



CAKE & COCKHORSE

BANBURY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Banbury Historical Society

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We invite contributions on all aspects of the history and archaeology of Banbury and its surrounding region. Detailed contributors' guidelines are available from the Editor.

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CONTENTS

Contributors	4
Editorial	5
Obituaries	
Brian Goodey 1941 – 2024	6
Dr Kate Tiller 1949 – 2024	7
Banbury at work in 1901 <i>Barrie Trinder</i>	8
The Admiral Holland <i>George Hughes</i>	20
An ‘eminent Flout’ to Banbury <i>Oliver D Harris</i>	23
Souvenirs of Banbury: retailers and tourists before World War I <i>Ellie Reid</i>	30
Banbury Radio Station <i>David Sabin</i>	47
Sansbury, Hicks and Woodward <i>Joe Townsend</i>	56
The rise and rise of the Reverend Dr Richard Andrew of Adderbury c.1401-1477 <i>Nick Allen</i>	71
A strange survival from the Civil War? <i>Oswyn Murray</i>	74
Law and order in the countryside <i>Helen Forde</i>	78
The Broughton Coin Hoard <i>Simon Townsend</i>	79
Archaeology roundup 2024 <i>Pamela Wilson</i>	80
Book Reviews	82
Annual Review	85
Accounts	86
Index	87

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Abbreviations used in the articles

<i>BA</i>	<i>Banbury Advertiser</i>
<i>BG</i>	<i>Banbury Guardian</i>
<i>Bodl</i>	Bodleian Library, Oxford
<i>C&CH</i>	<i>Cake & Cockhorse</i>
<i>OCCHS</i>	Oxfordshire County Council, Heritage Search
<i>ODNB</i>	<i>Oxford Dictionary of National Biography</i>
<i>SMA</i>	<i>South Midlands Archaeology</i>
<i>TNA</i>	The National Archives

EDITORIAL

We are delighted to announce that Martin Fiennes, the present Lord Saye has agreed to follow in the steps of his father and grandfather and become President of the Banbury Historical Society. BHS welcomes him and hopes he will enjoy his role.

The unexpected death of our committee member Brian Goodey was a sad loss to the Society as was that of Kate Tiller who had for many years championed local history in Oxfordshire. Steve Kilsby has joined the committee and his knowledge of Banbury and its environs will be very welcome.

Quite by chance five articles for this year's *Cake & Cockhorse* document the 20th century; Ellie Reid has sought out late 19th or early 20th century souvenirs and postcards of Banbury; Barrie Trinder has investigated Banbury and Banburians using evidence from the 1901 census; David Sabin has undertaken some serious detective work to uncover the history of the Banbury Wireless station, now covered by a Bodicote housing estate; Joseph Townsend has used oral evidence to supplement the existing history of the Spencer corset factory and George Hughes unearthed the history of the Admiral Holland pub. Bearing in mind that we are practically into the second quartile of the 21st century these studies into the history of the preceding century are important contributions.

Cake & Cockhorse always welcomes conundrums, or unexplained mysteries; Oliver Harris has done meticulous investigation on the oddity of the inclusion of 'zeal' into the description of Banbury in William Camden's *Britannia*, which has several potential explanations. Readers can draw their own conclusions but there is little doubt that Banbury, at least in the 17th century, was renowned for its zeal even if the word was an unauthorised interpolation. Oswyn Murray has also explored a mysterious 17th century text, found in the unlikely setting of a builder's yard. That too can be interpreted in different ways; the Broughton Coin Hoard, probably transported to the area by Henrietta Maria, Charles I's queen, and now on display at the Banbury Museum, is another story without a conclusive end although the evidence for the rough date of the money being hidden is fairly clear.

Working backwards, Nick Allen has highlighted the importance of William of Wykeham (14th century) in Adderbury and demonstrated the elevated company he kept and Pamela Wilson has contributed an account of the various archaeological excavations over the course of the last year. Reports in 19th century local newspapers continue to provide interest and amusement, and tracking down the exploits of King's Sutton constable, George Morgan, was good fun.

Editors always maintain two things; the first is their grateful thanks to those who have put together interesting articles and spent time in archives and libraries – let alone on screen these days – ferreting out little known facts; the second is that there is always scope for additional material which only you, the members, can provide. The interest in local history remains high at all levels, and I am glad to say that the age span for contributors this time was approximately 70 years! Finally, my thanks as ever to those who participate in putting *Cake & Cockhorse* together – George Hughes for checking and proof reading and Meriel Lewis who designs such an attractive publication.

Helen Forde

BRIAN GOODEY

1941 – 2024



Brian Goodey died suddenly, and unexpectedly, on 23rd May 2024.

Trained originally as a geographer, in Nottingham (BA) and Indiana (MA), in 1975 Brian was appointed Senior Lecturer at Oxford Polytechnic (now Oxford Brookes University), where he taught Landscape and Urban Design, and generated an immense research output, national and international.

Retiring, as Professor Emeritus, in 2006 he prepared a submission in support of awarding conservation status on the Banbury suburb of Grimsbury. A modified form of that was published (2007) in *Cake & Cockhorse* ('Grimsbury Conservation Area: Exploring the Façade of Freehold Land Societies', vol 17/3, pp 81-98).

Drawing on the same material he gave a lecture to the Society in December 2007 titled *Going to Town in the 2000s: Banbury's Typicality as a Market Town*.

Brian's message is well summarised in his own words: "My argument will be that these past remnants are not just for ... [tourists. They] should serve as an essential, visible, text to remind citizens of the origin [of] their current beliefs and aspirations... Urban squares, buildings[,] routes, and the [rural landscape] provide the 'textbook' for what we want to retain... . They are often more eloquent and universal in their language than [an academic paper]. And we must find ways of re-incorporating them into the thought process[es] of a contemporary population."

Brian joined the committee of the Banbury Historical Society in 2014, and played an active part right to the end. His last major contribution was to suggest, for the April 2024 meeting, that members bring a document, and draw from it some historical story. This proved to be a fertile idea and provided an entertaining and instructive evening.

We shall miss Brian's unfailing enthusiasm for visual aspects of history and his special ability at drawing our attention to unnoticed beauties in our built environment.

Ian West

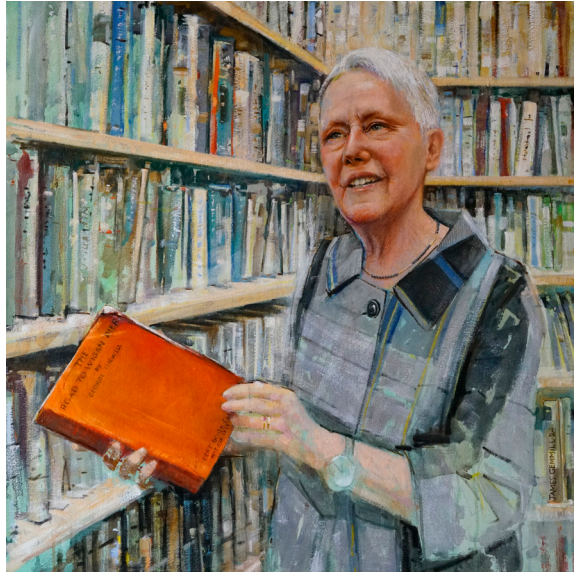
DR KATE TILLER

1949 – 2024

Dr Kate Tiller, Fellow of Kellogg College, Oxford, who died in May 2024 was a key figure in local history in Oxfordshire for more than four decades. Kate lived in Banbury for several years in the 1970s when Liam Tiller, her husband, worked in the planning department of Cherwell Council.

After her appointment in 1979 to the Oxford University Department of Continuing Studies the couple moved to Roke near Wallingford. Kate taught history to adult classes throughout Oxfordshire and played prominent roles in the county's learned societies. She lectured to BHS on several occasions and in 2000-01 published an article 'Hook Norton – An Open Village' which arose from work done in a class which she had taught in the village. It appeared as a chapter in J Thirsk, ed, *The English Rural Landscape* (Oxford University Press, 2000) and was reprinted in *Cake & Cockhorse* (vol 15/2, 2001). She also wrote a trail guide to Hook Norton and an article 'Village Dissenters: Hook Norton Baptist Chapel and its Chapelyard' which appeared in this journal in 1983 (vol 9/3).

Her principal publications were *Church and Chapel in Oxfordshire*, an edition of the 1851 Ecclesiastical Census, published by the Oxfordshire Record Society in 1987, *English Local History: an introduction* (Sutton, 1992), and *An Historical Atlas of Oxfordshire* which she edited with Giles Darkes and was published by the ORS in 2010. A second edition is due to appear in 2026.



*Portrait of Kate Tiller by James Gemmill
commissioned by Kellogg College*

Barrie Trinder

BANBURY AT WORK IN 1901

Barrie Trinder

Banbury's mid-Victorian prosperity ended in the early 1880s. The agricultural depression terminated the era of high farming, and the town lost its right to send its own MP to the House of Commons. There followed five decades of what appears, with hindsight, to be stagnation. The town's population and that of its hinterland ceased to grow. According to the sociologist Margaret Stacey, Banbury became a place 'where you knew where you were', and where most businessmen were less concerned with making money than with living comfortably and maintaining their social status. The year 1931 saw changes that now appear dramatic but were not necessarily so interpreted at the time. The town's population began to increase; cattle trading was removed from the streets; Banbury Cross became the centre of a traffic island; The Northern Aluminium Company's factory and the Great Western Railway marshalling yard were opened and the Red Lion hotel was sold to FW Woolworth. This article uses the census returns of 1901 to examine the town's economy around the half-way point of Stacey's period of stagnation.¹

In a national context this was a time of rapid population growth. The population of England and Wales rose from 29,003,000 in 1891 to 32,528,000 in 1901 and to 36,070,000 in 1911, increases respectively of 12.17% and 10.89%. Banbury's population increased by only 1.59% in the 1890s, and by 3.35% in the 1900s. The prosperity of any market town depended on its hinterland, and Banbury's hinterland was not prospering. The population of the poor law union outside the town (not the whole hinterland but a substantial proportion of it) fell by 6.88% in the 1890s and was static in the 1900s.

Banburians controlled their own affairs in the early 20th century to a greater extent than before or since. Changes in 1889, following the Local Government Act of the previous year, extended the borough council's authority over the whole of the Oxfordshire portion of the parish, as well as to Grimsbury, which had been in Northamptonshire, although it had been part of the ecclesiastical parish of Banbury. The corporation took over the work of the Board of Health and an enlarged borough police force had authority over the whole parish.

The census of 1901 in Banbury is distinguished by the conscientious way in which occupations are recorded. The trades of most factory workers are precisely defined, and most farm workers are described as shepherds,



19-20 Centre Street, Grimsbury that were under construction in 1901 half a century after the plots in the street had been laid out by the Freehold Land Society

1. M Stacey, *Tradition and Change: a Study of Banbury* (Oxford University Press, 1960), 11.31-32; C Bell & H Newby, *Community Studies* (Praeger/Allen & Unwin, 1971), pp 279-80; B Trinder, 'Fifty years on – Banbury in 1931', *C&CH* (1981) vol 8, pp 117-137.

cowmen, carters or yard men rather than as mere agricultural labourers. The census identifies employers, workers and the self-employed, and distinguishes those working at home. It does not, as some earlier censuses did, reveal the number of workers employed by each master.

The expansion of the town had slowed down. The census recorded only eight houses under construction in Banbury, among them 78-79 West Street and 19-20 Centre Street in Grimsbury.

Some of the most squalid houses, in Blue Pig Yard, Crown Yard, and Rag Row had been cleared. In 1891 the medical officer found 62 cottages in the town that he categorised as 'filthy', including dwellings around the common lodging house in Globe Yard and in Boxhedge Square where, in 1920, families still shared outside toilets and water taps, children ran barefoot and there was hostility to strangers. Nevertheless, the death rate fell from 18.4 per thousand in 1856 to 13.5 in 1895 and 10.6 in 1904. The slow rate of growth was reflected in the plots on estates laid out in the 1850s that remained empty, 11 in Centre Street, 12 in North Street and several on Queen Street (now Queen's Road).²

Banbury's energy needs were met in 1901 by supplies of coal, delivered from the Midlands to 28 retailers by canal and rail. The more substantial coal merchants were also dealers in hay, straw and grain, while others were builders or ironmongers, all trades that required the use of carts or wagons. Wood was still used for domestic heating, at least for kindling, and two wood choppers and sellers made their livings in Castle Street. The streets and many homes were lit by gas from the town's second gasworks, built between the two railway lines in 1854, and some businesses used gas engines. A paraffin oil hawker from Warkworth served those households that still relied on oil lamps. Steam engines powered breweries and engineering works, and pumped water and sewage. Waterpower drove the machinery at Banbury Mill and the corn mills at Grimsbury, Huscote and Wykham. A fundamental change began in 1901 with the opening of the Banbury & District Electric Light Supply Co's power station in Lower Cherwell Street.

Power was generated by three Brush Parsons turbo generators, and coal for their boilers was delivered by canal. From 1906-07 machinery at two corn mills was powered by electricity, and the rising demand for power was reflected by the installation of new generating equipment.³



Banbury's Power Station in Lower Cherwell Street

The world of retailing

Banbury in 1901, as it had been for centuries, was a town of shopkeepers. The corporation included three ironmongers, a watchmaker, a draper, a chemist, a pork butcher, a chemist, and a tobacconist. Shopkeepers and such craftsmen as shoemakers and tailors traditionally lived in the town centre above their shops. There were few alternatives until the early 1850s when the *Banbury Guardian* applauded the prospect of 14 plots on Oxford Road and

2. B Trinder, *Victorian Banbury* (Phillimore, 1982/2005), pp 98-100; D Knight, 'The Making of Queen's Road, Banbury', *C&CH* (2015) vol 19, pp 267-284.

3. G C J Hartland, 'The Banbury Power Station 1901-1935', *C&CH* (1970) vol 4, pp 127-310.

St John's Road being made available for villas designed by Edward Bruton (1826-99), although the newspaper hoped that they would be occupied by families not engaged in business who would come to Banbury to spend and not to get money. A decade later William Johnson saw Banbury's suburbs as 'an elegant row of suburban villas, to which the fortunate tradesman may retire after a life of industry and enjoy in peace the evening of his days. Here he may possess all the advantages of a residence in the country, combined with the accustomed comforts of the town. His church or his chapel is close at hand – his old companions are in his immediate vicinity ...'.⁴ By 1901 most of Banbury's shopkeeping families had left the centre for villas and elegant terraces in the Front Row of the Freehold Land Company's estate in Grimsbury, on Dashwood Road, St John's Road, Oxford Road and Hightown Road, and on the Gillett estate on Bath Road. The extent of change in the town centre is shown by the numerous properties where no one was staying overnight on 31st March 1901, when the census was taken though there were 33 visitors in High Street, 15 in the Market Place, seven in Parsons Street and 19 in Bridge Street.

John Harlock, from Finedon, Northamptonshire began trading as a linen and woollen draper at 3 Parsons Street about 1848. He was a Quaker, a magistrate, served on the borough corporation for more than 30 years and was mayor in 1865. By 1891 he had expanded his business into the adjacent premises, 1 and 2 Parsons Street, the ancient Prebendal House, extending round the corner into the Market Place. In the 1860s he and his family moved to *The Lawn*, at the corner of Old Parr Road and St John's Road leaving



*The Lawn, St John's Road,
home of the Harlock family*



*The Harlock family shop on the corner of
Parsons Street and Market Place*

the shop premises in the occupation of a housekeeper, two shop men, three shop women and a girl domestic servant. In 1901 his married son, Arthur Harlock, lived at the shop with five male assistants, a milliner, two female apprentices and a maid. John Harlock continued to live at *The Lawn*, where his daughters kept a kindergarten.

His younger son Walter Harlock a linguist, lived in Sweden, and was joint author of a much-reprinted Swedish-English dictionary for schools. John Harlock lived to the age of 101, and his portrait hangs in Banbury's town hall.⁵

4. *Banbury Guardian*, 23 April 1853; WP Johnson, 'The Stranger's Guide through Banbury c 1859', *C&CH* (2009) vol 18, p 22.
5. *Views and Reviews: Banbury* (Pike, c 1897), p 40; M Lester, *Memories of Banbury* (Privately published, 1986), p 35; O E Wenstrom & W E Harlock, *Svensk-Engelsk Ordbok Skolupplaga* [Swedish English Dictionary for Schools], (Stockholm: Norstedt, 1920).

Thomas Orton Hankinson, the pork butcher, moved to Banbury from his birthplace near Nuneaton about 1861 when he was in his mid-twenties. He began trading at 92 High Street and by 1867 had opened an eating house at 93. By 1871 his household included a butcher's servant and a housemaid, and ten years later he had two assistants, one male and one female, and two apprentices as well as the housemaid. He was a member of the corporation from 1890, mayor in 1893, and a director of the Banbury Tweed Co. His shop in 1897 was said to be full of pork, hams and bacon, sausages, and pork pies, with 'gigantic specimens of the genus *porcus*' hanging from the ceiling. His meat was cured and his pies baked in a factory at 16 Broad Street. In 1894-95 the family moved to Middleton Road but had settled by 1901 at 74 Broughton Road where the census records him at the age of 63 with a 41-year-old wife, a baby daughter and two domestic servants. His widowed sister lived above the shop with two domestic servants.⁶

The few prominent traders still living over their shops included the German-born John Ludwig who sold 'an indescribable variety of pretty things, the majority of them being not only beautiful but useful' from 84 High Street. William Lake enjoyed the patronage of the nobility, gentry and clergy for 'the most recherché of goods, ties, collars, hats, caps, gloves' at 29 High Street. The business of John Hyde, draper at 38 Market Place was reckoned 'one of the oldest and most notable in Banbury'.⁷ A new business that followed old traditions was the drapery shop at 53-54 Parsons Street recently opened by John Pilsworth, a 33-year-old Irishman. He lived on the premises with his wife, two daughters and mother, three sisters-in-law, and two male and seven female shop assistants, all of whom were Irish. Only a 25-year-old domestic servant, apart from the daughters, was born locally.

A commentator on Banbury in 1935 reflected that 'The introduction of multiple shops has much altered the appearance of the town', but this tendency originated more than half a century earlier and was developing in 1901. The process began about 1877 with the opening of a shoe shop at 14 High Street by Freeman, Hardy & Willis who shortly afterwards removed to 8 High Street where the company were still trading in the 1950s. Freeman, Hardy & Willis was established by the Leicester footwear manufacturer Edward Wood (1839-1917, later Sir Edward) and incorporated in 1876. The following year he decided to concentrate on retailing providing 'shoes for all the family' and opened his first branch shop in south London. For several years from 1878 his distribution warehouse in Leicester was managed by John Butcher (1833-1921), born in Brackley, who, during a decade in Banbury from 1863 was secretary of the Temperance Society and a founder of the Co-operative Society. By 1903 Freeman, Hardy & Willis had 300 branches and claimed to be 'the largest boot and shoe dealers in the world'.⁸

The Public Benefit Boot Co which opened a shop at 7 Parsons Street about 1896 was formed in Leicester by Samuel Lennard (1851-1901) and merged in 1904 with the company of the same name based in Leeds. Between 1907 and 1911 the name was changed to Lennard's Ltd. Another national chain that originated in Leicester was founded by Stephen Hilton (1845-1914). His Banbury branch opened at 1 High Street (on the corner of Broad Street) in the early 1890s. Millward Ltd, the fourth chain store selling footwear in Banbury in 1901, was founded in Basingstoke in 1857 by Alfred Millward. The company began trading at 82 High Street in the late 1890s and was still there in the 1950s. Factory-made footwear was also sold by Banbury's Co-operative Society, but 16 individual boot and shoemakers were still trading in 1901.

6. *Views & Reviews*, p 21.

7. *Views & Reviews*, 21, pp 25-26, 31.

8. Cheney & Sons, *The Silver Jubilee of the Reign of His Majesty King George V: a programme of the Celebrations* (Cheney, 1935), pp 24-26.

Eastman's Ltd, butchers specialising in American meat, opened for business at 14 High Street about 1890. The firm took its name from Timothy Eastman (1821-83) who, from the mid-1870s, exported beef to Britain from an abattoir in New York City. From 1877 his Scottish agents were an old-established firm of Glasgow butchers, John Bell & Sons who in 1889 set up Eastman's Ltd, incorporating the American company, which they liquidated in 1900 as an increasing proportion of their meat came from Australasia and South America. Eastmans Ltd had 205 shops in 1903, and 1400 in 1912. After takeovers Eastmans Ltd were still trading at 14 High Street in the 1950s.

The imposing name of the London Central Meat Company contrasts with the company's origin in 1880 as a market stall at Tamworth, opened by Herbert Lea and GE Lowe. The partnership had more than a hundred shops by 1900, including those at 42 Parsons Street and 64 Bridge Street in Banbury, opened in the mid-1890s. Pictorial evidence shows black vitrolite fascias with lettering in gold, and an emphasis on the sale of Canterbury lamb.

Free Trade enabled butchers to sell meat from distant parts of the earth, while grocers were able to offer low-priced dairy products, such as New Zealand butter and dairy products from the Netherlands, Denmark, and from the increasing number of co-operative creameries in Ireland. New products included factory-made biscuits and margarine, whose manufacture was pioneered in The Netherlands by Van der Bergh & Jurgens, while tea was imported in increasing quantities from India.

The first chain store selling groceries to be established successfully in Banbury was that of the Star Tea Company (later the People's Star Tea Co. and the Star Supply Stores) which opened at 15 High Street in the late 1870s. The company was founded in Manchester in 1873 by Joseph Cadman (1820-97) and James Fish (1836-1913). Bulk purchases enabled it to offer cheaper prices than shops supplied by wholesalers. It had more than 40 stores by 1888, became a limited liability company in 1892 and had 200 stores by 1908. The International Tea Co. which opened at 92/93 High Street in the early 1890s, was established in 1878 by Hudson Kearley (1856-1934, later Viscount Devonport) who adopted a similar strategy, and had branches in most towns in southern England by 1900.

Home & Colonial opened its shop at 78 High Street about 1895. The company, established in 1885 by Julius CH Drew (1856-1931) and John Musker (1846-1926) and incorporated three years later, had more than 300 shops by 1897. Home & Colonial prospered by concentrating on tea, butter and margarine. The most flamboyant retailing entrepreneur of the period was the Scot, Thomas Lipton (1848-1941, later Sir Thomas). After spending several years in the United States Lipton returned in 1869 to Glasgow where he took charge of his parents' shop. By 1882 he was expanding into England while establishing his own suppliers in Ceylon (Sri Lanka), in the United States and in many parts of the United Kingdom. In the 1890s he boasted of opening a new shop every week. His store at 72-74 High Street in Banbury opened about 1899.⁹

A masculine world: mechanical engineering

Engineering was Banbury's principal manufacturing industry in 1901. Several firms, some with international connections, had grown up in the previous 90 years.

James Gardner (1785-1846), the inventor of the Banbury Turnip Cutter, had an ironmonger's shop at 65 High Street. In 1839 he established a workshop in Parsons Meadow Lane (later Fish Street, George Street). After his death the ironmongery business was retained by his family.

9. For the rise of chain stores in the grocery sector see P Mathias, *Retailing Revolution* (Longmans, 1967).



Tramway Road once the course of the 2 ft gauge horse-drawn railway linking the three parts of the Britannia Works

The foundry was leased from 1 September 1849 to Bernhard Samuelson (1820-1905, later Sir Bernhard) re-named the Britannia Works and substantially enlarged. By 1870 it employed up to 500 men. Much of its success was due to the introduction of the Cyrus McCormick reaper, invented in Virginia, USA which was displayed at the Great Exhibition in 1851 and by October of that year was being manufactured in Banbury. From 1858 the Britannia Works made reapers to the design of Seymour & Morgan of Brockport NY, which were known as the Banbury Reapers, and were sold widely in

the United Kingdom and abroad. In 1881 the company began to manufacture flour-milling machinery and acted as sub-contractors making roller mills for the Manchester firm of Briddon & Fowler. Samuelson's were granted patents for several innovations in roller milling technology and claimed in 1910 that there were not many British mills that did not have their machines. A limited company took responsibility for the Britannia Works in 1887, but it never grew to the size of foundries in other market towns, such as Ransome's of Ipswich which employed 1,500 in 1885 or Marshall's of Gainsborough which employed 2,000 in 1892. The managing director in 1901 was Josiah P Hardy, aged 69, a Yorkshireman who lived for many years at 32 Oxford Road. When Samuelson & Co. became a limited company on 13 February 1888 he had become a director.

In 1901 three parts of the Britannia Works were linked by a 2 ft gauge tramway, authorised in 1870, on which motive power was provided by Shire horses.

The notoriously noisy Upper Works had grown from James Gardner's workshop and occupied the area bounded by Fish Street, Britannia Road, Windsor Terrace and Lower Windsor Street. It included the time and general offices, machine shops with lathes, slotting, grinding and milling machines, tapping machines for making screws, and shops for painting and electro-plating. Motive power was provided via shafts and belts from a twin-cylinder steam engine with a huge flywheel.

The Lower Works extended from Canal Street behind the eastern side of Upper Windsor Street to Swan Close Road, alongside the canal from which narrow boats supplied it with pig iron, coke and moulding sand. There were pattern shops, moulding shops, two cupola furnaces in which iron was melted, and fettling shops where sharp edges were removed from castings, as well as shops where finished castings were painted. A time office and stables lined a yard where completed machines were prepared for despatch. The third part of the works was a depot alongside the railway where the timber used at the



A portable steam engine made by Barrows & Co at the Cherwell Works powering stone crushing machinery at the annual show of the County of Salop Steam Engine Society 2005



1901 Ordnance Survey map of the Cherwell Street area showing the three parts of the Britannia Works, the Cherwell Works, the factory of W F Lucas & Co and Henry Stone's box factory

Works was delivered, stacked and seasoned, and where new machines were loaded on to railway wagons.¹⁰

JE Kirby made steam engines and threshing machines in North Bar in the late 1850s and about 1861 moved to the Cherwell Works, Canal Street, in partnership with Thomas Barrows from Birmingham.

Kirby then retired and Barrows was joined by John Carmichael, who died in 1868, and then by William Stuart. In 1901 the Cherwell Works probably employed about 100 people. The company was best known for its steam engines, but it also made pumps, ore crushing plant, saw benches and street sweepers. At least eight of its engines are recorded on the Traction Engine Register, and a batch with works numbers between 2507 and 2520 was exported to Australia in 1901.¹¹

The Lampitt family's engineering business originated in the 1790s with a millwright's shop at the junction of Paradise and Water Lane. Their Vulcan Foundry on the opposite side of Warwick Road was established about 1837 and employed about 50 people in 1871. The

10. B Trinder, *Victorian Banbury*, pp 33-34, 82-85; H Howes, *Water and Steam Mills of Northamptonshire* (Northamptonshire Industrial Archaeology Group, 2022), pp 11-12; *Milling*, 23 April 1910, 10 February 1912; GCJ Hartland, 'The Britannia Works from Living Memory', *C&CH* (1971) vol 4, pp 194-95.

11. B Trinder, *Victorian Banbury*, pp 85-86; C Bowden, *The End of a Revolution: the Last Days of Stationary Steam* (Landmark, 2008).

company specialised in individualistic and sometimes unconventional designs of engines, chiefly for agricultural purposes. About 1891 the family concerns were divided. Alfred Lampitt established the Christ Church Works in Fish Street, trading as engineers, millwrights, brass founders and tower bell hangers, while John Lampitt & Co worked as millwrights, iron founders, engineers and steam engine manufacturers from the Vulcan Foundry.¹²



The principal building of the Lampitt family's Vulcan Foundry was still standing when this image of the Foundry Street area was taken in 1966

The 1901 census recorded 455 men living in the borough who were engaged in mechanical engineering, including 104 fitters, 50 moulders, 37 turners, 27 painters, 21 smiths and 65 labourers.

Many entries show whether an individual was engaged in making agricultural implements at Samuelson's or steam engines at Barrow's. This appears to have been a settled workforce, mostly locally born. The companies were still recruiting young men, for more than 100 were aged 20 or below. At least 15 engineering workers who would have been employed in Banbury lived in adjacent villages, including an iron moulder and a 'furnace stoker in an iron foundry' at North Newington, a pattern maker and a moulder's labourer at Bodicote, a 'carter at an iron foundry' at Hanwell and a steam engineer's apprentice at King's Sutton.

Engineering workers in Banbury: ages

20 & under	21-30	31-40	41-50	51-60	60+	Total
101	108	84	80	45	37	455
22%	24%	18%	18%	10%	8%	100

Engineering workers in Banbury: places of birth

Places of birth	Number born	Percentage
Banbury	276	60
Hinterland broadly defined	94	21
More distant places	85	19

Men from more distant places included five each from Birmingham and Oxford, three from Scotland, four each from Somerset and Wiltshire and five born overseas (two from India, one each from New Zealand, Corfu and Switzerland). The few from the North of England included individuals from Barrow-in-Furness, Bradford, and Bridlington. Only 20 of the 455 were recorded as boarders. The remainder were heads of households, their sons or other family members.

12. B Trinder, *Victorian Banbury*, p 85; G C J Hartland, 'The Vulcan Foundry, Banbury', *C&CH* (1968) vol 3, pp 228-229.

A new female world: textiles and fancy boxes

Plush and girth cloth were made in Banbury from the early 18th century, but by 1901 both trades were of negligible economic significance. The town's only textile mill built by the Cobb family in 1837 to weave girth cloth closed in the 1870s, but girth weaving continued in workshops on North Bar and Warwick Road and employed eight people in 1901.¹³ Other branches of the textile industry employed significant numbers of people.

Plush weaving was carried on by Thomas Henry Cubitt from premises at 4 Horsefair that his father had taken over from his employers, Gillett and Lees. The workshop accommodated about 15 hand looms and the embossing machine bought by the Gilletts from Henry Bessemer in the 1830s. Some work was still put out to domestic weavers. Dorothy Bromley recalled that about 1891 while visiting the home of her family's housemaid in Boxhedge Square she was impressed by the beauty of the cream-coloured plush that the servant's father was weaving in a workshop behind his cottage. The census recorded only four plush weavers in Banbury in 1901, one of them a pauper in the workhouse, but weaving continued at Shutford, where the census listed 27 people involved with the trade. The Cubitt business closed in 1909.¹⁴

The Cobbs' factory was occupied from about 1876 by Platt & Medley, makers of tweeds. After a fire the enterprise became a limited company financed by a consortium of Banbury shopkeepers, including Thomas Hankinson the pork butcher, Levi Tearle the baker and John Hyde the draper. It was re-named the Banbury Tweed Company. Stanley Medley, a Liverpoolian who was living at 1 Broughton Road in 1901 continued as secretary and managing director. The 1901 census recorded 13 male and 16 female workers at the Tweed Factory. The manager was 64-year-old John Davis, a native of Trowbridge who had been in post for at least 20 years. Twelve workers had been born in textile centres in the West of England, one at Trowbridge, four at Chipping Norton, two at Westbury (Wiltshire) and one each at Blockley, Crewkerne, Frome, King's Stanley and Winchcombe. Six were aged 70 or more. They were described as 'a staff that could not be excelled in the kingdom', but the enterprise closed in 1902.¹⁵

In the late 19th century clothing, food and furniture, which consumers had previously obtained from local craftsmen, were being manufactured in factories and distributed nationally. Changes in the manufacture of clothing sprang primarily from the introduction of the sewing machine which was due largely to the corporation established by an American, Isaac Meritt Singer (1811-75), which opened a very large factory at Clydebank in 1884. The Singer Corporation was represented in Banbury from 1883 by an agent at 69 Bridge Street, and by 1901 had its own shop at 6a High Street, one of eight where sewing machines were sold and maintained. Factory production of clothing was further stimulated by the introduction in the 1880s of electric knives for cutting multiple layers of cloth and the buttonholing machine patented in 1881.

The origins of the underwear factory of W F Lucas & Co are obscure. The company began working in Banbury in the mid-1890s in Middleton Road, but moved in 1896, to a purpose-built four-storey factory on the west side of Britannia Road. The site was occupied from 1926 by Spencer Corsets Ltd. The manager was one Ernest Storer, aged 31 in 1901, a native of Bethnal Green, East London, an area where the manufacture of clothes has traditionally flourished, who lived at 17 Albert Street. The census records 101 female workers at the factory,

13. *Views & Reviews*, pp 24-25.

14. *Views & Reviews*, pp 18-19; V Hodgkins & C Bloxham, *Banbury and Shutford Plush* (Banbury Historical Society, 1980); DM Bromley, 'A Victorian Childhood', *C&CH* (2009) vol 17, p 299.

