

CAKE AND COCKHORSE



BANBURY HISTORICAL
SOCIETY

AUTUMN 1989 PRICE £1.00

VOLUME 11 NUMBER 4

ISSN 6522-0823

Banbury Historical Society

President;
The Lord Saye and Sele

Chairman:
Dr. J.S. Rivers, Homeland, Middle Lane, Balscote,
Banbury.

Deputy Chairman:
J.S.W. Gibson, Harts Cottage, Church Hanborough, Oxford, OX7 2AB

Magazine Editor:
D.A. Hitchcox, 1 Dorchester Grove, Banbury, OX16 0BD
(Tel: 253733)

Hon. Secretary:
Mrs. M. Barnett,
Banbury Museum,
8 Horsefair, Banbury.
(Tel: 259855)

Hon. Treasurer:
G. Ellacott,
3 Deers Farm,
Bodicote,
Banbury, OX15 3DF.
(Tel: Home 258493)
Business 250401

Programme Secretary:
Miss P. Renold M.A.F., R.Histo.S.,
51 Woodstock Close,
Oxford OX2 8DD
(Tel: Oxford 53937)

Hon. Research Adviser:
J.S.W. Gibson,
Harts Cottage,
Church Hanborough, Oxford OX7 2AB
(Tel: Freeland 0993 882982)

Committee Members:

Mrs. J.P. Bowes, Mrs. N.M. Clifton, Miss M. Stanton
Mr. A.E. Crosby, Mr. H. White

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

Cake and Cockhorse

The Magazine of the Banbury Historical Society
issued three times a year

Volume 11	Number 4	Autumn 1989
Nanette Godfrey & Charmian Snowden	Wykham Park - From the early 19th Century to the present day	78
J.S.W. Gibson	A Few Weeks in 1795	84
F.E. Burroughes	A History of the Music at Banbury Parish Church	90

Once again with Banbury's development, another site has been cleared, this time it is the Old Council Yard and surrounding buildings in Bridge Street. The Oxon Archaeological Unit have proceeded with a dig prior to the building of the Inner Ring Road. The initial excavation found the foundations of some "medieval cottages". It is hoped to publish further details when available. Another development on the archaeological front is the proposed development by Coca Cola Ltd. on the Hardwick Village site. The planning permission for this is being held up while the historical value of the site is assessed.

In this issue we have the second part of the history of Wykham Park, together with an article on Church Music, first published as a pamphlet by St. Mary's Church, Banbury, 10 years ago.

D.A.H.

Cover Picture: Wykham Park (Tudor Hall)

WYKHAM PARK

From the early 19th Century to the present day

The spendthrift Sir Harry Watkin Dashwood was the last member of that family to own Wykham Park. In 1801 he sold the estate to a landowner, James King. For the next 65 years it changed hands several times, and its owners are rather shadowy figures - in 1817 David Stewart, in 1850 Thomas Vincent Price.

The year 1865 was a turning point in the history of Wykham. In that year a rich and successful self-made business man, William Mewburn, visited Banbury. All his life he was a devout Methodist. He came to Banbury to lay one of the foundation stones of the Marlborough Road Chapel. It would have been a "once off" visit, but he aspired to set himself up as a country gentleman, so when he heard that Wykham Park was on the market, he bought the estate and moved in. He was then 48 and already extremely rich.

There had been a Methodist congregation in Banbury since 1784 when John Wesley, aged 81, had paid his first real visit to Banbury as a guest of the Presbyterians to preach at their meeting house. The early Banbury methodists were working-class people - weavers, rope-makers, brick-makers, labourers, and the like. By the mid 19th century Banbury was expanding fast and becoming very prosperous on the basis of its new industry, the manufacture of agriculture implements, such as reaping machines and turnip cutters. The industry was centred on The Britannia Works Foundry, owned by Sir Bernhard Samuelson who was also M.P. for Banbury for most of the time between 1859-1895. Trade flourished, and shop-keepers, business and professional men found plenty of openings for profitable enterprises in Banbury. It was a boom time for new buildings, both public and private, and new places of worship sprouted up all over the town.

In 1861 the Banbury Methodists, who by this time consisted largely of shop-keepers and professional men decided to build themselves a much bigger and better chapel than the one they had made do with in Church Lane. The new chapel was the first building to go up beside the new Marlborough Road. It was to be an immensely prestigious building, far outshining those recently put up by other denominations, and it cost what was the then impressive sum of £6,800. Its founding fathers were very satisfied with its design, being in the 'quaint and gothic style' and embellished with those "grotesquely carved figures which give such peculiar quaintness to the exterior of medieval buildings". The new methodist church was the largest in the county. It opened free of debt, thanks largely to Mewburn's donation. It was fashionable and its congregation rich.

It was in this context that Mewburn arrived on the Banbury scene. No Anglican squire could have had more influence over the running of his parish church than Mewburn did over the Marlborough Road congregation. By 1867 he was Circuit Steward, in which position he soon controlled the appointment of ministers to Marlborough Road Church.

Every Sunday morning onlookers would wait outside the church for the arrival of the carriage from Wykham Park. Mewburn and his family would enter and sit in a pew near the centre of the downstairs part of the Church, while the servants went upstairs to the gallery.

He always behaved as a squire and was very influential in the district, being High Sheriff and later Deputy Lieutenant of Oxfordshire. He always said that everyone should give 1/10 of his income to charity and he practised what he preached. He gave a great deal of his money to Wesleyan causes. For example he paid half the cost of the new chapel built in the working class suburbs of Grimsbury in 1871. This new church, furnished with the most up-to-date heating arrangements and with a school and playground attached cost all of £2,350. The Banbury Wesleyans were very proud of their achievement, built, as they said, in a 'mixed style, but partaking somewhat of the Grecian'. Mewburn's enormous generosity was for the most part confined to Methodists but he and his wife paid for the children's ward for the Horton General Hospital to mark Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee in 1897. A year or so before he died, Mewburn contributed £2,000 towards the building of the Wesleyan school in Dashwood Road, which opened in 1901.

In 1868 the Wesleyans tried to get Mewburn adopted as the Liberal candidate for the borough. The sitting M.P. Bernhard Samuelson was also a Liberal. There was virtually no difference in the political views of the two men and they both approached Mr. Gladstone for his approval, but he had no preference. Mewburn's political views were clear-cut and fairly radical. He believed that the universities should be opened to all classes of people; that elementary education should be extended to the lower classes; that there should be complete civil and religious liberty; that the Irish Church should be disestablished; and in his economic views he was a supporter of the Manchester School. The nonconformist lobby in Banbury wanted him to back the temperance movement but he was disinclined to do so. In fact he backed down and didn't in the end stand for adoption. Samuelson's political organisation was skillfully conducted, and many voters were put off by the feeling that to vote for Mewburn was a vote for the Wesleyan Chapel. Later in the 1880 election he actively supported Samuelson who strongly backed Gladstone's campaign against the Bulgarian atrocities.

Mewburn's lifestyle at Wykham Park certainly supported his prestigious public image. He made extensive alterations to the house, transforming it from the restrained, elegant house of the Dashwoods into a Victorian mansion. He made the front of the house as it is now, facing east, adding the present front door and porch. He probably added the drawing room and the room which is now the Headmistress's study would have been his study. Much of the back premises of the house were added for servants quarters, a nursery wing and a butler's pantry. We are not sure where the kitchen was. The crenellated roof and the present new squash court by the swimming pool was probably an orangery and the sun terrace was also Mewburn's. Some of the additions were completed by 1871.

A letter, signed Greenaway, gives a pleasant description of

house and grounds as they were in 1889; "Wykham Park lies in a gentle ascent from Banbury Cross, the country all around presenting well timbered knolls and graceful fields. The tall spire of Bloxham Church being an interesting object in the near distance. The soil generally is a deep, close loam, resting on lias rocks, upper lias clay and marlstone, the timber being mainly oak, elm, ash and beech.

The park comprises some 200 acres of undulating woodland with alternate stretches of pasture, dotted here and there with oaks and elms of gigantic measurements.

The house, a plain, solid structure, is built of the yellow sandstone common to the district which has become mellowed with 60 years exposure to sun and wind, and facing south and west it commands fine views over an extensive tract of northern Oxfordshire.

The present building stands south of an old manor house which has been utilised to form a suite of carriage houses and harness rooms. In the mansion are several grand reception rooms, the drawing room being considered uniquely furnished.

