

But the heart had gone out of the Royalist cause; attempts to relieve the Castle had failed, and on 27th April the King left his headquarters at Oxford, giving himself up to the Scots at Newark a few days later. That same day, 6th May, fifteen weeks after the siege had begun, surrender terms were agreed between Sir William Compton and Colonel Whalley.

Almost immediately the levelling of the Castle outworks was ordered, and on 14th June 1648, the House of Commons resolved that the Castle itself should be demolished, “leaving only ... a little Stable, and another little Storehouse, both lately built for Lord Say to keep his Hundred Courts in: And that the materials ... be employed and bestowed for the use and repairs of the town of Banbury”, which had suffered considerable damage; compensation of £2,000 was to be granted to the owner of the Castle and land, Lord Saye and Sele.

Had the Castle survived it would not, perhaps, have been for long; the attitude that consented to the destruction of a beautiful church would have had no time for a decaying castle. For castles had passed out of fashion – long before 1642, even – and after 1556 the small Town Hall was of more significance than the lowering Castle, symbolising as it did the newer moods of independence and civic freedom.

Editorial note. In the fifty years since Ross Gilkes wrote this article, there have been a number of histories of Banbury, all with their sections on the Castle, the most authoritative being volume ten of the Oxfordshire *Victoria County History*. That and, of course, Alfred Beesley’s never superseded *History of Banbury* (published in 1842) will provide sources of the various quotations.

There has also been considerable archaeological investigation of the Castle site, now irretrievably covered by shopping developments. Reports on discoveries have appeared regularly in *Cake & Cockhorse*, which undoubtedly add detail to Gilkes’ description. This, nevertheless, remains a fair account of the place that so dominated the medieval and Civil War-torn town of Banbury.