

# 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 Picture** is taken from Banbury Chap Books.

# CAKE & COCKHORSE

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

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This issue is a pot-pourri. We hope that each of you will find interest in it.

Eden's 'The State of the Poor' published in 1797 recites the diet of the poorest of Banburians at that time. A labourer and his family lived on £30 a year, spent mainly on bread because fuel was too expensive for home cooking.

We are glad to have the opportunity to print the informative article on Wroxton by two former students of Wroxton College, telling its story from the 11th century. They might be expected to have trans-Atlantic views on Lord North, whose home was Wroxton; it is a delightful bonus to have two Wroxton visitors classified - Theodore Roosevelt as statesman, Sir Harold Wilson as politician.

The situation of the poor of Banbury and of the comparatively rich Norths at Wroxton had changed little by the evening of Wednesday 23rd June 1824 when John Henry Newman preached his first sermon, at the church of Over Worton near Deddington. There, as Caroline Miles tells in the third article of this issue, the future cardinal of the Roman church exhorted the countryfolk to wait "not idly and despairingly but with energetic progress".

Those words of a then evangelical push away from the 18th century directly into the industrial surge of the 19th. It is unlikely but tempting to suppose that John Mawle (1800-1861), then a newly-married farmer at Bodicote, rode to Over Worton that day and heard Newman; for

it was John Mawle's son whose ironmongery business became a vital ingredient of Victorian Banbury's progress and has recently closed after 120 years. The Mawles are the subject of our fourth article, by a relative of the family.

Finally, there is a tear-drop for the lost inscriptions from St Mary's churchyard, and a reminder that Gulliver started his travels from Banbury. Though the tombstones have gone or are largely illegible, it is good to know that the appeal for St Mary's church succeeded so magnificently quickly. At least we shall still have the roof.

D. E. M. F.

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**Archaeology.** The Oxfordshire Archaeological Unit has interesting work on hand. Anyone who would like to help with the digging, or to have the newsletter, should write to the Unit at 46 Hythe Bridge Street, Oxford OX1 2EP (tel:- 43888).

From the **Penguin Dictionary of Historical Slang** by Eric Partridge, 1972:-

Banbury: A loose woman: low London: 1894,

People, 4 Feb. By association with hot-cross buns and '(jam-)tarts'.

Banbury story (of a cock and bull). 'Silly chat'. B.E.: late C17 - early 19; cf. the c19 dial Banbury tale and see Grose, P. (Dictionary of Vulgar Tongue).

**Northamptonshire Past and Present** (Vol. VI, No. 1, 1978) - 60p from Northants Record Society, Delapré Abbey, Northampton - includes an article on "Enclosure and Farm Holding in Brackley, 1829-51" by John R. Lowerson; and two contemporary letters relating to the second Northamptonshire Election of 1701, when Thomas Cartwright of Aynho (1671-1748) was one of the candidates.

**Baptism**, 1 August 1728, William, son of William and Mary Dudley of Banbury, Oxon.

From the register of Hollingbourne, Kent, at the Kent Archives Office, Maidstone (p.187/1/1.)

SIR FREDERICK M. EDEN (1766-1809) - **THE STATE OF THE POOR**  
(3 volumes: London 1797)

Introduction

**The State of the Poor** is a massive factual study of labouring life at the end of the eighteenth century. Its author, Sir Frederick Morton Eden, was the eldest son of Sir Robert Eden, a governor of Maryland. Little seems known of Frederick's early life until he entered Christ Church, Oxford, where he matriculated in April 1783 at the age of sixteen. Almost four years later he graduated with a B.A. degree; an M.A. followed in October 1789. After leaving Oxford he devoted most of the remainder of his short life to business and to social investigation. He was a founder of the Globe Insurance Company and it was at their office that he died on 14th November, 1809. He was buried at Ealing parish church.

Eden's only claim to fame is his major study, **The State of the Poor**, upon which he decided to embark as a result of the high prices and social hardship current in Britain during 1794 and 1795. As he himself wrote, during the middle years of the 1790s the labouring classes were 'subjected to great distress, from a rise, unexampled within the present century, in the price of the necessaries of life.' The modern Briton can understand his concern with inflation! However, Eden was also critical of the desire of labourers in the South of England to include 'expensive' wheaten bread in their diet, whereas their fellows in the north consumed barley, oatmeal, and oatcakes as well as increasing quantities of potatoes. As he sternly wrote:

In the South of England, the poorest labourers are habituated to the unvarying meal of dry bread and cheese from week's end to week's end. . . Could the use of barley, oat-meal, soups, &c. be introduced into the South of England, the situation of the labouring classes would, at once, be greatly improved: so strong, however, are the prejudices entertained by them, against these sorts of food, that their introduction would be attended with considerable difficulty. It is generally supposed by the people in the South. . . that these kinds of (apparently coarse) food are neither so wholesome, nor so nutritious, as the wheaten-bread, which constitutes the chief diet of labourers in the counties adjoining the metropolis. . . The prejudice against rye-bread is equally strong. . . 'In Nottinghamshire, opulent farmers consume one-third wheat, one-third rye, and one-third barley; but their labourers do not relish it, and have lost their **rye-teeth**, as they express it.' . . . The principal consumption of barley in the South of England is in malt liquor: it may, however, be doubted, whether a given quantity of barley and water, reduced by the culinary art into a thick soup, does not contain more

nourishment than the same quantity of barley and water, converted by the process of fermentation into beer. (Vol. 1, Pages 496-497 and 525-527).

In his strictures, Eden failed to take sufficient note, however, of the shortage of fuel in the southern counties, which prevented labouring families from having cooked meals. This is clearly apparent in the Banbury extract.

In collecting material for **The State of the Poor**, the author visited a number of country parishes, but he also had much correspondence with local clergy and other interested parties. For the rest he relied on the services of 'a remarkable faithful and intelligent person, who has spent more than a year in travelling from place to place for the express purpose of obtaining exact information agreeable to a set of queries with which I furnished him'. So successful was this approach that Karl Marx, for one, has described Eden as 'the only one of Adam Smith's disciples during the eighteenth century to produce any work of importance.' Though this did not prevent him from castigating the latter for 'complacently' accepting 'the horrors of the expropriation of the countryfolk from the close of the fifteenth century down to his own day' through the enclosure movement.<sup>1</sup>

An account of Eden's life and of his other publications can be found in the **Dictionary of National Biography**.

Pamela Horn

#### FOOTNOTES

1. Karl Marx, **Capital**, Everyman's Library ed. 1930, Vol. II, pp. 679 and 839-840. Marx's views on the disappearance of the small farmer, etc, would now be seen as too extreme by most modern historians. See, for example, G. E. Mingay, **Enclosure and the Small Farmer in the Age of the Industrial Revolution**, London 1968, and David Grigg, **The Agricultural Revolution in South Lincolnshire**, Cambridge 1966, pp. 88-91 and 199.
2. Two examples of families are quoted in the Banbury section. It has been impossible to identify the first. None of the wives of labourers buried before July 1795 and after a seven-year-old son might have been born had sons baptised between July 1787 and December 1788 except Martha wife of William Gubbins, who had had four elder sons but no daughters.

With the other family, however, probable identification has been made. William Adams, labourer, married Martha Cleaver on 25 June 1777. Their children were

Martha,	baptised	29 Aug	1779,	aged	15 or 16	in July	1795
Richard,	"	2 Sep	1781,	aged	13 or 14	in July	1795
Esther	"	13 Jan	1784,	aged	11	in July	1795
Samuel	"	13 Apr	1785,	buried	14 Nov	1785	
Sarah	"	24 Sep	1788,	aged	7	in July	1795
William	"	8 May	1791,	aged	4	in July	1795

Priscilla baptised 3 Feb 1793, bur. 7 June 1793

Susannah, no baptism, buried 11 June 1793

They were described as of Neithrop throughout.

Martha Adams was buried 25 December 1816 aged 65 still of Neithrop. William was buried 10 January 1836, from Neithrop Workhouse, then described as aged 82. This fits closely with the baptism of William son of Samuel (labourer) and Mary Adams, of Neithrop, 27 September 1756, although it shows that Eden was ten years out in his age which he said was 'about 50'.

The baptism of the daughter aged 9 has not been located.

## PAROCHIAL REPORTS. BANBURY.

THIS borough consists almost entirely of houses: the small portion of land, that is not built on, is laid out in gardens: the inhabitants are tradesmen, and manufacturers, principally, of worsted, and hair-shagg, or plush. Here are one of Lady Huntingdon's chapels, one Presbyterian, one Methodist, and one Quaker's meeting-house. The number of houses paying window-tax is 228; the number exempted is supposed to be much the same. The prices of provisions are: beef, 5d. the lb.; mutton, 5d.; bacon, 10d.; milk, 1d. the pint; bread, 1s. 10d. the half-peck loaf. Weavers, in full business, earn from 8s. to 30s.; and some even 40s. a week: common labourers have 8s. or 9s. a week, during the whole year: children and women in the manufactories earn about 3s. a week. There are 42 inns and ale-houses in this town: and four Friendly Societies, consisting, each, of about 100 members; the rules of three have been confirmed by the magistrates. The land-tax is £200.; and is about 1s. 1d. in the pound. The Poor are partly maintained in a work-house, in which there are at present 39, viz. 6 from 1, to 7 years of age; 6 from 7 to 8 years; 11 from 8 to 15 years; 4 from 15 to 30 years; and 12 from 30 to 74 years of age. Of these, one is blind; one insane; and four are lame. The Poor in the house are chiefly employed in spinning, and twisting for the manufacturers of the town. Their earnings amount to about £40. a year. No account of the annual mortality in the house could be obtained.

### *Table of the Diet used in the Poor-house.*

	Breakfast.	Dinner.	Supper.
Sunday,	Bread and broth:	Meat and vegetables.	Bread, cheese, and beer.
Monday,	Ditto.	Cold meat.	Ditto.
Tuesday,	Bread and cheese.	Same as Sunday.	Ditto.
Wednesday,	As Monday.	Same as Monday.	Ditto.

Thursday,	Bread, cheese, and beer.	Bread, cheese, and beer.	Ditto.
Friday,	As Sunday.	Same as Sunday.	Ditto.
Saturday,	Bread and broth.	Cold meat.	Ditto.

The Poor here, in general, appear to be in a very miserable state. The following is a statement of the earnings and expences of a labourer's family. He is a widower, between 50 and 60 years of age; has one daughter 21 years old, another 13 years, and a son 7 years old.

