

Indexing the *Banbury Guardian*: Any Volunteers?

Last autumn I sent a group of (adult) students off to the Banburyshire Studies Centre in the reference library to research a topic – any topic – of their choice in the back issues of the *Banbury Guardian*. They all came back with fascinating stories but had found the search frustrating in the extreme because of the lack of an index. One can dip into the paper, on microfilm, from the 1830s into the twentieth century, and find all sorts of wonderful things, from advertisements for obscure agricultural machines, to reports of workhouse outings, to house sales and farm sales, council elections and school openings: all the varied life of town, village and country is there. However, if you want to look up a particular place, for instance, and see if anything newsworthy had happened there, you cannot do so, because it is completely unindexed.

In some places a local history society has set about improving this situation, and by 1990 more than 650 indexes had been started or were already available for local newspapers. I wondered whether there might have been some interest among members of the Banbury Historical Society in having a go at making the history in the *Banbury Guardian* more available and more accessible for other local historians? No special skills are needed to start with apart from a bit of spare time (possibly two or three hours a week) and I am quite sure that all who participated would find it interesting and would come across all sorts of fascinating nuggets of information (there would be a ready market for these in the pages of *Cake & Cockhorse*). Are there members of the Society who would like to ‘do’ some history in this way?

If you might be interested and would like to discuss it further (but this would not commit you in any way) please contact Deborah Hayter (01295 811176) or email: deborahhayter@hotmail.com .

D.H.

Note. There *is* an index and synopsis to the county’s earliest newspaper, *Jackson’s Oxford Journal*, from its start in 1753 up to 1790, available at Oxfordshire Studies (formerly Centre for, Oxford Central Library) and at the Oxfordshire Record Office. It is described by its compiler, Eileen Davis, in *The Oxfordshire Family Historian* (Oxfordshire F.H.S.), vol. 1, no 9 (Autumn 1979).

Ideally there would eventually be at least three indexes, to personal names, places and subjects. The first is the simplest but much the largest, and, should the newspaper be digitized, could be provided by computer (as is already the case with *C&CH*). Most useful, to my mind, would be an index of places, with subject sub-headings. Such an index could then form the basis of a subject index itself.

Penelope Renold provided a series of extracts from the *Banbury Guardian* in *C&CH*, 9.7-9; 10.1,2,9; 11.5 (1984-90); copies still available.

J.G.