

TRACING ANCESTORS IN OXFORDSHIRE'S SECOND TOWN: BANBURY

Jeremy Gibson

[This article first appeared in the OXFORDSHIRE FAMILY HISTORIAN 18.1, April 2004, and has since been slightly amended]

Banbury is, I believe, unique in having an Historical Society (B.H.S.) records series devoted just to one not very large market town and its surrounding hinterland of villages within ten to fifteen miles. Records series are normally for whole counties or sizeable or important cities like Birmingham and Oxford. In a county series, records relating to the complete county usually have preference, and if there is a volume on a single place, that will probably be the only one for some years, or other parts of the county would start to grumble.

At Banbury we have no such restriction, and of the twenty-seven volumes so far published, eight have been of the Banbury parish registers, two of Banbury wills and inventories, one of Banbury Corporation records, one of the Peculiar Court proceedings, and four for the early Victorian period – reminiscences, the Banbury M.P.'s correspondence, the gaoler's journal, and a narrative history.

There have been four volumes of parish records from nearby villages (South Newington, Wigginton, Bodicote and King's Sutton), and narrative histories of Adderbury and of Aynho (in Northamptonshire). Another narrative history is *Edgehill and Beyond*, an account of the effect of the Civil War on the South Midlands, 1642-1645, based extensively on previously unresearched documents. Three are 'county' volumes, shared with national record societies: *Clockmaking in Oxfordshire*; *Oxfordshire and Berkshire Protestation Returns, 1641-1642*; and an *Index to Administrations and Inventories of the Archdeaconry of Northampton, 1711-1800*. The last complements the first records volume, the *Index to Wills Proved in the Peculiar Court of Banbury 1542-1858*, which, in addition to the town and parish of Banbury, includes Cropredy, Claydon, Mollington and Wardington; Horley and Hornton; and King's Sutton in Northamptonshire; as well as the tiny manorial court of Sibford Gower (in the parish of Swalcliffe), 1773-1829.