

CAKE & COCKHORSE



BANBURY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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BANBURY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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Details about the Society's activities and
publications can be found on the inside back cover

Our Cover, which is reproduced from William Potts's A History of Banbury, shows two Bluecoat children. We are indebted to Mr. Portergill for not only his article on the Bluecoat School but also for provision of illustrations.

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

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It is a commonplace that the developing countries of Africa are being catapulted into the 20th century in barely a generation. But we often forget how abruptly we too entered the age of technology and mass education. Two articles in this issue of *Cake and Cockhorse* – by Pamela Horn and Douglas Price – describe worlds that now seem almost as far away as Mars, though there are still many people alive who will remember the conditions they describe.

Both articles contain much that stimulates thinking. What, for example, was the historical explanation for the Church of England's failure to win the hearts of the broad masses of working people? Was it doctrinal or social in origin? Whatever the reason, there is little doubt that ordinary people have long felt – and still continue to feel – that something is lacking. The sullen reserve described in the notes by Rector Ffoulkes in Wigginton still lingers on in the villages of Banburyshire.

People who despair of our present educational system can at least take some heart from Pamela Horn's description of education in Oxfordshire in the Victorian age. A cynic might be tempted to ask whether education is all that important: the children who went through the appalling schools of Victorian England were adults in one of the most successful periods in our history, but we, with vastly better education, seem to be living in a period of steady decline! No doubt the answer is that the Victorian triumphs were based on the virtual slave labour of the working people of this country.

Writing in the wake of the Tyndale report, I cannot help noting that in Victorian England, as now, academic achievement was apparently regarded by many as not the chief aim of education. In 1856, school teachers were told "When you have manufactured a steady, honest, God-fearing, Church-going population, then you have done your duties as

Schoolmasters". And again "The first object of a Christian school is to communicate religious principles." Now, of course, social engineering is often advanced as the most important aim of schooling and increasingly strenuous efforts are being made to blur academic differences.

But the really cynical will say that school has not changed at all. As the mistress of Souldern school noted in 1869 "... the parents here... send their children to school simply to be free from the care of them." The cheapest and most efficient penitentiary system in existence - that alas was and perhaps still is the opinion of many pupils and parents.

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The Workers' Educational Association, Banbury Branch, will be presenting a new course this autumn on **The Past Around You**, ten meetings on sources and methods for local history. The course will cover the use of documents, maps, photographs and observation of field patterns, place names, hedgerows, landscape and local buildings. Two field meetings will be included. The course will be held at the Teachers' Centre, South Bar, Banbury on Tuesday evenings from 7.30 to 9 pm, starting on 28th September 1976. The tutor will be Mr. P. Gosling, BA, Dip. Archeol., and the fee will be £2.25 for ten meetings.

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Despite temperatures in the nineties, a highly successful **Annual General Meeting** was held on June 26th at Kirtlington Park, by kind permission of Mr. C. Buxton. Connoisseurs of the curious ritual which passes for the formal part of the proceedings - the election of officers and committee - had a treat again: everyone was elected twice this year! Mr. Buxton then gave us a most interesting talk about the house and his work devoted to preserving country houses. There then followed a tour of the house, including the beautiful library. Our sincere thanks to Mr. Buxton, who said goodbye to us from under the shade of the third largest oak tree in England - a survivor from the Kirtlington Oak Forest planted in 1475.

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A further **Records Volume** has been published: **Banbury Wills and Inventories, Part Two, 1621-1650**. This appears before **Part One** for technical reasons and we are therefore deferring a review until the volume is complete.

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Entertainment of Speakers. After meetings, the Speakers are usually entertained to dinner by members of the committee. It would be very nice if other members of the Society could come along as well. If anyone would like to, could they please contact Mary Stanton at the Banbury Museum (Telephone 2282).

OXFORDSHIRE VILLAGE SCHOOL TEACHERS : 1800-1880

'The schoolmaster, as we now understand his office . . . has arisen in modern times, he is a comparatively new agent in the social organization. He is a result of the advanced civilization of the last hundred years. His office is an addition which increased exigencies have rendered necessary for the social service . . . Strictly speaking, the real professional schoolmaster must, in all countries, be considered to date his origin from the first establishment of normal or training schools.' Educational Expositor, March 1853, quoted in Asher Tropp, *The School Teachers* (London, 1957), p.5.

Teaching in the 19th Century. The currently accepted view of teaching as a respectable profession is a surprisingly recent one, dating back little more than a century. Indeed, even in mid-Victorian England a schoolmaster, especially in country districts, was expected to undertake a whole range of jobs alongside his basic concern with the instruction of the young. The measurement of land and of task work at harvest time for local farmers, the writing of letters and making of Wills for fellow villagers, the training of the church choir, and the playing of the organ on Sundays, were but a few of these additional chores. In fact the two latter duties were often compulsory for staff in Church schools, as advertisements in the press make clear. Typical of these was an appeal in *The Schoolmaster* of 20 September, 1873, for a master at Church Handborough who was also 'able to sing and help train choir . . . Superintend Sunday-school'. He was to be paid a salary of £80 a year, plus one-eighth of the government grant to the school, and provided with a rent-free house and garden. It was not so much that teachers objected to the performance of the extraneous duties as to the fact that they regarded the compulsion which went with them as a reflection upon their professional standing. Correspondence on the subject in the teaching press was extensive, and most subscribed to the views of 'No Sunday Worry', when he declared in *The Schoolmaster* of 23 July, 1881: 'Clerical managers are all predominant in country parishes; and unless the teachers will tamely submit to Sunday-school, organ, choir duty, and whatever other Church work the clergy choose to put on them, their situations are not worth more than three months' purchase'.

Despite such complaints, however, it was only after the passage of the 1902 Education Act that these 'compulsory' extra duties were at last phased out.

Yet, even in the 1870s the status of teachers was far higher and more secure than it had been in the early years of the nineteenth century. For all too often the post of teacher had at that time been filled by men and women who were too old or too sick or too inefficient to do anything else. At its best, the instruction they provided was restricted to the three 'R's'

and the Bible, but in many cases it degenerated into mere child minding.

Schools in Oxfordshire. Oxfordshire was no exception to the general pattern and in 1808 when a survey of the country's educational facilities was undertaken at the request of the Archbishop of Canterbury it revealed that of about two hundred rural parishes submitting returns, over one-quarter had no school at all, while around one in five of the rest were dependent upon a dame school only, where the youngsters were taught to read and to recite their catechism but little else. Typical of these was one at Idbury, where it was noted: 'the little Children are taught to knit, read the Catechism, & a small use of the Needle.' On a rather higher plane were schools like that kept at Shipton-under-Wychwood 'by a Tradesman, who teaches writing, Reading & Accounts.'¹

Nor had things improved a great deal a decade later, when a Digest of Parochial Returns prepared in connection with the Select Committee on the Education of the Poor (England) showed that of 312 day schools within the county, one in six was a dame school.² Mary Smith, the daughter of a boot and shoemaker at Cropredy, remembered attending one such establishment in the 1820s, kept by 'Dame Garner'. Mrs. Garner 'had two little forms, which were the sum total of her school furniture; and from these seats she called, one by one, all the little ones to her knee to read. She sometimes pinned them to her knees for punishment, and always wore the same hard look of stern authority . . . No smile was ever seen to illuminate her stern countenance, from the time of our arrival at school, to the time we made our curtsies and hurried out of it'.³ Her pupils were taught only to read. It was small wonder that as late as 1858, one of Her Majesty's Inspectors of Schools, the Rev. W. Warburton, should conclude that the chief merit of the dame schools was that they kept 'the children out of the way of the mother at home, and [habituated] them to some little restraint for certain hours every day.'⁴

However, the standard of teaching was not much higher in the other Oxfordshire schools reported upon in 1808 and 1818 as being supported by endowments, or the subscriptions of the well-to-do, or the weekly pence of the children. For since there was no proper system of training available, even the ambitious or conscientious teacher had difficulty in acquiring either techniques of instruction or academic knowledge. At Mixbury, for example, the modest attainments of the scholars comprised an ability 'to read and to repeat the Church of England's catechism, and to keep themselves clean and their clothes whole, and they are employed in some little handicraft which goes a good way towards finding them in clothes.'⁵ Still less encouraging was the situation at Begbroke, where in 1818 it was decided to convert the parish poor house into a school and to appoint the existing tenant, 'Widow Parker as school mistress'. Mrs. Parker resisted her 'educational' calling for some time, but was eventually forced to accept the position in January, 1820, as an alternative to facing eviction from her home. She was to be paid 6s. a week by the parishioners,

plus ½d. per week by the scholars (which was estimated to add another 1s. to her weekly income), and was to keep the school open from 8 a. m. to 5 p. m. (with a mid-day break of two hours) from Easter to Michaelmas and from 9 a. m. to 4 p. m. from Michaelmas to Easter. The school was to operate all the year round except for six weeks at hay and corn harvest, 'when she is to go afield'.⁶ This latter employment was to be for 'her own profit'.

