

Hugh's account was comprehensive to the extent that he was able to take stock of such unusual points as the one time closure of the canal locks at night, which encouraged boat people to ensure they got through places like Banbury in time. Cold weather would concern them in case it led to a frozen water surface. Another hazard was excess mud necessitating dredging activities using a special machine.

Oxford was journey's end but not the end of the story in which our speaker reminded us of the intention to revive a terminal basin which today is Worcester Street carpark.

The canal and its environs has had and still does have many curious characteristics, Hugh was determined to ensure that we did not miss any of these.

IN MEMORIAM – CHENEY'S OF BANBURY

Brian Little

Publications about Banbury and district owe much to the works of local printers. Cheney's rank high amongst these. Their printed items have given a great variety of insights into local history.

Cheney's always did the race cards for Crouch Hill Steeplechases. With great pride John Cheney said to me that these were produced on the day of the event in order to achieve greatest accuracy. The cards are memorabilia now and, sadly, so too are the affairs of Cheney and Sons, who have recently closed their doors.

The first John Cheney and founder of the company became landlord of the Market Place Unicorn Inn in 1765. It is here that he began printing in 1767. Four years later he was busily engaged on a wide range of items that embraced summonses, warrants, sale catalogues, turnpike tickets, ballads, hymns and posters.

Cheney left the Unicorn in 1788 and took a shop in Red Lion Street (part of the High Street) where he became known as a bookseller and stationer as well as printer. This was a good decision and he prospered to the extent of supplying newspapers to the gentry. His proud boast was that the printing of items was effected in 'the neatest manner within the shortest period of notice and on the most reasonable terms'.

Subsequent locations for the firm were Fish Street (now George Street) and Butchers' Row, but in 1895, encouraged by the need for larger premises, the company came to Calthorpe Street. Here their wide range of business activities virtually underpinned the whole of Banbury society.

In a nostalgic moment, the present John Cheney decided to make a film about the firm. This showed great vision. The video is a gem; there can be no better epitaph to such a wonderful old company.

An article by Professor C.R. Cheney, 'Cheney & Sons: Two Centuries of Printing in Banbury' appeared in *C&CH*, 3, 9 (Autumn 1967).