

# CAKE AND COCKHORSE



*Mistress.* "I THINK, COOK, WE MUST PART THIS DAY MONTH."  
*Cook (in astonishment).* "WHY, MA'AM? I AM SURE I'VE LET YOU 'AVE YOUR OWN WAY IN  
'MOST EVERYTHINK!"

## BANBURY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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# BANBURY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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**Details of the Society's activities and  
publications will be found inside the back cover.**

# *Cake and Cockhorse*

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

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The British Association for Local History (B.A.L.H.) is one of the most prestigious and important organisations that ensure that the powers that be (we write during a General Election campaign) do not totally ignore what is now known in jargon-speak as ‘heritage’.

It was therefore with amazement and delight that we were recently informed that of the eight short-listed articles for B.A.L.H.’s ‘Local History Award’, two had been published in the last two issues of *C&CH*. These are Vivien Billington’s ‘Woad in the Banbury Area’ and Keith Chandler’s “‘A Very Celebrated Banbury Character’ – The Case of William “Old Mettle” Castle’.

Whilst we do not consider local history should be a matter of competition, and so the actual award seems irrelevant, it is nevertheless enormously gratifying that two of our contributors have been so honoured.

The award will be announced on 2nd June at the B.A.L.H. A.G.M., when the Phillimore Lecture, on ‘A Countryside Transformed? – Change and Custom in Rural England, 1760-1914’ will be delivered by Dr Kate Tiller. As Kate is the author of a major article in this issue of *C&CH* (albeit a reprint courtesy of O.U.P.), we hope this may not seem too incestuous! In fact we have no idea who may have nominated these articles – certainly not us – and we are equally sure Kate had nothing to do with it – but we enjoy the coincidence! We are fortunate to have had so distinguished an historian on our patch.

In our last issue we glorified the contributions from non-academic ‘amateurs’. Now we can relish articles from three established academics, Dr Pamela Horn, Dr Kate Tiller, and what we like to think of as our very own Dr Barrie Trinder. It just goes to show that the journal of a local history society can provide a vehicle for important, or at least worthwhile, academic research and its presentation. Even with Kate’s reprint, much of its basis lay in her supervision of a local history class in Hook Norton and subsequent publication in *C&CH*.

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Cover: A servant and mistress confrontation, from *Punch*, 1858 (see pp. 66-76)



**Hook Norton in the 1920s, looking west from the church tower.** *The linear settlement pattern can be seen, with a long street flanked by the houses, crofts, orchards and barns of the sixteenth-, seventeenth-, and eighteenth-century farmers of the open fields. At the far end of the village is its nineteenth-century brewery, which brought new diversity to the village economy.*

*This photograph and the three others illustrating this article and appearing in 'The English Rural Landscape' are reproduced by kind permission of the Oxfordshire County Council Photographic Archive*

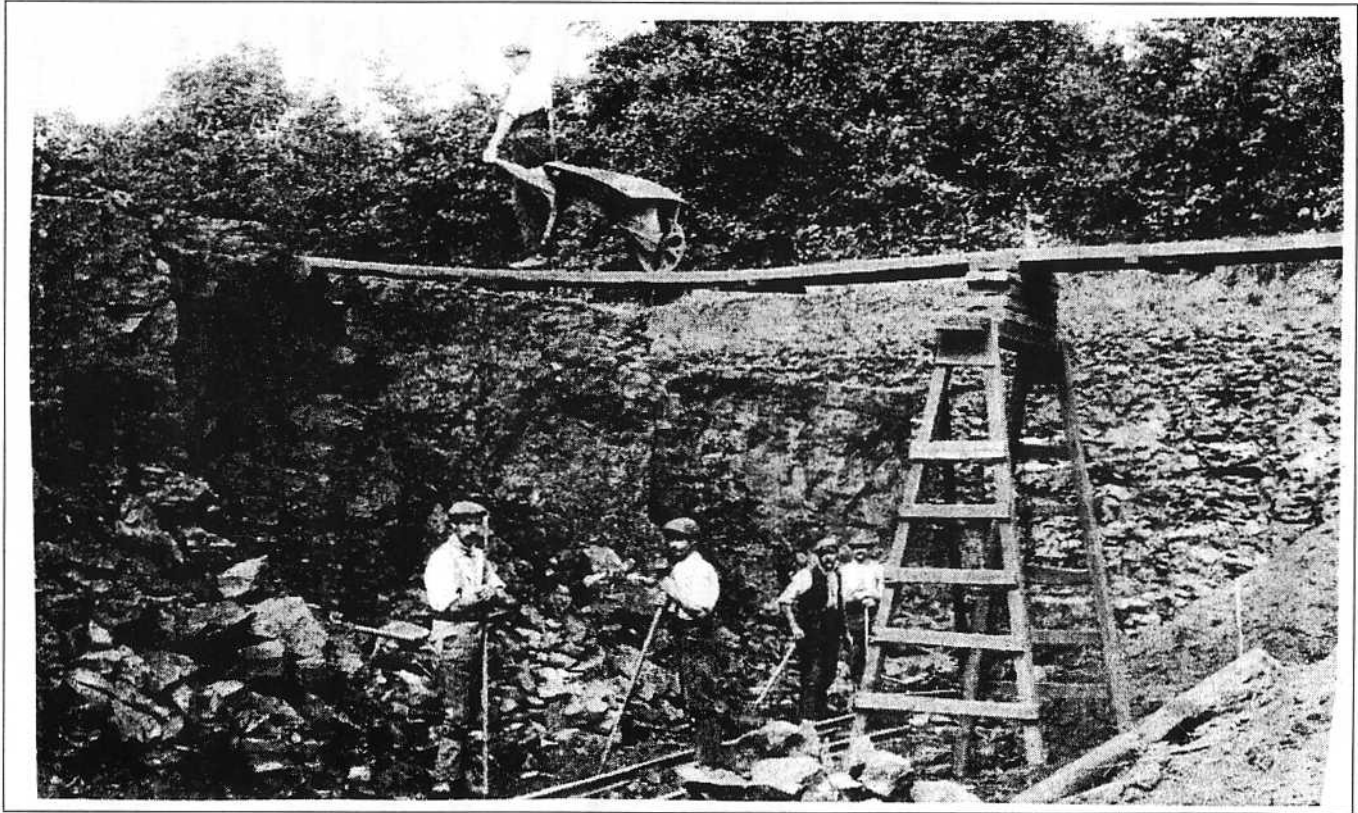
## HOOK NORTON – AN OPEN VILLAGE

*Kate Tiller*

*Note.* This article is reprinted from *The English Rural Landscape*, edited by Joan Thirsk, 2000, by kind permission of the publishers, Oxford University Press.

The traveller does not stumble casually upon Hook Norton. Rather it has to be sought out, along by-roads leading from the ancient ridgeway, which runs north-east to south-west across the parish a mile and a half north of the village, or by branching off the modern A-road between Banbury and Chipping Norton, whose course lies just south of the parish boundary and some two miles from the village. Approaching from the south-east and the Chipping Norton road the way is undulating, across the small valley of the river Swere, and twisting, around sometimes right-angled bends, to South Hill overlooking Hook Norton village. Settlement is focused here, apart from some outlying farms, most of which post-date the parliamentary enclosure of 1774. The village is long and straggling, following the slopes of a steep-sided stream valley, and bracketed at its western end by the tower of the nineteenth century Hook Norton Brewery. The villagescape is dominated by a rich stock of domestic, vernacular buildings, several of which signal in their red and cream striped walls Hook Norton's position on the boundary of the north Oxfordshire Redlands (to Arthur Young 'the glory of the county') and Cotswold oolitic limestones.

At the centre of the village, on the north bank of the valley, stands the parish church. From its tower, settlement and landscape become clearer. To the west the long street is flanked by the stone and thatched or tiled homes of the sixteenth-, seventeenth- and eighteenth-century farmers of open-field agriculture. This pattern of houses, crofts, orchards, and sometimes barns can still be unravelled from later infill and twentieth century 'refurbishment'. The scene is empty of a 'big house' or park, the nearest thing being the gabled building now called the Manor House, but built by the local Austin family in 1636. At the far, Scotland End of the village is the tower of the brewery ('an extraordinary essay in brick, ironstone, slate, weatherboarding, half-timber and cast iron', according to John Piper), built in 1897-1900. It is a successor to the brewery begun on a local farm by John Harris in 1849 which helped inject new diversity

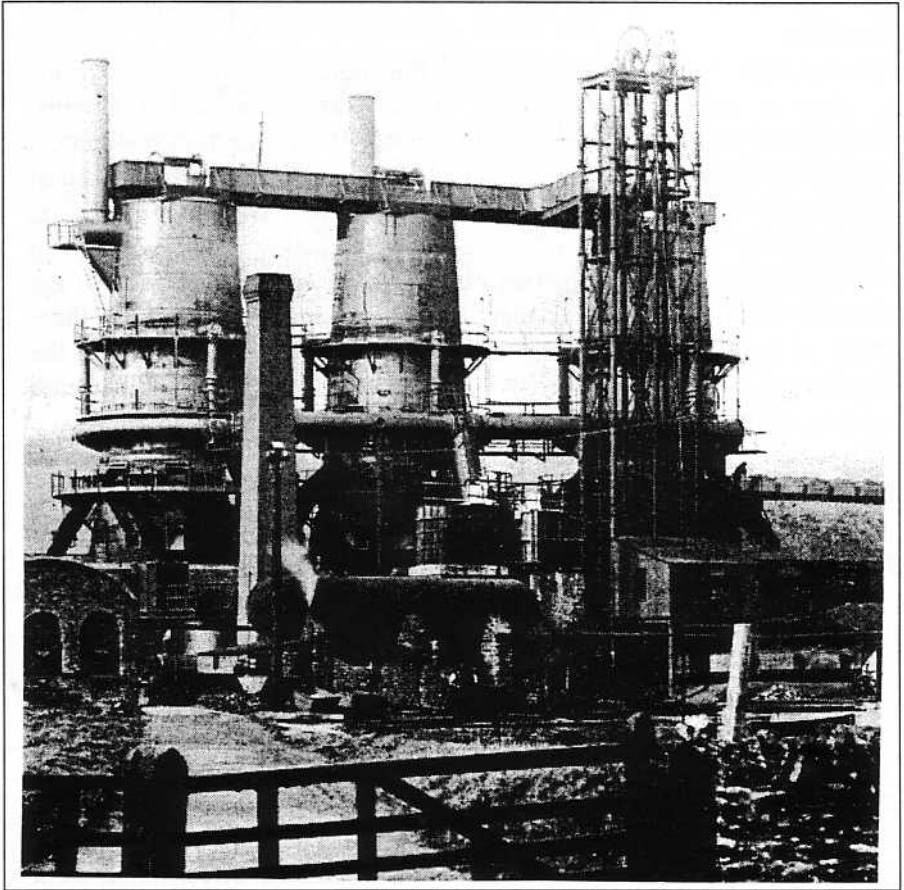


**Industry in the countryside.** *The opening of the Banbury–Cheltenham Railway in 1887 made it viable to work the local, low-grade ironstone, which was dug out of the fields to the east of the village (see Map 4) (O.C.C. P.A.).*

into the village economy during the difficult years of agricultural depression.

