

THE STRANGER'S GUIDE THROUGH BANBURY:
including a brief sketch of its history, a summary of its public
buildings, and a glance at its trade

by *W.P. Johnson*

published Banbury: G. Walford, "Advertiser" Office, 72, High Street
First edition, 1859. Second edition, 1866.

Editorial note. The editions are undated. However the earlier (entitled *The Strangers' Guide*) despite illustrations dated 1854 (the Town Hall) and 1858 (the Gas Works), also includes the Cross, formally opened in October 1859, so must post-date that. The engraving of the High Street, showing the *Advertiser* office, is dated 1 October 1859. Oxfordshire Studies possesses a photocopy of this first edition (on which much of this transcription is based). The location of that original or any other is unknown.

Johnson's *The History of Banbury*, also undated (mainly plagiarised from Beesley's *History*), was published by Walford from the "Advertiser" and "Beacon" office, so must post-date 1863 when the *Beacon* first appeared (it continued until 1905). As well as reusing illustrations from the first edition of the *Strangers' Guide* it introduces other familiar scenes: Bodicote House, Jan. 1860; Broughton Castle, May 1860; the Round House, Edge Hill, August 1862, and even Banbury Old Church, demolished in 1790.

A copy of the second edition (now *The Stranger's Guide*) is in the British Library. Very fortunately, another copy was recently discovered and acquired by Brian Little, from which most of the illustrations used here are reproduced. It can be firmly dated to 1866, as it concludes with a description of the new Wesleyan Chapel in Marlborough Road, opened 9 May 1865, and an engraving dated 15 January 1866. This edition also introduces an illustration of the Corn Exchange in Cornhill (dated 15 April 1858), but omits those (from the first edition) of the High Street, the Railway Stations and the Gas Works.

Apart from that of the Wesleyan Chapel, all these engravings will be familiar from frequent reproduction, most recently and together in *Banbury Past through Artists' Eyes*, and in many issues of *Cake & Cockhorse*, but also of course in histories by William Potts, Ted Clark, Brian Little and others. We owe much to Walford for first reproducing them.