15. *Views & Reviews*, p 19.

of whom only 12 were aged over 25. The remaining 89 included 58 who were in their teens, amongst them four 13-year-olds, seven 14-year-olds and nine 15-year-olds. The enumerators punctiliously recorded their tasks – there were 77 (sewing) machinists, six finishers, three ironers and two pressers, two packers, two counter hands, and two buttonhole makers, who probably used buttonholing machines. The forewoman was 28-year-old Adelaide Harington, a native of Oxford, whose husband was employed at the factory. The census reveals ten male employees, all but two of them under 25, and five in their teens. Seven were employed as cutters, suggesting that powered knives were used to cut layers of fabric. A 16-year-old born in Smethwick was the firm's office boy. Most of the female staff had been recruited locally; 73 were born in Banbury and only 15 came from the hinterland, three from Somerton, two each from Chipping Norton, Croughton and Shotteswell and individuals from Adderbury, Aynho, Byfield, Chacombe, Hornton and King's Sutton.¹⁶

It is unsurprising that many young women were employed in a clothing factory, but the size of the female labour force revealed by the census of 1901 at Henry Stone's box factory was less predictable. Henry Stone (1818-95), son of a Banbury grocer, set up as a bookseller on High Street about 1840, but in 1857 moved to Coventry and married Eleanor Cash (1812-80), sister of John Cash (1822-80) and Joseph Cash (1826-80), builder of the celebrated Cottage Factory alongside the Coventry Canal. He left the Banbury shop in charge of his partner Edwin Hartley. Stone's bookshop in Coventry proved unprofitable and he returned to Banbury in 1869 after John Cash presented him with a patent for a millboard file shaped like a book. Using capital of £1,000 provided by the solicitor James Stockton, he invested in a millboard cutting machine and began manufacturing in Parsons Street in March 1871. In 1880 he sold his share in the High Street bookshop to his partner. The box-making enterprise had 16 employees by 1881 and in 1884 moved to a purpose-built factory in Gatteridge Street. During the following decade it was largely run by Henry's son, Lewis Wycherley Stone (1859-1925). Production was diversified and came to include the *Mozart* cabinet for music, the *Referee* for letter files, the *Red Letter* file, and a range of fancy paper boxes. The concern became a limited company Henry Stone & Son Ltd in 1899.¹⁷

Enumerators distinguished box factory employees. The labour force in 1901 comprised 112 females and 37 males. The women were mostly young – 80 aged 20 or below, 27 between 21 and 30. Eighty-eight were born in Banbury and only seven in the hinterland. Five of the remaining 17 were born in the city of Oxford, including the 40-year-old factory superintendent, and the remainder included an Irishwoman, a Scotswoman, and a Welshwoman. Of the 37 men, 27 were born in Banbury. The remainder included a partner in the company, Eyre Crowe aged 35, born in Poland but a British subject, who lived at 30 Oxford Road, and the works manager, William Taylor, from Massingham, Norfolk.

Most employees were simply recorded as makers of fancy boxes, either of cardboard or paper, but some occupations give insights into the technologies employed. There were gluing machinists, box folders, packers and even a gold duster. Two young men made springs for fancy boxes, while others were involved in colour painting and printing. There were five cutters, all men, a trimmer, and three polishers.

Another female world: domestic service

Domestic service was often perceived to be the only occupation open to working class girls in the late Victorian countryside. Families in overcrowded dwellings encouraged teenage

16. *Victoria History of the County of Oxford*, vol X, Banbury Hundred (Oxford University Press, 1972), p 39.

17. Henry Stone Ltd, *An Uncommon Business* (Henry Stone Ltd, 1968); B Trinder, 'The Journal of Eleanor Stone', *C&CH* (2013) vol 19, pp 136-46.

daughters to find places as servants. A girl could go to a farmhouse, or she could venture on to the despised lowest level of the hierarchy of country house servants, a fate that Joseph Ashby urged his cousin to avoid. Places for some girls were arranged by incumbents' wives, and some sought places by parading at Banbury's Michaelmas Fair. Seven register offices for servants were in business in Banbury in the 1870s but by 1901 there were only five.¹⁸

The census recorded 470 resident domestic servants in Banbury divided between 353 households of which 261 (74%) had only one servant, 73 (21%) had two, 16 (4%) had three and three had four or more. The majority, 60%, came from the hinterland and only 21 % from Banbury itself. The villages which provided the most domestic servants in Banbury were Hook Norton with 14, Adderbury and North Newington each with 12, Bodicote and King's Sutton each with ten, and Deddington with nine.

Most servant girls were 'general' domestic servants, the only servants in the households where they worked. Almost all the clergy in Banbury had resident domestic servants, and most doctors had more than one. Heads of households with servant girls included clerks employed by brewers, agricultural engineering firms, banks and solicitors, a music teacher, the manager of a boot and shoe shop, and commercial travellers working for a brewery and a grocery. Many such people lived in recently built houses in such places as the Front Row (Middleton Road) on the Freehold Land Company estate in Grimsbury, Hightown Road, Oxford Road, Calthorpe Road, Dashwood Road, St John's Road or Bath Road, where 14 houses had resident servants.

Where there were two servants, one was usually a cook, and the other a housemaid. There were about 50 cooks, some very young. Parlour maids were usually found in houses with several servants. More than a dozen houses included nurses who might be tending very young children – one was actually called a midwife and another a mother's help – or looking after elderly or infirm employers. Governesses, employed to teach the children of wealthier families have not been included in totals of servants.

There were scarcely any resident male domestic servants. Grooms did not usually live in. The coachman at *Woodgreen* lived in a cottage near the house. Dr Archibald Johns who lived with his wife at 19 Horsefair employed a 14-year-old page boy from Fenny Compton, along with a French housekeeper and a cook from Aynho. John Vanner at *Springfield*, by 1901 a widower, employed a butler, a female cook and two housemaids. The household of William Mewburn's widow at Wykham Park included a butler, two footmen, and seven female servants.

More than 70% of resident servants in Banbury were aged between 12 and 25, and 66 were aged 15 or younger. It was commonly assumed that young women would leave domestic service when they married, and that they were most likely to find husbands if they were employed in a town like Banbury rather than in a farmhouse or a country mansion. It was a precarious occupation in which age or pregnancy could lead to poverty. There were 11 former domestic servants in Banbury's workhouse, all of whom were unmarried. Nine of them had children.

The census shows convincingly that domestic service had ceased to be the only employment available for young women in Banbury itself. While 98 of the 470 resident servants recorded in 1901 had been born in the town, 172 female factory workers were born there. Domestic service was much more an occupation for country girls than for those who were town-bred.

18. F Thompson, *Lark Rise to Candleford* (Oxford University Press, 1957), 163-83; MK Ashby, *Joseph Ashby of Tysoe* (Cambridge University Press, 1961), pp 90-91, 161.

Ages of domestic servants

Age	Numbers	Total for group	Percentage
12	1		
13	10		
14	22		
15	33		
16	45		
17	40		
18	35		
19	31		
20	30	20 & under: 247	52
21	28		
22	24		
23	20		
24	18		
25	9	21-25: 99	21
26	11		
27	6		
28	12		
29	11		
30	6	26-30: 46	10
31-40	40	40	8
41-50	27	27	6
51-60	7	7	2
60+	4	4	1
Total	470	470	100

Conclusions

The 1901 census reveals that Banbury's economy underwent substantial changes during a period when it was supposedly stagnant. The town was an increasingly important railway centre, and the home of 175 railwaymen in 1901.¹⁹ Many shopkeepers had moved to the suburbs and the residential accommodation in a significant number of town centre properties was left unoccupied. Branches of chain stores steadily multiplied. Mechanical engineering appears to have been tolerably prosperous, with the Britannia Works making flour milling equipment as well as agricultural machinery, and the Cherwell Works successfully exporting its steam engines. The most significant change was the growth of factory work for young women, nearly 200 of whom, mostly born in the town, were employed making underwear or fancy boxes. Many more young women were employed in domestic service, but most were migrants from the countryside. The town may not have been growing but it was changing.

19. B Trinder, *Junctions at Banbury* (Banbury Historical Society, 2017), pp 50-51.

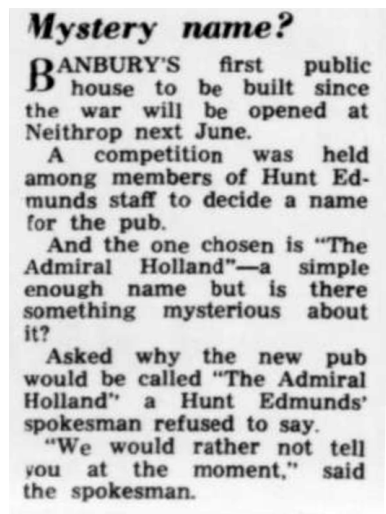
THE ADMIRAL HOLLAND

George Hughes

Whilst visiting Banbury in 2018, a familiar landmark seemed to have disappeared from Woodgreen Avenue – The Admiral Holland was no more. Having for many years driven past The Admiral, the fleeting thought was ‘perhaps that’s progress?’ closely followed by who was Admiral Holland?



*Admiral Holland public house
(Wikimedia)*



*Banbury Guardian
27 September 1962*

The place to start answering this question was Hunt Edmunds, the brewery which had commissioned the public house to be built. A brewhouse was built by John Hunt in Bridge Street around 1839,¹ who was the licensee of the Unicorn Inn in Market Place with his wife Elizabeth.² After his death in late 1840 it fell to his son Thomas Hunt (1818-1879) to develop the brewing side of the business. In 1850 Thomas Hunt went into partnership with William Edmunds (1826-1908), being recorded in the 1851 census as a brewer and wine merchant,³ and the company

was known as Hunt Edmunds. The firm initially operated four public houses, but were soon able to develop tied estates and when Tom Wilkinson Holland joined the partnership in 1872 it became Hunt Edmunds and Co. By 1886 the company operated two brewery sites and had 64 tied-houses in Banbury and the surrounding villages.⁴

Time passed but Hunt Edmunds were still building pubs, even after World War II. This building, unquestionably modern, needed a name and the issue was first broached by the *Banbury Guardian* in 1962⁵ in an article entitled ‘Mystery name’ for Banbury’s first public house built since the war. The journalist outlined that the name chosen, following the in-house competition, was to be The Admiral Holland. However, Hunt Edmunds at the time declined to confirm it, leaving the name uncertain. The next article published in March of the following year,⁶ confirmed that the name was indeed The Admiral

Holland. The main thrust of the article was that the brewery had received a very strong reprimand for having built the public house before planning approval of their amended plans had been granted by the licensing justices.

1. Vera Wood *The Licensees of the Inns, Taverns and Beerhouses of Banbury* (OXFHS, 1998), p 115.
2. Ibid p 115.
3. 1851 Census – Richard Edmunds, New Road, Neithrop, Banbury.
4. Hunt Edmunds & Co. <https://archiveshub.jisc.ac.uk/search/archives/0bc172a7-edff-3714-9d78-518b6d350f4e> (accessed 11 November 2024).
5. *Banbury Guardian* 27 September 1962.
6. Ibid 21 March 1963.

Suffice it to say all issues were ultimately resolved, final sign-off being granted with The Admiral Holland being officially opened on Tuesday 9 April 1963, as reported in the *Banbury Guardian*.⁷ The article finally clarified that the public house was named after a former director of Hunt Edmunds Brewery, Lancelot Holland, who had lost his life during World War II, when his flagship HMS *Hood* had encountered the *Bismark* and *Prinz Eugen*, Germany's pocket battleships, in the encounter in May 1941 known to history as the Battle of the Denmark Strait. Holland's naval records⁸ show that he had joined the Royal Navy in 1902, spending the First World War as a gunnery specialist on HMS *Excellent* and by 1934, he had reached the rank of rear admiral; in 1937 he became *aide-de-camp* to King George VI⁹ and was promoted to vice admiral.



HMS Hood (Imperial War Museum)

HMS *Hood*, built during WWI, was a battlecruiser with a displacement of about 46,000 tons. On the 22 May 1941, six destroyers, acting as an escort for HMS *Hood* and HMS *Prince of Wales*, sailed north, heading to the Denmark Strait between Iceland and Greenland. In the early morning of 23 May the German forces were sighted by the *Hood* and in the ensuing Battle the *Hood* suffered a catastrophic magazine explosion in the early morning breaking the ship in half; the admiral and all but three of the crew were lost.¹⁰

Holland's naval record also confirms that he had been born in Middleton Cheney on 13 September 1887, the son of Thomas Wilkinson Holland, a director of the Hunt Edmunds brewery. Baptismal records show that Lancelot Ernest Holland was baptised at All Saints' church in the village by the Rev. W Edward Buckley on the 16 October 1887¹¹ and the entry into the parish register clearly records that his father Tom was living at the Holt in Middleton Cheney. This was the original home of Mary Ann Horton (1790-1869), the benefactor of the Horton General Hospital in Banbury, daughter of William Horton (1744-1833) a wealthy London hosier.

Vice Admiral Lancelot Ernest Holland is remembered on the Naval War Memorial in Portsmouth, located on Clarence Esplanade in Southsea and in the War Graves memorial register.

1887 October 16 No. 1119	Lancelot Ernest	Tom Wilkinson Holland of the Holt Middleton Cheney	Holland	The Holt Middleton Cheney	Esgue, Brewer	W E Buckley Rector
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7. BG, 11 April 1963.

8. Naval Record for Lancelot Holland (1877-1941) TNA ADM 196/51/25.

9. Ibid.

10. *Encyclopædia Britannica* <https://www.britannica.com/topic/HMS-Hood> (accessed 10 November 2024).

11. Northamptonshire Archives Service, 211P/8.



*Portsmouth Naval Memorial
(Harry Mitchell, Wikicommons)*

1940 ROYAL NAVAL VOLUNTEER (WIRELESS) RESERVE TELEGRAPHIST FOX I.C. COUCH R.B. HALL A.B. MACFARLANE J.T. MILLS H.B. PARSONS A.R.B. RHODES B.C. WARNER C.S. ROYAL NAVAL AUXILIARY SICK BERTH RESERVE SICK BERTH ATTD. LEAH S. RAMSDEN W.T. N.A.A.F.I. STAFF CANTEN MANAGER FOXON A.S. HOULTON J.E. MURDING J.E. KING A.F. MILLER L.V. PARSONS C.W. PENKETHMAN C. PRIOR G.F. SMITH P.C. PELETIER P.A. CANTEN ASSISTANT CLARK A.H. LENG E.R.	1941 ROYAL NAVY LIEUTENANT LEGGATT D.W. LEWIS E.S. LIVESLEY J.C. MERRITT A. MEYRICK R.W.M. MORRIS R.L.S. O'HARE D.A. PATERSON J.R. PETERS W.G.L. ROBERTSON A.S. RODWEILL I.A. SCOTT R.D.S. ROSE H.W.M. SIMMONS R.D.C. STEWART D.R. TALBOT F.B. WALERS M.J.P. WHITEWAY-WILKINSON WOOD F.J. R.D.D.S.C. WOODCOCK S. SUB LIEUTENANT ALSTON G.M.H. ANTHONY J.W. FRANCK E.W. GUINNESS R.C. HARTCUP P.J. HOUSTON R.B. MILLAR M.F. SCOTT-KERR J.H.A. SMITHARD R.M. ACTING SUB LIEUTENANT FRODSHAM N.H.	1941 ROYAL NAVY INSTRUCTOR LIEUT HARGCOMBE C.D.L. SURGEON COMMANDER FORSYTH A.N.M.B. AND S. HURSTY H.L.R.C.P. SORLEY E.R.M.D. D.P.H. SURGEON LIEUT. COMDR. DE LABILLIERE C.D.D. M.R.C.S., L.R.C.P. SURGEON LIEUTENANT FIELDING J.O. M.R.C.S., L.R.C.P. SURGEON LIEUTENANT(D) PEACOCK J.E.C.L.D.S. COMMANDER(S) HOGAN J.M. ROE D.C. WILLIAMS H.G. LIEUT. COMMANDER(S) SKINNER R.M.P. LIEUTENANT(S) BROWNE R.H.P. SAWS T.B.N. CHARLES J. LUXMOORE T.D.P. PHILLIPS R.C. PORTER-FAUSSET F.A.P. SUB LIEUTENANT(S) BALLARD C.D. LAWDER D.M. MIDSHIPMAN(S) BLACKLEY B.P. COLLINGS J.P. POOLEY J.D. TWYGCROSS-RAINES F.H. VACHER G.D.B. COMMISSIONED GUNNER BRUCE G.F.W. CHAPMAN J.A. COPE S.N. GEORGE C.H. LOWE H. STANLEY A.E. TOSER M.C.H. VARLOW A.C. GUNNER GOLDFINCH E.M. MACDONALD F.L. MARRIOTT G.E.D. SUTTON F.W. TARRANT S.W. GUNNER(T) BROWN W.O.
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*UK, Commonwealth War Graves 1937-1947 for
Lancelot Ernest Holland Memorial Register Panel
45 on Column 1*



*Official portrait
(HMS Hood Association)*

AN 'EMINENT FLOUT' TO BANBURY

Oliver D Harris

In the 16th and 17th centuries, Banbury was widely known for its cheese.¹ An early assertion of this fact was made by William Camden in his *Britannia* of 1586. Camden devoted a dozen lines to Banbury, reporting the victory of Cynric the West Saxon over the Britons (an engagement now located at Barbury, Wiltshire), the Lancastrian victory at Edgcote in 1469, and the building of Banbury Castle. And he briefly comments, '*Nunc autem conficiendo caseo notissimum*' ('But now it is most noted for the making of cheese').² *Britannia* ran through five further Latin editions down to 1607, each expanded from the last, but the reference to cheese remained unchanged. In 1610, however, the first English-language edition was published, in a translation by Philemon Holland (1532-1637) and here an intriguing revision appeared. The sentence was extended, to read: 'Now the fame of this towne is for zeale, cheese, and cakes.'³ Over the following century, this amendment was to be the source of much speculation and comment. While elements of the story have been noted in the past, the present investigation seeks to delve a little more deeply into what might have occurred.⁴

To set the revision in context, it should be appreciated that Holland's translation includes numerous other textual additions to its Latin predecessor (some 1200 in total, ranging from single words to longer passages of several hundred); and that many later readers came to believe that these interpolations had been inserted by Holland without authority. However, this was certainly a misapprehension; the title page describes the work as 'revised, amended, and enlarged with sundry Additions by the said Author', and the great bulk of

* Neither doth the *Ouse* or *Isis* as yet gather himselfe into one streame, when hee meeteth with *Cherwell*, which out of Northamptonshire, runneth almost through the mids of this Countrey. This river first watereth *Banburie* sometime Banesbypis, a faire large town, at which *Kinric* the West Saxon King in old time put to flight the Britans in a memorable battaile fighting manfully for their lives, state, & all they had: and in this later foregoing age, not farre of *Richard Nevill* Earle of Warwicke siding with the house of Lancaster gaue such an overthrowe to those of Yorke, that forthwith al-
fo he tooke King Edward the Fourth now forlorne and hopelesse. Now the fame of
this towne is for zeale, cheese, and cakes, and hath a Castle for shew, which *Alex-
ander* Bishop of Lincolne, (for to the Sea of Lincolne it belongeth) first built, who ha-
ving a minde to dwell stately rather than quietly, brought upon himselfe many ad-
versities by his huge buildings. About this towne, (that I may obserue so much by
the way) peeces of the Romane Emperours coine found, (as also else where in the
field neere adjoining) make somewhat to proue the antiquitie of the place.

*The account of Banbury in William Camden, Britain,
translated by Philemon Holland (1610), p 376.*

1. Martin Thomas, 'As thin as Banbury cheese', *Cake & Cockhorse* (2012), vol 18/8, pp 274-6. Helen Forde, 'Banbury cheese and its conundrums', *C&CH* (2019), vol 21/2, pp 45-55.

2. William Camden, *Britannia* (1586), pp 199-200.

3. William Camden, *Britain*, trans Philemon Holland (1610), p 376.

4. Earlier accounts include Alfred Beesley, *The History of Banbury* (Nichols & Son, 1841), pp 454-62; and John Timbs, 'Banbury Cakes and Banbury Cross', *Once a Week* (16 May 1863), vol 8/203, pp 583-5.

new content can be attributed with confidence to Camden.⁵ On balance, it seems likely that the translation's mention of Banbury cakes was just such an authorial addition. The town's reputation for these delicacies was already well established, with the earliest clear reference dating from 1586;⁶ and certainly neither Camden himself, nor anyone else at later dates, took issue with the cake reference. There seems little need to speculate further on this detail.

'Zeal' was another matter. In a 17th century context, the word held overtones of extreme religious zealotry, specifically puritanism, and was a considerably more loaded and contentious label to apply. It was indeed the case that Banbury was something of a byword for puritanism, which had emerged locally in the 1580s in controversy over maypoles, Whitsun ales and Morris dancing, and had led in 1600 to the toppling of the town's market crosses. A Catholic agent in London, reporting this latter event, had expressly ascribed it to 'The Inhabitants of Banbury beying farr goen in Puritanisme [and acting] in a furious Zeale'.⁷ The potential for offence in Britannia's adoption of the term was recognised by several commentators. Camden himself, in a note written shortly after publication, remarked that 'some thinke it a disgrace';⁸ Elias Ashmole in 1652 called it 'an eminent *Flout* to Banbury';⁹ and White Kennett in the 1690s claimed that its appearance had 'passt to the great indignation of the Puritans of that town'.¹⁰

So what had happened? The story that emerged was that 'zeal' had never been the intended wording of either Camden or Holland, but had been a last-minute introduction at the press. There were, however, three somewhat variant accounts of the circumstances.

One was that 'zeale' was a misprint or mis-correction of 'veale'. According to Thomas Fuller, writing in about 1660, the phrasing 'was at the first (as I have been credibly informed) a *litteral mistake* of the Printers (though not confessed in the *Errata*) ... *Zeal* being put for *Veal* in that place'.¹¹ A decade later, John Ray similarly reported that Banbury was proverbially renowned for 'veal, cheese and cakes' (with the implication that this is what Camden had written); but that, 'through the correctours mistake', the first word had appeared as 'zeal'.¹² All this is possible, but far from convincing: although Banbury has a long history of cattle-farming, it has never (despite Ray's claim) been especially associated with veal, and there seems little reason to suppose that either Camden or Holland might have set out to highlight this aspect of its agricultural economy.

White Kennett (bishop and antiquarian, 1660-1728) reported a rather different 'credible story' in the 1690s. He claimed that Camden had visited the press when the sheet in question was being printed, and 'looking on it he found, that to his own observation of *Banbury* being famous for *Chees*, the Translator had added *Cakes* and *Ale*, which Mr *Camden* thinking too light an expression, corrected the word *Ale* into *Zeal*'.¹³

5. OD Harris, 'William Camden, Philemon Holland and the 1610 translation of *Britannia*', *Antiquaries Journal* (2015), vol 95, pp 279-303 (293-5).

6. Timothie Bright, *A Treatise of Melancholie* (1586), p 27.

7. Westminster Diocesan Archives HIS/A7, p 4: 'Anthony Rivers' [pseud William Sterrell?] to Robert Persons, 13 Jan 1601; published in Henry Foley (ed), *Records of the English Province of the Society of Jesus* (Burns & Oates, 1875-83), vol 1, p 8. On the author, see P Martin and J Finnis, 'The identity of "Anthony Rivers"', *Recusant History* (2002), vol 26/1, pp 39-74.

8. Bodleian Library (Bodl) MS Smith 19, pp 11-75, William Camden, 'A Suplement of the TopographiCALL Description of Britain published MDCX', at p 53. See n 16 below.

9. Elias Ashmole, *Theatrum Chemicum Britannicum* (1652), 457. See n 42 below.

10. Bodl MS Eng. b. 2043, fol 192^v, notes on Oxfordshire by White Kennett, c1693-4; published in Edmund Gibson (ed), *Camden's Britannia* (1695), col 270.

11. Thomas Fuller, *The History of the Worthies of England* (1662), bk 2, p 328. Fuller died in August 1661, and his work was published posthumously.

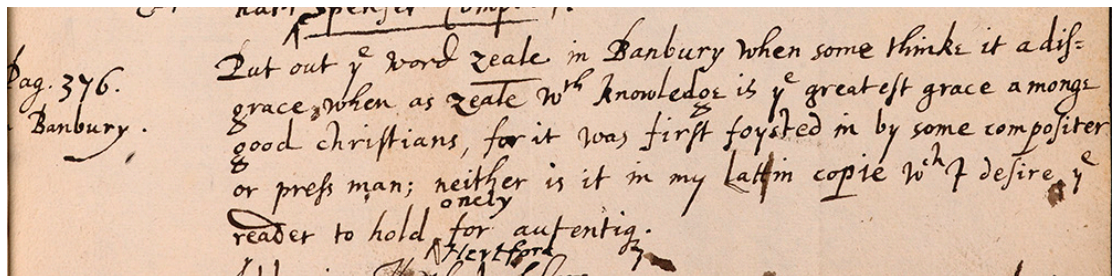
12. John Ray, *A Collection of English Proverbs* (1670), p 249. Ray concludes '*vide Autorem*' ('see the author'), but it is unclear to what he refers.

13. Bodl MS Eng. b. 2043, fol 192^v; published (with minor amendments) in Gibson, *Camden's Britannia*, col 270.

This version is a little more persuasive, and finds an element of support in a marginal note added by William Booth, (c 1620-1673) an antiquarian-minded lawyer, to his own copy of *Britannia* in the middle years of the century: at the mention of ‘zeale, cheese, and cakes’, Booth comments, ‘it was Ale, cheese, &c in the first editions’.¹⁴ He was mistaken as to the earlier editions, but his remark suggests that the rumour of ‘zeale’ as a corruption of ‘ale’ was already in circulation a generation before Kennett reported it. The phrase ‘cakes and ale’, meaning revelry, is best known today from Shakespeare’s *Twelfth Night* (first staged in 1602), but Shakespeare had borrowed what was already an established idiom – albeit one that more commonly appeared in this period in the reverse form, ‘ale and cakes’, which fits better still with *Britannia*’s text and Kennett’s interpretation.¹⁵ However, as has already been emphasized, there is no evidence elsewhere to support the idea of Holland illicitly expanding his translation in this way. The theory’s plausibility is also somewhat weakened by its premise that the ‘ale and cakes’ doublet, instead of being added before or after the word ‘cheese’, would seem to have been split to sit astride it.

The third version of events is the earliest, and is Camden’s own. It is found in a manuscript ‘Suplement’ to *Britannia* (already briefly quoted) that he worked on over the decade following the appearance of Holland’s translation. He probably hoped to see this into print, but it remained unpublished at his death in 1623. It comprises a series of addenda and corrigenda, one of which runs:

‘Put out [i.e. delete] ye word *zeale* in Banbury when some thinke it a disgrace, when as zeale with knowledge is ye greatest grace amonge good christians, for it was first foysted in by some compositer or press man; neither is it in my Latin copie *which* I desire ye reader to hold onely for autentiq.’¹⁶



Camden’s correction of the passage in his ‘Suplement’.
Bodleian Libraries, University of Oxford, MS Smith 19, p 53.

14. Ohio State University, Rare Books & Manuscripts Library, DA610.C161 1610: Camden, Britain (1610), p 376; digitised on Google Books and HathiTrust. William Booth (c1620-1673), of Witton, Warks, and the Middle Temple, first read the book (according to a note on the dedication page) in Jan-Feb 1640, but his many annotations evidently span a period of some 20 years or so thereafter.

15. William Shakespeare, *Twelfth Night*, Act 2 sc 3. ‘Cakes and ale’ is earlier found in F S[abie], *Pans Pipe: three pastorall eglogues, in English hexameter* (1595), sig B3^r; and ‘ale and cakes’ in Nicholas Breton, *The Workes of a Young Wyt* (1577), 12; John Dando, *Maroccus Extaticus: Or, Bankes Bay Horse in a Trance* (1595), sigs [C3]^r-[C4]^r; Anon, *Pimlyco: Or, Runne Red-Cap: Tis a Mad World at Hogsdon* (1609), sigs C^r, D^r, D2^r, [D4]^r; and elsewhere. John Norton, co-publisher of *Britannia*, provided in his will for an annual Ash Wednesday feast for the Stationers’ Company of ‘Cakes wine and Ale’: TNA PROB 11/121/20, dated 21 May 1612; proved 12 Jan 1613; published in HR Plomer (ed), *Abstracts from the Wills of English Printers and Stationers, from 1492 to 1630* (Bibliographical Society, 1903), pp 45-7.

16. Bodl MS Smith 19, p 53.

This explanation is clearly the most authoritative of the three, and we can probably accept it as the most convincing: that the word ‘zeal’ was surreptitiously inserted by a presumptuous printworker. Camden’s words are echoed in the next edition of *Britannia*, published in 1637 (shortly before Holland’s death), in which Holland complains – albeit with a degree of exaggeration – that the 1610 edition had seen ‘many grosse and absurd mistakings and alterations of my translation’, including ‘whole Verses and Lines left out, and eftsoones other Words and Sentences foisted in’.¹⁷

Despite Camden’s phrasing, the perpetrator must have been working as a compositor (the artisan who set the type), rather than a pressman (who inked the formes and operated the press, but had little control over the textual content of what was printed). The 1610 *Britannia* was published by a consortium of six London booksellers based in St Paul’s Churchyard, headed by George Bishop (publisher of the 1590, 1594 and 1600 editions) and John Norton (who had joined with Bishop in publishing that of 1607).¹⁸ Its printing was contracted out, like that of all earlier editions, to the Eliot’s Court press in the Little Old Bailey.¹⁹ It was here, presumably, that the errant compositor was employed.

The Eliot’s Court press was itself a syndicate of several master-printers, first established in 1584.²⁰ The two principals at the date of *Britannia*’s publication were Arnold Hatfield, the last surviving founding partner, and Melchisidec Bradwood (?–1618), who had joined in 1602. Also present, and probably already in a position of some responsibility, was Edward Griffin, Hatfield’s apprentice, who would attain his freedom in February 1611 and later succeed as principal master. *Britannia* was printed in instalments over a period of some ten months between August 1609 (when Holland noted that the work was now ‘under the presse’, and that the first ‘written [i.e. printed] sheetes’ had been submitted for Camden’s approval), and May 1610 (when Henry Stanford (c 1552–1616) reported that ‘Mr Tyrell told us yesterday that he saw your englishe Cambden printed’).²¹ The Oxfordshire chapter lies about a third of the way through the volume, so probably went through the press in late 1609. The work, presumably now complete, was formally entered on the register at Stationers’ Hall on 4 June 1610.²² Almost immediately afterwards, Bradwood relocated to Eton to print the works of St John Chrysostom, an ambitious project of eight folio volumes in Greek type edited by Sir Henry Savile, provost of Eton College, which would take three years to complete: he was authorised on 18 June to retain no fewer than six apprentices in this enterprise, and also took from Eliot’s Court a stock of supplementary type, initials and ornaments, and perhaps other materials and equipment.²³ Although he never relinquished his interest in the London establishment, he remained in Eton until his death in 1618. Hatfield died in 1613, when Griffin took over the press in London.²⁴

17. William Camden, *Britannia*, trans Philemon Holland (1637), sig [4V3]’. However, the Banbury entry is not amended in this edition.

18. Edward Arber (ed), *A Transcript of the Registers of the Company of Stationers of London, 1554-1640 AD* (London, 1875-94), vol 3, p 435.

19. The volume is identified as Eliot’s Court work from its decorative initials: cf HR Plomer, ‘Eliot’s Court press: decorative blocks and initials’, *The Library* (1922-3), 4th ser vol 3, pp 194-209.

20. HR Plomer, ‘The Eliot’s Court printing house, 1584-1674’, *The Library* (1921-2), 4th ser vol 2, pp 175-84. AW Pollard and GR Redgrave, *A Short-Title Catalogue of Books Printed in England, Scotland, & Ireland 1475-1640*, 2nd edn (Bibliographical Society, 1976-91), vol 3, pp 58-9. Kenneth Womack, ‘Eliot’s Court Press (1584-1674)’, in JK Bracken and J Silver, *The British Literary Book Trade, 1475-1700*, Dictionary of Literary Biography 170 (Gale Research, 1996), pp 119-23.

21. British Library Cotton MS Jul. C.v, fol 106: Holland to Camden, 25 Aug 1609; published as ‘BM’ [pseud Henry Ellis], ‘P. Holland’s translation of the Britannia’, *Gentleman’s Magazine* (1843), ns vol 20, 489-90. Berkeley Castle Muniments GL5/130: Henry Stanford to Elizabeth, Lady Berkeley (patron of the work), 9 May 1610.

22. E Arber, *Registers*, vol 3, p 435.

23. WA Jackson (ed), *Records of the Court of the Stationers’ Company, 1602 to 1640* (Bibliographical Society, 1957), pp 42-3.