Turning to look south and east from the church the street below opens out into a vestigial market place. Hook Norton was and is a large, diverse, and vigorous village society, but one that never developed into a market town, despite the fact that in 1437 the Earl of Suffolk, the lord of the manor, had a Charter to hold a market and two fairs. Then, as subsequently, seigneurial influence failed to make a lasting mark on Hook Norton. Rather the market place was the location of some of the many businesses and events that figured in village life. In 1871 there were no fewer than 133 crafts and tradesmen, over 10 per cent of the population, in the village. Around the market place in the late nineteenth century were a smithy, an ironmonger's shop, a tailor and outfitters, and the Sun and the Bell inns. Stock sales and the annual Club Day fair on the Tuesday before Whitsun were held here. Buildings tumble in an unregulated way down Bridge Hill to the stream and it is here that settlement spills over from the main village onto the south slope of the valley, creating a subsidiary hamlet of Southrop, first mentioned in 1316. Archaeological evidence suggests earlier activity in the area, which may subsequently have been amalgamated into the main area of village settlement. At the bottom of the hill was one of the four village tites, places where water was collected in buckets on a yoke by those who did not have their own wells. Mains water came to Hook Norton only in 1955, and sewerage in 1965.

Beyond the roofs of Southrop the landscape opens out, mixed farming country in a parish (large for Oxfordshire) of 5,340 acres, rising from 450 to 650 feet above sea level on the ridges to north and south of the village. In the far distance the tall piers of a viaduct carry the Banbury to Cheltenham Railway. This connection came late to Hook Norton. The line was opened in 1887 and closed in 1962. Plans had been made as early as 1845, but technical problems and the cost of overcoming the terrain meant that nothing came of them until 1883-7 when two sections of viaduct and a tunnel were built. The work is said to have taken 400 men four years, and six workers were killed. In August 1883 police had to be brought from Banbury to Chipping Norton to restore order when disgruntled navvies laid siege to the manager after their ganger had disappeared with the wages. A navvy was sentenced to hard labour for stealing chickens from a local farm, whilst another had his leg broken, fighting at the Bell at Christmas 1886. Once the railway opened, in 1887,



### **The Brymbo Works.**

*Here the calcining kilns stand amidst fields, with railway wagons on the right, waiting to take the processed ironstone to South Wales and Staffordshire. Ironstone working was short-lived (lasting some forty years), but important to the village at a time of agricultural depression. (O.C.C. Photographic Archive)*

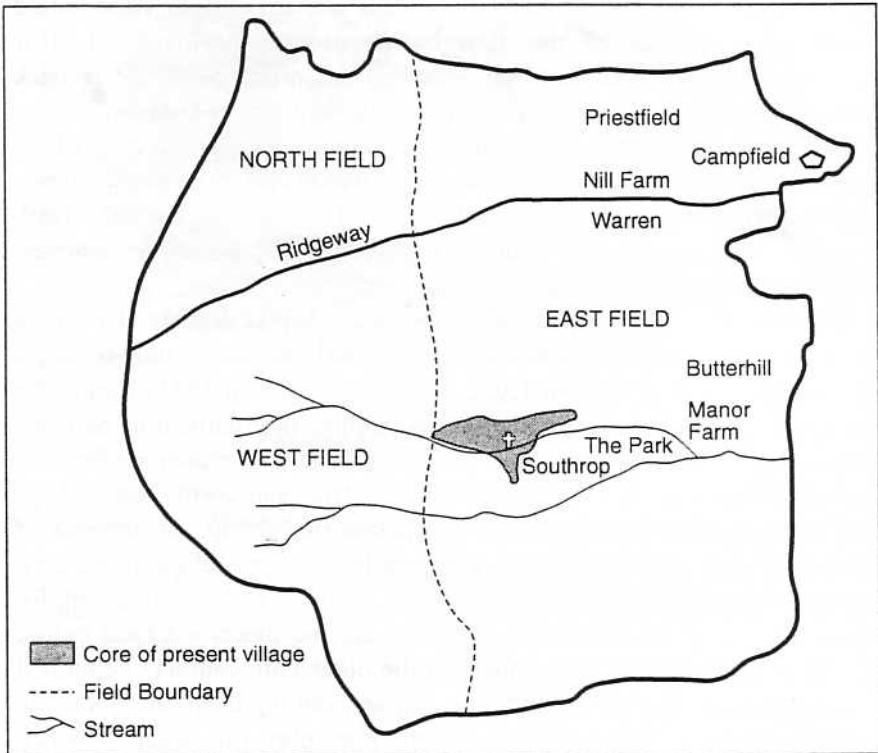


the longer-term impact began to emerge – a monthly cattle market near the new station was started, the first seaside excursion (to Portsmouth) was oversubscribed, and, above all, the low-grade ironstone of the area became a commercial proposition with direct access to lines to South Wales and Staffordshire. This new ability to exploit a natural resource added another source of local employment for the village.

To walk through the village east of the church is to see the signs of different phases of Hook Norton's fortunes. There are more of the rich yeoman houses of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, several with distinctive staircase turrets built from the local red ironstone. There are small cottages and extended roof spaces into which the expanding population of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries was fitted. The 1,351 people recorded in Hook Norton at the 1821 Census represented a 31 per cent rise in twenty years, an increase which was said 'to consist only of paupers'. Then beyond East End we reach the Railway Inn, the station site, and shortly, incongruous in surrounding fields, the remains of the Brymbo Ironstone workings and their accompanying terraced housing. Finally, the minor road heads back towards the 'beaten track', the main road to Banbury, passing on its way Manor Farm and Butter Hill, a rich grassland, the field-name of which can be traced back to 1154 when it is mentioned in Oseney Abbey cartularies. Here, as throughout Hook Norton's landscape, land, buildings, field and place names, artefacts and documentary sources, when brought together, yield a rich and lengthy story.

Hook Norton is in many respects a classic 'open' village. Its parish area is large and its population high by rural standards, undergoing a particularly rapid rise (from 1,032 in 1801 to 1,525 in 1841) during the period when contemporaries began to employ the distinction between 'open' and 'closed' communities. It was a village with numerous farmers, high poor rates, a wide range of rural industries and crafts, many shops and pubs, a large housing stock in diverse ownership, an absence of large estates or resident gentry, a strong tradition of religious nonconformity dating back to the seventeenth century, and a reputation for independence. This distinctive character can be discerned long before the term 'open village' was coined in the nineteenth century. Perhaps it underlies a number of unflattering rhymes dating from the sixteenth century on (e.g. 'Hogs Norton, where pigs play the organ'), which identify the village with rusticity and boorishness. The name of the place appears as 'Hogesnorton', in the Close Rolls, as early as 1381.

The first written reference to Hook Norton comes in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle and describes a battle there in 913. The form of the name is ‘Hocneratune’, rendered by the place name historian Margaret Gelling as ‘the tun of the people at Hocca’s hill slope’. Thus at the very outset we are faced with the challenge of relating people and events to the surviving physical terrain (Map 1). As we have seen, the present village certainly lies on a slope, along the stream valley at the centre of the parish. However, recent work by John Blair suggests that the events of 913 may have been focused some two miles north-east. The Chronicle (John of Worcester’s text) describes how, ‘After Easter the pagan army from Northampton and Leicester plundered Oxfordshire, and killed many men in the royal vill [*regia villa*] Hook Norton and in many other places...’ This was one of the abortive Viking counter-attacks which punctuated the reconquest of the Danelaw. It was the practice of Saxon writers to locate such military events in relation to royal villis. Blair notes



Map 1. Hook Norton: the medieval landscape – principal features

that the ridgeway running south-west from Banbury towards Gloucestershire and through the north of Hook Norton parish would have been the major route along which Vikings from Danelaw areas to the east could cross the Cotswold uplands into southern Mercia. Moreover, near to the point where the ridgeway enters Hook Norton parish no fewer than five later parishes meet in an area close to a striking concentration of earlier sites – a holy well, a pagan Anglo-Saxon burial, the major Iron Age fort at Tadmarton Camp, and two smaller polygonal enclosures. Using the evidence of later field names it has also been possible to locate Priestfield as an area astride the ridgeway and one which, according to twelfth-century documents recording the gift of the Hook Norton church by the post-Conquest lords of Hook Norton to endow Oseney Abbey, had previously ‘pertained to the church of that vill’. Taking all these clues of strategic, political, and ritual importance, Blair has suggested that the Saxon royal vill of Hook Norton may have been sited on the ridge west of Tadmarton Camp, in the north-east of the present parish and not in the modern village.

There is no doubt that shifts in settlement are a feature of English landscape history and that this part of the Hook Norton landscape saw considerable activity in pre-documentary periods. The application of modern fieldwork techniques to one field demonstrates this. The author, together with students of a local history extra-mural class held in Hook Norton, field-walked Campfield, adjoining the ridgeway and near the meeting of boundaries of five parishes. Once again field names provided an initial clue. An early task in the analysis of the Hook Norton landscape was to compile a field-name index, starting with the fields shown on a post-war 6-inch Ordnance Survey map, then collecting currently known names, and then working back through successive historic periods, helped by maps only as far as the eighteenth century but by documentary sources as far back as monastic cartularies of the twelfth century. Using this painstaking compilation of data the patterns of the medieval and post-medieval field systems began to emerge. Other sources, including always (as we shall see at Campfield) looking at the landscape on the ground, were then brought into play. Through such a process the reality is apparent of W.G. Hoskins’s notion of landscape as a palimpsest, as a fabric used and reused many times, but the layers of which, by dint of careful investigation, can gradually be separated and peeled back. Here too the particular value to landscape history of regressive analysis, as propounded by Marc Bloch and others, becomes clear.

Hook Norton's field names suggested many things: land use (Cowpasture), size (Five Acres), soil conditions (Pudding Furlong); open field features (Butts, Long Cut Furlong), ownership (Parson's Hill), crops (Old Sandfoin ground), and archaeological features (Campfield). Using the field-name index and map, Campfield was located. References to Hook Norton Camp were found in antiquarian sources, Robert Plot's *Natural History of Oxfordshire* (1677) mentions a 'quinquangle', near to Tadmarton Camp, which he associates with the campaign of 913. By the nineteenth century Alfred Beesley, quoted in a commercial directory of 1852, was still linking the Camp with the 'terrible slaughter of the English ... driven by the Danes from the camp at Tadmarton', but the banks of the camp were reported to be reduced by the plough 'almost to the level of the soil'. Nevertheless, twentieth-century aerial photographs in the Oxfordshire County Sites and Monuments Record revealed the irregular pentagonal outline of the Camp as a soil mark and it was decided to field-walk the site after autumn ploughing. Differences in soil colour still marked parts of the single bank of the enclosure, and within its area thirty-four worked flints were found and subsequently identified as pre-historic. Apart from a solitary earlier Neolithic example, eighteen of these were Bronze Age, including a fine middle Bronze Age skinning knife, and equally distributed between early, middle, and late periods, probably indicating use of the site by a small group, possibly seasonally, but over a long period.

By 1086, when Hook Norton is recorded in Domesday Book, it had ceased to be a royal vill. Had Hook Norton lost its previous status when a block of royal land in north Oxfordshire had been split into separate manors in the tenth century? Within Hook Norton had settlement shifted in focus to the present village site at the end of the Saxon period from a previous centre on the ridge to the north? Only some pieces of the jigsaw are available to us. Other archaeological finds in the area of the parish suggest settlement and land use to the south, east, and west of the present village in the Romano-British and Iron Age periods. In the area of the village itself evidence of earlier settlement has also been uncovered. The oldest surviving fabric of the parish church, previously thought to date from the early to mid-twelfth century, has proved to be late Saxon with the discovery, during work in 1987, of long-and-short quoins on the eastern angles of the nave, part of what was a substantial Anglo-Saxon building. A short distance away, in Southrop just the other side of the stream, a burial accompanied by a hoard of silver coins has

taken the story back into the ninth century. The find was first made in 1848, but a recent reconsideration of the manner of the burial, and the coins found with it, has identified this as a warrior burial, and coin hoard, characteristic of a soldier in the Viking army, datable to 875 or shortly afterwards. If there was still a place of strategic importance up on the hill to the north in 913 it seems increasingly likely that a significant settlement was also already in existence in the valley. This was to be the central place in the medieval and later landscape of Hook Norton.