The pleasure grounds occupy fully ten acres of lawns, walks and flower beds, and are rich in specimens of Irish Yew 20' high and perfect in outline; several Wellingtonias are making rapid development. A grand *Picea Pinsapo* occupies a prominent place on the lawn near the house and is regarded as having no equal for many miles around... a wide spreading sycamore with a clean bole has a dwarfed appearance since fully four feet of its clean, straight stem has been covered in raising the ground to make the south eastern lawn.

The kitchen gardens includes two acres, well walled in with about half an acre forming a border with an eastern aspect". The letter goes on to describe the Vineries and plant houses occupying about 70 yards of glass, containing muscat grapes in fine condition with heavy clusters, and orchids of various kinds. There were abundant hardy fruits, bearing crops of Blenheim Orange, Lord Suffield, Wellington, Northern Greening and Wyken Pippin apples. The pear trees bore heavy laden boughs of duchesse d'Angouleme, Autumn Bergamots and Passe Colman, and there were prolific crops of plums and damsons.

The letter ends with a tribute to the Head Gardener. "Everything about the place speaks to the ability of Mr. W. Baskett, head gardener, who appears to have a staff sufficient to keep the gardens in complete order. If there is one department in which Mr. Baskett excels it is in growing chrysanthemums; his groups of untrained examples that annually appear at the Banbury shows being pronounced A1 for size of bloom and healthy foliage."

That was in 1889, shortly before the ballroom was added as a music room in about 1890.

Going back a bit to 1871. In that year on 24th May, a most spectacular wedding took place in Banbury. That was the marriage of Mewburn's daughter to Mark Olroyd, son of a West Riding woollen manufacturer. There was great public enthusiasm for the event and the Banbury Guardian gave extensive coverage to the occasion. At the entrance to Marlborough Road was a huge decorated arch with the initials O and M at each end. All down High Street and along

Marlborough Road were flags, bannerets, and at the entrance to the Church another huge arch with "Every blessing be yours" emblazoned on a shield. Enormous crowds watched the arrivals at the Church and every free seat was taken hours before the ceremony began. The wedding was conducted by two of the most celebrated Wesleyan ministers of the time, and when the bride left the church, escorted by 7 bridesmaids, her path was strewn with rose petals. The most important members of the party were conveyed to Wykham in coaches pulled by nine pairs of greys - specially acquired for the purpose by the Red Lion Stables. The whole of the Wykham estate was adorned with floral arches and flags. According to the Banbury Guardian, the wedding breakfast was "of the most recherche description."

Mewburn often opened these grounds for public occasions. In the 1880's and '90s the annual Sunday School treat was a very red-letter day for great numbers of children, and the children of the Banbury Wesleyan Sunday School enjoyed not merely a treat but a festival. In 1889 nearly 700 children and teachers came to Wykham Park. John Smith of the Temperance Hall and Commercial Hotel, Bridge Street, supplied tea and buns to each of the children at a cost of 5½d a head. Swings were hired, and balls, whips, lorries, and other toys were bought from Mr. Brummit of Parsons Street and Mr. Ludwig of High Street, both of them Methodists. Such were the crowds expected that 10/- was paid to the country constabulary for the attendance of two policemen.

I hope that Mr. & Mrs. Mewburn would approve of their mansion being a girls' school. They were great believers in education, especially for the poor. I came across some remarks made by Mrs. Mewburn about education when she opened a sale of work at the school-room of the Grimsbury Methodist Chapel in April 1889. Perhaps she had her husband in mind when she stressed recent improvements in education. "Children", she said, "now have great advantages over those of 30 years ago. They may now get such an education, both religious and secular, that almost any superstructure may be raised upon it, and a boy possessed of even moderate abilities, by determination, by industry, and the fear of God before his eyes, may raise himself to almost any position to which he aspires". As to the girls, she said, "we ought to expect a great deal from them. I hope we shall see better cottage homes in the future than many we now see around us - I cannot imagine that well educated girls, with a knowledge of the laws of health and cleanliness, and cookery, and the values of fresh air and ventilation - I cannot imagine them growing up with slovenly women content to live in untidy houses - surely they will try to make their homes into real homes - the pure, pleasant and wholesome places they ought to be." Clearly, to her, girls' education meant home economics.

Mewburn died in May 1900, aged 83. His son and heir, William Mewburn, Jr., sold Wykham Park on the death of his mother, to his brother-in-law, Robert Perks, M.P., in 1903. There could not have been a more appropriate heir. The son of a distinguished Methodist minister in Hammersmith, Robert Perks started his career with some valuable assets - "robust health, a well spent youth; honourable

family traditions, and a dauntless spirit". His early life in a large family, was disciplined and austere, but happy and intellectually stimulating. After his education at Kingswood, Eton College and King's College, London where he was a brilliant and industrious scholar, he pursued a distinguished career, in which a legal training, journalism, a flair for business (especially related to railway development and the growth of the London Underground) and a deep commitment to serve the public good brought him to The House of Commons as Liberal M.P. for Louth from 1892. Amongst his interests, he strongly supported over many years a (politically) nearly successfully project for a Channel Tunnel.

In 1878 he had married William Mewburn's youngest daughter, Edith. Her father had been his school friend at Eldon House, The marriage proved to be most happy and mutually supportive. Edith gave her husband devoted and intelligent help, encouragement, and support in all his work, whilst rejoicing in her traditional feminine role as wife and mother of their family of four.

Wykham Park was Sir Robert's country house. His main residence was in London, and he owned a seaside home at Littlestone, Kent. He made extensive alterations to Wykham Park, building a new wing to the house, and a picture gallery and library.

It was in Sir Robert's time, early this century, when the estate employed over a hundred workers, that Cecil Rogers (son of the then 'Steward'), whilst sitting on a bank among the daffodils, had the bright idea of a private road being constructed from the front of the house to join the A361. This idea materialised and it was necessary to build the bridge which spans the Wykham/Bodicote road, and which carries the front drive from the front door to the main road. This was a laborious project, as the land had to be made up to gain the height for the bridge to clear the road underneath and all the work had to be done by hand.

At the entrance to the A361 a stone lodge was built, and a very fine and tall pair of wrought iron gates were erected. These were, fortunately, reprieved during the Second World War when most iron gates and fencing were taken to help the war effort.

From 1928-39 Wykham was owned by Sir Arthur Smith Bingham. It is recorded that when the Banbury Cattle Market was opened - now the largest in Europe - "one of Smith Bingham's beasts was the first to enter the ring." He also introduced pheasants into the estate woods in the mid-1930s.

The last phase in the story of Wykham, before the beginning of the present regime, covers the war years 1939-July, 1944. At the start of the Second World War, Wykham Park was requisitioned by the British Army, who installed a number of Nissen huts. In 1943 the United States 696th Armoured Field Artillery Battalion arrived at Wykham. The officers made themselves very comfortable in the main house, which they called 'The Castle'. Robert McCormick, historian of the Battalion, wrote: "The situation provided very desirable quarters for the battalion". Its major task at Wykham was to obtain equipment and vehicles for an armoured field artillery battalion. There were time for agreeable leisure activities - trips to Banbury

and Oxford, movies, parties and dances. On 25th July, 1944, the 696th left 'tree shaded, blacked out Wykham Park' at one o'clock in the morning, heading for the south coast for embarkation to the continent to participate in the invasion of Europe.

In 1945, Nesta Inglis, Headmistress of Tudor Hall, moved her school into Wykham Park. Tudor Hall had been founded in Kent in 1850. It first occupied property in Forest Hill, then a house at Chislehurst. When the Second World War broke out Miss Inglis evacuated the school to Burnt Norton, a house near Chipping Campden. The girls had been extremely happy there so it was decided not to return to Kent when the war was over but to purchase a suitable property in this part of the world. Wykham Park proved ideal with its secluded grounds, so close to the town yet commanding long views across Oxfordshire; and its mellow, old stone buildings enjoying room to develop new facilities. Tudor Hall has flourished in these delightful surroundings.

