

CAKE & COCKHORSE



BANBURY HISTORICAL SOCIETY SUMMER 1975

BANBURY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

President : The Lord Saye and Sele

Chairman: J. F. Roberts, The Old Rectory, Broughton Road, Banbury (Tel: Banbury 51496).

Magazine Editor:

J. B. Barbour, M.A. PhD, College Farm, South Newington, Banbury (Tel: Banbury 720492)

Hon. Secretary:

Miss C. G. Bloxham, B.A.
Oxford City and County Museum
Fletcher's House,
Woodstock,
Oxford
(Tel: Woodstock 811456)

**Assistant Secretary
and Records Series Editor:**

J. S. W. Gibson, F.S.A.
11 Westgate
Chichester PO19 3ET
(Tel: Chichester 84048)

Hon. Treasurer:

Dr. G. E. Gardam
11 Denbigh Close
Broughton Road
Banbury OX16 0BQ
(Tel: Banbury 2841)

Hon. Research Adviser:

Dr. E. R. C. Brinkworth

Hon. Archaeological Adviser:

J. H. Fearon, B.Sc.

Committee Members

Mrs G. W. Brinkworth, B.A., Mrs N. M. Clifton, Mr A. Donaldson, Miss F. M. Stanton

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.

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

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One of the main reasons for studying the past must surely be to understand the present. Quite apart from practical advantages, it is always interesting to know that something is now as it is because of certain events that occurred in the past. Modern astronomers and cosmologists are probably the most extreme practitioners of this art. The major part of a recent conference on cosmology in Oxford was devoted to discussing events thought to have taken place during the first two or three minutes of the universe's existence - about fifteen thousand million years ago - and the way in which they influenced many of the features of the universe we see around us now.

Such studies of the past are often of great practical relevance: Geologists study the Earth of 400 million years ago in order to tell the oil companies they work for where to look for oil. And, to take a quite different example, it was only a year ago that legal historians in the United States were busily studying the practice of impeachment in medieval England in order to advise Congress how they should go about impeaching President Nixon.

Local history, too, provides many opportunities for such studies, one of which is Geoffrey Stevenson's article **Open Village : Victorian Middle Barton** in this issue of *Cake and Cockhorse*. Why is it that two neighbouring villages such as Middle Barton and Sandford St. Martin today have such different appearance? A major factor is, not surprisingly, the pattern of property owning in previous centuries and the distinction between "open" and "closed" villages. Mr Stevenson concludes that 'the Bartons exhibit, in social and economic terms, many of the "open-village" characteristics of which the topography of this rural sprawl is a key indicator.'

Our Cover is a drawing of the armorial lion of William le Scissor in the stained glass in the east window of the south aisle of St Peter ad Vincula in South Newington (See p. 50)

NEWS AND NOTES

Summer Visits

Members are reminded of the following summer visits:

Thursday 5th June : Swerford Church
Thursday 19th June : Hook Norton Church
Thursday 3rd July : The Churches of Barford St John and
Barford St Michael

Members wanting transport should assemble at North Bar at 7 pm; otherwise 7.30 pm at the respective churches.

Trip to Winchester

Sufficient members have decided to go on this trip (Sat. 12th July) to warrant the hire of a coach. Anyone also wishing to join the party should contact Mr. A.W. Donaldson [2, Church Close, Adderbury; tel: (Home) Banbury 810732 (Work) Banbury 2217.]

The Book of Banbury

Subscriptions for Christine Bloxham's book have now passed 400; if 500 can be reached this summer the book will go into production in the autumn.

A. Beesley

Mr Sterling E. Beesley, of 1030 South Orchard Drive, Bountiful, Utah 84010, USA, is anxious to contact any present living descendants of Alfred Beesley, the author of the History of Banbury, or anyone who could give him genealogical information about descendants of Alfred Beesley. Also he would be interested to hear from anyone having knowledge of a connection of the Banbury Beesleys with Joseph Beesley, who married Elizabeth Philby in Wooburn, Bucks, on 10 January 1778, or his son Benjamin Beesley, born in Wooburn on 22 February 1784, and subsequently blacksmith of Bladon, Oxon, and the father of three sons and three daughters (the eldest, William Sheppard Beesley, was born on 7 February 1816).

WEA Courses

The Banbury Branch of the WEA are planning two courses of interest to our members for this autumn: 1) Village Churches of the Area (in connection with the European Architectural Heritage Year). This will probably be held in Banbury. 2) The Changing Village, with special reference to Enclosure (probably to be held in Bloxham).

Further details from: Mrs. Dorothy Bullard, The Old Smithy, Shenington (Tel. Edgehill 251).

OPEN VILLAGE: VICTORIAN MIDDLE BARTON

Frank Emery cites Middle Barton as "a Victorian open village by any standard".¹ One of the best definitions of the open village occurs in the Report of the Assistant Poor Law Commissioners on the employment of Women and Children in Agriculture in 1843. Unfortunately the evidence taken by these commissioners, unlike that of 1867-8, did not include Oxfordshire. Thus we must take this Norfolk example and attempt to relate it to the Bartons:

"Castle Acre is what is called an "open" parish: that is, in the hands of a considerable number of proprietors, while the neighbouring parishes are each owned by one or two (or very few) proprietors. These last, partly in order to prevent an increase of birth settlements, and to keep down the rates, partly from an unwillingness to invest money in cottage property, not only allow no new cottages to be built, but let the old ones fall into ruin. The resident population of these parishes is thereby gradually reduced, as the labourers are forced to quit them, and come to reside in Castle Acre. Thus, while in the adjoining parishes there are not enough hands left to cultivate the soil, Castle Acre is overstocked with inhabitants who do not properly belong to it, and who are, generally speaking, the worst characters in the parishes whence they come. The competition caused by these newcomers raises the house rent throughout the parish; and as they are at the mercy of those who have land at Castle Acre, they are forced to pay exorbitant rents for very wretched dwellings".²

Thus, whereas Emery concentrates on a "sprawling and haphazard form", and an independent, turbulent and dissenting community, factors which clearly relate to the Castle Acre definition, the 1843 Commissioners consider the supply of housing and the spread of land ownership as important factors. These are the factors which I wish to consider in Middle Barton in the last century.