	£.	s.	d.
He works as a common labourer, in carting, digging, &c. and, generally, with the same master; his earnings are 8s. a week for 48 weeks; and, in one of the summer months, 9s. a week; annually	-	-	-
			21 0 0
The eldest daughter is subject to fits; and is otherwise very sickly: she cannot earn any thing, but takes care of her father's house. The youngest daughter is at a charity-school, where she is provided with cloaths, but her father finds victuals. The boy earns nothing. The parish allows the father 2s. a week, for his children	-	-	5 4 0
Total income	-	£ 26	4 0

EXPENCES.

	£.	s.	d.
This family uses $4\frac{1}{2}$ half-peck loaves in a week, or 234 annually, which sell at present for 2d. each, £ 21. 9s.; but taking the average price of last year, 1s. 2d.; they cost annually	-	-	-
			13 13 0
Tea and sugar, about	-	-	2 10 0
Butter and lard	-	-	1 10 0
Beer and milk	-	-	1 0 0
Bacon, and other meat; about	-	-	1 10 0
Soap, candles, &c. about	-	-	0 15 0
House-rent	-	-	3 0 0
Coals	-	-	2 10 0
Shoes and shirts	-	-	3 0 0
Other cloaths, &c.	-	-	2 0 0
Total expences	-	£ 31	8 0



In this account the expences exceed the income by £5. 4s.; on enquiry, it was found, that the man was in debt between £3. and £4.; and that his neighbours were very kind to him, and often supplied him with old cloaths, &c. Perhaps, too, as he could only give a certain account of his annual income, and the quantity of bread used in his family, he may have calculated his other expences too high. He has a garden of 160 square yards, on which he grows about three or four bushels of potatoes; he only bought two gallons more last year.

The following is an account of the earnings and expences of another labourer, who lives in Banbury. He is about 50 years of age; has a wife, and six children at home, viz. a girl 15; a boy 13; a girl 11; a girl 9; another girl 7; and a boy 4 years old.

## E A R N I N G S.

	£.	s.	d.
The father says, he earns on an average 8s. a week, throughout the year	-	-	-
Eldest girl spins, and earns about 1s. 6d. a week	-	3	18
Eldest boy goes to plough, and earns about 3s. a week	-	7	16
The second girl is lame: the three youngest earn nothing	-	0	0
			<hr/>
Total earnings	-	£32	10
The man receives 1s. a week, from the parish, to support his lame daughter	-	-	-
			<hr/>
Total income	-	£35	2
			<hr/>

## E X P E N C E S.

	£.	s.	d.
This family uses 9 half-peck loaves in a week, at 1s. 2d. annually	-	-	-
House-rent	-	2	12
Fuel, about 1s. a week	-	2	12
			<hr/>
Carried over	-	£32	10
			<hr/>

	£.	s.	d.
Brought over -	32	10	0
The man could give but little account of his other articles of expence; but in order to balance his income, it will appear, that he must procure cloathing for his family, as well as every other necessary article of food, for the trifling sum of	2	12	0
Total expences -	£35	2	0

The labourers in this part of the country complain, heavily, that the farmers, instead of selling their milk to the poor, give it to their pigs. Of the difficulty of subsisting with their present earnings, on a bread diet, the above statements afford a convincing proof. The family, which receives about 19s. 6d. a week, in earnings and parochial aid, has usually consumed 9 half-peck loaves in a week, which, at 1s. 10d. each, the present price, would cost 16s. or 2s. 6d. a week, more than their receipts. They must, therefore, reduce their consumption of the most necessary, and, indeed, almost their only, article of subsistence. It is much to be lamented, that, in a country where wages are not high enough to enable the poor to supply themselves with wheaten bread, strong beer, and butcher's meat, they have not the means of eking out their scanty portions by culinary contrivances. No doubt, a labourer, whose income was only £20. a year, would, in general, act wisely in substituting hafty-pudding, barley bread, boiled milk, and potatoes, for bread and beer; but, in most parts of this county, he is debarred, not more by prejudice, than by local difficulties, from using a diet that requires cooking at home. The extreme dearth of fuel, in Oxfordshire, compels him to purchase his dinner at the baker's; and, from his unavoidable consumption of bread, he has little left for cloaths, in a country where warm cloathing is most essentially wanted.

Some slight attempts to prevent the removal of corn, which have lately been made at Banbury, are certainly ascribable to the pinching wants of the people: the arrival of the military prevented more serious consequences taking place.

## PAROCHIAL REPORTS.

*Table of Poor's Rates, and Expences for the Poor.*

Years.	Poor's Rates.			Net Expenditure.			Rate in the Pound.	
	£.	s.	d.	£.	s.	d.	s.	d.
1680	57	17	11	57	11	10		
1740	278	13	5 $\frac{1}{4}$	258	0	9		
1760	340	11	0	365	11	6		
1781	705	18	0	827	3	6 $\frac{3}{4}$		
May, 1782	762	19	6	788	16	10	13	6
1783	769	5	11 $\frac{1}{2}$	970	8	6 $\frac{1}{4}$	13	6
1784	809	5	2	845	14	9 $\frac{1}{2}$		
1785	823	5	0	977	4	3 $\frac{1}{2}$		
1786	935	2	6	995	7	4 $\frac{1}{2}$		
1787	885	4	4	1091	0	4 $\frac{1}{4}$		
1788	782	10	0	890	7	11 $\frac{1}{4}$		
1789	839	0	6 $\frac{1}{4}$	946	16	7		
1790	866	1	10 $\frac{1}{2}$	824	2	10 $\frac{1}{2}$		
1791	970	9	7 $\frac{1}{2}$	1226	8	0		
1792	1052	12	0	1271	10	10 $\frac{3}{4}$		
1793	880	12	9	1046	17	11		
1794	1025	13	6	1128	5	9		
1795	1151	12	0	1304	9	8 $\frac{1}{2}$	19	0

N. B. The Rate in the pound (which is marked in those years of which the accounts could be obtained,) is on the nominal rental, and is said to be at  $\frac{1}{3}$  of the rack rent. Onehouse, however, is rated at near half the real rental.

The books for the years from 1775 to 1781, could not be found. The sums under the title "Poor's Rates," are the net assessments; and are separated from the total receipts, which include compositions for bastardy, &c. and £ 26. an annual donation of the Earl of Guilford.

In the above disbursements are included the following annual payments, viz. 16 guineas to watchmen; £ 17. 10s. to the gaoler; house-rent, £2. 2s.; governor of the work-house, 20 guineas; constables, in time of peace, for removing soldiers' families, &c. receive, yearly, about 20s. or 30s.; and in time of war, £ 40. or £ 50. The manufactures of this town are chiefly exported to Russia. The trade has been very dull for some years, but has lately revived: some considerable orders have been received, and trade is a little brisk again, though still the weavers have not full employment.

July, 1795.

## DEDDINGTON.

THIS parish contains, by estimation, 4000 acres. The number of houses that pay the window-tax is 102; the number exempted near 300. The inhabitants, (who, with the exception of a small congregation of Presbyterians, are of the Established Church,) are mostly employed in agriculture. There are ten inns, or ale-houses, in the parish: the number, a few years ago, was 21. Farms are from £ 15. to £ 315 a year; but are, chiefly, about £ 100. a year. The principal articles of cultivation are wheat, barley, and beans. There are about 45 acres of common in the parish. The tithes are farmed at £ 750. a year, and taken in kind.

The prices of provisions are: beef, 5d. the lb.; mutton, 5d.; veal, 5d.; bacon, 10d.; butter, 9d. 10d.; milk, 1d. the pint; bread, 1s. 10d. the half-peck loaf. Common labourers earn 7s. a week in winter; 8s. in spring; and 12s. in hay and corn harvest: women are paid 6d. the day, for weeding corn; 8d. for hay making; and 1s. in corn harvest, without victuals.

There are two Friendly Societies in this parish. The number of members in each, amounts to 120. They pay 8d. into the box, monthly; allow 6s. a week, to sick members, during the first twelve months; and 3s. a week, after that period. Both Societies have taken the benefit of the late Act of Parliament.

The Poor are farmed, in the parish work-house, for £ 1000. year. The parish, however, defrays all expences arising from bastardy, small-pox, broken bones, dislocations, and law concerns. The number of persons in the house, at present, is 18. Out-pensioners receive about £ 7. a week; besides which, the rounds-men, (or labourers who cannot get employment,) are often chargeable, and supported by the parish. In winter, their number is sometimes 40, or 50; the parish employs them in the stone-quarries in the neighbourhood. No regular bill of fare is observed in the work-house. The Poor were not all farmed till the present year; but were chiefly supported by weekly pensions. In general, however, about 20 persons have been maintained in the work-house, under a contractor, who was allowed 2s. 6d. a head for their weekly maintenance.

PAROCHIAL REPORTS.

Table of Baptisms, Burials, Marriages, and Poor's Rates'.

Years.	Baptisms.			Burials.			Marriages.	Total Income, including receipts for bastards, &c.	Expenditure on Poor.	Rate in the pound, nearly on the full rental.	
	Mal.	Fem.	Tot.	Mal.	Fem.	Tot.					
1680	—	—	—	18	21	39	10				
1685	—	—	—	18	29	47	3				
1690	22	26	48	14	10	24	2				
1691	22	26	48	9	14	23	4				
1692	24	24	48	17	17	34	6				
1693	20	20	40	10	18	28	0				
1694	13	16	29	22	18	40	4				
1695	32	28	60	14	21	35	6				
1696	25	9	34	9	25	34	14				
1697	26	23	49	17	12	29	6				
1698	19	23	42	22	16	38	5				
1699	23	15	38	8	15	23	1				
1700	25	18	43	25	19	44	4				
1720	22	20	42	12	14	26	8				
1740	17	28	45	20	21	41	10				
1760	28	26	54	18	8	26	11				
1775	22	27	49	7	16	23	10				
1776	12	28	40	19	18	37	10		£. s. d.		
1777	21	28	49	18	22	40	6		463	3 9	
1778	27	18	45	15	17	32	12		From the Returns made to Parliament.		
1779	22	23	45	11	13	24	13				
1780	26	19	45	10	31	41	12				
1781	24	35	59	20	23	43	10				
1782	24	32	56	7	15	22	6				
1783	24	27	51	15	16	31	12	£. s. d.			
1784	24	16	40	14	17	31	14	637	11	2	
1785	25	29	54	30	39	69	8	796	1	9	
1786	26	25	51	17	21	38	11	952	8	11	
1787	31	25	56	22	22	44	11	989	17	5	
1788	33	25	58	20	12	32	7	1126	3	8	
1789	24	22	46	10	10	20	11	997	16	9	
1790	28	15	43	24	13	37	12	1015	15	4 $\frac{1}{2}$	
1791	35	24	59	8	15	23	8	2605	8	5	
1792	—	—	—	19	15	34	4	2622	19	6 $\frac{1}{2}$	
1793	23	18	46	14	17	31	5	1181	0	2 $\frac{1}{2}$	
1794	13	15	28	16	24	40	11	1315	9	2 $\frac{1}{2}$	
May 1795	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1251	3	6 $\frac{1}{2}$	
								1487	14	4 $\frac{1}{2}$	
								1548	19	8 $\frac{1}{2}$	
									1100	13	1 $\frac{1}{4}$
									2622	19	6 $\frac{1}{2}$
									1202	17	2 $\frac{1}{2}$
									1314	7	2
									1181	1	8
									1463	7	5 $\frac{1}{2}$
									1343	16	7 $\frac{1}{2}$
											6 0
											6 6

No accounts could be procured, of either receipts or expenditure, farther back than the year ending in 1786; but it is said, that, for some years previous to that period, the Rates were as high as they were in that

\* The Rate and Expenditure, of 1789 and 1790, are inserted together in the books.

year; and that account is corroborated by the Returns made to Parliament, of the expences for the Poor in 1776, and the Assessments in 1783, 1784, and 1785. An old farmer adds, that he has heard his father say, that, 55 years ago, he paid £ 3. 12s. Poor's Rates for a farm, which now pays £ 26. ; and that, in 1740, the year after the great frost, 9 gallons of wheat, at one time, cost 11s. ; but fell, in a few months, to 3s.