Establishment of the National Society. It was partly to combat such situations that in 1811 the National Society for Promoting the Education of the Poor in the Principles of the Established Church was established (usually shortened to National Society). Although it had as its main aim the setting up of Church Schools in parishes which were without educational facilities or in which only dissenters' schools existed, it did make tentative plans for the training of teachers as well. A Central School was set up near its London headquarters and here teachers could obtain in-service tuition. As the Society's annual reports pointed out, it would receive Masters and Mistresses, sent . . . from any Society or School in union with [it], to be instructed gratuitously in the National system, and will assist in paying a part of the expense of such master or mistress coming to London to be trained, if the circumstances of the particular Society or School may appear to require that assistance.⁷

It is not known if any Oxfordshire teachers were in fact sent on the course but by 1820 nineteen of the county's schools had become associated with the Society.⁸

Nevertheless, an even more significant decision taken by the Society was its adoption of the monitorial system as a means of meeting the continuing shortage of teachers. Under this, older pupils were recruited to aid – and, indeed, replace – the adult teacher in instructing their younger brethren. This step was a move away from creating a qualified teaching profession and as such was condemned by some observers as undermining still further the teacher's

social position . . . by requiring little else of him than an aptitude for enforcing discipline, an acquaintance with mechanical details for the preservation of order, and that sort of ascendancy in his school which a sergeant-major is required to exercise over a batch of raw recruits before they can pass muster on parade.⁹

But enthusiastic supporters of the scheme countered the criticism with the claim that it would enable as many as one thousand children to be taught by a single teacher. Furthermore, it is doubtful whether even instruction by a monitor was worse than that given by the 'Widow Parkers' of the teaching profession under the old régime.

A similar monitorial policy was adopted by the British and Foreign School Society, the National's main rival in the elementary school field.

The British Society, although ostensibly non-sectarian, obtained most of its support from Nonconformists, following its formation in 1814. It, too, began to provide 'training' for aspirant teachers at its headquarters at Borough Road in London. But as at its National Society counterpart, the instruction period was very brief – with three months the norm even in the 1830s, at a fee of 6s. per student per week. During this period, trainees spent most of their time learning the rudiments of the monitorial system, although some attempt was made to improve their general education as well, with the working day commencing at 6 a. m. and ending at nine or ten at night. As the Society's secretary frankly admitted in 1834: 'Our object is to keep them incessantly employed . . . and we have found in some instances that their health has suffered on account of their having been quite unaccustomed to mental occupations.'

Impact on Teaching Standards. In Oxfordshire the impact of this organization was limited – so that in 1858 a government survey indicated that a mere eighteen of the county's 403 elementary schools were linked to the British Society, as opposed to 370 associated with the Church of England. The remainder were connected with the Roman Catholics, Wesleyans, Congregationalists, Quakers and Primitive Methodists.¹⁰ Nevertheless, records preserved at the Borough Road College show that a few Oxfordshire candidates entered the British training school in its early days. One such was eighteen-year-old Robert Pargeter of Deddington who was admitted in the autumn of 1833. His widowed mother owned a bakery in Deddington, and in his letter of application Robert noted that both of his parents had been Wesleyan Methodists, 'and I have always attended that ministry. Our means have never been ample, but as we understand it is usual for Persons . . . to pay something, my Mother will strain a point to enable me to pay 6/- per week'. The application received support from members of the Banbury British School Committee. Another would-be Oxfordshire entrant at this date was William Hodgkins of Charlbury, whose sponsor described him as 'a young man of good moral and religious character'. Hodgkins had obtained teaching experience by conducting a Sunday school and having obtained 'some taste' for the job now wished 'to engage in it for a permanency'. He seems to have had the support of at least some of the Charlbury British School Committee in his aspirations.

Yet, although the setting up of the voluntary societies ultimately helped to improve the quality of teaching, the process was painfully slow. In 1842, when the Rev. Henry Hopwood, the National Society's inspector, visited schools in the Oxford diocese, his report was gloomy. Of 146 masters and mistresses whose work he had examined, only forty-three had managed 'the general routine of the school with skill; . . . 58 admit of improvement, but may be regarded as moderately competent; and . . . 45 are comparatively inefficient in this respect.' Even more seriously, a mere forty-two were 'well instructed and generally skilful in communicating knowledge', while the rest ranged from 'insufficiently informed and

slightly skilful' to 'apparently uninformed and incapable of communicating knowledge'. In other words, about two in every three were failing in their basic teaching skills. Mr. Hopwood went on to give examples of the faults he had in mind:

Much time is wasted over spelling-cards. Such spelling lessons as 'bla, ble, bli, blo, blu, ' are worse than useless . . . In one girls' school, one of the middle classes is called 'the bla class, ' from the circumstance that one of the cards . . . beginning with this combination of letters, is the reading lesson for that class; and the Mistress informed me that this card occupied them, an hour daily, for three months. I need hardly say that the minds of the children were quite stagnant.¹¹

These adverse comments are confirmed by the reports both of government inspectors and of those appointed by the Oxford diocesan board of education – which was itself set up in 1839 as part of the Church of England's response to growing governmental intervention in the education sphere. The surviving reports of the diocesan inspector for the Woodstock deanery in 1854 give a flavour of the standard of teaching generally available. At Tackley, for example, the mistress, Mildred Lofts, was described as:

a very respectable well principled, tidy, orderly, respectful Person (who took the School at a time when the Rector was in great difficulty, the previous Schoolmistress having died, & he himself being absent from ill health); but being untrained, is without any professional skill.

The children are . . . greatly deficient in Intelligence & Energy. The Needlework is good – prizes being given for the best Darning – Marking – &c. and for the best knitting done by Boys (as an employment for them while keeping Sheep – "minding birds" &c.). Five boys can knit stickings.¹²

Of the twenty-seven parishes reported upon by the diocesan inspector in that year only one school – at Duns Tew – earned the accolade of 'excellent'. This catered for almost eighty children, and according to the report there was a 'high degree of Order – Intelligence, Discipline &c . . . Writing very good – the girls' style more free than the boys'.

Establishment of Training Schools in Oxfordshire. Nevertheless, in an endeavour to raise average teaching standards in the county the Oxford diocesan board of education decided in January 1840 to establish a training school for masters at Summertown on the outskirts of Oxford. A few months later a similar institution was set up to cater for girls, first at Reading and then from 1845 at Kidlington. The principal of the male training school was the Rev. John Thorp, who had previously been vicar of Stadhampton. In its early stages the board appears to have laid down that pupils were to be admitted between the ages of fifteen and eighteen and were

to have a fixed period of instruction of three years. Fees were £20 a year – with candidates also expected to bring two sheets and three towels with them – but Exhibitions were to be offered to some. This training school survived from 1840 until 1853, when a new and larger training college was opened at Culham. During its twelve or so years of life, it admitted 121 pupils, over one-quarter of them over the age of twenty-one, and despite the original intention, many of them stayed for a few weeks or months only.¹³ Indeed, of the first fifty students recruited by the training school during the years 1840-1844, no less than ten left after receiving instruction for a year or less, while eight others left prematurely because of ill-health, unsuitability or similar reasons. A mere five remained for more than two years.¹⁴

The subjects studied included English Reading, Latin and English Grammar, Writing, Arithmetic, History, Geography and Natural Science, Linear Drawing and Mapping, with a comprehensive programme of religious instruction. But in view of the limited staff at the training school and the brevity of most students' period of study, it is doubtful how far the programme was actually carried through. This suspicion is reinforced by the fact that many of the trainees had an extremely low standard of scholastic attainment when they entered – as surviving records make clear. There was, for example, the 17½-year-old son of an Enstone ragman, who entered the school in July 1844. In the opinion of the principal he was very coarse in manner & appearance – in this respect did not much improve – expert as Arithmetn. – but not otherwise of much ability – was appointed to the school at Langley Marish, his coarse habits seemed to follow him, he left after giving but little satisfaction.¹⁵

Then there was John Neighbour, aged 16¼, who was the son of a carpenter from Wheatley and also entered the school in July 1844. He, too, remained in training for two years and was classed as of 'moderate ability . . . but his moral strength doubtful – went to Souldern where he obtained credit for his School – but from moral failure compelled to leave'. By 1868, however, he had become established at a school at Chipping Warden and had apparently overcome his 'moral' problems.¹⁶

Among the older students was William Chester, who entered the school in October 1849, at the age of twenty-two. Immediately prior to this he had been employed as a domestic servant at the rectory at Wootton near Woodstock, and was sponsored in his new venture by his former master. He remained at Summertown only nine months, although he was a candidate of 'considerable ability', who the principal considered would have benefited from a full period of training. But, as he added, Chester 'was wanted to take charge of Wootton School for which he came to prepare', and after his brief training that was what he did.¹⁷

Social Background of Students. The training school records also

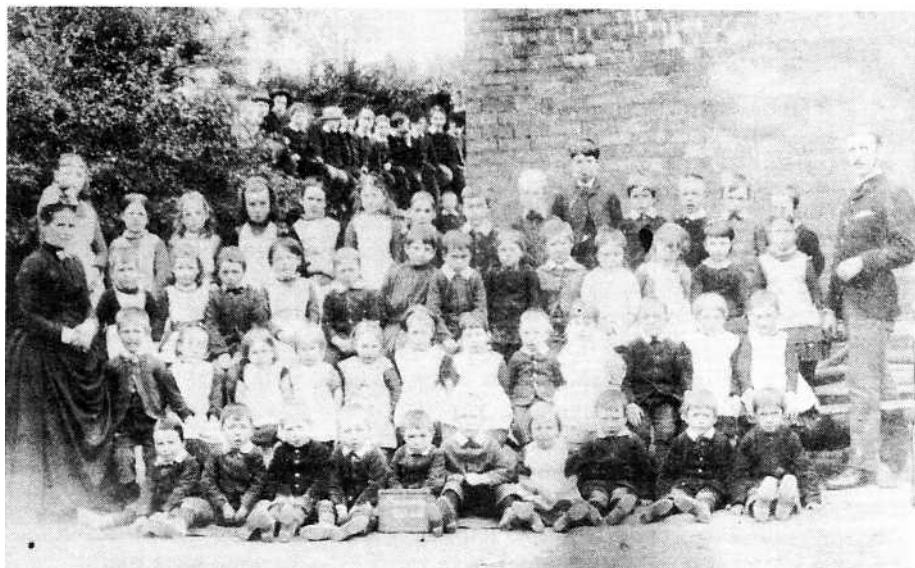
provide information on the social background of the students. Thus of twelve candidates who entered in 1844, two were the sons of bedmakers in Oxford colleges, two were the offspring of carpenters, two were mature students – one a former servant and the other a former compositor – while the parents of the remainder included a farmer, an apothecary, a ragman and a labourer. In two cases no occupation was shown.