Nanette Godfrey &
Charmian Snowden

SOURCES

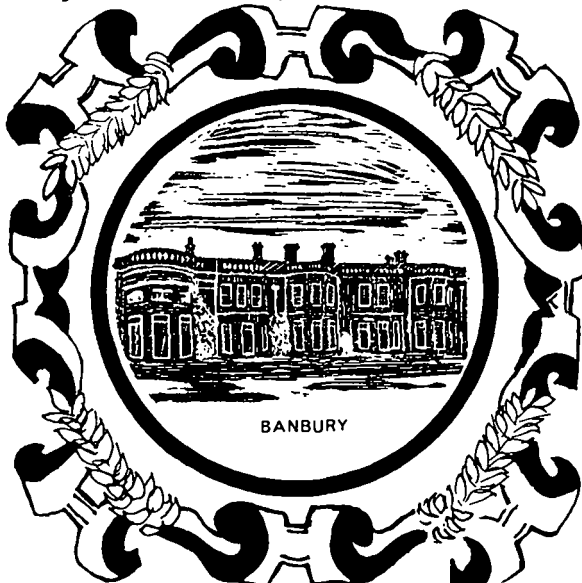
The Banbury Guardian

Methodism in Banbury by Barrie Trinder

The Life Story of Robert Perks by Devin Crane

History of 696th Armoured Field Artillery Battalion by
Robert McCormick

The Tunnel Bridge - an account by Arthur Rogers



A FEW WEEKS IN 1795

Attending the Oxfordshire Local History Association autumn meeting with the topic of "News, Boys, News", I learnt that in addition to the well-known **Jackson's Oxford Journal** there was another short-lived eighteenth century newspaper for the county, the **Oxford Mercury**. The speaker also let drop that this seem to carry a certain amount of news of the Banbury area.

The **JOJ** from its start in 1753 to 1790 has a wonderful modern synopsis and index to local (Oxon) news, and I have made use of this when researching the history of the Three Tuns, Banbury's leading eighteenth century tavern. From 1790 on it is necessary to search the newspaper itself, a fascinating task but so time-consuming for any but specific dated events that I have yet to try it much. However, the carrot of enhanced Banbury news and knowledge that the **Oxford Mercury** only lasted fourteen months (5 August 1795 to 26 October 1796), also the easy availability to me of the unique full set in nearby Woodstock Town Hall, tempted me into a few hours research there.

To date I have in fact only examined issues from August 1796 to mid-January 1796, and from a comparative look at **JOJ** from August to October, the suggestion of a good Banbury correspondent is far from proved. It is however most interesting to have alternative sources and to compare their advertising and news coverage.

Any researcher in newspapers will know the hardest job is to stick to your subject and not get led into reading all the other fascinating items, be they local or national, news or advertisements. I did my best to restrict myself, and this article, to Banbury area items.

What was happening, locally (never mind the French war), in the summer and autumn of 1795?

OM.1: 5 August 1795. The Oxford Canal Navigation were to hold a General Meeting at the Red Lion on 26th (the canal had opened in 1778). Timothy Cobb Esq., banker, had married Miss Rhodes, daughter of the late Thomas Rhodes of Battersea (the Banbury Marriage Register confirms this, 31st July, Miss Rhodes' Christian name being Ann). He was an influential Banburian, as was their son Timothy Rhodes Cobb.

The Reindeer Inn was advertised for sale by auction. This is perhaps the most interesting item of the period covered, and the expanded advertisement is reproduced in facsimile (Page 86) Despite the typical house agents' hyperbole the Reindeer had in fact been in decline throughout the century, superseded by the Unicorn, the Three Tuns and most recently by the Red Lion and the White Lion. From 1706 the inn had belonged to the Howes family. The deed for its sale in 1795 is in Oxfordshire Archives [S & F Colin 25 D]

JOJ.2206: 8 August. Ad. for the auction of the George Inn, in occupation of Mrs. Mulherhan, an adjoining house occupied by Mr. Edward Busby, and an adjoining malthouse, newly built, occupied by Messrs. Barnes and Ward. Another auction for lands at Great Barford.

OM.2: 12 Aug. Ad. for William Rusher's Circulating Library (he was the

agent for the **OM** in Banbury). He had "just received from London a fresh assortment of Patterns of Paper Hangings and Borderings of the newest fashion... Also a Quantity of Printed Music New Books, Magazines etc."

"On Saturday se'nnight John Wyatt was committed to our castle gaol, by John Loveday LLD and William Holbech Esq., MP., charged with having, together with divers others, on 24th July, riotously assembled at Bloxham and... did make an assault on Wm. Beale the driver of a waggon loaded with twenty-two sacks of wheat, the property of William Atkins of Chipping Norton, and did stop and detain the waggon until nine sacks of wheat were taken and carried away, in aprons, sheets, and cloths, by the mob."

Despite my determination to keep a local restraint, I cannot resist another item; "A few days ago were married at Ilminster, Mr. Wyatt, of Broadway, a blind gentleman, aged 82, to Miss Tucker, of Ilminster, aged twenty".

JOJ.2207: 15 August. Ad. relating to the estate of William Tims, decd., of Neathrop, victualler, formerly of Deddington, yeoman, whose local executors were John Allett of Great Bourton and John Tombs of Little Bourton.

"On Thursday evening died at Banbury. Mrs. Catherine Newman relict of John Dorsett Newman of Banbury" Her husband had been the son of John Newman who had established plush weaving in Banbury but he had been less successful and died a bankrupt in 1776.

OM.3: 19 Aug. "On Saturday morning last a plaisterer's lad, about 16 years of age, fell from the uppermost scaffold at the dome within Banbury's new church, by which misfortune he had his thigh and his jaw-bone broken, and was otherwise much bruised. There is, however, great hope of his recovery. The accident happened in consequence of his stepping on the end of a plank, which tilted with him.

"On Friday morning last died Mrs. Aplin, sen., relict of the late Mr. Aplin, attorney at law and town clerk of this borough".

JOJ.2208: 22 Aug. An apology by William Easley Smith of Ratley Grange for slandering Robert Usher of Westcott Farm, Tysoe, signed by him by mark, witnessed by Tho. Barnes of Ratley and F.W. Dury of Banbury.

"Last week died, after a short illness, Mrs. Aplin, aged 80, a widow lady of great respectability." (The register shows she was named Susannah, and her late husband was B(enjamin).)

Bankruptcy announced of Robert Osborne of Banbury, factor, dealer and chapman, with creditors meeting at the Hen and Chickens Inn, High Street in Birmingham.

OM.4: 26 Aug. Announcement that Stephen Hunt, late wharfinger in Banbury has taken the Lether Bottle Inn there, "Where gentlemen, travellers etc., may meet with the best Accomodation, N.B. Good stabling for Hunters and other Horses. Post horses to let.".

JOJ.2209: 29 August. Auction of the Manors of Newbottle and Charlton, incl. an ancient mansion and 820 acres, by Mr. Young on 15 Oct. at the Red Lion.

OM.5: 2 Sep. A more detailed ad. for the auction of the Reindeer, below:

TO BE SOLD BY AUCTION;
BY MR. HAWTYN,
On THURSDAY the 24th of SEPTEMBER, 1795;
At FIVE in the Afternoon;
At the REIN DEER INN, in BANBURY, OXON,
Unsale disposed of by PRIVATE CONTRACT, of which timely
Notice will be given,

LOT I. A FREEHOLD DWELLING HOUSE, with an old accustomed Grocer's Shop, now in full Trade, situate in the greatest Thoroughfare-street, in Banbury aforesaid, but under the Appellation of PARSON'S LANE, and near the Centre of the said Street, now in the Occupation of Mr. Robert Gardner, Tenant at Will; comprising a convenient Shop, good Kitchen and Pantry, Two very roomy Bed-chambers, with Three Lodging-Rooms over, neat Garden, walled round, with a desirable Conveniency therein, free Use of a Pump of excellent Water, with Liberty of Thoroughfare through a large Yard into the adjoining Fields.

LOT II. A FREEHOLD DWELLING HOUSE, adjoining the preceding Lot, comprising Two good Cellars, roomy Dwelling House, neat Garden, Two pleasant Bed-chambers, a Light Closet and Lodging Room over; also a Piece of Ground, calculated for a Garden, Part walled round, free use of a Pump, which produces Plenty of Water, with Liberty of Thoroughfare, as in the last Lot.

LOT III. A Large GARDEN, abounding with Choice Fruit Trees, and a commodious Bowling-Green adjoining, with a Terrace Walk and beautiful Shrubbery, at the Confinè of which is a pure limpid Stream, well supplied by an inexhaustible Spring, and which is capable of being converted into a Fish-pond.