In the country between Oxford and Deddington, the Rates are from 1s. 3d. to 3s. 6d. in the pound, in several parishes, which are almost entirely agricultural. The high Rates, in this parish, are ascribed to the common-field, of which the land principally consists; whereas the neighbouring parishes have been inclosed many years, and many small farms in them have been consolidated; so that many small farmers, with little capitals, have been obliged, either to turn labourers, or to procure small farms in Deddington, or other parishes, that possess common-field. Besides this, the neighbouring parishes are, many of them, possessed by a few individuals, who are cautious in permitting new comers to obtain a settlement.

The general opinion, here, is, that canals are a great injury to the Poor, by enabling farmers to send their corn abroad: such erroneous ideas do not merit a refutation; but the farmers are very apprehensive that they will produce serious consequences. A boat laden with flour was lately seized by the populace; but was restored, on the miller's promising to sell it at a reduced price.

According to the present price of bread, a family here, which consists of a man, his wife, and three children, (the eldest of which is 4 years of age,) will expend, in that article alone, from last Michaelmas to Michaelmas next, £ 16. 18s. The whole earnings of the man, provided he continues in health during the year, and can obtain constant work, will not exceed £ 22. 15s. ; and as his wife and children earn nothing, there will only remain £ 5. 17s. to provide him and them with lodging, fuel, cloaths, and every other necessary of life; and his deficiencies must be made up by the parish.

*July, 1795.*

## WROXTON: AN ABBEY, A HISTORY

Wroxton, three miles from Banbury in North Oxfordshire, is distinguished from many other small villages in the Cotswolds by its imposing Abbey. There has been a building on the site of the present Jacobean mansion since Medieval times. Its owners have included Augustinian priors, the founder of Trinity College, Oxford, and, most recently, an American university. Its lease has been held by a lord-keeper to Charles II and a prime minister to George III. Its distinguished visitors have included royalty (Charles I, George IV and William IV), writers (Horace Walpole, Celia Fiennes and Henry James), politicians (among them the former British prime minister, Sir Harold Wilson) and statesmen (including the former American president, Theodore Roosevelt). The following brief account traces Wroxton Abbey's history from the documentary sources available.

Ownership of Wroxton manor is recorded as early as 1089 when it was held by Guy de Reinbeudcurt, lord of Chipping Warden. Although the association between Wroxton and the Chipping Warden overlords became increasingly tenuous, Wroxton remained with Guy's descendants until 1536.<sup>1</sup>

Hervey Belet was a tenant at Wroxton in 1136. His son Michael and grandson Master Michael held the Oxfordshire land in turn, until in 1216 or 1217 the latter founded an Augustinian priory in honour of Saint Mary at Wroxton. He endowed it with his Wroxton manor house, demesne, and other properties, valued at £78 13s 4d.<sup>2</sup> The deed of foundation indicates that the prior was permitted at least twelve canons and was given free administration of Wroxton.<sup>3</sup> In 1218 the physical assets of the priory were described as follows:

. . . in the village of Wrokestan which is called the place of St. Mary with the chapel in honour of the Blessed Mary there founded and the houses and all the court with the plantations and fish ponds and the space which is contained within the compass of the wall that is about the vineyard and about the court and all things within the said court contained the advowson also of the parish church of Wrokestan with its appurtenances.<sup>4</sup>

The priory buildings were modified at least once after the time of this description: in 1304 they were reported out of repair and financial assistance was sought from visitors. Whilst the priory buildings were being modified, the demesne was expanded by a number of land purchases. When the priory was dissolved in 1536 it had twenty tenants and held almost all the lands in the parish of Wroxton and Balscot.

Henry VIII granted a twenty-one year lease of the surrendered Wroxton lands to William Raynesford, Esquire, in 1536. The lease directed that most of the buildings should be destroyed.<sup>5</sup> By purchasing

Raynesford's lease in 1537 Thomas Pope gained control of the various monastic remains:

First, The Wall of the Church on the outside next the cloyster from the foote of the great wyndow downwards. Item, The fourth ile joyning to the same ile. Item, the iles northest from the joyning to the same ile. Item, the dorter, with the roffe thereof. Item, The frater howse on both sides.<sup>6</sup>

On these priory ruins the present house was constructed. Excavations in 1956 and 1964 to the north and east of the house uncovered stone conduits, stone-walled tunnels and foundations believed to have been part of the monastic outbuildings.<sup>7</sup>

Sir Thomas Pope, treasurer of Henry VIII's Court of Augmentations, apparently never lived at Wroxton. But his younger brother John settled there in or before the reign of Edward VI (1547-1553).<sup>8</sup> Sir Thomas granted John a ninety-nine year lease of the manors of Wroxton and Balscot in 1551, and in 1555 settled the estate on him and his posterity in strict entail. Sir Thomas was also the founder of Trinity College, Oxford. On Lady Day 1556 he endowed the new college with the manors, demesnes, and lands of Wroxton and Balscot. Trinity evidently accepted an obligation to renew the lease of the estate to the male heirs of John Pope, thus accommodating their founder's wish - indicated by his 1555 settlement - that Wroxton should remain in the Pope family.<sup>9</sup>

There is no evidence of major work on the site of the former priory at Wroxton until William Pope spent £6,000 near the turn of the sixteenth century erecting a house on the monastic ruins.<sup>10</sup> Incorporated into the basement of the present building are a thirteenth-century blocked arch and a fourteenth-century molded doorway, as well as some walls remaining from the priory period.<sup>11</sup> The main floor was built around a great hall and its minstrels' gallery. In keeping with Elizabethan architectural tastes Pope's mansion was built in the symmetrical form of the letter E.<sup>12</sup> The exact construction dates of the Wroxton manor house are unknown. Work could have begun very late in the sixteenth century, or after William Pope was made a Knight of the Bath in 1602, or even after he had been created a baronet in 1611. The insertion of a painted glass window by Van Linge in 1623 indicates that construction was nearly finished by that time. The size of the house can be judged by a tax on its thirty-four hearths.<sup>13</sup>

Construction was followed by family conflict when William Pope died in 1631. His eldest son had predeceased him, and the heir to his title, Earl of Downe, (granted in 1628) was his eight year old grandson Thomas. The Wroxton estate, however, was seized by the first Earl's younger son Sir Thomas Pope, who claimed the property on the basis of a death-bed will. The second Earl of Downe's guardian filed a petition protesting against Sir Thomas Pope's illegal seizure, and citing Trinity



College's "confidence or agreement" with their founder that the lease was to be renewed only to the male heir of the family. The petition was unsuccessful. Sir Thomas Pope, later third Earl of Downe, obtained a lease of the Wroxton estate from Trinity in 1640. The second Earl never possessed the lands.<sup>14</sup>

The younger Thomas Pope, second Earl, had no legal hold on the Wroxton property, which was occupied during the civil war period by his uncle. By 1648 Downe was heavily in debt. He left England at about that time, but returned at the Restoration and died in Oxford. He was buried at Wroxton early in 1661. His uncle, Sir Thomas Pope, succeeded him in the Earldom, and thereby secured his claim to the property. He had suffered in the civil wars and the king had imprisoned him in the common gaol at Oxford for six weeks.<sup>15</sup> With his death in 1668, and his son's death shortly after, the male line failed and the titles became extinct. The family property and lease passed to the third Earl's three daughters and their cousin Lady Elizabeth Lee.

Francis North, one of the lawyers who arranged the division of properties between the coheiresses, married the second daughter, Frances in 1671.<sup>16</sup> The couple lived in London, taking vacations at Wroxton. In 1681 Francis North, by then lord-keeper and first Baron Guilford, bought out the shares of the other heiresses for £5,100. In the last years of his life he settled at Wroxton.<sup>17</sup>

Before his death in September 1685, Lord-Keeper Guilford and his architect brother Roger carried out extensive building work costing over £2,000, partly financed by the sale of timber.<sup>18</sup> According to Roger North, his brother "built from the ground a withdrawing room and back stairs and finished up the rooms of state, as they were called, and shaped the windows, which before had made the rooms like bird-cages". When Celia Fiennes visited she approved of the alterations as "all the new fashion way".<sup>19</sup> By 1683 the project was complete apart from some wainscoting in the withdrawing room and great bedchamber. Attention turned to the construction of new stables. Guilford wrote to his steward Francis White requesting that he arrange for the purchase of timber. He also questioned the design of the new stables:

Whereas my first intentions were to have the whole building one entire through stable I think it better to divide the same by walls and to have two doors and also several stables at least... which will be more safe, more private, and more convenient.<sup>20</sup>

Bills for boarding chambers in the "new building", as the stables were called, were still being paid nine months after the lord-keeper's death. Guilford may never have seen his stables completed. After the new building was finished, emphasis fell on improving the manor, outbuildings, grounds and timber.<sup>21</sup> Although John Pope had covenanted to plant three hundred trees within twenty years of taking the lease from his brother

Sir Thomas in 1551, these woods no doubt suffered damage during the Civil War as did others in Oxfordshire.<sup>22</sup> In addition to the reforestation, the decade following the lord-keeper's death saw hedges planted and drains dug. The wool house, old stable, wheat barn, barley barn and hovel with the deer house were all thatched. Stone was bought for a summerhouse; the wall at the upper court gate was mended; the pond was cast, and its boat-house thatched. Even the brook near Drayton bridge was scoured in this renewal effort.<sup>23</sup>

In 1727 the second Baron Guilford commissioned Tilleman Bobart to landscape his Wroxton grounds. Bobart, who had worked with Queen Anne's gardener Henry Wise at Hampton Court and Blenheim Palace, was of the classical school of gardeners. The formal gardens he designed at Wroxton must have enhanced the symmetry of the Jacobean mansion, but little remains of them today.