Let us first deal with the sprawl of the Bartons. Hoskins calls Middle Barton "a settlement without any nucleus or discernible plan... The roads and lanes of the village suggest an origin in paths and tracks across open land".³ Technically in the parish of Steeple Barton, it had become so enmeshed with its neighbour, Westcote Barton, that it came to share the same fields, which were enclosed together in 1795 (see map). Its growth at the expense of Steeple Barton probably dates from the thirteenth century, when the road from Chipping Norton to Bicester was formed by the building of Heyford Bridge over the Cherwell, and this new road found an easier route to the north of the river Dorn. Certainly, Middle Barton develops between this road, turnpiked in 1793, and a parallel road to the south of the Dorn. Only one cottage lying north of the turnpike is marked on the 1795 enclosure map.⁴ The earlier settlement was close to the stream, where there is evidence of mills in both Middle and Westcote Barton.

Let us turn to the spread of land ownership. William Wing, a Steeple Aston farmer who threw himself vigorously into many issues of the day, wrote in 1866: "There is a sufficient land held in mortmain to prevent the whole of either parish ever being absorbed into one undivided ownership: Magdalen College field, the rectorial glebe at Westcote Barton, the vicarial glebe at Middle Barton, thirty acres belonging to two bodies of trustees governing the charities established at the Inclosure, more than 56 acres belonging to the Great Tew Charity Estate, and about 9 acres belonging to the Charity estates of the neighbouring parish of Sandford".⁵ These provided, in part,

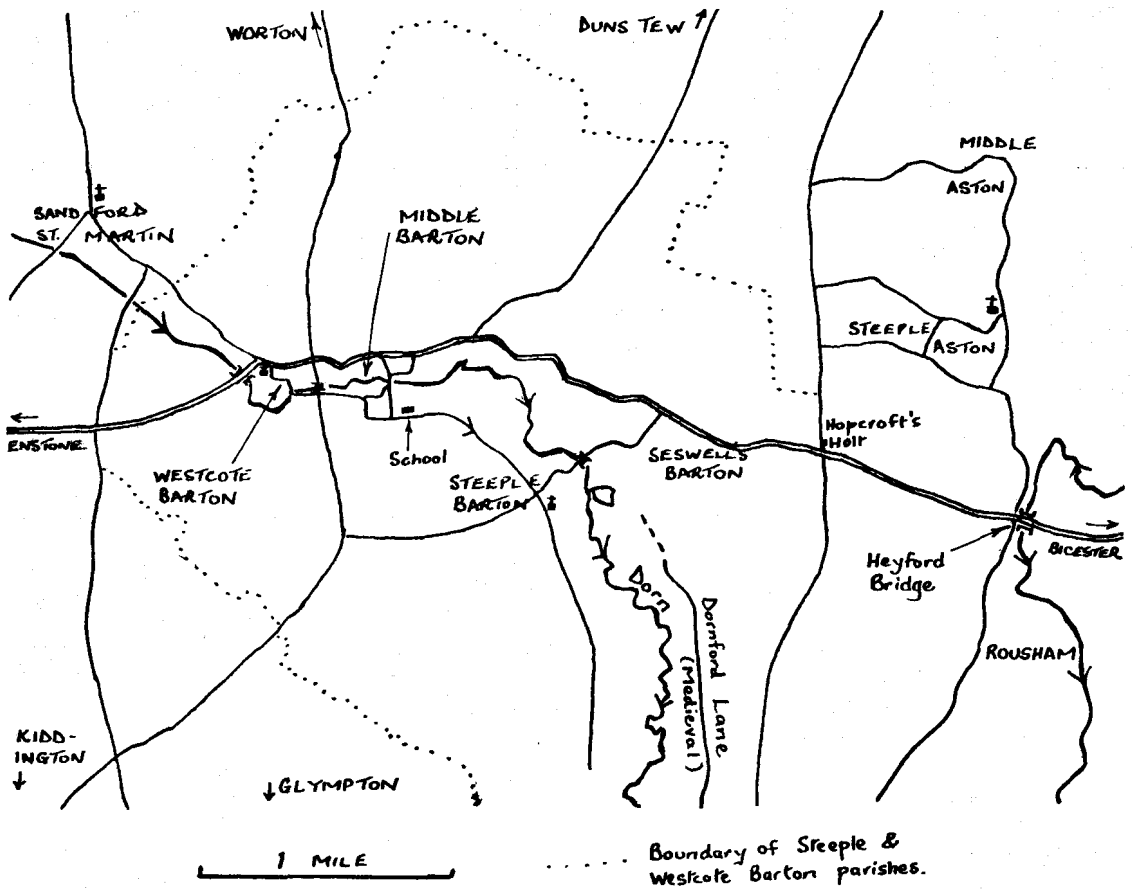
the counterweight to the squiring tendencies of the Hall family, who held Barton Abbey from 1822 to 1924, and those of Jenner Marshall, whose family lived at Westcote Barton Manor from its building in 1857 until 1925.

At the 1795 enclosure, although 25 individuals received allotments of land, the Duke of Marlborough heading the list with 347 acres, most of these owners were absentee landlords: Wing points out that no resident owner of more than six acres appears on this list, although a further 29 small owners are listed since they use the opportunity to extinguish tithes on their old allotments by making a money payment. Of these 29, the miller, Richard Boddington, pays the most in freeing $1\frac{1}{2}$ acres of tithe.⁶ Both of the Victorian historians of the village give lists of landed proprietors, and that of the Rev. Jenner Marshall gives 21 names in Westcote Barton alone for 1867-8, though half of these are cottage owners of the Castle Acre style.⁷ The parliamentary return in 1873 of landowners owning more than one acre shows 16 names for the Barton residents.⁸ At the top of the list are Alexander Hall with 2,470 acres, and the Rev. Jenner Marshall held 419. The old county franchise of a forty-shilling freehold gave a declining number of Barton landowners the right to vote in contested county elections: 17 in 1754, 13 in 1826, and only 9 in 1837 (although 6 occupiers of land are then qualified by the 1832 reforms).⁹ In Victorian times the wider franchise gave 27 Barton inhabitants the vote in the 1849-50 registers, and 45 in 1862-3.¹⁰ Thus there appears to be a sufficient spread of ownership to justify Wing's point.