LOT IV. That Well-known and Good-accustomed FREEHOLD INN, the REIN DEER, now in full and desirable Trade, situate and adjoining to Lot the First, in Parson's Street aforesaid; comprising a large and convenient Cellar, commodious Yard, in which is a Pump that produces Plenty of valuable Water, and having a Carriage Road from the Front into another Part, which leads to the Birmingham and Coventry Turnpike Roads; on both Sides of the Yard is extensive Stabling, good Warehouse, Granaries, with Store Rooms over, Oily, Scullery, and other Conveniences; a long and roomy Range of Buildings, used as a Wool Warehouse, and one other Building, which may be used as a Coach-House; likewise a Paddock and Piece of Ground, which may be converted into Gardens: At the Foot of the Yard is a convenient Horse-Pond, well supplied with a running Stream.

The HOUSE PART comprises a good Kitchen, convenient Bar Room, Three eligible Parlours, One large and very commodious Dining Room Parlour, a new-erected Brewhouse, convenient with every requisite for Brewing Eighteen Bushels of Malt with Ease:—The Second Floor contains Six Bed-chambers, with Lodging-Rooms over.

This Inn is now in the Occupation of Mr. William Hale, as Tenant at Will, and is well worth the Attention of a Person wishing immediately to get into a Public Line of Business, or Common Brewers, desirous of extending their Trade.

For Particulars apply to Mr. WALKER, Corn-Market, Oxford, or the Auctioneer, at Banbury.

Printed Particulars and Conditions of Sale will be delivered in due Time

JOJ.2210: 5 Sep. As well as the ad. for the Reindeer, one for rams, the property of Mr. Henry Whateley, late of Culworth, now moved to Dorset, at the Hare and Hounds, Wardington.

OM.6: 9 Sep. "On Tuesday morning, 1st, a very alarming fire broke out at the bakehouse of Mr. William Hawkes in Adderbury West, which in a short time consumed the whole roof of that building and did other

damage, but through the prompt activity of the inhabitants and the skilful exertion of the engineer, who was well supplied with water, together with the calmness of the morning, it was prevented from spreading further although surrounded by thatch buildings and furze ricks." [A shorter report appeared in **JOJ.2210.**]

"A narrow leaved Aloe, from Vera-Cruz, in Spanish America, is now to be seen in full bloom, in the green-house belonging to William R. Cartwright Esq., of Aynho".

JOJ.2211: 12 Sep. "At Banbury, on Tuesday last, a dispute arising between one Careless, a Fishmonger, and Grant, A Fruiterer, respecting the purchase of a basket of fruit, a most severe battle ensued, which, after a contest of two hours, terminated in favour of Careless, and, we are concerned to add, that Grant is since dead."

OM.7: 16 Sep. "On Monday last Robert Knight, Gent., was chosen Mayor of Banbury for the ensuing year.

"On Tuesday two young men of that town, Richard Grant and William Careless, whose parents were huxters, and could not agree, it is supposed, respecting their trade, met in Parsons Meadow, where after two hours fighting, Grant was so terribly bruised as to be carried home in a chair, and died in consequence early this morning. The parents of both were present during the battle, encouraging their respective sons to fight. What is very remarkable, the same young man, William Careless, some time ago accidentally killed a boy at Middleton Cheney ... by throwing a stick."

"On 10 Sep., Banbury burial register records: "Richard son of Thomas Grant, kill'd by fighting with Mr. Carless."

JOJ.2212: 19 Sep. Auction (by Hawtin) of the household contents of "a large and commodious stone and sashed house" in High Street, Banbury. These included "a Chamber Organ, Violin and Case, a very handsome Phaeton, and an elegant Gig." The following day there was to be a sale of books. The subsequent ad. for letting presumably this house is noted below:

Ad. for the Michaelmas Meeting at Astrop Wells on 29 Sep. Admittance to the Ball, 5s for each Gentleman, 2s.6d. for each Lady. Publick Breakfast as usual and Supper at the Rooms.

Auction of property in Sibford Gower, including a mercers' and grocers' shop (established for some years) and warehouse, in occupation of Mr Joseph Russell, at the Red Lion, Banbury on 8 Oct.

JOJ.2213: 26 Sep Plants to be sold by Mr Walker at the Buck and Bell, Banbury.

Ad. for the Banbury Assembly at the White Lion: Gentlemen 7s.6d., Ladies 5s. (clearly a more upmarket thrash than Astrop!).

JOJ.2214: 3 Oct. Ad. for letting of the Turnpike at Banbury Bridge Toll Gate. the tolls produced £305 last year. Auction at the Red Lion, 16 Oct.

Ad. for "A Desirable Dwelling House. to be Lett, and entered upon immediately, if required, in the capital, opulent and populous Town of Banbury. The handsome freestone-build and sashed Dwelling House, very pleasantly and eligibly situated in the High Street, always the Residence of genteel Families, and late in the occupation of a Medicine Doctor; comprising very cool Cellaring; and on the Ground Floor a

lobby, three Parlours, Hall, Kitchen, Brew-House, Out-House and Stable; Yard paved, convenient Garden walled round, and also other Domestic Conveniences. The second Floor contains five excellent Bed-Chambers; and one large Room over, which may easily be converted into Lodging Rooms,

"Also may be had with this House, if requested; A convenient large Garden, walled round and abounding with choice Fruit Trees, and a neat Summer House therein, annexed to which is a roomy Orchard, planted with Trees of delicious Fruit and covered with Plenty of growing Herbage; moreover having a Pump and Well of valuable Water, Adjoining the same is a Two-stalled Stable and Straw-House, a good Yard, with a Carriage Road, and Kitchen Garden therein."

This description of such a substantial house and grounds in Banbury High Street poses a problem, bearing in mind the built-up nature of the area, which I cannot feel I can solve. At first I thought it might have been on the south side opposite the present Post Office, until I remembered that this was still called Sheep Street at the time, High Street being the part from the White Lion to Broad Street and beyond. Where in that area could a house have such substantial grounds? Possibly facing the White Lion, west of the Red Lion and Pepper Alley, with access from the present George Street, then Scalding Lane and later Fish Street. Your guess is as good as mine! As for its former occupant, I suggest Dr. Edward Burford, the cantankerous Corporation member who had died in March 1787. His widow died in 1798, so one may well speculate that a few years earlier she no longer wanted to maintain such a household. The occupations index to Banbury's burial register shows no doctors at all (nor physicians), which is sadly misleading, as Burford is described as 'M.D.' as well as 'Gent.' (as editor I accept the blame for inadequate scrutiny of my late friend Reg Couzens' work - but still Banbury is the only town in the county with its entire registers to 1838 published). Fortunately Edward Burford is well familiar!

JOJ.2215: 10 October "William Hale of that old-established Inn the Rein Deer in Parson's Lane, Banbury, begs leave to return his most grateful Thanks to his Friends ... given him at the said inn... He has now purchased the said inn, in setting the same up in a neat and genteel Manner, and has laid in a stock ...

So we now know that William Hale who bought the Reindeer in 1795 had been there some years beforehand. The registers (in confirmation) show a daughter baptised to him, 'innkeeper', in June 1789.

This is as far as I had time to check the entries in **JOJ**. The remainder are from the **OM** solely.

OM.13: 28 Oct. Creditors of Richard Drope Gough. Meeting to be held at the Red Lion.

Auction of 3 cottages and a $\frac{1}{2}$ yardland in Bloxham, former property of Mrs. Sarah Palmer decd., at the Hawk and Partridge.

OM. 4 Nov. Ad. by Thomas Poley of coals at Aynho Wharf or Botany Bay.

OM.19: 9 Dec. Auction of house in Shutford, late occ. Mr. Joseph Tustain, at the George in Shutford.

"On Sunday last was married at St. Martin's Church, London, Mr. Wykham, Attorney, Banbury, to Miss Bignell, sister of Mr. Bignell,

Attorney, and eldest daughter to the late Mr. Bignell, whose loss has been justly regretted, by his exclusive connections for his just and upright conduct in his profession, and his amiable manners as a gentlemen".

This item demonstrates how a local newspaper can be of value. Here were two Banbury people marrying, not in Banbury but in a place no one would imagine searching for their marriage - presumably St. Martin in the Fields.