Bobart removed the old orchard and replaced it by a canal 240 feet long, 40 feet wide and three to four feet deep, where the bowling green now lies. He formed walking slopes both at the canal head and along its length adjoining the grand terrace, which he extended to meet the cross terrace east of the wood. In addition, Bobart altered the entrance court and parlour garden. He agreed to take gravel out of the court into the parlour garden, and "lay it in such a form there as shall be required. . . to take up the turf in the court, and lay it in a circular form in the centre, and in the vacant spaces in the aisles".<sup>24</sup>

Three years after the original plans had been made in 1727, Tilleman Bobart undertook to make one further alteration to the grounds: he agreed to lay out a kitchen garden on high ground to the northeast of the mansion. Bobart proposed that the west wall be moved further into the garden to afford greater protection from the wind and that the south hedge be taken away. By 1732 he had constructed an octagon basin in the center of the kitchen garden. The walls still stand although the gardens are overgrown. In 1727 the original cost estimated for all of Bobart's work was £130, but by the time the second Baron Guilford's son Francis had paid the last bills in 1732 the total had risen to almost £220.<sup>25</sup>

Francis North (1704-90), who took over the management of Wroxton at his father's death in October 1727, followed in the political footsteps of his father and grandfather. He was returned to Parliament for the family borough of Banbury in 1727, but soon took his seat in the House of Lords as third Baron Guilford. More honours followed: in 1730 he was appointed gentleman of the bedchamber to Frederick, Prince of Wales, and in 1752 he was created Earl of Guilford. Twenty-one years later he became treasurer to Queen Charlotte.<sup>26</sup> Prince Frederick honoured him with a visit to Wroxton during the Banbury Races in 1739 and had an obelisk erected at Wroxton in appreciation of his hospitality.<sup>27</sup> Guilford's increasing political prestige may have been the motivation for the alterations he made to the estate.

His most extensive work at Wroxton involved the gardens and grounds. Less than a decade after Tilleman Bobart completed the formal gardens, a large part of the grounds was remodelled in a radically different style. The new layout was one of the earliest gardens designed not to impress the viewer with the owner's grandeur, as Bobart's gardens had done, but to carry the eye out from the house through an imaginative landscape of water, trees and fanciful buildings, to the countryside beyond. Sanderson Miller, the designer of the new Wroxton gardens, lived at nearby Radway in Warwickshire, where he had experimented with this style on his own estate.<sup>28</sup>

Miller's plan centred around building a dam in order to create a large lake in a thick wood. At the outlet of the lake was a twenty foot cascade which supplied a serpentine river running through the park to a stream at the east end of the woods. The lake, cascade, serpentine river and extensive tree planting were all underway in 1739.<sup>29</sup> Later, idyllic structures were added to complete the romantic scene. These were a Chinese house by the river (erected in 1741), a Keeper's Lodge at the end of the park near the Bridge Road to Drayton (1743), a gothic-flavoured crenellated dovecot southwest of the Abbey (1745), a Temple on the Mount by the serpentine river (1750), a Chinese seat (by 1756), several Chinese bridges, and a new entrance gateway (1771).<sup>30</sup> Whereas many of these structures may not have been Sanderson Miller's work, the Temple on the Mount seems to have held special interest for Miller and Guilford as they corresponded at length regarding its design and construction. Guilford wrote in 1750, "The model is arrived and I am entirely of your opinion that the Dome appears too heavy and too big...". Within a year the floor of the Temple was ready to be laid, but there was "rain coming into my new building". Banister, the builder, did not know how to prevent the leak, but a solution was soon found and the Temple and the new landscape brought admiring comments from visitors.<sup>31</sup> Richard Pococke found the grounds interesting, and was especially fascinated by the Temple on the Mount equipped with "curtains that by turning screws let down so as to afford shelter which ever way you please. This commands a most delightful view."<sup>32</sup> Mrs. Delaney told Guilford after visiting both his estate and Blenheim Palace that Blenheim did not "stand in any manner of competition with Wroxton".<sup>33</sup> Horace Walpole was also impressed with the scene of the lake, cascade, serpentine river, and gothic-style temple, but dismissed as "paltry" the Chinese buildings and bridges.<sup>34</sup>

Although the water features of Miller's plan at Wroxton are generally the same today as two hundred years ago, many of the garden buildings have since disappeared. An eighteenth-century map of Wroxton Park by Francis Booth, paintings by Mrs. Delaney in the 1740s, sketches by S. H. Grimm in 1781, and an inventory of 1826 give an idea of the extensive and romantic aura of the Wroxton grounds in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.<sup>35</sup>

The third Baron did not revamp his gardens and leave his mansion untouched: in the 1740s he added a library and a chapel to the house. The library, "a pleasant chamber" according to Horace Walpole, was probably added first. Although the flooring was not laid until 1747 the room was well underway in 1743.<sup>36</sup> The library seems not to have been Sanderson Miller's work, but the additions to the chapel were under his direction and had certainly commenced by 1747. Guilford had his Van Linge glass taken from its former location and cut to fit into a new chapel window. He deliberated on the shape of the window up to the last minute and told Miller on 2 May 1747 that "I think the window will not agree with my glass if it is divided into more than four arches.". A week later he admitted to Miller that his choices were being limited: "he (Cheyne, Guilford's steward) says the window being begun the middle mullion cannot be made larger than the others".<sup>37</sup> The finished chapel boasts a gallery and a small chancel containing the newly-arranged Van Linge glass. The exterior has a crenellated parapet over a crocketed ogival dripstone, giving the chapel the gothic flavour that Miller favoured.

Guilford next had Miller design a false ceiling for the great hall. It features a papier maché pendant in the centre. Because the project seemed unlikely to be finished before the Earl's proposed visit in the summer of 1752, the work was postponed for a year. He explained to Miller, "my house is not large enough for me to dispense with the use of my best room when I am there".<sup>38</sup> The ceiling was certainly finished when Walpole visited in 1753. He admired the pendant as being "just in the manner I propose for the eating-room at Strawberry Hill".<sup>39</sup>

Miller's works were not confined to the Abbey and grounds. His influence was felt at Wroxton Church.<sup>40</sup> From 1681 when Francis, first Baron Guilford, settled at Wroxton, connections between the village church and the North family were apparently close. Francis Wise, incumbent from 1723 to 1746, resided at various times at the Abbey, taking prayers there twice a day in addition to preaching at Wroxton every Sunday. He even acted as steward of the Wroxton estate in Guilford's absence. It is not therefore surprising, that the family was as concerned about the church as about its own property. A North employee, J. Banister, built a gallery in the church in 1738, and the family accounts of 1740 include a bill paid to have the church-yard pitched.<sup>41</sup> In 1747 the church tower was in poor condition, and Guilford paid William Hitchcox of Ratley to "rebuild it in a substantial and workmanlike manner conformable to the plan thereof made by Sanderson Miller of Radway". Every farmer in the village agreed to furnish a team for a day's work on the project. The corner-stone was laid in April 1748. An octagon of stone capped the new built tower, but blew down almost as soon as it was finished.<sup>42</sup> This was the last major work at the church sponsored by the family. In the nineteenth century Col. North (1804-1894) and his son William (1836-1932) were Roman Catholics and family patronage thus passed to the Catholic

chapel built in 1884 by Col. North.

Guilford's alterations at Wroxton were by no means inexpensive. Expenses for "Improvements at Wroxton" recorded in the family accounts rose from a low of £67 in 1738 to as much as £731 in 1744. Throughout the middle years of the eighteenth century the Wroxton estate was run at an average deficit of about £170 per annum.<sup>43</sup> Wroxton accountbook entries of 1773 and 1774 for paying "debts of my father" indicate that the first Earl had a number of outstanding bills. His son Frederick, prime minister between 1770 and 1782, received £16,062 from George III, which is an indication of the family's financial difficulties in the late eighteenth century.<sup>44</sup> The shortage of funds may have been a major reason why few alterations took place at Wroxton for nearly a century after Sanderson Miller's work was complete.

After the first Earl's death in 1790, his son Frederick succeeded him as second Earl, but died of dropsy only two years later. Frederick's son George Augustus, third Earl of Guilford, held the estate until his death in 1802 after which the title passed first to his brother Francis (died 1817) and then to his brother Frederic (died 1827). At his death without male issue, the barony of North fell into abeyance. Upon the deaths of her two sisters, Georgina and Maria in 1835 and 1841, the peerage devolved upon George's daughter Susan Doyle according to a resolution of the House of Lords of 15 July 1837. Her husband, Col. John Doyle, took the name of North in 1838.<sup>45</sup>

The fifty-year management of the Wroxton estate by Baroness North and her husband was marked by major additions at the Abbey. A new library was built onto the east side of the house in the mid-nineteenth century, designed by one of the Smirke brothers, either Sir Robert or Sydney.<sup>46</sup> The library features a hidden door leading to the terrace. In 1858-59 Col. North employed John Gibson to design a south wing for the Abbey.<sup>47</sup> It was needed to balance the north wing built by Lord-Keeper Guilford in the late seventeenth century which had left the house asymmetrical. Horace Walpole commented that the house was "neither good nor agreeable; one end of the front was never finished". An engraving of 1823 illustrates the imbalance of the west front in the absence of a south wing.<sup>48</sup> By finishing the south side of the house the Norths were following literally the Pope-North motto they had inscribed over the new library's bay window: "Animo et Fide Perage".<sup>49</sup>

William, eleventh Baron North, managed the Wroxton estate after his father's death in 1894. He is remembered by the villagers for his love of hunting and for the meets he hosted at Wroxton. Wooden and stone tombstones of his hounds can still be found under the trees southeast of the Abbey. When Lord North died in 1932, aged 96, the family found itself in financial difficulties. The Wroxton lease was surrendered to Trinity College and the furnishings of the mansion were sold at auction.<sup>50</sup> Four hundred years of Pope-North control of the manor came to an end.