To appreciate the problems of cottage provision it is necessary to realise that in the period 1801-71 the Bartons saw a growth in population only equalled since 1961. There was an increase from 577 to 1,240 in the first 70 years of the census, followed by a slow decline to 746 in the following 90 years.

What was the housing stock during the period? We have the evidence of the enclosure map of 1795, from which can be deduced 68 properties in Middle and Westcote Barton, which were covered by the award, and one should perhaps allow a further 20 for Steeple and Seswell's Barton, which were enclosed earlier, except for 25 acres as late as 1825. No doubt many of the properties were multiples of cottages: thus the 577 inhabitants of 1801 probably inhabited more than 100 houses. For the period 1841-71 we have clearer evidence from the census enumerators' returns: it is clear that 70 cottages remained adequate for the static population of Westcote Barton (which reached a peak of 284 in 1871).¹¹ In the whole parish of Steeple Barton 100 houses were added in this period to the existing stock of 135. Some of these lay to the north of the turnpike road (where only one property pre-dates the enclosure award): Norton House in Worton Road (the old Herdsway) was built by a stonemason, Charles Norton, for his own use in 1860.

Who owned the new cottage property? George Culley writes in 1869 of 50 of the Westcote cottages belonging to about a dozen tradesmen, with the landowners appearing to have none at all.¹² Fortunately, Jenner Marshall lists these proprietors: Solomon Jarvis, a saddler of Quaker origin, John Savery, son of a Brize Norton miller, George Baker, wheelwright and carpenter, Thomas Brain, carrier and Elizabeth Reeve, daughter of S. R. Evans, a blacksmith in the village in 1795.¹³ Some of these gave their names to courts and yards of cottage property. Culley also gives figures for Steeple Barton: "the landowners of this parish leave the necessary supply of cottages to private or speculative enterprise. Thus the chief landed estate, having about 1300 acres let in farms, appears to be represented by 10 cottages". One



Barton farm of 500 acres has no cottages in 1867. Despite this, the labour requirement stated in 1871 by the Barton farmers of 3700 acres is 87 day labourers and 44 boys.

The condition of many of these cottages is described in detail in the Royal Commission of 1867-9. The National Schoolmaster, Charles Howett, says: "They are constructed of stone generally; the rooms are about 10 feet by 9 feet; they are badly ventilated and badly drained. They have generally two rooms on the ground floor; one of these is the living room, the other serves as a pantry. The water supply is very deficient.

There are no gardens near the cottages, but an allotment ground outside the village. There are no outhouses. By far the greater proportion of the cottages are owned by local tradespeople. There is no actual agreement that the tenant shall be obliged to deal with the landlord as far as I am aware, but it is looked for by the landlord, and such a system certainly exists. The average cottage rent is about 1s 4d a week. The cleanest, most regular and best of my scholars live in clean, tidy houses whereas the dirty and irregular ones inhabit the contrary. In this village where, on the whole, the cottage accommodation is bad and the water supply deficient, fever of a more or less aggravated form is always lurking about".¹⁴

The medical officer of the Woodstock Poor Law Union, which included the Bartons, took up this point: sickness he put down to "low wages, which will not allow men with families to procure food sufficient either in quantity or quality; and secondly, the unwholesome state of many of the cottages."¹⁵ An investigation of this kind was conducted partly by circular and partly by visits of the Assistant Commissioners. Evidence from the first method is necessarily slanted: in Oxfordshire, of 73 respondents, 37 were clergymen replying for their parishes, 17 were landowners, 20 were occupiers of land (19 of whom were Poor Law Guardians), one was a land agent and 4 were schoolmasters. None were labourers. It is a lucky chance that George Culley, an Assistant Commissioner, met George Grimsley at his work:

"I am a carter. I get 10s a week, and 1s extra for Sundays. I have four children at home. This boy with me is the eldest at home: he is 12. He was at school a short time, but he had to come out to work at 9, and he can't neither read nor write much now. I have charge of seven horses, and he and another lad help me. My boy has 3s 6d a week, and his money and mine is all that is coming in. It ain't much living, the way we have to get on. Bread is about all we can get, and about 2 lb of bacon for the family for a week. There is some people half starving in Barton. Some of them can't get work, and some won't work; but there's a good many as would work if they could get it. The girls do a bit of gloving, and some of them go out to service. I have one out at service, and I have a girl of 7 at home that ought to be at school, only I can't afford to send her".¹⁶

George, a native of Middleton Stoney, appears to have settled in the Bartons, join other members of the family who were stonemasons there, having lived in Hampton Gay and Glympton on the way, to judge from the birthplace of his children in the census returns. From this source we also learn that the eldest boy had moved away by the time he was 16, and that the daughter in service appeared to have returned and worked as a "machinist" in the glove trade. Perhaps it was this extra income that had allowed George to send her younger sister to school in 1871.

We cannot avoid wondering whether Barton was not bearing other people's burdens,

and particularly those of the landowners of Worton, Glympton, Rousham, and Sandford St. Martin. Nor are we alone: William Wing used considerable organising talent to persuade the vestries of Steeple Barton, Steeple Aston and Lower Heyford to protest at proposed legislation in 1846 which would weaken their power to remove people without a settlement.¹⁷ Harsh though this sounds, the terms of the Poor Law from 1834 to 1865 laid upon the individual parish the financial burden of relieving its inhabitants, even where this was done in Woodstock Union Workhouse. In 1865 the Union Chargeability Act swept away these parochial distinctions, but by this time the damage done in diverting the pattern of rural settlement was permanent.

