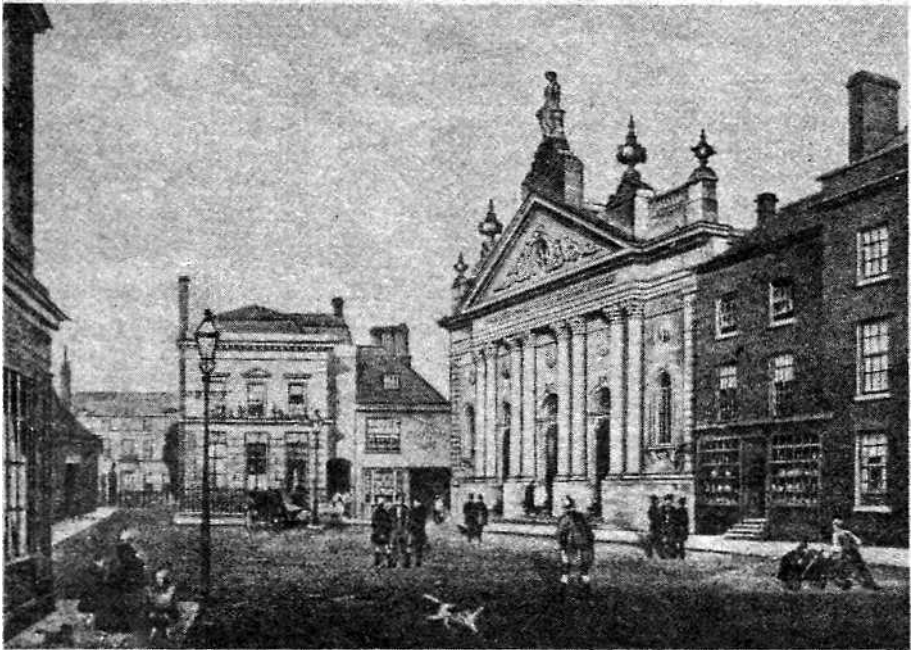


# CAKE AND COCKHORSE



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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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With this number of *Cake & Cockhorse* members will receive their annual invitation to our start-of-the-season Reception at Banbury Museum, as always encouraged by the Museum staff, our Secretary Simon Townsend, our unofficial voluntary public relations officer Chris Kelly, and all their colleagues. However, this occasion will be a little different from usual. It will be the last time we are entertained at the Museum on the Horse Fair. For just over twenty years this superbly placed building has been catering to townspeople and tourists alike. Many of our longer-standing members will remember its earlier location on the top floor of the Library building in Marlborough Road, where there was space to incorporate the Globe Room panelling (since returned to its original home behind the Reindeer Inn, where your committee now regularly meet – isn't that an encouragement to members to play a more active part in our Society?).

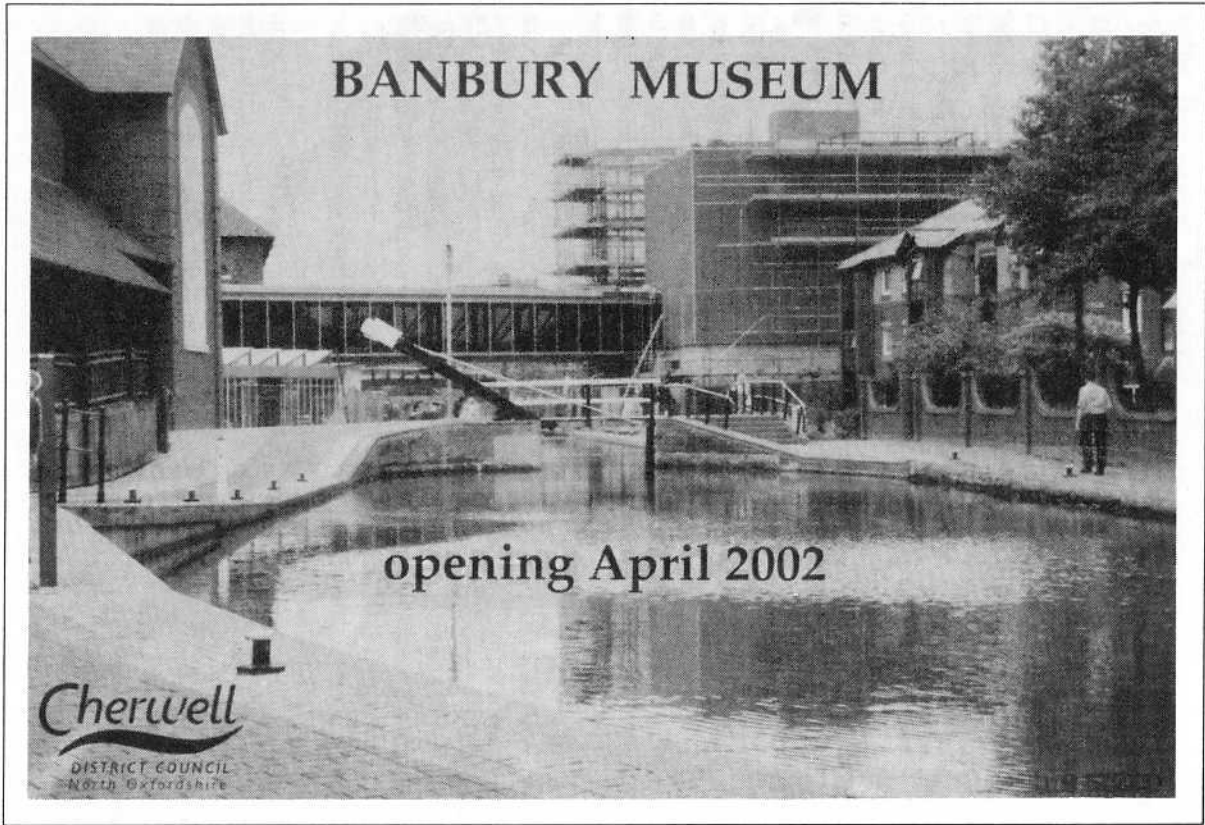
But the Museum in its present building will close at the end of September, to be rehoused in what is any museum curator's dream, a purpose-built building – and, belatedly, recognising Banbury's two centuries' old debt to the arrival of the Canal. Our congratulations to Simon, to whose dedication this is largely due.

You can read a bit about it overleaf. We may hold our next A.G.M. there, and we are expecting to move there for our lecture meetings from September 2002. However, we are sure that local members will make themselves familiar with the new setting as soon as the Museum reopens next Spring.

Whilst some may think it a pity that there will no longer be a Museum presence close to Banbury's famous Cross, with its constant tourist traffic, the new location, quite apart from the alternative Canal tourist attraction, will enable it to cater much more effectively to the local educational needs, which, in our view, are much more relevant to our young Banburians, who we hope will be our Banbury Historical Society activists in twenty (or less) years' time.

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*Cover* The Cornhill Corn Exchange (later the Vine Tavern and now an entrance to a shopping centre), built by Kimberley's in 1857.



*The new Banbury Museum under construction. The main entrance will be from the Castle Shopping Centre reached through the Tourist Office. Postcard kindly supplied by Cherwell District Council*

## BANBURY MUSEUM

A Museum and Galleries guide, giving events and exhibitions for all the Museums in Oxfordshire, is available through the Tourist Information Centre/Museum in Banbury.

The new Tourist Office will open in the Castle Quay shopping centre before Christmas 2001.

The new canal-side Museum will open April 2002, and will be conveniently situated in the centre of Banbury, near the Mill Arts Centre and Spiceball Sports Centre.

The displays will tell of Banbury's origins and historic past, including Banbury's role in the Civil War.

Collections never before exhibited to the public will be on display, including a rich variety of costumes.

There will be a 'hands-on' gallery about the Oxford Canal and the historic Tooley's Boatyard, which can be seen from the Museum.

There will also be a temporary exhibition programme, a Museum Shop and a café where delicious Banbury Cakes will be available.

The opening temporary exhibition is entitled 'About Time', in association with the Ashmolean Museum. Time affects all our lives: this major exhibition will show how attitudes towards time have changed, how time can be measured, and how we mark the passage of time in our lives.

The exhibition is supported by the Millennium Festival and the National Lottery.

\* \* \* \*

Banbury Museum opened at 8 Horsefair on 4<sup>th</sup> June 1981 and will close on Saturday 29<sup>th</sup> September 2001. In just over twenty years the museum has established itself as a popular town facility, welcoming over 70,000 visitors a year. When we open in April 2002, we hope that you will be amongst our first visitors. We will keep you up-to-date with our opening programme, and we look forward to welcoming you to our new home.

For more information, or to join our mailing list, contact: 01295 259855. Once open, the address will be Banbury Museum, Spiceball Park Road, Banbury OX16 2PQ. The phone number will remain the same.