24. In his will, Hatfield continued to describe Bradwood as ‘my partener’: TNA PROB 11/121/43, dated 9 Jan 1613; proved 25 Jan 1613.

The Eliot's Court premises appear to have housed two printing-presses, which suggests the employment of something in the order of four to six compositors and two to four pressmen.²⁵ Although we know little about them, we do have the names of up to a dozen apprentices who might have filled some of these roles at roughly the right date.²⁶ Two stand out as candidates for possible identification as the rogue compositor. The first is William Webb, who was bound apprentice to Melchisidec Bradwood for a term of eight years from June 1609. Webb was the son of a bricklayer from Wargrave, Berkshire, nearly 50 miles from Banbury, close enough for him to have known the town by reputation; while the striking out of his apprenticeship record in September 1611, with a note added that he is 'gone from his master & never to be made free', suggests that he had been a misfit in the printing-house, who during his service might have been tempted to indulge in an underhand act of textual mischief.²⁷ The origins of the second candidate, Edward Whicker, were more local still: he had grown up less than 16 miles from Banbury, at Kirtlington, Oxfordshire, where his father, Adrian, was vicar.²⁸ His brother, also named Adrian, was bound apprentice to the London printer John Windet for seven years from December 1608; and Edward was bound for a similar term to Arnold Hatfield at Eliot's Court from September 1611.²⁹ His apprenticeship therefore began well over a year after *Britannia* had been printed, but he might plausibly already have been engaged at the press in some junior capacity. As a clergyman's son, he was probably 'a good English Schollar at least' – a prerequisite for working as a compositor – and may have had strong religious views.³⁰ Like Webb, Whicker never took up his freedom of the Stationers' Company, but there are no clues to the circumstances in which he abandoned the trade.

It was clearly in a printer's reputational interest to follow the copy he was given with reasonable diligence, but discrepancies did creep in, and were sometimes the cause of comment and complaint. We might instance Camden's own concerns, in anticipation of the publication of the first edition of *Britannia* in 1586, about the 'carelessness or ignorance of the printers'; or Thomas Morton's attribution of errors in his *Apologia Catholica* (1605-6), another work published by Bishop and Norton, 'in part to the printers' improper and excessive haste'.³¹ Incidental lapses aside, the compositor was permitted a degree of latitude in editing his text in order to regularise spelling and punctuation, optimise layout, and even to clarify meaning; as Joseph Moxon argued in 1684, 'it is necessary the *Compositers* Judgment should know where the Author has been deficient, that so his care may not suffer such Work to go out of his Hands as may bring Scandal upon himself, and Scandal and prejudice upon the *Master Printer*'.³² For a compositor to take deliberately subversive liberties with his copy was a much rarer event – but not entirely unknown.

25. The partnership had two presses and one apprentice in 1586; and two presses were allowed to Edward Griffin in 1615; and again to Anne Griffin (his widow) and John Haviland in 1623. DW Rude and LE Berry, 'Tanner Manuscript no. 33: new light on the Stationers' Company in the early seventeenth century', *Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America* (1972), vol 66, 105-114 (107, 113, 121-2). Jackson, *Records*, 75, 158. Personnel figures can only be estimates, but compare those for London printing-houses in 1668; HR Plomer, *A Short History of English Printing, 1476-1898* (Kegan Paul, 1900), pp 208-9, 225-7.

26. For apprentices bound to Hatfield and Bradwood at Eliot's Court between 1602 and 1612, see Arber, *Registers*, vol 2, pp 259, 267, 276, 281; and DF McKenzie, *Stationers' Company Apprentices, 1605-1640* (Bibliographical Soc of the University of Virginia, 1961), pp 12, 17.

27. Stationers' Company Apprentice Register 1605-1666, fol 22; published as McKenzie, *Apprentices*, 12. Webb was bound on 26 Feb 1610, with his indenture backdated to 24 June 1609.

28. Adrian Whicker (d.1616) was curate of Kirtlington by 1596, and vicar 1600-1616. He had at least four sons and five daughters. His brother, Robert, was vicar of Chalgrove, 1585-1609.

29. McKenzie, *Apprentices*, pp 17, 28.

30. Quotation from Joseph Moxon, *Mechanick Exercises on the Whole Art of Printing, 1683-4*, ed H Davis and H Carter, 2nd edn (Oxford UP, 1962), p 193.

31. Bodl MS Smith 74, 3: Camden to Abraham Ortelius, n.d. (c1585). Thomas Morton, *Apologiae Catholicae Pars Secunda* (1606), sig 4g^v.

32. Moxon, *Mechanick Exercises*, p 219.

Another possible instance is found in John Donne's *Pseudo-Martyr*, also published in 1610, in which Donne's report of Catholic recognition of the Pope as 'Supreame spirituall Prince' was rendered in print as 'Supreame spirituall Princesse'.³³

Britannia's allusion to Banbury zeal was probably noticed by readers at a fairly early date. It is not impossible that it helped inspire the name of Zeal-of-the-land Busy, the Banbury baker turned 'superlunatical hypocrite' puritan elder, in Ben Jonson's satire *Bartholomew Fair*, first staged in 1614.³⁴ Jonson, a former pupil of Camden at Westminster School, remained an admirer and 'everlasting friend' of his old schoolmaster, and was well acquainted with his published work.³⁵ One perspective the two shared was a belief in the power of nomenclature – and Camden had elsewhere commented disparagingly on such outlandish puritan baptismal names as 'Free-gift', 'Reformation', 'More fruite' and 'The Lord is neare', bestowed 'upon some singular and precise conceit'.³⁶

More certainly, the *Britannia* passage is echoed in Richard Brathwaite's *A Strappado for the Divell* (1615) – albeit with ale and zeal in conjunction rather than as alternatives, and in immediate reference to Bradford, Yorkshire, which Brathwaite dubs the 'Banberry of the North':

'And well this title with the *Towne* agrees,
Famous for twanging, *Ale, Zeale, Cakes and Cheese*.
But why should I set zeale behinde their ale?
Because zeale is for some, but ale for all.'³⁷

Similarly, Lieutenant Hammond in 1635 found Banbury 'as full of Ale as Zeale', adding, 'I durst not stay long heere for feare that those two (I mean Ale and Zeale) might soon ouerload a Trauellor; therefore, away I hasted from them.'³⁸

In 1632, John Taylor (the 'Water Poet') described the Cherwell flowing towards Oxford

'From Banbury desirous to adde knowledge
To zeale, and to be taught in *Magdalen College*.'³⁹

Four years later, he again characterised Banbury as 'famous for Cakes, Cheese and Zeale' – and on this occasion explicitly attributed the phrase to 'the learned *Camden*'.⁴⁰

Some, however, were beginning to question whether the words were indeed Camden's. In 1652, Elias Ashmole raised the issue in his *Theatrum Chemicum Britannicum*, (given on Internet as *Theatrvum Chemicvm Britannicum*) an anthology of alchemical poetry. Ashmole's principal cause for concern was another interpolation in the 1610 *Britannia*, which identified one of his chosen authors, George Ripley (d. c1490), as a native of Ripley in Surrey, and described him as 'a ringleader of our Alchemists, and mysticall impostor'.⁴¹

33. John Donne, *Pseudo-Martyr* (1610), sig ¶2^v, p 15.

34. Ben Jonson, 'Bartholomew Fair', ed J Creaser, in D Bevington, M Butler and I Donaldson (eds), *The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Ben Jonson* (Cambridge UP, 2012), vol 4, pp 253-428 (quotation from Act 5 sc 6). Cf Patrick Collinson, 'Ben Jonson's *Bartholomew Fair*: the theatre constructs Puritanism', in DL Smith, R Strier and D Bevington (eds), *The Theatrical City: culture, theatre and politics in London* (Cambridge UP, 1995), pp 157-69 (esp 160-3 on Banbury).

35. Bevington *et al*, *Works*, vol 1, 441; and see also *ibid*, vol 2, pp 432-3, 462; vol 4, p 629; vol 5, pp 119-20; and WH Herendeen, 'Like a circle bounded in itself: Jonson, Camden, and the strategies of praise', *Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies* (1981) vol II, pp 137-67.

36. William Camden, *Remains Concerning Britain*, ed RD Dunn (University of Toronto Press, 1984), p 49 (originally published 1605).

37. Richard Brathwaite, 'To all true-bred Northerne Sparks', in *A Strappado for the Divell* (1615), pp 189-210 (204).

38. LG Wickham Legg (ed), 'A Relation of a Short Survey of the Western Counties', in *Camden Miscellany Vol. XVI*, Camden 3rd ser vol 52 (Royal Historical Society, 1936), p 83.

39. John Taylor, *Taylor on Thame Isis* (1632), sig [A7]^r.

40. John Taylor, *The Honorable, and Memorable, Foundations, Erections, Raisings, and Ruines, ... within ten Shires and Counties of this Kingdome* (1636), sig [D6]^r.

41. Camden, *Britain* (1610), 295. Ashmole's volume included six works by or attributed to Ripley (who claimed a Yorkshire and Lincolnshire gentry background): Ashmole, *Theatrum*, pp 107-93, 374-96.

Ashmole took umbrage at these imputations of lowly origins and fraudulence, blaming ‘the Boldnesse of this *Translator*’. He continues:

‘But this kind of liberty I finde Holland hath taken in other parts of that worthy worke, The effects whereof, hath rendred *Banbury* (amongst others) much beholding to him for an eminent *Flout*: For, where *Cambden* fames it for *Cheese* onely, he addes *Cakes* and *Zeale*: Neither of which are to be found in the *Originall*, though doubtlesse both in the *Towne*, and for better purpose then to be *boasted* of.’⁴²

A few years later, Thomas Fuller accepted that the great majority of the 1610 interpolations had been introduced ‘not onely with [Camden’s] knowledge and consent, but also, no doubt, by his desire and help’ – while acknowledging that ‘with some *Antiquaries* [they] obtain not equal Authenticalness with the rest.’⁴³ The Banbury entry, however, he saw as more problematical, and he remained uncertain as to whether it should be read as a candid critique of the town or a vulgar joke:

‘though Zeal be deservedly put first, how inconsistent is it with [Camden’s] *gravity* and goodness, to couple a *spiritual grace* with matters of *corporeal repast*: so that if spoken in *earnest*, it hath more of a *prophane* than *pious* Pen; if in *jest*, more of a *Libeller* than *Historian*.’⁴⁴

While willing to allow that the wording might be attributable in part to a printing error, Fuller was struck by the fact that this went uncorrected in the following edition, which seemed to suggest intent:

‘But what [is] casual in that [edition of 1610], may be suspected *wilful* in the next and last Edition, Anno 1637, where the error is continued out of design to *nick* the Town of Banbury, as reputed then a place of *precise people*, and not over-conformable in their carriage.’⁴⁵

Over the following decades Banbury retained its name for zeal, although the nature of that zeal fluctuated with the religious climate of the times. In June 1710, a century on from the publication of Holland’s translation, a rather different strand was demonstrated in the enthusiastic reception the town accorded the controversial high-church cleric Henry Sacheverell, on his triumphal cross-country progress following his trial before the House of Lords on charges of seditious preaching (he was found guilty, but given only a token punishment).⁴⁶ In the aftermath of these events, Joseph Addison again alluded to Banbury’s repute ‘near a Hundred Years ago ... [as] a Place famous for Cakes and Zeal’, finding it as ‘true to this Day as to the latter Part of this Description; tho’ I must confess it is not in the same Reputation for Cakes that it was’.⁴⁷ (Many would dispute that final remark!)

There is no doubting that Banbury’s renown for zeal had a solid basis in fact; but it seems equally clear that this notoriety was reinforced and perpetuated down the years by the passing remark in *Britannia*, which had begun life as a cheeky gibe by a maverick printworker. And yet, at the end of the day, while mindless zeal was indeed something to be disparaged, informed zeal was not. Just as Camden had argued that ‘zeale with knowledge is ye greatest grace amonge good christians’, so Fuller concluded that ‘this Town need not be ashamed of, nor *grieved* at what *Scoffers* say or write thereof; only let them adde *Knowledge* to their *Zeal*, and then the more of *Zeal* the better their condition.’⁴⁸

42. Ashmole, *Theatrum*, pp 456-7.

43. Fuller, *Worthies*, bk 3, p 128.

44. Fuller, *Worthies*, bk 2, p 328.

45. *Ibid.*

46. Geoffrey Holmes, *The Trial of Doctor Sacheverell* (Eyre Methuen, 1973), pp 242-5. FF Madan, *A Critical Bibliography of Dr Henry Sacheverell*, ed WA Speck (University of Kansas Libraries, 1978), pp 139, 151, 163-4.

47. ‘Isaac Bickerstaff’ [pseud Joseph Addison], ‘From my own Apartment’, *The Tatler* (2-5 Sept 1710) no 220, p 2. Addison attributes the description to Fuller, but his dating suggests that he has Camden in mind.

48. Bodl MS Smith 19, p 53. Fuller, *Worthies*, bk 2, p 328.

SOUVENIRS OF BANBURY: RETAILERS AND TOURISTS BEFORE WORLD WAR I

Ellie Reid

The town of Banbury, long-known for its mention in the nursery rhyme ‘Ride a cock-horse’ and, especially in times past, for its Banbury cakes, will for centuries have offered something to interest visitors and passing travellers. During the 18th century, travelling for recreation, to visit places of cultural or historical interest, or of natural beauty, became fashionable for those with the means. By 1814, the antiquary Samuel Pegge had noted that ‘A Traveller is now-a-days called a Tour-ist’.¹



*A Banbury motto box
(National Trust images)*

Records relating to early tourism are sparse, so this article looks at some of the surviving material culture, that is souvenirs, postcards and visitors’ guides. They give an insight into how the attractions of Banbury and the surrounding area were presented to tourists.² Of course, only items of robust material tend to survive through time, and many ephemeral souvenirs will have been used and discarded; Banbury cakes will have literally been consumed! However, the array of items available, who made them, and who retailed them, provides an insight into how Banbury responded to the increasing numbers of visitors that continually improving transport links brought to the town in the period up to World War I.

There will have been many more visitors to Banbury than actual tourists, and often it is not possible to differentiate between the two. However, in the late 19th and early 20th century, American visitors to Great Britain became a very visible type of tourist whose presence was noted in the newspapers and elsewhere. Some of the wealthy Americans who visited Banbury published memoirs. These now provide some insight into how they saw the town and how the local area contributed to their experience of their ‘old country’

Georgian Banbury 1714-1830: the age of stagecoach travel

During the Georgian period, as Barrie Trinder’s work has shown, Banbury was a relatively prosperous town with a diversity of shops. These included retailers of goods manufactured outside the immediate locality. Banbury may not have been able to attract tourists to the extent of the fashionable spa towns, but the many stagecoach routes that passed through the town would have brought visitors, who were likely to have purchased chap books and sampled Banbury cakes.³ Longer-lasting forms of souvenir available to travellers were small enamelled boxes intended for snuff or, with a mirror inside the lid, for patches i.e. beauty spots. Fashionable from 1770, they were among the toys or trifles made for adults, and those with transfer printed mottos were considered a novelty. Their popularity led to cheap but inferior quality items being produced from 1790 until the first decades of the nineteenth century.⁴

1. S Pegge, *Anecdotes of English Language* (1814) 313 in *Oxford English Dictionary*, s.v. “tourist (n.), sense b,” March 2024, <https://doi.org/10.1093/OED/2239956041>.

2. Much has been written about the history of Banbury and its cakes, cross and nursery rhyme so this article does not seek to replicate that.

3. Barrie Trinder, *Georgian Banbury*, (Banbury: Banbury Historical Society, 2023).

4. Susan Benjamin, *English enamel boxes: from Eighteenth to twentieth centuries* (London: Little Brown, 1993), p 62.

Several different boxes with the motto 'A present from Banbury' are known to survive. The example illustrated with the motto 'A trifle from Banbury' has been dated to 1770-1800 and is held in the National Trust collection at Polesdon Lacey in Surrey. Motto boxes were produced in large quantities at Bilston and Wednesbury, in South Staffordshire, but Banbury examples may have been made in Birmingham which by the mid-eighteenth century was already a renowned centre for the production of metal goods.

In the Victorian period, Birmingham manufacturers produced a wide range of souvenir and commemorative ware. Given its relative proximity to and transport connections with Banbury, Birmingham became an obvious source of supplies for Banbury retailers.

The coming of the railways and the new Banbury Cross

The opening of the Great Western Railway, which saw Banbury's first rail links to Oxford in 1850 and Birmingham in 1852, and the opening of the Buckinghamshire Railway to Verney Junction also in 1850, had the potential to bring many more tourists to the town. Even the briefest of visits enabled rail travellers to experience Banbury cakes while the train was in the station. In August 1853 the *Banbury Guardian* reported that one of the daughters of the Emperor of Russia passed through Banbury on the 4.55pm train and 'made a purchase of some "real Banbury Cakes" from the refreshment stall of Mr. W Betts'.⁵

The erection of the new Banbury Cross in 1859 brought a new attraction for tourists and featured in Banbury's first visitors' guide.⁶ *The strangers' Guide through Banbury, including a brief sketch of its history, a summary of its public buildings, and a glance at its trade*, first published in 1860, was an illustrated narrative which described a traveller's arrival by train and subsequent perambulation round the town. It provided a comprehensive guide to Banbury's facilities as well as an historical portrait of the local area.⁷ Its author, the antiquary William Ponsonby Johnson described Banbury Cross as an 'elegant structure' and outlined the armorial references in its design. He considered the restoration of a cross as much-needed because 'to think of Banbury without a "cross," runs counter to all the reminiscences of childhood and sets at defiance all the records of legendary lore'.⁸ Whether the then modern gothic design with its historical references fulfilled childhood expectations of the cross is debatable, but it became a focal point for visitors and provided a distinctive feature which could be depicted on souvenirs. By January 1860, John Gibbs (1827-1901), the Oxford architect who designed the cross, was arranging for a lithographic print of 'a faithful and beautiful copy of the Cross' to be prepared by one of the best London artists for the cost of 5s 6d plain or 7s 6d tinted.⁹ Orders for the print were being taken at the office of the *Banbury Advertiser*.

The new Banbury Cross became the most depicted view of Banbury, and as will be seen, appeared on a wide range of souvenirs. In later years, alterations were made to the cross originally constructed. Sometime after 1872 the water conduit pipes and basins at the base of the cross were removed and their places filled with stone, and in 1888 the cross was cleaned, the heraldic shields recoloured, new gas standards erected, and iron railings around the cross were installed. In 1914, the original design for the cross was completed with the installation of statues in the three vacant niches. Bronze plaques were also added below the statues recording the destruction of the original Banbury Cross, the

5. *BG*, 11 August 1853, p 3.

6. See William Potts, *Banbury Cross and the rhyme*, (Banbury: The Banbury Guardian Office, 1930) for an account of the building of the cross, the historical references in its design and later refurbishments and changes up to 1927.

7. WP Johnson, *The strangers' guide through Banbury*, (Banbury, G. Walford, [1860]).

8. *Ibid*, p 11.

9. *BA*, 5 January 1860, p 5; this may refer to the lithographic print by John Sunman Austin, *The Cross and Horse Fair, Banbury, Oxon* printed by M Billing of Birmingham, 1860.

construction of the new cross in 1859, and the erection of the statues of Queen Victoria, King Edward VII and King George V to commemorate the coronation of King George V in 1911. These alterations to the Cross and surrounding street furniture help to date the images found on souvenirs.

George Walford (1820-1900), Banbury publisher and stationer

The publisher of *The strangers' Guide through Banbury* and the *Banbury Advertiser* was the printer, stationer and bookseller George Walford, who published and sold an expanding range of local items of interest to visitors. In 1856 he was selling note paper headed with printed engravings of 'views in Banbury' at 1d a sheet.¹⁰ By 1859, seven different views: The Town Hall and High Street, Church and Vicarage, Green and Horsefair, Catholic Church and Schools, St John's Terrace, Great Western and North Western Railway Stations, and Corn Exchange and Corn Hill were available as note paper in 6d. booklets or in picture frames.¹¹ The following year the range was extended to include the new Banbury Cross, a view in the High Street, the Gas Works, and Bodicot House. These views had been engraved from photographs by the Banbury photographer George Herbert (1814-1902).¹² By 1866, Walford had issued two booklets, the second of which included visitor attractions such as Banbury Cross, Edgehill, and Broughton Castle.¹³ The same year, he also began selling photographic views of Banbury and the locality with *carte de visite* size images costing 6d. and stereoscopic slides at 1s.¹⁴ By July 1869 the selection had expanded to include views of Broughton Castle, Wroxton Abbey and parish churches at Bloxham, Adderbury and Middleton Cheney.¹⁵

From 1875, George Walford's son Edwin took over the bookselling and stationery side of the business and continued to cater for the needs of visitors by publishing an extensive new series of photographic views of 'Banbury & Neighbourhood' by 'a Metropolitan Artist' which could be supplied in cabinet or *carte de visite* size or unmounted for scrapbooks.¹⁶ In 1897, already an established map agent, he published *Walford's cycling and touring map of the Banbury District* to cater for a new type of visitor.

Stereoscopic slides

From the mid-1850s, the viewing of stereoscopic photographs (stereographs) became a popular form of entertainment. Two photographs taken a short distance apart were mounted on card next to each other and viewed through a hand-held stereoscope. The two photographs imitated what the left and right eye might see, giving the impression that a 3-D



*Stereoscopic image of Banbury Cross
(wrongly identified as being located in Leamington
in the contemporary caption)*

10. BA, 27 March 1856, p 5.

11. BA, 8 September 1859, p 1.

12. BA, 8 March 1860, p 4.

13. BA, 7 June 1866, p 1.

14. BA, 4 January 1866, p 1.

15. BA, 1 July 1869, p 1.

16. BA, 25 March 1875, p 1.

image was being viewed. Stereoscopic views of Banbury became available to buy by the end of 1862 as photographers Monsieur George & Madame Barat were selling ‘Stereoscopic views of Banbury’ for 1s each from their New Studio, The Green, Banbury.¹⁷ These would have made an easily-transportable souvenir for visitors to take home. Stereoscopic views were widely distributed so that, as well as enabling the viewer to ‘see’ a place without having to visit, they could also advertise the attractions of a locality and encourage tourists.

The illustrated example of a stereoscope slide from a series ‘Original English scenery’ was published in Rochester, NY, between 1885-1887. The image, by an unknown photographer, appears to predate the planting of trees with tree guards in Horsefair in November 1879.¹⁸

A Banbury Stanhope

In 1868, innovations in photography enabled George Walford to advertise a new one shilling novelty – ‘Banbury Cross in miniature’. His advertisement described a tiny bone case of less than an inch, inside of which was a microphotograph of Banbury Cross and its surroundings which could be viewed through a peephole. Referred to now as a ‘Stanhope’ after the lens inside the case to which the photo was affixed, Walford does not seem to have had a name for this novelty but said it was the work of M Lempard, ‘an ingenious Frenchman’ and that an example ‘may be seen any day at the Advertiser office’.¹⁹ None of the Banbury examples, however, are known to have survived.

Banbury Cross and ‘Ride a cock-horse’

Images of the new cross could be used on souvenirs of Banbury or as part of illustrations accompanying the ‘Ride a cock-horse’ nursery rhyme. Although my intention is not to survey illustrations for ‘Ride a cock-horse’, there were inevitably items relating to the nursery rhyme which could be retailed and bought as souvenirs. One example is the ‘Ride a Cock-horse’ silk bookmark produced by Thomas Stevens of Coventry which depicted the new cross rather than one in a generic style. The design of this ‘Stevengraph’ was registered on 24 July 1874 and the bookmark was produced in a couple of different colour combinations. These were sold for 6d. each by William Garrett Mousir (1835-1886), ‘Hosier, haberdasher and general dealer in London, Birmingham and Sheffield goods’ of 40 Market Place, Banbury who sold Coventry silk-woven book-markers, both wholesale and retail.²⁰

In 1875, Mousir was also advertising ‘The Banbury needle case. Containing 100 good useful egg-eyed needles. Assorted sizes, with a photograph of Banbury Cross on the case.’ Also priced at 6d.²¹

One popular form of Victorian souvenir was Mauchline ware. Between the 1850s and 1933, small items of treen made from sycamore or plane, were produced at factories in and around Mauchline, Ayrshire. They were decorated with images of local views, initially painted miniatures, but later transfers of engravings and then photographs. The manufacturers had warehouses and sales offices in Birmingham where orders could be placed from a wide range which included small boxes and all manner of needlework and stationery/writing items. Mauchline ware was generally sold in small shops such as stationers located in the immediate area of the historic site that attracted tourists. Banbury items are rarely

17. *BA*, 18 December 1862, p 1; George Paul Barrett (1834-1914), born Hinckley, Leicestershire, and his wife Margaret née Doherty (1835-1878).

18. *BA*, 27 November 1879, p 4.

19. *BA*, 2 July 1868, p 1.

20. *BG*, 20 January 1876, p 4.

21. *BG*, 15 July 1875.

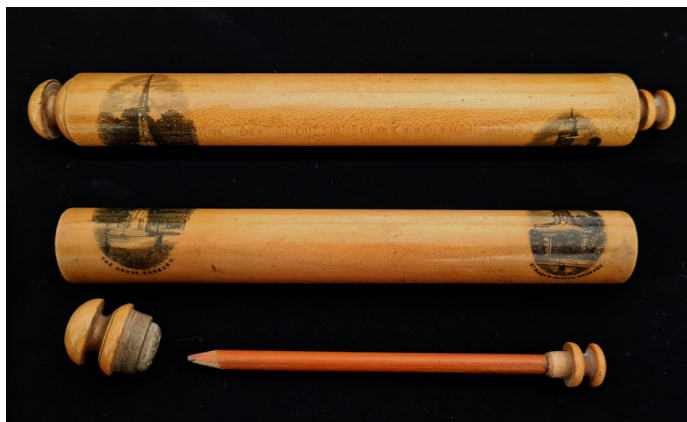


Stevengraph bookmark
manufactured by
T Stevens, Coventry
(image: www.stevengraph-silks.com)

seen and the town is not included in the published list of places for which Mauchline ware has been recorded.²² The cylindrical ruler, with pencil and rubber holders depicted, with transfer images of Banbury Cross (before the 1888 refurbishment) and St Mary's Church, is a rarity, but shows that one unidentified retailer was trying to tap potential demand for Banbury souvenirs.

Goss and crested china

During the 1880s, the Stoke-on-Trent firm of WH Goss introduced to the market for souvenirs and collectables, porcelain miniatures of historic artefacts decorated with local coats of arms.²³ This Goss or crested china was popular through to the 1930s with many firms copying the idea and producing miniature porcelain novelties with heraldic decorations. Adolphus Goss, son of the firm's founder William Goss, travelled the country sketching items in museums suitable for production as miniatures, seeking permission from local councils to reproduce the local coats of arms, and engaging a sole agent in each town to sell Goss china. In 1884, in a letter home to his young wife, he wrote: 'Today I went to Banbury where the sight of Banbury cakes made me somehow think of you darling, I don't know why. I got a nice little order for Banbury arms near the celebrated Banbury Cross'.²⁴ Between 1901 and 1914, lists of Goss agents record the china and glass dealer EG Bloomfield of 52 High Street as the Banbury agent.²⁵ In the 1890s, Edwin Bloomfield was a manager for china and glass dealer Sarah Carter at that address, which is in sight of Banbury Cross and was perhaps the shop Adolphus was referring to.²⁶ WH Goss did not produce an historic miniature relating specifically



A Mauchline ware cylindrical ruler, souvenir of Banbury

22. David Trachtenberg and Keith Thomas, *Mauchline ware: a collector's guide*, (Woodbridge : Antique Collectors' Club, 2002).

23. Ellie Reid, (2024, June 13). 'Goss, William Henry (1833–1906), porcelain manufacturer.' ODNB. Retrieved 8 Aug. 2024, from <https://www.oxforddnb.com>

24. Lynda & Nicholas Pine, *William Henry Goss: the story of the Staffordshire family of Potters who invented heraldic porcelain*, (Horndean, Milestone Publications, 1987), p 192.

25. J.J. Jarvis, (ed.), *Goss Record 1901 & 1902* (Goss Collectors' Club, 2003); J.J. Jarvis, (ed.), *Goss Record*, (London: Evans Bros., 1914 reprinted by Milestone Publications 1989).

26. TNA, 1891 Census, RG12/1183 f.49 (Ancestry.com).

to Banbury but over the years a range of shapes became available decorated with the Banbury Borough's seal which was used as the heraldic decoration.²⁷ Bloomfield's High Street store closed in 1915, and by 1921, Nathan's store in the Market Place, already a retailer of crested china, having been a sole agent for Foley and then Shelley 'heraldic crest ware', had become the Goss agent. The popularity of crested china continued after the war, and in February 1921, at a grand fancy dress carnival at the Town Hall, organised by the Banbury branch of the Shop Assistants' Union, Miss Hellena Maud Smith, an assistant in the china and glass department of Nathan's, wore a 'Goss China' costume in the Trade Speciality Parade which won her a pair of blankets for her efforts.²⁸



Three examples of crested china: A cinerary urn, WH Goss model design registered in 1914 (left); Model of vase from Exeter Museum, Arcadian China (1904-1939) (middle); High-handled pot (shape 41), Shelley late Foley (1910-1916) 'manufactured for Nathan's Domestic Store, 10 Market Place, Banbury' (right)

Chapman Bros. the home furnishers were another retailer of crested china. In December 1905, they advertised their 'special purchases of Miniature Ware in order to meet the present craze' including 'Banbury crest ware of finest china. The Borough Arms are Beautifully executed in enamelled colours. Prices 7½d. to 1/6 each.'²⁹

During the inter-war years, various models of Banbury Cross (with statues in the niches) and of a fine lady on a white horse became available. From 1920, house furnishings retailer William Holloway of Parsons Street sold crested china by various manufacturers. Willow Art brand models of Banbury Cross were made for Holloway by Hewitt and Leadbeater of Stoke-on-Trent, a firm that made models of churches, crosses and historic buildings a speciality. Models of 'A fine lady on a white horse' and the Banbury Cross by AB Jones, manufacturers of Grafton China are among crested china that can be found marked retailed by W Holloway, Banbury. At least another dozen manufacturers provided china novelties with Banbury decorations during the pre- and inter-war period, including some poorly made models of the Banbury Cross and 'Fine Lady' marked 'foreign' and probably made in Germany by manufacturers. Other decorations were also available, WH Goss and Florentine China produced pieces decorated with transfer views of the Banbury Cross, and other manufacturer's offerings included items decorated with 'lucky white heather'.

While Banbury Cross was clearly an attraction for visitors, it also provided a focal point for town celebrations, notably for Queen Victoria's Golden and Diamond jubilees. In June 1887, the huge golden jubilee procession through the town included 'Lady on White Horse, attended by Flower girls and pages'.³⁰ The scene at Banbury Cross was photographed by G[George] Anthony Beales (1864-1901) an 'art photographer' from Spalding who had just established a business at 5 South Bar. Beales advertised a wide range of photographic services including both studio and outdoor photography, and was preparing 'a series of artistic views, churches and places of note in Banbury and neighbourhood'.³¹ He registered

27. A C Fox-Davies, 'The Borough arms', *BG*, 31 May 1894, p 6.

28. *BA*, 17 February 1921, p 8.

29. *BA*, 28 December 1905, p 7.

30. *BA*, 23 June 1887, p 4.

31. *BA*, 2 June 1887, p 1.

his copyright of the photograph, and sent a copy to Queen Victoria who is said to have ordered further copies.³² His photograph does not seem to have been widely reproduced as a souvenir, and in the 1890s his business interest turned away from Banbury and he established studios in Northampton in 1892 and Norwich in 1893.