Many of the students were surprisingly young when they left to take up their first teaching appointments. As we have seen, John Neighbour was only eighteen when he started at Souldern, while George Simmonds, who was described as 'an ingenuous – hopeful – well ordered youth', was a mere seventeen years of age when he left after $2\frac{3}{4}$ years to take charge of Stockton school near Southam in the winter of 1852-53. There are several similar examples in the records, and in such cases the master can have been only a very few years the senior of his eldest pupils. At the time of the 1851 Census of Population, indeed, out of 180 schoolmasters employed in Oxfordshire, twelve were under the age of twenty and a further twenty-nine were aged between twenty and twenty-five. Twenty years later the proportion of young men was still higher, with 141 out of the 327 male schoolmasters and teachers employed being under the age of twenty-five. Those over forty-five years of age numbered, by contrast, a mere sixty-five. And it was in these circumstances that the Rev. H. W. Bellairs, Her Majesty's Inspector for Oxfordshire, noted in 1868, that one cause of failure in the county's elementary schools was 'the unskilfulness as well as the comparative youth and inexperience of the teachers'. However, he saw shortage of funds to run the schools efficiently and the irregularity of attendance of the children as equally damaging characteristics.¹⁸

Government Efforts to Raise Standards. Meanwhile, in 1846 the Government itself began to take steps to raise teaching standards. The weaknesses of the monitorial system were already well established. The 'instruction' given was mechanical, repetitive and often inaccurate; and as Henry Hopwood noted after his tour of Oxford diocesan schools in 1842, in 'large monitorial schools, these little deputy rulers – who have sometimes, and not always undeservedly, been called "tyrants in rags" – are very apt to become petulant, conceited, and capricious.'¹⁹ They were also unable to provide the moral guidance which was increasingly seen as a major function of the teacher. In an effort to remedy the situation, therefore, the Committee of Council on Education introduced in 1846 the post of pupil-teacher. Pupil-teachers were to be apprenticed for five years at any school approved by H. M. I. and were to receive a state stipend, ranging from £10 per annum for their first year to £20 per annum for their last. During this period they would receive instruction from the master or mistress of their school and would also act as assistant teachers.²⁰ After the apprenticeship had been successfully completed, the youngsters were eligible for admission to a training institution as a Queen's Scholar or Exhibitioner. If that course, too, were carried through satisfactorily, a

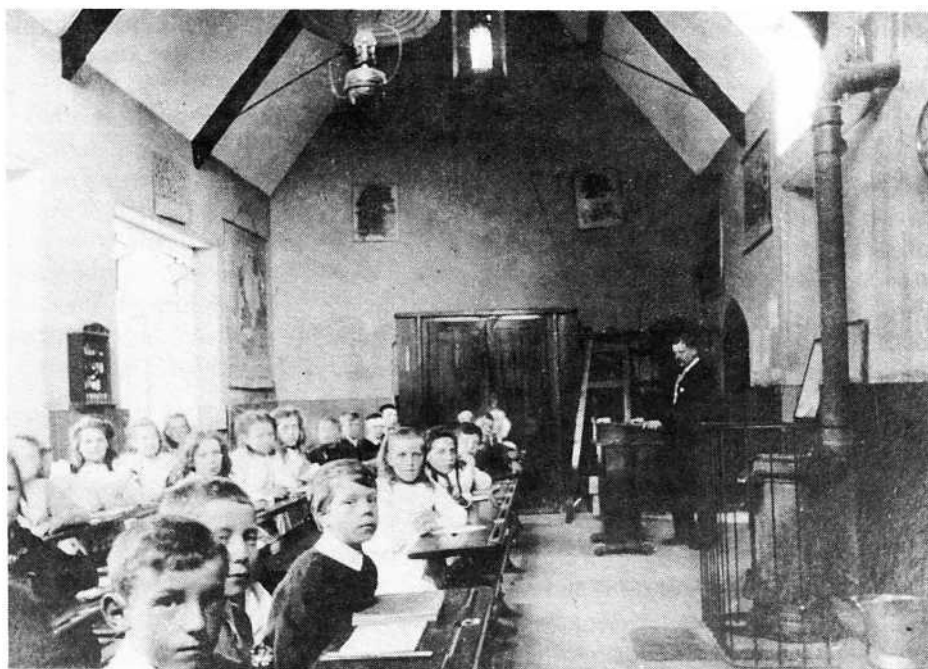
certificate would be issued and the young teacher would be entitled to receive an annual government grant as an addition to his or her normal basic salary.²¹ After fifteen years' experience a state pension would also be payable.

This policy remained in operation until 1862, when the Revised Code changed the whole basis of government grants to elementary education. Thereafter all sums were to be paid over to the school managers and not to the teachers or pupil-teachers, who now had to negotiate with their employers direct on the salary question. Often, as H. M. I. Bellairs noted disapprovingly, this meant that managers hired their pupil-teachers 'at the lowest price at which they could be had . . . In some cases I have heard of £4 per annum as the stipend of a pupil-teacher.'²² Similarly, the pensions concession introduced in 1846 was also withdrawn (although aspects of it were revived in 1875), and the various government grants available to elementary schools were themselves amended. Henceforth, except for



Cropredy School, c.1888. The master is John James Bonner, who remained there as headmaster from 1884 until 1910, shortly before his death. At the time of the photograph he was aged about thirty. The mistress on the left of the picture is his sister. She kept house for him until he married and also helped in the school, chiefly with needle-work. She had no teaching qualifications. I am indebted to Mrs. Hilda Eriksen of Cropredy for the photograph and for information about Mr. Bonner.

building grants, all payments were to be assessed on the basis of the attendance levels of the pupils, plus their success at an annual examination in the three 'R's' to be conducted by an H. M. I. The Revised Code added greatly to the anxieties of teachers, since at a time when there was no framework of compulsory education – a situation only remedied for all children by the Education Act of 1880 – and when child labour was common, even the achievement of satisfactory attendances was a considerable problem. And in efforts to maximise on the examination grants for reading, writing and arithmetic, many teachers concentrated on these subjects to the virtual exclusion of all else, save for religious instruction and needlework, which was compulsory for the girls. Teaching became a hard and monotonous grind for instructors and pupils alike. Only in schools without a certificated head teacher, and therefore without the essential prerequisite for the award of a government grant, was this regimen avoided.



Horspath Church School in 1907. The bare walls and long desks for the pupils were typical of schools in the 1880s, too. The headmaster, William Booker, was in his early fifties and had been at the school for some years. Like Mr. Bonner of Cropredy he was certificated but had not been to a training college. Photograph from collection at Oxfordshire Education Office.

But, of course, in most cases such institutions had equally damaging 'dame school' characteristics. And in any case, with the passage of the 1870 Education Act, every officially approved elementary school had to have a certificated head teacher. Not that this meant that all of the heads had been formally trained – for it was possible for in-service teachers to take the certificate examinations held each December at the various training colleges without receiving residential instruction. In 1878, H. M. I. Pickard, the county's new Inspector, calculated that of sixty-one masters and eighty-three mistresses whom he had interviewed during the year, forty-four of the former and thirty-three of the latter had been trained, while the rest were untrained:

From this the conclusion may be drawn that there is a great variety in the quality of the instruction given. The low salaries of some of the mistresses are easily accounted for by the fact that not a few are only provisionally certified.²³

The weaknesses in the training of women teachers were of particular importance, since in Oxfordshire they outnumbered their male counterparts by well over two to one. At a time when there were few alternative occupations open for girls, teaching was an attractive proposition.²⁴

Effect of Reforms. Nevertheless, in 1846 when the pupil-teacher scheme was introduced, the problems of the Revised Code lay well in the future, and there were hopes that as a result of the reforms, better prepared pupils would enter the training colleges. Yet an examination of the admissions registers at Culham leads to the view that these changes were slow in coming. In the period up to 1880 the social background of students remained very much what it had been in the early days at Summertown, and although students' scholastic achievements appear to have been a little higher, even this was not certain. Thus a twenty-one-year-old former railway clerk from Chipping Warden, who had lost his leg in an accident and was admitted as a private student in 1868, had to leave after a year, being 'quite unfit for a schoolmaster, could not be taught to spell or to compose decently.'²⁵ Then there was the eighteen-year-old from Headington near Oxford, who had served a five-year apprenticeship at Headington Quarry National School before entering Culham in 1879. Although he was described as 'disagreeable' and 'a poor teacher', he nevertheless managed to get a post at Benson National School in February 1881 at a salary of 25s. per week.

The parental occupations of students likewise varied little over the years. Of thirty-seven candidates admitted in January 1870, for example, three were the sons of gardeners, three of labourers, four of grocers, and eleven were the offspring of small tradespeople. Two more were the sons of schoolmasters, and one of a customs house officer. Much the same kind of family background emerges from an examination of the forty-two students admitted at the beginning of 1871, with nearly half of the candidates coming from tradesmen's families. Such social origins

were typical of apprentice teachers in rural areas – as H. M. I. Cook confirmed, when he wrote: 'In the country . . . [they] are the children of small tradesmen, yeomen, or the upper servants in gentlemen's families.'²⁶

Needless to say the vast majority of the students settled down to a satisfactory career once they had qualified – like Albert Higgs, who was appointed to Great Rollright School at Christmas 1874, at the age of twenty-two. When he left in April 1876, to take a larger school in Wolverhampton, he was presented with an inkstand and blotting book, while his niece, who had assisted him, was given a travelling bag. The presentation was made by the incumbent 'who in a few but touching words alluded to the universal sorrow he heard expressed on every side at the departure of Mr. Higgs'.²⁷ Then there was Charles Cooke, who was appointed to Standlake School at Christmas 1880. He subsequently wrote to the Culham principal that he was 'never happier in his life', and the principal himself added the comment: 'An Excellent Teacher & Disciplinarian'. Similarly, William Sumner, who moved to Banbury National School in 1880, proudly proclaimed three years later: 'my school is classed not only excellent but the best in district'.