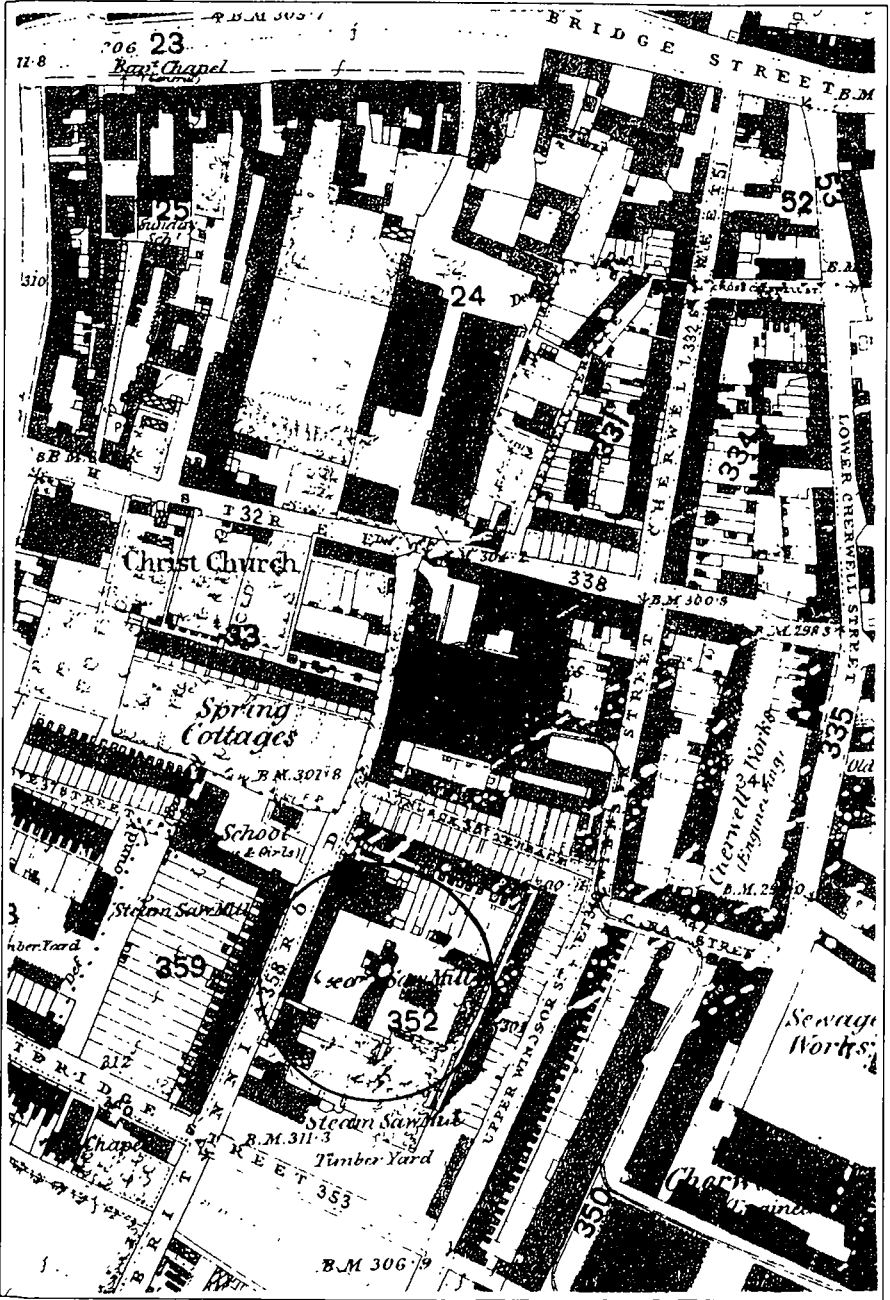


Fig. 1. Ordnance Survey Map of Banbury, 1882. Kimberley's premises circled.

# A.T. KIMBERLEY LTD, BUILDING CONTRACTORS, BRITANNIA ROAD, BANBURY

*Sally Stradling*

## Summary

The firm of A.T. Kimberley occupied a purpose-built complex of buildings on the east side of Britannia Road, Banbury, approximately half a mile south of the town centre (see Fig 1). The business operated from 1852 until the 1980s.<sup>1</sup> Kimberley's became a Limited Company by 1935.<sup>2</sup>

In 1997 planning permission was granted for demolition of the buildings, clearance of the site and construction of 75 sheltered housing units.<sup>3</sup> Kimberley's appeared to present a unique opportunity for study and recording since not only the original premises and builders' yard survived, but also the firm's complete archive including drawings, letters, tenders, cash books and war receipts. Oral history also played an important part in piecing together the latter years of the firm. Interviews were conducted with Jane Swintek (*née* Kimberley), Dorothy Kimberley, Michael Freeman and former employees including Aubrey Charles and Dennis Clifton. The purpose of this paper is to present initial research into the Kimberley family and the activities of the family business, complementing other recording initiatives undertaken to record physical fabric.

In essence the material investigated, both archival and oral, illustrates and gives a flavour of the day-to-day operation of the company including information on the lives of the Kimberley family, activities of the firm including tendering procedures, commissions undertaken, employee relations and apprenticeships. The story of Humewood, County Wicklow, Ireland, a legal '*cause célèbre*' which almost bankrupted the firm in the early days, has become somewhat of a legend in the Kimberley family.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Partnership Agreement between Edwin Kimberley and Albert Kimberley, 1<sup>st</sup> September 1852.

<sup>2</sup> Kelly's Directory, Oxon, p.376.

<sup>3</sup> Planning Application 97/001 13/F Cherwell District Council.

<sup>4</sup> Information from Jane Swintek.

## **Background**

Since the Kimberley archive was under threat with no possibility of being housed locally, the Owner's permission was sought for the County Archivist to inspect the material to assess its interest and potential for future archiving. Carl Boardman and his staff undertook the inspection, were considerably impressed by the content and completeness of the archive and subsequently removed the materials to the County Archives at Oxford. This work took several days. In the 1990s the Royal Commission on Historical Monuments of England (now the record branch of English Heritage) was contacted to carry out a photographic record of the buildings. In 1997/98 Phoenix Consulting were commissioned by McCarthy and Stone (Developments) Ltd to provide a detailed record of the site comprising measured drawings, photographs and analysis as a condition of Planning Consent.<sup>5</sup>

## **The Family Firm**

The Company was founded by Edwin Kimberley (1814-1854) of Banbury, Oxfordshire, and Albert Kimberley (1811-1887) of 36 Linton Street, New North Road, London in the County of Middlesex, at Banbury, in an agreement signed on the 1<sup>st</sup> September 1852. Trading began in January 1853 as a sawmill and building contractors. Further directors of the firm included James Snowden Kimberley (1838-1920), Albert Thomas Kimberley (1879-1941) and James Marshall Kimberley (1906-79).

Albert Kimberley, one of the founders, spent his early years in London. He was the son of William Kimberley of Aley near Kenilworth, a carpenter and his first wife [-----] Harrison<sup>6</sup> who was something of a mystery. A portrait of her carried out in pastels, possibly by a French or Italian emigré, was exhibited at the Great Exhibition of 1851. When she died William married Elizabeth Rainbow (1791-1861) and their son Edwin (half-brother to Albert) later became a partner in the building firm with Albert.

Apparently Albert did not get on with his stepmother Elizabeth and was so unhappy that he ran away to London, where he worked as a carpenter. He reputedly built high quality staircases and worked at Drury Lane and Buckingham Palace after a fire there in 1834. Albert appears to have prospered. Jane Swintek recalls a story passed down through the

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<sup>5</sup> Copies are held in the Oxfordshire Sites and Monuments Record, National Monuments Record and Cherwell District Council.

<sup>6</sup> Kimberley family tree.



family, that Albert was somewhat of a well-to-do philanthropist helping people at Newgate gaol and forming an association with Dickens through that contact. For some reason, possibly from his London days, Albert knew the architect, William White (1825 -1900).<sup>7</sup> The results of that rather unhappy association are described below, in connection with Humewood in Ireland.

From Albert's personal notebooks covering the period from 1838 to the 1850s it has been possible to trace some of his working life in London, which appears to bear out information given by Jane Swintek. The notebooks contain references to work in progress on sites, mainly in the London area. The notebooks are filled with sketches of joinery details for windows, doors, panelling, bank counters and staircases, as well as roofing and general building works. Other details recorded included cash received and bills sent out.<sup>8</sup>

Some of the earliest entries relate to works to windows and doors at the London and Westminster Bank in Bell Lane, and to Southampton Railway Terminus, in 1838.<sup>9</sup> Between December 1846 and 20<sup>th</sup> April 1847 Albert was working at Mincing Lane, the National Debt Office, a new prison, Morden College, Kingsland Road, Hambro Wharf, the Provident Institution and Saint Pancras Buildings.<sup>10</sup> A leather bound notebook covering work carried out between January and June 1850 records details of sites visited together with work required. Entries include the Religious Tract Society, Humphrey's Wharf, the Bank of England, No 9 Austin Friars, Lincoln's Inn Fields, 6 Maitland Place, Clapton, Morden College, Regent Street, Baker Street, Mr Ingrahm at More Hall, Kew Station and University College, London. At the back of this notebook an entry records from 20<sup>th</sup> to 25<sup>th</sup> May 1850 Albert Kimberley employed a workforce of 17, described as 7 men, 6 labourers and 4 carpenters. They were working between six and a half to fourteen hours a day. Names given were:

Johnson, Johnson, Smith Snr, Blackwell, Dudley and Farmer.  
Labourers to Johnson: Baden, Drefdell, ? White, Jackson, Davies.  
Carpenters: Downey, Johnson, Smith or South and Stringer.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Information from Jane Swintek.

<sup>8</sup> Kimberley family archive.

<sup>9</sup> Albert Kimberley, cash book c.1838-1859.

<sup>10</sup> Albert Kimberley notebook dated 30<sup>th</sup> December 1846.

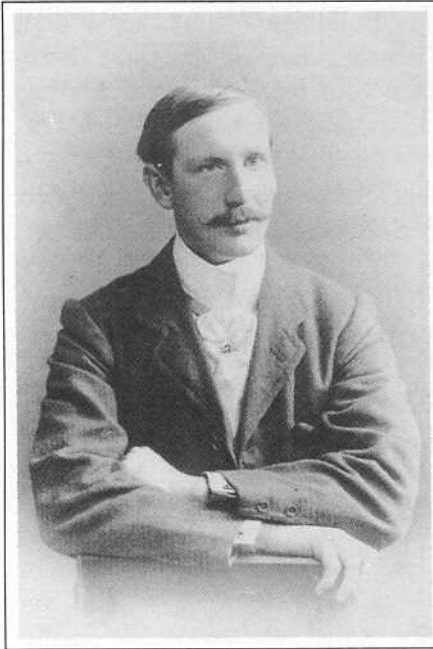
<sup>11</sup> Leather bound notebook, Albert Kimberley, January 1850 - June 1850.



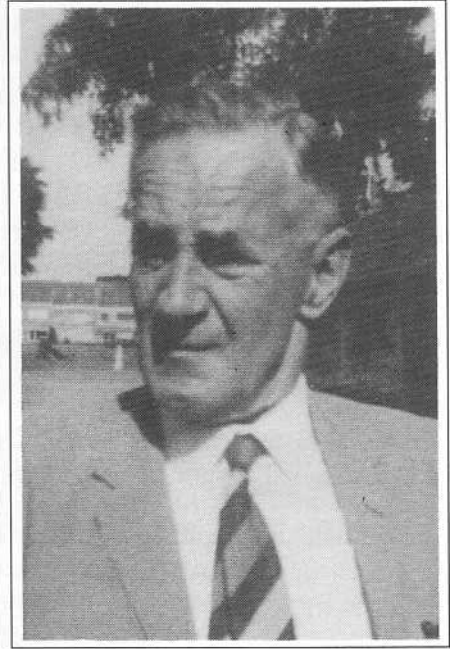
*Albert Kimberley, 1811-1887.*



*James Snowden Kimberley, 1838-1920.*



*Albert Thomas Kimberley, 1879-1941*



*James Marshall Kimberley, 1906-1979.*

By 1853 Albert Kimberley had joined forces with Edwin in Banbury. An entry for 31<sup>st</sup> January 1853 records:

*Paid Mr E. Kimberley for my part of the stock 74-15-6;*

*Paid Mr W.E. Kimberley for stock bought in off Wm Wilkins 14-12-0;*

*Paid Mr Wilkins for his share of the pole and coffin furniture 3-5-0;*

*Received of Mr E. Kimberley 28-13-0 for my share of the stock.*<sup>12</sup>

By 1861 Albert was listed as living at 25 Britannia Road, Banbury. He was married to Caroline with a son James and daughter Sarah. His occupation was given as builder, employing 41 men.<sup>13</sup>

Before the family business was established Edwin married Anne and was living at 80 Upper Cherwell Street, Banbury. His occupation was given as carpenter.<sup>14</sup>

Sadly, in 1854, shortly after the two half-brothers had set up business together in Banbury, Edwin died. The death certificate, dated 19<sup>th</sup> December 1854, recorded that Edwin had died on 17<sup>th</sup> December and the cause of death was given as epilepsy.<sup>15</sup>

Albert carried on the business and by 1871 was described as a building contractor with sawmill and brickworks, employing 90 men and 5 boys.<sup>16</sup> In the top-left photograph opposite Albert is seen sitting outside the rear steps of No. 26 Britannia Road.

