

Most of those involved at Neithrop and Bodicote appear to have been residents in Banbury, including two weavers, a coal dealer, a sawyer and a millwright. In some respects the riots reflected tensions between the town and the countryside. One Banbury magistrate referred to ‘threats from the countryside to rise in large numbers to revenge themselves on the town’, but rather than agricultural labourers expressing their anger against commercial and professional interests in the town, the riots at Bodicote appear to have reflected long-standing resentment amongst people in Banbury against interference in their affairs by a yeomanry largely made up of farmers’ sons. Nevertheless the riots were also genuine expressions of anger about the threats posed by machinery to farmworkers’ livelihoods, and the principal rural disturbance in Banburyshire took place at Tadmarton where over a long period relationships between farmers and their labourers were particularly bitter. One of those who threatened to destroy Thomas Wilkes’s draining plough was James Bodfish, and it was an Isaac Bodfish of Tadmarton who in 1872 was at the centre of a notorious court case in which Charles Garrett, a Tadmarton farmer, was charged with savagely beating him to prevent him from joining the National Agricultural Labourers’ Union.⁸ Throughout the mid-nineteenth century there were incidents of rick burning and the maiming of farm animals in Banburyshire.

The accounts transcribed by Mrs Hoad provide a valuable addition to sources on the riots. They have been re-ordered to deal in turn with the Neithrop, Bodicote and Tadmarton disturbances. Accounts of events at Heythrop, Steeple Aston, Crowmarsh, Beckley and Warborough have not been included. Some slight amendments have been made to the text to make grammatical sense, and some obvious errors in dating have been amended to avoid confusion. Place names follow modern usage.

Two affirmations from Thomas Page of the borough of Banbury, clerk to W Walford, solicitor:

Affirmation made 3 December 1830:

On 26 [?] November,⁹ I was standing near the public house called the *Star* when the yeomanry under the command of Major Stratton passed me, and I was informed there was a large mob of people burning a machine at Neithrop, the property of Mr Joseph Pain at Neithrop. In consequence of which [I] accompanied the yeomanry to Neithrop and

⁸ Trinder, *Victorian Banbury*, 150.

⁹ Every other source shows that the riot took place on Monday 29 November.