But on the other side of the coin there were a few doubtful characters, like John Keeling, a Yorkshireman, who left Culham after about six months to take 'temporary charge of Beckley School'. According to the principal, he subsequently 'ran off from there abruptly with a girl from Oxford, found very ill in some disreputable house and taken to work house, after home by his mother. Recovered, but believed to have died soon after.'

Teaching Burdens: The Annual Inspection. Some men and women found the stresses of teaching large numbers of children without adequate assistance too much for them. One such was Sidney Holland, who took up an appointment at Stanton Harcourt in 1878 at an annual salary of £100 'to include organ and sewing'. But by July the burden of his position was obviously wearing him out, as the principal of Culham noted: 'Has 102 children in school with no assistance but his mother.' Eighteen months later he left Stanton Harcourt, 'obliged to go to a Lunatic Asylum – worry & anxiety'. Although he seems to have recovered temporarily and to have taken up a fresh position at the small school at Milton in Berkshire, he remained there a few months only. Holland eventually died in October 1887 at the early age of thirty. On his memorial card was the text: 'Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.'

For teachers like Holland it was at the time of the annual inspection of the school by the H. M. I. that the pressures were greatest. Thanks to the Revised Code, the financial future of a school – and even a teacher's own annual income – could depend upon success or failure on that occasion. For many school managers paid their teachers partly by a share of the grant, instead of wholly by a fixed sum, in order to encourage greater

effort. At Shutford, for example, the mistress in the late 1880s was paid £50 a year plus one-third of the grant, while her male counterpart at Charlbury Board School obtained £80 per annum, plus one-fifth of the grant; his senior female assistant obtained £50 plus one-tenth of the grant.²⁸

In these circumstances it is possible to trace a note of rising hysteria in many school log books as the time of the annual visit drew near. At Claydon Board School, for example, the master, Henry Pollinger, began his monthly mock examinations in preparation for the great day six months beforehand. But here attendance was the great problem – with the boys illegally employed on the farms and the girls as domestic servants. Many were therefore unable to complete the 250 attendances a year necessary to qualify for the grant. In October, 1880, for example, Pollinger noted: 'F^k. Hughes St^d. III still at work [he was employed by a member of the School Board] and cannot now make his 250 attendances for Examⁿ. Jane Butler St^d. III is at service in the village. G. Langford . . . has been present 11 times out of 40, since Harvest Holidays'. Despite all the anxieties, however, H. M. I. Pickard reported in January 1881: 'The children have passed a creditable Examination'. But Mr. Pollinger had clearly decided that the strain was too great, and in November 1881 he resigned. His successor remained only a year, before he, too, resigned – to be replaced by Miss Elizabeth Farquharson, a woman of obvious determination. She faced much the same problems: 'If something is not done immediately the "Average Attendance" will be very small & the "Grant" correspondingly so', she wrote in March, 1883, shortly after taking up her new appointment.²⁹ And on 31 October, 1885, came the comment: 'The attendance of some of my pupils is most distressing.'

Similar preoccupations concerned other teachers – as at Souldern, where the master recorded on 25 June, 1875: 'This being the week fixed for the Inspection I impressed upon the minds of children their duty to be present which was readily adhered to'. A poor result at the annual inspection could, indeed, mean more than financial penalties, for all too often school managers blamed the teacher for failures – rather than the children of the generally slack policy towards enforcement of the legal limits on child labour. Teachers who did not match up to the standards expected could, therefore, face rapid dismissal.

Yet another cause of worry was the relationship which many elementary teachers experienced with Her Majesty's Inspectors. This stemmed in part from their wide differences of background and education. Most Inspectors were from well-to-do professional families and has been educated at one of the older universities – like the Rev. H. W. Bellairs, who inspected in Oxfordshire schools from 1844 to 1872, and had been educated at Shrewsbury and Oxford. His successor, the Rev. H. Adair Pickard, was the son of an army officer and was educated at Rugby and Christ Church, Oxford, before moving into the inspectorate. Such men

were 'little inclined to regard teachers as in any way their equals', while the teachers, for their part, complained of the 'young men . . . fresh from the university, who [had] never seen the inside of a public elementary school' prior to assuming their official duties.³⁰

Problems of Discipline. The Cane. Elsewhere, as Flora Thompson remembered of Cottisford school in the 1880s, it might be unruly children who would make the teacher's life a misery. Here there was an elderly mistress in charge. She was a poor disciplinarian

And the struggle to maintain some degree of order wore her almost to shreds. Again there was always a buzz of whispering in class; stupid and unnecessary questions were asked, and too long intervals elapsed between the word of command and the response . . . She ruled, if she can be said to have ruled at all, by love and patience and ready forgiveness. In time, even the blackest of her sheep realized this and kept within certain limits; just sufficient order was maintained to avoid scandal'.³¹

Needless to say some of her colleagues were made of sterner stuff and responded to such situations by frequent canings in order to impose discipline. In November 1865, for example, the new master at Launton admitted that he had been: 'Obliged to use the stick very freely in school today, for without it I could in no way obtain anything like Discipline, as if I simply spoke to the children they would stand and laugh at me.'³² At Claydon, the redoubtable Miss Farquharson was equally ready to resort to punishment – as on 13 March, 1883: 'Flogged boys in Standards IV & V & kept them in till 5 p. m.' Few teachers felt confident enough to emulate the master at Mixbury, who in large, clear letters proudly entered in his book on 14 November, 1870: 'Corporal Punishment abolished in the school.' It is not known if he kept to this resolution. Certainly George Swinford, who attended Filkins School in the 1890s, recalled of Mr. Lewis, the headmaster:

He used to glory in giving me a good thrashing for the least little thing, but when I got older, I turned on him and kicked his legs, then he used to send my mother [a] note, then I had another good hiding.³³

Other teachers became discouraged by their isolation within the village community – like John Hughes, who left the headship of Hook Norton school in 1866 because he was 'naturally of a retiring disposition, and my occupation has fostered it, and I felt myself pained often by an unwillingness to associate with my equals in age &c. It was chiefly to place myself where such association was unavoidable that I was willing to give up the work'.³⁴ For a woman teacher, even marriage was difficult, as H. M. I. Cook pointed out: 'She could not marry a labourer, nor an artisan who was not an educated man, and she was not very likely, generally speaking, to marry a

person very much above herself. ' ³⁵ It was in this context that such organizations as the Chipping Norton and Charlbury Teachers' Association and the Oxford District Teachers' Association – offshoots of the National Union of Elementary Teachers, which has been formed in 1870 – could play a role. In addition to discussing questions of educational interest, they organized teas, concerts and even glee clubs for their members. ³⁶

Occasionally, it might be the lack of progress of their pupils which induced depression. At Souldern, in April 1869, the mistress noted resignedly: 'The progress of the scholars is very slow, their being naturally dull; the parents here do not appreciate learning & fill their children's heads with its uselessness, they send their children to school simply to be free from the care of them.' ³⁷ A little earlier, her colleague, the headmaster at Stonesfield school, has similarly complained: 'I think the children in Wales, my native country, are much cleverer than the children here, especially in arithmetic; they can do reading, writing, and arithmetic easily at 10. I think these children would require half time up to 13.' ³⁸

Yet, despite the hardships of the daily grind – and Culham College records indicate a considerable sprinkling of men dying prematurely, often from tuberculosis – the teaching profession was attractive to the poor but able youngster, who at least by mid-Victorian times saw it as a means of rising in the world. This was especially true of working-class country girls, for whom teaching offered an independent, comparatively well-paid career away from the all-too-possible alternative of domestic service. And, of course, for those who were good at their job, there was the rewarding knowledge that they were guiding young minds towards a new and broader life than that known by their parents' generation. This remained true despite the continuing requirement that they inculcate into their charges the correct social attitudes towards those in authority. As the Rev. H. Newland put it, in a lecture to parochial clergy and schoolmasters in the Oxford diocese during 1856:

When you have manufactured a steady, honest, God-faring, Church-going population, then you have done your duties as Schoolmasters.