OM.21: 23 December. Ad. Wanted: in the Town of Banbury, by a young clergyman. A neat sitting room and bedroom. Would have no objection to board in a respectable family. Direct a line to Rev. J.C., to be left at the White Lion. (Curates are only identified for 1783-4 and 1806-on in Banbury Marriage Registers, vol.3[B.H.S.5]). However, a James Chapman first officiated at a marriage on 9 Jan 1792, so is probably the advertiser here.

Auction of 25 acres at Hook Norton.

OM.24: 13 JAN 1796. Partnership dissolved Between Messrs. Callow and Hayward of Banbury (surgeons) - debts to be paid to W. Rusher.

Under the heading 'Oxford' there is a report of an address at Quarter Sessions re, the high price of wheat followed by items of charitable distributions, including:

Lord Eardley, during his late visit to Broughton Castle, sent £120 to Coventry and £50 to Winslow.

"Mr. Green, and Messrs. King, Snow and Co., the two large Shagg or Plush manufacturing houses in Banbury, have for some months past allowed to all their men (in proportion to their families) bread at 1s.3d. the half peck loaf, by which means, as they employ a number of hands round that part of the country, they have already expended several hundred pounds.

"A remarkable instance of the mildness of the season - A blackbird's nest, containing four eggs, was found on Tuesday night in Lord Guildford's garden at Wroxton." The 'first cuckoo' lives on, or back!

J.S.W.Gibson

Sources

Jackson's Oxford Journal and the **Oxford Mercury** are available on microfilm at the Oxford Local Studies Library.

'The Reindeer Inn, Banbury', Michael Laithwaite, **C&CH2.10** (Nov.1964)

'The Three Tuns in the Eighteenth Century', J.S.W.Gibson, **C&CH8.1** (Autum 1979, for Dr. Edward Burford.

'Shag and Plush Weaving in 18th Century Banbury', J.S.W.Gibson, in **Banbury and Shutford Plush** B.H.S., 1980 for the Newman Family **Banbury Parish Registers**, B.H.S., 5, 16,18.

Acknowledgments

I am most grateful to Mrs. Marion Moxon and the Woodstock Town Council for giving me such convenient access to their sets of the two newspapers at Woodstock Town Hall; and also to Dr. D.M. Barratt for facilitating this.

"PLAYING YERELY AT THE ORGAYNS AND SINGYNGE IN THE QUYER..."

A History of the Music at Banbury Parish Church.

In Banbury, as in so many other places in the medieval period, it was the Church which provided education for boys, in return for their services as singers and servers at Mass. By the beginning of the 15th century, Banbury had a thriving and important Grammar School, which was connected with the Knights Hospitallers of St. John of Jerusalem. The Hospital and School had been founded in the early 13th century, possibly in 1209, and was richly endowed, owning much property in the town and district. The Episcopal register at Lincoln gives us a very complete picture of the organisation of this charity. From the early 14th century the position of Master of the Hospital and School was regarded as so important, that in 1310 Bishop John Dalderby wrote a letter to the Brethren, reminding them that they did not elect a new Master, but only nominated him to the Bishop for institution. After 1355 the Bishop claimed the appointment belonged to his collation, and appointed the Master himself, the Archdeacon or Prebendary of Banbury being ordered to give him induction. The master was usually appointed from one of the Canons of the Cathedral, or else a Scholar of Oxford.

The School was a Free Grammar School for 16 boys, and the Master had a salary of just over £14 a year. An Usher was also appointed at an annual salary of £4.

By the beginning of the 16th century, therefore, Banbury Parish Church was remarkably well equipped to perform the musical portions of the services. As well as the 16 boys, whose school statutes required that they sang Mass every day, there were 9 chantry priests, as well as the staff of the Parish Church, officiating at the services. Few Cathedrals at that time could boast of such a complete musical establishment, and even today there are many choir-masters who would be pleased to have a choir of 16 boys and 9 men.

In 1523 the Guild of St. Mary, a chantry foundation of the Parish Church, was given "a paire of orgayns". At this time, a pair of organs simply meant a large positive instrument, probably standing in the Rood Loft. These "Orgayns", about which we have no other details, were set up in the church, and in February 1523 Anthony Cokes was appointed as first Organist and Choirmaster of Banbury Parish Church. His wage was £4.13s.4d. yearly.

The choir of 16 boys and 9 chantry-priests continued up to 1549, and would have continued longer, except that the Deputy Surveyor for Oxfordshire under the 1547 Chantries Act, John Maynard, discovered that by statute the Master and boys had to sing Mass for the soul of the Founder, even though no-one was quite sure who the Founder was. The Hospital and the School was suppressed, and Banbury lost much of the music at the Parish Church.

Anthony Cokes was allowed to keep his position as organist, with

a pension of £4 a year, and he continued as organist, with a voluntary choir, to the reign of Elizabeth. Nicholas Cartwright, the last Master, was allowed under licence, to keep a school in a chantry-chapel in the church-yard, and he probably supplied his colleague with boys for the choir.

In 1563 John Dreaper was appointed organist in place of Cokes. We do not know if Cokes had died or retired; in any case he would have been a very old man by now, having served the Parish Church for nearly 40 years. Dreaper had the same annual salary as Cokes' pension, but with the rising rate of inflation, it was no longer a living wage, and it is possible that he took over the school at the same time.

Dreaper died in 1587, and Thomas Welch was appointed. However, the growth of the strongly Puritan element at Banbury led to the decline of the musical tradition. Eventually in the 1620s, the Choir was disbanded, the organ destroyed, and Welch turned out of his post, without a pension. The desultory attempts to provide any education for boys in the town came to an end, and the only references are the Churchwardens' Presentments in the Archdeacon's Court, reporting local schoolmasters for teaching without the necessary licence.

The period of the Commonwealth finally completed the destruction of the musical tradition at the Parish Church.

It is customary to disparage the late 17th and early 18th centuries as a nadir of worship in the Parish Churches, but considering the disruption of the Interregnum, and the difficulties of the new 1662 liturgy, it is surprising that music in churches was as good as it was. Temperly argues convincingly that this was a period of reform in metrical psalmody and in performance, and the amount of money invested in new music and in organ building in the first half of the 18th century, belies the idea of a moribund church content to sing metrical psalms accompanied only by what instruments happened to be available.

Soon after the Restoration we find the Churchwardens referring to the Musicians' Gallery, and the repair of instruments, so that we can guess that at Banbury, as else-where, there was a band of instrumentalists to lead the singing. We do not know exactly when these instrumentalists started to perform at the Parish Church, but it was before the end of the 17th century. However, we do know when a choir was re-formed, and the name of the first choir-master.

In 1698 Richard White left £100 in his will, the income from which was to be used for educating poor children born in Banbury, and in 1705 the Banbury Blue-Coat School Trustees was founded, with additional voluntary subscriptions. 30-boys and 20 girls were to be educated each year, and the School-master was to receive £25 per annum. He was not to do any other teaching, or to receive any money from the parents of the children he taught; he was to be a member of the Church of England, a frequenter of Holy Communion, one who understood the grounds and principles of the Christian religion, who could write a good hand and understand arithmetic, and who should be approved by the Minister for the time being.

This pedagogic paragon was also required to accompany the child-

ren to church each Sunday, where they had a special gallery reserved for them. There they were to lead the congregation in the metrical psalms, and on Lady Day, 1706, Joseph Watts was appointed choir-master to teach them the tunes. The children were all provided with a uniform to wear, and it became one of the local sights to see them processing to church for Divine Service. The choir became highly competent, and in 1747 Watts published a collection of Psalm-tunes, Anthems, and Canticle Settings for them; and if they are no better than many examples of 18th century church music, they are certainly no worse than many works by Kent and Nares.

However, the Banbury congregation was not content with their music being led by a band of instrumentalists and fifty charity-school children. A curious mixture of parochial pride, rational sentiment, and a desire for greater decorum in public worship led to the purchase of an elegant new organ at a cost of £390. The Churchwardens, with characteristic caution, agreed to the installation of the instrument only if there were enough public subscriptions to cover the cost. On Saturday 16th November, 1765, Jackson's Oxford Journal was able to report:

"On Wednesday 27th. instant, at the opening of the new organ, erected by Messrs. Byfield, Wilcox and Knight, in the Parish Church of Banbury...will be performed, under the direction of Mr. J. Hobbs, the organist, Mr. Purcell's Te Deum and Jubilate, accompanied with instruments, and an Anthem by the same Author, with new instrumental parts, and the Old Hundredth Psalm..."

