

The renovations were complete in July 1948, and both the Mural and Cake Shop received national press coverage.

The Mural (pages 52-53) should be viewed in the context of post war Britain. Although Banbury had escaped the fate of near neighbour Coventry, there were few Banburians who remained untouched by the horrors of the wars fought in the first half of the twentieth century. The painting offers a comfortable and secure local history, a noble lineage, a Banbury with a notable past and dependable future. Thomas' traditional style sat comfortably in a conservative town.

The Mural delivers a didactic narrative of Banbury's history, but one which is not necessarily strictly accurate and one which naturally revolves around cakes.

The chronology begins with the Roman Amphitheatre and battle fought in 556AD between Saxons and Britons. There was of course never an amphitheatre, although the bear pit was sometimes mistaken for one, and the great battle between King Cynric and the Britons was probably fought at Barbury in Wiltshire. The story then skips along through the centuries touching on the Bishops of Lincoln, Queen Mary's charter, Thomas Stanbridge and Banbury Grammar School and Sir Francis Walsingham, supposed Member for Banbury, who stands above an illustration of the Cake Shop. Ben Jonson follows on, with a reference to "Rabbi Zeal-of-the-Land Busy, who kept a cake-shop in Banbury".

Facing playwright Ben Jonson, a gentleman, possibly Lord Saye and Sele, in Civil War garb, introduces Banbury Castle, "a most important stronghold ... it changed hands several times". This as we know is a little exaggerated; 17-year-old Sir William Compton held the castle for the King valiantly through two sieges, from just after the battle of Edgehill until the tail end of the war. Moving swiftly on, Lord North is next to appear with reference to the loss of the American colonies.

The narrative approach then shifts, a strong-man supporting a plinth upon which stand livestock and the words "Banbury is an important Market Town and Agriculture Centre." Below are objects, examples of Banbury's industries, plush, agricultural tools and the words "the opening of the important aluminium factory began a new chapter in the history of Banbury." Painted fewer than 20 years after the Northern Aluminium Company came to Banbury, these words are especially poignant following Alcoa's recent closure.