And another lecturer at the same conference declared:

The first object of a Christian school is to communicate religious principles and impressions, because these conduce to the glory of God and the eternal happiness of man . . . The second object . . . is to give the mind the power of acquiring knowledge and drawing sound conclusions. ³⁹

Against this general background, the remarks of 'Douglas No. 2' in a letter to The Schoolmaster of 24 September, 1881, are easy to understand: 'I believe there is no work which taxes the energy so much as

FOOTNOTES

1. Return of Schools, 1808, at Bodleian Library, Oxford, MS. Oxf. Dioc. Pp. d. 707.
2. **Select Committee into the Education of the Poor (England): Digest of Parochial Returns**, Parliamentary Papers 1819, Vol. IX, Pt. B. Among them was a school at Finmere, 'under the direction of the parish clerk', which was attended by about thirty children. Then came the significant – and characteristic – comment in these Oxfordshire returns: 'The poor are desirous of the means of instruction.'
3. **The Autobiography of Mary Smith, Schoolmistress and Nonconformist**, (London 1892), p. 16.
4. **Report of the Committee of Council on Education**, Parliamentary Papers 1859, Vol. XXI, Pt. I, p. 117.
5. Return of Schools, 1808.
6. MS. D. D. Par. Begbroke d. 4, item c, letters dated January and February, 1820, in Bodleian Library, Oxford.
7. See, for example, the **Ninth Annual Report of the National Society for 1820**, p. 27. R. W. Rich, **The Training of Teachers in England and Wales during the Nineteenth Century** (Cambridge 1933) p. 41, notes that by 1834 the Central School of the National Society had trained 2, 039 teachers – with an average training period latterly of five months.
8. *Ibid.*
9. Asher Tropp, **The School Teachers** (London, 1957), p. 7, quoting from the **Educational Expositor**, March 1853.
10. **Report of the Commissioners on the State of Popular Education in England**, Parliamentary Papers 1861, Vol. XXI, Pt. I, p. 607.
11. **Fourth Annual Report of the Oxford Diocesan Board of Education** (Oxford 1843), pp. 20 and 26.
12. Report of Inspector in the Deanery of Woodstock for 1854 at Bodleian Library, Oxford, MS. Oxf. Dioc. Pp. e. 51.
13. Leonard Naylor, **Culham Church of England Training College for Schoolmasters 1853–1953** (Oxford n. d. c. 1953), p. 9. The girls' training school was transferred to the new college at Fishponds, near Bristol, in 1853.
14. Oxford Diocesan Training School, Pupils' Register 1840–1853, preserved at Culham College, Oxford, and consulted by kind co-operation of the librarian.
15. *Ibid.*
16. *Ibid.*
17. Chester proved a fairly successful teacher. In 1854, the diocesan inspector noted of his school: 'The Master, who has been trained for the purpose, at Summertown Training School, has improved the School considerably. The Boys were examined at the same time & in the same subjects as the Girls, & displayed about the same acquaintance with the minute particulars of Scripture & History. They are not perhaps quite so intelligent. In Writing & Summing far superior. . . There is still room for improvement in spirit – intelligence – order & cleanliness among some of the lower boys'. Inspector's report for the Woodstock deanery at the Bodleian Library, MS. Oxf. Dioc. P. e. 51.
18. **Report of the Committee of Council on Education**, Parliamentary Papers 1868–69, Vol. XX. Mr. Bellairs's General Report for 1868, p. 23.
19. **Fourth Annual Report of the Oxford Diocesan Board of Education**, p. 27.
20. **Minutes of the Committee of Council on Education for 1846**, Parliamentary Papers, 1847, Vol. XLV, p. 5. A sum of £5 per annum was paid to the teacher for instructing the apprentice, at the same time.
21. *Ibid.*, p. 6. These extra grants ranged from £15 to £20 a year for a master who had

undergone one year's training to £25 or £30 a year for a man who had received three years' training. The women teachers were to receive two-thirds of these sums. See Asher Tropp, *op.cit.*, pp.13-23 for a discussion of the development of the pupil-teacher system.

22. **Report of the Committee of Council on Education**, Parliamentary Papers, 1872, Vol. XXII, Mr. Bellairs's General Report, p. 34. Indeed as late as 1904 the pupil teacher at Stanton St. John received only £8 per annum, while paid mistresses at Adderbury and Noke secured a mere £3. 18s.. See Filed Report of Oxfordshire Education Committee LER/1/1 at Oxfordshire Record Office. There are several other similar cases – at Sibford Gower the rate was only £2. 2s. !
23. **Report of the Committee of Council on Education for 1878-79**, Parliamentary Papers, 1878-79, Vol. XXIII, General Report of the Rev. H. A. Pickard, p.663. Even in 1904, shortly after the establishment of Oxfordshire local education authority, around 60 per cent of the county's elementary schools had untrained heads. See Filed Report of Oxfordshire Education Committee, 1 March 1904, CER/1/1 at Oxfordshire Record Office, for relevant details.
24. At the 1851 Census there were 523 schoolmistresses recorded, as opposed to only 180 schoolmasters. Of the females, thirty-two were under the age of twenty and seventy-three were aged between twenty and twenty-five. By 1881 there were 517 schoolmasters, male teachers, professors, lecturers, etc. as opposed to 1,191 females.
25. Students' Registers at Culham College. Subsequent details of students' careers are derived from the same source.
26. John Hurt, **Education in Evolution** (London, 1971), p.122.
27. **Oxford Times**, April 1876. This extract is included with Mr. Higgs's records at Culham College. In March 1879, Higgs moved again – to Henbury, near Bristol, where he was said to be 'getting on well'.
28. Shutford National School, Cash Book and Accounts at Oxfordshire Record Office, TS.B.7, and Charlbury School Board Minutes T/SM.4/i also at the Record Office.
29. Claydon Board School Log Book at Oxfordshire Record Office, T/SL.16/i.
30. See obituary notice of the Rev. H.A. Pickard in **The Times**, 29 September, 1905. Asher Tropp, *op.cit.*, p.119. Nancy Ball, **Her Majesty's Inspectorate** (Birmingham 1963).
31. Flora Thompson, **Lark Rise to Candleford** (Oxford 1963 ed.), p.200-201.
32. Launton School Log Book at Oxfordshire Record Office, T/SL.32/i.
33. G. Swinford, **History of Filkins** at Bodleian Library, MS.Top.Oxon.d.475, p.41.
34. Letter from John Hughes in Culham College Register of Students 1853-59.
35. John Hurt, *op.cit.*, pp.140-141.
36. **The Schoolmaster**, 22 October and 31 December, 1881, for example. The president for 1882 of the Oxford District Teachers' Association was the headmaster of Milton-under-Wychwood Board School; his vice-president the master at Shipton-under-Wychwood National School.
37. Souldern School Log Book, entry for 6 April, 1869, at Oxfordshire Record Office, T/SL.46/i.
38. **Royal Commission on the Employment of Children, Young Persons and Women in Agriculture**, Parliamentary Papers, 1868-69, Vol. XIII, Evidence with Mr. G. Culley's Report on Oxfordshire and Berkshire, p. 358.
39. **Report of an Educational Conference of Parochial Clergy and Schoolmasters in the Diocese of Oxford** (Oxford 1856), pp. 23 and 38.

THE BANBURY BLUECOAT FOUNDATION

The heavy leather-bound minute book which starts in the year 1785, is now filled and will shortly be deposited for safe-keeping with the County Archivist. Perhaps, therefore, this is an appropriate time to peep into that book and its predecessor and to tell something of the fascinating story of Banbury's Bluecoat School.

It was in 1551 that King Edward VI founded the first Bluecoat School, now known as Christ's College at Horsham in Sussex, but it was not until 1705 that a Subscribers' Meeting was held to establish a Bluecoat School in Banbury and to adopt rules for its regulation.

Nine trustees were authorised to select the children who were to be educated and clothed by the Charity. They were also charged with placing some of the children out as apprentices or, for the girls, domestic servants.

The Master was to receive a salary of £25 a year and the Mistress £12.10. 0. Strict criteria were laid down for the Master's qualifications. He had to be a member of the Church of England, of sober life and conversation, one who frequented the Holy Communion. He must have good government of himself and his passions and be of meek temper and humble behaviour. He should write a good hand and understand arithmetic, teach the children the principles of religion and bring them to church regularly on Sundays and Holy days. He was not to teach any other children nor to receive money from the friends of any of the scholars.

He also had to teach the girls to write. This may seem a little strange until we examine the necessary qualifications of the Mistress. They were similar to those of the Master, except that she need not be able to write or understand arithmetic! However, she had to teach the girls to knit, sew, mark and spin.

Each boy was provided with a coat, breeches, cap, two bands, two pairs of stockings, two pairs of shoes and one pair of shoe buckles. The girls each had two caps, two whisks, one gown, one petticoat, two shifts, two pairs of stockings, one pair of knit gloves, two pairs of shoes and one pair of buckles.

There were to be not more than 30 boys and 20 girls in the first year. The income of the charity was basically from public subscriptions although it was later endowed with property left by, among others, the Norths of Wroxton Abbey.

For 112 years, from 1705 to 1817, the school was held in the upper floor of Banbury Gaol in the Market Place. Today, a plaque on the wall says "Banbury Jail 1649-1852". What a pity it is that it does not also read "Banbury Bluecoat School 1705-1817".

By 1817, crime was on the increase and the Borough needed more room to accommodate its guests. It so happened that the National School had recently been established on land belonging to Bluecoat in Southam

Road – today we know it as St. Mary's School.

So the Bluecoat School decided to leave its rooms over the Jail and moved in with the National School. The Trustees felt that in so doing they were also doing a service to the Town, as it would have cost £2000 to build a new Jail. They generously agreed to let the Borough rent the old

BANBURY BLUE COAT SCHOOLS.

TRUSTEES:—

Mr. J. G. Rusher,
Mr. J. Barford,
Mr. H. Ward,

Rev. C. Forbes,
Lieut. Col. North,
Mr. H. R. Brayne,

Rev. T. Mardon,
Mr. T. Staley,
Mr. S. Chesterman.

RULES

TO BE OBSERVED BY THE CHILDREN ATTENDING THE

BANBURY BLUE COAT SCHOOLS.

SCHOOL HOURS:—

On Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays—from 9 till 12 in the Morning, and from 2 till 5 in the Afternoon. During the short days, the Afternoon School to begin and end half an hour earlier.

On Wednesdays and Saturdays—from 9 in the Morning till 1 in the Afternoon.

On Sundays—at a quarter before 9 in the Morning, and a quarter before 2 in the Afternoon.

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NEGLECT OF ATTENDANCE AT PUBLIC WORSHIP ON SUNDAYS, AND AT PRAYERS AT SCHOOL ON SUNDAYS AND WEEK-DAYS, WITHOUT LEAVE GRANTED FOR SOME NECESSARY CAUSE, WILL ON NO ACCOUNT BE ALLOWED.