James Snowden Kimberley married Frances Elizabeth Wakeford (1849-1932).

Albert Thomas Kimberley married Elizabeth Marshall (d. 1958). At one time he lived at Grafton Lodge (demolished) on the corner of Britannia Road and Gatteridge Street.

James Marshall Kimberley married first Marjorie (Johnny) Johnston, and had one daughter Jane. He married for a second time to Dorothy Spencer. He was born at St. Leonard's House, Grimsbury, and later moved to live at Old Quarry, Broughton Road, Banbury, a house built by Kimberley's on the site of their brickyard.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Notebook/cashbook marked 'A. Kimberley's' (1838-1856).

<sup>13</sup> Letter from Jane Swintek to Sally Stradling dated 19<sup>th</sup> April 1997 including information from 1861 Census Returns and Electoral Registers in the P.R.O.

<sup>14</sup> *Op cit*: from 1851 Electoral Registers and Census Returns.

<sup>15</sup> Information from Jane Swintek

<sup>16</sup> Census Returns 1871.

<sup>17</sup> Information from Jane Swintek.

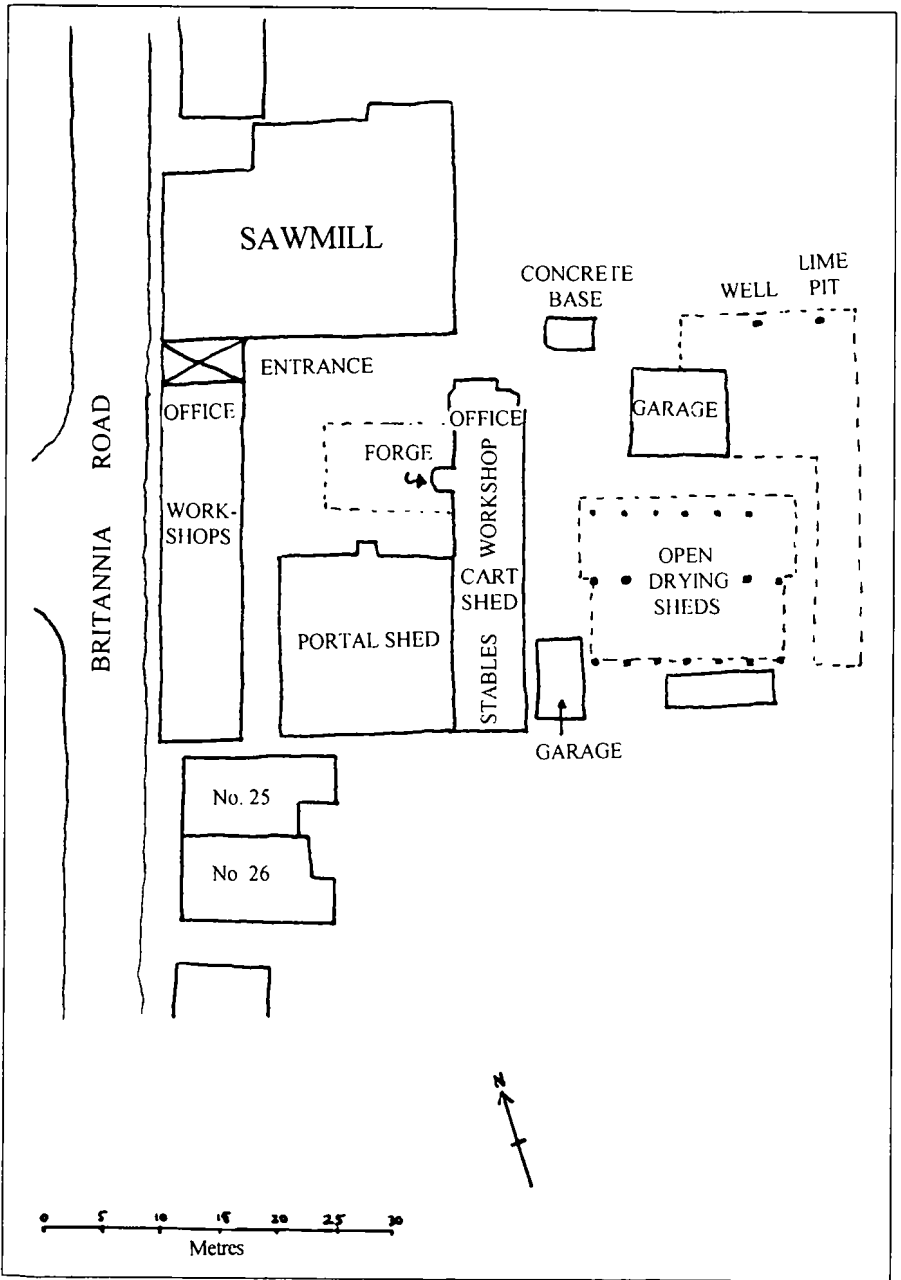


Fig. 3. Sketch plan of Kimberley's yard, by Sally Stradling after Phoenix Consulting, based on plan for J.S. Kimberley, c 1900

## **The Premises**

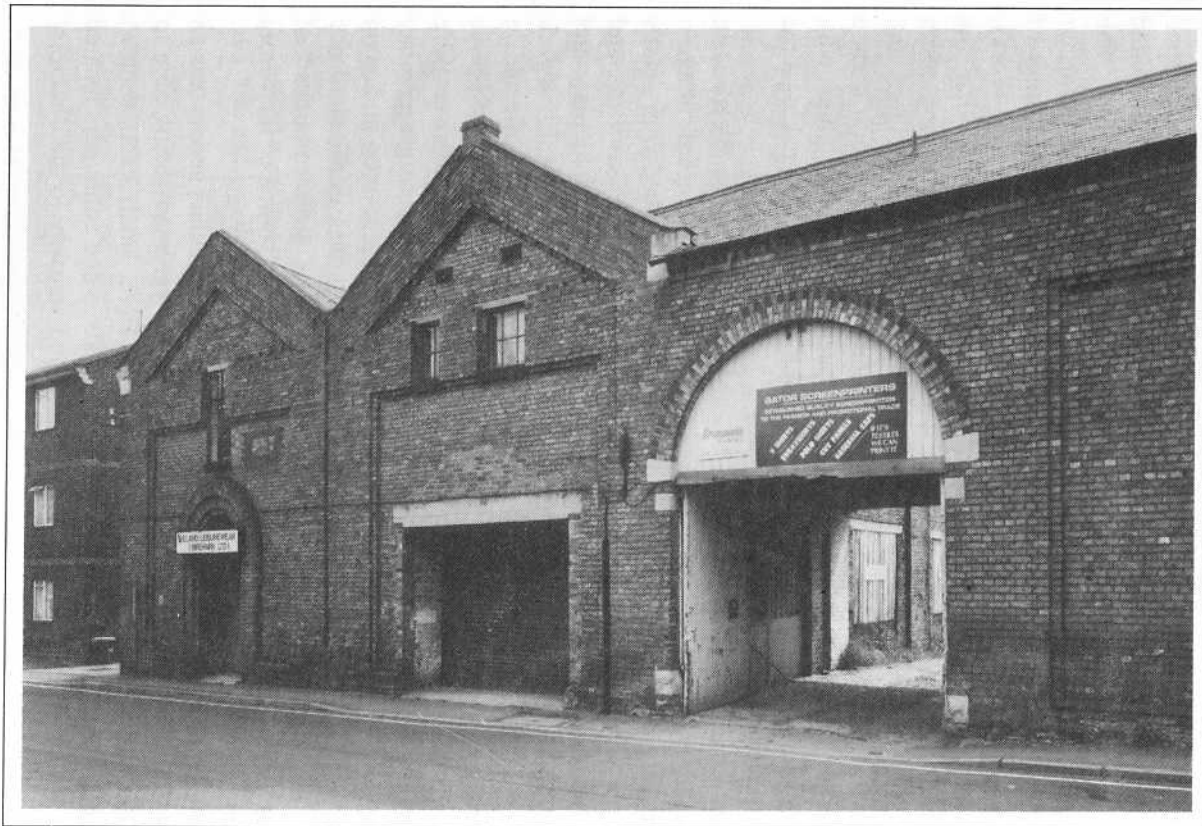
Kimberley's premises and yard were located on the east side of Britannia Road, approximately half a mile from Banbury town centre. The buildings are located within the industrial zone which developed close to the Oxford Canal in the nineteenth century and included Spencer's Corset Factory and Stone's Factory (demolished).<sup>18</sup> The buildings ranged on three sides around an open yard with a further central range. Beyond it was another yard with open sheds for storage of timber. Plans annotated 'Plan of Steam Sawmill and Joinery Works, Property of James S. Kimberley, Banbury' c.1900 show that the premises included steam sawmills with workshops and drying room over, masons', plumbers', print and glazing shops with workshops and offices over, fitting shop with sanitary showroom over, smith's shop including forge with double bellows, coach house and stables with hayloft over, open sheds for timber, a well and a pit for making lime putty (see Fig 3).

The buildings were constructed in local red brick under Welsh slate roofs, in an industrial vernacular style. As would be expected, function dictated form, yet the Britannia Road frontage was enriched with details such as large, blind brick panels, dentilled brick eaves cornices and polychromatic brickwork decoration in the arched vehicular and pedestrian entrances. Detailing in moulded polychromatic brickwork became a feature of the Kimberley Company work and is reflected in buildings in the town such as the Victorian school buildings of Grove House Infants School, Britannia Road. The Kimberley premises were two storeys in height, the Britannia Road elevation presenting a nine bay frontage with the twin gables of the sawmills, carriage arch and main office/workshop range. The main vehicular access was in the third bay from the left, with stone setts and central ground strip comprised of timber setts, apparently intended to prevent the horse's feet from slipping.