Open villages are associated with dissent. In the Bartons there were three such sects: Quaker, Wesleyan and Primitive Methodist. The rector of Westcote Barton seems to nominate a fourth - the Agricultural Labourers' Union - in his replies to the Bishop of Oxford's visitation enquiries in 1875 and 1878.¹⁸

Quaker influence is noted in Bishop Secker's visitation return of 1738, which speaks of a meeting house, and this remained for rare services until 1860.¹⁹ But the Banbury Meeting's records reveal only three burials there between 1701 and 1749, concerning two families, the Fletchers and the Holloways. Solomon Jarvis, whose widow was a cottage owner in Marshall's list of 1868, was the son of a Quaker from Shipston-on-Stour whose two children dying in infancy were buried in the Adderbury Friends' burial ground in 1801.²⁰

The Wesleyan influence appears to be stronger, for in 1835 they vacated an earlier



Worton Road, Middle Barton, in the early twentieth century: one of a set produced by Kirby & Co. in Middle Barton. Charles Norton's house of 1860 lies immediately behind the couple in the photograph.

building for a new chapel in Worton Road. The Primitive Methodists' chapel dates from 1860. In the religious census of 1851 the Wesleyans claimed 220 worshippers attending both morning and evening service; the Primitive Methodists laying claim to 130 on each occasion with, for good measure, 'for want of room we have upwards of 40 outside'.²¹ These figures exceed the congregations of Anglicans in the parish churches of Steeple and Westcote Barton. However, the church at Steeple Barton was in gross disrepair. In addition, the low state of the parish was a result of 42 years of non-residence by Robert Wright, who only attended once in 1808 to read himself in as Vicar. Since he derived £650 a year from his rectories of Itchen and Ovington in Hampshire and only £78 a year from Steeple Barton, this is not wholly surprising.²² The Rector of Westcote Barton continued to be perturbed at the spiritual condition of his parish: in 1875 he spoke of congregations diminished 'materially since the labourers' union commenced their attacks upon Clergy and Church' and in 1878: 'an increase is prevented by the influence of Dissent in the neighbouring parish and the hostility of the labourers' union.'

This seeming independence of religious spirit (incidentally not carried forward into a dissenting school as was the case in Hook Norton) may have carried over into other areas: clearly the Westcote Barton rector thought so. The indications of independence may be sought in evidence of self-help through unions, friendly societies, the chapel and the pub, and through evidence of a variety of non-agricultural employment. The converse pattern may be looked for in the influence of squire and parson through the apparatus of social control open to them: employment, education, and coal and allotment charities. That such attitudes may be benevolent is irrelevant: for all William Wing's championing of the labourers' causes he remains a 'deferential' figure.

The Bartons escaped a strong squirearchical influence, though the Halls and the Marshalls attempted in Victorian times to rectify this. The escape from such an 'anti-communal influence' is a central characteristic of an open village: the point is well made in M.K. Ashby's study of Bledington.²³ How far is this true of the Bartons?

William Hall, of the Swan Brewery in Oxford, first bought the Barton Abbey estate in 1822, and four generations of Halls lived there until its sale in 1924. Its 'Abbeyness' owes far more to the scale of its Victorian rebuilding, and the drive of Wellingtonias to the turnpike road, than to any connection with the monks of Oseneay. Henry Hall, of the second generation, was High Sheriff in 1850-1, and his son held the same office in 1867. The son was not only Master of the Heythrop Hunt from 1863-72, and Chairman of the Woodstock Board of Poor Law Guardians, but also 'gave lengthy and valuable service to Oxford as one of its parliamentary representatives'.²⁴ It is symptomatic of the approach of Gaskell's 'Oxfordshire Leaders: Social and Political' that this phrase glosses over Hall's disqualification as Tory M.P. for Oxford in 1880 for electoral malpractice. Nevertheless, Hall gained Wing's approval by establishing a parochial school on National Society principles in 1865, by which time the family influence on the village was clear. Earlier, in the 1840s, Barton law-breakers are usually committed for trial by magistrates from neighbouring parishes, such as Cottrell-Dormer of Rousham, Admiral Lechmere of Steeple Aston, or the Rev. Thomas Curme of Sandford.²⁵

The Jenner Marshalls played a more modest role: the Temperance mission hall was in recent years renamed after the daughter of the Victorian antiquarian and clergyman who built Westcote Barton manor. The rector of Westcote Barton played a more

prominent role than his Steeple Barton colleague, even when a resident vicar replaced Robert Wright in 1850, and the church was rebuilt. The Rev. Edmund Lockyer built a large Victorian rectory to the north of the turnpike road in Westcote Barton.

There were schools in both parishes to Hall's foundation of a National School in 1865. The prolific pamphleteer and text-book writer, the Rev. William Mavor, catechised Westcote Barton children in 1796 "till such as attend are quite perfect. As an encouragement I distribute catechisms among the poor."²⁶ Two Jepsons, father and son, were schoolmasters: the father was a drummer in the North Wootton Volunteers, and the son became a land valuer. In the autumn of 1845 the vestry of Steeple Barton voted, eight votes to five, for Mrs. Caleb Nicholls as the schoolmistress.²⁷ Yet the Bartons never mustered the strength to create any dissenting school on the pattern of some other open villages.

