

It was in the period covered in the book that nationally-branded consumer goods came to be available in towns like Banbury, where Arkell Bros. at 57 High Street offered Morley's and Brettle's hosiery and Robert Stevens near The Cross sold Swan fountain pens. A further development was the appearance of chain stores such as Freeman, Hardy & Willis at 8 High Street, who proclaimed themselves 'the Largest Retailers of Boots and Shoes in the World', and gave away cards of British wild animals to attract custom. The brash typography of the advertisement for Fine Fare of 1961 contrasts sharply with the elegance of some earlier marketing material. The short reminiscence of the store's early days is particularly interesting. The book is not confined to conventional shops but includes material relating to motor agents, cinemas and some manufacturers.

Individual images have been generally well-researched and many have been precisely dated. Other aspects of the text are less satisfactory. The publisher for many years of Banbury lists and directories was *John* (not James) Golby Rusher, and after a spell when the business was controlled by his sister, Jane Eliza Rusher, the right to publish the lists and directories was sold in 1896 (not in 1905) to the historian William Potts. Some of the information in the text seems to be based on gossip. It seems scarcely credible, for example, that L T C Rolt, the celebrated canal and railway conservationist and author of engineering biographies, could have invested in a Banbury business in 1921 when he was only eleven years old.

Many town-dwellers identify strongly with particular shops. When Chapman Bros moved from their store that extended from High Street into Broad Street to smaller premises in Bridge Street in the early 1950s it was regarded by some of their customers almost as an act of treachery. This book helps to explain such feelings and will be a valuable source for future generations of historians of Banbury and of retailing. We must be grateful to our Honorary Research Adviser and his co-author for bringing these treasures from their private collections into the public domain.

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Oxoniensia, vol.76, 2011, The Oxfordshire Architectural & Historical Society, Ashmolean Museum, Oxford.

The most recent issue of *Oxoniensia* has two 'Notes' of archaeological activity in the Banbury area. Paul Booth *et al.* write on 'A portable Lead "Tank" from Wigginton'. Part of the site, first excavated as long ago as 1824, was reinvestigated 2001-5 by Banbury-based Phoenix Archaeology and Historic Research, when the Roman lead tank was discovered and removed. Stephen Wass and Rebecca Dealtry report on a 'Possible Early Christian Enclosure and Deserted Medieval Settlement at Prescote, near Cropredy'. This has connections to the 'bizarre and outrageous St Fremund' (John Blair) (see Peter Christopher in *C&CH* 17.7, 2008).