Ten years later, it was the Banbury and District Photographic Society that took the lead in creating a photographic record of the 1897 Diamond Jubilee celebrations. Honorary secretary Seymour Beale (1857-1917) wrote to the *Banbury Guardian* seeking photographers to get in touch so he could allocate the work 'otherwise we shall be having a voluminous record of the "White Lady" at the expense of the rest of the show'.³³ Although many different images of the celebrations survive, the copyright of two images of the 'Lady on White Horse', one by Seymour Beale (portrait) and the other by James Sprent Robertson (1856-1931) of Adderbury (landscape), were later registered by Thomas Blinkhorn and Edward Buck (trading as Beales & Co.), and became widely reproduced on souvenirs up until at least the 1960s.³⁴



Model of Banbury Cross marked 'Wm. Holloway, Parson's St. Banbury'; Fine lady on a white horse, (design registered in 1922) by Grafton China

American tourists pre-World War I

By 1873, Great Britain saw an increasing influx of wealthy American tourists seeking to visit the land of their birth or that of their ancestors. Arriving by steamer and travelling principally by train, many were drawn to explore places with which they held literary or historical associations.³⁵ With help from travel guides such as *Shaw's tourists' picturesque guide to Great Britain and Ireland, specially prepared for the use of American Tourists*, they took delight in visiting historic buildings and exploring the countryside.³⁶ As Barrie Trinder has shown, Banbury had links with America through emigration, manufacturing and trade, religion, education and entertainment.³⁷ Many Americans would have been familiar with one of the several versions of the nursery rhyme 'Ride a Cock-horse'. Others may have heard of (or may be even tasted imported) Banbury cakes. Moreover, Banbury made a convenient stopping-point for American visitors, whose itineraries frequently took in Oxford, Stratford-upon-Avon and Warwick. Also nearby was Sulgrave Manor, in Northamptonshire, known in the 19th century to be the former home of ancestors of first American president, George Washington. In the 20th century it became a magnet for American tourists, and was considered one of the chief 'American shrines' in England.³⁸

32. TNA, COPY 1/381/23; *Peterborough Advertiser*, 1 May 1901, p 4.

33. *BG*, 10 June 1897, p 5.

34. TNA, COPY 1/474/269; TNA, COPY 1/474/271.

35. 'Coming visitors – the number of Americans', *Times*, 10 April 1873, p 7.

36. George Shaw, *Shaw's tourists' picturesque guide to Great Britain and Ireland, specially prepared for the use of American Tourists*, (London: The Graphotyping Company, [1873]).

37. Barrie Trinder, "The distant scene: Banbury and the United States in the mid-nineteenth century", *C&CH* (Spring 1978) 7/6, pp 163-174.

38. George Baker, *The history and antiquities of the county of Northampton, vol 1*, (London: John Bowyer Nichols and son, and John Rodwell, 1822-1830), pp 513-515; Alfred T Story, *American shrines in England*, (New York: Macmillan, 1908).



Anthony Beales's photograph of the 1887 golden jubilee procession; Seymour Beale's 1897 photograph reproduced as a postcard c.1904, published by Eyre & Spottiswoode

The memoirs of wealthy Americans who visited Banbury in this period provide some insight into how they saw the town and how the local area contributed to their experience of their 'old country'. Three are particularly relevant for this purpose. The Scottish-born American industrialist and philanthropist Andrew Carnegie (1835-1919) visited Banbury with a group of his friends, in the summer of 1881 during a seven-week tour by four-horse carriage from Brighton to Inverness which is described in his memoir *An American four-in-hand in Britain*.³⁹ In 1901 the American lawyer and author Abraham Van Doren Honeyman (1849-1936) who led horse-drawn coach tours for visiting Americans, many based in Oxford and taking in Banbury, published a photographically illustrated account of his experiences, *Bright days in merrie England: Four-in hand journeys*.⁴⁰ Thirdly, in 1908, the Manhattan lawyer and writer, John M Dillon (1867-1911) recounted in his book *Motor Days in England* his experiences touring southern England in a chauffeur-driven car with a group of friends, who visited Banbury en route from Leamington to Oxford.⁴¹

Carnegie and his party travelled to Banbury from Oxford via Blenheim, reaching Banbury at five o'clock. Carnegie describes how they recited 'Ride a cock horse' as they approached the famous Banbury Cross:

'We expected to see a time-worn relic of days long past, and I verily believe that some of us hoped for a glimpse of the old lady on a white horse, with "rings on her fingers and bells on her toes." Imagine our disappointment, then, when we saw an elaborate Gothic structure, looking as new and modern as if it had received its finishing touches but yesterday. ... The charm was gone.'⁴²

39. Andrew Carnegie, *An American four-in-hand in Britain*, (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1886).

40. A VanDoren Honeyman, *Bright days in merrie England: Four-in hand journeys*, (Plainfield, New Jersey: Honeyman, 1901) and (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1903); *BG* 30 July 1903, p 3.

41. John M Dillon, *Motor Days in England*, (New York: GP Putnam's Sons, 1908).

42. Carnegie, *An American four-in-hand*, p 65.

Carnegie's disappointment that Banbury Cross was a "spick-and-span imitation of antiquity" was tempered once he became acquainted with the history of the original cross. In his account, Honeyman too seems to have expected to see something ancient. Of the town he says:

'In Banbury all is life. With the famous Cross as the centre, streets radiate in several directions, full of good-looking shops and bright-eyed lassies, serving within. Banbury may have an odd name, but it is a wide-awake spot for a' that. I say famous Cross, but, alas! The old is gone; the new is startlingly new and to that extent disappointing.'⁴³

Turning his attention to Banbury Castle, Honeyman reported that all that survived was some castle wall in the foundations of a cottage. He then proceeded to recount the tale of Lord Herbert's son and Matilda of Banbury Castle, the 'white lady on a white horse'. Dillon also commented on the remains of the castle and on the 'recently restored' Banbury Cross. He, too, related a version of the story above. As Potts showed in 1930, this was of course a fictional modern ballad. 'The legend of Banbury Cross', which professed to be based on historical tradition, was published in the 19th century by an article clerk Mr JF Haynes.⁴⁴ Neither Honeyman or Dillon made this clear and may have been under the impression that it was an ancient romance.

On the subject of Banbury cakes, Carnegie reported that they were widely made and exported and that they 'are still in as high repute as ever'.⁴⁵ Honeyman's party stayed at the Red Lion hotel, which was pictured, and described as 'a two-storey, ramshackle affair, located directly on the sidewalk, but with good beds and appetizing meals'. They requested Banbury cakes with their supper and Honeyman described them as muffins rather than cakes, declaring that 'their reputation did not overshadow their supreme excellence'.⁴⁶ Honeyman was also much taken by 'The Original Cake Shop', which he considered to be as ancient and more quaint than the Reindeer Inn, where he had paid sixpence to view the interior of the Globe Room. John Dillon's visit to Banbury by motor car, saw the party stop off at the Red Lion only for refreshment but seemingly not Banbury cakes, foreshadowing the future trend for motorists to pass through rather than to stay in the town.

Travelling by coach was a slow and at times difficult mode of transport, but Carnegie was keen to explain the advantages: 'By all other modes the views are obstructed by the hedges and walls ; upon the top of the coach the eye wanders far and wide, ... Everything of rural England is seen, and how exquisitely beautiful it is, this quiet, peaceful, orderly land!'⁴⁷ Their 'slow tourism' brought them closer to the countryside, much in the way that recreational canal boaters were later to do. After a night spent at the White Lion, Carnegie's group had some debate about which route to take to Stratford-upon-Avon as they identified Broughton Castle and Compton Wynyates as being of interest but eventually opted to take in Wroxton Abbey, which Carnegie described as 'a realization of your most picturesque ideal of a great old English house', and Edgehill.⁴⁸

Honeyman used Oxford as a base for his local tours. There he engaged William Franklin, a well-known Oxford liveryman, to provide up to four coaches, William himself driving the leading coach. Honeyman's routes also included Edgehill where the hilly terrain was not

43. Honeyman, *Bright Days*, p 29.

44. The tale and its origins is better described in: William Potts, *Banbury Cross and the rhyme*, (Banbury: The Banbury Guardian Office, 1930), pp 59-60; Potts refers to: 'Varieties', *Leisure Hour*, 28 August, 1875, p 560.

45. Carnegie, *American four-in-hand*, p 66.

46. Honeyman, *Bright Days*, p 33.

47. Carnegie, *American four-in-hand*, pp 38-9.

48. Carnegie, *American four-in-hand*, p 69.



Postcard published by Benjamin Morland

surprisingly a challenge for the horses. As a consequence, he described choosing routes that avoided making the horses negotiate the steepest part of Edgehill whilst pulling a coach with 14 people onboard.⁴⁹

The local gradients were equally a problem for John Dillon's party travelling in early motor cars. The party's visit to Banbury was made enroute from Leamington, their route taking them via Edgehill and Upton House which was 'worth going to see for its view alone'.⁵⁰ On leaving Banbury after lunch, the weather deteriorated, and Dillon described the dangers, 'as the brakes would not hold going down-hill.' Half-way up a steep ascent near Deddington their chauffeur had to pull over to let a large wagon pass downhill. The hill start then required proved too much for the car and the occupants had to alight in the pouring rain and get help from another vehicle to get the car up the hill. The only consolation for the party was that at the summit of one of the hills, sunlight broke through the clouds and bathed a church and its surrounding village in the countryside below with a shaft of golden light, whilst all around remained shrouded in mist and gloom.

In 1907, the dangers of motoring locally had the most unpleasant outcome for one unfortunate party of American tourists. Harry and Hilma Johnson of Berkeley, California and Mr and Mrs James Blake of California who were staying in Oxford, where they hired a chauffeur-driven motor car for a day trip to Stratford-upon-Avon. They reached Banbury at 11 am and then proceeded to Edgehill and down Sunrising Hill, but crashed before the bend halfway down. Harry Johnson, a 28 year-old attorney, subsequently died and the three other passengers were badly injured.⁵¹ The cause of the accident was investigated at the inquest into the death of Mr Johnson, which was held at Rupert Cottage close to the scene and where the Johnsons had been taken after the accident. The chauffeur Thomas Kent had six years driving experience and was well regarded by his employers Messrs Coxeter. However, it transpired that he had only ever driven up the hill before, not down. Whilst freewheeling downhill, controlling his speed with the footbrake, Kent said they approached the bend rather more quickly than he expected. The rain on the windscreen

49. Honeyman, *Bright Days*, p 34.

50. Dillon, *Motor Days*, pp 150-1.

51. *BG*, 13 June 1907, p 8.

obscured his view of the warning sign. It seems he lost control of the car on the slippery road by applying the handbrake to try and get round the bend but in doing so, burst a tyre which caused the car to swerve and turn over. A photograph of the aftermath of the accident later appeared on a postcard.

The Globe Room at The Reindeer Inn and Sulgrave Manor, Northamptonshire

The American enthusiasm for the historical buildings of the Banbury area, at the beginning of the 20th century had two contrasting outcomes. Honeyman, having paid his sixpence to the proprietor, seemed somewhat underwhelmed by the sight of the Globe Room and its tradition of a connection with Oliver Cromwell. However, the sale of the Globe Room's architecturally significant interior fittings and their removal from the Reindeer Inn in 1912, saw this physical manifestation of Banbury's history seemingly destined for the USA.⁵²

The fate of Sulgrave Manor was somewhat different. Although Honeyman's tours did not take in Sulgrave, he described the Washington connection, and the manor was pictured in his book. He commented: '... a visit should be paid to it from Banbury by Americans, whose patriotism is strong enough to lead them to take a little pains thus to display it'. In 1914, a century after the Treaty of Ghent was signed formalising the peace agreement between the United States of America and Great Britain, Sulgrave Manor House was bought by the Anglo-American Peace Committee.⁵³ Restoration had to await until after World War I but it opened to the public in 1921 and inter-war official guides saw Banbury promoting itself as 'The most convenient centre for George Washington Country.'⁵⁴

Americans and the craze for souvenir spoons

Although the three memoirs of the Banbury tourists did not mention any purchases of souvenirs, the enthusiasms of American visitors did influence the souvenirs available nationally. In the late 19th century, many Americans who toured continental Europe bought highly decorative enamelled spoons which were produced as souvenirs of the places they visited. In America, two innovative silversmiths started producing spoons: MW Galt of Washington DC produced George Washington spoons in 1889 and Seth F Low designed Salem Witch spoons, which along with souvenirs of the 1893 Chicago World Fair marked the beginning of a souvenir spoon collecting craze which lasted until World War I. In Britain, where commemorative spoons had been issued for royal events, and special events, the demand for spoons as souvenirs of places seems to have been stimulated by the demands from American tourists.⁵⁵

In Banbury, souvenir cutlery was available for sale through much of the twentieth century. In common with other tourist destinations, latterly the goods produced were of poor quality and often intended only for display, although solid silver examples were produced at least until the beginning of the 1960s. The three examples depicted give an insight into Banbury souvenirs in the first part of the century.

The art nouveau style spoon embellished with an image of Banbury Cross on the bowl was actually manufactured in America by Simmons & Paye, of Providence, Rhode Island, and imported and assayed by London importers RM Marples & Son. The silversmiths were

52. Honeyman, *Bright Days*, p 33; John Harris, *Moving Rooms*. (New Haven, Conn. : Yale University Press, 2007), pp 107-110; *Cake & Cockhorse*, November 1964, p 53.

53. Honeyman, *Bright Days*, pp 37-38; Martin Sirot-Smith, 'Sulgrave 3: After the Washingtons', *C&CH* (Summer 1998) vol.14/3, pp 58-66.

54. *Banbury: The centre for Washington Country*, *Official guide of the Banbury Town Council and Banbury and District Chamber of Trade*, (Cheltenham: Ed. J. Burrow, [1924/5].

55. <https://spoonplanet.com/Britishspoons.html>

active until 1901 and the spoon assayed in 1904/5 so although the retailer is unknown, it shows that a significant effort was made to cater for demand.

In 1907, the High Street watchmaker, jeweller and silversmith Eustace Durran launched a new style of Banbury spoon that he had designed, which the *Banbury Guardian* described as 'quite the nicest thing in local souvenirs' that had been seen for some time.⁵⁶ Available in silver, silver-gilt and silver plate with some enamelling, the spoon had Banbury Cross on the handle which was topped with the shield and sun of the borough arms surrounded by a scroll with the English motto 'The Lord God is a Sun and a Shield'. The armorial decoration was also available as a pendant. Durran actively promoted his Banbury souvenir goods and in the 1910s newspaper advertisements showed spoons available from 2s 6d and pendants 1s. By 1918, he was advertising 'souvenir tea spoons, pickle forks, butter knives, bread forks and jam spoons', and the family business continued to sell Banbury souvenirs after Durran's death in 1926.⁵⁷ The silver pickle fork illustrated, was manufactured by John Round of Sheffield and was assayed in 1914. Spoons of a similar design were still being assayed in 1924 and a silver-plated example has been seen which was marked 'Eustace Durran silversmith Banbury'. The design of the cross does not include the statues added in 1914, so this design seems to be based on Durran's 1907 spoon, although the borough motto is in Latin rather than English.



Three examples of Banbury souvenir cutlery

The strainer spoon was manufactured in EPNS (electro plated nickel silver) by an unknown manufacturer 'RB'. Items by this company are known to have been made during the inter-war years. The design on the shield is unclear but it appears to more closely resemble St Mary's Church rather than Banbury Cross, so is a rather atypical souvenir. The retailer is unknown.

Brassware souvenirs

Towards the end of the 19th century, old brassware became collectable and the 1880s saw a craze for collecting antique horse brasses in the traditional designs worn on horse tack to ward off evil and bring good luck. Factory-made replicas and commemorative and souvenir designs began to be produced including a Banbury Cross design showing the cross (without statues in the lower niches) and a lady on a horse. In 1910, the *Banbury Guardian* reported that Chapman's, the High Street furnisher, was selling a brass model of Banbury Cross for 3s 6d for use as an ornament or letter-weight.⁵⁸



Banbury Cross horse brass

⁵⁶ *BG*, 17 October 1907, p 5.

⁵⁷ *BA*, 23rd May 1918, p 1, 14th October 1926, p 1, 6th December 1928.

⁵⁸ *BG*, 24 November 1910, p 5.



*A shoe horn manufactured by Crofts and Assinder, Birmingham;
Banbury Cross candlestick holder, maker unknown)*

During the 1920s and 1930s brassware souvenirs in the form of domestic utensils were increasingly popular as cottage-style interiors became fashionable. Much of the brassware was made in Birmingham by manufacturers such as Crofts and Assinder. Banbury souvenirs included a doorknocker in the form of the ‘fine lady on a white horse’ as the knocker and Banbury Cross as the back plate. Hearthside and other utensils with a variety of Banbury Cross designs included toasting forks, corkscrews and as depicted in these two well-worn examples, shoe horns and candlestick holders.

Banbury postcards and photograph books before World War I

Picture postcards of local scenes survive in large numbers as they were a cheap and collectable form of souvenir. The sending of privately published postcards (as opposed to official Post Office cards) at a postcard rate of a halfpenny stamp first became permissible on 1 September 1894. The earliest posting date for picture postcards seen for Banbury, at the time of writing, is 28 Sept 1900.⁵⁹ In 1902, a change in Post Office regulations permitted messages to be written on the same side as the address other than on postcards being sent abroad. This enabled the reverse of the card to be entirely decorative and a national boom in postcard publishing followed. Whilst visitors and tourists bought and sent postcards or kept them as souvenirs, postcards were a cheap form of communication sent by local people to friends and family, and were also used by businesses for advertising. Collecting postcards was a popular hobby which helped fuel demand for new images to add to collectors’ albums.

The market for postcards in Banbury was sufficient to attract both national and local postcard publishers who produced both artist-drawn and photographic cards. Most of the cards of Banbury produced during the Edwardian ‘golden age of postcards’ were photographic. Typical scenes included: Banbury Cross often with St Mary’s Church in the background; Banbury Market Place and Banbury Town Hall, both often photographed on market day; the view along Parsons Street showing both the ‘original cake shop’ and the Reindeer Inn; The Globe Room at The Reindeer Inn; and the pargetted timber-

⁵⁹. *Picture postcard annual 2024*, (Nottingham: Reflections of a Bygone Age, 2023), p 58.

framed buildings in the High Street occupied by Betts bakery, purveyors of Banbury cakes, and Neale & Perkins ironmongery. Views of Banbury Cross predominated and, on the whole, postcards represented popular scenes likely to appeal to tourists as well as locals.

Many of the leading national postcard publishers produced photographic postcards of Banbury, including: Valentine & Sons Ltd. (Dundee), The Photochrom Company (Tunbridge Wells), and ETW Dennis & Sons Ltd. (Scarborough) publishers of 'Dainty' postcards, and Brown & Rawcliffe Ltd.

(Liverpool). These firms could produce cards in black and white, part-tinted or in full colour, on their own presses. Other smaller publishers often had their cards produced by German postcard printers who had access to more advanced printing technology than was available locally.



*Artist-drawn advertising postcard for
The Red Lion Hotel*

The leading publisher of artist-drawn postcards was Raphael Tuck & Sons Ltd, a long-established publisher in London of a vast range of printed products including greetings cards and calendars. By 1907, a set of six 'Oilette' postcards of Banbury area scenes by landscape artist Henry B Wimbush (1858-1943) were issued in Tuck's Picturesque Counties series.⁶⁰ Wimbush's oil paintings presented romantic, idealised images of: Banbury Cross and St Mary's Church, the market place, 'the old houses' in the High Street, Edge Hill, Broughton Castle, Wroxton village. Other examples of artist-drawn cards include Regal Art Publishing Co.'s 'Picturesque Oxfordshire' series which included a card of The Reindeer Inn, and Langsdorff and Co.'s image of Banbury Cross. These all had considerable touristic appeal and depict the locations mentioned in the accounts of the American tourists.

Artist-drawn cards were often used for advertising; Tuck's Oilette of 'The Old Houses' High Street, was a painting of Betts' Bakery which can be found with an advertisement for Banbury cakes printed on the address side.⁶¹ Many copies of postcards of both the Red Lion and White Lion hotels still survive. These cards have captions promoting the historic attractions of these old coaching inns and were perhaps freely available or alternatively bought in great numbers by hotel visitors. The example above posted in 1913, is an example of hotel promotion by the proprietor John W Bloomfield (1845-1917) who was a prominent public figure and Mayor of Banbury 1911/12.

The bookseller, stationer and printer, Harry Bennett Stanley (1869-1936) of 32 High Street, Banbury, was one of the town's first traders to publish their own local postcards and books of local views.⁶² Stanley took up photography in the 1890s and was well-known locally as a lantern-projectionist. He was an agent for the landscape photographs taken by the renowned firm of GW Wilson & Co. of Aberdeen and by the summer of 1897 he

60. Series no. 7632 Picturesque Counties: Oxfordshire III. Tuck also issued an image of the Reindeer Inn in their Old Manor Houses series, and around 1913 a set of photographic postcards of the local area. Images of all these cards can be found online at: www.tuckdbpostcards.org

61. www.tuckdbpostcards.org/items/29350-the-old-houses-high-street/picture/1

62. BG, 12 August and Sulgrave Manor 1897, p 5; Stanley traded in Banbury until 1904 after which he became landlord of the White Hart Hotel, Winchcombe, Gloucestershire, before emigrating to Canada around 1911 where he worked as a photographer for the Canadian Kodak Company. BG 30 July 1936, p 4.

had already published three books containing their local views.⁶³ Photographs of Banbury, published in 1894, included views of the town and the interior of the Globe Room, views of Wroxton Abbey, Compton Wynyates and images of Broughton Castle including previously unseen interiors. The *Banbury Guardian* reported 'The book will have interest for our American cousins as it contains views of Sulgrave Church and Sulgrave Manor House, the home of the Washingtons.'⁶⁴

In 1901 Stanley published a book of photographs entitled *Banbury and the County of Shakespeare*, clearly aimed at tourists, which was described as 'the most comprehensive view book' so far seen.⁶⁵ The majority of the images appear to have been supplied by Scarborough photographers ETW Dennis & Sons Ltd. The 16 Banbury area images selected were extended beyond the town to include the local historic sites: Broughton Castle, Wroxton Abbey, Edgehill, and Compton Wynyates. The book also included an engraving of the original St Mary's Church and a photograph of the 1897 diamond jubilee celebration re-enactment of 'the lady on a white horse' at Banbury Cross, two reproductions of illustrations of English Civil War scenes at the Reindeer Inn and the well-known engraving of 'The Puritan' who hanged a cat.⁶⁶ The *Banbury Guardian* reported that at the same time, Stanley also issued a set of local view postcards of historical subjects which from examples seen, appear to have comprised the same images used in his book.

In 1904, several other Banbury retailers introduced new postcards of local views. In June the bookseller and stationer Walter R Sansbury (1867-1934) of 60 Bridge Street started a series of coloured postcards which included Banbury Cross and church, old houses in the High Street, Broughton Castle, the Town Hall on market day, Wroxton Abbey and Edgehill. These were also sold by his father Richard Sansbury, bookseller, stationer and tobacconist at 9 Horsefair.⁶⁷ Both of their business premises were located where tourists arriving by rail travellers or road might pass. By 1911 Walter Sansbury was a professional photographer trading from 36 Bridge Street. He subsequently gained many commissions to photograph the interiors of country mansions including one to make a photographic record of Wroxton Abbey interiors for Lord North.⁶⁸ In July 1904, photographers Messrs Beales and Co. issued both plain and coloured local views in their 'Bee' series. The range of cards included town scenes from new points of view and village scenes not previously seen on postcards.⁶⁹

The most prominent local publisher and retailer of postcards in the pre-World War I era was Benjamin Robert Morland (1866-1933).⁷⁰ Morland, a printer by trade, had arrived in Banbury in 1897 and purchased the printing business established by Thomas Ward Boss (1825-1904) at the Corn Exchange. In addition to the Exchange Printing Works, Morland also bought the bookselling, stationery and printing business run by Jane Eliza Rusher (1822-1903) at 30 Market Place. He transferred the bookselling and stationery business to 31 Market Place where he also sold fancy goods and where, in late August 1900, he also opened a sub-post office.⁷¹

63. Roger Taylor, 'Wilson, George Washington (1823-1893)', *ODNB*, www.odnb.com ; The University of Aberdeen holds the photographic archive of G W Wilson, and his company's views of Banbury have been digitised and can be viewed online on their digital photographic collections website.

64. *BG*, 14 June, 1894, p 8.

65. *Banbury and the county of Shakespeare* (Banbury: HB Stanley, 1901); *BG*, 12 December 1901.

66. This photo of the 'the lady on the white horse' is slightly different from those registered as having been taken by Robertson and Beale; 'The Puritan' by Henry Meyer & Edward Prentis c1833.

67. *BG*, 2 June 1904; *Banbury Beacon* 4 June 1904 p 4; Richard Sansbury published cards before this date as an example of a black and white card with an undivided back printed in Dresden.

68. *BG*, 26 July 1934.

69. *BG*, 7 July 1904.

70. *BG*, 16 March 1933, p 5.

71. *BG*, 23 August 1900.



*HB Stanley's shop in sight of Banbury Cross.
Extract from 'High Street Banbury'
(George Washington Wilson & Co.)*



*Sulgrave Manor House ancestral home
of President Washington
(George Washington Wilson & Co.)*

By November 1902 Morland claimed to have 8,000 picture postcards in stock, and by April 1906 he was a wholesale and retail seller of Raphael Tuck's postcards. In July 1904, Morland published a series of 100 different postcards which were both plain and coloured, and featured a brief description of the place photographed. His selection included views of Banbury and the surrounding villages, and subjects of touristic appeal such as James Robertson's 1897 photograph of 'the lady on the white horse', images of the Globe Room at the Reindeer Inn, and views of historic houses including Sulgrave Manor. The *Banbury Guardian* reported that 'the needs of all visitors should not fail, we imagine, to be met in this large assortment', and that Morland 'appeals to those who believe in supporting home industries by stating that the cards are entirely produced in Banbury'.⁷²

Banbury town guides

In 1901, Morland, who already published a general directory of the town, *Morland's Directory of Banbury and District*, issued his *Guide to Banbury and District* aimed at visitors and inhabitants.⁷³ Illustrated with line-drawings and comprising a description of the town and local area accompanied by 'interesting facts' and historical anecdotes, the guide included advertising e.g. for hotels and purveyors of Banbury cakes, etc. The description of the villages around included details of places of interest such as 'the noted Edgehill Tea Gardens, the Proprietor of which is Mr G Griffin, who is evidently alive to the requirements of Visitors. There is every accommodation here for Refreshments, recreation, and storage of Cycles, Traps, Wagonettes, Brakes, Horses, &c'.⁷⁴ The *Banbury Guardian*, which criticised Morland's effort for quoting old but now questionable sources, conceded that the guide would have a ready market. During the first decade of the twentieth century, national publishers offered to produce guides for towns and cities wishing to boost their economic prosperity and encourage visitors. In 1906, Messrs. W Mate and Sons of Bournemouth offered to produce one of their lavishly illustrated guides for the Banbury area, for distribution nationally through their agents. This caused some controversy as it was unclear whether ratepayers or retailers would accrue any costs relating to its production and distribution, and there was some debate about whether such a guide could be produced locally.⁷⁵ Morland, however, rose to the challenge presented by the Mate's proposal and by the end of the decade had produced *The illustrated guide to Banbury and district* with photographic illustrations

72. BG, 28 July 1904, p 5.

73. BG, 25 April 1901, p 5.

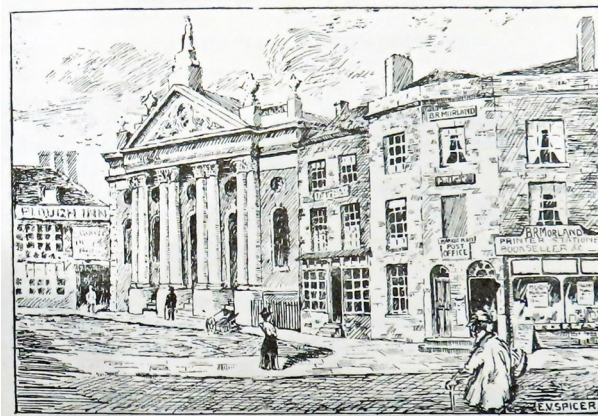
74. *Guide to Banbury and District*, (Banbury: B R Morland, [1901]), p 43.

75. BG, 5 July 1906, p 6.

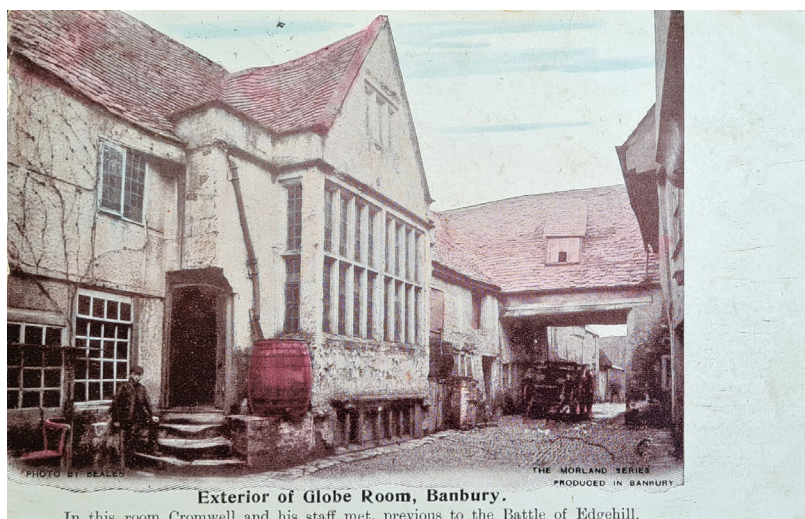
and a fold-out map.⁷⁶ It is unclear whether the Mate's guide was ever published, but two editions of *A guide to Banbury* in the series of Borough Guides produced by the Cheltenham publisher Edward J Burrows appeared by the end of the decade, and the firm became the principal publisher of official Banbury guides in the first half of the twentieth century.⁷⁷

Conclusion

Before the First World War, Banbury welcomed increasing numbers of travellers, visitors and tourists for rest and refreshment. This article has considered briefly some visitors who had come from across the Atlantic, but further research could consider other types of tourist, perhaps those arriving by charabanc or bicycle. Tourists who travelled for recreation, presented Banbury retailers with an opportunity to sell locally produced books, postcards, prints and photographic images, as well as manufactured souvenirs sourced from elsewhere. Visitors were attracted by the reputation of Banbury cakes and childhood associations with Banbury Cross. They admired surviving old buildings and the historic and natural attractions of the wider countryside. Banbury Cross, although modern, became a focal point for visitors and remains an enduring landmark for the town. While the outbreak of the First World War brought an end to this early chapter in the history of Banbury tourism, the inter-war and post-Second World War periods, which brought considerable changes to the town, offer scope for further research



*Benjamin Morland's shop and Post Office
(BR Morland Guide to Banbury and District, 1901)*



*Morland postcard posted in 1904; the space on the front for
a message was needed by visitors sending cards abroad*

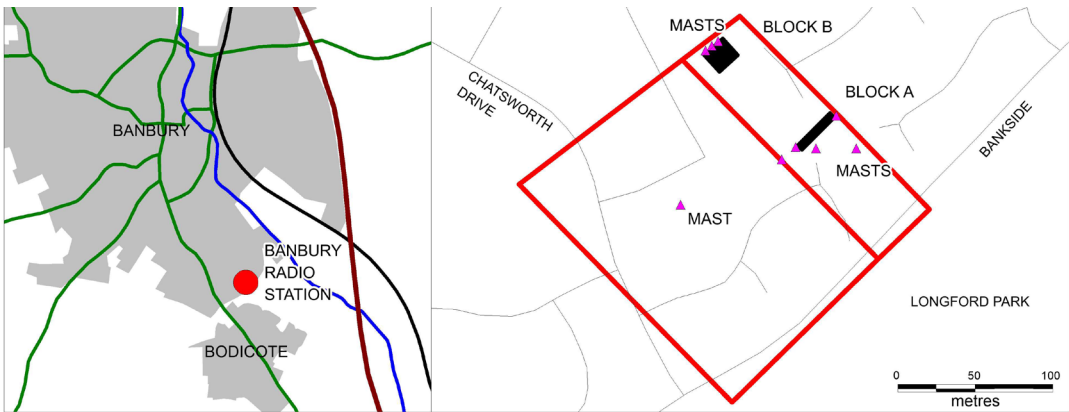
76. B R Morland, *The illustrated guide to Banbury and district*, (Banbury, [c1910]).

77. BA, 16 September 1909, p 7; Edward J. Burrow, *A Guide to Banbury*, (Cheltenham, 1910).

BANBURY RADIO STATION

David Sabin

Banbury Radio Station was located at Bodicote Grounds Farm (OS NGR 446365 238875) with the site initially covering two acres (0.8 ha) which was later extended to eight acres (3.24 ha). An access track to both the station and the farm ran north east from the Oxford Road (A 4260), the station buildings being approximately 380m north east from the road and 200 m south west of the farmhouse. The later eight-acre site included a small field immediately to the south west of the station buildings where there was a mast (OS NGR 446304 238802) and aerial array, several other masts were located within the curtilage of the station buildings. Prior to 1932 the site lay within the civil parish of Bodicote but on 1 April of that year it became part of the enlargement of Banbury and is now covered by housing constructed in the 1970s.