Byfield must have been John Byfield the Younger, (d1774). His father, also John Byfield, and also an organ builder, had married a daughter of Renatus Harris, (1652-1724) and was thus a collateral descendant of Thomas Dallam, (1575-1630), another famous organ builder. Of Thomas Knight there is very little information, save that he added the Swell Organ to the instrument in Chichester Cathedral in 1778. On Wilcox we have no information at all.

John Byfield the Younger's name is more commonly linked with Green's as they were partners between the years 1770 and 1772. Several instruments exist built by them in partnership. The connection of Byfield with Knight and Wilcox is most unusual, and no other instrument is known built by these three together. Unfortunately, no detailed specification of this instrument survives. However, we know it had 17 stops, 9 on the Great, 5 on the Swell, and 3 on the Choir. Later evidence, and our knowledge of organ-building of the period, allows us to reconstruct the specification with a fair certainty of accuracy.

This instrument has traditionally been associated with Snetzler. Sumner includes Banbury Parish Church in his list of Snetzler instruments, but without citing any authority for this.

Snetzler was probably of Swiss origin, born in 1710. Burney, the 18th century musical historian was well-acquainted with him, and gives us details of his early career on the continent. By 1747 Snetzler

had settled in London, and with the patronage of Burney quickly made a name for himself. In Burney's words, "He gave such a specimen of his abilities that he was soon called to almost every corner of the kingdom."

It is hard to discover exactly on what authority the attribution to Snetzler has been made. The instrument was never claimed to be by him originally, and it is not until the later 19th century that he is referred to as the original builder. The number of instruments Snetzler is supposed to have built rivals the number of beds Queen Elizabeth is supposed to have slept in. There is no concrete evidence to support the idea that Snetzler had any hand in the instrument. Interestingly, however, this is not the only organ by Byfield which has been linked to Snetzler. The Byfield organ in Leeds Old Parish Church was reputed to have had a Trumpet stop by Snetzler.

Provision of an organ also required provision of an organist, and despite the fact that the Churchwardens had the instrument erected by public subscription, they found that they had to fork out for the salary for the organist. And to be fair to them, they acted handsomely. Mr. J. Hobbs was appointed at a salary of £30 per annum, a very large sum in those days. (However, like most organists' salaries, it did not keep pace with inflation, and we find the organist still being paid £30 over a century later.) When Hobbs was appointed, his salary was sufficient for him to live on, and we have no record of him holding any other appointment than that of organist.

Hobbs was a well-known local personality. Like many of his successors he was regarded as the leading musical figure in the town and district, organising concerts, festivals, and special musical services in the medieval church.

From the 1770s, the condition of the building was giving rise to concern. Eventually the bold decision was taken to demolish the building and replace it. This caused much faction in the parish, and Hobbs was amongst those who opposed so radical a scheme. He resigned in 1775, but still remained in Banbury to castigate the Trustees for what he regarded as their folly. He died in 1794, before the new building was completed.

He was succeeded by Mr. J. Jarrett, who to his credit in 1790, urged the Churchwardens and Trustees, on the demolition of the old church, to store the instrument carefully so that it might be used when the new building was completed. During the period of the re-building, the parishioners worshipped at the Independent Chapel, and Jarrett conciliated the instrumentalists to play for services again.

At the opening of the new church on 15th September 1797, one of the few surviving features of the old church was the organ, in pride of place on the gallery which then ran across the east wall, with the Chancel in an alcove underneath. Surprisingly, at the opening, Jarrett was not re-appointed as organist, and the reason for this remains a mystery. Instead the Trustees and Churchwardens appointed the most illustrious organist Banbury ever had, William Crotch.

Crotch was something of a pluralist. As well as being organist of Banbury Parish Church, 1797-1806, he was Chorister Infirmarum

of Magdalen College, 1790-1797, Organist of St. Johns College, 1797-1806, of Christ Church Cathedral, 1790-1806, and St. Mary's University Church, 1797-1806. He was also Professor of Music in the University. He later moved to London, and became first Principal of the Royal Academy of Music.

Crotch played for the opening service, which we are told was very grand, with solemn music, choristers from Magdalen College, the Lord Bishop of the Diocese, wands of office for the Trustees, and twenty constables to keep the vulgar populace in order. Later in the same week Professor Crotch conducted a mammoth performance of "Messiah", for which the best seats cost an exorbitant guinea, and the cheapest seats were five shillings, more than the average labourer's weekly wage. Nevertheless, we are told that the church seating 3,000 people, was packed for the occasion. A one-way system had to be devised for carriages.

It is doubtful if Crotch played the organ regularly at Banbury. The salary of £30 was attractive enough for him to put in a pupil as organist at a reduced fee, and to pocket the difference. However, Crotch as an organist of Banbury Parish Church, even if "in absentia", is commemorated each year by a performance of "Lo, Starled Chiefs" from his Oratorio "Palestine."

After a succession of Crotch's pupils, none of whose names are known to us, the Trustees and Churchwardens decided to appoint an organist who would take his duties more seriously, and on Crotch removing to London in 1806, Robert James Edwards was nominated. He again was prominent in local affairs, promoting much music making in the town. In 1809 he edited a collection of Metrical Psalms and Hymns for the particular use of the Mayor and Corporation, and we find him in 1841 organising a musical festival in the church, the proceeds in aid of lighting the building with gas. There was a full cathedral service in the morning, with Canticles by King, and in the afternoon a concert of sacred music from "Messiah" and "The Creation". Inflation had caused the prices of the best seats to rise to £5. The cheapest seats were still 5 shillings. However, Banburians must have felt that they were getting their moneys-worth, as "leading artists of the day appeared, and Cathedral Services rendered by Choirs from Oxford and Stratford, and the church filled with an eager and fashionable audience."

A year later "Messiah" and "The Creation" were again performed, this time in aid of the organ-rebuilding fund. A Mr. Charles Cox of London was employed to lower the instrument, probably by rebuilding the case, and adding a fashionable Cremona on the Great, to replace the now passe' Cornet, to add a Dulciana on the Swell, and twelve stopped Pedal Pipes, with, presumably, the pedal-board to go with them.

Cox as an organ builder is something of a mystery. Little is known of his work, and no major instruments are recorded as being built by him. He moved to Banbury from London in 1847, and joined partnership with Spiers, a local carpenter, and traded under the name Cox and Spiers, Calthorpe Lane, Banbury. Only one example of their work is known, a small one manual organ at Llanbister,

Radnorshire, which bears on the name-plate, "Reconstructed 1859".

A lithograph of the interior of the Church in 1844 shows this instrument on the east gallery. The case is obviously not the original 18th century case; its proportions look amateur, and may derive from Spiers' woodworking rather than design abilities.

The specially printed pamphlet of the services to celebrate the re-opening of the organ survives. There was a full cathedral service in the morning, and in the afternoon a performance of "Messiah".

In 1846 Edwards announced his retirement, and the Banbury Guardian advertised for Wednesday 23rd September at 2.00 pm. "Handel's Sacred Oratorio "Messiah" will be performed by the Church Choir, assisted by the Choral Society, and several professional friends from Oxford and the neighbourhood, in order to testify to Mr. Edwards their sense of his efficient services rendered in the Church as organist for upwards of 30 years."

Frederick Marshall from Leamington succeeded Edwards. He was wellknown in the Midlands as an organist. He had designed the new instrument for Stratford Parish Church, built by Hill in 1841, with 36 speaking stops. He was given a farewell concert at the Royal Music Hall in Bath Street, Leamington, on February 18th, 1847, and he took up his duties in Banbury the same month. No doubt he hoped to persuade the Churchwardens at Banbury to do something about rebuilding the antiquated instrument, which apart from the modest tinkering by Cox in 1841, was as it had been built in 1765.

In April following Marshall's arrival, the Choir gave a concert of sacred music, including "Messiah", "The Creation", and "Palestine", in aid of their funds, and the same programme was repeated in April and September of 1848. In 1849 the Choir again begged "respectively to announce that a concert of Sacred Music will be given...in aid of the Funds, to include a selection from the Oratorio "Messiah"."