Parents must take care to send their Children to School *punctually* at the appointed hours, *clean washed and combed, with their hair cut short, and their clothes well mended.*

☞ The Committee are resolved to enforce this rule strictly: and any Child offending against it may be sent back by the Master or Mistress.

No Child is to be absent from the School without leave of the Clergyman. Every Child offending against this rule shall forfeit at the rate of *three-pence a day* for absence, and not be received again into the School until the forfeit has been paid, and his or her Clothes and Shoes given up to the Master or Mistress; but the Child may be re-elected, if the Trustees shall think proper. If a Child be ill, leave must be obtained for absence from School.

No Child is to be admitted into the School, or dismissed from it, except by the Trustees, or by the Committee of the National Schools, with their Sanction.

Every Child shall be answerable to the Master or Mistress for any bad behaviour while out of School.

~~~~~  
N. B. Every Child leaving School, with a good character, after finishing his or her education, shall receive a Bible and Prayer Book.

One-half of the money received for Needle-work, done in the Girls' School, is usually applied to the benefit of the Girls; regard being had in the apportionment of it to their respective merits.

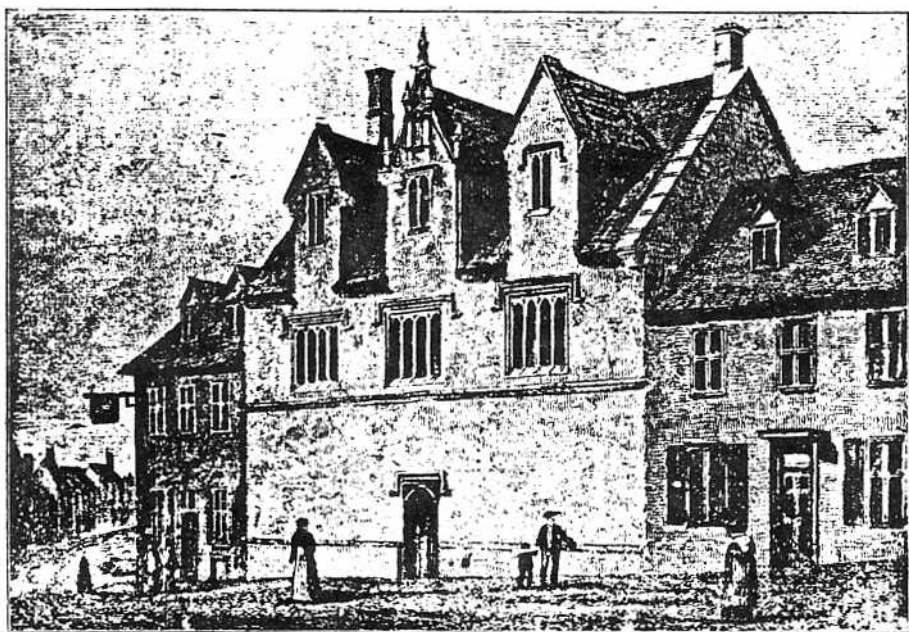
RUSHER, PRINTER.

premises for 12 guineas a year.

The minute book contains the story of a ten-year struggle, after 1817, to get the Borough to pay the 12 guineas yearly rent. Letters were written to Mayor after Mayor – usually without any reply. Finally, petitions were sent to the Recorder and to the Lord Chancellor himself before a settlement could be effected.

Then the Trustees had to eat humble pie. It transpired that they had never owned the building – at any rate there were no deeds to prove ownership, and it seemed that the Corporation was, after all, the rightful owner.

When the children were transferred to the National School in 1817 the Bluecoat Charity agreed to pay £30 per annum for the education of what were then described as the "Blue boys and girls". By 1850, it was decided that there was no longer any need to provide clothing, so the whole of the funds were devoted to education, and in 1859 it was resolved that 50 children be educated at the National School at a cost not exceeding one penny each per week.



Banbury Gaol in the Market Place, the upper floor of which housed the Bluecoat School from 1705 to 1817. Reproduced from *Banbury Through a Hundred Years*, by William Potts.

A typical budget – for the year 1824 – was:

Education	30. 0. 0.
Draper's bill for clothing	30. 13. 7.
Making up clothing	4. 6. 0.
Shoes	17. 0. 0.
Books	1. 0. 0.
Land Tax	<u>2. 0.</u>
	<u>£83. 1. 7.</u>

In that year there were 16 boys and 12 girls, so the average cost was less than £3 per pupil per annum!

The minute book contains a fascinating picture of the life and thoughts of those times. For example, one scholar was asked to leave because the Trustees had found out that his mother had omitted to go through the formality of a wedding ceremony. In 1845 it was resolved that henceforth the girls should knit both their own and the boys' stockings. In May 1846 there were complaints of "unbecoming behaviour in Church", so all 25 "Blue children" were paraded in front of the Trustees and told that they would be deprived of their uniform and made to attend church in their own clothing as a mark of their bad behaviour if it occurred again.

This led, in 1847, to new rules being drawn up, of which a photocopy is appended to this article.

Times and conditions gradually changed until, in 1913, the National and Bluecoat Schools finally merged and surplus funds were to be used for scholarships and exhibitions to secondary and technical schools. Regular examinations were held until the Education Act of 1944 took over the control of secondary education.

Once again, the Trustees of the Bluecoat Foundation had to rethink, and our income is now devoted to grants for clothing and uniforms to deserving secondary school children, to authorised school journeys and to Sunday School prizes. For example, our income in the year ended 31st March 1975 was £145, out of which £118 was spent on grants to pupils of Banbury Schools.

It is nice to realise that the goodwill and charitable thoughts of our ancestors of 1705 are still alive and I like to think that even today, in spite of all that the Welfare State provides, there is a fund, albeit a small one, which the Banbury Bluecoat Foundation can apply to those who are in real need of help.

John Portergill

A VICTORIAN PARSON AND HIS PEOPLE: RECTOR FFOULKES AT WIGGINTON

In 1878, when the Reverend Edmund Salisbury Ffoulkes was about to leave the benefice of Wigginton, he compiled a series of notes on aspects of the life of the parish for the information of his successor. These notes provide a revealing picture of the state of village society at the time and of the problems which it presented to the parson.

Ffoulkes was evidently a highly conscientious clergyman: but he was essentially an academic and, as such, out of place in this small and in those days remote North Oxfordshire village. Born in 1819, he matriculated at Jesus College, Oxford, in 1837, and was elected a fellow of the college (of which his father, Henry Ffoulkes, was Principal, 1817-57) in 1842. He was attracted to the Tractarian Movement, and in 1854 he joined the Roman Catholic church – a move which necessitated the forfeiture of his fellowship. Subsequently, however, he returned to the Church of England and was restored to his Anglican orders. His presentation to the benefice of Wigginton, of which Jesus College was patron, in 1876 was evidently a temporary expedient to provide him with a livelihood; and only two years later he escaped from what he must have regarded as a form of academic exile when he returned to Oxford to become vicar of the University Church of St. Mary the Virgin for the remainder of his career. He was a prolific author and controversialist, the Bodleian Library catalogue listing twenty-seven works from his pen.

It was perhaps inevitable that such a man should have had difficulty in establishing close relations with his rustic parishioners; but the social and economic circumstances of the late eighteen-seventies placed additional obstacles in his path. These were years of acute agricultural depression when the small farmers were faced with a threat of bankruptcy and there was increasing distress among the farm labourers.¹ In the absence of a resident squire the parson tended, despite acts of generosity which were evidently taken for granted, to be seen as the one person in the village associated with the "governing classes", and so regarded with suspicion and even hostility as somehow to blame for the prevailing social maladies. This is reflected in the recurring complaints throughout Ffoulkes's notes of the apathy and lack of co-operation on the part of the farmers and of the sullen indifference exhibited by the labourers. In some degree this situation developed in response to anti-clerical propaganda, and Ffoulkes records significantly that some of his parishioners were "persuaded" to absent themselves from the services in his church.²

For most of the labourers, however, there was little opportunity for the display of anything other than an attitude of dumb resentment, though their token resistance to the rector's attempt to impose conditions on the tenure of the glebe allotments reveals the feelings that lay beneath the surface. Memories survived of the treatment meted out to their

fathers who had been driven to violent demonstrations fifty years earlier; and the union movement among the labourers was still in its infancy, meeting stiff resistance. Ffoulkes gives us a vivid glimpse of these despairing men in his picture of the "knot of idlers" who could only testify to their discontent by absenting themselves from church on Sundays and assembling at the further end of the village before drifting into the public house – though, as he puts it, "they make no stir or noise".

It was only in 1895, when the Parish Council came into existence under the Local Government Act of the preceding year, that the labourers found a voice in the politics of the village. At the first election to the council all five seats went to farmers on a show of hands at an open meeting; but when a secret poll was demanded all five seats were captured by what was termed the "labourers' party". The new council at once embarked upon a "witch-hunt" in which the then rector was evidently the principal suspect. Though no major scandals were in fact revealed, the rector's reactions clearly showed the gulf that had developed between parson and people since the old institutions of village self-government had fallen into desuetude following the enclosure of the Wigginton open fields in 1796.³

The following are extracts from Ffoulkes's memoranda books, now preserved in the Wigginton church chest. Interpolations are in square parentheses.

1. **Notebook on the Glebe Allotments**

14 September 1876. These allotments were first originated by the Reverend J. Williams in 1842-3. The conditions attached to them ... appear to have fallen into disuse since, and every copy of them to have been lost ...

The rent is paid yearly in the Friday before the Parish Wakes in September, which are held on the 1st Monday after Sept. 11 (Sept. 1, Old Style),⁴ and is fixed at 6s the chain of 16 poles or 625 links. Three chains are considered to be the full allotment. No receipts for rent are given, but a cross affixed to each name as paid.

In place of the former rules which have been lost, the two following will in future be strictly enforced:

1. No person will be allowed to retain his allotment who has not been regular in his attendance at church; or if he has been brought up to chapel, in his attendance at chapel; or in whose household there has been any grave misconduct or disorder since the last rent-day.
2. No person will be allowed to sub-let any part of his allotment without leave from the Rector ...

[The names of 38 "allottees" are given.]

In 1877 a good deal of dissatisfaction was given at Mr. Law, the then church clerk, being deputed to receive the rents, and very few were paid in fact till the Rector appeared to receive them in person. Several

were then admonished by him on their non-observance of the rules, particularly that relating to attendance at a place of worship. All promised compliance in future except William Powell (the widow's son), who would not attend at the Rectory, nor give up his land . . . Unfortunately, with a single exception, none of the copies of those rules with the signatures of the allottees . . . could be found . . . , and the result was that he could not be made to quit in default of the legal 5 months' notice. The Rector was further advised that attendance at a place of worship was not a condition that could now be enforced by law . . .