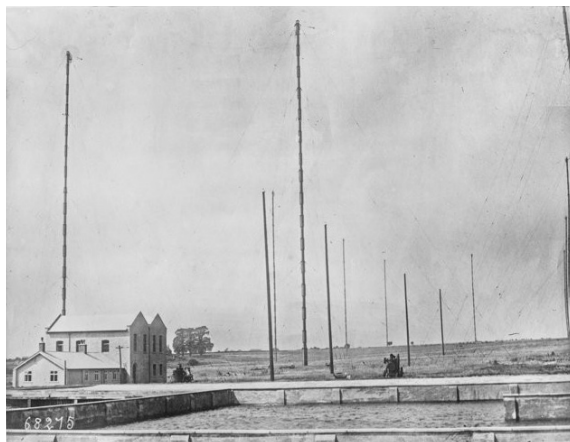


Location map and basic plan of Banbury Radio Station during the post-WWII period

Banbury station was constructed in 1921 initially as the long-wave receiving station for the first link of the post-WWI revived Imperial Wireless Chain, but was used only occasionally after the late 1920s due to technical advances that led to the closure of the long-wave link with Cairo. During the pre-WWII period it was mainly referred to as the 'Banbury Wireless Station'. Banbury and the Imperial Wireless Chain transmitter at Leafield, 4.5 miles north west of Witney, Oxfordshire were often referred to as the 'Oxford Station' in the 1920s. In 1940 it was used by staff evacuated from the GPO (General Post Office) Radio Laboratories at Dollis Hill, near Willesdon and wartime references to the site call it the 'Banbury Radio Station'. After WWII the site was used for radio monitoring and by the early 1950s it became the 'Banbury Radio Measuring Station' to assist the implementation of international radio plans.

The Post-WWI Imperial Wireless Chain Receiving Station

The Imperial Wireless Chain was conceived by Marconi's Wireless Telegraph Company in 1910 but due to much political wrangling construction work did not commence until late 1913 and into 1914. The scheme aimed to provide diplomatic and commercial communications across the British Empire by wireless. At this time communications relied on cable links that



*Leaffield Wireless Station, transmitter site for the
Imperial Wireless Chain
(Bibliothèque Nationale de France)*

were seen as potentially vulnerable and costly, and wireless offered an alternative. In January 1915 all work on the scheme was halted following the outbreak of war in 1914; however, a number of other countries, including the United States and Germany, continued to implement similar schemes throughout the war and when hostilities ended Britain was at a disadvantage.

A conference attended by representatives of the GPO, the War Office, the Admiralty and staff from the Marconi Company was held in March 1912, with one of the main discussions relating to the choice of a site for the British stations.¹ To avoid interference to shore stations, the Admiralty wanted the transmitter as far

away as possible from the coast, and the War Office did not want anything in the eastern part of the country, due to defence considerations. Wales was unsuitable geographically and no land was available on Salisbury Plain, an area that had been previously suggested by the GPO. The location chosen for the receiving station for the pre-WWI scheme was at Morgan's Hill, close to Devizes in Wiltshire. The site was referred to as the 'Devizes Wireless Station' although it was located in the nearby parish of Bishops Cannings. The transmission side of the wireless link was at Langley near Leaffield, generally referred to as the 'Leaffield Wireless Station', the first link in the chain being between Britain and Egypt with similar receiving and transmitting sites under construction near Cairo (Abu Suier and Abu Zabal).² Transmitters and receivers were located on separate sites to allow duplex operation i.e. the ability to send and receive at the same time. Due to the cancellation of the Marconi contract after the outbreak of war Devizes, Leaffield and the Cairo stations were left incomplete but were utilised for military purposes during the conflict.

The receiving site at Devizes had six 300-foot masts in place when the Royal Engineers took over the site in 1915 and the linear arrangement of masts would have been capable of supporting an aerial some 2,300 metres in length; plans for the Imperial Wireless Chain aerial systems exist in The National Archives and date back to May 1912.³ The army constructed a receiving station of wooden huts clad with corrugated iron at the centre of the line of masts (a seventh 300-foot tower may also have been constructed at this time) and the site became a base for radio interception and intelligence.⁴ After the war the GPO took on the site and ran a highly successful maritime communication station until 1929 when it was abandoned in favour of new locations at Highbridge, Somerset and Portishead, near Bristol, together known as the 'Portishead Radio' which closed in 2000.⁵

1. IL Sanders, G Bartram, & S Joyce *Connecting an Empire. The Imperial Wireless Chain: Origins and Early Developments, 1910 – 1928*, (Castle Ridge Press, Morgan Hill, California 2023), p 25.
2. Crawley CG Chetwode 'Post Office Point-To-Point Services. Stations for Overseas Communication' *The Wireless World and Radio Review* 1925, vol. XVI no 18.
3. *Report of the Cables (Landing Rights) committee on questions arising out of agreements between the Western Union Telegraph Co. and the Anglo-American and Direct United States Cable Cos. Blueprints of Imperial Wireless Chain aerial systems*. Board of Trade, 1912. TNA MT/10/1419/1.
4. J Bruce *Defending our skies*. How Signals Intelligence helped combat air raids in World War I. GCHQ 2017. <https://www.gchq.gov.uk/information/defending-our-skies> [accessed 2023].
5. L Bennett *Portishead Radio. A Friendly Voice on Many a Dark Night*, (New Generation Publishing, 2020).

With the Devizes site operating as a maritime station for the GPO, and interest in the revival of the Imperial Wireless Chain soon after the war, a new location was required for the receiving part of the link with Egypt. The specific reasons why Banbury was chosen are uncertain but there are a number of factors that could have ultimately favoured the choice of a two-acre site at Bodicote Grounds Farm. Wireless experimentation and advances in technology had continued through WWI and with it, improved understanding of the technical and physical requirements of a wireless station. The transmitter and receiver sites at this time required separation due to the high power of the transmitted signal which contained spurious harmonics and other sources of noise; duplex operation required minimal interference to the receiving frequency. Interference to the receiver could potentially create significant difficulty in picking up the comparatively weak signal from the Egyptian transmitter. Very low frequencies (VLF) transmitted tend to propagate as a ground wave following the curvature of the earth with a vertically polarised wave front that effectively dips towards the earth rather than following a straight line into space. Reflection from the lower part of the ionosphere (the ionized part of the upper atmosphere of the earth) can occur at night and the waves may travel extremely long distances due to the earth's surface and lower ionosphere effectively creating a waveguide.

High magnitude radio waves from a high-power transmitter are required to communicate reliably to the sort of distances required by the Imperial Wireless Chain (approximately 2,000 miles) especially during daylight. Due to the very long wavelengths transmitted (several thousand metres), aerial systems are inefficient because they are electrically short and close to the ground; a resonant vertical aerial of high efficiency would need to be a quarter wavelength in height which is completely impractical. As a consequence, a significant amount of energy is lost in the transmitter aerial/ground system. The pre-WWI transmitter at the Leafield Wireless Station was initially intended to be a 300 kW Marconi spark-gap system but the post-war transmitter installed for the GPO was a 250 kW Elwell-Poulsen arc system operating at 12,350 metres (24.3 kHz) in the very low frequency (VLF) radio band.⁶ The spark transmitter was considered dated and inferior to the arc system at this time, although both systems had the potential to cause considerable amounts of interference. Leafield's arc transmitter was certainly causing problems to wireless receivers within Oxfordshire, and Hansard records that jamming by the transmitter was discussed in a House of Commons sitting in August 1924; alterations to the transmitter circuit at this time had apparently made a considerable improvement.⁷

Marconi believed that certain aerials had directional properties that could be exploited to effectively create gain to the transmitted or received signal in the required direction. The orientation of the line of masts at Devizes and at Leafield was close to the great circle path to Egypt in order to exploit a small amount of gain from the long wire 'inverted L' type aerial. At right angles to the alignment of the aerial, the radiated power was thought to be lower and signals received from that direction weaker, a property that could be exploited where interference is a problem. An imaginary line joining the aerials at Leafield and Devizes forms a right angle with their alignment; this angle was important enough to be shown schematically on the Marconi Wireless Telegraph Company's plan of the Devizes site which lies to the south west of Leafield.⁸ The schematic Board of Trade plan⁹ from 1912

6. EH Shaughnessy, 'The Post Office Wireless Services' *Post Office Electrical Engineers' Journal*, (The Electrical Review Ltd, London, 1926) vol 19/1, pp 58-66.

7. Hansard, House of Commons Debate, vol 176 col. 3100, 7th August 1924. <https://www.api.parliament.uk/historic-hansard/commons/1924/aug/07/leafield-wireless-station-jamming>.

8. TNA WO 78/4326 *Devizes Plan of Wireless Stations*, November 25th 1915.

9. *Report of the Cables (Landing Rights) committee on questions arising out of agreements between the Western Union Telegraph Co. and the Anglo-American and Direct Unites States Cable Cos. Blueprints of Imperial Wireless Chain aerial systems*, Board of Trade, 1912. TNA MT/10/1419/1.

also indicates this geometrical relationship between the transmitter and receiver sites. The Banbury Wireless Station was also located at a right angle with Leaffield, with respect to the great circle path to Egypt, but to the north east. A line joining the Devizes and Banbury sites is 52 miles in length and passes through Leaffield! It is, therefore, considered highly likely that this was a very significant consideration when selecting Bodicote Grounds Farm in order to limit the potential for interference to the receiving station from the transmitter at Leaffield. It does, however, appear to be a very literal interpretation of the 1912 plan at a time when technological improvements in receiver and aerial design were likely to be far more significant. The distance between transmitter and receiver sites is also important to minimising interference; the 1912 plan infers a minimum distance of 12 miles and Banbury to Leaffield is approximately 17.5 miles. Other factors to consider regarding the location of the station included access to the telegraph cable network, particularly underground trunk lines linked to London, as well as access to housing and transport links.

There is no evidence that Banbury used a receiving aerial with anything like the dimensions of the 2,300-metre-long system intended for Devizes. Such a large aerial system would potentially have picked up considerable amounts of electromagnetic noise, both natural and man-made, which could have resulted in difficulties in receiving the required signal from Egypt. The development and improvement of wireless technology during WWI, particularly related to thermionic valves, allowed the production of receivers with greater sensitivity and selectivity which could be used with smaller more directional aerials to improve the signal to noise ratio of the intended long-wave signal. The aerial system in use at Banbury during its operation as part of the Imperial Wireless Chain is uncertain, and although a number of masts were mapped in the 1960s, these may well relate to later use of the site. The receiver type is also uncertain although it is possible that it was a bespoke GPO design.

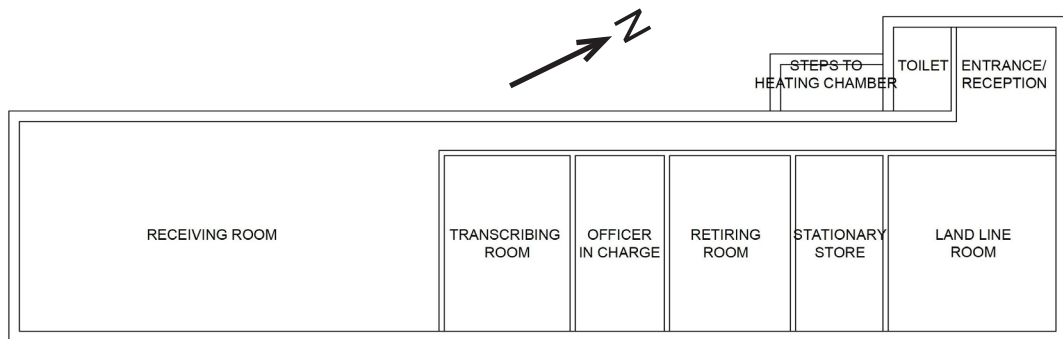
Regardless of the factors involved in locating a suitable site, the land must also be available. The pre-WWI scheme relied on the use of Crown Land at no cost to the government. In 1920 the *Banbury Guardian*¹⁰ advertised the sale by auction of 'Live and Dead Farming Stock' at Bodicote Grounds Farm by Miller and Abbots on 27 September 'by direction of Mr George Savin who is declining farming'. Presumably the land also became available around this time and was leased by the GPO. An interesting piece regarding 'Joy-Flying Over Banbury' was published in the *Banbury Advertiser*, also in September 1920, about 10 days before the auction. A field at the Bodicote Grounds Farm was used for Banbury's first Aviation Week organised by the Berkshire Aviation Company and part of that temporary flying field became the site of Banbury Wireless Station a year or so later. Large crowds gathered and many people took up the opportunity to fly, the airmen giving a display of various stunts and 'walking on the wings'.¹¹

The post-WWI Imperial Wireless Chain stations were to be constructed to building plans drawn up by the GPO. At Banbury the initial construction appears to have been a receiving building about 100 feet (30.5m) long and 20 feet (6m) wide along much of its length with an additional entrance and reception area of 15 feet (4.5m) by 9 feet (2.7m) protruding slightly towards the north west at the north eastern end of the building, forming a somewhat L shaped plan.¹² The south western part of the building contained the *Receiving Room* which was 40 feet (12.2m) in length and this could be reached by a corridor that ran along the western side of the building from the entrance and reception area. The sequence of other smaller rooms to the north east of the *Receiving Room* were as follows: *Transcribing*

10. *BG*, 9 September, 1920 p 4. *BG* 16 September, 1920, p 4.

11. *BA*, 16 September, 1920 Joy-Flying Over Banbury, p 8.

12. IL Sanders, G Bartram & S Joyce *Connecting an Empire. The Imperial Wireless Chain: Origins and Early Developments, 1910 – 1928. Appendix VII. Milner Commission, 1921 – Building Plans*, (Castle Ridge Press, Morgan Hill, California, 2023), p 202.



*Block A building based on GPO plan 'For Imperial Stations. Receiving Building' 1921
(Based on Appendix VII. Milner Commission, 1921 – Building Plans)*

Room, Officer In Charge, Retiring Room, Stationery Store and Land Line Room. Immediately north west of the latter was the reception area, entrance and toilet. The north eastern end of the building also contained a subterranean *Heating Chamber* accessed by a stair from the corridor. Later references to the site from the 1950s refer to this structure as 'Block A' with a somewhat larger, almost square building, about 70m to the north west as 'Block B', which is visible on aerial images dating to March 1948.

The site would also have contained a number of ancillary buildings relating to power generation and storage as well as masts to support aerial wires. Further research may reveal more detailed plans; Ordnance Survey mapping from the 1960s does show the site in some detail but undoubtedly numerous changes had occurred since the time of the Imperial Wireless Chain.

During the early 1920s Marconi was experimenting with high frequency short-waves and directional aerials that had significant advantages over the low frequencies widely used at this time. Short-waves can reflect off the ionosphere allowing communication over large distances at considerably lower power levels compared to long-wave transmitters. Communication links between Britain and remote parts of the Empire could, therefore, be achieved at much lower costs and in addition, direct point-to-point services became possible which for some of the Dominions was considered preferable compared to a chain of communication.¹³ The government had announced in 1923 the construction of a large long-wave transmitter, at Hillmorton near Rugby to address some of the concerns of the Dominions by being powerful enough to communicate directly, rather than through a chain. The Rugby Radio Station was constructed by the GPO and became operational in 1926 as the world's most powerful thermionic valve transmitter; using proven technology the long-wave signals could be received anywhere in world.

By the mid-1920s Marconi Beam Stations exploiting short-wave communication were also under construction at a number of sites. The Dorchester (Dorset) Radio Station became operational in 1927 with services to New York and South America; later, in 1928, services to Japan and Egypt came into operation. Dorchester's receiving site was located at Somerton.¹⁴ The long-wave service from Leafeld became redundant ending the role of Banbury within the Imperial Wireless Chain which, mainly due to technological advances, was never completed.

13. IL Sanders, G Bartram & S Joyce *Connecting an Empire. The Imperial Wireless Chain: Origins and Early Developments, 1910 – 1928. "Empiradio" – The Short-Wave Beam System*, (Castle Ridge Press, Morgan Hill, California 2023), pp 163-167.

14. L Bennett *The Marconi Beam Wireless Stations of Somerset. Chapter 9. An Overview of Dorchester Wireless Station*, (New Generation Publishing, 2023), pp 386-397.

Banbury Radio Station during WWII

Banbury was only occasionally used for fieldwork from the late 1920s until November 1940 when an evacuated group from the Radio Laboratories at Dollis Hill took over the site.^{15,16} There was concern that air raids could damage the Post Office Research Station at Dollis Hill and the decision was made to move some of the staff and equipment to safer areas. Of particular concern was crystal production as at this time quartz crystals were cut and ground to resonate at a precise and stable frequency for use in radio oscillators. Banbury became one of a small number of sites where crystal production was carried out. The process requires a very precise frequency standard; at Dollis Hill Primary Standard Frequencies were available to the laboratories but due to transmission difficulties and cost these could not be transmitted to the distant crystal production sites. Banbury was, therefore, provided with a separate frequency sub-standard initially from a Marconi Type 482-C frequency measuring set that contained a 250 kHz crystal oscillator, harmonic generator and synchronous clock, but in 1944 this was replaced by a Post Office 100 kHz crystal oscillator.¹⁷



Banbury Radio Station Block A building, north west facing side, 21 August 1954. The original early 1920s building appears to have gained an additional porch compared to the original plan (Reproduced with permission from BT Archives)

Post-WWII

Post-WWII, Banbury took on the role of radio monitoring in order to produce information that could assist in the preparation of frequency assignment plans. In 1947, at the joint International Telecommunication Conference and International Radio Conference in Atlantic City, New Jersey, the International Frequency Registration Board was created to act as an administrative body to regulate the use of frequencies by various types of radio services. Tables were produced for revised frequency allocations, frequency tolerances for new and existing transmitters, tolerances for harmonics and parasitic emissions and bandwidths required by different types of radio communication. In 1951 at the Extraordinary Administrative Conference in Geneva an agreement was made that effectively implemented the Atlantic City Allocation Tables voluntarily which ultimately meant that the UK had to find replacement frequencies for many of the existing radio services.¹⁸ As a consequence, the station became the 'Banbury Radio Measuring Station', its function being to study radio conditions over the long-term in order to assist planning and to provide monitoring information to assess the implementation of international radio plans.

Some general details of the site in the early 1950s are set out within *The Post Office Electrical Engineers' Journal*. The site covered eight acres (3.24 ha) of land at Bodicote Grounds Farm

15. GPO, 1941. The Frequency Measuring Equipment at Banbury, *Radio Report No.663*. Post Office Engineering Department, 1941.

16. PM Parker & G Gregory, 'Banbury Radio Measuring Station', *The Post Office Electrical Engineers' Journal*, 1954 vol 47, part 3, p 143.

17. 'Routine Checks of Banbury, Mill Hill and the Factory Departments' Frequency Sub-Standards, January to December, 1944' Radio Report No. 1307. (Post Office Engineering Department, 1945).

18. P M Parker & G Gregory, 'Banbury Radio Measuring Station', *The Post Office Electrical Engineers' Journal*, 1954 vol 47, part 3, p 143.

approximately one mile south east of Banbury. There were two main single storey buildings referred to as Block A and Block B and several small buildings. Block A was the original receiving building associated with the Imperial Wireless Chain and constructed in 1921, but internally it contained receiving rooms, a frequency standards laboratory and staff offices. Block B contained working and spare laboratories, a workshop and domestic offices. In February 1948 local newspapers¹⁹ reported on proposals to extend the site from two to eight acres with the construction of further masts and aerials, the additional six acres (2.43 ha) being land immediately to the south west of the existing site. It is possible that Block B building was constructed at this time, although it may have been associated with the wartime use of the site.

Power was supplied by a three-phase 11kV overhead power line with a transformer feeding 400V three-phase 50Hz current to the engine room switchboard. A 57hp (42.5kW) diesel engine driving a 37kW three-phase generator provided a back-up power supply. In addition, float-charged batteries provided a stable power supply to equipment generating the frequency standard. A small battery-driven converter supplied 230V at 50Hz to the thermostats within the frequency standard equipment in the event of a mains failure.

The aerials in use at the time consisted of a group of six inverted-Vs that were of wire construction with their centres attached to the top of a single mast located away from the buildings in the small field to the south. The aerials sloped down to short anchor posts and were spaced around the mast in order to exploit their directional properties. There were also six omni-directional aerials of various types located close to the buildings.

The receivers were described as a number of commercial communication receivers covering 50 – 30000kHz, and also Post-Office single-sideband receivers covering 10 – 30,000kHz.



The Banbury Radio Station Block B building, south east facing side, 21 August 1954. The building may have been constructed as part of expansion during 1948 or possibly during WWII
(Reproduced with permission from BT Archives)



Banbury Radio Station Block A building, main measurements room, probably the south west end of the building, 16 January 1957
(Reproduced with permission from BT Archives)

19. BA, 18 February, 1948, p 4. BG, 19 February, 1948, p 5.

Staff and links to the local community

It is likely that a number of staff through the post-war period were those who were evacuated from Dollis Hill in 1940. A newspaper article notes the death of James O'Brien who had been a Coldstream Guardsman during WWI and had retired from the Banbury Radio Measuring Station with an Imperial Service Medal.²⁰ He had been evacuated from Dollis Hill in 1940 and after his retirement he had been involved with teaching French to children in primary schools around the Banbury area with the aid of a tape recorder, part of a 10-year teaching experiment by Oxfordshire County Council. His wife, Olydd, had been evacuated with a London primary school to Middleton Cheney and later became the headmistress of Mollington school (1955-1977). Another article celebrates the presentation of the Imperial Service Medal to Jim Cordell who had also been evacuated from Dollis Hill in 1940; he stayed at the radio station until 1967 when it closed, having given 40 years' service to the GPO on his retirement.²¹

Occasional newspaper articles dating to the 1920s, when the station was the receiving end for the Imperial Wireless Chain, reveal several staff names and their association with events away from the site. A report with regard to the Grimsbury Brotherhood, records 'Mr Millett, of the Banbury Wireless Station, gave a most instructive address on the work, referring to its development and the difficulties that still needed to be overcome, and illustrating his remarks from his own experiences as a wireless operator in France during



*Post-WWII staff at Banbury Radio Measuring Station (Block A building in the background)
(with permission from Mark Bletchley)*

20. BG, April 4th 1985, p 7.

21. BG, August 19th 1976, p 7.

the war; Mr Gibbs, also of Banbury Wireless Station, supported Mr Millett'.²² An article from 1923, reports on 'Post Office Officials at Dinner', this social gathering at the White Horse Hotel included a 'Mr JA Gallagher (in charge of the Banbury Wireless Station)'.²³

Through the Bodicote History and Memories social media group local memories of the site relate mainly to the period after its closure up until its demolition in 1971. A staff photograph dating to the post-WWII period is reproduced with permission from Mark Bletchly whose father worked at the station. On the far right is Lionel Bletchly, immediately to his right is Ron Brain, back row 2nd from the left Jim Cordell and 5th from the left Bill Hitchman. Mr Hitchman was clearly well known to the Bodicote community as a 'Jack of All Trades', since his activities included being the cook and gardener at the Banbury Radio Measuring Station and he also gave talks on fuschias and free shaves to old patients at the Horton General Hospital; he was the chairman of Bodicote British Legion and had been secretary of both the Bodicote cricket and football clubs.²⁴

Site closure

The station closed in 1967 ahead of the expiry of the lease on the site in March 1968. However, in 1965 plans for a new station at Hornton, Oxon were being prepared and although this was never constructed, at the time there were 20 engineers working at the Banbury station.²⁵

There is now no physical trace of anything related to the station, the site having been demolished and built over for housing only a few years after its closure. Historical information is patchy and as an Imperial Wireless Chain receiving site it has been largely overlooked, lying in the shadow of the transmitter at Leafield. There has been little interest in the protection of early wireless sites as heritage assets, yet they represent an incredible advancement in technology that forms the basis of the high-tech world we live in today. The sites often contained the most cutting-edge technology of the day and heralded profound changes to society often to remote or very rural parts of the country.

22. *BA*, July 27th 1922, p 8.

23. *BG*, January 11th 1923, p 6.

24. *BG*, October 3rd 1963, p 10.

25. *BG*, February 18th 1965, p 7.

SANSBURY, HICKS AND WOODWARD: A WINDOW INTO THE LIVES OF THREE OF BANBURY'S FORMER SPENCER EMPLOYEES

Joe Townsend



Spencer Corset from mid-1940s (Corsetiere.net)

Between 1994 and 1997, several former employees of Banbury's Spencer Corset factory were interviewed as part of an oral history project conducted by the Oxfordshire Museums Service.¹ This article aims to shed light on the varying experiences of those who helped shape Britain's corset industry and unpick the important impact the company had on 20th century Banbury. The three recordings are with Mrs Rhoda Woodward, Mr Lawrence (Laurie) Hicks, and Mrs M Sansbury. All three conversations add significant depth to several themes loosely touched on in previous literature concerning Spencer Banbury Limited (to be referred to as Spencers henceforth) – the meticulous manufacturing process, the encouragement of recreational activities and the unique personalities of both company directors, Dorothea and Robert Allen. An underlying motif which runs through the entirety of the article is the showcasing of an innovative, yet sometimes unconventional, organisation; it will also examine the merits of oral history as a resource.

Virtues of oral history

This oral history project has become an important part of the enduring history of Spencers' influence on Banbury. As highlighted by Sally Stradling when she traced the origins of the company, and recorded the art deco facilities designed by Wallis, Gilbert and Partners the history associated with the factory buildings has been somewhat lost by their eventual demolition.² Despite efforts by Banbury Museum and other organisations, a century after the Spencer Company settled in the town, its trace is faint. *Silhouette*, the final remnant of Spencers, after decades of buyouts and changeovers, was still active in the area in the early 2000s, having settled on niche garment manufacturing after struggling to compete with major brands in the 1980s. Instead, they designed maternity and mastectomy wear, as well as basques, strapless bras and garments that offered a wider range of cup fittings

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1. The interviews, on three cassettes, were carried out by Simon Townsend (Oxfordshire Museums Service) and Sally Barker (Oxfordshire County Council) and can be accessed at the OCC Heritage search on OXO003854, OXO003855 and OXO003856.
 2. Sally Stradling, 'Spencer Corsets Limited, Britannia Road, Banbury', *Oxoniensia* (1997), vol 61, p 396.
 3. Mrs Sue Keyworth, Interview by both Simon Townsend, Oxfordshire Museums Service, and Sally Barker, Oxford County Council Department of Leisure and Arts, Oxfordshire County Council, Heritage Search (OCCHS)-OXO003855, 20 March 1995.
 4. Amanda Joynt, 'History', *Silhouette*, <https://silhouettedingerie.co.uk/pages/about-us> [accessed 25 Oct. 2025].

than mainstream brands.³ However, the company went into liquidation in 2003 and after its sale and resurrection as Silhouette Lingerie Ltd, their production was relocated from Banbury to the EU.⁴

As most people who worked at the factory in its heyday are now either extremely elderly or have passed away, the audio recordings created in the 1990s will allow future generations access to an invaluable insight into one of Banbury's largest 20th century businesses. Oral history showcases a level of emotional depth portrayed in a way which humanises the past, something written sources often fail to do. There is an exuberance of detail, built through a layering of anecdotal and personal reflection which allows access to the daily routine of someone living lifetimes ago. It permits a nuanced and multifaceted interpretation of a narrative which written history may neglect. Furthermore, the community's involvement in recording its own history, as well as the continuation of developing storytelling as a skill, cannot be negated.

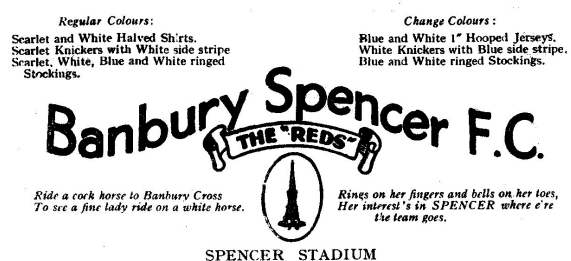
All this said, the fickle nature of memory, especially in oral history, means that elements such as biases, hindsight, selective recollection and the general fallibility of memory can lead to inaccuracies and, naturally, misremembering: another problem is that these are only three interviews in a potential sample size of thousands between the 1920s and 1960s although they include both factory and office workers, and cover both male and female perspectives. All these factors must be considered when evaluating the information supplied.

Interviewees

All three played different roles in the company and therefore they voice unique perspectives. Mrs Rhoda Woodward (née Hawkins) (1926-2020) was a native of Adderbury, going to work at Spencers in the summer of 1942 at the age of 17. She only worked at the factory for 6 months as by February 1943 she was 17 ½ and therefore had to register for war work, something Spencers was not considered to be involved in at the time. Rhoda was initially employed to stitch webbing belts onto each garment, before progressing to working on a machine which attached strips to hold the corset's bones.⁵

The genial Mrs Florence Muriel Sansbury, née Graham, (1911-2005) worked for the company for 23 years, joining as an office clerk in 1929, and leaving as a secretary in the company in 1952.⁶

Mr Lawrence Hicks (1916-2002) joined the company in 1931 shortly before his 15th birthday, working as an office boy. Initially his job entailed sorting post however he worked his way up to a point where he had 16 people working under his stewardship in the company's printing department.⁷ He worked for the company both before and after World War II and most likely would have still been there in the 1960s. He was also heavily involved with Banbury Spencer Football Club, a works football team created by the Allens which ran for 32 years, the origin of what is now Banbury United FC.⁸



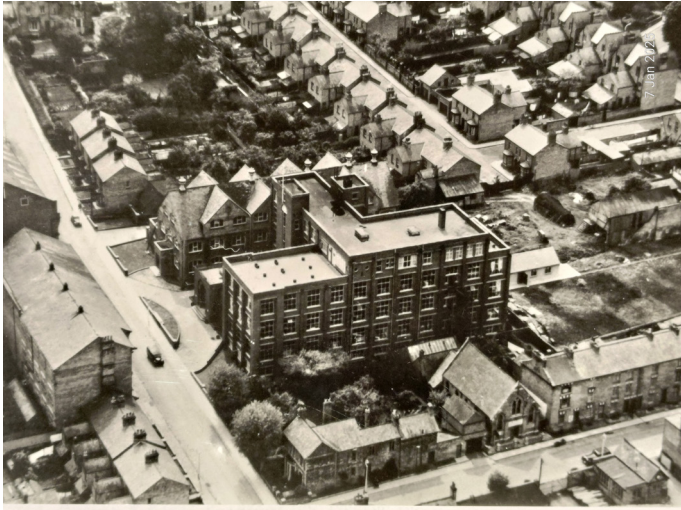
1934/5 season programme

5. Mrs Rhoda Woodward, OMS Interview.

6. Mrs M Sansbury, OMS Interview.

7. In the 1939 National Register he was described as Head of the Printing Department in surgical supports (Ancestry)

8. Mr Lawrence Hicks, OMS Interview.



*Spencer House factory after 1937 extension
(Banbury Museum)*



*Spencer House
(Sheila Evans)*

The Allens and the origins of Spencers

The Spencer Corset Corporation was created in 1904 by Darwin Spencer Berger (1883-1967) in New Haven, Connecticut, USA, being quickly joined by his elder brother George Wendell Berger (1880-?). The company soon branched out to Rock Island, Quebec, Canada, followed by their introduction to Banbury in 1926.⁹ Their Banbury factory was run by Dorothea and Robert Allen, a couple who had previously run a corset factory in Manchester, with 51% of profits going to the Allens, and the other 49% to the owners, the Berger brothers.¹⁰ Spencer Corsets Limited, Banbury, was formed in February 1927, although the building which became their home in Britannia Road was purchased the previous year.¹¹ The production of corsets began in 1927, and a decade later a new extension was built by the Oxfordshire firm Kingerlee, being designed by renowned Art Deco architects Wallis, Gilbert and Partners. Over time further buildings were purchased along Britannia Road.¹² Banbury appears to have become the base for Spencers' foray into Britain due to a skilled workforce, factory premises being readily available, and its reputation as a fulcrum for weaving.¹³ Within five years of opening Spencer House in Banbury, profits for the combined Spencer organisation had reached £1 million, leading to the claim that it was the largest corset enterprise in the world.¹⁴

Dorothea Allen was truly an enigma. She was born Dora Brammer in 1895 and claimed to have been born in Scotland, although in fact she was from Sheffield;¹⁵ she met Robert Allen in the early 1920s, and despite not marrying she took his name.¹⁶ After being involved with a corsetry business together in Manchester and becoming acquainted with the

9. Alfred Woodward, *Dorothea Allen: a ninety-six-year-old mystery – Incorporating Spencer Banbury and The Berger Corporation* (Braywood Publishing, 2007), p 1.

10. A. Woodward, *Dorothea Allen*, p 12; limited public information is available about their Manchester factory, and it is heavily contradictory, however it appears there was a partnership with Gaylord Barclay/Barclay, the son of another American made-to-measure corsetry pioneer, with whom they worked before splitting and going separate ways.