The Abbey stood empty until World War II, when it was used as a warehouse by a firm of clothiers called Pawson and Leafs. In 1948 Lady Pearson leased the Abbey, renting flats to half a dozen tenants. She also opened the building to the public as an historical monument and ran a small tea room in the Abbey dining room. Trinity College put the Abbey up for sale in 1963, when Fairleigh Dickinson University, New Jersey, bought the mansion and fifty-six acres of grounds.<sup>51</sup>

With both the buildings and grounds in disrepair, the new owners were faced with a massive restoration project. Dry rot permeated the building, the plumbing was "literally held together with bailing wire and scotch tape", and the electrical and heating systems required extensive upgrading.<sup>52</sup> Soon after purchasing the estate, Fairleigh Dickinson had the timber work, floors, and ceilings repaired, installed central heating and rewired the Abbey. Bedrooms were added in the basement and the brocade and gold leaf in the Yellow Room were restored. The architect was C.J. Cunningham. The outhouses, namely the old kitchens, garden shed, brewhouse and laundry, were demolished, and wood panelled saddle room in the former stables was destroyed. Extensive remodelling took place in the Carriage House (the former stables) in 1973 and 1974 when a new kitchen, boiler room, and dining room were incorporated. At the same time the Carriage House was extended westward to house a lecture hall and southward to enlarge the dining room. Architect, G. Forsyth Lawson. A car park was added in 1975 and the Lodge at the entry gate was restored in 1977.<sup>53</sup>

The history of the Abbey has been long and varied since its days as an Augustinian Priory. It has had many occupants and seen many changes in physical appearance; from the priors who built dormitories and a cloister, to the first Earl of Guilford who relandscaped the grounds in a romantic style, to Col. and Lady North who added the south wing of the Abbey. Ironically, an American institution now owns the estate. Frederick, Lord North, prime minister during the 1770s and a former tenant of the Abbey, believed he would always be remembered as the man who lost the colonies. Now his house is occupied by former colonials. During their stay at Wroxton the American students gain an appreciation of the context in which former residents of Wroxton Abbey lived; men and women who contributed to the tradition from which the American nation grew.

Carol D. Frost  
Blythe W. Marston

## FOOTNOTES

1. **Victoria County History, Oxfordshire**, (hereafter **VCH Oxon**), IX, 175.
2. **VCH Oxon**, II, 101; "Wroxton Abbey, Oxfordshire", **The Saturday Magazine**, No. 546, 18 (2 January 1841), pp. 2, 3.
3. **VCH Oxon**, II, 101.
4. Alfred Beesley, **The History of Banbury: Including Copious Historical and Antiquarian Notices of the Neighbourhood** (London, 1841), p. 80.
5. **VCH Oxon**, IX, 172, 176; **Valor Ecclesiasticus, Temp. Henr. VIII, Auctoritate Regia Institutus** (1841), II, 198.
6. Thomas Warton, **The Life of Sir Thomas Pope**, (2nd ed., London, 1780), p. 372.
7. "Archaeological Finds in Excavations at Wroxton Abbey", **Oxford Mail**, (15 August 1956); **VCH Oxon**, IX, 172.
8. Warton, p. 431.
9. Herbert E. D. Blakiston, **Oxford University College Histories: Trinity College** (London, 1898), p. 44; **D(ictionary of) N(ational) B(iography) XV-XVI**, 135-7; **VCH Oxon**, IX, 176.
10. Trinity College, Oxford, President's Office, MS. Wise (1 29) p. 7. **VCH Oxon**, IX, 172.
11. Anthony Wood and Richard Rawlinson, **Parochial Collections, Oxfordshire Record Society** (Oxford, 1929), XI, 357-8.
12. John Summerson, **Architecture in Britain 1530-1830** (Harmondsworth, 1953), pp. 55-56.
13. Warton, p. 438; H. T. Kirby, "The Van Linge Window at Wroxton", **Journal of British Society of Master Glass Painters**, XIV (2), 117. Wood and Rawlinson, pp. 357-8.
14. Bodleian Library, Oxford; MS. North, b. 1., ff. 4-6; **VCH Oxon**, IX, 176; E. P. Shirley (ed.), "Original Letters of Sir Thomas Pope, Knt", **Miscellanies of the Philobiblon Society IX** (1865-6) pp. 3-18.
15. **VCH Oxon**, IX, 172; **DNB**.
16. MS. North, b. 20, ff. 315-19; b. 26, f. 153; Wroxton Parish Register, Marriages 1671/2.
17. **VCH Oxon**, IX, 172, 176.
18. MS. North, b. 20, f. 3; c. 5, f. 99.
19. Roger North, **Lives of the Norths** (London, 1826), II, 248. Celia Fiennes, **Through England on a Side Saddle** (London, 1888), p. 19.
20. MS. North, c. 50, ff. 3v-13v; c. 7, f. 32.
21. MS. North, c. 50, ff. 3v-13v.
22. **VCH Oxon**, IX, 175 182.
23. MS. North, c. 50, ff. 6v, 36, 77, 98, 99; c. 51, ff. 28, 30v.
24. MS. North, b. 28, f. 26; c. 11, f. 61; a. 7, f. 9; b. 17, ff. 1, 9-90. Many of Bobart's alterations to the grounds can be studied on an estate plan, dated 1729, which has recently been acquired by the Banbury Museum.
25. MS. North, a. 7, f. 9; b. 17, ff. 1, 9-90. b. 28, f. 26.
26. **DNB**, XIII-XIV, 603-4.
27. MS. North, c. 59, f. 22.
28. William Hawkes, "Miller's Work at Wroxton", in Sanderson Miller of Radway ed. A. C. Wood and W. Hawkes (Banbury Historical Society, 1969), pp. 120-125.
29. MS. North, c. 57, 58, 59, 60, 63, 64; b. 13, 14, 15, 16, 24; Letters of Sanderson Miller, in W(arwickshire) R(ecord) O(ffice), CR 125B/755, 760.
30. MS. North, c. 58, f. 162; c. 59, ff. 22, 23; b. 24, f. 156; c. 64, f. 196; **The Travels Through England of Dr. Richard Pococke**, ed. James Cartwright (1889), pp. 239-40.
31. WRO CR 125B/942, 952, Sanderson Miller to Francis North, 22 Feb. 1750.
32. **Travels Through England**, pp. 239-40.
33. MS. North, d. 14, f. 209.
34. **An Extract from a letter by Horace Walpole to John Chute, 4 August, 1753**, (Rhode Island, privately printed, 1974). For a longer account of Miller's work see A. C. Wood and W. Hawkes, Sanderson Miller of Radway and his work at Wroxton

- (Banbury Historical Society, 1969).
35. The Booth map and Grimm sketches are in the Bodleian Library. Mrs. Delaney's paintings are in the National Gallery of Ireland at Dublin.
  36. Horace Walpole to John Chute, 1753; MS. North, c. 59, ff. 23, 176.
  37. WRO, CR 125B/936, 937, Sanderson Miller to Francis North, 2, 9 May 1747.
  38. WRO, CR 125B/956, 957, 958, Sanderson Miller to Francis North, 11 Dec. 1751 ? Jan, 8 Feb. 1752.
  39. **Horace Walpole to John Chute.**
  40. Wroxton Church dates from the twelfth century and was closely associated with Wroxton priory.
  41. **VCH Oxon**, IX, 184, 185; MS. North, c. 58, f. 100.
  42. MS. North, b. 29, f. 175. **Horace Walpole to John Chute.**
  43. MS. North, c. 56; c. 59, f. 54. c. 60; c. 64.
  44. P. D. G. Thomas, **Lord North** (London, 1976), pp. 113-4.
  45. **DNB**, XIII-XIX, 60.
  46. There is some question as to which of the Smirke brothers designed the Wroxton library. **VCH Oxon**, IX, 173 contends it was Sir Robert, citing Gardner, **Dir. Oxon**, (1852). Gardner supplies no reference. Jennifer Sherwood and Nikolaus Pevsner, **The Buildings of England: Oxfordshire** (London, 1974) claim the library was designed by Sydney Smirke, the younger and lesser known of the brothers.
  47. **VCH Oxon**, IX, 173.
  48. **Horace Walpole to John Chute. Skelton's Antiquities of Oxfordshire (1823)**, title page engraving.
  49. "Carry through to completion in courage and faith"
  50. **Wroxton Abbey Sale: Monday May 22, 1933 and following days**, (Oxford, 1933).
  51. Peter Sammartino, "General Notes", **Journal of the Society of Arts**, December 1975, p. 25.
  52. **Ibid**, p. 27.
  53. Information courtesy of Dr. John R. Seagrave, director of Wroxton College.

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London S. W. - 1 November 1870

My dear Brother,

On the 1st of October I wrote to you on a Postal Card to inaugurate the new system. I wrote in Greek, thinking that the Postman from Banbury might possibly be unacquainted with that language. I wonder whether the Postal Card reached you. Probably not. ....



## NEWMAN'S FIRST SERMON

The village of Over Worton lies about half a mile north of the narrow road connecting Great Tew and Duns Tew. It is very small: a farm, a handful of cottages, Over Worton House, the Rectory, the church; no shop and no pub. The lane leading to it is a dead-end for motor cars, though a track runs on downhill to Nether Worton in the valley below.

An examination of the first Ordnance Survey 1" map of the area (based on a field survey made between 1811 and 1818, revised in 1830-31) suggests that the village was much the same size in 1824, when a 23-year old newly ordained Anglican curate preached his first sermon there. His name was John Henry Newman and he was to die, in 1890, a Cardinal of the Roman Church.

At the time Newman was a fellow of Oriel, and had just been appointed curate of St Clement's, Oxford. It is, therefore, surprising to find him making his debut in the pulpit in a small village church nearly twenty miles away. Neither Newman himself, at least in the journals and papers so far published, nor his biographers have found much to say about the event. It was no doubt an inauspicious occasion – it is hard to imagine that even in 1824 Evensong on a Wednesday evening in June was attended by many people other than the curate in residence and his immediate household – and yet in view of the tremendous influence that Newman was to exert as a preacher as Vicar of St Mary's, Oxford, from 1828 to 1843, and later as a priest of the Oratory in Birmingham and Rector of the Catholic University in Ireland, it was a significant one. An opportunity to study the manuscript of the sermon itself, preserved, along with many of Newman's sermons and papers, at the Birmingham Oratory,<sup>1</sup> made me curious to find out why he went to Over Worton. The manuscripts also, incidentally, clear up a persistent confusion about the text on which he preached. But more of that later.

