

The *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* may be consulted on-line at the Centre for Banburyshire Studies. The 60-volume printed version is available at the Centre for Oxfordshire Studies, Oxford Central Library (as is the on-line version; also on-line at Abingdon, Henley and Witney libraries). For anyone prepared to make the journey to Church Hanborough, Jeremy Gibson is happy to welcome researchers to browse in his set of the printed volumes (easy car-parking and a pub next door).

The people listed here are of course only those thrown up by our search for 'Banbury'. We may try to do the same for nearby villages in 'Banburyshire' in due course. What this exercise has shown, not unexpectedly, is the transitory influence Banbury has had on the lives of these 'national' figures. For only two of those listed, Alfred Beesley and William Whately, can it be said that Banbury was central to their lives. The town was important to at least two others, Samuel Wells and Sir Bernhard Samuelson. However, Wells had been active elsewhere before he was instituted Vicar of Banbury at the age of 34. Samuelson, though Banbury became his home, had multitudinous industrial activities elsewhere and an influential parliamentary career. And who was the shadowy 'B. minister Samuel Grevill' who refuted the Quaker Alexander Parker in the 1650s? We have found no other reference to him – could it in fact have been Samuel Wells, vicar at that time? It is salutary to be reminded that life does exist outside Banbury, of the busy careers of those who passed through, or who maybe were only born here.

We have shown articles published in *Cake & Cockhorse* on a few of those listed. There is surely scope for further work of this sort. Like the *Victoria County History*, the *ODNB* should be regarded only as a starting point, not the final word. The sources are given, but even Homer nods – there may be more to be found, original material to be researched in greater depth and perhaps with the advantage of local knowledge.

The *ODNB* remains a great publishing event, a source of enormous value to all present and future historians. What's more, the on-line version will be constantly updated and corrected. It's there to be used – use it!

*Note.* An article on the new *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, by Mark Curthoys, appeared in the *Oxfordshire Family Historian* (Oxfordshire Family History Society), December 2004 (18.3).