At thirty hides Hook Norton was the largest of Robert d'Oilly's manors in 1086, and the centre of his barony. Its landscape, as to be expected of a subsistence agriculture, was dominated by arable cultivation. There was land for thirty ploughs, but with five ploughs on the five-hide demesne and a further thirty ploughs on tenant land, the arable must have been fully exploited. Hook Norton's rich resources of pasture also figure, with 140 acres of meadow, and pasture five furlongs by two furlongs. There was also a spinney, extending to two furlongs by half a furlong.

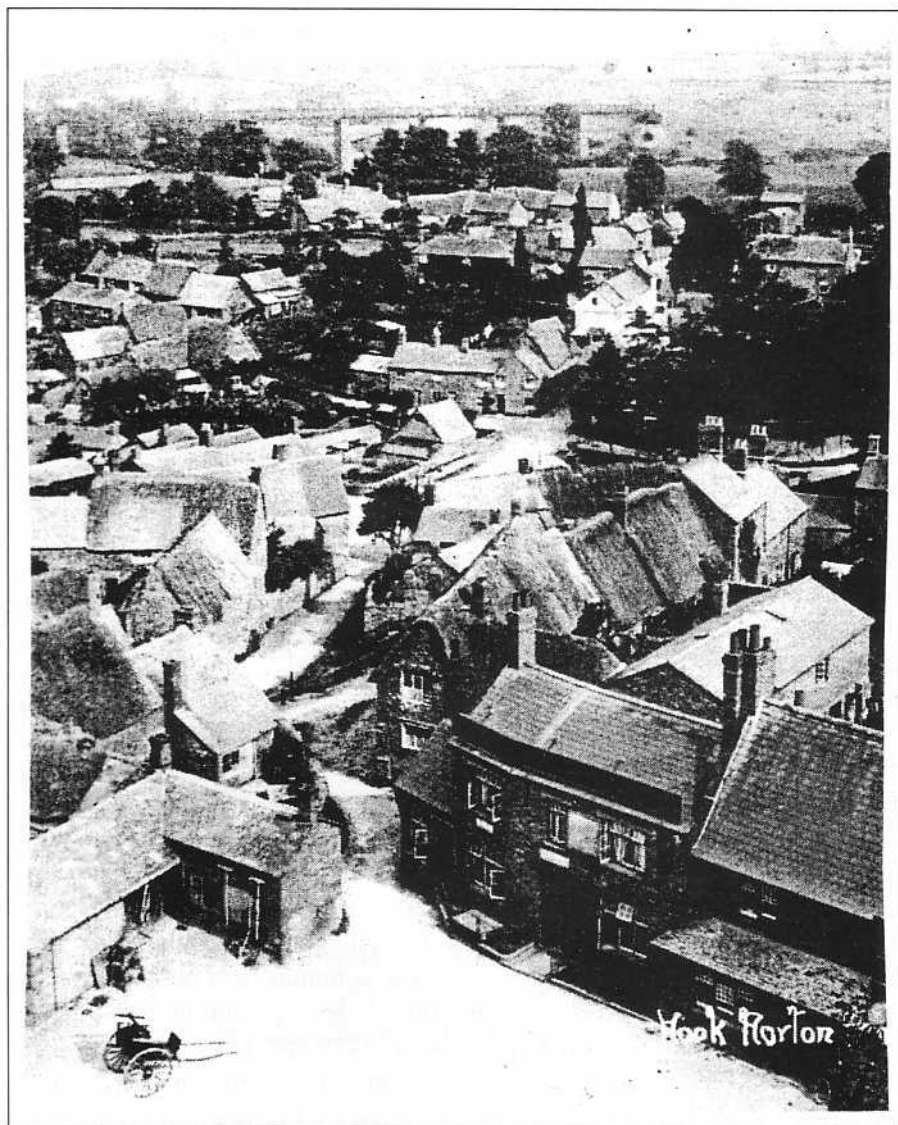
The arable land was managed through a common-field system fully developed in its complexity. For example, in 1260 a half-yardland holding consisted of thirty-four separate pieces together with one acre of meadow per year in the common meadow. At this stage Hook Norton had two great fields, East and West, but, by the mid-fourteenth century, a third, North, had appeared (Map 1). Much of what we know of the medieval landscape and its workings comes from the rich surviving records of Oseney Abbey, the Augustinian house in Oxford founded by Robert d'Oilly in 1129.

Robert gave Oseney not only Hook Norton church, its advowson, and rectorial rights (the living subsequently became a perpetual curacy), but also substantial areas of glebeland amounting to three hides. These holdings later became the basis of Nill and Manor Farms. The effect was that Hook Norton had two manors, that of the d'Oillys and their successors (the longest lasting of whom were the de Plessets, and the Chaucer - de la Pole dynasty, Earls and Dukes of Suffolk) and a second abbey manor. Each lordship had some of the landscape accoutrements of its status, near Nill Farm a dovecote and a rabbit warren, and to the east of the village, Hook Norton Park, first mentioned in an *inquisition post mortem* of 1301 as part of the holding of Hugh de Plessset.

The relationship between Oseney Abbey and the local parish is apparent today in the marked contrast between the chancel and nave of

St. Peter's church. The strikingly plain and largely unaltered twelfth-century chancel was the responsibility of the abbey, the rectorial appropriators, whilst the nave was the concern of the parish. It, and the tall west tower, are altogether grander in scale and, in their Decorated and Perpendicular style, betoken the prosperity of the village in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Inside the church the only seigneurial monument is a thirteenth-century grave slab of Isabel de Plesset, tucked away in the corner of the north transept. Thereafter the seats of power of the medieval lords of Hook Norton manor lay elsewhere. There were continuing contacts with absentee lords, as shown by the charter of 1437 in the Earl of Suffolk's attempt to establish, or more likely control, existing market activity. However, this already reduced link ended in the early sixteenth century when first (in 1513) the fortunes of the de la Poles foundered and then (in 1539) Oseney Abbey was dissolved. The old patterns of landholding broke up and, although some vestiges of manorial jurisdiction remained through the Bishop of Oxford as successor to Oseney, the real momentum of the place rested with the local families who are memorialized in the yards of the parish church and the Baptist chapel, the Goffes and Lampetts, the Austins and Wilmots and their like.

The village took on its now characteristic appearance in the early modern period. During the late sixteenth, and especially the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, it underwent a great rebuilding of its vernacular houses and farm buildings. Hook Norton was rebuilt in stone, predominantly the fissile, coursed rubble walling of richly coloured orangey-red ironstone. Except for the few grander houses with stone slate roofs, the majority of buildings were thatched. The results of this rebuilding stretch from East End to Scotland End and over the stream into Southrop. They encompass a small number of large houses: in the Hearth Tax returns of 1665 the Crokers, lessees of the Bishop's Manor, held the Parsonage House (described in 1650 as 'a Fair Stone built House ... containing many fair and useful Rooms with Necessary Barns Stables outhousing and Yards') with thirteen hearths. The Austins, at the 'Manor House' already mentioned, had eight. Otherwise the overwhelming majority of Hook Norton taxpayers had homes with between one and four hearths. These represented the typical houses with a ground plan of three rooms in line, usually parlour, hall, and kitchen, and chambers over, or smaller two-room cottages. Something of the interior lives of these homes is revealed in probate inventories. For example, the



**Hook Norton in the 1920s, looking south-east from the church.**

*Immediately below lies the 'market place', with smithy, shops, and inns. The unregulated buildings of the twin settlements of Hook Norton and Southrop lie on either side of the valley with the railway viaduct (opened in 1887) and the open countryside of the north Oxfordshire redlands beyond (Oxfordshire County Council Photographic Archive).*

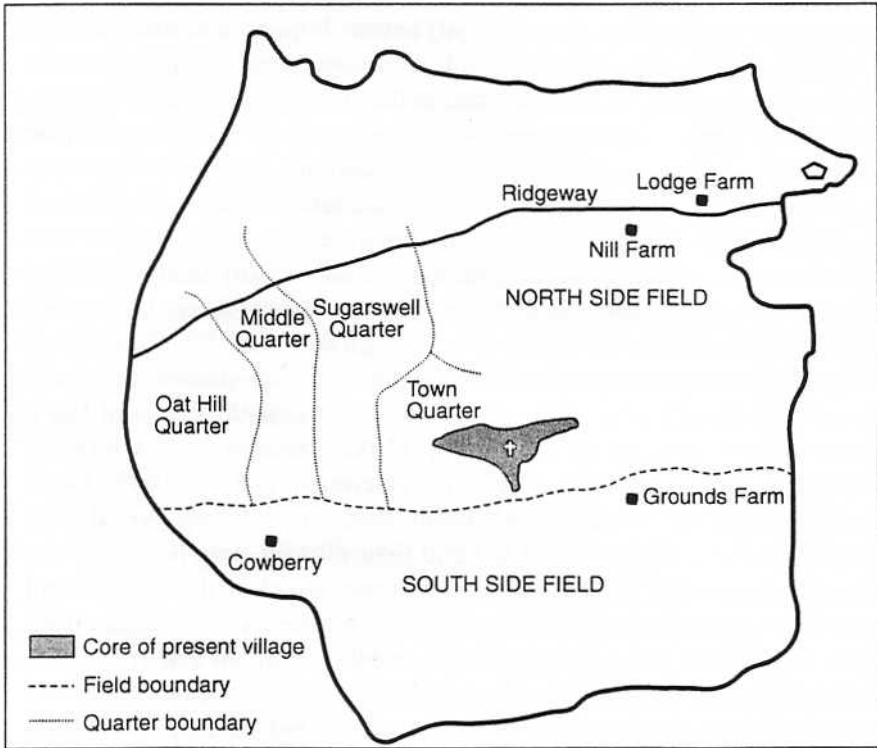
Calcotts were an established village family. Alexander Calcott (1616-1682) was a village baker. His probate inventory describes moveable goods in a two-storey, six-roomed Hook Norton house. The total worth of his goods and chattels was £72.15s.0d. Of this over £39 was due to him in debts, and some £32 accounted for by furniture and household belongings. Because he ran his business in his home, domestic cooking was done in the hall, whilst the kitchen became the bakehouse, with a furnace, dough troughs, and moulding boards. In the stable-cum-fuel-house was 500 of furze, fuel for baking. In the cellar was brewing equipment and 'two dozen of hemp'. The showpiece of the house was obviously the chamber over the parlour, its contents worth more than any other room and showing the level of comfort attainable in a village home by the second half of the seventeenth century. There was a feather bed with scarlet curtains and counterpane, a red rug, a table and eight red leather chairs, four pictures, and fire irons.

Building was going on outside the village, too. In 1646 Lodge Farm, a smart new yeoman farm house, was built two miles north-east of Hook Norton on the old ridgeway (Map 2). This was probably created in connection with enclosure for sheep-farming, and is just one element in major changes which Hook Norton's farming and thus its landscape underwent in the early modern period. Other enclosure was taking place. A rare surviving agreement of 1672 to enclose Cowberry field and meadows shows the process at work. The parties were William Horwood, grazier of Hook Norton, James Beal, mercer of Hook Norton, Joseph Davis, mercer of Chipping Norton, and Richard Archer, cooper of Battersea, Surrey, an alliance of local farming expertise, local tradesmen's capital, and London business interests set to exploit Hook Norton's grazing to the full. Clearly the village's agriculture was no longer a matter of local subsistence or static common-field organization.