[Ffoulkes decided, therefore, to let the allotments field as a whole to William Stanbra, the tenant of the Rectory Farm, for £30 a year, leaving him free to sub-let the allotments on his own terms.]

The rents were then received at Michaelmas 1878 by the Rector in person, and the allottees re-took without one exception at the same time from Mr. W. Stanbra. A supper was given by the Rector at the close of the proceedings, which proved a very satisfactory gathering to all parties.

2. Parish Notebook

Church. . . . Church services, which I learnt on being inducted, 20 April 1876, were then customary, ran thus: Sundays, full service with sermon, 11 am and 3 pm, except during winter months when for 3 pm it was at 2.30. Sunday school at 10 am and 2.15, or 2 pm. during winter months. Holy Communion after 11 am service on the last Sunday in the month, except at Christmas, when it was changed to Christmas Day, and at Easter, when it was changed to Easter Day if that day fell anywhere near it. There were full services with sermons at 11 am on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday likewise; and on Wednesdays and Fridays in Lent at 7 pm. Churchings were performed just before the General Thanksgiving, the woman not leaving her seat; and baptisms after the 2nd Lesson.

My own additions to these were: Holy Communion at 8 am every 2nd Sunday in the month, and on Christmas and Easter Days. Matins daily at 8.30 am, as in Ed. VI's First Prayer Book, and on Wednesdays Vespers according to the same form with sermon at 7 pm. This last has always been fairly attended.

In the autumn of 1877, owing to my having a curate, a 3rd service was given at 7 pm on Sundays with the approval of both churchwardens, and was continued till harvest time in 1878. But no good results in appearance ensued. There were rarely more at the afternoon and evening services combined than there had been in general at the afternoon service alone; and when there were, it was probably due to the presence of strangers. Worse than this, several who had commonly come twice to church when there were two services contented themselves with coming once when there were three. . . .

Quire. So far as its performances are concerned, is much above

the average. Miss Stanbra, who accompanies it and instructs the children, is indefatigable beyond all praise. But it has acquired a monopoly of the chancel, and an independence, not quite intelligible. Practically, the adult members of it all belong to one family, the Stanbras;⁵ and they seem to add to it or exclude from it at their discretion. I have made but one addition to it, who, being a real addition and popular, was accepted at once; but a step of any kind on my part unacceptable to any member of that family would assuredly be resented by all, and probably lead to the break-up of the existing body. The adults receive no pay whatever; and the children received nothing till I gave them tickets for attendance to count for rewards in the Sunday school; and the only treat to which they have been accustomed is the annual choral festival, to which I have latterly sent the children and Miss S. in an omnibus at my own cost, and given both them and the adults their dinner tickets. This year there was a concert to defray expenses: but it barely covered the cost of music and lessons. It used, I believe, to do more; but not in my time. The Rector chooses the hymns for the church services, which the quire in general attend very fairly. Adult females there have been none, except Miss S. for some time . . .

Clubs, Charities, etc. 1. Heath Allotments. These lands were allotted to the poor of the parish when the wastes were enclosed by Act of P[arliament], 35 Geo. III, A. D. 1795 . . . The property was vested in trustees, of whom the Rector of Wigginton is now the sole surviving one. A committee was formed to assist the late Rector in distributing the coal, etc. [purchased with the rent received] . . . , previously to which it had been managed under the Rector by N[ehemiah] Gilkes, the late clerk. I dispensed in 1877 with this committee, as not having any legal sanction in the original act, and appointed Joshua Powell, treasurer of the Wigginton Labourers' Club, and therefore a fit representative of the working classes, as bailiff; still leaving N. Gilkes to do the accounts as long as he should be equal to it . . . The custom has hitherto been to let these lands to the highest bidder by a pin in the candle . . .

2. Clothing Club: in which the women pay 1s a month, beginning with December, and receive a premium of 3d. The children pay 1d a week, and receive 1s. 1d premium on the year. All receive tickets, with the amount marked on them, early in December on some shop in Banbury (Railton for shoes, etc., and W. Strange for clothes, etc., at present), and the tickets are returned for verification when the bill is sent in. The Rector's signature goes with each ticket . . .

[A list follows of charitable subscriptions to the fund totalling £11. 1s. including £3 from the Rector, "who makes up any deficit".]

3. Labourers' Benefit Society. This is not yet enrolled, and is in a transition state therefore, as its rules have to be brought into harmony with the legal requirements for enrolling. Its accounts are kept

and its business managed by its own officers, and it is not yet taken up by the parish as such: though it was with this object that I became an honorary member, and subscribed myself, and got a few more to do the same and attend the annual dinner. The members attend morning church on that day and have a sermon preached for them.

School (Day). School was once held in the house now occupied by John Brain; later in the stables held by Clifton the blacksmith opposite to his forge. The Reverend J. Thorpe built what is now the class room of the present school in 1832, aided by subscriptions; this was afterwards enlarged and arranged as at present by the Reverend John Williams, late Rector, at a cost of £300, aided also by subscriptions. The ground on which it stands and the playground adjacent was [sic] given by Mr. Powell . . . The school house is insured by the Rector; the candles supplied by the churchwardens; the coal out of the coal distributed at Christmas from the rent of the Heath allotments. The school and class room are cleaned and fires lit by a woman who gets 6s a month for doing both.

The first government grant to this school appears to have been received in 1871, when Miss Skelton was mistress. As from this date the reports and cash accounts are consecutive. But no minute-book having been kept, or at least transmitted, neither the names nor the proceedings of the managers can be gathered except from incidental entries . . . School Memoranda from January 1877:

23 Jan. At a meeting of the school managers . . . it was unanimously resolved: "That Mrs. S. Upton be appointed school mistress in the room of Miss Jones, on trial for three months, at the rate of £40 a year; to continue, if satisfaction is given to the managers and she feels heart in her work, at the same amount by the year, with the whole of any grant over £20 in addition".

29 Jan. Wrote to the Secretary to notify this appointment and beg for permission to have the school conducted under the circumstances by an uncertificated teacher, granted in Oct. 1875, to continue till Mrs. Upton should have received a 3rd class certificate next year . . . ; while commenting strongly on the harm done to the school by allowing mistresses in charge to absent themselves for examinations and [to] compete for scholarships . . .

School (Night). There has been a night school, with intermissions, for many years; beginning with November as it gets dark, and ending with March as it gets light. Few, if any would come at any other season; and the numbers fall off directly it is light enough to be in the fields . . . Reading, writing and arithmetic are the only work done; and in general it is all poor of its kind. The lighting, firing, slates and pens are supplied really by the Rector; only books borrowed from the day-school. I never offered any rewards for progress or for coming; and it was discontinued last year because so few offered themselves; nor, owing to my leaving,

has it been revived this [year].

School (Sunday). This I found in existence, but at the lowest ebb. It has been revived and continued all my time; but at no small cost. We instituted a system of tickets for attendance twice each Sunday, and for saying of collect, hymns, catechism of the Bible and godmothers' gift, as set to each class. There has been no ticket given hitherto for good conduct. Each of the boys and girls of the 1st class, on getting 150 tickets, receives a reward of 4s given in the shape of an order on Banbury for shoes (Railton) or clothes (Dean, Smith or Strange, as selected for the Clothing Club); each of the 2nd class, 3s on getting 130 tickets; each of the 3rd [class], 2s on getting 50 tickets, in the shape of orders as above. In this way a fair attendance and average behaviour and diligence has [sic] been secured. Hymns all are fondest of learning. The lack of teachers is the greatest drawback: but one has ever offered to teach, several have refused; all who consented came only for a time, were not over regular, and then left without saying a word. My curate and family, with the school-mistress and monitor, have latterly done the work alone. I never asked the farmers or their wives.

Cottage Lectures (and other Pastoral Matters). I had intended to have started some [lectures] at the Heath after my curate came to me; but he ventilated the subject there without meeting any encouragement, and so there have been none, at least in my time. The people seem to welcome a visit, but seldom allow you to go further than gossip. I have invited them to come to me time after time to confer on the concerns of their souls; but not one has come to me, save for medicine, meaty broth or stimulants. It is only when they are ill that they invite any talk about religion. They are dreadfully shy or dreadfully close on religious subjects; and to talk to them about Holy Communion is in general to shut their mouths. With very few exceptions . . . , communicants are confined to the farmers: but again, still fewer would think of communicating more than once a month. Now and then the Sharmans and Slatters come to an early communion: but the Stanbras never by any chance, and possibly try to keep others from so doing. Several I know to have been persuaded to stay away from Matins, though I know not by whom. Miss Stanbra was long before she came; and as she comes now regularly, she may have been absent against her will.

Two farmers, brothers, complained to me personally, just at my leaving, in a conversation brought about by myself, that I had never visited them of an evening, which they said former Rectors had done. I replied that I entered no man's house after dark except at his invitation or on special business, and that I thought no gentleman would; adding, however, that I had often invited people from the pulpit to come to me at any time most convenient to them, of an evening or otherwise, to discuss spiritual subjects; but that neither they nor any one else had come. From the way in which this remark was received, I inferred that the visits they

