

LODGING THE MEN, STABLING THE HORSES in 1686

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On 11th June 1685, early in the reign of James II, in England's last seaborne invasion, the Duke of Monmouth landed at Lyme Regis. The Battle of Sedgemoor, the Duke's execution in July and the aftermath of the 'bloody assizes' followed.

Such an invasion gave the authorities cause for planning measures to counteract any future such crisis. In military affairs it is the battles which get the publicity, but these depend upon the unsung background work, the logistics of getting men and transport, in this case horses, in place.

Thus it was that a government survey was undertaken in 1686 to discover the extent of guest beds and stabling 'which ye publique Houses & Inns in ye several Cities Market Towns & Most considerable Villages' in each county 'can & usually do accommodate Guests withal.'

This shows that the three principal places in Oxfordshire were, not surprisingly, Oxford, with 804 beds and stabling for 504 horses, Banbury, 131 beds and stabling for 307, and Henley with 229 beds but no less than 659 stables. Frustratingly only totals for each place are given, with no indication of which or how many inns there were.

This immediately highlights Oxford's importance as a place to visit and Henley's as a route town, with Banbury of much less relevance in either category. Nevertheless Banbury supplied far more than any other north Oxfordshire town: Bicester, 47 and 14; Chipping Norton, 37 and 40; Witney, 33 and 62; and Woodstock, 43 and 109.

Of places in Banbury's Oxfordshire hinterland, generally single inns, Adderbury had 8 beds, 7 stables; Bloxham, 8 and 4; Broughton, 2 and 2; Cropredy, 2 and 6; 'Hugnorton', 3 and 3; Mollington, 1 and 4; Shutford, 1 and 4; Warmington (actually Warwickshire), 3 and 6; Wroxton 1 and 2. The only other place of any size was Deddington, with 18 beds and 14 stables; presumably in more than one inn.

In the latest issue of *Oxfordshire Local History* (see page 148) I have listed all places in Oxfordshire and Berkshire, and also the findings in a subsequent survey (undated) and a much less informative one of 1756.¹

¹ National Archives: WO.30/48 for 1696; WO.30/50 and 49 (undated, 1756).