

The final images revealed an astonishing contrast between the *Graphic's* romantic vision of waterside Oxford in 1879 and the harsh reality of canal life as exemplified by that doyenne of canal boatwomen, Rose Skinner, shovelling coal.

Mark Davies has written numerous books on a range of waterway issues and is a monthly contributor to BBC Radio Oxford using as his theme, life on the Oxford Canal.

### **Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> November 2010**

*The Cartwrights of Aynho: The building of a dynasty*

Jim McDermott

A huge audience of about eighty was treated to a lively presentation of some of the highlights of the Cartwright family archive. These stemmed from a methodical listing and cataloguing of family papers, which include a large quantity of legal and financial documents connected with the Aynho estate from medieval times right up to the present day. This at times covered many other nearby Northamptonshire parishes, as well extensive holdings in Oxfordshire, such as at Deddington and Bloxham. There are also a discrete batches of military and turnpike papers.

Jim McDermott held the attention of members and friends by focussing especially on contrasting members of the family. Many of these emerged as colourful personalities such as William Cornwallis Cartwright, staunch Liberal and friend of Gladstone. In common with other members of the family he was a hoarder of papers including post cards, which offer valuable insights into the nineteenth century social scene in Aynho and political issues of the time. Above all he lived the life of a country squire to the full: so much so that expenditure started to exceed income by quite a margin.

Contrasts with other family members followed in turn and revealed astonishing differences. There was hunting and shooting Tommy and inveterate overseas traveller Fairfax Leighton. Diplomatic involvement in events leading up to the First World War provide fascinating insights.

**B.L.**

At our Society's very first lecture meeting, in February 1958, Dr E.G. Forrester spoke on this subject. Since then we have published Nicholas Cooper's history of *Aynho* (vol. 20), several articles have appeared in *Cake & Cockhorse*, and we have visited Aynhoe Park a number of times. The house, village and possessions of the Cartwright family are integral to Banburyshire's history. The associated archive is a marvellous source, deposited at the Northamptonshire Record Office years ago. However, it was only recently that it was put up for sale, and our Society amongst many others raised the significant sum to keep it there. It is clear that our support for the purchase has been well justified. Let us hope that members will be tempted to explore, research and contribute!

**J.S.W.G.**