

This match was extensively reported in the *Banbury Guardian* of 19th June 1851.²² A month earlier, on May Day, Queen Victoria had opened the Great Exhibition, the brain-child of her husband Albert, Prince Consort.²³ In its issue of that day the *Guardian's* editorial was as full, laudatory and flag-waving as you might expect.²⁴ The *Banbury Guardian* of 20th February had contained a full page engraving "Interior of the Crystal Palace for the Great Exhibition of 1851", presented to the subscribers to *The Banbury Guardian* February 20 1851. It is almost certain that this was the first illustration ever to appear in that newspaper. It would be interesting to know when the next illustration appeared.

Headed "Cricket. GRAND CRICKET MATCH AT BANBURY." The introductory half-column details the preparations for "showing the inhabitants of Banbury such play as few of them had ever had an opportunity of seeing", and refers to the practice undertaken by the players so that they could face "such bowling as some of them had never before faced". On the Monday 1,100 persons were present "graced by the presence of many ladies". Tuesday saw 1,500 with the number of ladies greatly increased over the previous day. Monday and Tuesday were fine, but Wednesday was overcast and damp. However, Banbury won.

The arrangements were "very complete with great credit being due to the honorary secretary Mr T. Mitchell"; refreshments were supplied by Mr Hayward of the White Horse Hotel. On Monday evening Sig. Persiana²⁵ gave a Promenade Concert and a display of Fireworks on the Bowling Green and Tuesday evening was wound up with a dance at Mr

²² We are fortunate in having such a good local history library in the Centre for Banburyshire Studies in Banbury. Except where otherwise noted, all the local information included here has been sourced from it. I am especially grateful for the help and encouragement of the librarian, Mr Martin Allitt.

²³ *Iron Bridge to Crystal Palace*, Asa Briggs, Thames & Hudson 1979.

²⁴ The report notes that because of the Queen's visit to the Exhibition the demand for tickets rose from 7,000 to 11,000-12,000. The Commissioners wanted to raise the price to 3 guineas for ladies and 4 guineas for gentlemen "But this arrangement did not meet the views of Prince Albert, and the request was abandoned."

²⁵ Giuseppe Persiani (1799-1869), Italian composer. He settled as a singing-master in Paris, and wrote operas. *The New Everyman Dictionary of Music*, 6th edition, Eric Blom, revised by David Cummings. Everyman's Reference Library. J.M. Dent 1988. He is also noted as the husband of the noted soprano Fanny Persiani (1812-1867). They were contemporaries, therefore, of Jenny Lind (1820-1887). Banbury Reference Library has a copy of the 29-volume *New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 2001, volume 19 of which contains a much fuller account of Persiani's life.