Robert Allen, in a study of agricultural development in the South Midlands (including Oxfordshire) between 1450 and 1850, has recently re-emphasized the capacity of local agriculture to improve and modernize without recourse to wholesale enclosure by parliamentary act. He looks rather to 'a yeoman revolution' of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Taking Hook Norton in the same period one can see the strengths of such an argument, for enclosure by agreement, consolidation of holdings, improved crop rotation and specialization for the market all seem to be in evidence. At some point before 1700 the common fields were reorganized into North Side and South Side Fields. As we know



from a sale document of 1709 North Side Field was further subdivided into quarters (Map 2), making greater flexibility in cropping and management possible. It was this considerably evolved landscape that eventually saw parliamentary enclosure in 1774.



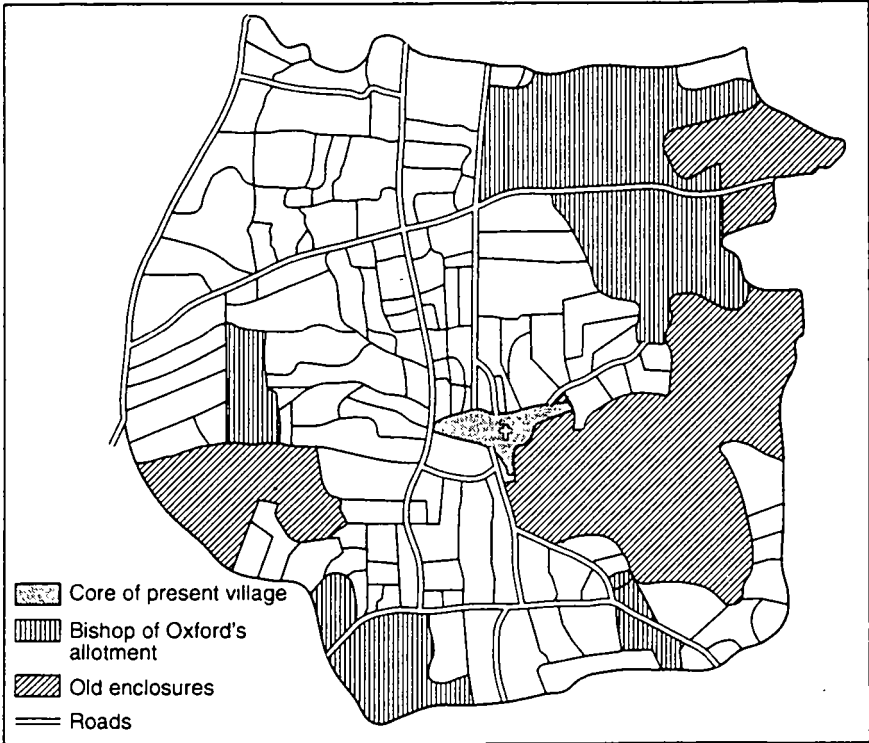
*Map 2. Hook Norton: post-medieval fields and farms.*

Early modern Hook Norton has all the marks of a successful and generally prosperous community. The exact size of the population is not recorded, but an estimate, based on the Compton Census returns of 1676, would put the total then at around 720. This census was undertaken for the Archbishop of Canterbury to determine numbers of communicants and nonconformists in each parish. The results show that Hook Norton had 338 conformists, 6 papists, and 90 nonconformists, more than any other parish in the diocese and proportionately extremely high. (The next greatest concentration of dissenters was at neighbouring Bloxham, with 80 nonconformists to 800 conformists.) The dissenting presence was to

be one of the hallmarks of Hook Norton's open village character. North Oxfordshire had always been a stronghold of Puritanism. During the Civil War in 1644 a Particular Baptist Church was founded at Hook Norton, under the pastorate of James Wilmot and Charles Archer. In 1655 Wilmot signed the Articles of Faith and Order when Hook Norton became part of an Association of seven Baptist churches in the Midlands. With the enactment of the Clarendon Code after the Restoration he paid the price of his faith and was imprisoned and his goods confiscated. These were offered for sale at Chipping Norton market but no one would buy them. Eventually the goods were returned to Hook Norton, where a friend of Wilmot bought them and returned them to their original owner on his release from gaol. Despite all of this, and excommunication, Wilmot continued in his ministry, and the Return of Conventicles in 1669 shows a monthly meeting of sixty Anabaptists in Wilmot's house in the village. When he died in 1681 he left a cottage and inventoried goods worth £40.3s.6d. His ministry passed to his son Daniel who was to serve until 1741. During that time the curate of Hook Norton was suspended by the Bishop (1682) because of the level of dissent in the parish and, after the Toleration Act of 1689, Hook Norton's Baptists became publicly established. In 1718 they moved from worshipping in a private house to build their own meeting-house (on the site of the present 1787 building on the main street of the village) and were able to do so because of the support of substantial benefactors from Hook Norton and surrounding villages, notably William Harwood, who died in 1720. They built not only a meeting-house, but also a minister's house and three almshouses, and land was provided for their own burial ground, a substantial presence indeed.

In some ways the parliamentary enclosure of 1774 was for Hook Norton part of a continuum of agrarian and landscape change. Nevertheless it raised tensions, between local landholders and the principal land- and tithe-owner, the Bishop of Oxford, and also on the part of the smallest players on the scene, those with only rights of use – grazing or the gathering of fuel – on the old customary system. Little of these rumblings penetrated the formal parliamentary procedures. Rather they were expressed in an earlier petition querying the Bishop's right to all the tithes being claimed. A local agent investigated the petition and reported to the Bishop (January 1773) that the principal signatories 'have retracted as they did not know what they had signed', whilst the smaller ones 'are those who now have an opportunity of committing

trespasses on their Neighbours' Property with their sheep, which in so great a Field cannot be altogether prevented. The poor people who have no property have usually cut a few Furze upon the Greensward Part of the Field, and these poor creatures are the only people that seem to merit your Lordship's Consideration'. He went on to propose an allotment of land, the rents from which would provide a dole 'to the Honest and Industrious poor at Christmas... although [they] have no pretence to claim a right'.



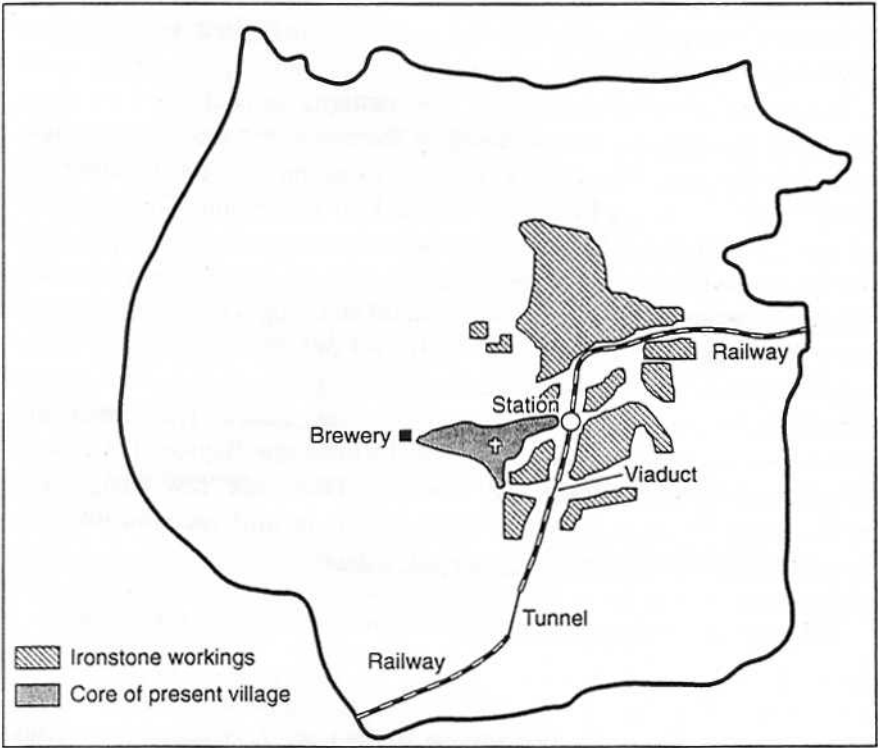
*Map 3. Hook Norton: Parliamentary enclosure 1774 – old and new enclosures.*

The Act was duly passed and in September 1774 the Award was made (Map 3). Of 116 allottees the Bishop received some 835 acres, Nathaniel Appletree 217, and six others between 100 and 157 acres. Four years later dissatisfaction continued and a leading local farmer wrote to the Bishop that 'some discontented souls' would probably renew their

petition despite his efforts, for 'obstinacy has no ears'. By this time quickset thorn hedges surrounded new fields, various exchanges of land had taken place between the principal allottees, roadways had been laid to prescribed widths, watercourses diverted, new farmsteads outside the village (like Appletree's at Belleisle) built, and an allotment of 40 acres for the poor placed in the hands of Trustees.

How far was the social structure of Hook Norton affected by parliamentary enclosure? The year 1774-5 saw record poor relief expenditures and annual sums spent continued to rise thereafter, probably part of a broader trend of rising population and low wages. A listing of the Bishop's copyhold tenants in 1774 and 1808 revealed 46 per cent of the same individual or family names and 54 per cent new names. A parallel list of tithe payers, mostly small freeholders, shows 80 per cent of new names, indicating high levels of post-enclosure sales. Land tax assessments, sadly available only after 1785, indicate that by then, and into the 1830s, Hook Norton had a steady pattern of 25-30 per cent owner-occupiers and 70-75 per cent tenants. By the mid-nineteenth century the Bishop's estate was being dispersed by sale.

Victorian Hook Norton reached a peak of growth (1,525 people) in 1841. It remained dependent on farming, with twenty-one farmers in 1871, but to this was added the brewery from 1849 and the ironstone workings from 1889 (Map 4). The other distinctive feature of the village economy and social mix was the large number of crafts and tradespeople. A native of the place, leaving Hook Norton school just after the First World War, got his first job gardening for the brewery owner, another brother washed bottles at the brewery, whilst a third worked in a local bakery shop, which had an extensive delivery round in the parish and small adjoining villages, Swerford, Wigginton, Whichford, and Ascott, which looked to Hook Norton for services. These economic options buffered the village from the worst effects of agricultural depression after 1873. Hook Norton retained its robust openness: for example, despite the arrival of a resident and energetic Anglican incumbent in 1841, more people attended Baptist, Quaker, Wesleyan, or Primitive Methodist worship on Census Sunday 1851 than at the parish church. In 1875 the Rector reported to the Bishop that at least half the population were habitually absent from church and that in the last three years things had got worse, 'especially since the formation of the Agricultural Labourers' Union', a member of whose Executive Committee lived in the village. Organisations like the Friendly Society flourished.



*Map 4. Hook Norton: the nineteenth century – brewery, railway, and ironstone workings.*

Despite good fortune compared with many villages, population growth was not sustainable. Numbers fell to 1,232 in 1881, only to recover partially, to 1,346 by 1901. The inter-war years were tough, the population falling again to 1,153 by 1931. Fred Beale, whose interview is quoted above, emigrated to Canada at the age of 19 in 1927 to work on a Prairie farm. He returned, for family reasons, in 1936, and took a job at Alcan's new aluminium factory, out of the village, in Banbury.

