

have a lot of useful and important information presented in an attractive way. Christine was Curator of Banbury Museum and Secretary of the Historical Society, so was and is a knowledgeable historian with a proper academic tradition of accuracy and referencing, even though constrained by the limitations of the series.

The most recent to appear, *Banbury: A History* (Phillimore, 2003), is by Brian Little, lavishly illustrated like his three earlier books in *The Changing Faces* series: *Banbury Book One* (1998), *Grimsbury* (1999), and *Easington* (2000) (all Robert Boyd Publications). A good many other books of photographs or paintings of Banbury have appeared in the last two decades, of greater interest to local than family historians.

One other early *History of Banbury* should be mentioned, that by William Ponsonby Johnson, published about 1865 by the *Guardian's* rival, the *Banbury Advertiser* office. Its chief merit is a series of engravings of local scenes, the text being a mixture of national history and plagiarism of Beesley's *History*.

That is the outline of major published sources covering all periods of Banbury's history, with the exception of the last-mentioned all containing potential for the 'in-depth' family historian.

Relatively Modern Sources

Family historians start (or should start) with the present and work backwards, and so I will treat the available records in the same way. Obviously the basic sources for family history in the past 167 years are as relevant here as elsewhere – certificates of birth, marriage and death from 1837 are now held nationally at the Family Records Centre [FRC] in London, but the indexes to these (for England and Wales) can be consulted in microform at the Centre for Oxfordshire Studies [COS].

So far as modern probate records are concerned, the local Probate Registry is at the Law Courts building in St Aldates, Oxford (opposite the police station) (01865-241163), open 9.30-4.00 (Monday to Friday), but records there date only from 1957. Microfilm of printed annual indexes to probate records for all England and Wales, from 1858 to 1957, are available at COS. For the wills and, for intestates, letters of administration (admons.) themselves you must go to London to the Probate Department of the Principal Registry of the Family Division [PDPR].

Banbury's own trade directory was Rusher's *Banbury List*, which appeared annually from 1795 to the early years of the twentieth century, though before 1820 surviving copies are now very rare. From 1832 a