Despite this plethora of "Messiahs", the Churchwardens were chary of spending much money on the organ. Messrs. Bryceson of London were called in to give an estimate. In collaboration with Marshall, Bryceson produced a specification remarkable for its time, especially in the pedal department. The Churchwardens, not being organists, were not impressed, and decided to go for a more modest proposal of removing the east balcony, and dividing the existing organ on either side of the Chancel. Marshall resigned, and took up a post at St. Michael's Coventry. He was succeeded by F.J. Archer. He was rather a nonentity; he did not even conduct a "Messiah", and so it is not surprising that within the year he was replaced by H.C. Heppingstall. He conducted two "Messiahs" in the 18 months he was organist, and was only prevented from conducting a third by his death. As a result of the financial gains of these "Messiahs", the Churchwardens found they were able to implement the greater part of Bryceson's plans, although it was left to Heppingstall's successor, James Thompson, R.A.M., to give the opening recital.

At Bryceson's rebuild of 1859, the organ was divided in two, on either side of the Chancel. The doorway by which the south case was entered still exists behind the plaster above the priests' vestry. The instrument was controlled by a four manual console on the north side

(the pipes for the Solo Organ never materialising,) by means of an early electric action which Bryceson had patented. Although this was a remarkably early date for such an advanced piece of electronic engineering, involving a distance of some 40 feet between the console and one half of the instrument, there is no record of the action ever mal-functioning. (An electric action supplied by Bryceson in the 1870s for Rugby School Chapel Organ, was still functioning in 1966).

After giving the opening recital on this instrument, Thompson resigned in 1860, and was replaced by J.W. Elliott, who dutifully conducted a "Messiah", and then also resigned in 1862. Perhaps neither of these gentlemen cared for electric action, or perhaps a more cogent explanation was the appointment of Henry Back as Vicar of Banbury in 1860.

Henry Back was a High Churchman, appointed by the High-Church Bishop of Oxford, Samuel Wilberforce. The Bisop was alarmed by the low-church proclivities of Banburians; Back was horrified by the state of the church as he found it. Week after week the Banbury Guardian published acrimonious letters about the changes which Back made in the services. In 1866 Back wore a surplice for the first time. This "rag of popery" led to an Easter Vestry Meeting of the Parishioners which had to be adjourned twice. Eventually it was finally completed on July 31st, having started in March. The Vicar prudently spent the first eight months of the year in Italy, leaving his Churchwardens to fight his battles for him, and no forwarding address.

In 1863, Back appointed the youngest organist ever, Eugene Spinney, who was just eighteen. He was the oldest of the talented Spinney dynasty of Leamington. Frank, the second brother, was organist of Leamington Parish Church from 1878, and was succeeded by the youngest brother Walter. They were both voluminous composers of church music, as was a fourth brother, Herbert, who took Holy Orders, and moved to Burton-on-Trent. Eugene also composed church music, all of it now out of print. His Evening Canticles in C minor are about the best of what charitably can be described as uninspired "pieces D'occasion".

Eugene moved to Banbury with his eldest sister Matties as housekeeper, and while he was at Banbury he studied for his B.Mus. at Oxford. On November 1865 there was given a performance by Eugene, assisted by a band and chorus of over 250 performers, of his exercise Cantata. The concert also featured Miss Mattie Spinney, who was an accomplished singer and pianist.

On December 4th, 1867, Spinney died at the age of 22. A memorial window to him, depicting the Parable of the Sower, was set up in 1868. His sister acted as organist and choir-mistress. However, disaffection in the parish was still strong. "An agrieved Parishioner" wrote to the Banbury Guardian in March 1868:

"We have been accustomed to say our prayers with the clergy-man, and not to hear them and the responses chanted or intoned or whatever the noise may be called, by a choir of little boys and men"

Miss Spinney bore this sort of odium for over 18 months, and then returned to her family at Leamington.

W.F. Naish followed her, and only lasted a year, and after him Back appointed G.A. Hardacre. He was a much older man, greatly experienced, who came from St. Columba's College Rathfarnham, where he had been a pupil of Dr. Edwin Monk, when the college had opened in 1843. (Monk moved to York Minster, where he trained two more organists who came to Banbury Parish Church).

Hardacre was a school-master, as strong-minded as Back, and of the same High-Church principles. It was during his time that major reconstruction work was done at the church. The small Georgian Chancel apse was demolished, and the present chancel built; the choirstalls and raised alter erected, and the whole church decorated to the scheme of Arthur Blomfield. Much of the work was financed by the Back family, and this helped to quieten opposition. If money could not buy happiness in the parish, it certainly proved effective as a down-payment, so that by the time Back resigned the living in 1881, he was one of the most admired, if not the most loved of the 19th century Vicars of Banbury,

As part of Blomfield's scheme, the organ was again rebuilt, this time in its present position on the north side of the chancel, the choir vestry being sliced in half to accommodate it. J.W. Walkers were called into do the work, and it is to their credit that they dealt fairly circumspectly with the instrument as they found it; indeed, their re-building was far less drastic than Bryceson's had been. They noted the 18th century character of the instrument, and much was preserved. They were also careful of the best of Bryceson's work, and the result was a conservative rebuild at a cost of £765. Three stops were prepared for, and unfortunately never materialised, a Furniture III ranks mixture and a 4ft Clarion on the Great, and a Fifteenth of the Choir, and the lack of these is still among the deficiencies of the instrument.

Hardacre gave the opening recital in October, 1874, and the Choir sang the anthem "It shall come even to pass" by Ouseley at the Dedication ceremony. In 1878 he retired, and moved to Daventry, where he acted as organist at Holy Cross until at least 1899.

S. Hughes, who followed him at Banbury, resigned within the year, and he was succeeded by W.H. Garland. He was one of Monk's pupils at York Minster, and he did much to build up the choir at Banbury. He returned to York as Deputy Organist, hoping to fill the post of his former teacher, on Monk's retirement in 1883, although this was not the case, and Garland remained a deputy until the turn of the century.

One of the last occasions Garland played the organ at Banbury was to give a recital to mark the cleaning and over-hauling of the instrument, on September 15th, 1882. The opportunity was taken at this time to add a Gamba onto the Choir slide which had been designed for a Fifteenth. This, and a lower octave to the Clarionet, was supplied by Messrs. Martins, of Oxford, and the Banbury Guardian announced proudly:

"The instrument now contains a total of 36 stops

and 1974 pipes. We can only lament its unfortunate and too crowded position in the church..." sentiments which the choir echo a century later as they squeeze into their vestry on top of the blower and behind the bellows.

The report of the opening is the first written ascription we have of the organ being originally by Snetzler. However, as all stops pre-dating the Walker rebuild are attributed to him, including Bryceson's work, one feels that the identification is merely the result of a recognition of the 18th century origin to the instrument, coupled with a name that happened to be well-known as an organ builder of the period.

A fellow-pupil of Garland's at York, Mark James Monk, (no relation to Dr. Monk) was his replacement at Banbury. He was appointed by Back, but served under Canon Porter, another great Benefactor of the church. (Porter had been the first student at Cuddesdon Theological College, founded by Wilberforce. At first he was the only student, and one afternoon when he and the Tutor, a cleric named Pott, and the Principal Canon Liddon, were out for a walk, they met their founder and Bishop. "Ah," said Wilberforce, "My Theological College. Let me see, I have a Pott, with a Liddon, and a little Porter inside.")]

Monk took the opportunity, while at Banbury, of studying for his D.Mus. at Oxford, which he gained in 1888. He proved most active in Banbury, the choir reaching such heights of excellence under him, that in the 1880s, when the Choir and Church Choral Society, under the name Banbury Philharmonic Society, combined for concerts, the Great Western Railway Company organised special late trains so that those from the villages could attend the whole concert. Monk left in 1890 to become the first organist of Truro Cathedral.

It would have been difficult for anyone to follow Monk, whose skill as a choir-trainer and organist was widely acknowledged. O.S. Marshall certainly found it hard to follow him, and the Choir and Choral Society suffered. He resigned in 1897, one suspects as a result of pressure from Canon Porter, but he continued to live in Banbury until his death in the late 1930s, teaching and conducting the Co-operative Society Glee Club, and the Madrigal Society. But Marshall was responsible for at last getting the choir surpliced, in 1896, the surplices being made by ladies of the parish. The Parish Church was the last church choir in Banbury to have surplices, and cassocks were not bought until 1903. From Marshall's time too, we read of 27-hour-day Choir outings, starting in the early hours of one morning, and arriving back by early next morning. Places such as Plymouth, and the Isle of Wight were visited by Great Western Railway. Proper steam trains!