William Wing was behind most initiatives in Barton in the 1840s, and a Coal Charity, similar to the one surviving in Steeple Aston until 1975, was one of these. It appears to have become connected with the Allotment Charity, which was reorganised in 1840, when the original 30 acres of the poor plot of the enclosure award was rented at an economic level and the proceeds applied to the poor. It is to John Jepson, the trustee of the Allotment Charity, that we find several local merchants applying in 1871 to supply Wyken best bright coal at 17s 6d a ton, no doubt shipped by the Oxford Canal from the Warwickshire collieries to Heyford Wharf.²⁸ 11½ acres of replacement allotments do seem to have been provided: William Wing receives scores of pencilled slips similar to that on which Thomas Smith asks for "that cut which Richard Brain had who is dead".²⁹

The vestry at Steeple Barton was also concerned to help the labourers in the parish through assisting emigration. In February 1845 they authorised the overseers "to promote the emigration to Port Philip Australia of William Wren and his family in the same manner as the parish officers of Tackley are promoting emigration from their parish".³⁰ They are further required "to ascertain the expense required to complete the outfits for emigration to the United States of Harriet Eaglestone". The next month they ask William Wing to apply to the Poor Law Commissioners for permission to apply to assisting emigration the surplus remaining from the sale of the eleven parish poor cottages which were built before the 1834 Act. Within the year they vote to assist the emigration of the Coxheads, and the Butlers to Canada.

What independence could the Barton inhabitant aspire to in this period? There are four gamekeepers in 1871, but none are locally born. So there is no scope here for the labourers: 203 in 1841, 238 in 1851, 266 in 1861 and 226 in 1871. Since the farms of the parish employ far fewer than this number, many must have found day work in neighbouring closed parishes. But in 1871 twenty labourers are unemployed in March, a figure similar to the 27 which Culley found when investigating in the autumn of 1867. The women were able to supplement low earnings by the surprising expansion of gloving: from 1 in 1841 to 30 in 1851, 123 in 1861 and 117 in 1871. Apart from the four domestic establishments of squire and parson, there was little scope in the village for domestic service. There was, of course, a growing group of craftsmen and tradesmen: 65 in 1851, but 96 in 1871, by which time the residents included a policeman and a railway clerk.

Were Barton people content to accept their limited work opportunities mutely? There is evidence that in the Swing riots of the south of England in 1830 threshing mach-

ines were destroyed in Barton in November, 1830. Two days later, at Heythrop, 70 or 80 men marched into the servants' hall, demanded beer and money, broke into the barns and smashed machines of every sort, chanting 'Bread or Blood'.³¹ Their leader was a local ploughman, Thomas Hollis, whom his followers nicknamed 'The King'. If we take a limited look at the period 1840 to 1844, we find that 4 Barton people were transported, three for seven years, one for ten. Their offences were stealing a watch, sheep stealing (from Church Farm) and night-poaching, armed (in Kiddington parish, a convenient walking distance on a moonless night after the closure of the village's three inns).³²

Union activity is hardly akin to law-breaking, yet even sympathetic figures like Wing appear to lose sympathy when the labourers turn to self-help. His pamphlet on Woodstock³³ as a parliamentary borough is grudging and carping at a time when there was a chance of Joseph Arch standing and winning this seat, since the 'borough' seat was artificially extended to a group of villages including Tackley. The Barton labourers had to wait until 1884 to achieve the county vote.

Pamela Horn pieces together some of the Barton labourers' activity during the seventies, showing how at one point Middle Barton passes a resolution against corporal punishment in the army, how at another the Steeple Barton labourers 'stand aloof' from the internal bickerings in the Labourers' union, and how the Westcote Barton labourers are urged by the Oxford district to ask for 15s a week in March 1874.³⁴ Of the general influence of the unions, we have the testimony of the Westcote Barton Rector already quoted.

There seems little doubt that the Bartons exhibit, in social and economic terms, many of the 'open-village' characteristics of which the topography of this rural sprawl is a key indicator.

G.R. Stevenson

References

An enormous debt is owed by the author to the late George Laws, Bursar of Lincoln College, Oxford, whose interest in the Bartons arose from thirty years as land agent to the Barton Abbey estate, and from the enthusiasm of Professor Hoskins during his sojourn in Steeple Barton Vicarage. Those documents in the possession of Mrs. Cynthia Laws are referred to as LAWS MSS.

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29. MSS Laws.
30. Vestry minute book, Steeple Barton, 1836-51.
31. Hobsbawm, E. and Rude, G.: **Captain Swing**, 1969 p.142, 207.
32. Oxfordshire County Record Office. Calendars of prisoners for Quarter Sessions and Assizes.
33. Wing, W.: **Parliamentary History of the Borough of Woodstock during the present century**, 1873.
34. P.R.L. Horn: **Agricultural Trade Unionism in Oxfordshire, 1872-1881. Oxfordshire Record Society, 1974.**

A NOTE ON SERGEANTY TENURE AT SOUTH NEWINGTON

Feudalism was not so much a system as a labyrinth. The perfectly apt word is Christopher Brooke's, in his **From Alfred to Henry III, 871-1271**, London, 3rd Impression, 1967, p. 96: a book I would recommend to those who wish to brush up their knowledge of feudal society, a subject which has seen such considerable advance in the last two or three generations.

A labyrinth indeed: anomalies, exceptions, intricacies are found everywhere. Nowhere is this seen more conspicuously than in the tenure known as sergeanty. It covered many and curious obligations. To take a few at random, there was the duty of counting the king's chessmen and putting them back in their box, the feeding of certain paupers, the finding of a towel to dry the king's hands, the keeping of a hound with red ears, the provision of a dinner of roast pork, a great variety of falconry duties, the providing of entertainment at the Christmas festivities, with the making of a leap, a whistle and a fart (debut facere die Natalis Domini singulis annis coram rege unum saltum et siffeletum et unum bumbulum). I quote this last example from Austin Lane Poole's **Obligations of Society in the 12th and 13th Centuries**, Oxford, 1946, pp. 66 note 2, where he gives reference to the **Book of Fees**. As he says on the same page, "The astonishing variety of the services, the extent to which they were actually performed and the general characteristics of the tenure may be aptly illustrated by the group of sergeants who are recorded as holding lands in Oxfordshire". His book contains much information about places in the Banbury area. It is of particular interest when he tells us (p. 72) that "the history of the king's tailor is perhaps better authenticated than any of the Oxfordshire sergeants", for this relates to South Newington. Lane Poole gives a short history of the sergeanty (pp. 72-3).

