

BANBURY v ALL ENGLAND: CRICKETING CONNECTIONS, 1851-1852

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Introduction

Cake and Cockhorse, Spring 2004, contained two contributions which connected Banbury with historical cricket of the mid-nineteenth century. Jeremy Gibson's¹ republication of Thomas Ward Boss's *Reminiscences of Old Banbury* (in 1903) included "There was a large level field running from Perry's field² to the Old Parr boundary. This was used as the old Banbury Cricket Ground for over twenty years. I remember the Eleven of England playing there in their tall black hats."³ This would certainly have been appropriate cricketing costume in the 1850s.⁴ Later in the same issue Brian Little reports on the talk 'The History of Deddington Castle' by Chris Day, in which Mr Day had referred to the castle site as being used for 'gentlemanly' sport (cricket) with a thatched pavilion.⁵

The *Victoria County History [VCH]: Oxfordshire Vol X. Banbury Hundred* condenses Banbury cricket in a nutshell: "A cricket club was in existence c.1832⁶ but it seems to have been short-lived for in 1844 a new club was formed⁷ which in 1852 was listed among the 87 leading clubs

¹ Jeremy Gibson's help and encouragement has been greatly appreciated. His contribution will become fully apparent when a further article on Deddington is published.

² Presumably the horticulturist, Perry, referred to in Barrie Trinder's *Victorian Banbury*.

³ *Cake and Cockhorse [C&CH]*, 16.2 (Spring 2004), p.64.

⁴ This was the cricketing attire of the time. See "J.H. Dark as drawn by John Corbet Anderson in 1852" in *Lord's, The Cathedral of Cricket*, Stephen Green, Tempus 2003 (p.48). Stephen Green had been Curator and Librarian of the MCC for 35 years when he retired in September 2003.

⁵ *C&CH* 16.2 (Spring 2004), p.82.

⁶ *Victoria History of the County of Oxford, Vol X. Banbury Hundred [VCH]*, The Institute of Historical Research, OUP, 1972, p.15. British Library, *Lillywhite's Guide to Cricketers* (1852). (The British Library contains a *Guide to Lillywhite's Cricketer's Companion*, by G. Derek West, North Moreton Press 1995, but it does not mention Banbury specifically. I have not been able to trace the actual *Companions*, which were published between 1865 to 1885 – they might be in the process of being reprinted.)

⁷ *VCH* p.15. *Banbury Guardian* 1st August 1844 (The British Library). This report is actually incidental to an account of a match between Banbury and Evenley, which the latter won.