

his curates, a Mr Spurrell, who came in the late summer of 1844 and with whom he was soon quarrelling. Spurrell nonetheless remained until July 1846.

Risley was clearly devoted to his family, particularly his wife, Susan, whose difficult labour with her fifth child in 1836 was followed by years of poor health. In all, Mrs Risley bore five children between 1830 and 1836. The illness and ultimately the death of his only daughter, Bessy, from tuberculosis at the age of eighteen, is touchingly described and overshadows the diary entries for 1848. It was in October 1847, during the final stages of her illness, that Risley surrendered his living, having relinquished the office of rural dean about three months earlier.

The family were early rail travellers, particularly to London but also to Bristol, when Risley inherited an estate in Monmouthshire in 1844. There were regular visits to Brighton, where Bessy was at school in the early 1840s.

Risley was a generous distributor of charity to the poor of Deddington. This included support for a clothing fund, the provision of coal during the winter, and the periodic provision of meat and soup. He was critical of the unsympathetic attitude of the poor law relieving officer towards some of the older people. However, as a committed Conservative he was opposed to the radical political demands of the Chartist movement and this influenced his willingness to give help, as on 10 February 1845, when he noted "A man named Blackwell from Adderbury came begging - I gave him nothing, he being one of the disaffected there, & inclined to Chartist views, as I had been informed - I had relieved him aforetime".

Overall this volume can be recommended for its illuminating insights into Victorian country life and community relationships, as well as for its recounting of the joys and sorrows of the Risley family. With its breadth of coverage it will be of interest not only to local historians but also to those interested in the broader spectrum of nineteenth century social history.

Pamela Horn

Banbury Past through Artists' Eyes, by Simon Townsend and Jeremy Gibson. Over 200 illustrations: paintings, drawings, engravings, mainly in colour, only *one* photograph! Text mainly quoting from contemporary sources. 128 pages. 10 x 7½ ins., hard-bound and jacketed. Banbury Historical Society, vol. 30 (Fiftieth Anniversary) [ISBN 978 0 900129 28 5] in association with Robert Boyd Publications [ISBN 978 1 89953686 6], 2007.

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