Land at South Newington was granted to the Chamberlain, Robert St. Paul, which in the time of the king's father had been held by Aschorsan, the tailor (scissor). This man married Emma of Northampton who got the South Newington land as her dower. She held it in sergeanty, the service of which was the cutting of linen clothing for the king and queen. Upon the death of Emma the South Newington land escheated to the Crown and passed to William, the king's tailor. Many details about his work are to be found in the Misae and the Court Rolls. (Lane Poole, *op.cit.*, p. 72, n. 2, where he directs us to J. H. Round's **The King's Sergeants and Officers of State** (1911) for a full account of the descent and other details of the sergeanty. We know, for instance, that William renovated the crown and other regalia for Henry III's coronation in 1220.

Further information about William le Scissor appears in a source not mentioned by Lane Poole, namely **The Transactions of the North Oxfordshire Archaeological Society** for 1875, p. 30, in an article by that excellent local antiquary, David Royce. William's name occurs frequently in the Close Rolls. There we learn that William was confidential servant to Henry III. Sums were paid to him for cloth bought at fairs and for carts to carry them. On him rested the responsibility of providing armour, furs etc., of having the king's gilt and jewelled helmet in readiness; and to him was committed the merchandise which the Portuguese ship "Le Cardinale" brought to Portchester. He received loans, wax and lead for the king, restored, on fines paid, cloth seized for short measure at Holland (Lincolnshire) fair, to certain burgesses of Oxford and had custody of the land and heir of Radulfus Iuals which John de Breautte had bought of Adam Pincerne. William gave the land in frankalmoin to the Hospital of St. John

outside the East Gate, Oxford.

It is interesting that by a common anomaly, the old sergeanty service remained under the frankalmoign grant; the Hospital still had to provide annually a pair of scissors (see H. E. Salter, editor, *The Cartulary of the Hospital of St. John the Baptist*, *The Oxford Historical Society*, vol. 2, pp. 394-5, where in the margin Salter has 'Reg. Cart. 29, Mar. 3, 1241').

The above mentioned article in *The Transactions of the North Oxfordshire Archaeological Society* contains a mass of information about the history of South Newington. At page 30 will be found a reference to the document which we reproduce here. It is the grant by William le Scissor to the Hospital of St. John of the land escheated to the Crown on the death of Emma of Northampton who held it in fee; which land John de Breautte as well as William held of the King's bailiff, rendering annually to the King a pair of scissors or shears. The witnesses to this deed include Ralph Iuals. It is from this family that the parish derived the name Newington Juel, by which it was often called before it became permanently known as South Newington, though this latter name occurs as early as 1285. (See Margaret Gelling, *The Place Names of Oxfordshire*, part II (1954), p. 277.)

The seal is round, green, a lion rampant, under his feet a pair of scissors: **Sigillum Willelmi Cissoris Regis** (see illustration).

Another Oxfordshire sergeanty tenure might be mentioned here, for though it comes from the other end of the county, it is of personal interest to the present writer. At Pishill, one Robert, known as 'le Napier' was allowed by King John to hold a knight's fee by the sergeanty tenure of the provision every Michaelmas of a table cloth (nappa) worth three shillings, or that amount in money. (See Lane Poole, *op. cit.*, p. 17.)

E. R. C. B.

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CHURCHES OF THE BANBURY AREA. Drawings of the churches in the Deanery of Deddington and some others. By George Graham Walker. The Roundwood Press, 1975. 60pp. £4.00.

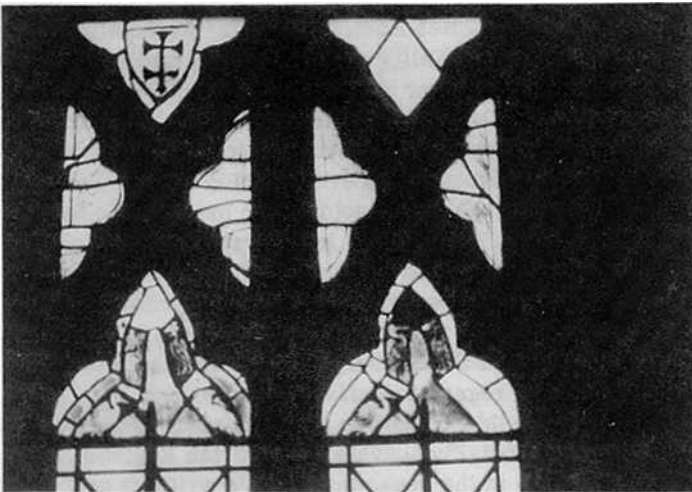
This attractive and perhaps rather unusual book contains drawings of every church in the Deanery of Deddington with Banbury at its centre, along with others, in Northamptonshire, that come within the same six-mile radius of the town. Mr Walker, who moved to Banbury twenty-five years ago as a technical writer, has also provided a text to go with each church, drawing attention to architectural features of especial interest or something worthy of note from the church's history. The result is a charming and very personal book and it will undoubtedly be treasured by many. Considering the price of books today, it is good value, and would make an ideal birthday or Christmas present for anyone who loves the area. I imagine that many copies will find their way around Britain and the world to former residents of the area.

My only criticisms are the rather awkward size of the book (a foot wide but unavoidable given the way churches are built) and a regret that the texts are not a bit longer and more comprehensive. It could then have served as a guide book as well as being a book that one will take down from a shelf to enjoy by the fire on winter evenings.

J. B. Barbour



The seal of William le Scissor attached to the deed reproduced on p.49.



Photograph of a window in the north aisle of St Peter ad Vincula in South Newington. The double cross in the top left is of the Hospital of St John in Oxford (subsequently Magdalen College), which was granted land in South Newington in the 13th century by William le Scissor. The bird in the bottom right is thought to be a crane, representing the Cranford family, who held land in South Newington at the same time.

