Publications Reserve and provisions, balance at 1st January 1973	431
	25	Baptisms & Burials, Pt. 1	—			Subscriptions—proportion attributable to records	190
	45	Shoemaker's Window	—	268		Sales	48
	7	Wigginton Constables' Book	—	175		Royalties	81
	<u>12</u>	Wills and Inventories	<u>8</u>	8	69	Grant	50
89		Purchases:					
		Shoemaker's Window	37	50			
		Postage and packing	3				
42		Transferred to Capital Account	200				
		Publications Reserve and Provisions, balance as at 31st December 1973	552				
<u>431</u>			<u>800</u>	<u>562</u>			<u>800</u>

Balance Sheet at 31st December 1973

1972		Liabilities		1972		Assets	
31		Subscriptions in advance	20	1		Cash in hand	1
16		Sundry creditors	28	370		Deposit account	225
25		Old Banbury reprint reserve	—	<u>48</u>		Current account	<u>67</u>
<u>431</u>		Publications reserve and provisions	552			Payments in advance	—
		Capital account				Sundry debtors	25
	98	As at 1st Jan. 1973	8			Stock of Old Banbury (written down)	290
	<u>25</u>	Add: transfer from publishing reserves	<u>200</u>				
	123	Less: excess of expenditure over income	<u>200</u>				
	<u>8</u>		<u>8</u>				
<u>511</u>			<u>608</u>	<u>511</u>			<u>608</u>

I have examined the foregoing accounts of the Banbury Historical Society and in my opinion they give a true and fair view of the state of the Society's affairs at 31st December 1973.

Bloxham, Banbury
4 April 1974

A. H. Cheney
Chartered Accountant

The activities and publications of some or all of the following bodies should interest readers:

- Arts Council of Banbury (Miss Rosemary Hall, Flat 33, 20 Calthorpe Road, Banbury).
Minimum £1.05
- Banbury Art Society (Hon. Sec., R. Edgson, Print's Cottage, Bloxham, Banbury) £1.00
- Banbury Geographical Association (B.E. Little, 2 Burlington Gardens, Banbury) 53p
- Bicester Local History Circle (Hon. Sec., Miss G.H. Dannatt, Lammas Cottage, Launton Road,
Bicester, Oxon.). 50p
- Buckinghamshire Record Society (Hon. Sec., E.J. Davis, County Record Office, New Council
Offices, Walton Street, Aylesbury, Bucks.). £2.10
- Council for the Preservation of Rural England, Oxfordshire Branch (Mrs E. Turner, Woodside,
Woodgreen, Witney, Oxon.). Minimum 50p
- Dugdale Society (publishes Warwickshire records) (Shakespeare's Birthplace, Stratford-upon-
Avon). £2.10
- Heraldry Society (59 Gordon Square, London, W.C.1.). £1.50; or to include 'The Coat of
Arms', £2.50
- Historical Association (59a Kennington Park Road, London, S.E.11.) (Oxford Branch: A.J.P.
Puddephatt, 93, Old Road, Headington, Oxford). £1.00; or to include *History*, £1.75
- Northamptonshire Record Society (Délapre Abbey, Northampton). £2.10
- Oxford Architectural and Historical Society (Ashmolean Museum, Oxford). 75p or to include
Oxoniensia, £2.10
- Oxford Preservation Trust (The Painted Room, 2 Cornmarket Street, Oxford). Minimum 50p
- Oxfordshire Record Society (Dr W.O. Hassall, Hon. Sec., Bodleian Library, Oxford). £2.00
- Shipston-on-Stour and District Local History Society (H.G. Parry, Hon. Sec., 8 Stratford Road,
Shipston-on-Stour, Warw.) 50p
- Warwickshire Local History Society (47 Newbold Terrace, Leamington Spa.) £1.00
- Woodford Halse Historical Society (J.W. Anscumb, 7 Manor Road, Woodford Halse, Rugby,
Warw.) 50p

The Local Historian, published quarterly is available from the National Council of Social
Service, 26 Bedford Square, London, W.C.1.-single copies, 28p
annual postal subscription £1.05

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for the Banbury Historical Society

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