Newman's association with Over Worton sprang from his friendship with the curate, the Rev. Walter Mayers. Mayers had been the classical master at Dr Nicholas's school in Ealing, where Newman was a pupil from 1808 until December 1816, when he entered Trinity College, Oxford, some two months before his sixteenth birthday. But Mayers was more, much more, to Newman than a liked and respected former school-master: a strong Evangelical, in the autumn of 1816 he gave his pupil a number of devotional works, including Law's *Serious Call* and Bishop Beveridge's *Private Thoughts on Religion*. The impact of this reading is best told in Newman's own words: '... a great change of thought took place in me. I fell under the influences of a definite Creed, and received into my intellect impressions of dogma, which, through God's mercy, have never been effaced or obscured.'<sup>1</sup> And he wrote of Walter Mayers as 'the human means of this beginning of divine faith in me'.<sup>2</sup> He ever regarded this as the time of his true conversion, and the rest of his life, includ-

ing his reception into the Roman Church in 1845, as developing out of it.

Mayers became curate of Over Worton in 1823 and moved into the rectory next to the church. There he took pupils, to supplement his income no doubt and possibly also to give him an occupation. In 1824 he married Sarah Giberne, whose younger sister, Maria Rosina, was to become one of Newman's dearest friends, and to be of great practical help to him in one of the blackest periods of his life, when he was sued for libel by the renegade priest Achilli in 1851. But there is no evidence that Maria Rosina was staying at Over Worton in June 1824. In her autobiography she recorded that she first became 'properly acquainted' with him in 1827.<sup>3</sup>

Both John Henry Newman and his younger brother, Frank, helped Mayers with coaching. It seems that Frank lived at the rectory for a time, but Newman would come from Oxford when required. In a cancelled, unpublished preface to one of the **Historical Sketches**, an essay on Cicero, he recorded how one day in the spring of 1824 'after working with his private pupils till the evening, he sat down to his article till four o'clock next morning, and then walked over from Oxford to Worton,<sup>4</sup> a distance of eighteen miles, in order to appear punctually at the breakfast table of a friend, the Rev. Walter Mayer, who on quitting home had committed his pupils in his parsonage to the author's charge.'<sup>5</sup>

So Newman's appearance in the pulpit of Over Worton Church on the 23rd June 1824 seems natural enough. We may surmise that Mayers was close enough to him to know that he needed help to find his feet following his ordination - 'I feel as a man thrown suddenly into deep water' Newman had written in his journal on the evening of the 13th June, the day of the ceremony - and we know that he found composing sermons hard work. In the autumn of 1823 he had written a number of sketches of sermons (he burnt them in 1874), and on the 15th August 1824 he noted in his journal 'Two Sermons a week are very exhausting. This is only the third week, and I am already running dry...'<sup>6</sup> But the most eloquent testimony to the struggle is the manuscripts of the sermons themselves.

I mentioned earlier that confusion about the text of Newman's first sermon still persists. It springs from a passage in an Autobiographical Memoir of his early life which he wrote when in his seventies. In it (writing of himself in the third person) he refers to 'His first Sermon, on "Man goeth forth to his work and to his labour until the evening" (Ps civ, 23). But this, though the first sermon that he **wrote**, was not in fact the first he preached, as the manuscripts make plain. 'No 1.' is headed 'St Clements - Sunday Morning June 27 1824 (The first sermon I ever wrote)', and No 2 'Over Worton: Wednesday Ev. June 23rd 1824 (The first sermon I ever preached)'. The text of this second sermon to be written is also taken from the Psalms: "Wait on the Lord: be of good courage, and He shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the Lord." (Ps xxvii. 14).

But what of the sermon, or sermons, themselves? He seems to have found No. 1 rather easier to write than No. 2, the opening pages of which are so scored through and altered that it is difficult to arrive at a coherent text. Some of the changes are in a different ink, and they may have been made a year or two later: he used the sermon twice more, on July 4th 1824 at St Clements and again at St Clements on October 15th 1826. Looking at the pages, one can sense the struggle to express his thinking as clearly as possible. His aim was always to persuade and convince, to lead his hearers on to reflect further on the text he had chosen, and the thoughts he drew from it, rather than to overwhelm them with oratory. One who heard him, Sunday after Sunday, at St Mary's has left a description of his manner, and matter, in the pulpit that deserves quoting at length.

'When he began to preach, a stranger was not likely to be much struck, especially if he had been used to pulpit oratory of the Boanerges sort. Here was no vehemence, no declamation, no show of elaborated argument, so that one who came to hear a "great intellectual effort" was almost sure to go away disappointed . . . . The look and bearing of the preacher were as one who dwelt apart, who, though he knew his age well, did not live in it . . . . His power showed itself chiefly in the new and unlooked-for way in which he touched into life old truths, moral or spiritual, which all Christians acknowledge, but most have ceased to feel . . . . What delicacy of style, yet what calm power! how gentle, yet how strong! how simple, yet how suggestive! how homely, yet how refined! . . . .'<sup>7</sup>

Most of these qualities are evident in his very first sermons. There is delicacy of style, a gentle and holy simplicity of manner, and even a new and un-looked for way of illustrating an old truth -

'The **best** of God's gifts when perverted become the **worst**. We have heard of those who, advancing rashly to machines they did not understand, have been struck dead by the very electric fluid which properly directed effects the most beneficial and useful results.' (MS p 7)

a simile which must have puzzled the country folk of North Oxfordshire in 1824.

Above all, the themes of both sermons are deeply characteristic of their author. The text of No. 1, "Man goeth forth to his work and to his labour until the evening", was one of the 'notes' of his entire life, to use a favourite expression of his, and he used it again many times, notably for the profoundly moving, grief-stricken, sometimes incoherent sermon with which he bade farewell to his Anglican Ministry in September 1843.<sup>8</sup> The necessity of perseverance in religion, waiting on God for light, and waiting on Him for holiness, peace, and future happiness, is an equally familiar

theme in Newman's writings.

Already in his first sermon he is moving away from the Calvinist ideas he had absorbed from Mayers, towards his own perfectly balanced and rounded understanding of the Christian faith. He urged his hearers at Over Worton to wait 'not idly and despairingly but with energetic progress' 'Let us be up and doing' while we wait for the day when 'Faith is exchanged for sight, and hope for actual enjoyment.' Sixty-six years later, in August 1890, he died in Birmingham, and the tablet marking his grave in the Oratory cemetery at Rednal bears the inscription "Ex umbris et imaginibus in veritatem". He chose the words himself: they expressed, with the utmost simplicity, the faith which had sustained him throughout his long life.

#### FOOTNOTES

1. Like all admirers of Newman, I owe a great debt to the late Father Stephen Dessain, of the Birmingham Oratory, for allowing me to read this and other unpublished Newman manuscripts in the Oratory's archives.
2. *Apologia Pro Vita Sua* Chapter 1 (p 17 in Svaglic edition (Oxford English Texts. Clarendon Press 1967). See also note on p 479.
3. Quoted in *Memoirs and Letters of Francis W. Newman* by I Giberne Sieveking (Kegan Paul 1909), p.20.
4. Newman spelling varies : sometimes Warton, sometimes Worton (e.g. at the head of the Sermon manuscript). The *Old Series Ordnance Survey* (David & Charles 1969) has Upper (rather than Over) Worton.
5. Anne Mozley, *Letters and Correspondence of John Henry Newman*, Vol I (Longmans Green 1891) p 85 footnote 2.
6. *John Henry Newman, Autobiographical Writings*, ed Henry Tristram (Steed & Ward 1956), p 200, 201.
7. Principal Shairp of St Andrew's, quoted in Wilfrid Ward, *The Life of John Henry Cardinal Newman*, Vol I (Longmans, Green 1912) p 64.
8. *Sermons Bearing on Subjects of the Day XXVI*, 'The Parting of Friends.' The preface to the 1869 edition of this volume of sermons, by W J Copeland, has helped to perpetuate the confusion about the text of the first sermon that Newman delivered.

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MIDDLETON CHENEY. Families of Middleton and Ping. Miss Dorothea Abbott of Birmingham is looking for information on the families of Ping and Middleton who seem to have been connected with a needle or weaving factory in Middleton Cheney early in the 19th century. Please address any information to the editor.

## THE MAWLE FAMILY - Ironmongers and Mayors of Banbury

The ironmongery business in Banbury of J. Mawle & Sons, was founded nearly 120 years ago by John Mawle of Bodicote. It was at 57 Parsons St., which is at the Market Place end, near Cornhill. George Herbert in 'The Shoemaker's Window' p.97 mentions an ironmonger by the name of Green.

### JOHN MAWLE 1832-1917

John Mawle was the second son of John Mawle (1800-1861) of Warkworth and his wife Mary, daughter of John Adkins of Tadmarton. John Mawle senr. was a farmer and already living at Bodicote when he married in 1821. Their son John was born on 16th February 1832 at 'The Hermitage' Bodicote, but he was not christened until 1837 when he was seven years of age. Seven of John and Mary Mawle's children were christened at Bodicote at the same time by the Rev. N. Cotton Risley, Vicar of Deddington.<sup>2</sup> The family moved to Astrop Hill Farm, Kings Sutton in the mid-1850's.

At first John helped his father on the farm, but about 1851<sup>10</sup> he went as apprentice to Mr. Joseph Mascord of High St. ironmonger (later this was Neale & Perkins). A few years later Mr. Mascord moved to 57 Parsons St. where he traded as an ironmonger, agricultural implement and seed merchant. In 1858, after a short spell away from the town at Tunbridge Wells and Biggleswade, John Mawle came back to 57 Parsons St. and took over the ironmongery portion of Mr. Mascord's business.<sup>3</sup> The 1865 Poll of Banbury lists both Joseph Mascord and John Mawle (a new voter) at 57 Parsons St. That year John moved to 65 High St. where he acquired the business of Mr. Gardner.<sup>1</sup> Today it is part of the National Westminster Bank. There is a passage at the side where the warehouse was; this had a track which ran across the pavement to the road, so that goods could be picked up by carrier's cart or unloaded.

John Mawle was ruthlessly determined to make a success of the business and it developed and kept abreast of the times and eventually John Mawle & Sons, ironmongers, agricultural and horticultural engineers, seed merchants, etc, became one of wide reputation.<sup>3</sup>

John Mawle married Hannah Elizabeth (Betsy) Taylor in 1858. She was the daughter of a prosperous miller of Purwell Mill, Hitchen in Hertfordshire and they lived over the shop, but she died in 1866, aged only 27 years, leaving four small children, John Taylor, Sydney Joseph, William and Mary Elizabeth, who were then looked after by his cousin Miss Sarah Mawle of Warkworth.

