

## Conclusion

Attempting to answer Deborah's question has, like all historical research, taken far longer than intended, and thus enhanced the enjoyment and satisfaction in undertaking it.

Apprenticeship is an enormous subject, as important in its time as further education is today. It is not my purpose to discuss this as a whole. Boys' ages at indenture are shown but not discussed. The life and duties of apprentices are ignored, as are the premiums paid. There are plenty of topics which are worthy of investigation, but not here.

Even within the aims set, of discovering the boys' family backgrounds, their fathers' occupations and standing in the community, and trying to find out what became of them, research has been restricted mainly to locally published secondary sources, and no attempt made to examine material elsewhere, published or unpublished – this is not a thesis, and the article already over-long.

As it is, assumptions have been made about relationships that may be wrong. When there are three possible fathers, but the wills of two make no mention of the son, must the third, with no will, be the right one?

And I have committed the cardinal sin of examining Banbury in isolation. Belatedly I have glanced at the lists for the villages in Banbury's hinterland, and realised there was a feltmaker Richard Strank apprenticing a boy from Little Bourton in 1681, years before Edward Stranke (1705) was indentured to the same company. Great Tew has a splendid sequence of apprenticing to the Painters Company: John Vere took on Isaac Worley in 1669, who in turn took John Predy (1682), who took Crispin Butler (1695), who took Thomas Butler (1704) who took Philip Evans (1719) – how's that for village exploitation and migration!

For those who want to find out more, in particular see the late Joan Lane's study, *Apprenticeship in England: 1600-1914*, UCL Press, 1996. The introductions to *Oxford City Apprentices 1697-1800*, ed. Malcolm Graham (Oxford Hist. Soc. 31) and *Warwickshire Apprentices and their Masters 1710-1760*, ed. K.J. Smith (Dugdale Society 29) give briefer summaries and local context. However, these all deal mostly with the eighteenth century. The London Livery Companies listing provides information on the earlier decades, at least from the 1660s.

Joan Lane's descriptions of apprentices' clothing are in general for the better-off. An important aspect of a master's obligations was the provision of clothing. One can be sure that the orphan John Hughes' clothes were in great need of replacement after he had 'runned away'.