In 1943, as part of the preparation for post-war reconstruction, a survey, *Country Planning*, was made of rural English life, together with a film, *Twenty-Four Square Miles*. The area chosen was north Oxfordshire around Hook Norton. The resulting picture showed the relative deprivation of the country dweller, in terms of standard of living, housing conditions, educational and medical services, and social

opportunities. Here was a landscape of declining population, dilapidated agricultural buildings, and farming methods, fossilized by economic depression in a traditional mixed husbandry, and carried out in units (average farm size 109 acres) and field patterns derived from a history long past. Rural crafts had declined to the point that only three smiths worked in the area. There were twenty jobs at the brewery. Community activities were marked by apathy and lack of leadership. The centre of village life was the pub: Hook Norton had seven and a beer shop. The authors argued that mains water, gas, electricity, metalled roads, a bus past the door, and active citizenship should be brought to these neglected areas. Now, over fifty years on, hardly two per cent of Hook Norton's population works in agriculture and people live, but do not work, in the village. In the 1980s 136 new households were added. The school, the post office shop, the brewery, the pubs, the band, the Baptist church, and the local historical society all flourish. There are few dilapidated buildings to be seen in a landscape which is still recognizably the product of its long history.

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### *Sources*

*Note.* This paper was written for a national, not local, readership. *The English Rural Landscape* (ed. Joan Thirsk, Oxford U.P., 2000, £30.00) has received widespread acclaim. It is our good fortune that a 'Banburyshire' parish was one of only five 'cameos' chosen to illustrate its wider themes. Nevertheless, only a few in our locality are likely to spend £30 if their only interest is in Hook Norton. We are therefore enormously grateful to Kate Tiller, Joan Thirsk and Oxford University Press for their willingness, indeed enthusiasm, in allowing us to reprint the paper so that those who live in and around Hooky can read it.

O.U.P. required source references to be kept to a minimum. In a local historical journal such as this, we want to know such *minutiae*, to encourage readers to do further research themselves. Accordingly we have attempted to provide indications of the printed sources used, which we hope will stimulate others to continue research into the village, and contribute to *C&CH*.

The titles opposite (incorporating and expanding on those in the original published version) show how much the 'Hook Norton Number' of *C&CH*, 9.1 (Autumn 1982), and further articles in the two subsequent issues, have provided the grass-roots material for Kate's magisterial summation for a wider public.

J.G.

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## A LITERARY JUBILEE: 'ANTHONY BURGESS'

*Barrie Trinder*

The autumn of 2000 marked the fiftieth anniversary of the arrival in Banbury of the most celebrated literary figure to be associated with the town during the twentieth century. In September of that year, John Burgess Wilson, whose pen-name was Anthony Burgess, took up a post as English master at what was then Banbury Grammar School. As it happens, I joined the school on the same day, but as a first year pupil. The purpose of this short note is not to reminisce, but to place on record an outline of John Wilson's links with Banbury. Others will have more vivid memories of his activities in the town, or may be better able to evaluate his contributions to literature and to music.

Anthony Burgess chronicled his life in vivacious style in two volumes of confessions.<sup>1</sup> He was born to a Roman Catholic family in Manchester in 1917 and from the autumn of 1937 studied at that city's university. He served in the army from October 1940, in the Royal Army Medical Corps and then in the Education Corps, spending the last part of the Second World War as a member of the garrison of Gibraltar. His confessions provide an unheroic view of the tedium of wartime service for those who were not storming beaches or flying Spitfires. After demobilisation he took a civilian post at the Mid-West School of Education near Wolverhampton, and then taught for two years at the emergency training college at Bamber Bridge near Preston before his move to Banbury in 1950.

John Wilson lived with his wife, their collie and her Siamese cat in a cottage in Adderbury. He acknowledged in his confessions that he enjoyed Banbury, and lauded the accomplishments of his colleagues at the grammar school, particularly Kenneth Carrdus, Maurice Draper and Kenneth Tryon. He augmented his income by private tuition, some lecturing for the Workers' Educational Association, and by writing for the *Banbury Guardian*. He produced a succession of plays for local amateur dramatic groups. In his novels and in his confessions he was

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<sup>1</sup> Anthony Burgess, *Little Wilson and Big God* (1987), London: Heinemann; Anthony Burgess, *You've had your time* (1990), London: Heinemann.



successful in conveying the precise flavour of a time and a place, whether in Malaya, Russia, Elizabethan London or Banbury in the 1950s. His descriptive powers were formidable, as when he recalled, '*the Vicar of Banbury, a man with a nose like a piece of cuttlefish bone stuck in a budgerigar's cage, a great drinker in the White Lion...*'<sup>2</sup>

John Wilson was regarded as a character at the grammar school, even by pupils with whom he had few direct contacts. I experienced his teaching for only one period a week during my first year, and that for a subject called 'Speech Training', which in effect meant phonetics in which he had been interested since his time at Manchester University. He liberally distributed 'credit' marks, the 'carrots' in the school's system of rewards and punishments, to such an extent that they were devalued. He had a slightly untidy appearance, intensified by a particularly ragged academic gown. His eloquent, exquisitely-modulated though recognisably Mancunian speech was memorable. During the summer of 1954 (or it may have been 1953) he caused some comment by taking a picnic lunch daily in one of the school's quadrangles with a female colleague. Others to whom he taught English, or who were his colleagues, will remember him better.

Almost by accident John Wilson was appointed in the summer of 1954 to a lectureship in a college at Kuala Kangsar in Malaya, but his embarkation for Singapore on the Rotterdam Lloyd line *Willem Ruys*<sup>3</sup> did not end his links with Banbury. He had already begun to write novels during his stay in Adderbury, including one about a small town grammar school in the 1950s entitled *The Worm and the Ring*, the title being drawn from Wagnerian imagery, 'worm' standing for *Wurm*, or dragon. The manuscript was forgotten during his stay in Malaysia, but he continued to write novels. The first to be published, a story set in Malaya, was *Time for a Tiger*, which appeared in 1956. I recall a fluttering of excitement during my final year at Banbury Grammar School when a book by a former member of staff appeared in the library, and discussing it with teachers who had worked with the author. John Wilson returned to the United Kingdom at the age of 40 in 1957, and paid a brief visit to Banbury. He went back to the East, on a three-year contract in Brunei, but was invalided home in 1959 before its completion. At the end of that year he was diagnosed with an inoperable

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<sup>2</sup> A. Burgess, *Little Wilson and Big God* (Penguin ed., 1988), 357.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 372.

cerebral tumour, and determined to write sufficient novels in what remained of his lifetime to maintain his wife. In the event he outlived his first wife, married again, and developed a literary career that brought celebrity and riches. He is perhaps best known as the author of *A Clockwork Orange*, the starting point for the film directed by Stanley Kubrick. He wrote about Russia in *Honey for the Bears* and about Shakespeare in *Nothing like the Sun*, as well as studies of Ernest Hemingway, James Joyce and D.H. Lawrence, and the script for the television production *Jesus of Nazareth*. He died in 1993 at the age of 75.

As well as writing new novels after his enforced return to England, John Wilson began to consider what could be made of older work which had remained unpublished. He dug out the yellowing typescript of *The Worm and the Ring*, which was accepted by Heinemann and published, to be accorded praise by the *Times Literary Supplement*, early in the summer of 1961. The book aroused some interest in Banbury, but became notorious in August 1962 when the *Banbury Advertiser* announced that Alderman Gwen Bustin, mayor of Banbury in 1959, who had retired earlier that year from the post of secretary at Banbury Grammar School which she had held since 1920, was suing the author for libel.<sup>4</sup> The following Sunday Anthony Burgess began a review in the *Observer* of Simenon's *Pedigree* with the words:

*'The laws of defamation are a great nuisance. In more civilised times than ours a real or imagined libel would meet the slap of a counter-libel or an invitation to a punch-up. This kept literature healthy and its practitioners alert. Today those who fancy themselves traduced tend to snivel, niggle and set a cash value on their tiny bruises. This is sordid and of no help to literature. Can one imagine an 'Inferno' being produced today?'*<sup>5</sup>

The *Banbury Guardian* did not run the story until the following week when it published an interview with John Wilson which had taken place at his cottage at Etchingon, Sussex, in which he expressed his liking for Banbury, and his dismay at public attitudes to teachers.<sup>6</sup> Rumours were already current in Banbury that the case had been settled out of court. Wilson was preparing to fight the case, and his Q.C. was preparing what

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<sup>4</sup> *Banbury Advertiser*, 8 August 1962.

<sup>5</sup> *The Observer*, 12 August 1962.

<sup>6</sup> *Banbury Guardian*, 16 August 1962

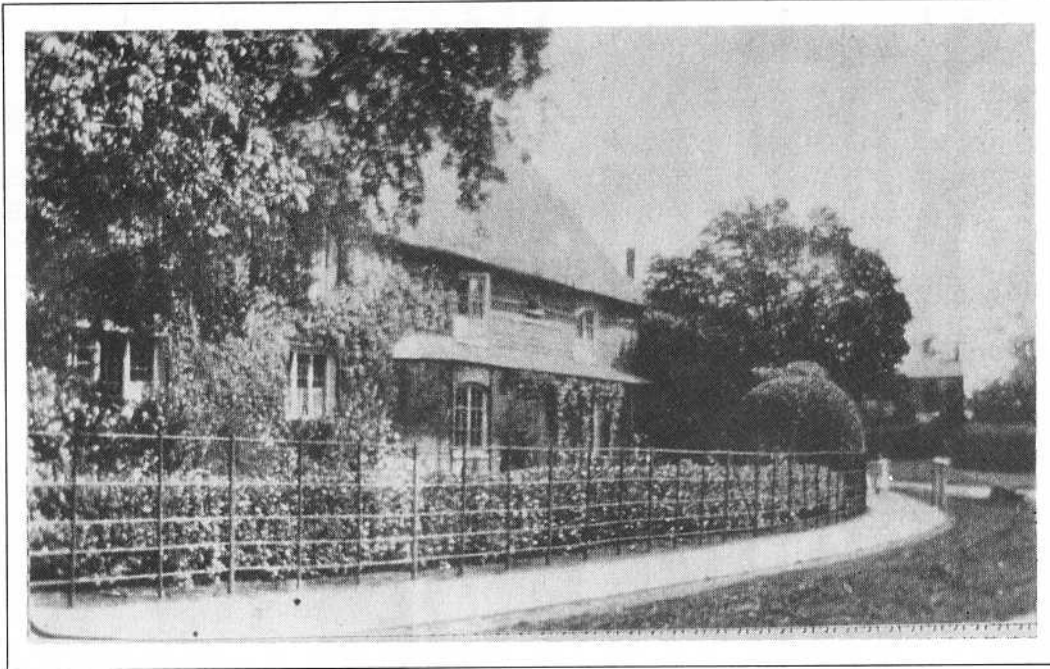
was considered to be a formidable defence, but Heinemann agreed to pay Miss Bustin a hundred pounds and to pulp the remaining stock of the books.<sup>7</sup> The case went before Mr Justice Sachs in the High Court in October 1962 when the agreement by the author and publisher to pay damages and withdraw copies was formally announced.<sup>8</sup> The settlement of the case was the last mention of Banbury in Burgess's confessions.

Some copies of *The Worm and the Ring* remain in circulation. Its plot is not modelled on any events in Banbury, nor do its principal characters resemble members of the staff at the grammar school in the 1950s – Burgess's headmaster for example is totally unlike the then headmaster. It does evoke the atmosphere of the town half a century ago. The sensitively-observed rhythms of language, the descriptions of bus journeys in the rain, some fleetingly-noticed minor characters, are vividly realistic. If *The Worm and the Ring* is unobtainable, Burgess's two volumes of confessions can be recommended (although they will not be enjoyed by the prudish), both for his writing about Banbury and for the impression they convey of a life of great achievement.