In the 1880's John Mawle built 'Elmleigh' 63 Hightown Road, Banbury (now a Nurses Home). In the early 1900's he opened another shop, nearly opposite at 22 High St,<sup>4</sup> which is the one recently closed. He had also one in Gold St. Northampton.

He was elected to the Town Council in 1882 and was Mayor of

Banbury in 1890 and again in 1900. He retired from the Council as Alderman in 1904 and sat on the Bench for 26 years. He was a life-long Baptist.<sup>3</sup> General Booth of the Salvation Army visited Banbury in November 1901 and stayed with John Mawle at 'Elmleigh'.<sup>11</sup>

His sons, John Taylor Mawle and Sydney Joseph Mawle helped in the Banbury businesses and William Mawle ran the Northampton shop until he died just before his father. His daughter Mary Elizabeth lived with him at 'Elmleigh' after the death of her husband. She had married Frederick Day, a solicitor with Munton & Stockton, but he died two years after the marriage, in 1887. They had a son Bernhard, who lives in Canada and Freda, who was born after her father's death (of whom more later). Mrs. Day died in 1938 aged 77 years. She had acted as Mayoress during her father's Mayoralty in 1900.<sup>7</sup>

John Mawle died at 'Elmleigh' on 6th July 1917, aged 85 years and was buried in Banbury Cemetery.

#### JOHN TAYLOR MAWLE 1860-1948

He was the eldest son of John Mawle and was known as 'Long John'. He was educated at Ark House, Banbury and later at Weston-Super-Mare. He was apprenticed to an ironmonger at Bury St Edmunds before joining his father's business.<sup>6</sup>

When his father moved to 'Elmleigh' he lived over the shop at 65 High St. and brought up a family of six children there. They were Queenie, Elsie, Avron, George, William, and Gwendoline, of whom the latter is the only one still living. He married three times. His first wife, who was the mother of his children, was Edith Catherine Avron, the daughter of a French Sea Captain (he was the Captain of a Tea Clipper plying to and from India), but she died in 1901, aged 39 years.

The business was divided on the death of his father in 1917, John Taylor Mawle retaining the ironmongery side at 65 High St.. This was closed down at the end of the war and the contents auctioned. Because of the war these goods were in short supply and many unobtainable, so people came from far and wide to the auction, some even from France and high prices were made. It was an incredible sale. The 65 High St. shop then became Lorna's Cafe and later the District Bank.

On his retirement Mr. Mawle went to live at 31 Oxford Road (now part of the Manor Hotel) and he lived there for the rest of his life.

In 1896 he followed in his father's footsteps in being elected to the Town Council and was Mayor and Alderman in 1919. He was also a J.P. His Obituary states:- "He was Mayor at a time when housing schemes at Easington and Kings Rd. were under consideration. He was an outstanding personality and was a familiar figure in the town and made a notable contribution to the life of the town and district. He deserves to be long and gratefully remembered.....He was one of the first in Banbury to own a motor car."<sup>5</sup>

He was a Baptist like his father. He died on 25th June 1948 aged

88 years. None of his children lived in this district and descendants are now scattered across the world; one in Scotland, one in British Columbia and another in Australia.

John Taylor Mawle's three sons all served in the first World War in the trenches and all were wounded. The youngest son, Normal William Reginald (Bill) served in both wars. He was in the infantry and subsequently with the R.F.C; he flew in France and was awarded the D.F.C. He was in the Auxiliary Air Force in the Second World War and served with the R.A.F. obtaining the rank of Group Captain. He spent a total of 11 years with the forces without ever being a regular. His real career was in business and he became a well-known typewriter manufacturer in West Bromwich and was a pioneer of portable British typewriters. He had a wide range of interests. He was a Magistrate and was awarded the O.B.E. He died in 1972.

His son, who is the present John Mawle, followed a business career after serving in the Royal Navy, obtaining an Engineering Degree at Cambridge. He now lives in Scotland.

#### SYDNEY JOSEPH MAWLE 1863-1931

He was the second son of John Mawle and was educated at the Banbury Academy, Horse Fair, Banbury. He went into business at Kingston before joining his father and brother in the business.<sup>5</sup> After his father's death he ran the business at 22 High St. until his death in 1931 when it was sold to Mr. Ernest Horn of Oxford and it remained in that family until the business closed down in October 1977.

Sydney Mawle developed the sanitary engineering and agricultural implement side of the business and was sole proprietor. His Obituary states:-

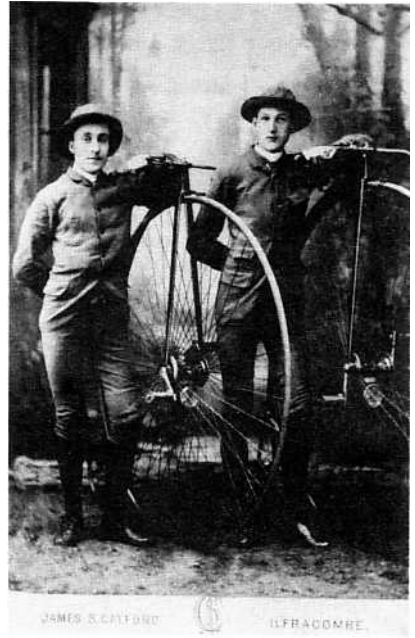
"He was widely known in the Midlands and amongst trade exhibits at the Oxfordshire Agricultural Show where J. Mawle & Sons was a leading feature. Mr. Mawle's advice was much in demand by residents of country houses and farmers in connection with water supply plants and on the agricultural side he was probably the best known man to farmers over a wide area .....

"Mr. Mawle gave a great deal of his time to public service. He was on the County Council and elected an Alderman..... During the War he was elected to the Town Council and became Mayor in 1920, thereby filling an Office occupied by his father and brother. He immediately followed his brother as Mayor, a unique occurrence in the Borough. He was again Mayor in 1922. He retired from the Council in 1928. His genial and equable temperament was an asset to the many functions in which as Mayor he attended.

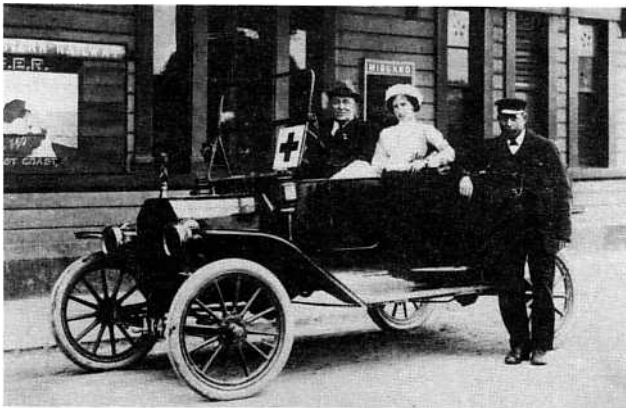
"Among the causes he supported was the St. John Ambulance and the Red Cross. It was in connection with this that he inaugurated a striking piece of war work. Troop trains were passing through Banbury Station daily and he found many troops had long journeys without



John and Mary Mawle of Bodicote ca 1860



Sydney and John Taylor Mawle



Sydney Mawle and Freda Day at Banbury Station  
during the 1914-18 war



refreshments. With the assistance of the Railway he built a kitchen at the station and put nurses of the Banbury Red Cross in charge, under his niece Miss Freda Day and working on a rota, every train, day and night was served with refreshments. All the funds were raised by voluntary subscription. Later when hospital trains brought war wounded, the War Office extended the work here making Banbury an official rest station. The Government placed a V.A.D. hospital here and Mr. Mawle threw himself into the work of equipping it. . . . . In recognition of these services he was awarded the M.B.E. in the list of War Honours. . . . .

"A matter of which he took a great interest was the restoration of Sulgrave Manor, the ancestral home of the Washingtons. The completion of this and the opening of the house by the Marquis of Cambridge took place when he was Mayor. The movement owed a great deal to him and this was generously recognized by the officials in London and representatives in the States who consulted him and Mr. Carter, the steward.

"Mr. Mawle was a magistrate and Governor of the County School . . . . . After the war he helped in the extension of the Horton Infirmary. . . . . He was a sidesman at St Mary's Church. . . . . And a keen Freemason, becoming Provincial Third Principal in 1920. . . . ."

Sydney Mawle married Miss Ellen Ireland of Ilfracombe and they had two children; John Cyril who was killed through a kick from a horse in 1923, aged 33 years, and a daughter, Doris who married Mr. William Shilson and lived in Oldham.

When his father died in 1917, Sydney Mawle was living at 'The Hermitage', the old family home of his grandfather, at Bodicote<sup>3</sup> but for many years since he had lived at 'Chesterton' Hightown Rd. He died on 23rd May 1931, aged 68 years and was buried in Banbury Cemetery.<sup>5</sup>

FREDA MARY DAY 1888-1963

Miss Freda Mary Day, later Mrs. Raymond Cherry, was the daughter of John Mawle's daughter and was brought up by him at 'Elmleigh'.

Miss Day was a Quartermaster of a Red Cross Detachment in Oxfordshire and it so happened that she read a letter in the Banbury Guardian 10th September 1914<sup>9</sup> - just after the start of the war - "drawing attention to the fact that troops passing through Banbury Station were so parched that they were drinking the water from fire buckets. After reading this Miss Day consulted her Uncle Mr. Sydney Mawle, Assistant Director of the Red Cross in Oxfordshire and together they interviewed the Station-master who agreed to the setting up of a Rest Station and Canteen at the G.W.R. Station. . . . . and at noon the same day 500 troops had been served with lemonade. . . . ."

"Banbury was the first Canteen to be provided by voluntary effort for the travelling serviceman." This was started in September 1914 and it ran continuously day and night until July 1919.

"It is estimated that 3,000,000 men were fed at the Station. . . . . The largest amount of credit must be given to Miss Day. . . . ."<sup>9</sup>

On 30th April 1919 she married Mr. W.R. Cherry of Barford St. Michael and they had a son Patrick and daughter Mary. Mr Cherry farmed latterly at Camp Farm Tadmarton and died there in 1960. Mrs. Cherry died in 1963 at Hook Norton.<sup>8</sup>

Their daughter, Miss Mary Cherry, is the agricultural journalist and broadcaster and is the only descendant of John Mawle to live locally.

Barbara Adkins

### NOTES

The Mawles' were an old Northamptonshire farming family. They were living at Blakesley in the 18th century. Joseph Mawle, a descendant, was the first generation to live at Warkworth, just outside Banbury on the Northants/Oxon borders. This family has farmed there for over 170 years.

