

# Banbury Historical Society Library

## Report for AGM July 2024

The books and resources in the Historical Society library, although already available to members, began to be officially organised and catalogued in autumn 2021. A call was put out to the membership for a librarian to oversee this and Sue Jaiteh responded. Steve Kilsby and Phil Richards volunteered to assist her in this task.

### **Books Catalogue**

The library has material on the following:

- Banbury history, the history of Oxfordshire and the surrounding counties (Buckinghamshire, Northamptonshire and Warwickshire) and the Civil War – about 70% of the collection
- The remaining 30% of the collection relates to:
  - How to write local history and where to find archival sources
  - Relevant general historical, archaeological, genealogical, geological and heraldic material, and reference works on canals, railways, furniture, paintings, pottery, silver, clocks etc.
  - Material relating to resources needed at the museum – museum practice, identification of pieces on display, items relating to present or past exhibitions, material to support the Reminiscences programme

Much of the library's material was donated by Jeremy Gibson and other benefactors. There is a variety of different types of material: books, booklets, journals like *Cake and Cockhorse*.

The cataloguing of the material on the shelves is largely done: however, we have now run out of shelf space for the items that remain to be catalogued. Once we have new additional shelving, these items can be catalogued and the items on the shelves reshuffled to fit the new space.

### **Maps**

A collection of maps of the local area, and some from farther flung areas. As well as the expected historical maps (mainly of Banbury and area), there are relatively modern OS maps of this and other areas. The current cataloguing scheme is not ideal and may be revised over the next few months. Notwithstanding this, the maps are fully indexed. The index will be made available on the library's website shortly.

### **Blue Folders**

These consist of newspaper clippings, articles and extracts, reports, photos and other images, magazines and newsletters, archaeological and field survey reports, pamphlets, programmes, correspondence, transcripts and other miscellaneous ephemera not included in the books catalogue or maps index.

An index is in preparation with the intention of uploading it to the library website on completion. Sections are:

- Banburyshire,
- Banbury Places and Subjects,
- Banbury Streets and Buildings,

- Oxfordshire Towns and Villages,
- Northants Towns and Villages,
- Warwickshire and Gloucestershire Towns and Villages
- Other Local Subjects.

### Public Access

The library is currently open to the public on Thursday and Saturday afternoons from 2-4pm and is staffed by BHS member volunteers. Members currently on the volunteer list are Susan Addison, Helen Forde, Tom Forde, Steve Kilsby, Rosemary Leadbeater, Phil Richards, Verna Wass and Pamela Wilson. Volunteers are coordinated by Phil and are managed through the online calendar tool *TeamUp*. Volunteers can log in, select their own sessions and see where gaps are. Phil sends a weekly email giving updates on the situation for the next two weeks. Karen Paul, Front of House and Retail Manager for the museum also has access to the calendar so that she can update the staff on who will be staffing the library when it is open. Simon Townsend, Director of the Museum and Sue Jaiteh, Librarian are also copied into the weekly emails.

A Visitors' Book is kept and, since records started on 30<sup>th</sup> June 2022 up to 16<sup>th</sup> June 2024, a total of 116 visitors have been recorded.

Interests have included

- memories of Banbury,
- the Nethercote campaign,
- Tonk's Ironstone,
- the Banbury workhouse,
- the old school in Wykham Gardens,
- the Domesday Book,
- Wrench's Garage,
- Kellys and trade directories,
- Banbury castle,
- the battle of Cropredy Bridge and the Civil War,
- local paintings,
- Tysoe,
- St Mary's School,
- Shops in Parsons Street
- Parsons Street in the 1860s,
- Wroxton,
- Victorian County History of Warwickshire,
- maps of Deddington,
- canals, bridges and Tom Rolt,
- ALCAN,
- Lord North,
- John Kalbergo,
- Fritwell,
- Hook Norton,
- Mollington,
- Juniper Hill,
- Causeway,
- Middleton Cheney,

- the Claridge family,
- non-conformism in Banbury,
- Swalcliffe and Banbury archaeology,
- mayors of Banbury,
- Ratley,
- the election of 1834,
- recent businesses in Banbury,
- photos and maps of Banbury,
- railways,
- the Banbury isolation hospital at Nethercote,
- Little Bourton,
- Warmington,
- Towcester,
- wharf engineering,
- John Knight,
- buses,
- Bicester,
- temperance,
- fishing and horses

as well as general research and curiosity about and how to approach local history, family history, the library and the Banbury Historical Society.

### **Recommendations**

- Open the library for members from 6pm on the days of BHS lectures
- Subscribe to the paid version of *TeamUp* so as to accommodate more volunteers to staff the library
- Improve the internet profile of the library to encourage more use of it – it is a good location for study as well as for reference