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<sup>7</sup> A. Burgess, *You've had your time* (Penguin ed., 1992), 54-55.

<sup>8</sup> *Banbury Advertiser*, 24 October 1962



*'The Cottage', home of Mrs Sally Davis, Miss Sarah Davis, and Catherine  
(née Davis) wife of Dr William Wellington Hyde.  
(Photo Courtesy of Bloxham Village History Club)*

# A BLOXHAM SERVANTS' BOOK

*Pamela Horn*

*Note. The extracts have been copied from the original servants' book sent to the author by the late Mr J.H. Fearon of Bodicote (Chairman, Banbury Historical Society, 1962-65) in September 1974. At the time the writer's identity was unknown but subsequent research has revealed her to be Mrs Sally Davis of 'Bloxham Cottage', widow of John Davis, 'gentleman'. See Appendix, page 75.*

In predominantly rural counties like Oxfordshire the vast majority of middle- and upper-class Victorian families expected to employ at least one resident maid. This was not merely for reasons of status but as an essential aid in running inconveniently constructed houses, with numerous fires to be made up and floors to be scrubbed. Servant numbers grew with particular speed in the 1850s and 1860s, with the 1871 Census Report commenting disapprovingly that the greatest ever rise in the total had occurred over the previous decades: 'Wives and daughters at home do now less domestic work than their predecessors: hence the excessive demand for female servants'.<sup>1</sup> Although the rate of advance then slackened, even in 1901 43 per cent of all females in Oxfordshire declaring an occupation were servants (see also Table 1, page 76).

Yet the relationship between mistress and maid could be fraught with difficulties, as a usually older women of one class gave orders to, and regulated the conduct of, a youngster from another, subordinate sector of society. 'My goodness,' commented Jane Carlyle, wife of the famous Victorian author, 'why make bits of apologies for writing about the servants – as if "the servants" were not a most important – a most fearful item in our female existence!'<sup>2</sup>

In 1861 almost 40 per cent of Oxfordshire maids were under the age of twenty; indeed, 8.6 per cent were below the age of fifteen, which would

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<sup>1</sup> Quoted in Pamela Horn, *The Rise and Fall of the Victorian Servant* (Stroud, 2000 edn.), 26-27.

<sup>2</sup> Quoted in Thea Holme, *The Carlyles at Home* (London, 1965), 162. As the manuscript of the first volume of her husband's *French Revolution*, which had been lent John Stuart Mill, had been taken for waste-paper and burnt by a servant of his, her remarks are obviously heartfelt!

seem a signal act of faith on the part of some mistresses. In these circumstances, employers were frequently disappointed in the standard of service they received, while servants felt exploited by the heavy labour that was heaped upon them, often without proper training. Florence Stowe of Whichford, on the Warwickshire/Oxfordshire border, began work in the home of a Shipston-on-Stour bank manager in 1905 when she was thirteen. She was expected to do the heavy work of the household while the cook supplemented her culinary duties with some light dusting. Florence's Christian name was also thought inappropriate for a maid so her mistress called her Mary instead. For her various labours she was paid the meagre sum of £4.10s. a year.<sup>3</sup>

It was against this kind of background that Mrs Beeton in her famous *Book of Household Management* (1861) advised the 'sensible master' and the 'kind mistress' to remember that 'if servants depend on them for their means of living, in their turn they are dependent on their servants for very many of the comforts of life; and that, with a proper amount of care in choosing servants, and treating them like reasonable beings, ... they will ... surround themselves with attached domestics.'<sup>4</sup> However, as the servants' book of Mrs Sally Davis of Bloxham shows, these injunctions were not always observed and problems inevitably followed.

When the book opened in October 1852, Mrs Davis had been a widow for just over seven years. She was aged about 61 and had inherited from her late husband, John, a considerable amount of property in Bloxham.<sup>5</sup> She clearly enjoyed a comfortable standard of life and at the 1851 Census of Population was living with her two daughters, Sarah, aged 28, and Catherine, aged 24. There were four servants – Elizabeth Slaney, aged 47, a married woman who was the cook; Elizabeth Gilkes, aged 24, who was the housemaid; Elizabeth Miller, aged 23, who was the kitchenmaid; and a male general servant, James Slaney, who was probably Elizabeth's husband, although he was eleven years her junior.<sup>6</sup> When the servants' book began in October of the following year, however, James was not mentioned – only three female domestics. Subsequently, two or three maids were employed and that remained the

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<sup>3</sup> Archival Resource Centre, University of Essex, QD1/FLWE/40.

<sup>4</sup> Mrs Isabelle Beeton, *The Book of Household Management* (London, 1861), 961-962

<sup>5</sup> See Sally Davis's will, proved at Oxford on 24 September 1862 by her two daughters, Sarah and Catherine, who were her executors. The will was made two years before she died.

<sup>6</sup> 1851 Census Return for Bloxham, HO.107.1733, at the Family History Centre, London

case even in 1861 when Mrs Davis's son, John, aged 45 and categorised as a 'fundholder', had joined the household.<sup>7</sup>

As the extracts given below indicate, Mrs Davis's relations with the cook, Elizabeth Slaney, were not always easy, but when she died on 18 August 1862 she left Elizabeth two pounds in her will. With the exception of another small bequest, her substantial estate, valued at almost £7,000, was divided between her three children, John, Sarah and Catherine.

The entries quoted cover the period from October 1852 until Sally Davis's death about a decade later. Thereafter the book was continued by her daughter, Sarah, who at the 1871 Census was shown as living alone in Bloxham with two servants, Hannah Hancox, cook, and Elizabeth Harris, housemaid. Her sister had married John Wellington Hyde, a surgeon, who was fifteen years his bride's senior, in November 1863. After Sarah's death the book may have been kept by Catherine Wellington Hyde or by another family member. The last entries appear in 1901, when the appointments of a nurse, Ethel Whitfield, at £12 per annum, and of a cook, Mrs Widgery, at £20, were recorded. There was also a housemaid, Ethel Tanner, who received £10 a year. But by then the book merely listed the name and wage of the servant, without any other details.

The extracts have been divided according to occupations, so that comparisons can be made over time, rather than, as in the original, in the order in which recruitment took place. In 1853 alone, there were four cooks, beginning with Elizabeth Slaney and ending with Mary Neville. Further problems followed in 1854 and 1855, before Elizabeth Slaney returned in the autumn of the latter year. Until the spring of 1855, the servants had to provide their own tea and sugar, rather than having these provided by their employer. This was doubtless an economy measure to prevent the over-lavish use of what were still relatively expensive commodities.

Mrs Davis only settled wages once a year, although many of the maids obtained small advances to tide them over in the interim. This policy must have made budgeting difficult for the servants, and when daughter Sarah took over, the maids were hired (and presumably paid) on a monthly basis, rather than annually.

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<sup>7</sup> 1861 Census Return for Bloxham, RG 9.913, at the Family History Centre.

## Servant Appointments from October 1852 to August 1862

### Cooks

*[Elizabeth Slaney was still employed in 1852 (although she was not mentioned in the book's first entries), since, as will be seen, the kitchenmaid was hired to be 'Betty's ... help'. Mrs Slaney seems to have left early in 1853.]*

**1853: February 5th.** Hannah Haydon came here as Cook engaged at £9 wages to Michaelmas, to find her own Tea & Sugar, viz. to be paid the £9 at Michs. Hannah Haydon had on account of her wages £2 on the 8th of April. Hannah Haydon on account of Wages June 11th – £1.

**October 12th.** Hannah Haydon left with the balance of her wages £6 and a present of 5 shillings for good Dairy work and Baking.

**1853: September 30th.** Patience Wyatt engaged from Mrs Conner as Cook for the year from Michaelmas, to find her own Tea and Sugar at wages £11. Left at the end of 6 days.

**1853: October 12th.** Mary Neville engaged as Cook for the 12 Months at £13, to find her own Tea and Sugar.

**1854: April 12th.** Mary Neville had on account of her wages £3.

**May 26th.** Mary Neville had on account of her wages £1.

**October 10th.** Mary Neville left with her Balance of wages £9 and a present of £1 to buy her wedding cake she having been a most useful servant here.

Hannah Perkins engaged as Cook for the 12 months to Michaelmas 1855 at wages £14, to find her own Tea and Sugar.

Hannah Perkins left here on the **30th November** to go to nurse her sick mother at Milcomb.

**December 14th.** Paid Ann [*sic*] Perkins for 8 weeks wages as above £2.2s.

**December 11th.** Sarah Moss of Adderbury came here as cook, to find her own Tea and Sugar at £11 wages for the year, to be calculated at that sum till Michaelmas next, for which time she is engaged, she being paid for 10 months service at that time. Left on the **31st of March**.

**1855: March 31st.** Deborah Ayres of Boddicot as cook at £12 pr. Ann. Tea and Sugar found her, went home 17 days ill. I had Mrs Herritage to do her work, left ill to go home & finally on the **23rd June** with £2.10s. wages for her 10 weeks service here.

**June 23rd.** Sarah Moss came back into the cook's Place at the same wages £11 for the year to be calculated accordingly to Michaelmas.

Sarah Moss left at **Michs.** with 15 weeks and 4 days wages paid £3.5s.

Elizabeth Slaney cook as before at £9 wages from **Michs. 1855 to Michs. 1856.**

**1856: October.** Elizth Slaney engaged again as Cook at £9 for the 12 months to 1857.



**1857: October 12th** paid the above to Elizth Slaney. Engaged Elizth Slaney again as Cook at the same yearly wages of £9 and to give her one Pound more if she would keep good order and tidy habits in the Kitchen with a young Girl to help but no promise made for that extra Pound and no better performance. Paid her wages £9 as before **Octr. 11th**.

**1858: October.** Betty Slaney as before Cook &c. with a help and her washing put out.

**1859: October 11th.** Betty Slaney as before to Cook &c. with a help and her Washing put out at £9 wages yearly.

*[Elizabeth Slaney's name does not appear again in the servants' book but the 1861 Census shows she was still living with the family as their cook. Not until 5th February 1863 was there a mention of a cook, when Hannah Pollard was appointed at £12 a year, with her tea, sugar and washing found. She was engaged 'as a monthly servant' and left on 10th October 1863, when a new cook was recruited.]*

## Housemaids

**1852: Michaelmas, October 11th.** Elizth Gilks [*sic*] engaged again as Housemaid, to find her own Tea and Sugar at yearly wages £9. Elizth Gilks left her Service here to be married to Wm. Maul.<sup>8</sup>

**1853: March 14th** paid her wages 22 weeks from the 11th October £3.17s. – gave her extra 13s. as a present.

**March 7th.** Emma Flint came here as Housemaid, engaged at the rate of £7.10s. yearly wages to be paid in right proportion of that Sum to Michaelmas and to have a small present more given to her if found deserving of it. Emma Flint to find her own Tea and Sugar for the above. Emma Flint had on account of her Wages June 23rd £1.

**October 12th.** Emma Flint left with her balance of wages according to the above statement 31 weeks £3.10s. and a present of 5 Shillings given to her.

**September 14th.** Ellen Plumb [*sic*] engaged as Housemaid yearly Servant, to commence at Michaelmas, and find her own Tea and Sugar at yearly wages £8 and to have an addition of 10 shillings given to her if found deserving of it but not else.