AGRICULTURAL TRADE UNIONISM IN OXFORDSHIRE 1872-81. Edited by Pamela Horn. Oxfordshire Record Society, vol. XLVIII. Issued for the year 1970. Published 1974. 144 pp.

The myth that there was once a period of beatifically peaceful social relationships in the English countryside, which has been destroyed by commuters, the welfare state, television or intensive farming, according to choice, is often powerfully propagated by the media. Readers of Dr Horn's many contributions to this journal, or of her excellent biography of Joseph Arch, will have good reason to doubt this rose-tinted view of the past, and their scepticism will be further reinforced by this useful group of documents.

Dr Horn has collected together some of the most important documentary records of the agricultural trade unions in Oxfordshire during the 1870s, the lengthiest and most important of which is the Minute Book of the Oxford District of the National Agricultural Labourers' Union, 1872-79. Like many minute books, it gives a much better view of routine administration than of times of crisis. Anyone seeking significant new insights into the intensely emotional years between 1872 when Joseph Arch's union was formed, and 1874 when it suffered its major defeat, will be disappointed. About more mundane matters, how money was allocated from the Emigration Fund for members going overseas, how the union handled piece work disputes, how it reacted to complaints that it was taking an insufficiently strong line, it is much more illuminating. Dr Horn also includes a branch minute book, from Horspath, which is one of only two such documents known to survive.

Three further documents throw light on the union from the point of view of the employing and governing classes. These comprise the rules of an employers' association, the Oxfordshire and Adjoining Counties Agriculturalists' Association, some correspondence between a farmer, George Wallis of Old Shifford, and Hugh Hamersley of Pyrton Manor, the chairman of Quarter Session, and some extracts concerning the union from replies by clergy at the Bishop's visitations of 1875, 1878 and 1881. There is a useful introduction which provides sufficient background to the documents, and at the same time gives factual accounts of two events which feature heavily in Oxfordshire labour history mythology; the use of soldiers to bring in the harvest at Wootton in 1872, and the imprisonment in 1873 by the magistrates of Chipping Norton, of two mothers of young children for alleged breaches of the law concerning picketing. Dr Horn also shows that although the labourers' movement in Oxfordshire collapsed in 1893, some of its leaders continued their political careers in local government. There are lists of the branches in the Banbury and Oxford districts of the union, which pose interesting questions with regard to Banbury's hinterland.

The labourers' documents in this collection are important as rare fragments of the history of one of the greatest social upheavals in Victorian England, but they are not impressive for their eloquence in the sense that Arch's writings are. The strongest impressions left by this book come rather from the sources on the other side of the struggle. The landowners, farmers and clergy regarded the foundation of a union by the labourers with utter incredulity, and were totally unable to understand why the farmworkers should have any cause to be dissatisfied with their lot. They sought refuge in the belief that the agitation was all brought about by dissolute 'outsiders', by 'a lot of loafing fellows such as they saw hanging about a market town'. The clergy

blamed falling church attendances on the union and the radical Sunday press, and some of them showed an extreme hostility to what they regarded, somewhat surprisingly, as high wages. This book should be yet another nail in the coffin of the rural idyll. Unfortunately it is likely that in spite of it, and many similarly scholarly publications, the chocolate box lid version of agrarian history will continue to flourish.

Barrie Trinder.

BANBURY MUSEUM

The Oxfordshire County Council Department of Museum Services will shortly be taking over the day to day management of Banbury Museum. The Museum powers in relation to the museum will still however be exercised by Cherwell District Council. The County Council's programme of assistance involves the provision of a professional museum assistant to be resident in Banbury, and a programme of exhibitions, details of which are set out below.

April 30th - May 29th

'In Evidence', an exhibition mounted by the Oxfordshire County Museum, showing the information about the landscape which can be gleaned from aerial photography and archaeology.

May 31st - June 29th

'Taunt's Jaunts', an exhibition of Victorian and Edwardian life through the camera of the Oxford photographer Henry Taunt.

August 23rd - Sept. 21st

'The Bashful Willow', an exhibition about basket making, displaying the range of baskets used in industry, agriculture, traders and the home, and the tools and craft of the basketmaker, from the Area Museum Service for South Eastern England.

BANBURY HISTORICAL SOCIETY - SEVENTEENTH ANNUAL REPORT - 1974

The Committee have pleasure in submitting the Seventeenth Annual Report and Statement of Accounts, for the year 1974.

Membership: The number of members, which has stood at between 350 and 400 for many years, does not appear to have been affected by the increase in subscription at the start of the year. We record with regret the deaths of two members of long-standing, the Lady Bicester and Mr A.E.H. Elkington, and also of Mr R.C. Couzens, who though not a member compiled indexes to this magazine and to several records volumes.

On Frank Willy's departure from the area John Roberts was elected chairman of the committee, and Julian Barbour editor of *Cake and Cockhorse*. Mrs J.W. Brinkworth, Mrs N.M. Clifton and Miss F.M. Stanton were elected to the committee. Miss Stanton, from her post in Banbury Museum, has also been assisting Christine Bloxham with secretarial and general liaison work.

Lectures and Meetings:

- January: The Banbury Gas Industry - Mr. G.C.J. Hartland
February: The Mordaunt Papers - Lady (Elizabeth) Hamilton
April: The Impact of Railways on Victorian Banbury - Barrie Trinder
and Village Meeting at Sibford - Leslie Baily and Geoffrey Forsyth Lawson
June: A.G.M. at Canons Ashby
September: Dating Panel Paintings by Dendochronology - Dr. J.M. Fletcher
October: Reminiscences - E.R.C. Brinkworth, Dr Wilfred Hudson, Harold Alcock and Edward Clark.
November: Oxford Bargemen - M. Prior
December: The Eruption of Thera and the end of the Minoan Palaces - G. Cadogan
As always we are most grateful to our speakers, all of whom gave their services without charge.