Marshall, (who as far as we know was no relation to Frederick Marshall,) was succeeded by W.L. Luttmann, who built up the choir to its former strength and standard. He was the more talented of two brothers, and studied at Oxford for his B.Mus. A choir photograph of 1903 shows a young and stern-looking Luttmann surrounded by the choir, 17 boys and 12 men, all looking very proud in the new cassocks

and surplices, and all wearing eton collars.

Luttmann was a friend of many notable musicians of the day. He assisted Sir Frederick Bridge, the organist of Westminster Abbey, with the music for the Coronation in 1901, and during his time at Banbury eminent composers such as Parry, Elgar, Stanford, and Coleridge Taylor came to conduct the Philharmonic Society in concerts of their own work.

Luttmann resigned in 1907 to become organist of St. Alban's Cathedral, and he was succeeded by his brother W.C. Luttmann, who remained as organist throughout the War years, retiring in 1919.

It is from W.C. Luttmann's time that systematic records of the Choir were kept, starting in 1908. These consist of registers detailing the attendance at practices and services of every boy and man on the choir, together with a list of the music sung at each service; hymns, psalms, chants, canticles and anthems. We therefore have a very detailed picture of the life of the Choir. There are details of the practices, of tenors singing flat and being required for extra rehearsals, and boys caned for talking in the sermon, or breaking the vestry window with a ball, proving that Banbury Parish Church Choir has not altered much in the last 70 years. But some entries are, we hope, unlikely to re-appear. "Frank Buller, Solo Boy, killed in action. (he was one of three borthers, all in the choir, and all killed in action.) Jack Wheeler, Head Boy Cantoris, died of wounds. "Modern choirmasters may look back with envy to the days when boys' voices changed as late as 17 or 18, but at least we are spared the horror of recording in Choir Registers that boys who a few months earlier had been singing in a choir were silenced for ever in the mud and trenches of France and Flanders. 17 boys and men were killed in the First World War, and each year on Armistice Day the choir performs Elgar's "For the Fallen" in their memory, and also in gratitude to the 8 choir members who gave their lives in the Second World War.

Luttmann was followed by C.R. "Groggy" Palmer, and he rapidly built up the choir again, with the help of his wife, who was also an exceptionally talented musician. They had no children of their own, and each boy was like their own son. Choir Football and Cricket teams were started, and shields and trophies competed for between Decan and Cantoris, as they still are. An Annual Choir Camp was held, a tradition revived in recent years, (though we don't go under canvas). The choir also compete in the Berks, Bucks and Oxon Music Festival, winning the Challenge Shield seven years running. It was in Palmer's time too that the Choir joined what was then the School of English Church Music, founded by Sir Sidney Nicholson, which has now become the Royal School of Church Music. Nicholson visited Banbury in 1930 to conduct a Choral Festival, and presented the Choir with a Head Boy's medal, which is still in use.

Palmer was a superb organist as well as a choir-trainer, but he was also known throughout the district as a very forceful personality. As more than one person remembers of his reign; "When Groggy said 'Jump,' the Parish jumped!"

It was at Palmer's initiative that the organ was rebuilt in

1924. There had been considerable discussion over the years about the organ, but plans had been delayed, first by the War, and then by the difficulty of raising sufficient money. Messrs. Hill, Norman and Beard were finally appointed to rebuild the instrument to a specification costing £2,800. The tracker action, requiring a force of 4½ pounds of the Great CC key was replaced with pneumatic action, and the present console, with its highly distinctive system of stop control, built.

The donations for the organ fund were, however, slow in coming in, and it was soon realised that the complete scheme which Groggy had planned would not be built. This is perhaps fortunate, since the resulting instrument, with much pipework being replaced, would have been a typical 1920s Romantic Monster, though no doubt splendid of its type. As it is, the lack of money has ensured that the organ was preserved rather than replaced.

The organ was opened on Easter Day, 1925, after 12 months work costing £1,800. The Lord Bishop attended Mattins, and the choir sang the "Hallelujah" Chorus. (They still do.)

For nine years the instrument remained incomplete, the Pedal Open Diapason pipes forming an imperfect screen to the hole in the wall through which the remainder of the instrument could be seen. The Silver Jubilee of George V in 1935 provided an occasion to appeal once more for funds to complete the instrument. Again donations were small, and Groggy reconciled himself to the fact that his scheme was never to be built. Instead, he completed the Pedal section as far as funds would allow, clothed the instrument decently in the case Arthur Hill had designed for it before the War, and with the little money left, Groggy treated himself to the Tuba, which as the Banbury Guardian remarked, "is a loud stop of Trumpet tone, that will allow the organist to lead any congregation, however large. Needless to say, it will be sparingly used". It is certainly an exciting sound in the resonant acoustic of the building, but the paper was right, its use is limited!

The opening recital was on September 15th, and this time the Choir sang "Blessed City Heavenly Salem," by Bairstow. The cost was £790.

Palmer resigned from Banbury in 1946 to go with the Vicar, Canon Williams, to St. Peter's Bournemouth. It was a move he regretted, and he always felt his best work was done in Banbury. The "esprit de corps" of the Choir was remarkable, and one may catch the flavour of it by talking to old choir members.

Palmer was followed by a Mr. Jolley, who resigned within a few months, and Mr. A.T. Batts was appointed to succeed him. Under him, the Choir repertoire was broadened to include more Plainsong and Renaissance music, and became noted in the Diocese for its standards. Mr. Batts retired in 1971, upon reaching the "Psalmist's span."

Mrs. Batts was succeeded by Stephen Bell, now Music Master of King's College, Taunton, and he in turn was followed by Miss Mary C. Davies, only the second choirmistress the Parish Church has had. When she left on taking up a teaching post in Kent, she was succeeded by F.E. Burroughes.

F.E. Burroughes - 1980.

The Banbury Historical 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 and 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. By 1985 there had been 88 issues and at least 230 articles. Most back issues are still available and out-of-print issues can if required be photocopied.

Other publications still in print include:

Booklets -

Old Banbury - a short popular history, E.R.C. Brinkworth
New Light of Banbury's Crosses, P.D.A. Harvey
Banbury Castle - a summary of excavations in 1972, P.Fasham
The Building and Furnishing of St. Mary's Church, Banbury,
N. Cooper

Pamphlets -

History of Banbury Cross
The Globe Room at the Reindeer Inn, Banbury

The Society has also published twenty or more volumes in its records series (1st available of those still in print). These have included **Banbury Parish Registers** (in seven parts: Marriages 1558-1837, Baptisms and Burials 1558-1812); **Banbury Corporation Records: Tudor and Stuart; Banbury Wills and Inventories, 1591-1650** (Part 1, 1591-1620; Part 2, 1621-1650); **A Victorian M.P. and his Constituents: The Correspondence of H.W. Tancred 1841-1860**; **Shoemaker's Window: Recollections of Banbury before the Railway Age**, by George Herbert (now available in Gulliver Press edition); **South Newington Churchwardens' Accounts 1553-1684**; **Wigginton Constables' Books 1691-1836**; **Bodicote Parish Accounts 1700-1822**; **Victorian Banbury**, by Barrie Irinder (with Phillimore); and **Aynho; A Northamptonshire Parish**, by Nicholas Cooper (with Leopard's Head Press); **Banbury Goal Records 1805-1852**, edited by Penelope Renold. Volume in preparation **Baptisms and Burials 1813-1838**. An edition of letters to the 1st Earl of Guilford (of Wroxton, father of Lord North, Prime Minister and M.P. for Banbury) is also planned.

Meetings are held during the autumn and winter, normally at 7.30 pm at the North Oxfordshire Technical College, Broughton Road, Banbury, on the second Thursday of each month. Talks are given by invited lecturers on general and local archaeological, historical and architectural subjects. In the summer, the AGM is held at a local country house and other visits are arranged.

Membership of the Society is open to all, no proposer or seconder being needed. The annual subscription of £8.00 including any records volumes published, or £5.00 if these are excluded.

Application forms can be obtained from the Hon. Membership Secretary, c/o Banbury Museum, 8 Horsefair, Banbury, Oxon.

