

‘4th July. “... the schoolmaster had complained ... that the proper order of the boys could not be preserved whilst Reuben Gardner and Thomas Jarvis were permitted to mix with the others.” 25th July. “... superintend the erection of a cover to that part of the wall over which the school boys make their escape.”

And so it went on. One pities the inadequate schoolmaster, but in 1841 he is being directed “not to cane the boys *much*.” [my italics] “He considered that he has the ... authority to whip the boys and that he does so on occasion, but not excessively ... not cruelly.” He, rather than the punishment, was not acceptable, and he got the sack.

As its name implies, Carol Richmond’s “Black Sheep Publications” deals in the seamier side of life, and she has now produced a whole series relating to Oxfordshire (and Reading) criminals, police and coroners’ inquests. *Banbury Constables 1775-1925* does just that – biographies, long and short, of all those who applied the law in Banbury borough until this was taken over by the county force in 1925. Prominent amongst them of course is William Thompson, our first Superintendent, who served for fifty years, from 1825 to 1875.

No reference is made to *Banbury Gaol Records* (BHS 21, 1987): a pity, as those so meticulously name indexed are likely to appear in that too. I would also have liked a place-name index: all places in the Union occur frequently, and there are more further away. These are minor omissions. Carol deserves our gratitude for the immense amount of research she has put into compiling these books. They reveal usually ignored and very human aspects of our local history.

J.G.

Politics and Loyalty in Post-Revolution Oxfordshire: the ‘1690’ County Parliamentary Poll [and] the Association Oath Rolls, 1695-6, compiled and ed. Jeremy Gibson. A5, card cover, 80pp, Oxfordshire Family History Society and The Family History Partnership (ISBN 978 1 90280 30 7), 2011. £5.00 (+ £1 p&p from Jeremy Gibson, cheques payable to him, address on front cover).

The poll book for the infamous Oxfordshire election of 1754 has long been available, providing an invaluable and oft-used source for political, family, local and many other kinds of history. Unfortunately we have, until now, had no similarly accessible evidence for the 1690 election – which, coming so soon after the revolution of 1688, was arguably even more important in revealing the political (and religious) sympathies of the county. Now Jeremy Gibson has filled the gap, having serendipitously stumbled across a 23-folio document amongst the Risley collection in the Bodleian Library which turns out to be a county-wide record of the voting in 1690.

The list itself is not an official poll book, as Gibson explains in his informative introduction. Rather it appears to have been prepared for canvassing, possibly in 1695, and intermixes the names of the 1690 voters with those who, in some cases, had superseded them a few years later. This is nonetheless the closest we yet have to a full record of the voting in 1690, and as such it constitutes an invaluable new source for historians of many shades.