By kind invitation of Mr Louis Osman, the A.G.M. was held at Canons Ashby House. 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 Dr Harry Judge, whilst Mr Jack Fearon replied.

The hard work of 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: A number of members helped fieldwalk part of the northern section of the proposed M40 extension, on behalf of the Oxfordshire Archaeological Unit. As the motorway has been postponed, fieldwalking has ceased for the present.

Kirsty Rodwell has completed excavations at Banbury Castle, and has been watching the progress of the building to survey any further signs of the castle. She has reported her findings in 'Cake and Cockhorse'. Charlie Chambers has excavated a medieval site at Hanwell which he has published in 'Cake and Cockhorse'. Peter Locke has replaced Frank Willy as historian and archaeologist at Bloxham School, and is studying the archaeology of the area.

Cake & Cockhorse: Contributors to the year's three issues have included (in addition to the editors and other committee members): Messrs. R.A. Chambers, N. Cooper,

A. Davidson, Dr Pamela Horn, Bishop D.G. Loveday, Mr F.D. Price, Miss K. Rodwell, Messrs. E.R. Stevenson and B.S. Trinder. The Summer issue was the last of Volume Five and of Frank Willy's regrettably short editorial tenure. An index to the volume is in preparation.

With Volume 6 and Julian Barbour's new editorship a determined effort is being made to cut down the spiralling cost of production of the magazine, at a time when each issue was approaching £200 to produce. This has meant reverting to electric typewriter reproduction and ceasing printing with Messrs. Express Litho Service of Cowley, Oxford, who have since 1962 done much to help us make the magazine so attractive. This reversion to a simpler standard, whilst retaining the opportunity to include illustrations, will provide very significant savings, and at a time of steeply rising costs has already enabled us to keep these in line with those of 1973.

Publications: Whilst the hopes of issuing a records volume in the year were not realised, the text of the next volume, the Bodicote Parish Accounts, is now ready for printing and will be issued during the summer or autumn. A substantial grant has been promised towards the cost of the Wills and Inventories volume. At the time of the preparation of the accounts no royalty for 1974 had been received from the publishers of Shoemaker's Window, but we understand that this is now out of print, and the royalties due will appear in the 1975 accounts.

Banbury Museum: With the reorganisation of local government this has passed into the care of the City and County Museum at Woodstock, where our energetic secretary now works. A report on the museum is given elsewhere in this issue.

Accounts: The increase in subscription rates (by 50 per cent) is reflected in the more satisfactory state of the accounts, in which for the first time for several years we have achieved a very small surplus of revenue over expenditure. This is partly due to much lower than usual general expenses, which can easily fluctuate in years with heavy stationery printing bills. The large increases in postage costs will affect us in common with other concerns with unavoidable mailing.

An effect of local government reorganisation has been the apparent cessation of grant aid to this Society. For more than ten years Banbury Borough Council, through its libraries 'vote', gave us increasing help with the production costs of the magazine and records volumes, which by 1973 had reached £100 per annum. Whilst it would be logical for the Cherwell District Council (whose area much more coincides with that of this Society's activities and interests than did the old borough) to continue this assistance, responsibility for libraries is now with the County Council. Your committee have asked the County Council to continue the grant and are awaiting the Council's response. We believe that with both magazine and publications their interest and value is of a much wider and long-term importance than merely to the present membership, and that the financial support hitherto shown by our local authority has an effect out of all proportion to its size, whilst its withdrawal could very shortly prove calamitous.

J.S.W. Gibson

BANBURY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Revenue Account for the Year ended 31st December 1974

1973	Expenditure	1973	Income	1973	
504	Cake & Cockhorse	508	538	Subscriptions	758
	50 Less: Grant	-		Less: Proportion attributable to records	<u>252</u>
	78 Sales	<u>85</u>	190		506
<u>128</u>		<u>85</u>	348		
376		423	12	Sales: postcards and pamphlets	17
6	Subscriptions	5		Old Banbury	
	Lecture and meeting expenses, printing, stationery, post-ages, telephone and sundries	109		Sales	24
172				Less: written off stock value	20
220	Annual dinner and other social functions	213	2		
	211 Less: Receipts	192	6	Donations	5
9	---	---	21	Deposit account interest	53
20	Donations	5	27		
12	Research	3	200	Excess of expenditure over income	-
-	Excess of income over expenditure	19			
<u>595</u>		<u>585</u>	<u>595</u>		<u>585</u>

Publications Account for the Year ended 31st December 1974

	Production costs	431		Publications reserve and provisions, balance as at 1st January 1974	552
8	Wills and Inventories	-		190 Subscriptions - proportion attributable to records	252
	Bodicote Parish			Sales	8
	Accounts	25	48	Royalties	-
8	---	---	81	Grants: Banbury Borough Council	-
37	Book purchases	-	50		
3	Postage and packing	-			
200	Transferred to capital account	-			
552	Publications reserve and provisions, balance as at 31st December 1974	<u>787</u>			
<u>800</u>		<u>812</u>	<u>800</u>		<u>812</u>

Balance Sheet at 31st December 1974

1973	Liabilities	1974	1974	Assets	1974
20	Subscriptions in advance	16	1	Cash in hand	-
28	Sundry creditors	158	225	Deposit account	525
552	Publications reserve and provisions	787	67	Current account	139
		293	---	---	664
8	Capital account	27	25	Sundry debtors	54
	8 as at 1st Jan. 1974	8	290	Stock of Old Banbury as at 1st Jan. 1974	290
	Add: transfer from publications reserve	-		Less: written down	20
200				---	270
	- Excess of income over expenditure for year ended 31st Dec. 1974	<u>19</u>			
		27			
208		-			
200	Less: excess of expenditure over income	<u>27</u>			
		-			
8		<u>27</u>			
<u>608</u>		<u>988</u>	<u>608</u>		<u>988</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 1974.
 Bloxham, Banbury, Oxon, 23 April 1974

A. H. Cheney, Chartered Accountant.

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