Immediately to the right of the carriage (later vehicular) access was an office cum post room/store, the incumbent or 'yardman' being able to monitor movements to and from the yards. Here, small items such as nails etc were dispensed from a number of boxes and containers located in the side walls. The main entrance door and stairway to the directors'

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<sup>18</sup> Carol Rosier, Brief for building recording by Phoenix Consulting, 21<sup>st</sup> March, 1997.



*Fig 4. Kimberley's Yard, front elevation. Courtesy National Monuments Record.*

offices on the first floor originally led from here but was boarded over in more recent years and access gained from the rear, yard side. A prominent brick stack served the plumbers' shop and was visible from the main front. Fenestration was functional with small panes of glass to fitting shops and broad windows with inset pivoting lights to offices or workshops (see Fig. 4).

Numbers 25 and 26 Britannia Road (now demolished) were a pair of semi-detached brick/stone houses to the south of the main yard range. The plan of the steam sawmills of c.1900 labels the garden of No. 25 as belonging to Mrs Kimberley. These houses were rebuildings of existing stone structures and were probably specifically enlarged to provide accommodation for the Kimberley family, adjacent to the works.<sup>19</sup>

## **The Building Firm in Operation**

*The Early Years: 1853-1927*

### *Tenders*

The Company records reveal the numerous projects for which the firm tendered in Banbury and surrounding areas. These included estimates for a number of country houses such as Adderbury House and Over Norton Park, as well as for numerous churches, schools, banks, vicarages and even for the Great Exhibition of 1851. Banbury experienced tremendous expansion in the mid nineteenth century as a result of canal and railway communications and Kimberley's was to the fore, submitting plans for the Power Station, Union Workhouse and many of the terraces of workers' housing which characterise the town.<sup>20</sup>

Examples of tenders are found in letter books:

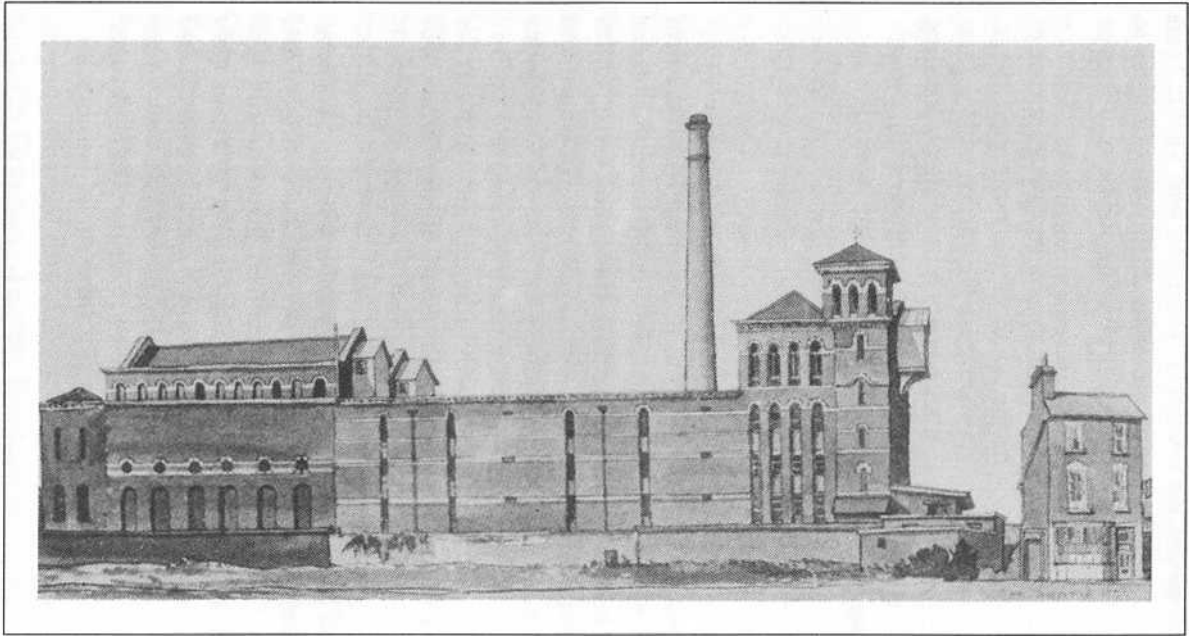
*October 18<sup>th</sup> [18]69 To the Directors of the Banbury Water Company. Gentlemen, I herewith forward estimate for the erection of Engine Bed according to the Drawings and Specification prepared by your Engineer and I am willing to execute the same in the best and most workmanlike manner for the sum of one hundred and fifty pounds and eight shillings. £155.8s.0d. Hoping that I may be honoured with your command, I remain Your Obedient Servant Albert Kimberley per JSK.*<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Phoenix Consulting, Report on Building Recording and Investigation, Kimberley's Yard, Banbury, Oxfordshire, 19<sup>th</sup> June 1998.

<sup>20</sup> Carol Rosier, Brief.

<sup>21</sup> Kimberley's, Letter Book 4 [KLB.4], p.270.



*Fig. 5. Hunt Edmunds Brewery, built by Kimberley's in 1866, from a painting by Maurice Draper, reproduced in 'The Book of Banbury', Christine Bloxham, Barracuda, 1975, p. 87.*



On 28<sup>th</sup> October 1869 Albert Kimberley provided an estimate of £234.0.0d for the erection of two houses in Grimsbury to plans prepared by the builder Mr Blencowe.<sup>22</sup> Another tender given was for the construction of a new sawmills for Messrs. Samuelson and Co., Engineers, Banbury, on November 3<sup>rd</sup> 1869, for £419.12s.0d. The building to be 7 bays in length, 36 feet wide with proper pitched roof, skylight, ventilators and everything to correspond with other shops.<sup>23</sup>

Kimberley's also carried out valuations as seen in a letter of 12<sup>th</sup> October 1869 in which Albert Kimberley provided a valuation of £1,350.0s.0d for business premises in Bridge Street (Banbury), occupied by R. Edmunds Esq.<sup>24</sup>

### *Commissions*

From early on, Kimberley's appeared to establish clients both locally and from much further afield. The firm worked on a range of commissions from small scale to major projects, such as Humewood, County Wicklow, Ireland. In common with other nineteenth century builders Kimberley's had an undertaking and coffin making branch of the business. A letter to the executors of the late Revd. C. Forbes, dated 12<sup>th</sup> October 1869, included in the total bill of £11.7s.4d. not only the cost of the elm shells and coffin, but also the shroud, purchase of land for the grave, hearse carriage and two horses, men's time for attending the funeral and the cost of the headstone, fixed.<sup>25</sup>

Some of the earliest projects carried out included the Cornhill Corn Exchange (later to become the Vine Tavern, see front cover), to the designs of W. Hill of Leeds (1857) and Hunt Edmunds Malthouse (demolished) behind Bridge Street, Banbury, with banded polychromatic brick (1866) (see Fig. 5).<sup>26</sup> Kimberley's also secured the contract for laying the sewage drains for Banbury, for the local Board of Health, c.1854.<sup>27</sup>

A letter to William White, dated 29<sup>th</sup> June 1869 confirmed that Kimberley's were doing some work at Fenny Stratford Parsonage.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> KLB.4, p.291.

<sup>23</sup> KLB.4, p.305.

<sup>24</sup> KLB.4, p.257.

<sup>25</sup> KLB.4, p.257.

<sup>26</sup> Phoenix, p.9, from *V.C.H., Oxon*, 10 (1972), pp. 26, 39,

<sup>27</sup> Jane Swintek, from William, Potts, *A History of Banbury* (1958), p. 222.

<sup>28</sup> KLB.4, p.44.

Other projects included the construction of a new lodge at Bletchington Park in April 1870<sup>29</sup> and a new station for the G.W.R. in 1870.<sup>30</sup>

A wages book for the period 1870-77 shows that Kimberley's were now undertaking work across the country. References to payments to 74 men were given in June 1873, to 55 men in September 1873, to 63 men in October 1874 and to 72 men in February 1877. Projects included: Hanwell cottages, 1870-71; Wykham Park, 1871; Grimsbury Chapel, 1871; All Souls' College, Oxford, 1871; Middle Aston House, 1871; Helmdon House, Pangbourne, 1871; Chacombe Chapel, 1873; Warmington Chapel, 1873; Ardley Rectory, 1874; West Ilsley Rectory, 1874; Great Bourton Vicarage, 1874; Bodicote Vicarage, 1874; Bodicote Schools, 1874; church at Bournemouth, 1874; Begbroke Rectory, 1875; Childrey Rectory, 1875; Windsor, 1875; Beaumont College, 1875; Manchester College, Liverpool, 1875.<sup>31</sup>

It is unclear how Albert knew the architect William White. In 1866 White was commissioned by a Mr W. Wentworth Fitzwilliam Hume-Dick, a rich Anglo-Irish landowner, to build a new house on his property in County Wicklow, to cost no more than £15,000. White showed some very sketchy designs to Albert in 1867, who, anxious to get the commission, made a tender for £13,560 for the construction of Humewood. The design was a 'muscular' form of Gothic Revival, executed in local granite. Work started at once. The scale and overall design changed as the project went on so that costs escalated.<sup>32</sup> In 1870 Kimberley's were pre-occupied with Humewood as the numerous letters to specialist suppliers and to William White show. Evidence of spiralling costs for extras not included in the original contract are contained in letters written by Albert Kimberley to White and Hume-Dick.<sup>33</sup>

In June 1870 Hume-Dick was presented with a bill for £25,000 and refused to pay the difference. Kimberley sued Dick and White and after a legal battle that dragged on for five years, won the case in May 1876. Kimberley won on all counts, including costs amounting to around £10,000.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> KLB.4, p.707.

<sup>30</sup> KLB.4, p.729.

<sup>31</sup> Kimberley Wages Book No. 2, April 1870.

<sup>32</sup> M. Girouard, *The Victorian Country House*, p.254.

<sup>33</sup> Kimberley's Letter Book 4, p.32. Letter to Hume-Dick from Albert Kimberley, June 8<sup>th</sup> 1869.

<sup>34</sup> M. Girouard, *The Victorian Country House*, p.254.