11. Sally Stradling, 'Spencer Corsets Limited, Britannia Road, Banbury', *Oxoniensia* (1997), vol 61, p 380.

12. *Ibid*, p 381.

13. William Potts, ed. Edward T. Clark, *A History of Banbury* (Gulliver Press, Banbury, 2nd ed. 1978), pp 225-226. Taken from: Stradling, 'Spencer Corsets', p 380.

14. *Spencer Corsets Limited*, District Sales Manager's Guide (1933), 6-7. Taken from Stradling, *Spencer Corsets Limited*, p 381.

15. A Woodward, *Dorothea Allen*, pp 93, 97, 100-102, 104.

16. *Ibid*, p 11.

Bergers, they moved to Banbury, to run the British concern of the global Spencer Corset organisation. According to Alfred Woodward, who published a slightly muddled, yet eye opening biographical account of the Allens, Dorothea curiously possessed both a Belgian passport and a doctored British one.¹⁷ Additionally, for a long time, her mother Emily Brammer lived in the Allen's manor house in Sutton-under-Brailes, in the guise of a former housekeeper named Mary Forbes.¹⁸

Robert on the other hand, born Eric Robert Allen in 1890, had left his wife and child in Sheffield to pursue a life with Dorothea. His father was a clothier's assistant, and his mother ran a corset business from home, so this appears to have been one of the sparks for their corsetry empire.¹⁹ In comparison to Dorothea, the mystery concerning Bob was why he had fabricated not only various military ranks, but also a Scottish history for which he appears to have had no claim.²⁰ They both successfully ran Spencers for decades, growing the business into one of the United Kingdom's largest and most successful corset and surgical support companies. Spencers supplied customers from across Europe, including royalty, both commercially and through their NHS contracts, operating from their headquarters in Banbury with divisions scattered across the UK.²¹ They amassed a wealth which allowed them to live lavishly in both pre-and post-war Britain. Robert died in 1965, and after struggling with his death, Dorothea became a recluse, rarely leaving Sutton Brailes Manor. She died intestate in 1990, with the identification of potential heirs to her £2 million fortune causing significant media interest in both the UK and America. She had destroyed all her mother's photos and documents, as well as her own, making the job of deciphering her legacy an arduous one.²²



Robert and Dorothea Allen at Sutton Brailes Manor with Nero, one of their signature black labradors (A Woodward)

'Made-to-Measure' manufacturing

One element that generated consensus amongst the interviewees was the meticulous nature of the company's retailing, manufacturing and distribution processes. Each role was compartmentalised, especially on the factory floor where each employee focussed on a specific task. Initially, the customer would find the company's details in the phone directory, or through journal advertisements. Spencers featured in lifestyle publications including *Vogue*, *Harper's Magazine* and *British Good Housekeeping Magazine* as well as in several

17. A Woodward, *Dorothea Allen*, p 100.

18. *Ibid.*, pp 14, 105.

19. *Ibid.*, p 9-11.

20. *Ibid.*, pp 10-11, 16, 67, 100-102, 104.

21. NHS: A Woodward, *Dorothea Allen*, pp 2, 7, 167-72; Hicks, OMS Interview, 'Royalty: More boom than bust for the corset industry', *Oxford Mail*, 25 June 2012. Former Spencer employee, Mrs Gladys Sangster, worked on corsets for Princess Mary (Queen Elizabeth II's great-aunt), and Queen Ena of Spain.

22. A Woodward, *Dorothea Allen*, pp 51, 92.



Cutting room on first floor of Wallis, Gilbert and Partners extension (Sheila Evans)



Work room on first floor of new wing (Sheila Evans)

medical journals such as the *Journal of Obstetrics and Gynaecology*, the *Journal of Bone and Joint Surgery* and the *British Medical Journal*.²³ A corsetière, working in 'the field' as they called it, would then be dispatched to the client's home in order to take their measurements. Two copies would be created, one going back to the factory whilst the other was retained by the corsetière. The factory would then manufacture a corset specifically designed to the client's measurements, be it for aesthetic or health reasons. At its peak, Mr Hicks claimed there were nearly 3000 corsetières,²⁴ though Stradling put this figure of corsetières and fitters closer to 2000, with an additional 600 factory staff.²⁵

The manufacturing process began in the cutting room, a department consisting mainly of men, where templates would be laid over rolls of material to then be cut out. After this the cuttings would be passed to the factory floor where the stitching process would take place.²⁶ Once the garment was completed it would be transferred to the dispatches department, where it was delicately packaged and sent out to the client to be fitted.²⁷ Mrs Sansbury and Mr Hicks concurred that the time it would take

between measuring and fitting a garment would be five to seven days, unless the customer paid four or five shillings for a rush order, when it would be ready in just a few days.²⁸ At the height of production in the post-war period, hundreds of garments would be piled high in Royal Mail vans and sent onwards each night.²⁹ Mrs Sansbury remembered once processing around 500 handwritten invoices in one day.³⁰ Mr Hicks referred to the decade following the creation of the NHS as the 'peak period' due to the contracts which followed for surgical supports.³¹

All three interviewees described the rigorous scrutiny which prevailed throughout their time with the organisation. There were managers and chargehands, usually male, initially including two Americans who moved to England from the New Haven concern of the company, Frank Howlett and Philip Grillo. These two laid the foundations for the processes

23. Hicks, OMS Interview; Stradling, *Spencer Corsets Limited*, p 380.

24. Hicks, OMS Interview.

25. 'Unlaced Grace', Southern Arts Exhibition Leaflet 1995. Taken from Stradling, *'Spencer Corsets Limited'*, p 381.

26. R Woodward, OMS Interview; Sansbury, OMS Interview.

27. Sansbury, OMS Interview; Hicks, OMS Interview.

28. Sansbury, OMS Interview; Hicks, OMS Interview.

29. Hicks, OMS Interview.

30. Sansbury, OMS Interview.

31. Hicks, OMS Interview.

which would define the company, one being positioned in the offices and the other on the factory floor.³² Mrs Woodward worked on various stitching sections in the factory and described each garment as having a ticket assigned to it. She would have a bag tied to her machine into which she would put a corresponding number, which her supervisors regularly checked to ensure she was on track to keep up with targets. Furthermore, any mistakes in the stitching process would mean the garment was retained, and if too many faults were made, then this would lead to much consternation. Once a garment was completed it would head for a “stitch by stitch” inspection, which would often result in it being added to a pile of rejected pieces in the middle of the factory floor. The numbered ticket for the garment would then be read out which Rhoda said everyone dreaded, due to the public embarrassment; colleagues knew who had made a mistake.³³ Mrs Sansbury chuckled as she told the story of Harry Stroud, a factory manager (who eventually left to form a rival corset business, Strodex,) once exiting Mrs Allen’s office followed by a flying corset.³⁴

Strenuous critique was not something limited to the factory floor. Mrs Sansbury talked of the nerve-wracking experience of travelling to conferences in the north of England, to present accounts for the British Surgical Supports Association, a group created by Mrs Allen, under her close watch, something she claimed she would never want to do again. She further mentioned the time she was relieved from the role of organising staff salaries, as Mrs Allen had overheard the male supervisors discussing their pay, blaming Mrs Sansbury for divulging them.³⁵ Mr Hicks also contemplated, with frustration, the endless scrutiny by Mrs Allen of the layouts and sketches he created for the printing department.³⁶

Spencers’ working environment split opinion amongst the former employees, probably resulting from their differing positions. Mrs Sansbury felt it was a good place to work, stating that the other girls were all very nice and remembered getting on with everyone.³⁷ Alternatively, whilst Mrs Woodward did have fond memories of forming long-lasting friendships, she admitted she did not particularly enjoy her time there. She talked about how it was a very enclosed environment, with the factory gates only being open at lunch and home time. She described it as nerve-racking and remembered her supervisors being ‘so down on you’ and being treated ‘like a piece of machinery’. Furthermore, the women were not allowed to chat during work, although she did remember music being played on the radio, with some girls electing for Bing Crosby whilst others preferred Frank Sinatra.³⁸

Out of the three accounts, Mrs Woodward had the most negative memories of her experience, however she was the only one to work on the factory floor. She also only worked for a short period, during the war, so she may not have enjoyed the benefits that the factory’s post-war successes brought. Moreover, she talked of being unwell during her time there and mentioned recommendations from her doctor to spend her days outside instead.³⁹ Mrs Sansbury admitted there was not much integration between the different groups, with office workers having different cloakrooms and shorter hours. In fact, she echoed Rhoda’s experience, describing the factory workers as ‘working like the clappers’.⁴⁰ It is interesting that when noting their hours, both women claimed to have worked 8.30am

32. A Woodward, *Dorothea Allen*, pp 30, 60, 87; Sansbury, OMS Interview.

33. R Woodward, OMS Interview.

34. Sansbury, OMS Interview.

35. Ibid.

36. Hicks, OMS Interview.

37. Sansbury, OMS Interview.

38. R Woodward, OMS Interview.

39. Ibid.

40. Sansbury, OMS Interview.



*Spencers canteen decorated at Christmas, 1949
(Sheila Evans)*



*Guests of 1938 'Rainbow End' party, Dorothea
Allen central in white dress (A Woodward)*

to around 5.00pm on weekdays, finishing at midday on Saturdays.⁴¹ This is a perfect example of the flaws in oral history; both women were attempting to remember their working hours 40 to 50 years after they left the company, and there was general agreement that the shifts for the factory workers were longer than those in other sections of the business. The differing treatment of the office workers and those working on the sewing floor is hardly surprising, with the former being paid more, described as well-educated and referred to as 'Mrs Allen's Girls'.⁴² All three remembered the ten-minute breaks allowed in the morning and afternoon, as it was time for a cup of tea, with one hour designated for lunch.⁴³ 4d a week paid for two cups of tea each day. Mr Hicks remembered the breaks as a jovial time when records could be played for dancing, or table tennis could be played.⁴⁴

He reflected, interestingly, on the levels of enjoyment experienced by the work force, articulating how in the 1930s, 'pay was poor, money was short, but everyone was very happy', going on to reiterate 'you can't believe it, but it was true'. This

is something Mrs Sansbury touched on, providing the context that when she joined in the late 1920s, there had been a slump in available employment and Spencers was one of the few employers hiring in the area. Mr Hicks praised the 'comradeship' but admitted, when reminiscing about a bonus of two slices of bread and a banana for working until 7pm, 'you always remember the better side of things. Rhoda echoed this, describing how people did not worry too much about the low pay, providing they had something to give to their mothers and a bit left over to go dancing.'⁴⁵

The contrasting experiences of the interviewees highlighted two sides to employee satisfaction. Some proffered a view of an organisation which looked after its employees and fostered a communal attitude. An employee who attended the 'Rainbow End' party (a celebration marking the completion of the new building in 1938), expressed this feeling, writing 'Being a member of the Spencer organisation was not simply being a cog in a large machine, but rather being a member of one happy family'.⁴⁶ This view was reiterated by Horace Williams, a Spencers' employee during the 1930s, who managed the factory football team. After the opening of a new pavilion at the Spencer Stadium, he spoke of a communal atmosphere generated that was unparalleled during his professional footballing

41. R Woodward, OMS Interview; Sansbury, OMS Interview.

42. Sansbury, OMS Interview.

43. Sansbury, OMS Interview; R Woodward, OMS Interview; Hicks, OMS Interview.

44. Hicks, OMS Interview.

45. R Woodward, OMS Interview.

46. Letter from Mr JB Skelly, Organiser of the 'Blue Group'. Taken from: A. Woodward, *Dorothea Allen*, p 34.

career, praising the team spirit and personal involvement of the Allens.⁴⁷ However true both these opinions are from individuals with management roles within the organisation, they come after the Allens had invested heavily in the company, be it in terms of the 1938 festivities, or through the football team. Therefore, they may not be a balanced view of working conditions.

Alternatively, there are those who echo Mrs Woodward's sentiment. Candy Atherton, former journalist and Labour MP for Falmouth and Cambourne, after reporting on Mrs Allen's demise in 1990, described in an American documentary, a company which did not pay well and ran a particularly strict regime, claiming that Dorothea demanded that employees walk out of her office backwards.⁴⁸ In the same documentary a former secretary, Dorothy Kearse, spoke of how the Allens would sit behind a rope at the Christmas parties like royalty, which suggests a detachment from the happy family narrative.⁴⁹ The authoritarian and aloof nature of Mrs Allen's stewardship of the company did not endear her to many of her workforce, perhaps as it was not conducive to the aforementioned togetherness.

There was however a modern progressive element to the company which undoubtedly did help morale at the factory. In the 1937 extension, baths were installed which staff could use before and after work, or during their breaks.⁵⁰ Both Mrs Woodward and Mrs Sansbury commented on the innovative nature of this and the enjoyment, especially for the women who lived in the countryside. Both women highlighted the rarity of this amenity, suggesting that they were not aware of any other factories in Banbury with these facilities before the war. Mrs Sansbury commented how it was 'wonderful, really, in those days'.⁵¹ The popularity of the baths meant however that staff had to either get to work early or join a rota to be able to use them.⁵² Mrs Sansbury also mentioned the benefits of two weeks paid holiday which she could choose for a fortnight of her preference.⁵³ It is unclear however whether this luxury was something afforded to all factory staff, as Mrs Sansbury had risen to a lofty position within the administration of the company. Two further themes which naturally contributed to the morale of the Spencer workforce were the social life fostered by the company, and the personalities of their bosses. Both were spoken about in detail by the former factory workers interviewed.

Recreational activities

All three Banbury employees reflected positively on the company's encouragement of recreational activities. The most notable way that the company facilitated this was through sport. Mrs Sansbury talked of the women's field hockey teams, consisting of over 20 girls split into two teams. The factory made their kits or 'gymslips' as they were called, one team in scarlet and the other in royal blue. She fondly remembered going to play on a Saturday afternoon after finishing work, marching up the Middleton Road to play in Grimsbury. Squashing her fingers between two hockey sticks was remembered less favourably!⁵⁴ As mentioned by Laurie Hicks, table tennis was played, and facilities were provided for baseball and tennis.⁵⁵

However, without a doubt, football was the sport most associated with the company, in the form of Banbury Spencer FC. While all three interviewees described Robert Allen

47. Brian Little and David Shadbolt, *The History of Banbury Spencer Football Club* (Robert Boyd Publications, 2013), p 18.

48. *Unsolved Mysteries with Robert Stack*, season 3, episode 12, Sky, (1990).

49. *Ibid.*

50. R Woodward, OMS Interview; Sansbury, OMS Interview.

51. Sansbury, OMS Interview.

52. *Ibid.*

53. *Ibid.*

54. *Ibid.*

55. Little and Shadbolt, *History of BSFC*, p 7.



Team photo of Banbury Spencer Sports Club in early 1930s, Laurie Hicks is four from the right in the middle row (Little and Shadbolt)



The first season as Banbury United (1965/66), Laurie Hicks five from right, back row ('From the Archives', Banbury United FC Website, 5th June 2020)



Banbury Hospital Fête 1939, factory workers dressed as Banbury Spencer FC players (Little and Shadbolt)

as the driving force behind the team, in the club's 1946 AGM, Robert credited Dorothea with the idea of creating the team, 'to give the men from Liverpool and Manchester, who came to the Spencer works at Banbury, something to do on Saturday afternoons'.⁵⁶

The 'Gay Puritans', or later 'Puritans' as they would come to be known, were originally formed in 1931 under the name Spencer Sports Club FC, playing friendlies against local teams for a couple of years before joining Section C of the Banbury Division of the Oxfordshire Junior League for the 1933/34 season.⁵⁷ By the start of this season the team had decided to go by the name of Spencer Villa, a brief alteration as, during that season, they changed again to the name they would use for the next three decades: Banbury Spencer FC. When football restarted after World War II Banbury Spencer turned professional, or what might be referred to nowadays as semi-professional, so the club was able to pay players, as well as retaining amateurs.⁵⁸

By the 1960s however, performances and attendances left much to be desired, and the club was facing increasing financial pressures. Originally the club was bankrolled by the Allens, however this burden eventually shifted onto two supporters' organisations and by 1961 the administration of the club had left Spencer House, effectively marking its transition from a works club to a town club. It was taken over by several local businessmen and the change of the club's name to Banbury United two weeks after Robert Allen's death in 1965 brought an end to 34 years of direct association with the Spencer Corset factory.⁵⁹

The interviewees recount a scheme of bringing footballers from across the country, particularly Manchester and

56. Ibid, p 8.

57. Ibid, pp 6, 11-14, 23.

58. Ibid, pp 52-57.

59. Ibid, pp 104, 110, 123.

Liverpool, and employing them within the factory. Banbury Spencer FC's supporters were privileged to watch local men make hundreds of appearances for the club, as well as others who would go on to play across the Football League, all the way up to the First Division, with some players even gaining national recognition.⁶⁰ Both Rhoda and Mrs Sansbury concurred that the team was exceptionally popular, with the latter describing how if the 4.05 pm bus was missed, there was no chance of getting the next one due to the hordes of supporters. Both however admitted they did not attend themselves, and Mrs Sansbury remembers there was no pressure to go along.⁶¹ Mrs Woodward's recollection of the queue for busses on a matchday provides an insight into the team's popularity, however in 1942 when she was working at the factory, games had been abandoned due to the ongoing war, therefore this memory is from a different period of her long association with the area.⁶²

Mr Hicks' interview sheds most light on Banbury Spencer FC. He describes the team's development from 'young lads kicking the ball about and deciding to have one or two friendly games' to progressing to a standard where they eventually joined the Birmingham Combination League, becoming one of the better non-league teams in the region, winning the 'Tillotson Cup' several times. He articulated the importance of Mr Allen's involvement, most notably financially, and talked about how the players would change and shower at the factory. He admitted they never really won anything but would get 3,000-4,000 fans in attendance, which was notable.⁶³ His assessment of their success was rather modest considering their significant local impact; the largest attendance they ever achieved was in October 1948 with over 7,000 attending a match against Oxford City in an FA Cup qualifying round.⁶⁴ This was a truly remarkable turn out for an area with a population of under 20,000 around that time.⁶⁵



Banbury Spencer FC manager and players discussing tactics (1934), Laurie Hicks second from left, top row ('Pioneers', BUFC Website, 6th Feb 2024)



Laurie Hicks, then club secretary, Mr Len Goulden, new manager, Mr Bill Mooney, previous acting manager, Dec. 1965 ('From the Archives', BUFC Website, 5th June 2020)

60. Little and Shadbolt, *History of BSFC*, pp 31, 36-7, 55, 105, 122.

61. R Woodward, OMS Interview; Sansbury, OMS Interview.

62. Little and Shadbolt, *History of BSFC*, p 50.

63. Hicks, OMS Interview.

64. Little and Shadbolt, *History of BSFC*, p 67.

65. *General Register Office Census 1951, England and Wales, General tables* (HMSO, 1956) table 8, p 25. The population of municipal borough of Banbury in 1951 was 18,920.



*Guests of 1938 Rainbow End Party
(A Woodward)*

Spencers played a vital part in the social lives of the workforce, and throughout his interview, his fondness for the Spencer organisation and the football team shone through.

Throwing lavish parties and balls was another strategy employed to foster an enjoyable environment. All three former factory workers describe in detail the extravagant nature of the memorable Spencer parties and the dancing that came with them. Usually around Christmas time, these parties would involve either hiring local establishments like the Crown Hotel or clearing the ground floor of the factory's new wing. Mrs Woodward remembered Mrs Allen making sausage rolls and cheese straws, and during the Christmas party in 1942 she brought down large amounts of dripping, something Rhoda always questioned, given the then current rationing of food.⁶⁸

Mrs Sansbury joyfully reminisced about how Mr Allen would always come and dance, joining in the festivities, though to the employees' relief, Mrs Allen wouldn't engage in the same way. She remembered an 'old time ball' where Mrs Allen sent away for Edwardian dresses from Birmingham and arranged for the workers to have classes to learn the 'old time' dances. She described how Mrs Allen was very keen on the image her workers conveyed.⁶⁹ The Christmas ball was described in the *Banbury Advertiser* as 'picturesque in the extreme' with roughly 400 dancers.⁷⁰ Mr Hicks also fondly remembered the various parties, describing the aforementioned Rainbow End party as one of the most extravagant. He talked about playing the guitar in a works band at some of these parties, an experience he said he would never forget. Mr Allen had bought the band uniforms, consisting of red and white satin trousers and jackets, with Spencer badges, shirts and ties. He would hire all manner of instruments, something which stuck in Laurie's mind as it was the 1930s and this contrasted starkly with the hardship seen elsewhere in Banbury.⁷¹

The final pastime Sansbury, Hicks and Woodward all mention is that of organised social events. In the summer this included groups of over 20 getting together after work on a Saturday to go hiking, cycling or catching the train to Fenny Compton where they would hike over the Burton Dassett hills. In the winter games were played in the evenings, and Mrs Sansbury specifically remembered Mrs Davies, Robert Allen's secretary, being particularly fond of organising spelling bees somewhere on Bridge Street.⁷² Mr Hicks remembered that a group would head to a local pub and have 'half a pint between the lot of us', whilst Mrs Woodward described frequenting the 'milk bar' in Woolworth's after pay day.⁷³

66. Hicks, OMS Interview.

67. Little and Shadbolt, *History of BSFC*, p 119.

68. R Woodward, OMS Interview.

69. Sansbury, OMS Interview.

70. 'Edwardian Ball at Spencer House', *Banbury Advertiser*, 25 December, 1946.

71. Hicks, OMS Interview.

72. Sansbury, OMS Interview.

73. R Woodward, OMS Interview; Hicks, OMS Interview.

The memories of the three interviewees suggest that despite the poor pay and living conditions of the time, especially in the 1930s, everyone tended to make the best of the situation and found numerous ways to enjoy themselves when not working, be it through sport or other forms of socialising.

Dorothea and Robert Allen

One of the more contentious elements to these recollections are those concerning the personalities and characters of both Robert and Dorothea Allen. While he oversaw the legal and administrative side of the company, as well as running the football team, it was Mrs Allen who, everyone agreed, held the reins of the company. Nothing underlines this more than Alfred Woodward's interpretation of the Rainbow End party, where Dorothea 'looked the part, and acted it to perfection, like a queen surrounded by her workers, and Mr Robert Allen, her attendant drone'.⁷⁴ She was in charge of production, keeping an eye on the day-to-day running of the factory and ordering materials and, although Mrs Sansbury described them as a normal couple, it is clear that their temperaments were polar opposites.

Robert Allen evoked fond memories from Sansbury and Hicks. They remembered getting on well with him, the former describing him as 'gentlemanly' and 'nice', whilst the latter referred to him as 'a good chap'.⁷⁵ Mrs Sansbury laughed as she remembered his inability to edit his letters, requiring her to write several drafts, often apologetically saying to her 'Oh Miss Graham, I've had to murder the letter again'.⁷⁶ Mr Hicks recalled the times Mr Allen would come to the printing workshop simply to get out of his office and chat about football. He also mentioned that often on a Monday, if he had worked overtime on the weekend, Mr Allen would come and slip him a tenner, though this was something Mrs Allen would never have done.⁷⁷ He would join in with the dancing at Christmas parties and was known to enjoy his drink, being by all accounts a personable boss who enjoyed spending time with his colleagues, unlike Dorothea.⁷⁸



Dorothea and Robert Allen on holiday with the Berger family in Barbados (A Woodward)

At best, Dorothea Allen is described as 'particular' and a 'character', or less generously as 'autocratic' and a 'bitch'.⁷⁹ She was addressed as 'madame', and she was not popular, more 'held in awe'.⁸⁰ She was described as 'extremely smart', wearing mink coats and big hats, whilst driving around Banbury in a Rolls Royce.⁸¹ The interviewees describe her as 'private', 'shadowy' and 'aloof', not spending much time with her employees.⁸² When Mrs Sansbury left the company after over 20 years of service, there was no goodbye from Mrs Allen. She was given a Hoover washing machine

74. A Woodward, *Dorothea Allen*, p 19.

75. Sansbury, OMS Interview, Hicks, OMS Interview.

76. Sansbury, OMS Interview.

77. Hicks, OMS Interview.

78. Ibid.

79. In order: Sansbury, OMS Interview; *Unsolved Mysteries with Robert Stack*, season 3, episode 12, Sky (1990); Sansbury, OMS Interview; Hicks, OMS Interview.

80. Sansbury, OMS Interview.

81. Ibid.

82. Ibid.



*Lawrence, Basil and Dora Brammer
(A Woodward)*

and there was a farewell 'do' with cakes, however it was only Robert who turned up to wish her the best.⁸³ Mr Hicks bluntly admitted that he 'hated' her, however, he does remark that 'apparently, we got on alright'.⁸⁴ He was the only person to be called by his first name, and suspected this because she had had a brother called Lawrence who had died aged 27.⁸⁵ Mr Hicks reflected that he admired and respected the detail and stubbornness by which she conducted her work. She was a good teacher, someone who knew what she wanted and would not expect anything less, teaching him much during the time they spent working closely together, yet still someone who was 'very, very tough'.⁸⁶ By contrast, Mrs Woodward remembered having very little to do with the Allens, never actually seeing them.⁸⁷ They both worked for Spencers before the 1937 expansion, when the Allens had offices alongside the workforce, resulting in far greater employee interaction.

Once the new building opened, they had a suite on the top floor with a private elevator, removing themselves from the busyness of the factory, and they are said to have rarely turned up at the factory before three in the afternoon.⁸⁸

It is clear that Dorothea was a difficult character, but a very competent one; despite her husband getting an OBE for his work as Employer Vice-Chairman of the Southern Regional Board of Industry in 1957,⁸⁹ she was clearly the backbone of the exceedingly successful business. She would have been one of the few female business leaders at the time, particularly when the factory was in its infancy in the 1920s. This may well have been a factor in her reported paradoxically frosty yet fiery personality, as well as her detached persona reflecting her secretive past. By contrast, Fred D Moller, (an American innovator in the global Spencer organisation) divulged how, when staying with the Allens at Sutton Brailes Manor during the war, he got to know her as Do, and discovered a 'soft' and 'sensitive' side to a woman he had previously viewed as a 'hard driving business women', 'hard as nails', and 'calculating' who instilled an element of fear into her workforce.⁹⁰ Her maternal wartime role of housing employee's children in her manor house was also less stark. Despite suddenly being 'possessed by a family of *Enfants Terribles*', her desire to adopt one of the group she had staying with her shows a caring side alien to those she employed.⁹¹

83. Sansbury, OMS Interview.

84. Hicks, OMS Interview.

85. Ibid.

86. Hicks, OMS Interview.

87. R. Woodward, OMS Interview.

88. Sansbury, OMS Interview.

89. *BG* 3 January, 1957.

90. A Woodward, *Dorothea Allen*, pp 59-60.



Sutton Brailes Manor (A Woodward)

Alfred Woodward believes the stark difference between Dorothea's demeanour when with her few close friends and her workforce was 'a front to keep people at arm's length, so that she would not go soft on someone and confide secrets in them'.⁹² The cause of her rough outer exterior is unlikely to have been solely due to concern that some of her lies might unravel, but a desire to maintain an aloof status amongst the community appears to have affected her; the excessive lengths she went to in order to conceal her previous life were striking. She died on 4 January in 1990, a couple of weeks short of her 96th birthday.⁹³ After investigation, it was concluded she was born on 21 January 1895; however, she had contradictory documentation claiming a series of dates between then and 1905.⁹⁴ Furthermore, her early years were also shrouded in mystery, as she claimed to have been born in Aberdeenshire, being descended from the historical Scottish Farquharson clan.⁹⁵ In fact, she was born in Sheffield, the daughter of Amos Brammer, and until the outbreak of the First World War, was educated by Ursuline Nuns in Herck la Ville, Belgium.⁹⁶ Her father died in 1929, and her mother lived with her in Oxfordshire under the false name of Mary Forbes.⁹⁷ Most of this information did not come to light until after her death, when attempts were made to find heirs to her substantial wealth. Amateur investigator Kenneth Barry Jarrett, (with whom Mr Hicks briefly mentioned having communicated in his 1997 interview) put the story together. The resulting media revelations may well have impacted on the remarks made by the interviewees and shaped their views. The mystery featured in an American docuseries '*Unsolved Mysteries*' and in BBC's '*Good Fortune*', and was eventually unravelled by Jarrett finding lovers and family members from Dorothea's past to identify old photographs, finally reconciling Dorothea Allen and Dora Brammer.⁹⁸ Identification was confirmed after her death through DNA analysis of a hair sample retrieved from her manor house.⁹⁹

91. A Woodward, *Dorothea Allen*, p 65.

92. *Ibid*, p 60.

93. *Ibid*, p 93.

94. *Ibid*, p 100.

95. *Ibid*, pp 100-104; *Unsolved Mysteries* with Robert Stack, season 3, episode 12, Sky, (1990).

96. A Woodward, *Dorothea Allen*, 93-110.

97. *Ibid*, 96, 105.

98. *Ibid*, 104-6.

99. 'Can DNA end the £2 million mystery left by Dorothea?', *Daily Mail*, 1st January 1996, 18.

Concluding thoughts

On reflection, oral history remains vital in preserving a community's history, as demonstrated by the insights drawn from the experiences of Rhoda Woodward, Laurie Hicks, and Mrs Sansbury. While the interviews referenced in this article have at times been inconsistent and require critical interpretation, they offer a unique understanding of the lives of those connected to Banbury's Spencer Corset company, a once-iconic cultural institution.

Although the prominence of the Spencer name in Banbury has diminished over the years, traces of its legacy remain. Banbury United FC, the biggest club in North Oxfordshire, still honours the name through its stadium, clubhouse and mascot, 'Spencer the Puritan'. The physical legacy of the factory is all but gone, however there is one product being manufactured in the area that harks back to the organisation that settled in Banbury nearly a century ago. The echo of Spencers' spirit of innovation lives on through the production of custom cast body-shaped mannequins created for clothing design, a nod to the company's made-to-measure heritage which undoubtedly would make many from the wider Spencer family smile.



*Spencers 'Spen-all' Corset, 1934
(Corsetiere.net)*

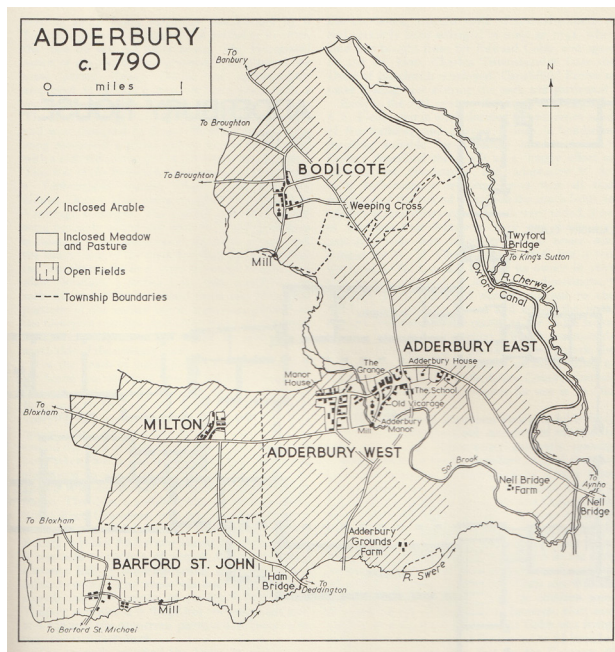
THE RISE AND RISE OF THE REVEREND DR RICHARD ANDREW OF ADDERBURY c.1401-1477

Nick Allen

The original Winchester Manor of Adderbury was one of more than 80 in the gift of the bishopric of Winchester. William of Wykeham (1324-1404), bishop of Winchester and Chancellor of England, founded his new college of St Mary of Winchester in Oxford (always known as New College¹) in 1379. In 1381 he split the Winchester Manor of Adderbury into two, creating a Rectorial Manor which he gifted to New College as part of its initial endowment, together with another of his many manors, Steeple Morden, near Cambridge.

Wykeham himself wrote the statutes of his college in which he laid down the priority of acceptance of young men to his college – namely founder's kin first, followed by natives of the estates that the college owned and candidates from the diocese of Winchester. In the first quarter of the fifteenth century the college register showed that the largest intake from any one area was from the parish of Adderbury. Fourteen students were listed – three of whom obtained bachelor degrees, two masters and two earned doctorates, one of whom was Richard Andrew; the remaining seven fell by the wayside, one died and six left without a degree.

Richard Andrew 'as a native of an estate the college owned' was actually born in Bodicote, about 1401, which was then part of the huge parish of Adderbury, North Oxfordshire, one of the largest parishes in the county.² At that date it consisted of East and West Adderbury, Milton, Barford St John and Bodicote; adding-up to more than 6,000 acres. Bodicote only became a civil parish in its own right in 1855.



