

# BANBURY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

## ANNUAL REPORT, 2004

Your Committee have pleasure in submitting the 47th Annual Report and Statement of Accounts, for the year 2004.

The year has seen some important developments. Of these, that of longest-term effect must be the transfer of the complete run of *Cake & Cockhorse* (to the end of Volume 15) to CD-Rom. Whilst this may be of little direct relevance to current members, it does mean that the vast body of research this represents now becomes available worldwide, encouraging yet more interest in the history of 'Banburyshire', the main purpose of our Society. Of immediate importance is the capability for searches for specific words throughout the run, effectively providing a computer index to Volumes 7 to 13, which have no printed index; and indeed merging the seven indexes that do exist. The initiative for this has come from Colin Cohen, from his first suggestion at an AGM some years ago through months of investigation and experiment to its completion.

Second, after several years of unfulfilled expectations, Leo De Freitas' eagerly awaited records volume 28, *The Banbury Chapbooks*, has at last appeared and has been distributed to members. This must be the most attractive truly records volume (as opposed to narrative history) yet produced by the Society, of which we think we can be justly proud. A special thank you is due to Leo for his tolerance of the continued delays in its production.

On a purely administrative level, after many years as chairman Brian Little has moved sideways to become Hon. Research Adviser and Deborah Hayter now chairs your committee. Brian and his wife Margaret (who acts as membership secretary) remain the easiest point of contact for information on the Society, but we now also have our own internet website c/o Banbury Museum (see inside front cover).

At the A.G.M. Kay Smith retired from the committee, after many years' service, and Chris Day was elected in her stead. Other officers and committee members were again re-elected. Membership of the Society remains close to three hundred, most as records members. Attendance at meetings and new membership remain constant, thanks to posters (fresh for each meeting) distributed by Deborah Hayter for display at an ever-increasing number of key places.

The year's meetings maintained their accustomed entertaining variety. Nick Allen has now been arranging these since 1995, and we have a full line-up for 2005/06. Reports prepared by Brian Little have appeared in *Cake & Cockhorse*. Graham Sutherland gave an account of the Gunpowder Plot, at short notice Chris Day gave an absorbing talk on Deddington Castle, and the season ended in fine fettle with Steve Bacon's graphic description of medieval medicine. In the autumn we welcomed once again Christine Bloxham, speaking on the old favourite Banbury Plush. The occasion of this talk was taken to publish a reprint of her *Banbury and Shutford Plush*, long out of print, which is selling well. Margaret Thomas came all the way from Kendal to tell us about the New