It is said that the only profit that Kimberley's made from Humewood was in the form of a huge block of granite brought back from Ireland and used by successive generations of the Kimberley family for their tombstones. William White became famous in architectural circles for Humewood, which was noted as one of the most interesting houses of the Victorian period. However, his reputation suffered as a result of the lawsuit and he could not secure further country house commissions.<sup>35</sup>

James Snowden's diary of 1877 shows that Kimberley's were employed at St. Francis Xavier College, Liverpool; Ditton Hall Church near Runcorn; Beaumont College; Banbury Gas Works; Ark House School; Central Corn Exchange, Banbury; Hunt and Co, Banbury; Saul's House and Cherwell Schools. This diary also includes entries on the sourcing and pricing of building materials: between 8<sup>th</sup> February and 1<sup>st</sup> March 1877, Albert Kimberley investigated timber at Horley on land belonging to Mr Hiron and Mr Melsbury. A valuation was given of £365.0s.0d. for 262 oak and elm trees. In February clay was measured at the Broughton Road and Green Lane Yards. On February 5<sup>th</sup> James Snowden gave a price of 30s. per 1,000 for Broughton Road bricks to a Mr Simmonds.<sup>36</sup>

Other projects known to have been executed by Kimberley's include: Church House, Horsefair, Banbury to the designs of W.E. Mills, architect. Constructed by J.S. Kimberley who secured the contract for £3,540. A public opening ceremony was held on 18<sup>th</sup> May 1905;<sup>37</sup> Houses in Windsor Street, Britannia Road, Bath Road, Middleton Road and West Street;<sup>38</sup> Work at Brasenose College, Oxford, in 1883 and 1888-9.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> Mark Girouard, 'Humewood Castle, County Wicklow, Ireland', *Country Life*, 16<sup>th</sup> May 1968, p.284.

<sup>36</sup> Hudson and Kearns, Diary, Note and Account book, 1877, belonging to John Snowden Kimberley, 9<sup>th</sup> February.

<sup>37</sup> *Banbury Guardian*, 30<sup>th</sup> April 1904

<sup>38</sup> Barrie Trinder, *Victorian Banbury*, Banbury Historical Society, 19, with Phillimore, Chichester, 1982, p.102.

<sup>39</sup> Pamela Keegan, 1997, references to Kimberley Bills in Brasenose College Archives for Albert Kimberley in 1883, for drainage pipes, and James Kimberley for bricks in 1888-9. College reference 421, Green cards for repairs 1882-1889.

New Building for the Mechanics' Institute, Marlborough Road to designs of W.E. Mills (1884);<sup>40</sup>

Greenhill, Twyford, Adderbury (now Leonard Cheshire Home) (1910) Painting and papering throughout, £166.4s.5d. For Lewis Wycherley Stone, of Henry Stone & Son, Banbury, cabinet makers and fine colour printers. House constructed 1905/6 by Groves to designs by W.E. Mills, architect.<sup>41</sup>

Wardington Manor, near Banbury, repairs to five chimney stacks, to sketches and specification by A. Randall Wells, architect, 1924. Cost of repairs £70.18s.0d.

A Kimberley Journal for the 1890s, giving details of bad debts and monies to the profit and loss accounts, yields information on works in progress, listed in the Appendix.

### *Apprenticeships*

In a letter to the Revd. Nerby of Kilbegan, on the 28<sup>th</sup> April 1870, Albert Kimberley discusses the terms of the proposed apprenticeship of R. Newton. For three years wages were to be: 6s. per week 1st year; 9s. per week, 2nd year; 12s. per week 3rd year. In addition there was a £40.0s.0d. premium on signing the Indentures. As for lodgings, very comfortable lodgings could be obtained for 10s. per week including all board etc.<sup>42</sup>

### *Social History*

The 1912 diary probably belonging to Albert Thomas Kimberley (1879-1947), provides glimpses into the life and times of the Kimberley directors. The entries usually start with a comment on the weather, ranging from 'weather most cool and uncomfortable' on 18<sup>th</sup> January to 'fine and warm' on the 9<sup>th</sup> May. Transportation was by bicycle, train or horse-drawn carriage. An entry for 6<sup>th</sup> March states 'JSK and Gregory had fly from Red Lion to Edgcote House.' By the end of the year the diary records trips made by motorcar. Sunday diary entries included details of church services, such as the men's service on 12<sup>th</sup> April, 1912: 'A fine day. Went to men's service. The Vicar preached. All the collections at every service at all places of worship will be sent to the Mansion

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<sup>40</sup> Phoenix, p.9 from *VCH, Oxon*, 10 (1972), pp.26, 39 and 124.

<sup>41</sup> J.S.W. Gibson, from his grandfather's account book.

<sup>42</sup> Kimberley Letter Book 4, p.734.

House Fund for the widows and orphans of the crew of the Titanic who went down this night week through collision with an ice-berg’.

Social events such as JSK visiting the Banbury Bowls Club are recorded. On 12<sup>th</sup> June, for example, there was a match against the Australians. On 22<sup>nd</sup> June the Mayor gave an ‘at home’ and entertainment to the inmates of the Banbury Union. Mrs JSK and Mrs Wray went with many others. On 19<sup>th</sup> January JSK and his wife went to Mr and Mrs Allen’s Whist Drive.<sup>43</sup>

### *Employee Relations*

A note in the 1912 diary for 28<sup>th</sup> June records that JSK was to attend a meeting at the Red Lion Hotel, Banbury to meet the employees to discuss their circular asking for an advance in their wages. A Minute Book of the Building Trade Employers of 1912-1922 records the regular meetings, minutes and rules agreed. The latter concerned standard hours of employment and rates of pay. At a meeting held at 7pm on 10<sup>th</sup> January 1920 at the White Lion Hotel, Banbury the following were in attendance: Messrs Bloxham (Chairman), Booth, Broughton, Bennett, Goodway, Hawtin and Kimberley. The new proposed working rules and rates of pay were discussed with representatives from the carpenters and joiners, bricklayers, painters, labourers and the National Federation Representative.

Wages were to be as follows per hour:

labourers 1s.; carpenters, joiners, bricklayers, masons and other skilled trades, except painters 1s.9d.; painters 1s.8d.

The working week was to consist of 50 hours. Payment for use of bicycles was to remain at 2d. per mile travelled. Further meetings discussed the terms of the taking-on of apprentices (2<sup>nd</sup> October 1920) amongst other issues.<sup>44</sup>

### *The Recent Years, 1928-1979: Oral History*

In a number of interviews and conversations with Jane Swintek (*née* Kimberley, daughter of James Marshall Kimberley), over recent years, it has been possible to glean some impression of her father’s day-to-day working life and of the activities of the firm.

James Marshall Kimberley went to Dean Close School, Cheltenham, and the headmaster wanted him to study for Cambridge. However his father, Albert Thomas Kimberley, wished him to go into the family

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<sup>43</sup> Light Railway and Tramway Journal Diary 1912.

<sup>44</sup> Light Railway and Tramway Journal Diary 28<sup>th</sup> June 1912.

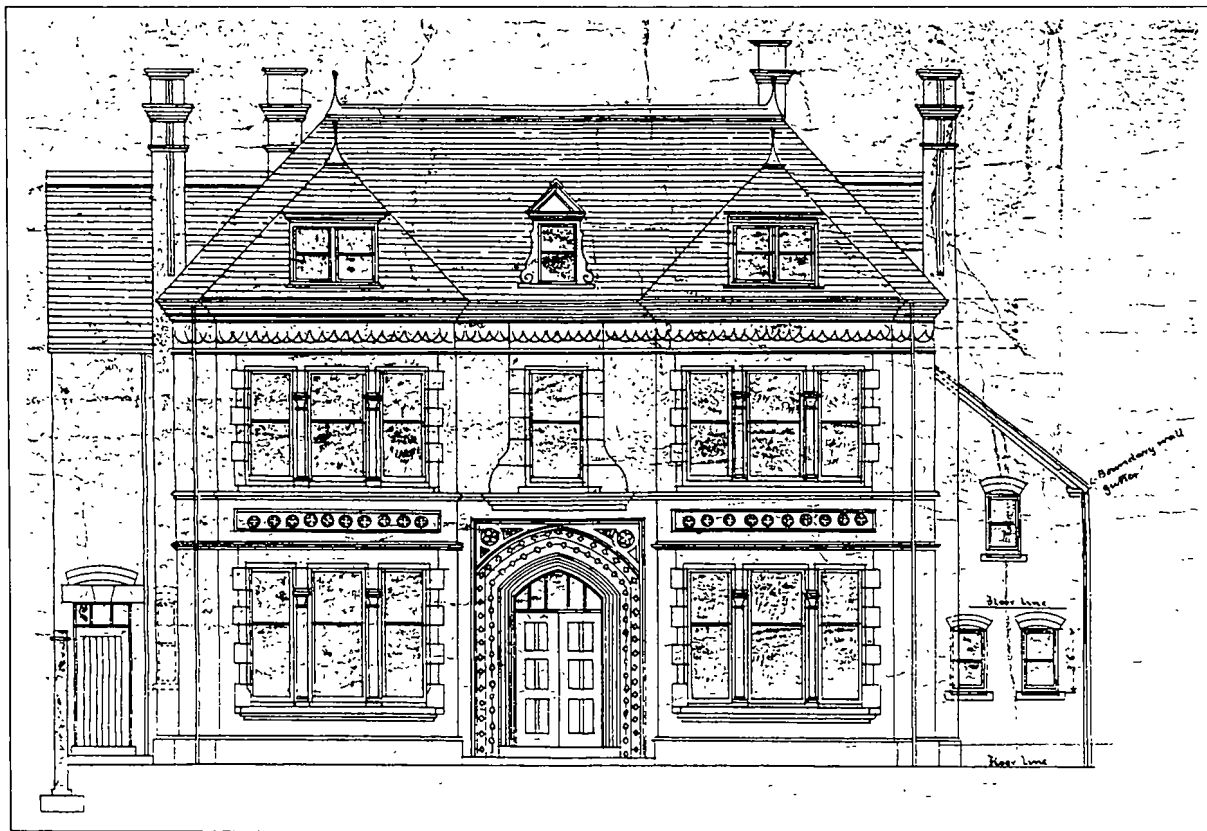


Fig 6 'House to be erected on the Oxford Road, Banbury, for George Stevens Esq.  
Front elevation' Lismore Hotel, c.1900, by W.E. Mills, architect.

business. At the age of sixteen James Marshall left school and became a master builder. He took the firm over in about 1928 at the age of 22.

Jane remembers her father's daily routine :

*'He would go down to the office at 8.30 or 9 o'clock, then he would meet people at lunch time, either in the Red Lion, White Lion or the Conservative Club, come home, have lunch, have a sleep, then go back and work until about 6pm. It was his theory that it was the way you met people (in the pub) and got the contracts.'*

Kimberley's evidently looked after their clients as even at weekends Jane remembers that her father would get telephone calls about blocked drains and would go off with a set of drain rods to clear them.