*Reproduced with permission from The Victoria County
History of Oxford: vol 9 Bloxham Hundred, OUP, 1969 p 7
© University of London*

1. New College, Oxford: the seventh Oxford college to be founded. The college was named 'St Mary's College of Winchester in Oxford'; but known as New College as there was, already, another college named as St Mary's College in Oxford – Oriel College. It was established for a warden and 70 scholars (fellows) to study theology in preparation for a parochial ministry. In addition, William of Wykeham provided for ten chaplains, three clerks and 16 choristers for the service of the college chapel. New College was built in the monastic style with courtyard, cloisters surrounded by a chapel, living accommodation and teaching facilities. Subsequently, most new medieval foundations at Oxford and Cambridge followed this layout. Wykeham also founded, in 1373, Winchester College as a feeder for his new, Oxford college – boys were entered at the age of 13, principally to learn Latin.
2. Richard's parents were known to have been named John and Lucy. According to the *Winchester Pipe Roll 1409/10* for the Winchester Manor of Adderbury, ed. Mark Page (Hampshire County Council), p 199, a tenant farmer, named as John Andrew of Bodicote paid annual rent of 19s.1d to his lord. John was paying considerably more rent to his lord than his fellows. He would have to have been a very successful farmer to have afforded to send his son to Winchester, even if his education was free.

Apr. 5.	Richard Andrew de Adderbury	Sept. 30. 1419	1433	1477
	Com Oxon	in loc	Oct 8.	on the Sept. 12
	Dioce. Lincoln	Gub. Wheeler (Schol.)	beneficiaries.	St. Nov. 5
		defuncti		(This will was
		mens. sept.		dated Sept. 12. 1477
				Approved Nov. 5

Register of New College, Oxford (by kind permission of the Warden and Fellows)

New College's register shows Richard Andrew, of Adderbury, matriculating (admitted to the college) in September 1419, having been a scholar at Winchester College from September 1414-17. He became a Fellow in 1421, and after many years of study he was awarded a Doctorate of Civil Law in 1432 and left New College in 1433 - this was to prove to be a momentous year for him. He was ordained that December and inducted as rector of Waddesdon, Buckinghamshire (not a New College living); also, in the same year he had been appointed King's clerk, finally entering the service of Archbishop Chichele as his chancellor and lawyer – the start of a stellar career.

Chichele, as archbishop and chancellor, was a very powerful and influential man; he was greatly valued by both Henry V and Henry VI. In 1406 Henry V appointed him bishop of St David's, in Pembrokeshire (a gift for royal service) and subsequently, in 1414, archbishop of Canterbury. Chichele was one of the original tranche of students who went up to Wykeham's newly founded college at Oxford. Together he and Henry VI founded All Souls College³ in 1437 and Andrew was appointed as the first Warden of the College; EF Jacob⁴ mentions that the twenty founding members of All Souls were 'under the control of the archbishop's chancellor, Richard Andrew' but he left in 1442 and in October the following year was awarded the plum appointment of the King's Secretary, in the place of Thomas Beckington (c 1390-1465) who earlier that year had been elevated to the bishopric of Bath and Wells.

Meanwhile, in October 1440, Henry VI had founded his new college at Eton⁵ by the Thames at Windsor. Richard Andrew, in amongst his many other duties, was one of the four commissioners appointed by the king to prepare the ground for his new foundation. Eton parish church was to be used initially as a chapel for the clergy, staff and boys until a chapel was built and consecrated for the use of the college. He was appointed Commissary General by the archbishop of York (an officer representing a bishop) in 1465 and the following year, at the age of 65, was awarded his final benefice, a rectorship at Woodston, Huntingdonshire.

During the intervening period Andrew had dipped his toe into politics; in 1441 he had been appointed as a negotiator in 'mercantile intercourse' with Holland. He had then touched upon a little diplomacy when he was sent to France to conclude a truce in 1444;

3. All Souls, Oxford: Oxford's ninth college, founded in 1437, to be known as the 'College of the souls of all the faithful departed' was planned and built in the 1430s, the foundation charter being presented by the king. The Warden and 40 fellows had two functions, the first to pray for the souls who had fallen in all the eternal wars with France – the college acting as a chantry chapel – and secondly an academic role. The college only accepted post-graduate students who were to study for higher degrees of theology, law, both civil and ecclesiastical, and medicine. All the Fellows were to be in holy orders to prepare themselves, in Chichele's words 'to be learned clerical militia' to serve Church and state'. The college's statutes were, unsurprisingly, modelled on those of New College – Chichele had been one of the first Fellows at Wykeham's new college.

4. EF Jacob, *Register of Henry Chichele, Archbishop of Canterbury 1414-1443*, (Oxford, Clarendon Press 1938).

5. Eton College: founded in 1440 by Henry VI as 'The King's college of Our Lady of Eton beside Windsor'; a year later he founded King's college at Cambridge to be supplied with scholars from Eton. The school was to be part of a large foundation which included a community of secular priests, ten of whom were fellows, a pilgrimage church and alms houses. Provision was made for 70 scholars to receive a free education.

still in that year, in his role as King's Secretary, he had been sent on a mission to France to bring back Margaret of Anjou for her marriage to Henry VI. For this service to his king he was awarded a handsome annuity of £100.

In 1446 Andrew had been granted a licence for the foundation of a chantry in Deddington, Oxon, (a chantry was usually a chapel of prayer for a priest to sing or say Mass for the soul of the founder and his friends) and he also founded a chantry in Chipping Sodbury, Gloucestershire. This would have been entirely in keeping with his past role as Warden of All Souls as the college was originally founded as 'The College of the souls of all the faithful departed'. Chipping Sodbury was, as it happens, near the birth place of Robert Westerley, the King's master-mason who was responsible for the design and execution of much of the early parts of Eton College. Andrew, in his role as the King's Secretary, would surely have known Westerley – possibly holding him in high regard?

Richard Andrew with all the many stipends from his benefices and appointments would have been a very wealthy man.⁶ He is recorded as having given extremely generously to both of his colleges many fine gifts such as precious manuscripts and silver before he died in 1477.

Biographical details (numbered clockwise from centre)

1. William of Wykeham, (1324-1404) Bishop of Winchester and founder of New College, Oxford. He also founded Winchester College.
2. Thomas Cranley, (1313-1417) Archbishop of Dublin, was also Lord Chancellor of Ireland, 2nd Warden of New College 1389-96 and Vice-Chancellor of Oxford University 1390.
3. William Waynflete, (d 1486). From 1432 to 1443 he was Master of Winchester College later first Provost of Eton to 1447. He was appointed Bishop of Winchester in 1448 and in the same year he founded Magdalen College and School, Oxford. He was chancellor of England 1456-1460.
4. William Say, appointed in 1468, Dean of the King's Chapel, St Pauls Cathedral, London.
5. Rev Dr Richard Andrew (c1401-1477) appointed by the King, in 1437, as Warden of All Souls, Oxford, king's secretary 1443-1454 and Dean of York in 1452.
6. Dr John Selott, appointed in 1462, Archdeacon of Sudbury
7. Dr Hugh Sugar, treasurer of Wells, 1460-1489
8. Dr John Morton, Dean of Arches and Master of the Rolls, an ex-chancellor of Oxford University 1476-8.
9. Dr Andrew Holes, Archdeacon of Wells, also a lawyer in royal service and keeper of the privy seal 1450-1452.
10. Dr Thomas Chaundler, Chancellor of Wells, Warden of Winchester College 1450-4, Warden of New College, 1454-75.
11. Dr Thomas Beckington, King's Secretary (1433-43), keeper of the privy seal (1450-1452) also Bishop of Bath and Wells 1443-65.
12. Dr Henry Chichele, (c 1362-1443) Bishop of St David's 1408, raised to the See of Canterbury in 1414.

Acknowledgements

I am deeply grateful to the archivists of New College, All Souls and Eton College who very kindly provided me with much of the information contained in this paper. I am equally happy to acknowledge Anthony Wagg's input with his deep knowledge of the history of Eton.



The founder of New College, William of Wykeham, surrounded by eleven of its stellar, medieval alumni; one, of whom is Richard Andrew. Possibly drawn by Dr Thomas Chaundler. It reflects Wykeham's immeasurable legacy to the Church and education (New College archives MS 288f.4r, by kind permission of the Warden and Fellows)

6. AB Emden *Biographical Register of the University of Oxford*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1957, four volumes) vol 1, 34-35 lists Richard Andrew's appointments which included 26 clerical benefices, plus six civil – two legal, two royal and two church administrations.

A STRANGE SURVIVAL FROM THE CIVIL WAR?

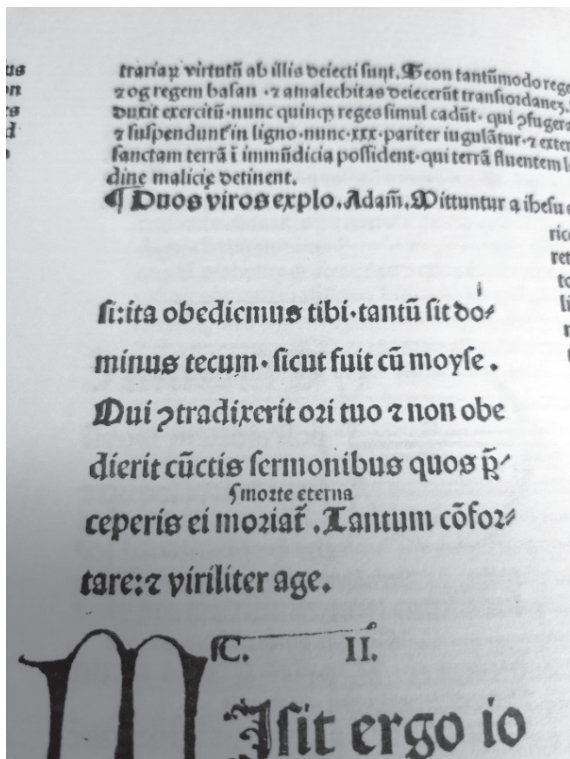
Oswyn Murray



This piece of wood or plank six foot long, with a painted inscription, gold lettering on grey-blue, was found in the woodshed of David Soden, whose family has lived in the village of Sibford Gower since at least the seventeenth century.¹ He thinks it came from the yard of the Poulton family business who were long active in the building trade in the area.

The lettering is in rough and uneven seventeenth century script, upper and lower case, and reads:

Qui rebellaverit ori tuo morietur: ANN (in capitals, presumably it continued with a year date)
[Whosoever shall have rebelled against your words, let him die: YEAR]



*Biblia Latina cum Glossa ordinaria,
editio princeps
(by kind permission of Bodley's librarian)*

The quotation is taken from the Latin Vulgate version of Joshua 1.18, where after the death of Moses, Joshua tells the Israelites to cross the Jordan into the Promised Land and seize it from the poor inhabitants. It seems to have been a well-known persecutors' text in Old Testament commentaries, both Hebrew and Christian, as justifying the death penalty then as now for those opposing both religious and secular authority.² But the quotation is significantly different from the standard Latin Vulgate, which in the *editio princeps* (1480/81) of Adolf Rusch of Strasbourg (*pictured left*) reads:

Qui contradixerit ori tuo et non obedierit cunctis sermonibus quos preceperis ei morietur, with an interlinear clearly Christian gloss specifying 'morte eterna' (eternal damnation)

The second word 'rebellaverit' in the Sibford inscription is significant. It is the word used in John Calvin's 1557 commentary on Joshua and by Hugo Grotius' 1625 *De iure belli ac pacis*, and

1. The name Soden is recorded in documents in the archive of the Town Estate Charity, Sibford Gower for the years 1668-1678.
2. There are numerous citations on the web.

derives in fact from the standard Protestant rather than the Catholic version of the Latin Bible, which was created by Immanuel Tremellius' 1569 Geneva translation; this was current in Reformation England and it lies behind The King James Authorised English version,³ used by John Milton and John Donne. Tremellius (1510-1580), an Italian from Ferrara, was a Calvinist convert from Judaism; he was protected by Archbishop Cranmer and became Professor of Hebrew at Cambridge; on the accession of Queen Mary he fled to become professor at Heidelberg.⁴ This reading '*rebellaverit*' instead of the standard Vulgate '*contradixerit*' serves to prove that the inscription belongs indeed to the period of the Reformation rather than being older or of more recent fabrication. The fifth word '*morietur*' is a variant on '*moriatur*' of the original Vulgate, Tremellius's '*morte plectitor*' (sic: perhaps '*plectitur*') and Calvin's and the later Vulgate text '*interficiatur*', perhaps suggesting a softening or adaptation of the original message or quotation from memory.

The lettering is uneven and rustic, but its colour of gold on blue grey is very similar to that of the contemporary wooden painted inscriptions in Duke Humfrey and Arts End in the Bodleian Library, Oxford,⁵ and was doubtless standard in the period. The use of Tremellius' Latin Vulgate text seems to rule out a Catholic origin; the sentiment is drawn from a religious text, but the presence of a historical date (whatever it was) points to a topical perhaps secular event.

There is no obvious church use. The top surface of the plank is painted in gold, which might suggest it was the top of a panelled area or positioned over a doorway. Previous study of Royalist tracts such as Robert Filmer's *Patriarcha* (1680, published posthumously) and Justus Lipsius' *Politica* (1589) shows that they tend to consist of strings of quotations from the Bible or classical texts as much as arguments,⁶ but I have been unable to find this text specifically quoted in the extensive pamphlet literature of the period. Could the word '*rebellaverit*' perhaps be significant, implying a denunciation of the (heretic) Parliamentarians at the time of the Civil Wars? Royalists of whatever religious persuasion certainly regarded the Parliamentarians as rebels against the monarch appointed by divine right. The fact that it was dated, though the date is missing (perhaps deliberately cut off), suggests that it was intended to refer to a topical event.



Shelf mark lettering of collection of John Selden's books, Arts End, Duke Humfrey, Bodleian Library, Oxford (by kind permission of Bodley's librarian)

3. 'Whosoever he be *that doth rebel* against thy commandment, and will not harken unto thy words in all that thou commandest him, he shall be put to death' (A.V. Joshua 1.18).

4. See KRG Austin, *From Judaism to Calvinism: The Life and Writings of Immanuel Tremellius* (c.1510-1580) Routledge 2007.

5. I owe this observation to Richard Ovenden, Bodley's Librarian.

6. O Murray, 'The Classical Traditions of Panegyric and Advice to Princes' *Concepts of Ideal Rulership from Antiquity to the Renaissance* ed. G Roskam and S Schorn (Brepols 2018) pp 217-54.

I have consulted several experts in seventeenth-century religious history.⁷ The most detailed comment is from Professor Alec Ryrie of Durham University who writes:

‘It looks to me as if Tremellius is the most plausible source. As Oswyn Murray says, Tremellius’ was the standard Protestant Latin Bible for a couple of centuries; and while it’s not exact, the shortening of ‘morte plectitor’ to ‘moriatur’ is closer than the parallel to the Vulgate, and is the sort of change you might make if trying to fit your phrase onto a plank of particular size. And if it’s Tremellius, then the object is likely to be made by a reasonably orthodox or establishment Protestant: not a Quaker or a Catholic recusant. The most obvious case would be a royalist of some sort, protesting against the Civil War or the Cromwellian regimes. Obviously if we knew the date it would be a giveaway. But I wonder if this might just be of some more Parliamentary or Presbyterian origin. The choice of a text which identifies rebelling against God’s *words* as the capital crime would be very Presbyterian, even Covenanter. And that might explain the most frustrating aspect of this, namely the missing date. That omission could just be accidental damage, but odds are surely that it was deliberate. I am imagining that the date might have been, say, 1662, the reimposition of the Book of Common Prayer? Or some date from the Laudian counter-revolution in the 1630s? Or 1641, referring to the Irish rebellion? Anyway, something that would give it away as politically dangerous, such that the owner might soon afterwards think it prudent to saw off the end of the plank and let the verse sink into safe obscurity.’

It is also necessary to explain the survival of the object in Sibford Gower. The two villages of the Sibfords, originally upland sheep farming communities, lie on the borders of Oxfordshire and Warwickshire, and have a record of independence from authority both religious and secular. After the nearby battle of Edgehill (1642) the first report of a Quaker Meeting was in 1668; George Fox visited in 1670 and 1678 and the first Meeting House was built in 1678-81; the villages have been Quaker strongholds until very recently. The current Meeting House (1864) is the second on the site (which itself was donated by an earlier member of the Soden family),⁸ and there was no Anglican church until the mid-19th century; the inhabitants were notorious for refusing to pay tithes.⁹ The inscription clearly does not belong within the Sibfords religious community.

A possible explanation of the object has been suggested by Simon Townsend, Director of the Banbury Museum & Gallery, to whom I have offered the inscription for public display. He suggests that it is of similar dimensions to the crossbeam of the town gallows already held in the Museum; this apparently survived because it was reused, incorporated into a plush loom, and is decorated with a zigzag line of nails. Could the Sibford wooden placard have been a similar decoration once affixed to the official gallows that survived until the 19th century on Gallows Hill in Sibford Gower, on the ancient border between Oxfordshire and Warwickshire?¹⁰ Gallows were often placed on common land and on the boundary

7. The Rev Professor Diarmaid MacCulloch of Oxford University, an expert on 16th - 17th century religious history, confirms the lettering looks rustic 17th century, but has been unable to clarify its purpose. Professor John Morrill of Selwyn College Cambridge is more dubious about the lettering and knows of no parallels for this use of the biblical text. I have also consulted Michael Questier of Queen Mary College London and James Kelly of Durham University.

8. Records of the Sibford Meeting House.

9. Pauline Ashbridge, *Protestant Paths: A Story of Dissent* (London 2016) ch 3.

10. I have not found an exact parallel to this, but Hogarth’s *The Idle Apprentice executed at Tyburn* in the V&A has a biblical quotation on the picture surround (Proverbs 1.27-8), and executioners’ swords were often decorated with moral maxims. The deserted situation and the cross bar are best illustrated in a Dutch woodcut by Esaias van de Velde (1587-1630), *Landscape with the Gallows* (MFA Boston 61.748), which shows both gallows and gibbet (the latter for suspending the corpse longer term, as a warning).



*Banbury town gallows crossbar showing zigzag nail decoration
(Banbury Museum)*

between parishes and dioceses, lest the souls of the dead haunt particular communities. The inscription would perhaps have been placed on the crosspiece, from which corpses were hung and left suspended for a period to make sure they were dead (usually half an hour to an hour). It seems to me that the sentiment reflects well the opinions of a Royalist army gathered before the battle of Edgehill in October 1642, and perhaps intending to execute their 'rebel' Parliamentary opponents after their victory. Although the text is literate and competently painted, the variety in the lettering and the variations from the standard biblical text might well suggest that it was made 'on the march' with a quotation from memory.

In the event neither side won; we may surmise that the ill-omened date was cut off and the placard removed by the local villagers, who (Lord Clarendon records) were hostile to the Royalists and refused to supply the Royalist army, having hidden their harvest which would have been plentiful in October. Clarendon describes in vivid detail the horrors of the battle on Sunday 23 October, the final withdrawal of both armies, and the burial by the minister of the local parish of 5,000 corpses from the two sides (3,000 Royalists and 2,000 'rebels' as he consistently calls them), which had been left on the battlefield stripped of their clothing and possessions, even while some were still alive.¹¹ Within a generation of this traumatic event the Sibfords formally became a Quaker community (one of the oldest surviving in the world) as a result of George Fox's visitations. But they no longer understood the text, so it was preserved by chance in the village.

Whatever its original location and function, the inscription itself is surely a public statement about an historical event, and the sentiment is clearly Royalist. At the very least it is evidence of the complex loyalties, and the violence of the religious and political hatreds that divided the communities of this remote part of Banburyshire in the 17th century.

11. Edward, Earl of Clarendon, *The History of the Rebellion and Civil Wars in England*, ed. W Dunn Macray, Book VI, 80-97.

LAW AND ORDER IN THE COUNTRYSIDE

Helen Forde

The 1830s and 1840s were times of unrest in rural England and South Northamptonshire and North Oxfordshire were no exception. By then the Tudor system of maintaining order by the village constable was inadequate in most places and the introduction of an organised police force in London in 1829 was a trigger to a more widespread attempt in 1839 to form rural police forces at county level. The move was against a background of considerable threats of violence over the mechanisation of agricultural practices and the political ambitions of the Chartists. Reform however was not welcomed by all, not least by Samuel Lovell of King's Sutton who wrote a long letter to the *Banbury Guardian* in 1849, principally against Sir Philip Sydney Pierrepont of Evenley with whom he had a running battle, but ending with the assertion: 'I have this to say: before the police were established, we, in this parish, paid only £20 for a constable during seven years. We had the services we paid for. During the seven years after the establishment of the police we paid £301 ls. 9d. And what benefit have we had from it? We have had one-fifth part of a man, and that fifth part has been of so little use to us, that we have been obliged to pay a village constable to do his work for him. If this is not reason for wishing to get rid of the police force and police expenses, I don't know what is'.¹

Samuel Lovell was in a good position to trumpet the value of this village constable who lived round the corner and consistently gained plaudits for his prowess from the beginning of his tenure (at least 1836)² until his death in 1855. George Morgan, born in King's Sutton in 1802, was a plumber and glazier by profession but he clearly spent much of his time hunting down miscreants and appearing in court as a prosecutor or witness. His forte was in producing evidence – matching the footprints of suspects to their shoes, boots or even bare feet, matching cabbage stalks left in the field to the cabbage heads found in a thief's kitchen and describing the coat pockets of an alleged thief as 'all bacony'³ when searching for stolen bacon and ham. Occasionally the reports of his actions verged on the sensational – 'That indefatigable officer, G Morgan of Sutton, hunted on their [sheep stealers'] train for a whole week, and ran into them just as the sheep feast was ended, at the hut of a well-known sweep, near Woodstock, the floor of which was littered down with straw and where from eight to ten smutty ladies and gentlemen had slept the night before'.⁴

He was presented with a framed testimonial in 1847, together with £82 raised by subscription for his services 'as a mark of approbation of his conduct for many years in apprehending and bringing to justice a number of notorious offenders, in the counties of Northampton, Oxford and Warwick; and more especially for his zeal and activity in discovering and capturing the murderers of the late Mr George Mobbs of Dane Hill farm who were convicted at the Oxfordshire June Assizes, 1846'.⁵

'Sending for Morgan' was, in the 1840s and early 1850s tantamount to success in pursuing those who set fire to barns,⁶ stole money from drunken revellers or burgled the houses of the better off. He was described as 'sagacious and active', 'indefatigable', 'energetic' and 'acute', in contrast, or so thought the *Banbury Guardian*, to the abilities of the organised police force.

1. *BG* 19 April 1849, p 2.

2. P Renold (ed) *Banbury Gaol Records* (Banbury Historical Society, 1987) vol 21, p 39.

3. *Northampton Mercury*, 9 January 1841.

4. *BG* 20 February 1845.

5. *BG* 20 August 1846, p 3.

6. *BG* 22 April 1847.

THE BROUGHTON COIN HOARD

Simon Townsend

In November 2024 the Broughton Coin Hoard returned for display in Banbury Museum & Gallery, on loan from the Ashmolean Museum.

In December 1996 a group of 16 coins were found within sight of Broughton Castle by Keith Westcott, a metal detectorist, who was working with the permission of Lord Saye and Sele. As the coins were removed a discolouration in the soil was observed, likely the remains of the bag that once held them. The coins were declared Treasure Trove at the coroner's inquest at Oxford in December 1997 and were acquired in 1998 by the Ashmolean Museum following the provisions of the 1996 Treasure Act.¹

The coins were first displayed on loan in the new canal-side Banbury Museum that opened in September 2002 but were returned to the Ashmolean Museum to feature in galleries created in the major redevelopment that opened on 7 November 2009. 15 years later they have returned to Banbury, displayed in a gallery only a stone's throw from where Banbury Castle once stood, providing a fitting geographic context for this Civil War collection. The coins have a Civil War (1642-1651) context, the latest coin dating to the early 1640s.

In times of turmoil wealth was frequently hidden, as is documented by Samuel Pepys in June 1667, when his wife and father buried their gold coinage in response to a raid up the Medway by the Dutch. The hiding of the Broughton Hoard may be associated with one of two events occurring in 1642 and 1643; it could be with the battle of Edgehill which took place on 16 October 1642, only a few miles from Broughton Castle, home of the parliamentarian Nathaniel Fiennes. Following the inconclusive battle, Broughton Castle was placed under siege and was taken by the royalists. Clearly this is an event that might have provoked the coins' deposit. Alternatively, they may be associated with an event the following year, 13 July 1643, when Queen Henrietta Maria was reunited with her husband King Charles I at Wroxton Abbey. Eighteen months earlier, on 23 February 1642, the Queen had sailed for Holland from Falmouth to reunite her daughter, Princess Mary, with her husband Willem (later Willem, 2nd Prince of Orange) and more importantly to raise funds to support the royalist cause. She returned on 22 February 1643, landing at Bridlington in Yorkshire, and travelled toward Oxford where the King had established court. By 13 July she had reached North Oxfordshire and was reunited with him. The presence of three coins of Philip IV of Spain, could suggest that they arrived in Oxfordshire with her from continental Europe.



*Philip IV, half-ducaton,
Antwerp mint, dated 1633
(© Ashmolean Museum,
University of Oxford)*

1. See NJ Mayhew and EM Besly 'The Broughton Coin Hoard' *C&CH* 15 (2002) vol 15/7, pp 233-239.

ARCHAEOLOGY ROUNDUP 2024

Pamela Wilson

Archaeology of the Banbury environs and their immediate hinterland in the adjacent counties – i.e. ‘Banburyshire’ – has been sparsely studied by comparison to central and south Oxfordshire. Widespread gravel extraction in the Upper Thames Valley to the south of Banbury has led to significant retrieval of archaeological remains, and the presence of a large well-endowed university with a keen research interest has also favoured more southerly investigation. Furthermore, aerial survey has been inhibited in the past by airspace restrictions around Upper Heyford, and even the local geology comprising Lower and Middle Lias clay is not conducive to the formation of cropmarks. A final factor came into play during local construction of the M40 motorway which was beset by funding disputes, leading to skimping of archaeological investigation.

More recently however things have been looking up. Successive governments have pledged to build many more houses, and after the introduction of PPG16 in 1990 and subsequent iterations requiring developers to commission an archaeological survey prior to starting construction, a number of local excavations have proved fruitful, albeit somewhat random and of limited scope.

There is little substantial evidence of a Neolithic presence (4300-2000 BCE approx) around Banbury, apart from the known causewayed enclosure at Wykham Farm¹ and a regionally significant occupation site east of Banbury uncovered by the Flood Alleviation Scheme.² A few Neolithic pottery sherds found in a couple of ditches at Frilford are typical of other small-scale findings in the area.³ Even the Bronze Age (2000-800 BCE) has been sparsely represented; Oxford University students made extensive study of ring ditches and a BA round barrow at Hampton Gay some way south of Banbury (and a Neolithic long barrow),⁴ while the finding of an aurochs radius at the Flood Alleviation Scheme (above) is probably Bronze Age.

Much archaeological evidence around Banbury however dates to the Iron Age (800 BCE-400 CE) and Roman periods. Recent work includes a small rural settlement with IA and Roman phases at Howes Lane, Bicester,⁵ an early to middle IA settlement at Turweston Road, Brackley, part of a larger network known locally,⁶ and a sequence of IA/early Roman enclosures at Broken Furrow east of Warwick Road in Banbury.⁷

Other findings have included further evidence of a multiphase site at Swalcliffe Lea with a probable IA settlement and extensive Roman pottery scatter,⁸ a small IA settlement at Sibford Ferris (with a ‘Beaker’ pit, i.e. late Neolithic),⁹ a mixed agricultural and domestic

1. A Oswald, C Dyer and M Barber, *The Creation of Monuments : Neolithic Causewayed Enclosures in the British Isles*. (English Heritage, Swindon 2001).

2. A Simmonds, *The Archaeology of Banbury Flood Alleviation Scheme*, Oxfordshire. Oxford Archaeology Monograph No 21, 2014.

3. B Braun, ‘Frilford, Millets Farm Centre’ *South Midlands Archaeology*, 2023 vol 53, p 96.

4. D Griffiths *et al* ‘Hampton Gay, Geophysical Survey at Barn Ground 2022’, OU Dept for Continuing Education *SMA*, 2023, vol 53, p 118.

5. S Bush, R Massey and C Randall, ‘Iron Age and Roman Occupation at Howes Lane, Bicester.’ *Oxoniensia*, 2024 vol 89, p 269.

6. J Durman, A King and I Leslie, ‘Brackley, Land Adjacent to The Butts, Turweston Road’, *SMA*, 2023, vol 53, p 53.

7. J Barker and G Griffith, ‘A Sequence of Late Iron Age to Early Roman Enclosures at Broken Furrow, Banbury’, *OXO*, 2024, vol 89, p 305.

8. E Shawyer, ‘Swalcliffe Upper Lea, Round Hill’, *SMA*, 2023, vol 53, p 99.

9. T Allen, C Howsam and J Boothroyd, ‘A Beaker Pit and Middle Iron Age Settlement at Hook Norton Road, Sibford Ferris’, *OXO*, 2024, vol 89, p 327.

IA settlement at Berry Hill Road, Adderbury¹⁰ and residues of Roman activity close to Aves Ditch, a 3-mile IA boundary earthwork near Upper Heyford.¹¹

Further evaluation of the known Roman villa at Broughton confirmed the existence of a bathhouse with tessellated floor, heated by a hypocaust, and a tower with painted plaster walls giving views down the valley below. A succession of terraced ponds suggested fish farming as a possible activity.¹²

Great excitement was generated in June 2024 when the *Banbury Guardian* announced 'Archaeologists discover prehistoric settlement'¹³ in advance of house building at Calthorpe Gardens, Bretch Hill. The settlement was predominantly late Bronze Age to middle/late IA, along with an Anglo-Saxon cemetery containing at least 52 individuals, but the 18,000 artefacts unearthed covered a much wider range of dates from mesolithic to post-medieval.¹⁴ Many artefacts, including rich grave goods, beaded pendants, gold-plated personal objects and weapons, were put on public display and a lecture is planned next year by the Banbury Historical Society.

Work in more recent contexts has include examination of the medieval parish church at Hook Norton, remodelled in the 13th century,¹⁵ and excavation at the 13th century North Aston Hall and its adjacent 14th century church.¹⁶ At Priory Farm, Helmdon, repair of the farmhouse suggested that it occupies the site of the 15th century Netherby Manor.¹⁷ In this arena Dr Stephen Wass, a BHS member and archaeologist, has developed a niche for excavation of medieval church grounds and gardens of substantial historic houses.

Oxfordshire Buildings Record work was interrupted by the pandemic but has recently resumed in Chipping Norton and Hook Norton, furnishing new evidence to contrast urban and rural historic building features. 75 and 37 respectively housing surveys were performed with special emphasis on styles of roof trusses.¹⁸ Meanwhile the Portable Antiquities Scheme has continued its valuable work: notable local finds include a Roman slide key lock bolt from Duns Tew and a coin pendant from Middle Aston.¹⁹

What have the important issues nationally been? One such is the advances made in the identification of ancient DNA (aDNA), leading to determination of age of ever-earlier skeletal fossils and other biological material. It's important too for identification of individuals in more modern contexts, in the Fromelles project 250 soldiers buried in unmarked WWI mass graves in northern France were recovered and identified.²⁰

And the perennial issue – Stonehenge! At present plans for the tunnel which would cut a swathe through the ancient landscape have been put on hold because of lack of funding (hooray!).

Stop Press!

National news just announced: largest dinosaur prints known in Britain just found at Ardley quarry proceeding along two distinct highways.

10. T Jones, 'Adderbury, Berry Hill Road', *SMA*, 2023, vol 53, p 102.

11. G Gurney, 'Upper Heyford, Heyford Park, Camp Road', *SMA*, 2023, vol 53, p 107.

12. M Brett and C Leonard, 'Broughton, Broughton Roman Villa', *SMA*, 2023, vol 53, p91.

13. *Banbury Guardian* 30 May 2024, 'Archaeologists discover prehistoric settlement'; 13 June 2024 'Finds from Town's ancient past'.