**1854: May 25th.** Ellen Plum had on account of her wages £3.

**October 10th.** Paid Ellen Plum the balance of her wages £5 and gave her a present of 5s. for good conduct.

**September 9th.** Engaged Ellen Plum again as Housemaid for the year to find her own Tea and Sugar as before at £8 and if found deserving to have an additional 5s. or 10s. given to her at the end of the year. Since her engagement Tea and Sugar have been found Ellen Plum with the other Servant which will make the £8 wage quite sufficient without further addition.

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<sup>8</sup> Elizabeth Gilkes married William Maule, a widowed labourer from South Newington, on 24 March 1853.

- 1855: April 26th.** Ellen Plum had on account of her wages £1.  
**October 2nd.** Paid Ellen Plum £7 and gave her a present of 5s.  
**October 1st.** Ellen Plum again engaged as Housemaid for the year to Michs. at wages £8.10s. Tea and Sugar found her.
- 1856:** Ellen Plum engaged again as Housemaid at £8.10s. – wages for the year. Tea and Sugar found.
- 1857: June 1st.** Ellen Plum had on account of her Wages £1. Remainder of her wages paid to her Father after she left here.  
**June 10th.** Clarissa Hartall engaged here as Housemaid for £8.10s. wages for the year her Tea & Sugar and Washing found her, the same as for Ellen Plum.  
**October 12th.** Paid the above for 18 weeks Service to Michaelmas £2.18s. and engaged Clarissa Hartall for the next year as Housemaid at the same yearly wages of £8.10s.
- 1858: October 11th.** Paid Clarissa Hartall her wages – £8.10s.  
**[1858]** Engaged Sarah Hemmings **October** as Housemaid at £8.10s. for the year from Michaelmas, her Washing paid for and her Tea and Sugar found.
- 1859: May 6th.** Sarah Hemmings had on account of her wages £2.  
**October.** Sarah Hemmings engaged again as yearly Servant at £9 wages and her washing put out.
- 1860: September 5.** Engaged Emma Owen as Housemaid for the year to Michaelmas 1861 at 9 Pounds wages and her Washing put out. She left after one week Service for objectionable Dress, by Mrs Taylor.  
**October 22nd.** Engaged Anna Sessions as Housemaid for £8 wages for the year to Michs. 1861, her washing put out by me. Miss Craddock.
- 1861: April 26th.** Anna Sessions had on account of her wages £1.  
**October 21st.** Paid the above on leaving my Service and gave her a present of 10s.  
**October 19th.** Engaged Susan Smith as Housemaid at £9 a year wages, her washing to be paid for by me – paid the above 11s. for 3 weeks service on her leaving.  
**November 13th.** Engaged Sarah Moss as Housemaid at £9 pr. Annum, her washing to be paid by me – paid the above 1 Sovereign on her leaving ill to go to Bromton [*sic*] Hospital.  
**December 2nd.** Engaged Susan Nichols [*sic*] of Southnewington as Housemaid as monthly Servant at the rate of £9 a year wages, her washing to be paid for by me.
- 1862: February 19th.** Susan Nichol [*sic*] left to go home ill, did not have her back.  
**March 5th** Paid Susan Nicholl [*sic*] for 11 weeks wages £2 and 1 month for giving her Notice 15s. She claimed 5s. more for 2 weeks being ill at home and which I sent her the following day.  
**March 4th.** Engaged Sophia Morby at £10 a year wages, her Tea and Sugar and Washing found by me, engaged as a monthly Servant, by Mrs D.

## **Kitchenmaids or under servants**

**1852: Michaelmas October 11th.** Ann Wakefield engaged as Betty's Kitchen help maid, to find her own Tea and Sugar at yearly wages £6.10s.

**1853 March 7th.** Ann Wakefeld had on account of Wages £1.

**October 8th.** Ann Wakefield left, having received her remaining wages £5.10s.

*[No kitchenmaid was then appointed until Elizabeth Slaney returned as cook in the autumn of 1855.]*

**1855: October 11th.** Martha Moss engaged for the Kitchen work under Betty at £4 wages for the year, Tea and Sugar found her.

**1856: May 29th.** Martha Moss on account of wages £1.

**[1856] October 8th.** Elizth Rogers engaged for the Kitchen work at £4 wages for the year. Tea and Sugar found by me and a little present at Michs. if she was found deserving.

**1857: October 12th.** Paid the above £4.

**October 11th.** Engaged Ann Morby as under Servant for the year at £4 wages and to find her in Tea and Sugar.

**1858: April 24th.** Ann Morby had on account of Wages £1.

**October 11th.** Paid Ann Morby £3.

**October.** Engaged Sarah Butler as under Servant here at £4.10s. wages for the year to next Michaelmas. Tea and Sugar found her and to wash her own clothes.

**1859: October 11th.** Sarah Page of Boddicot engaged as under Servant, to have £7 wages for the year.

**1860: April 7th.** Sarah Page had of me on account of her wages 2 pounds.

**October 2nd.** Engaged Anne Wells as under Servant for the year to Michaelmas 1861 at 7 Pounds wages and to wash her own clothes, by Mrs Taylor.

**1861: April 6th.** Ann Wells had on account of her Wages £1.

**October 19th.** Engaged Julia Le Bank as under Maid at £6 a year wages.

**1862: February 15th.** Julia Le Bank had on account £1.

**May 19th.** Do had on account £1.

**October 11th.** Paid Julia Le Bank £4.

As Mrs Davis's book reveals, staff turnover could be rapid on occasion, even if, as with the appointment of Elizabeth Slaney as cook, some servants stayed for several years. Overall in the period from Michaelmas 1852 to August 1862, there were seven different cooks, eleven housemaids and eight kitchenmaids or under servants. The longest serving of them was Mrs Slaney, who was employed for at least eight years, while at the other extreme, Emma Owen, recruited as a housemaid in September 1860, left after a week, on account of 'objectionable Dress'. This may have referred to the wearing of a crinoline



*PROBLEMS WITH A CRINOLINE*

Housemaid: "*Drat the bothering china cups and things. They be always a-knocking up against one's crinoline.*" [*Punch*, 1864]

For two fine examples of crinolines, see the earliest photograph of the Red Lion in Banbury, ca.1855-60, published in *C&CH*.10.6 (Summer 1987), 148.

which was fashionable at that time but which was frowned upon by many mistresses, both because it was felt that the maids were aping their 'betters' by wearing these wide skirts and because they were impracticable when girls were manoeuvring around rooms, carrying out their cleaning duties.<sup>9</sup> Emma seems to have been recruited through a Mrs Taylor. This was probably either Lucy Taylor, a straw bonnet maker and servant registry office keeper of 31 Parson's Street, Banbury, or another 'Mrs Taylor', with a servant registry at 50 North Bar. Similarly, Anna Sessions, who was appointed housemaid on 22 October 1860, was obtained through a Miss Craddock [*sic*]. George Craddock was a servant registry office keeper and boot and shoe maker of 38 Parson's Street, Banbury, but from 1865 this was under the name of 'Miss Craddock', although George continued as a boot and shoe maker.<sup>10</sup> In these mid-Victorian years it was common for registry office keepers to combine their employment role with some other business in order to make a living.

### Appendix

The Davis family were prominent in Bloxham and area from the 1760s on. See 'John Davis of Bloxham, Enclosure Commissioner', Michael Turner, *C&CH*.4.11 (Spring 1971). This mainly relates to the Rev. John Davis, Vicar of Bloxham 1762-89, but also to his son John Davis II, who served on 36 commissions between 1793 and 1819. Rusher's *Banbury List and Directory* has, from 1855, under 'Nobility, Gentry and Clergy', the address of 'Bloxham Cottage' for 'Mrs J. Davis' (before that it had just been 'Bloxham').

We approached Bloxham historian Mrs Yvonne Huntriss for further information, and were overwhelmed with pages of genealogy, local history and maps. 'The Cottage' was easily identified, as it appears in her *Exploring Old Bloxham* (1994), page 90. Amazingly it is still owned by the same family.

John (II) was the eldest son of the Vicar, born at Badby, Northants., 1756. He was steward to the Revd. Francis Annesley of Eydon and Sir Charles Knightley (of Fawsley) in addition to his active role as an enclosure commissioner. His first wife died in 1810 (buried at Bloxham). He married again in 1813. His second wife was the compiler of this servants' book. Sarah (Sally), born 1791, was daughter of Richard Gardner of Bloxham. They had four children: John, born at Bloxham 1815, a solicitor (unmarried, died 1894); Sarah, born at Bloxham 11th May 1820; Charles; and Catherine Elizabeth (1827-1890), who married William Wellington Hyde (through whose family the Bloxham connection has remained).

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<sup>9</sup> Pamela Horn, *The Rise and Fall of the Victorian Servant* [fn. 1], 130.

<sup>10</sup> Rusher's *Banbury List and Directory*, 1840s - 1860s.

An unchecked family tree gives John (II)'s death as 30th October 1835, which conflicts with Dr Horn's statement that Sally Davis was, in 1852, a widow of seven years. Perhaps a decade has been misread.

Sally Davis died at Bloxham on 18th August 1862.

*Bloxham Parish Magazine, December 1884:*

We have to record the departure of Miss Sarah Davis of The Cottage, Bloxham, a parishioner of long standing who was taken away on November 22nd ... while resident in Bloxham, she was glad to help any who needed assistance, and always did her part in keeping up the charities of the parish. She was laid in her grave with her mother [*i.e.* Sally Davis] on Friday Nov. 25th.

**Table 1**

*From: The published Census Reports for 1851 to 1901.*

	<b>1851</b>	<b>1861</b>	<b>1871</b>
Total females,			
All ages	84,697	86,328	90,769
<i>In private service</i>			
Dom. Servts., gen.	4,635	5,148	6,396
Housekeeper	415	752	1,053
Cook	405	786	823
Housemaid	530	1,003	1,112
Nurse	362	750	705
Laundrymaid	n/a	83	74
Total female servants	6,347	8,522	10,163
Of whom general servants were	73.0%	60.4%	62.9%
	<b>1881</b>	<b>1891</b>	<b>1901</b>
Total females	92,662	97,426	98,144
Total female indoor servants in private service, aged 10+	10,196	11,171*	10,345

\* The 1891 figure also included members of the family who were recorded as *servants in the household*. That applied to the 1891 Census alone.

*N.B.* Many of the servants were very young. Almost half of all *general servants* in 1861 were under the age of 20, and just over half of all the *nursemaids*. In 1871, one in fourteen of all *general servants* were under the age of 15 and about one in eight of all *nursemaids* were in that same youthful group.

# Lecture Reports

*Brian Little and Jeremy Gibson*

**Thursday 14th December 2000.**

***Banbury: Market Town or Shoppers' Paradise?* – Brian Little.**

The hoary opening words, 'Our speaker needs no introduction...' can never have been truer than for Brian, for many years committee chairman of our Society. And not for a long time have we had a subject so devoted to the town itself – never, in my recollection, one of such knowledgeable authority, nor one so wide-ranging.

Unfortunately, for those unable to attend, this lavishly illustrated survey is impossible to convey in mere words – sorry, Brian, but those who weren't there are the losers! This report is a cop-out. It was one of the most impressive talks in the over forty years of our Society. Sorry, members, if you weren't there! **J.G.**

**Thursday 11th January 2001.**

***Why did the Anglo-Saxons not become British?* – Dr Brian Ward-Perkins**

This was a very warmly received discourse for an extremely cold evening. Outside, the strong easterly wind was making its continental origin felt in much the same way as our speaker was looking to nearer Europe for guidance over the Anglo-Saxon/British dichotomy.