In James Marshall's time, in the 1940s, it seems from old wage books that there were as many as 70 men employed. By the mid-1970s this figure was about 7 to 10 men on the permanent payroll, with other workmen contracted in, as and when required. All manner of tradesmen (joiners, carpenters, smiths, plumbers etc.) were employed as well as apprentices. The carpenters also made furniture as well as coffins. Reputedly some of the workforce would start the day by going to the Volunteer Inn before breakfast. (The Volunteer Inn was once situated adjacent to the Kimberley premises on the same side of Britannia Road.) The men had a week's holiday at Christmas when the office closed and a further week off at the August holiday.

During James Marshall's time it appears that Kimberley's undertook a range of work from repairs and extensions to commissions for new houses for private clients and housing for the local authority. Jane recollects that Kimberley's had a reputation for quality and that after the second world war when there was a lot of undercutting amongst the building trades that her father remarked how he did not know how builders could 'build for that'. Kimberley's constructed houses on the Broughton Road, Bloxham Road, West Street, Warwick Road, as well as the Neithrop and Easington Estates. The Lismore Hotel, c.1900, on the Oxford Road, Banbury, was built for George Stevens, to drawings by W.E. Mills, architect (see Fig. 6).

Some of Jane's memories as a little girl accompanying her father to work shed light on the use of the site and operation of the yard. Jane remembers that the land now used as a public car park to the west of Upper Cherwell Street used to belong to Kimberley's. It included an area

of grass where James Snowden and later James Marshall Kimberley would allow the gypsies to camp during Banbury Fair. Whilst her father was in the office, Jane would play in the yard under the watchful eye of Joe Bason, the incumbent of the office under the gateway. Here he would give out nuts and bolts from the store room to who ever needed them and also acted as receptionist.

The sawmill was filled with piles of wood chippings and Jane was told to keep away from the machines when they were working. In the yard nearest to Upper Cherwell Street the larger materials such as timber, bricks, sand, cement etc were kept. It always seemed a hive of activity. A two-wheeled handcart was used for transporting materials around the yard.

Visiting sites with her father held strong memories for Jane. She recalled that the weather was often a problem in winter, with frost and snow being as much as a problem as heavy rains. Cement wouldn't set if it was too cold and if the ground was frozen the foundations could not be dug. Before Christmas Jane and her father would visit all the sites and have a glass of sherry to wish the men a merry Christmas. They would huddle around a stove in the site hut amidst a warm and friendly atmosphere. A number of the former employees from around this time (1940s) can be seen in a photograph taken at Banbury Reservoir (see Fig. 7).

Former employees, Dennis Clifton and Aubrey Charles were able to fill in details that cannot be ascertained from documentary sources.<sup>45</sup> Dennis worked for Kimberley's for 37 years, first as a bricklayer, and as foreman at many of the sites from the 1950s onwards. In due course he became a director and shareholder. Aubrey worked as a bricklayer/mason after the 1939-45 war. Workers apparently never went to Kimberley's yard, they went straight to the site they were working at, except in rare circumstances. Only specialist tradesmen such as carpenters, joiners, glaziers, plumbers etc. worked at the yard. In the 1940s Tom Clifton was foreman. At this time a lorry would pick the men up and take them to site. Jack Robinson was lorry driver at this time and would also deliver materials to sites. In the 1930s a 10-hour day was worked from 7am in the summer. There were quarter of an hour breaks morning and afternoon with half an hour at lunchtime. The foreman

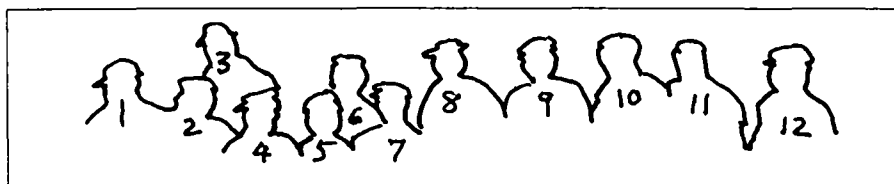
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<sup>45</sup> Interviews with Dennis Clifton and Aubrey Charles on 6<sup>th</sup> December 1997 and 7<sup>th</sup> December 1997, respectively.





Fig. 7. Kimberley workmen at Banbury Reservoir, 1940/1.



Key to Fig. 7: 1. Walters, clerk of works; 2. Billy Wootton ('Squeaker') Carpenter; 3. Tom Clifton, general foreman; 4. Cecil Shepherd; 5. Ned Haines, labourer; 6. Bill Waters; 7. (?)Spencer Lines ('Duke'), labourer; 8. Harry Haines, labourer; 9. Jack Robinson ('Robbo'), lorry driver; 10. Jack Kimberley; 11. Peter Scott, carpenter; 12. Jack Burdon, carpenter.

delivered wage packets to the site. In the 1950s a 50-hour week was worked, with Saturdays from 7 to 12 noon. Estimating was carried out by Frank Southam, James Marshall Kimberley and Mr Arnold, who was the manager.

Dennis recalled that Jim (James Marshall) Kimberley liked to build in the traditional way, using natural materials such as brick and stone together with lime/hair plasters and lead paints, and disliked the idea of using breeze block for inner skin construction work on houses. However, competition meant economies of scale and that modern methods and materials had to be employed in the later years of the firm.

From the 1940s to '70s Kimberley's obtained contracts alongside many other local building firms such as Hopkins, Booths, Gilkes, Hinkins & Frewin, and Brackley Builders and were employed in construction work for local authorities building Council Houses. Kimberley's worked at Croughton, Banbury (including Fairway, Warwick Road, Bretch Hill, Prescote Avenue, Lennox Gardens), Kings Sutton, Boddington, Adderbury, Aston-le-walls, Bodicote and Chipping Warden. All Council housing in the Brackley area was carried out under the chief architect G. Forsyth Lawson. Commissions carried out for private clients included work at Enstone for Taffy Hughes (1930s); Eynsham Hall, new dormitory for Thames Valley Police (1930s); Tusmore Park (1936); flats for the Ironstone Company at Wroxton (1937); the Isolation Hospital, Banbury (1937); alterations to White House, Aynho, for Mrs Cartwright (1954); a development of houses in St. Mary's Road Adderbury for Mr Parry (1954); alterations to the stables at Fritwell Manor (1963); new cocktail bar at the Bell Inn, Adderbury (1964); bungalow in Cropredy for £7,500 (1969/70); new construction for Kimberley Developments including flats at Cropredy on the site of the Old Vicarage, flats in Adderbury and Banbury (1970s). Other commissions included a new United Dairies, and new Midland Red garages at Malvern, under the architect Taunt, and at Leamington. Dennis was in charge of the demolition of the Volunteer Inn, Britannia Road, and the erection of new flats there.<sup>46</sup>

In addition to working on a number of Banbury sites and on the Cropredy vicarage site, Aubrey Charles remembers working on Council houses in Strawberry Terrace, Bloxham, at Aynho carrying out repairs to The Pediment for Miss Elizabeth Watt, and the construction of a summer

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<sup>46</sup> Information from Dennis Clifton.

house and standing for a greenhouse, and on road bridge repairs near Aynho. His uncle Eli worked on the Council houses in South Newington in 1921.<sup>47</sup>

### **Conclusion**

The material investigated (Kimberley family letter books, diaries, wages books and journals) has traced the origins of the firm of A.T. Kimberley Ltd. and has sketched the progress of the firm's activities over a hundred years or so. From a small scale operation in the 1850s Kimberley's prospered and grew with the Victorian expansion of Banbury, and through working contacts with some of the leading architects at both local and national levels.

A comprehensive analysis of the full archive and a definitive list of commissions undertaken by the firm have yet to be drawn up. These will yield valuable information on the breadth of Kimberley's work, together with the finances of the firm. The Kimberley archive will undoubtedly prove to be a rich and fascinating resource.

### **Acknowledgments**

I would like to thank Jane Swintek and Dorothy Kimberley for the loan of family records and for their interest and encouragement, Michael Freeman, Aubrey Charles, Dennis Clifton, Mr Braggins of Middleton Cheney, Chris Hone, Carl Boardman and the staff of Oxfordshire Archives (now restored as Oxfordshire Record Office), the staff of Banbury Library, Carol Rosier, Andy Richmond of Phoenix Consulting, Malcolm Airs, David Sturdy, Julian Mumby and Jonathan Gill.

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<sup>47</sup> The 1919 Housing Act made it compulsory for local councils to provide for the housing needs of their districts. See Brian Read, '“Homes for Heroes”: the first council housers in Oxfordshire' [Henley R.D.C.], *Local History Magazine*, **85**, May/June 2001.

## Appendix

A Kimberley Journal for the 1890s gives details of bad debts and monies to the profit and loss accounts yields information on works in progress:

*'works in progress to capital a/c'*,

Hankey, I.F., New Lodge, Bodicote, £380-0-0.<sup>48</sup> See Fig. 8.

Committee of Warnford Hospital, building new wing, £1774-4-0.<sup>49</sup>

Larnach, J.W. (enlarging Adderbury House), £1,689-12-0.<sup>50</sup>

*'freehold property to capital a/c, viz'*

Nos 24 to 34 (inclus.), Marlborough Road, £350.

Grafton Lodge, Gatteridge Street, £600.

Nos 20 to 23 (inclus.) Marlborough Road, £2,000.

Nos 25 and 26 Britannia Road, £800.

Nos 105 to 109 (inclus.) West Street, Grimsbury, £1,375.

No 9 Marlborough Road, £120.

House on Fish Street, £200.

No 2 Gatteridge Street, £175.

House, Broughton Road Brickyard, £200.

Windsor Terrace, 5 cottages, £350.

West Street, Grimsbury, 5 newly completed £1,000.<sup>51</sup>

An entry for 30<sup>th</sup> June 1893 reads *'to works in progress, accounts transferred'*  
St Leonard's House and 3 houses adjoining, £800-0-0.

Tarrant Hinton Church, 'to sales', £817-13-3.

London and County Bank to work done, £100-0-0.

Banbury Gas Co. [no sum].

Tadmarton Church, 'to sales', £660.<sup>52</sup>

By 30<sup>th</sup> September 1895 the journal records the sale of property:

9 Marlborough Road, £150.

2 Gatteridge Street, £190.

Fish Street Shop, £170.

1, 2 and 3 St Leonard's Place, Grimsbury, £700.

27 and 28 West Street, Grimsbury, £740.

105, 106 and 107 West Street, Grimsbury, £740.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> Kimberley Journal, Register No 8879, p.14, item 204.