According to 'Homes of Families of Gt. Britain' by H.P. Guppy (published in 1890) Mawle is a peculiar name confined mostly to Northamptonshire. In 1890 there were 15 Mawles' per 10,000. This name was often spelt Maule.

### SOURCES

1. **Shoemaker's Window** by George Herbert 1814-1902 p.88 and 104 under 'Perambulation of Banbury' p.88 "Then comes the White Lion (High St) kept by the Wyatts.....The next house in the corner was Mr. James Gardner, the ironmonger who after established the iron foundry. He had taken out a patent for a turnip cutter (1834)....." p.104 "Crossing to the other side (of Church Lane) was the White Lion Tap, & next came an old Independent Chapel; this is now made use of as a smiths shop & warehouse of Mr. Mawle, the ironmonger in High St.."
2. Tadmarton & Bodicote Registers.
3. Obituary of John Mawle in Banbury Guardian 12th July 1917.
4. Kelly's Directory - Banbury - High St. 1899 gives 22 High St. - Frank Wm. Shrimpton - fishmonger & poulterer.
5. Obituary of Sydney Joseph Mawle in Banbury Guardian 28th May 1931.
6. Obituaries of John Taylor Mawle in Banbury Guardian 1st July 1948 and Banbury Advertiser 30th June 1949.
7. Obituary of Mrs. Mary Day in Banbury Guardian 10th November 1938.
8. Obituary of Mrs. Freda Cherry in Banbury Guardian 4th July 1963.
9. Article in Banbury Guardian 14th August 1919 'The Banbury Rest Station - The Close of an excellent Work'.
10. 1851 Census of Bodicote - he was still living at home.
11. Letter in possession of a descendant.

## MONUMENTS AND THEIR INSCRIPTIONS IN SAINT MARY'S CHURCHYARD, BANBURY

In the early 1950's the churchyard round the old Banbury parish church suffered a fate rather similar to that of the church itself in 1790. As with the old church, it was, ostensibly at least, with the best of motives, and the resultant 'landscaping' was much applauded in circles that approve of clearing churchyards.

It was some years before the Historical Society was founded, or some protest might have been made, or attempt to record the stones before they were desecrated. As it was, it seems that virtually every stone was removed from its original position (possibly those in the north-west corner were an exception). Many were used to form the paving stones of the paths traversing the yard - unfortunately with their inscriptions upwards. A few 'altar' stones have been half buried in earth and shrubs encouraged to obscure what remains above ground. Perhaps the most tragic fate was reserved for the earliest stones - those of the late 17th and early 18th centuries, whose delightful deep-cut cherubs and other decoration appealed even to the landscapers. They were carefully leant against the north wall of the church - just where the eaves could drip directly on to them whenever it rained. Twenty-five years of this treatment have accomplished what two hundred and fifty of normal weathering failed to achieve - the soft Hornton stone has flaked away with a virtually total loss of the inscriptions.

Belatedly, a survey has been made of the churchyard and the inscriptions still legible have been at last recorded. Bearing in mind what has happened, it seems amazing that some 122 stones still could offer some worthwhile information, and names of 212 people have been identified in the pre-1839 burial registers. These will be published as an Appendix in the forthcoming volume of the 18th and 19th century parish registers.

Of the oldest stones one directly beneath the central north window, in the form of an open book, appears to be to the Wells family and bears several legible dates: 1681, 1667, 1706 - but frustratingly it is quite impossible to tie any of these up with entries for the Wells family who lived in Banbury at that time. So the earliest stone identifiable with burials in the register is a triangular fragment to Richard and Elizabeth Bloxham, who died in 1741 and 1745. Of similar date is the earliest inscription on one of the two Cobb family tombs, standing near the road in the north-west corner. Thomas Cobb who died in 1742 was one of the girth-weaving (and later banking) family who played an important part in Banbury life for a century and more. Other names of leading Banbury families in the later 18th century to be found here include Aplin, Austin, Bradford, Clarson, Gunn, Hawtyn, Munton and Pain. But not, alas, the town's historian, Alfred Beesley, who was buried here in 1847. Doubtless his stone shared the fate of most mid-19th century ones, and has been obliterated by the feet of uncaring Banburians.

Lastly, a tradition exploded, or at least tarnished. The "Preface to Readers" in the first edition of Swift's famous "Gulliver's Travels", 1726, remarks "I have observed in the Church-Yard at Banbury several Tombs and Monuments of the Gullivers." It is quite true that there were Gullivers living in Banbury at that time - indeed if Swift in fact stayed at the Three Tuns (the site of the Whately Hall) he might have met the sister of the landlord Thomas Stokes, who had married a William Gulliver. But alas for the credulous tourists who, we are told, reverently examine the stones to the north of the church and near the road - for the Gullivers they commemorate died a full century later. Of Swift's Gulliver monuments there remains no trace.

J. S. W. G.

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**LORD NORTH**, by Alan Valentine, 2 vols., University of Oklahoma Press, 1967. Vol. 1, xii, 568 pp., 16 plates; Vol. 2, viii, 518 pp., 16 plates. Available in hardback (\$19.95) or paperback (\$9.95) from University of Oklahoma Press, Norman, OK. 73019, U.S.A. (allow \$1.16 postage and handling).

To most people Lord North is "the Prime Minister who lost the American Colonies", Britain's most disastrous premier. However, to historians of Banbury he is outstandingly the most important and distinguished politician ever to have represented the borough in the House of Commons.

In fact, Lord North has had a very bad press, and is much the victim of aftersight. As a peacetime minister he was, by the standards of the time, very successful. But for the American war he might well be remembered in the same light as Sir Robert Walpole. His conduct of government during the earlier years of his period of office (he was Prime Minister from 1770 to 1782) contrasts well with that of his constantly changing predecessors.

The importance of this massive biography, which though published ten years ago only recently came to our attention, is the exhaustive research undertaken by the author, and the meticulous footnoting of his references. Naturally the book is concerned primarily with North's political career in a national and international context. But Dr. Valentine has made good use of the sizeable North collection in the Bodleian Library, and this contains a tremendous amount of local interest.

Lord North was the eldest son of Francis, first Earl of Guilford (1704-1790), who lived at Wroxton, the seat of the family from the 17th to the 20th century. He was a dutiful son and continued to be much influenced by his father even when he was Prime Minister. The voluminous correspondence in the Bodleian includes a number of letters from Lord North

himself to his father, and many more from others. One of those quoted by Dr. Valentine is Dr. Matthew Lamb, Vicar of Banbury from 1758 to 1780, who was very much the Earl's protégée. Elected to the Banbury Corporation in 1759, he thenceforward acted as political agent for the Earl on behalf of Lord North. The franchise for the Borough was confined to the eighteen Corporation members, and in eighty letters over the next twenty-five years Lamb was assiduous in advising just what inducements were needed to ensure each constituent's vote. Lord North was first elected for Banbury in 1754, but the fact that he was returned unopposed at that and at every subsequent election until 1790, when he succeeded to his father's title, shows the success of Vicar Lamb's persuasion. It is hoped to publish these and other letters relating directly to Banbury in due course in our records series.

Lord North's political career may have ended in disaster, but all seem to be agreed what an extremely likeable man he was. Corpulent and pop-eyed, his appearance was all against him, but his sense of humour and affability made him almost universally liked, by political opponents as well as supporters.

The research that Dr. Valentine must have put into writing this biography is awesome, and his footnotes and bibliography are themselves a most useful guide to published and unpublished material for later eighteenth century history. Another of the Earl of Guilford's correspondents was George Montagu, who lived nearby at Greatworth and Adderbury between 1754 and 1770. As one of Horace Walpole's friends he is well known, and it is surprising to find him here confused with his cousin Frederick Montagu in the index to Volume 1 and in several references. However the Montagu cousinage, the 'cu-dom', were legion, and in a work as large as this the occasional minor slip is understandable and pardonable.

Lastly, a word on the remarkably good value this biography is at under ten dollars for the two volumes. Though published in America it is a work of very considerable importance to local historians of north Oxfordshire, and well repays the trouble of acquiring it.

J.S.W. Gibson

## OXFORDSHIRE CUSTOMS AND FOLKLORE

(Resumé of talk given to the Society on 29 September 1977)

Customs and folklore are all too frequently considered quaint and meaningless, but behind them are primitive beliefs transmitted via folk memory, and transmitted by social factors throughout history. They can reveal traces of ancient social and economic systems and primitive religious beliefs. Many customs continued in full spate until the turn of the century, even up to the watershed of the first world war as modern life transformed rural society.

Much folklore was concerned with sympathetic magic and growing fertility. The Burford dragon is a relic of the midsummer fires which encouraged the waning sun to increase its strength - Banbury's fine lady on her white horse represented the goddess who rode round the fields every spring to ensure a good crop, and harvest rites placated the corn spirit.

Folklore revolves round attempts to explain the unknown - for example, the stone circle forming the Rollright Stones was thought to be a king and his army petrified by a wicked witch on their way to battle. There are apparently more superstitions connected with the Rollright Stones than any other archaeological site in Britain.

Echoes of history can be seen in Newland's mock mayormaking ceremony - Newland was founded as an extension of Banbury in the 12th century, but always retained its separate identity and elected its own mock mayor to demonstrate its antagonism to Banbury. Even ordinary mortals such as Betty White had legends spun around them - in her case around her skill in making Banbury cakes.

The difficulties and dangers of home life, birth, marriage, and death encouraged a wealth of superstitions. As recently as 1954 a Banbury midwife tried to buy a baby's caul for £10 so that she could give it to her sailor boyfriend as a charm against drowning.

The poverty of village children is reflected in many of the calendar customs. There was no spare money for them from their parents, so they went round begging for money and food at every conceivable opportunity - St Valentine's Day, Shrove Tuesday, Shick Shack Day, November 5th, etc.

The supernatural has always provided a rich source of folklore - many ghosts are sighted today, although witches and fairies have largely disappeared - the last fairies in Oxfordshire were seen going down a hole by the Rollright Stones at the beginning of the century.

There are many varied aspects to customs and folklore and it is fascinating trying to discover why and when they began and how they have changed. Puritanical Banbury must have lost much of its folklore in C17, as under Cromwell the government tried to abolish even Christmas as being too pagan, and Banbury boasted a Puritan who hanged his cat on Monday for killing a mouse on Sunday!

Christine Bloxham

# 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 7.30 pm. 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 £4.50 including any records volumes published, or £3.00 if these are excluded.

Application forms can be obtained from the Hon. Membership Secretary.

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