The story began with race distinctions and so inevitably cultural differences emerged which quickly explained why those who were to become English should keep themselves strictly apart from a more westerly British domination. This trend was so marked that when finally Anglo-Saxons took on the cloak of Christianity, the incentive for this stemmed from the north.

As his theme developed so Dr Ward-Perkins probed more deeply into Roman Gaul and Slavonic territory. Franks inside one and Germans in the other were huge catalysts for change. In our country, disappearance of Roman phenomena meant in a sense that there was no need of such a conquest. Even more than that there was no incentive for Anglo-Saxons to adopt the ways of the Britons (Welsh).

Experts in the field of group interaction, notably Freeman and Green, have pursued such issues as that of cultural take-over but their work may yet prove to be flawed as genetic scientists become more proficient at generating evidence. Equally such research may confirm that Anglo-Saxons had no desire or need to go west. The South East was their heartland. If the English were ever heavily British, they did not acknowledge this. Rather the argument was always stronger for discarding Britishness.

The evening ended with a battery of questions. Some projected other lines of investigation foreign to our speaker yet all were signs of an underlying enthusiasm for a persuasive argument. **B.L.**

**Thursday 8th February 2001.**

***The Eydon Fire of 1905 – Helen Doe*** (Eydon Historical Research Group).

This well-organised talk was both erudite and light-hearted. During the course of the evening, Helen Doe covered almost every aspect of the event including even the quality of the beer which suffered greatly from air-borne pollutants.

That fighting and controlling the fire was thirsty work was never in doubt. The weather was hot and the many wells were commandeered for bucket replenishment rather than human consumption purposes.

The Fire of Eydon began as many people were getting ready to eat their Sunday (midday) dinner. It started in an outbuilding but spread rapidly, partly because of a strong wind but also because so much of the village had thatch roofing. A consequence of this was that the flames were visible from many villages round about. Sightseers were not long in arriving and police were needed to ensure orderly behaviour and that firemen from Eydon itself, Moreton Pinkney, Towcester, Brackley and Banbury could go about their work.

The Banbury appliance was comparatively late on the scene, about 2.30 p.m. and coincided with virtually the maximum extent of the blaze in the High Street.

Out of 450 people in Eydon, 34 were rendered homeless, much to the concern of Lord Valentia who was the key local land and property owner. He organised relief and offered £25 towards an appeal that raised £250.

Sadly, little of the property was covered by insurance so that the costs of rebuilding together with fire brigade charges presented a formidable bill.

Golby and Sons, local builders, initially benefitted greatly from the fire but endured a long-running battle over receipt of money to fund the programme. It took until 1908 to complete all the necessary work by which time Golby, who had been local postmaster as well, was out of business.

**B.L.**

**Thursday 8th March 2001.**

***The Oxfordshire Yeomanry – David Eddershaw.***

David Eddershaw is a well-known and appreciated speaker, and we have enjoyed his talks on previous occasions. This was no exception.

Many of us will have seen the touring museum exhibition celebrating the Oxfordshire Yeomanry's bicentenary and hopefully will have acquired David's excellent history (reviewed *C&CH.14.4* – Autumn/Winter 1998). We also have recorded a very personal and poignant account by the late T.E. Nicholls of the sufferings of 'Banbury Battery' as prisoners of the Japanese in the Second World War (*C&CH.13.1* Autumn/Winter 1994).

David's talk enlarged on the subject, with entertaining slides of the Churchill family's long-term involvement with the Oxfordshire Yeomanry. No audience ever goes away dissatisfied after hearing David speak (and, despite his cold and his drive from Surrey that evening, we *could* hear him!).

**J.G.**



# BANBURY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

## ANNUAL REPORT, 2000

Your Committee have pleasure in submitting the 43rd Annual Report and Statement of Accounts, for the year 2000.

At the A.G.M. the retirement of Geoffrey Ellacott from the committee was accepted with regret. Officers and other members were again re-elected without change.

Membership of the Society has risen gratifyingly and is now close to three hundred, most as records members. We record with sadness the deaths of John Portergill, Douglas Price and Gerald Tibbetts, all members for many years. Attendance at meetings and new membership continue to benefit from the publicity efforts of Joan Bowes, who has distributed posters (fresh for each meeting) for display at an ever-increasing number of key places.

The year's meetings, arranged by Nick Allen, maintained their accustomed entertaining variety. Reports, generally prepared by Brian Little, have appeared in *Cake & Cockhorse*. In the summer we visited Lamport Hall in Northamptonshire and Ragley Hall in Warwickshire. Fiona Thompson and Beryl Hudson organised these with their usual initiative and efficiency. For the A.G.M., we were invited to the Visitor Centre at Hook Norton Brewery, with a conducted tour after the meeting, courtesy of Mr David Clark and the Company. In the autumn our popular start-of-season reception at Banbury Museum, hosted by Simon and his staff, was much enjoyed. To all those mentioned we are most grateful.

The normal three issues of *Cake & Cockhorse* appeared, with contributions from Vivien Billington, Keith Chandler, Nan Clifton, Hugh Compton, Steve Litherland, Dorothy Harrison, Walter McCanna, Kirsty Nichol, John Rivers, Alan Sargeant, Margaret Taylor, Fiona Thompson, Simon Townsend and Kevin Wyles, as well as from regulars Jeremy Gibson and Brian Little.

Considerable progress has been made in the preparation of Alan Rosevear's *Turnpike Roads to Banbury*, and we have been promised a substantial grant to help with production costs. Geoffrey Smedley-Stevenson's work on the diaries of William Cotton Risley, Vicar of Deddington 1836-1848, is approaching completion. The seventeenth century churchwardens' accounts for King's Sutton are being transcribed, and a volume on Banbury Chapbooks is planned.

The gratifying increase in membership in the year 2000 was reflected in a substantial increase in our income from subscriptions. This meant that we were well able to afford the cost of some larger than usual issues of *Cake & Cockhorse*, and still end up the year with a comfortable surplus on our General Account. The balance on the Publications Account should be more than sufficient to meet the costs of our next records volume which we hope to publish in 2001. The Brinkworth Fund had a quiet year; we would welcome ideas from members for modest projects of a broadly educational nature which have some connection with the Banbury area.

**Banbury Historical Society**

*Revenue Account for the Year ended 31st December 2000*

	2000	1999
<b>INCOME</b>		
Subscriptions	2661	2101
Less transfer to Publications Account	<u>578</u>	<u>(462)</u>
	2083	1639
Income tax refund on covenants	93	39
Building Society interest	695	620
Other	<u>47</u>	<u>25</u>
	2918	2323
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>		
<i>Cake &amp; Cockhorse</i> – costs less sales	1787	1314
Secretarial and administration	48	19
Meetings	326	358
Reception and AGM	149	171
Sundries including publicity	79	51
<i>(Donation towards purchase of Rowlandson)</i>	<u>0</u>	<u>100</u>
Total Expenditure	2389	2013
<b>SURPLUS for the year</b>		
transferred to Accumulated Fund	<u>529</u>	<u>310</u>

*Publications Account for the Year ended 31st December 2000*

<b>INCOME</b>		
Share of Subscriptions	578	462
Sale of records volumes	<u>248</u>	<u>585</u>
	826	1047
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>		
Despatch costs	<u>18</u>	<u>26</u>
<b>SURPLUS (DEFICIT) for the year</b>		
transferred (from) to Publications Reserve	<u>808</u>	<u>1021</u>

*Brinkworth Fund Account for the Year ended 31st December 2000*

<b>INCOME</b>		
Building Society Interest	145	137
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>		
Grant	<u>0</u>	<u>142</u>
<b>SURPLUS (DEFICIT) for the year</b>		
to/from the Fund	<u>145</u>	<u>(5)</u>

**Banbury Historical Society**

*Balance Sheet as at 31st December 2000*

	2000	1999
<b>ACCUMULATED FUND</b>		
As at 1 January 2000	7918	7608
Add surplus for the year	<u>529</u>	<u>310</u>
Balance at 31 December 2000	8447	7918
<b>PUBLICATIONS RESERVE</b>		
As at 1 January 2000	5171	4150
add Surplus (less Deficit) for the year	<u>808</u>	<u>1021</u>
Balance at 31 December 2000	5979	5171
<b>BRINKWORTH FUND</b>		
As at 1 January 2000	3021	3026
Add Surplus (less Deficit) for the year	<u>145</u>	<u>5</u>
Balance at 31 December 2000	3166	3021
<b>TOTAL BALANCE at 31 December 2000</b>	<u>17,592</u>	<u>16,110</u>
<b>REPRESENTED BY -</b>		
<b>ASSETS</b>		
NatWest Bank, Banbury – Current Account	688	145
Leeds & Holbeck Bldg Soc – Main Account	14,974	13,682
Leeds & Holbeck B S – Brinkworth Account	3166	3021
Cash	<u>20</u>	<u>42</u>
	18,848	16,890
Sundry debtors	<u>110</u>	<u>75</u>
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<u>18,958</u>	<u>16,965</u>
<b>Less LIABILITIES</b>		
Subscriptions received in advance	736	270
Sundry creditors	<u>630</u>	<u>585</u>
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES</b>	<u>1,366</u>	<u>855</u>
<b>NET ASSETS</b>	17,592	16,110

G F Griffiths, Hon Treasurer

I have reviewed and audited the books and records of the Banbury Historical Society and confirm that the accounts prepared by the Hon Treasurer represent a fair and accurate summary of the financial transactions completed in the year ended 31 December 2000

B S Goodchild, ACIB, ACIS

# BANBURY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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. Well over a hundred issues and some three hundred articles have been published. Most back issues are still available and out-of-print issues can if required be photocopied.

## Records series:

*Wigginton Constables' Books 1691-1836* (vol. 11, with Phillimore).

*Banbury Wills and Inventories 1591-1650*, 2 parts (vols. 13, 14).

*Victorian Banbury*, by Barrie Trinder (vol. 19, with Phillimore).

*Aynho: A Northamptonshire Village*, by Nicholas Cooper (vol. 20).

*Banbury Gaol Records*, ed. Penelope Renold (vol. 21).

*Banbury Baptism and Burial Registers, 1813-1838* (vol. 22).

*Oxfordshire and North Berkshire Protestation Returns and Tax Assessments 1641-1642* (vol. 24).

*Adderbury: A Thousand years of History*, by Nicholas Allen (vol. 25, with Phillimore – now reprinted).

*The 'Bawdy Court' of Banbury: The Act Book of the Peculiar Court of Banbury and Cropredy 1625-38*, ed. R.K. Gilkes (vol. 26).

Current prices, and availability of other back volumes, from the Hon. Secretary, c/o Banbury Museum.

## In preparation:

*Turnpike Roads to Banbury*, by Alan Rosevear.

Selections from the *Diaries of William Cotton Risley, Vicar of Deddington 1836-1848*, ed. G.W. Smedley-Stevenson.

*King's Sutton Churchwardens' Accounts 1636-1700*, ed. Paul Hayter.

*Banbury Chapbooks*, by Dr Leo John de Freitas.

The Society is always interested to receive suggestions of records suitable for publication, backed by offers of help with transcription, editing and indexing.

Meetings are held during the autumn and winter, normally at 7.30 p.m. on the second Thursday of each month, at the North Oxfordshire College, Broughton Road, Banbury. Talks are given by invited lecturers on general and local historical, archaeological and architectural subjects. Excursions are arranged in the spring and summer, and the A.G.M. is usually held at a local country house.

Membership of the Society is open to all, no proposer being needed. The annual subscription is **£10.00** including any records volumes published, or **£7.50** if these are not required; overseas membership, **£12.00**.