<sup>49</sup> *ibid*, item 208.

<sup>50</sup> Kimberley Journal, Register No 8879, p.14, item 211.

<sup>51</sup> *op cit*, p.16.

<sup>52</sup> *op cit*, p.32.

<sup>53</sup> *op cit*, p.57.

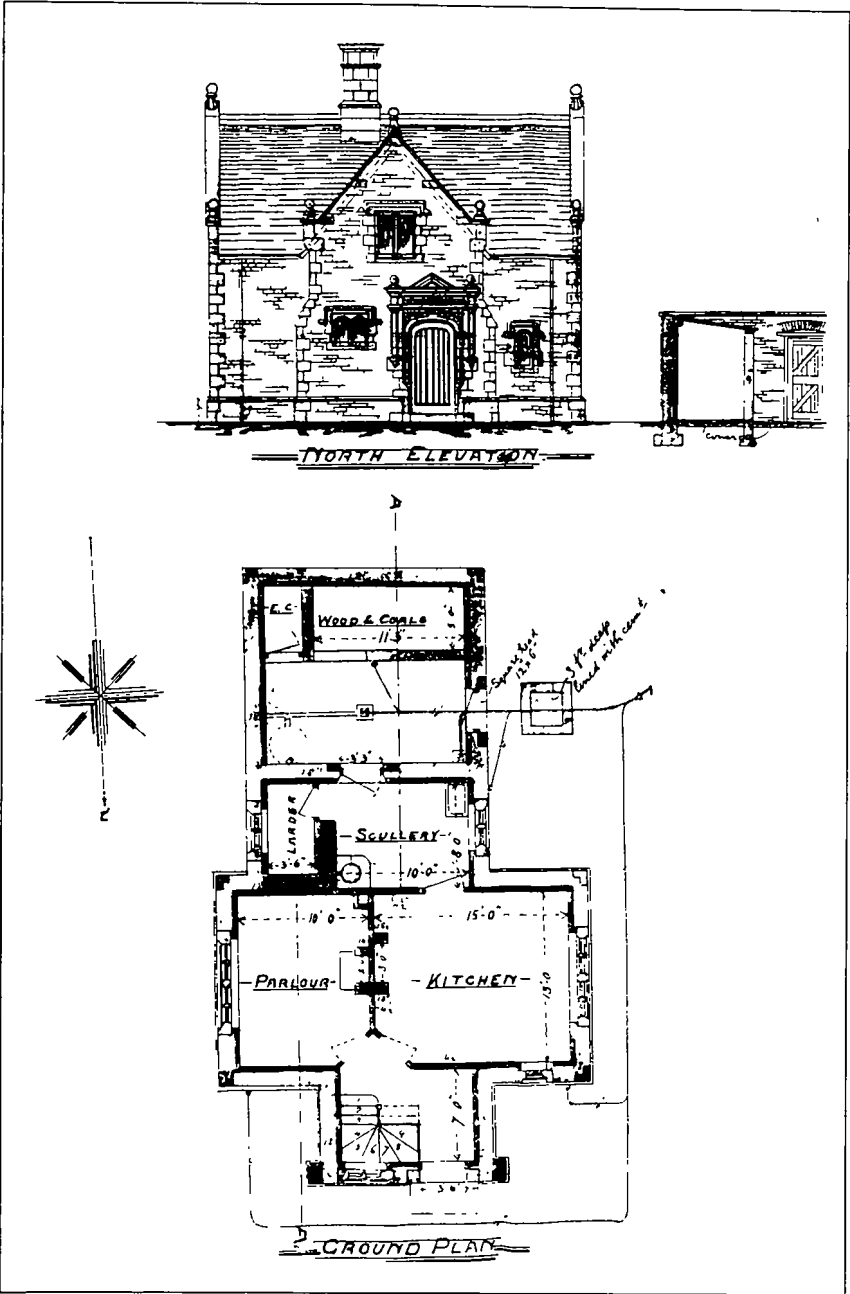


Fig. 8. Entrance Lodge, Bodicote Lodge, c. 1890. By W.E. Mills.

Work in progress for 30<sup>th</sup> September 1895 to profit and loss a/c:  
Strathfield Saye, £3,600; Young, £2,104; Bicester Hunt Stables, £250.<sup>54</sup>

Letters to James Snowden Kimberley and sons for the period c.1895 to 1916, from mostly grateful architects and clients, show the firm working on a range of commissions including church restoration, private houses, schools and interior furnishing such as oak tables:

11<sup>th</sup> February 1895, ref Property for Mrs Atkins MD, adjacent to the Watford Road, near Northwood.

29<sup>th</sup> June 1895. Letter from A.D. Mozley regarding desks for Wiggington Rectory

17<sup>th</sup> June 1897. Letter from Basil Champneys complimenting JSK on works to Winchester (College), especially wood block floors.

3<sup>rd</sup> July 1897. Letter from C. Griffith regarding oblong oak table for the Museum at Winchester College, praising the materials and workmanship.

c.1900s. Letter regarding Tarrant Hinton Church Restoration, Dorset.

c.1900. Letter from Blanche Lennox, requiring JSK or Freeman to come over to Broughton Castle to discuss the taking down of some oak panelling above the dresser outside the drawing room. See Fig. 9.

12<sup>th</sup> March 1903. Letter to JSK from Algernon Gordon Lennox querying bill for £150.

Undated letter from Lord Saye and Sele, Old Southcote Lodge, nr. Reading, asking JSK what was done with the oak panelling when opening up a large west window in the oak dining room.

16<sup>th</sup> January 1900s. Letter from James Gandy, London architect, advising JSK of taking Roland Edward Bennison into partnership with him.

26<sup>th</sup> November 1901. Letter from Holman Goodham, London architects and surveyors, regarding Cook's new offices.

15<sup>th</sup> July 1904. Letter from Henry F. Fox, regarding the building of the new house at Hook Hill, Woking, Surrey.

27<sup>th</sup> August 1908. Letter from S.E. Brown inviting JSK and sons to a tea to celebrate the completion of 62 Broughton Road, Banbury.

2<sup>nd</sup> August 1916. Letter from G. Reavell confirming details of payment of account for client Mrs Jameson of Radway Grange, Alnwick.

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<sup>54</sup> *op cit.* p.94.

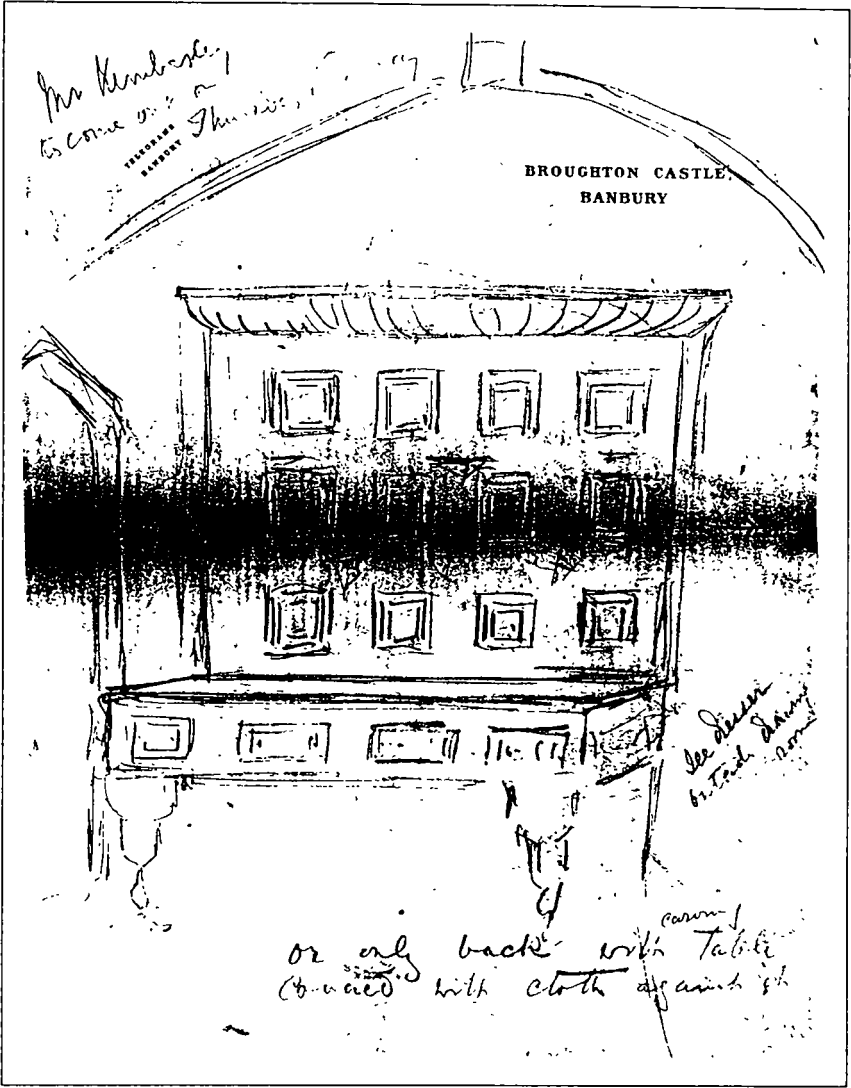


Fig. 9. Alteration to panelling, Broughton Castle, for Blanche Lennox,  
c 1900.

## THE FRIENDLY SOCIETY ESTABLISHED AT CROPREDY, June 18<sup>th</sup>, 1838.

*'A pauper's funeral was the ultimate social disgrace.'*  
E.P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class*, p.460

### *Pamela Keegan*

Cropredy's Friendly Society arose from the need for villagers to secure some financial support in sickness and to avoid a pauper's burial. They may also have begun to try and get some allotments upon which they could help to eke out the appallingly low wages. The turning point had been the 1834 Poor Law Amendment Act, which forced the two yearly-elected Overseers of the parish to send the money collected by a Poor Rate to the Banbury Union Workhouse. Before this the Overseers to the Poor account books show how the money was used to supplement the wages, care for the widows and widowers, the orphan children and the sick and injured. No one would wish to be on the parish or to have a parish burial in the family, but at least they remained in the parish or were sent back to the village in which they had a settlement. Property owners were able to get part or all of the cottager's rent paid when the cost of living rose above the labourer's wage.

The Poor Rates had risen alarmingly following the Enclosure of the fields and the loss of the commons to the cottagers. The war had not helped. Taxes were crushing the tradesmen. The magistrates being farmers themselves were able to get any amount of cheap labour. They loathed increasing the wages, though they were forced to do so when families with several children obviously needed enough bread to survive. Solutions like the Banbury Union, where destitute families could be separated into male and female wards, were seen as a solution to stop the rapid growth at the poorer end of society.