desired I should have made them would have been solely for gossip and perhaps taking a pipe. I upbraided them roundly for not having been more explicit on all subjects with me, and so never having given me the option of consulting their wishes; and said that the studied reserve of both farmers and labourers was the pest of the place.

I wish to leave it on record that occasional drunkenness is, so far as I know, the worst positive sin of the place now. There are several adults of both sexes who are illegitimate; but no child of that class has been born here in my time; nor, so far as I know, is the parish threatened with any. One fight between two gypsies resulting in the death of one, not in the village but some way off, the survivor however living at the Heath (Smith), is the only grave occurrence of my time.

The chapel belonging to the Baptists has long been closed;⁶ but a Westleyan [sic] farmer (Page) has a small gathering of a Sunday in his kitchen which is attended by several who come to church also. At one time it promised more success than it has had latterly.⁷ But not half the people come to church or to any place of worship at all who ought. Every Sunday there is a knot of idlers at the Heath end of the village morning and afternoon, who probably end by going to the public house;⁸ but they make no stir or noise. Many past their teens of both sexes have never been confirmed, and most who have been confirmed declare that they were never pressed to become communicants. Thirty is the outside who communicate at Easter; rarely half that number at other times. There has been no confirmation service anywhere near in my time. There is to be one for Wigginton at Swerford early next year.

District Visitors. I found none; and as my Sunday school teachers proved so few and so lukewarm, I did not attempt any. But Mrs. Law, the clerk's wife, professes to have been one in time past. I should have liked to have organized a dispensary, but it fell through for want of encouragement and support . . .

[The remainder of the book contains notes by Ffoulkes and his successor, the Reverend A. D. Mozley (1879-1914), on benefice lands and income (in 1876, £423 4s. from glebe, supplemented by £94 from Queen Anne's Bounty), parochial accounts and rate assessments, diocesan returns, temperance movements, and festivities held to mark the diamond jubilee of Queen Victoria in 1897 and the coronation of King Edward VII in 1911.]

Douglas Price

FOOTNOTES

1. The years during which Ffoulkes was at Wigginton saw a sharp fall in wheat prices through the flooding of the market with cheap American imports, while a series of wet summers ruined the English harvests and there were disastrous outbreaks of disease in livestock. The number of men employed in agricultural work declined by 92,250 in the decade 1871-81. (R. C. K. Ensor: **England, 1870-1914**, 115-8)
2. The hostility towards the Church manifested by leaders of the Agricultural Labourers' Union occasioned much anxiety among the clergy at this time. The Bishop of Oxford's

visitation inquiries of 1875 and 1878 included the questions: "How many of your adult parishioners are habitually absent from church? . . . Has the attendance at church during the past three years decreased?" A number of the replies attributed absenteeism to the effects of the union agitation; and it was noted that the **Labourers' Union Chronicle** was circulated on Saturdays to provide reading (as an alternative to church attendance) on Sundays. (**Agricultural Trade Unionism in Oxfordshire, 1872-81**, ed. P. Horn, Oxfordshire Record Society, XLVIII (1970), 131-6)

3. The Rector refused to allow the Parish Council to examine the Enclosure Award which was deposited in the church chest, the keys of which were held by himself and the churchwardens; and when a Methodist member complained that the accounts of the coal charity had not been posted on the door of the Wesleyan chapel as well as on that of the parish church, as the law required, the rector replied that he understood "chapel" to refer only to a chapel-of-ease of the Established Church. (**Wigginton Parish Council Minute Book, 1895-1918**)
4. Wigginton church is dedicated to St. Giles; and the "wakes" had originally been associated with the patronal festival on 1 September.
5. Edmund Reading Stanbra was churchwarden, with some intermissions, from 1833 to 1894, and other members of the family held the office (sometimes providing both wardens) until 1923.
6. Rector Williams reported in 1854 that this chapel was then "not very numerously attended." The building still stands, in use as a store-house. (V.C.H. Oxon, IX, 169)
7. The present Wesleyan chapel was erected in 1883.
8. The White Swan: in 1878 the building in the village furthest from the church.

THE OXFORDSHIRE PARISH SURVEY

Since the last newsletter the Survey's liaison officer, Clive Hart has left the county for a full time archaeological post in North Derbyshire. On behalf of the survey I would like to thank him for all of the spare time that he has given up to organising the project. Richard A. Chambers of the Oxfordshire Archaeological Unit has since taken over from Clive Hart and he is now available to give assistance to field-workers. He can be contacted during the daytime at Oxford 43888 and during the evening at Oxford 511216.

To allow both Richard Chambers and other members to assess the progress of the survey a **PROGRESS MEETING WILL BE HELD** at the Oxfordshire Archaeological Unit, 46 HYTHE BRIDGE STREET, Oxford (opposite the Nag's Head public house) at 2.15 p.m. on **Sunday, 12th September 1976**. During the meeting it would be helpful if brief progress reports could be given by one person for each parish or group of parishes being covered. Those reporting will find it useful to bring along any relevant maps and finds. This meeting will also serve as a good introduction to the parish survey for new participants. If anyone wishes to attend, could they please give advance notice to: Mr. R.A. Chambers, Oxfordshire Archaeological Unit, 46 Hythe Bridge Street, Oxford.

BOOK REVIEW

Open University, Social Sciences third level course: Historical Data and the Social Sciences, D.301. **The Banbury Poll, 1859 and 1865; The Banbury and Neithrop Register of Electors, 1865**, with a preface by Michael Drake, 32 pp., 1 illus., 60p. **Introduction to Historical Psephology**, prepared by Michael Drake, 148 pp., 40 illus., £3.95. Both published by the Open University Press, 1974.

The excellent collection of 19th century local political posters and associated material, collected by Potts, Rusher and others, and now housed in Banbury Reference Library, is known beyond the small circle of Banbury historians. This has led to Banbury being selected, together with Bath, to provide specimen reprinted political ephemera to accompany this Open University Social Sciences course.

How effective it is in that context, your reviewer, being but a humble local historian, is not qualified to say. What clearly is of considerable value to the local historian is the full reprint of the 1859 and 1865 Pollbooks and the 1865 Register of Electors (from the copies in the Banbury Library). The 1859 Poll-Book – for the election of 9 February, which Bernhard Samuelson won by one vote – lists alphabetically the names, addresses, trades or occupations, and assessment to poor rate, of the 535 electors on the Register. It ends with a comparison of the assessment (or wealth) of the voters for Samuelson and his chief opponent, the Conservative John Hardy. The 1865 Register lists the voters street by street, and shows how they voted at the 1859 elections. A canvasser has annotated this to show, according to symbols, how they might vote in 1865. Finally there is a list which shows, alphabetically, how each elector did in fact exercise his vote. Samuelson again won, by 45 votes from his Conservative opponent. Sir Charles Douglas, a Liberal who had won the seat from Samuelson in April 1859, was beaten into third place. The use of these lists of Banbury inhabitants, to local historian and genealogist, is self-evident, quite apart from their political interest. At 60p the publication is an outstanding bargain that anyone interested in 19th century Banbury should acquire.

The same cannot be said for the *Introduction to Historical Psephology*. To this reviewer its sole interest is the use of posters from the Potts Collection as illustrations – some 25 of these are interspersed, but do not appear to have direct relation to the text. They look very attractive, and of course are interesting to the Banburian – what use they are to the social scientist I am not qualified to say. The text itself relates to national electoral behaviour, with a section devoted to 'Radical Bath' – but nothing on Banbury apart from the pictures.

J.S.W. Gibson

ANNUAL CONFERENCE

LOCAL HISTORY COMMITTEE

Wallingford Town Hall, Saturday,
25th September, 1976 at 1.45 p. m.

All members of Local History Societies in Oxfordshire, and others interested in local history, are welcome.

This year's Conference is being organised jointly by the Oxfordshire Local History Committee and the Wallingford Historical and Archaeological Society, which is acting as host.

The Conference provides an opportunity for all those interested in local history to meet and discuss their work with others.

The programme includes:

- a local history exhibition in Wallingford Town Hall;
- a guided tour of places of historical interest in Wallingford;
- a talk on Wallingford – its history and historical society;
- the election of representatives of local history societies to the Oxfordshire Local History Committee, and to the N. C. S. S. Standing Conference for Local History.

Refreshments will be provided.

L. W. Wood
Secretary.

OXFORDSHIRE RURAL COMMUNITY COUNCIL
Hadow House, 20 Beaumont Street, Oxford, OX1 2NQ.
Tel: Oxford 43105

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Cake and Cockhorse has undergone several changes of format in the last two years. We hope that the latest change, the reduction to A5 size, will be the last for some time. The new size was not absolutely necessary but in an increasingly standardized world we have heeded the warning of our printer that adherence to a now archaic page size would cost us unnecessary money and possibly delays.

The **next issue** will be predominantly about Banbury and it is hoped to include two short contributions sent in as response to our request (in the Spring 1976 issue) for "Crumbs and jinglebells". Any other small items of interest about Banbury would be welcome.

BANBURY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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; Wigginton Constables' Books, 1691-1836; and Bodicote Parish Accounts, 1700-1822. Part 2 of Banbury Wills and Inventories, 1591-1650, was published in June 1976, and Part 1 is well advanced.**

Meetings are held during the autumn and winter, normally at 7 pm 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. Membership Secretary.

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