It was more than likely that the 1834 Act brought together trade and labourers to find a way to assist each other in times of sickness, accident or death. Anything to avoid the Banbury Union. The young men wished to get together to provide for sickness and old age now that they could not look to their own parish. There were several Methodists in the village which may have helped strengthen their determination.



The family cow, possibly a few sheep and a little land to grow the corn and vegetables when the cottage garden was insufficient to feed them, backed the old thrift which had been in Cropredy for generations and generations. Having to give up their rights to a common, where the cow could graze and where furze was available to heat food, totally upset the way of life for all but a few, those who had no such rights attached to the married quarters for the farmhands. The commons were not necessarily all upon the Oxhey Common, for the four Quarters of the Open Field, when fallow, were used to graze stock tended by the village herdsman. Anyone who could lease a few strips from a tenant farmer had access to the valuable grazing.

Cottagers might have a trade or work at certain jobs for the farmers. They were not working for a wage but for a set amount for the job, by which they had their food and limited fuel found by their own and the family's effort. Rent and clothes had to be supplied by work found or the sale of a calf. They put any surplus savings into stock and looked about for an extra 'commons' to have on a year's let. These savings were there to set up their children or to tide them over in the case of sickness and accidents. Burial meant cashing in on a 'saving.' There were of course always the poor in a parish, due to extreme old age or being left a widow with young children, but the parish was forced to help because with the Settlement laws they could not leave. Once men had to earn money for food and coal, bought at much greater expense from the baker, grocer and coal-merchant, on top of the rent and clothes, the wages could not compare with their fathers' thrifty economy.

Thomas Beecham, who had worked up at Cropredy Lawn in the 1830's with Thomas Giles, in 1872 wrote to Giles, who had emigrated to Australia and done well for himself, as Beecham had:

*I was happy to hear you was doing well and that you turned your talent to a better account than being satisfied in a most miserable condition such as all are placed in who work their lives out on a farm for a paltry few shillings a week.*

*A Guinea a Box*, by Anne Francis, 1872,  
published by Robert Hale Ltd., London, 1968.

Once the men had no alternative but to seek work with the farmers for a wage, that is, selling themselves, and the women also had to seek work as they no longer grew produce or had butter and eggs for sale at the market, the labour market was saturated and wages fell: this at a time

when farmers were not bringing in so many servants to live in, taking up the parish labourers to keep them off the poor books. Young men and women were marrying earlier from their cottages than was possible when they worked under the farmer's roof until their late twenties waiting for a cottage. At the same time many farm buildings were no longer required in the village since several farmers had moved into the once open fields and rebuilt there. The older farm houses were divided up into cottages: two farms at the south end of the village, Anker's Row in the High Street and five down Creampot Lane which included Poplar Cottages, Old Yard, Reads, Bloxham's and the old barn below.

The law forbade gathering together for political discussions. The Combination Acts of 1799-1800 were passed to prevent trade unions. To get together to revive the old habits of thrift and self-support they had to be very firm with their rules. They would exclude anyone over thirty joining, any profane swearer, thief, drunkard or Sabbath breaker. Members were fined heavily for breaking any of the rules. How did they organise their Friendly Society and how secret was it? They appear to have followed the general pattern of other societies with their 'Box' and rules. Had someone come into the parish who had enough money to gain a settlement and so help to get it together?

The only meeting places available were the inns: the Red Lion and the Brasenose. The Red Lion had a brick and stone wing built behind the old timber cottage with a cellar underneath. The Smiths may have built this after they purchased the property once the canal builders were producing bricks (see Appendix). The Brasenose too had a stone and brick building to the rear known as the Club Room, entered from a flight of steps, most likely converted from the old granary or hay loft.

The treasurers known from the surviving Articles were the Amos family, father and son, who were the landlords of the 'Nose. It is not known if John Lambert of the Lion, who was an able mathematician according to the Maths book he left as a tutorial for his many sons, was also a treasurer or steward. The meetings took place on the first Monday of every quarter and alternated between the two inns. The June and September meetings began at 7 o'clock and closed at 9. The December and March quarterly meetings began at 6 o'clock ending at 8. Every member must attend or send a representative if sick or an employer's note if kept away by work.

The members met and held the meeting behind locked doors. Funds were put in a 'Box' specially provided. It was to have three locks and



*Red Lion Street, Cropredy, pre-1908, showing , r. to l., the Co-op shop, the Red Lion Inn and houses 7 - 3 opposite St. Mary's churchyard.*



*The Brasenose Inn, Cropredy, sometime between 1915 and 1924. Mr Samuel Gardner (1852-1929), Mrs Matilda Gardner (1855-1930) and her daughter Matilda on the left. Driver unknown.*

keys, and in that way resembled the parish chest. The senior stewards for the time being each kept one, the treasurer the third. All entrance fees and quarterly payments went in and could not be used for anything other than Society payments. To become a member an applicant must be considered a fit person without any bodily infirmity or venereal disease, increasingly common at that time, and be voted for by the members in their absence. If someone was rejected no member might give the reason for the rejection on pain of a fine of 1s.6d.

They paid 5s. for entrance and 6d. for the rulebook. A staff was given to each member and that cost 1s. On each quarter 3s. was paid to the 'Box' and 3d. 'to be spent' [presumably on refreshments]. The book was kept open only for the two hours allowed, with a fine of 6d. if not paid. A second payment missed meant instant ejection from the club. If in June the funds had sunk below a guinea per member then these had to be made up in the December quarter. On Whit Tuesday the Society's feast cost 2s.6d. for lunch, dinner and supper.

Rule V explains the strict adherence to the acceptable behaviour necessary to belong. Two years must elapse before any benefit could be paid:

*Eight shillings for the first six months; if such illness continue so long and afterwards, three shillings per week for two years; if such illness still continue and afterwards, two shillings per week during the continuance of such illness.*

No payments were made if in arrears; or if illness was caused by playing football; the venereal disease; or if convicted of a felony. At the back of the Rule Book are three letters for members to copy, and have witnessed: one for a weekly allowance; one to continue it; and the third a notice of recovery. These were very necessary for members who resided two miles away from Cropredy. The stewards would investigate the claims and could call a doctor for advice. A false claim meant exclusion. Any member could call and check the sick, because:

*whilst on the box any Member detected in doing any kind of work, or any kind of gaming, tippling, or attending any kind of amusement, or going more than one mile from home except for medical advice, or otherwise imposing upon the Society, he shall be excluded.*

This rule might be suspended as might appear justifiable when the claimant was on only two shillings per week pay.

When anyone died after being a member for over two years and was free of the 'box', the sum of two pounds was allowed to the widow or

friends for funeral expenses and one shilling for each member paid the next quarter provided there was fifteen pounds in stock and the funeral had been decently performed; otherwise it was not to be paid. Long ago when families belonged to a lay fraternity they had a mass said at the funeral for their loved ones and everyone came and paid their pence.

Two senior and two junior stewards and a committee of nine persons, plus a secretary and treasurer, ran the Society. The treasurer in 1886 was George Thomas Amos and before him his father Thomas Amos. They had to be chosen by the majority of the members. They had to give such security for the stock as should be approved by the Society. The secretary paid his entrance money and had benefit of the Club but was free of expense as a remuneration of his office. The Stewards were chosen in turn and had to live within two miles:

*The two senior Stewards to continue in office one quarter; when they leave office, the two junior Stewards to take their places, and two others to be elected.*

Any senior refusing was fined 2s.6d., any junior 1s. The committee was chosen on the feast day and elected by members and:

*shall attend the Procession, two and two to keep the Members in order.*

The Stewards took their key to the meeting and imposed and collected fines. They had to summon Members to any extraordinary meeting deemed necessary by the committee. They took care of the cashbooks, writings that were safely deposited in the 'Box'. They had to take an active part in the society. If any steward or committee member was sick he had to appoint a replacement. A month before the Whit Tuesday Feast the committee and stewards met to order it and provide a band. Was this how the Wesleyan Band arose? The landlord whose turn it was provided the feast, paid for by the Society. The stewards gave out tickets for beer to be used before 9pm on the feast day:

*If any Member of this Society give away any beer or tobacco he shall forfeit one shilling.*

Whit Tuesday was a day to remember for the men. They dressed in their best, supporting the club colours with ribbons and rosettes. They met at the Club House at 9am where they each had some bread and cheese and half a pint before going to church. They processed behind their banner and marched to the band in an orderly procession as directed by the officers. They all attended the church service and

afterwards processed to the Club Room, two and two in their proper order. Woe betide anyone who did not wish to do this for he stood to forfeit 6d. to the 'Box'. Those ill, and Stewards arranging the Dinner, were exempt:

*The Procession shall call at the Inn where the Club is not held each year, and every Member and also the Musicians, shall be allowed half a pint of beer each on the Feast Day, or be excluded.*

The feast days could bring a fair spirit to the village so that the families too had a day to remember. Sometimes the dancing and fun brought frowns from the clergy but they must all have approved of the members' efforts to help themselves. It was a clergyman who first gave up part of the glebe to make allotments. The Poor's Field, which was allocated in lieu of the loss of collecting fuel on Oxhey, was also divided into allotments. That, however, and the charities are other stories. In the few places that kept their open fields and commons the need for Friendly Societies was not as urgent. Cropredy was large enough, and the centre of the area north of Banbury, to make it possible for the Society to gather sufficient members to keep enough stock in the 'Box'.

### **Appendix**

'Once the canal builders were producing bricks'.

Following the 1775 Inclosure and sale or division of the Oxhey Common, two new fields were used to produce bricks. This was after the Canal bricks were being made from Cropredy Clay for Lock Houses, the Wharf and Navigation Inn, plus stables. The houses for Oathill Farm and Oxhey Farm were built in brick (though their farmyards were in stone) as were later additions to farmyards at Hill Farm and Cropredy Lawn.

It would seem that brick makers left their 'trade' behind, and the Anker family of Cropredy developed Brickhill, whilst the Chamberlin family at Cropredy Lawn opened their own site for their brick barn fairly early in the 1800's. Lower Cropredy Mill was rebuilt in brick not long after 1818 by Hadlands, who also built their house in brick. Tradition says that Hadlands' bricks were made near the mill, possibly to the north of the new stables by the canal. New brick hovels in the fields and later cottages used Cropredy bricks but were roofed as the century progressed with canal brought slates. Chamberlin used Cropredy tiles.

There was one exception: the blue bricks that paved the village in 1847 came from Ratley [Oxon. R.O.: MS DD par Cropredy C18 Surveyors' Account Book].

# 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**.