14. M Sargent, 'Banbury, Land off Broughton Road, Bretch Hill', *SMA*, 2023, vol 53, pp 88-90.

15. J Blair, 'The Medieval Parish Church at Hook Norton: Discoveries and Observations', *OxO*, 2024, vol 89, p 63.

16. J Boothroyd 'North Aston, North Aston Hall', *SMA*, 2023, vol 53, p 103.

17. S Priestley, 'Helmdon, Priory Farm', *SMA*, 2023, vol 53, p 54.

18. P Clark, 'OBR: Chipping Norton and Hook Norton', *SMA*, 2023, vol 53, p107.

19. E Caswell, 'The Portable Antiquities Scheme in Oxfordshire 2023', *OxO*, 2024, vol 89, pp 453-458.

20. L Loe, 'Fromelles, Northern France', *In Touch : 50 years of Oxford Archaeology*, 2023, pp 26-27.

BOOK REVIEWS

Keith Laybourn, *The Ascott Martyrs* (Paul Jackson, 2023), 156pp. ISBN 978-1-739 327804-4, £14.99

This series of essays examines the cultural context in which the women known as the Ascott martyrs lived and worked in 1873 – essentially a familiar story of the oppressed poor coming into conflict with tenant farmers, themselves beholden to the elite landowning classes, and the emergence of collective action in the shape of the National Agricultural Labourers' Union (NALU).

The incident which sparked the event was the attempt by some Ascott-under-Wychwood women to dissuade two men from acting as blacklegs in a strike by the farm labourers. They were arrested, tried by local clerical magistrates in Chipping Norton and committed to Oxford gaol. Controversy ensued both locally and nationally with a huge public outcry over the brutality of sending 16 women, two with babies, to gaol in Oxford with hard labour. Some, largely farmers, were vociferous in their condemnation of the women, others were worried about the severity of the sentence and the conflicted role of the clergy who served as magistrates. The outcome? A reduction of the sentence, though not a pardon, from Queen Victoria indicating the concern at a high level; the seizure by the nascent NALU of a moment to promulgate its work on behalf of agricultural labourers, and greater prominence for tenant farmers, caught between the workforce poverty and the demands of landed proprietors for greater productivity.

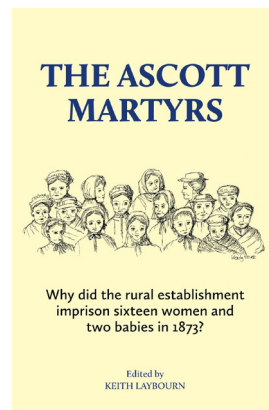
The authors offer comparisons to the Tolpuddle Martyrs, discussions on farming in Oxfordshire at the time, considerations on the issue of whether magistrates could fulfil double roles and how incidents like this contributed to emigration in the second half of the 19th century. Clearly the incident was the subject of a good deal of debate at the time but it dropped out of sight pretty quickly; however the 150th anniversary offers the opportunity to revisit the history of Oxfordshire at the time and bring up topics related to agrarian poverty, landlord greed, the need for judicial reform of the penal laws and how the agricultural communities in the county continued to be represented by a Conservative patriarchy, no doubt partly because many of those who had protested before left for America and a better life. The Ascott martyrs themselves would be surprised that, 150 years after their ordeal at Oxford, the topic was still being debated but if nothing else, their brief sojourn in Oxford gaol highlighted an attitude to women which has changed, at least partly, in the subsequent years.

Helen Forde

James Tobin, *Hook Norton at War 1939-1945*, Published by: Hook Norton Local History Group, 2023, 80pp, ISBN:978-1-9998256-5-2, £10

Available from the Secretary: David McGill, Sunnybank Farmhouse, Scotland End, Hook Norton, Banbury OX15 5NR email: scotlandend@btinternet.com

Hook Norton Local History Group are to be commended on the production of this fascinating insight into wartime life in a rural community, encompassing day to day life, the local impact of national events and the contribution made to those events by local people.



Anecdotal in style, thematic in structure, it has been woven together from a number of sources. Drawing mainly on articles by local historian James Tobin for the Hook Norton Newsletter, and edited by Donald Ratcliffe it includes a wealth of background information drawn from published sources, local detail from diaries, official documents and personal accounts, all referenced. It gives voice to the experience and contribution of all sections of the community, those who stayed and those who went to war.

At the outbreak of war Hook Norton might have seemed something of a backwater with farm work carried out using horse power. The Hook Norton Pig Club had been in operation some 25 years when the country was being encouraged to keep a pig and dig for Britain

The impact of successive shock waves: the influx of evacuees; the fear of invasion; the real threat of aerial bombardment is told with a wealth of examples of how local people and organisations had to step up and adapt. While small scale military training was seen in the area, major changes came in the run up to D-day when American forces arrived on the scene. The chapter on the Hooky Race Riot gives a rare insight into racial tensions of the day, somehow unexpectedly erupting in rural Oxfordshire.

This volume will be of interest to all who seek to understand the human impact of major historical events and will have a particular resonance for those with links to Hook Norton to whom some of the names and places will be familiar.

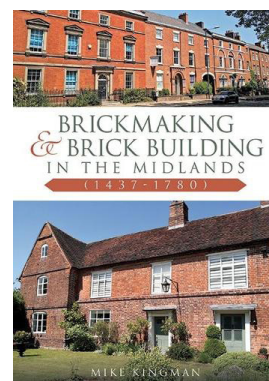
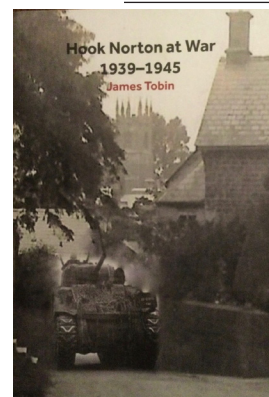
Verna Wass

Mike Kingman *Brickmaking and Brick Building in the Midlands (1437-1780)* (Brewin Books, Redditch, 2023), 330pp, ISBN: 978-1858587585

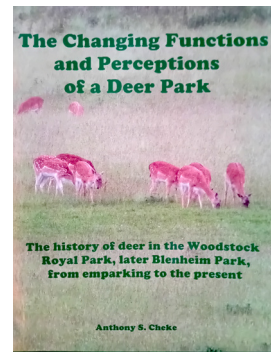
Whilst North Oxfordshire remains peripheral to the main geographical focus of this volume there is much here to interest local enthusiasts for building history. This remarkably comprehensive publication deals in detail with the origins of brick building in the region, early technologies and developments in the brick making industry and the economics of both production and transport. Kingman takes on and, on the whole successfully challenges, a number of established ideas regarding building in brick. For example, he stresses the aesthetic importance of the medium for early adopters rather than geological imperatives and underlines the largely unrecognised role of clergy in promoting the use of brick. In a later section the rise of brick as a cheap material as opposed to the use of increasingly rare and expensive timber is also questioned.

There is much to absorb and enjoy here but for many this will be a work of reference, a fact that makes the lack of an index all the more perplexing. Similarly, a set of regional maps illustrating the location of key sites could have done much to promote understanding of the geographical elements of the study. All in all, a useful addition to the literature on vernacular architecture but a text that could have been even more so with the addition of a map and an index.

Stephen Wass



Anthony S Cheke, *The Changing Functions and Perceptions of a Deer Park: The history of deer in Woodstock Royal Park, later Blenheim Park, from emparking to the present*. Published online May 2023, 25pp. Reprinted from *Fritillary 11*: pp 22-47 (2023) – Journal of the Ashmolean Natural History Society of Oxfordshire.



This 25-page, well-illustrated booklet with an extensive bibliography is a must read for anyone interested in social and landscape history, and of course deer and deer parks into the 21st century. Cheke's study came out of a Biodiversity Survey of High Park SSI (2017-2021) and covers the broader countryside around the Woodstock/Blenheim estate (renamed from Woodstock in 1709), Oxfordshire and Gloucestershire, illustrating the interaction of deer populations on the estate and surrounding area. The booklet is divided into six sections, The Establishment, Rise and Decline of the Deer Park followed by the Medieval, Tudor and Stuart periods, 18th and 19th centuries, Modern Period, Deer in High Park 2017-2021 concluding with the Impacts and Future of Blenheim Deer.

Domesday Book, 1086, lists Woodstock as a 'lordship forest of the king'. A royal hunting forest reserved for all 'beasts of the chase' (deer and wild boar) but as times changed and the landscape reshaped the deer were killed off before filtering back into the park towards the end of the twentieth century.

To protect the royal deer around 1110 an area was emparked by a stone wall (7 miles/11.3km), the first-time stone walling was used in this way in Britain. The park held Fallow Deer, reintroduced by the Normans as an exotic animal rather than for venison, being smaller and easier to manage, and the native Red Deer. Although the primary function of the park was the maintenance of deer, other animals were also kept including horses, pigs, oxen, cows, rabbits, and wild boar along with common grazing. Also (12th C) a royal menagerie of exotic animals.

Between 1230 and 1300 over a thousand deer were taken in the park some for (re)stocking other royal and smaller local parks. Emparked deer took a lot of looking after. Hay meadows were cut by local tenants (browsers) as part of their rent along with ivy, foliage, and twigs of shredded or pollarded trees, to supply extra feed (browse) for the deer in winter and droughts. In 1577 a herd of some 2,000-3,000 deer was recorded in the park but with increasing pressure from arable agriculture and poachers. By 1640 the inhabitants of Woodstock and nearby villages were petitioning against loss of access to common land, rights of verd and venison and damage done by escaped deer.

Tudor monarchs encouraged horse breeding within parks and from the 1580s the hunting of foxes and hares and horse racing. Racing on the course at Woodstock was finally abandoned about 1810. Although the post-restoration monarchy was not interested in hunting Woodstock remained primarily a deer park but saw the beginning of changes in the function and use towards more varied recreation and landscapes. There are few references to deer during the 18th-19th centuries, possibly reflecting a growing interest in new landscapes and architectural movements. Even after Capability Brown's remodeling of the park in 1781 it held between 2,000-3000 deer. 19th century illustrations show Red and Fallow deer in the park but by 1907 only 120 remained. A final cull took place between 1914-1918 but by 2014 Roe (1980s), Fallow and Muntjac (1970s) had re-entered the park with their browsing, along with that of hares and rabbits having a significant impact on the character of the park. Sporting rights for deer in the park have been leased since 2014 and in 2019 British White Cattle were introduced to help reduce deer numbers and return parkland to wood-pasture.

Graham Winton

ANNUAL REVIEW

The Society has thrived in 2024, maintaining its reputation for excellence in its well-attended programme of lectures and summer visits, professional academic journal, comprehensive reference library, website and members newsletter. Thanks to Pamela Wilson for her chairmanship over recent years, to Simon Townsend for his contribution to our work and that of Banbury Museum and to Graham Winton for his prompt and efficient minutes for the Committee.

Our lecture programme, available in person and online, continues to offer members the opportunity to hear about the latest developments in research from respected lecturers. Organised by local historian Deborah Hayter, this year's series has covered topics of local and regional significance. It ranged from: the history of footwear through the origins of Wessex, the importance of Burton Dassett Southend, Port Meadow (the boast of Oxford for a million years), physical attractiveness and the female life-cycle in the 17th century England to love and marriage in medieval Oxfordshire. In April members chose to give presentations on documents they had chosen, showcasing fascinating results.

Rosemary Leadbetter organised our summer visits which provided a rare opportunity to visit the wonderful time capsule, Rousham House, followed by a guided tour of the gardens with Deborah Hayter. Members appreciated the archaeological discoveries associated with Sir Anthony Cope's scientific theme park of the 17th century at Hanwell, led by archaeologist Stephen Wass. Our AGM in July took us to the Church of St Mary the Virgin, Cropredy. After the official business, expertly managed by our Vice President Barrie Trinder, we heard about the trials and tribulations of re-roofing a Grade I listed medieval church from the churchwarden Verna Wass.

Helen Forde has again done us proud with the 2024 edition of *Cake & Cock Horse*. While retaining the form of a respected academic journal, she succeeds yet again in creating a publication which looks attractive, engaging and accessible.

The Society's library continues to develop thanks to the work of Sue Jaiteh and her team; this reference collection is a rich resource for those engaged in research. It houses a full set of BHS Records Volumes alongside many essential sources including the *VCH*, trade directories and *Oxoniensia*. Thanks to our volunteers, the library is open to the public on Thursday and Saturday afternoons.

Our web master Ian West continues to develop our website to improve both content and interactivity. During the year the Society has taken a number of steps to increase its engagement with the local community. Stalls at Banbury Show, and Banbury Canal Festival generated significant interest and good sales of publications. Membership remains resilient standing at 220 for the year, thanks to Margaret Little and Treasurer Chris Bates for their efficient administration of new and renewing membership.

Verna Wass, Chair

ACCOUNTS

Banbury Historical Society

Registered Educational Charity 260581

Income & Expenditure Account for year ending 31 December 2024

	2024	2023
INCOME	£	£
Subscriptions	3,540	3,943
Sale of publications	1,117	1,642
Visitors' fees and other income	261	284
Legacy from former member Jeremy Gibson	0	1000
Records Volume Grants	0	1500
Total Income	4,917	8,369
EXPENDITURE		
Cake & Cockhorse	2,344	1,724
Meetings	550	820
Postage and other administration costs	665	829
Records Volume	25	2,802
Total Expenditure	3,584	6,175
SURPLUS (Deficit) for the year	1,333	2,194

Balance Sheet as at 31 December 2024

Balance of funds at 1 January 2024	11,200	9,006
Surplus (deficit) for the year	1,333	2,194
Balance of funds at 31 December 2024	12,533	11,200

Represented by:

ASSETS

NatWest Bank Current Account	6,771	3,734
NatWest Bank Reserve Account	5,147	5,074
Cash	29	29
Sundry Debtors – Museum sales & sums due	1,079	2,698
TOTAL ASSETS	13,026	11,535
LIABILITIES – Subscriptions in advance	(493)	(335)
NET ASSETS at 31 December 2024	12,533	11,200

Chris Bates, Treasurer

I have reviewed and examined the books and records of the Banbury Historical Society and confirm that the accounts prepared by the Treasurer represent a fair and accurate summary of the financial transactions completed in the year ended 31 December 2023.



Howard Knight FCMA, CGMA

16 February 2025

INDEX OF PERSONAL NAMES

A

Addison, Joseph 29
 Allen 61, 66, 68
 Allen, (Eric) Robert 56, 58, 59, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68
 Allen, Dorothea 56, 58, 59, 61, 62, 63, 64, 66, 67, 68, 69
 Allen, Nick 71
 Allen, T 80
 Andrew, John 71
 Andrew, Lucy 71
 Andrew, Richard 71, 72, 73
 Arber, Edward 26
 Ashbridge, Pauline 76
 Ashby, Joseph 18
 Ashmole, Elias 24, 28
 Atherton, Candy 63
 Austin, John Sunman 31
 Austin, KRG 75

B

Baker, George 36
 Barat, George 33
 Barat, Madame 33
 Barber, M 80
 Barclay/Barclay, Gaylord 58
 Barker, J 80
 Barker, Sally 56
 Barrett, George Paul 33
 Barrett, Margaret 33
 Barrows, Thomas 14
 Bartram, G 48, 50, 51
 Bates, Chris 85, 86
 Beale, Seymour 36, 37
 Beales, Anthony 37
 Beales, George Anthony 35
 Beckington, Thomas 72, 73
 Beesley, Alfred 23
 Bell, C 8
 Benjamin, Susan 30
 Bennett, L 48, 51
 Berger, Darwin Spencer 58
 Berger, George Wendell 58
 Berkeley, Lady Elizabeth 26
 Berry, LE 27
 Besly, EM 79
 Bessemer, Henry 16
 Betts, W 31
 Bevington, D 28
 Bickerstaff, Isaac 29
 Billing, M 31
 Bishop, George 26
 Blair, J 81
 Blake, James 39
 Bletchly, Lionel 55
 Bletchly, Mark 55
 Blinkhorn, Thomas 36
 Bloomfield, Edwin 34

Bloomfield, John W 43
 Bloxham, C 16
 Booth, William 25
 Boothroyd, J 80
 Boothroyd, J 81
 Boss, Thomas Ward 44
 Bracken, JK 26
 Bradwood, Melchisidec 26, 27
 Brain, Ron 55
 Brammer, Amos 69
 Brammer, Basil 68
 Brammer, Dora 58, 68, 69
 Brammer, Emily 59
 Brathwaite, Richard 28
 Braun, B 80
 Breton, Nicholas 25
 Brett, M 81
 Bright, Timothie 24
 Bromley, Dorothy 16
 Brown, Capability 84
 Bruce, J 48
 Bruton, Edward 10
 Buck, Edward 36
 Buckley, Rev. W Edward 21
 Burrows, Edward J 46
 Bush, S 80
 Busy, Zeal-of-the-land 28
 Butcher, John 11
 Butler, M 28

C

Cadman, Joseph 12
 Calvin, John 74
 Camden, William 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29
 Carmichael, John 14
 Carnegie, Andrew 37, 38
 Carter, H 27
 Carter, Sarah 34
 Cash, Eleanor 17
 Cash, John 17
 Cash, Joseph 17
 Caswell, E 81
 Charles I 79
 Chaundler, Thomas 73
 Cheke, Anthony S 84
 Cheney & Sons 11
 Chetwode, Crawley CG 48
 Chichele, Archbishop Henry 72, 73
 Chrysostom, St John 26
 Clarendon, Lord 77
 Clark, Edward T 58
 Clark, P 81
 Collinson, Patrick 28
 Cope, Anthony 85
 Cordell, Jim 54, 55
 Cranley, Thomas 73
 Cranmer, Archbishop 75

Creaser, J 28
 Cringan, Jimmy 66
 Cromwell, Oliver 40
 Crosby, Bing 61
 Crowe, Eyre 17
 Cubitt, Thomas Henry 16
 Cynric 23

D

Dando, John 25
 Darkes, Giles 7
 Davies, Mrs 66
 Davis, H 27
 Davis, John 16
 Dennis, ETW 44
 Devonport, Viscount 12
 Dillon, John M 37, 38, 39
 Dillon, John Donaldson, I 28
 Donne, John 28, 75
 Drew, Julius CH 12
 Dunn, RD 28
 Durman, J 80
 Durran, Eustace 41
 Dyer, C 80

E

Eastman, Timothy 12
 Edmunds, William 20
 Edward VII 32
 Edwin 32
 Emden, AB 73
 Ena of Spain, Queen 59

F

Fiennes, Nathaniel 79
 Filmer, Robert 75
 Finnis, J 24
 Fish, James 12
 Foley, Henry 24
 Forbes, Mary 59, 69
 Forde, Helen 78, 82, 85
 Fox, George 77
 Fox-Davies, AC 35
 Franklin, William 38
 Fuller, Thomas 24, 29

G

G Bloomfield, E 34
 G Griffin, Mr 45
 Gallagher, JA 55
 Galt, MW 40
 Gardner, James 12, 13
 George V 11, 32
 George VI 21
 Gibbs, John 31
 Gibbs, Mr 55
 Gibson, Edmund 24
 Goodey, Brian 6
 Goss, Adolphus 34
 Goss, William 34

Goulden, Len 65
 Gregory, G 52
 Griffin, Anne 27
 Griffin, Edward 26, 27
 Griffith, G 80
 Griffiths, D 80
 Grillo, Philip 60
 Grotius, Hugo 74
 Gurney, G 81

H

Hammond, Lieutenant 28
 Hankinson, Thomas Orton 11, 16
 Hardy, Josiah P 13
 Harington, Adelaide 17
 Harlock, Arthur 10
 Harlock, John 10
 Harlock, Walter 10
 Harris, D 24
 Harris, John 40
 Harris, Oliver D 23, 24
 Hartland, CGJ 9, 14
 Hartley, Edwin 17
 Hatfield, Arnold 26, 27
 Haviland, John 27
 Haynes, JF 38
 Hayter, Deborah 85
 Henrietta Maria 79
 Henry V 72
 Henry VI 72, 73
 Herbert, George 32
 Herbert, Lord 38
 Herendeen, WH 28
 Hicks, Lawrence (Laurie) 56, 57, 60,
 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70
 Hilton, Stephen 11
 Hitchman, Bill 55
 Hodgkins, V 16
 Hogarth, William 76
 Holes, Andrew 73
 Holland, Admiral Lancelot Ernest 21,
 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 29
 Holland, Philemon 23, 24, 26
 Holloway, William 35
 Holmes, Geoffrey 29
 Horton, Mary Ann 21
 Horton, William 21
 Howes, H 14
 Howlett, Frank 60
 Howsam, C 80
 Hughes, George 20
 Hunt, Elizabeth 20
 Hunt, John 20
 Hunt, Thomas 20
 Hyde, John 11, 16

J

Jackson, WA 26, 27
 Jacob, EF 72
 Jaiteh, Sue 85
 James, King 75

Jarrett, Kenneth Barry 69
 Jarvis, JJ 34
 Johns, Archibald 18
 Johnson, Harry 39
 Johnson, Hilma 39
 Johnson, William Ponsonby 10, 31
 Jones, T 81
 Jonson, Ben 28
 Joyce, S 48, 50, 51
 Joynt, Amanda 56

K

Kearley, Hudson 12
 Kearse, Dorothy 63
 Kelly, James 76
 Kennett, White 24
 Kent, Thomas 39
 Keyworth, Sue 56
 King, A 80
 Kingman, Mike 83
 Kirby, JE 14
 Knight, Howard 86

L

Lake, William 11
 Lampitt, Alfred 15
 Laybourn, Keith 82
 Lea, Herbert 12
 Leadbetter, Rosemary 85
 Lempard, M 33
 Lennard, Samuel 11
 Leonard, C 81
 Leslie, I 80
 Lester, M 10
 Lipsius, Justus 75
 Lipton, Thomas 12
 Little, Brian 63, 64, 65, 66
 Little, Margaret 85
 Loe, L 81
 Lovell, Samuel 78
 Low, Seth F 40
 Lowe, GE 12
 Ludwig, John 11

M

MacCulloch, Diarmaid 76
 Madan, FF 29
 Marconi 47, 48, 49, 51
 Margaret of Anjou 73
 Martin, P 24
 Mary, Princess 79
 Mary, Queen 75
 Massey, R 80
 Mathias, P 12
 Mayhew, NJ 79
 McCormick, Cyrus 13
 McGill, David 82
 McKenzie, DF 27
 Medley, Stanley 16
 Mewburn, William 18
 Millett, Mr 54
 Millward, Alfred 11

Milton, John 75
 Mobbs, George 78
 Moller, Fred D 68
 Mooney, Bill 65
 Morgan, George 78
 Morland, Benjamin Robert 39, 44
 Morrill, John 76
 Morton, John 73
 Morton, Thomas 27
 Mousir, William Garrett 33
 Moxon, Joseph 27
 Murray, O 75
 Murray, Oswyn 74, 76
 Musker, John 12

N

Newby, H 8
 North, Lord 44
 Norton, John 25, 26

O

O'Brien, James 54
 O'Brien, Olydd 54
 Ortelius, Abraham 27
 Oswald, A 80
 Ovenden, Richard 75

P

Page, Mark 71
 Parker, PM 52
 Pegge, Samuel 30
 Pepys, Samuel 79
 Persons, Robert 24
 Philip IV 79
 Pierrepoint, Sir Philip Sydney 78
 Pilsworth, John 11
 Pine, Lynda 34
 Pine, Nicholas 34
 Plomer, HR 25, 26, 27
 Pollard, AW 26
 Potts, William 31, 38, 58
 Poulton family 74
 Priestley, S 81

Q

Questier, Michael 76

R

Randall, C 80
 Ratcliffe, Donald 83
 Ray, John 24
 Redgrave, GR 26
 Reid, Ellie 30, 34
 Ripley, George 28
 Rivers, Anthony 24
 RM Marples & Son 40
 Robertson, James Sprent 36
 Robertson, James 45
 Roskam, G 75
 Round, John 41
 Rude, DW 27
 Rusch, Adolf 74

Rusher, Jane Eliza 44

Ryrie, Alec 76

S

Sabin, David 47

Sacheverell, Henry 29

Samuelson, Bernhard 13

Sanders, IL 48, 50, 51

Sangster, Gladys 59

Sansbury, Florence Muriel 56, 57, 60,
61, 62, 63, 65, 66, 67, 70

Sansbury, Richard 44

Sansbury, Walter R 44

Sargent, M 81

Savile, Sir Henry 26

Savin, George 50

Say, William 73

Saye and Sele, Lord 79

Schorn, S 75

Selden, John 75

Selott, John 73

Shadbolt, David 63, 64, 65, 66

Shakespeare, William 25

Shaughnessy, EH 49

Shaw, George 36

Shawyer, E 80

Silver, J 26

Simmonds, A 80

Simmons & Paye 40

Sinatra, Frank 61

Singer, Isaac Meritt 16

Sirost-Smith, Martin 40

Skelly, JB 62

Smith, DL 28

Smith, Hellena Maud 35

Soden family 76

Soden, David 74

Stacey, Margaret 8

Stack, Robert 69

Stanford, Henry 26

Stanley, Harry Bennett 43

Stanley, Harry Bennett 43, 44

Stevens, Thomas 33

Stockton, James 17

Stone, Henry 17

Stone, Lewis Wycherley 17

Storer, Ernest 16

Stradling, Sally 56, 58, 60

Strier, R 28

Stroud, Harry 61

Stuart, William 14

Sugar, Hugh 73

T

Taylor, John 28

Taylor, Roger 44

Taylor, William 17

Tearle, Levi 16

The Admiral Holland pub 20

Thirsk, J 7

Thomas, Keith 34

Thomas, Martin 23

Thompson, F 18

Tiller, Kate 7

Tiller, Liam 7

Timbs, John 23

Tobin, James 82, 83

Townsend, Joseph 56

Townsend, Simon 56, 76, 79, 85

Trachtenberg, David 34

Tremellius, Immanuel 75

Trinder, Barrie 7, 8, 9, 14, 15, 17, 19, 30,
36, 85

Tyrell, Mr 26

V

van de Velde, Esaias 76

van Doren Honeyman, Abraham 37,
38, 39, 40

Vanner, John 18

Victoria, Queen 32, 35, 82

W

Wagg, Anthony 73

Walford, George 32, 33

Wallis Gilbert and Partners 56

Washington, George 36, 40

Wass, Stephen 81, 83, 85

Wass, Verna 83, 85

Waynflete, William 73

Webb, William 27

West, Ian 6, 85

Westcott, Keith 79

Westerley, Robert 73

Whicker, Adrian 27

Whicker, Adrian 27

Whicker, Edward 27

Whicker, Robert 27

Wickham Legg, LG 28

Wilkinson Holland, Tom 20, 21

Willem, 2nd Prince of Orange 79

William of Wykeham 71, 73

Williams, Horace 62

Wilson, George Washington 45

Wilson, Pamela 80, 85

Wimbush, Henry B 43

Windet, John 27

Winton, Graham 84, 85

Womack, Kenneth 26

Wood, Edward 11

Wood, Vera 20

Woodward, Alfred 58, 59, 62, 65, 66,
67, 68, 69

Woodward, Rhoda 56, 57, 61, 62, 63,
65, 66, 70

INDEX OF PLACES

A

Aberdeen 43
 Abu Suier 48
 Abu Zabal 48
 Adderbury 17, 18, 32, 36, 57, 71, 72, 81
 Ardley 81
 Ascott 82
 Atlantic City, New Jersey 52
 Australasia 12
 Aynho 17, 18

B

Banbury 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12, 13, 15, 16, 17,
 18, 19, 23, 24, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30,
 31, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40,
 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 49, 50,
 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59,
 63, 64, 66, 67, 76, 79, 85
 Albert Street 16
 Banbury Castle 23, 38
 Banbury Cross 8, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35,
 37, 38, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46
 Banbury Mill 9
 Banbury Museum 5
 Bath Road 10, 18
 Betts' Bakery 43
 Blue Pig Yard 9
 Bodicot House 32
 Boxhedge Square 9, 16
 Bretch Hill 81
 Bridge Street 10, 12, 16, 20, 44,
 66
 Britannia Road 13, 16, 58
 Broad Street 11
 Broughton Road 11, 16
 Calthorpe Gardens 81
 Calthorpe Road 18
 Canal Street 13, 14
 Castle Street 9
 Catholic Church 32
 Centre Street 9
 Cherwell Street 14
 Corn Exchange 32, 44
 Corn Hill 32
 Crown Hotel 66
 Crown Yard 9
 Dashwood Road 10, 18
 Exchange Printing Works 44
 Fish Street 12, 13, 15
 Foundry Street 15
 Front Row 10, 18
 Gas Works 32
 Gatteridge Street 17
 George Street 12
 Gillett estate 10
 Globe Room 40, 44, 45
 Globe Yard 9
 Great Western and North

Western Railway Stations 32
 Green 32
 High Street 10, 11, 12, 16, 17, 32,
 34, 35, 41, 43, 44
 Hightown Road 10, 18
 Horsefair 16, 18, 32, 33, 44
 Horton General Hospital 21, 55
 Lower Cherwell Street 9
 Lower Windsor Street 13
 Market Place 10, 11, 20, 33, 35,
 42, 44
 Middleton Road 11, 16, 63
 North Bar 14, 16
 North Street 9
 Old Parr Road 10
 Oxford Road 9, 10, 13, 17, 18
 Paradise 14
 Parsons Meadow Lane 12
 Parsons Street 10, 12, 11, 17, 35,
 42
 Queen Street 9
 Rag Row 9
 Red Lion hotel 38, 43
 Reindeer Inn 38, 42, 45
 South Bar 35
 Spencer Stadium 62, 66
 St John's Road 10, 18
 St John's Terrace 32
 St Mary's Church 34, 41, 42,
 43, 44
 Swan Close Road 13
 The Admiral Holland 20, 21
 The Green 33
 The Original Cake Shop 38
 The Reindeer Inn 40
 The Town Hall 32
 Town Hall 42, 44
 Unicorn Inn 20
 Upper Windsor Street 13
 Vicarage 32
 Warwick Road 14, 16
 Water Lane 14
 West Street 9
 White Horse Hotel 55
 White Lion 38, 43
 Windsor Terrace 13
 Woodgreen Avenue 20

Banburyshire 80
 Barbury 23
 Barford St John 71
 Barrow-in-Furness 15
 Basingstoke 11
 Bath 72, 73
 Berkeley, California 39
 Berkeley Castle 26
 Bethnal Green 16
 Bicester 80
 Bilston 31

Birmingham 14, 15, 31, 33, 42, 65
 Bishops Cannings 48
 Blenheim 37
 Blockley 16
 Bloxham 32
 Bodicote 15, 18, 47, 49, 50, 52, 55, 71
 Boston 76
 Bournemouth 45
 Brackley 11, 80
 Bradford 15, 28
 Bridlington 15, 79
 Brighton 37
 Brockport NY 13
 Broughton 38, 44, 79, 81
 Broughton Castle 32, 43
 Burton Dassett 66
 Burton Dassett Southend 85
 Byfield 17

C

Cairo 47, 48
 Cambridge 71, 72, 75, 76
 Canada 43
 Canterbury 12, 72, 73
 Ceylon 12
 Chacombe 17
 Chalgrove 27
 Cheltenham 46
 Chicago 40
 Chipping Norton 16, 17, 81, 82
 Chipping Sodbury 73
 Clydebank 16
 Compton Wynyates 38, 44
 Corfu 15
 Coventry 17, 33
 Crewkerne 16
 Cropredy 85
 Croughton 17

D

Dane Hill 78
 Deddington 18, 39, 73
 Denmark 12
 Denmark Strait 21
 Devizes 48, 49, 50
 D Knight 9
 Dollis Hill 47, 52, 54
 Dorchester 51
 Dresden 44
 Dublin 73
 Dundee 43
 Duns Tew 81
 Durham 76

E

Edgcote 23
 Edgehill 32, 38, 39, 43, 44, 45, 76, 77,
 79
 Egypt 48, 49, 50, 51

Eton 26, 72, 73

Evenley 78

Exeter 35

F

Falmouth 79

Fenny Compton 18, 66

Ferrara 75

Finedon 10

France 54, 72, 73

Frilford 80

Frome 16

Fromelles 81

G

Gainsborough 13

Geneva 52

Germany 35, 48

Ghent 40

Glasgow 12

Greenland 21

Grimsbury 6, 8, 9, 10, 18, 54, 63

H

Hampton Gay 80

Hanwell 15, 85

Heidelberg 75

Helmdon 81

Herck la Ville, Belgium 69

Highbridge 48

Hillmorton 51

Hinckley 33

Holland 72, 79

Hook Norton 7, 18, 81, 82, 83

Hornton 17, 55

Huntingdonshire 72

Huscote 9

I

Iceland 21

India 12, 15

Indiana 6

Inverness 37

Ipswich 13

Ireland 12, 73

J

Japan 51

K

King's Stanley 16

King's Sutton 15, 17, 18, 78

Kirtlington 27

L

Langley 48

Leaffield 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 55

Leamington 32, 37, 39

Leeds 11

Leicester 11

Liverpool 43, 64, 65

London 11, 21, 24, 26, 27, 31, 33, 50, 73, 76, 78

M

Manchester 12, 13, 58, 64

Massingham 17

Mauchline, Ayrshire 33

Medway 79

Middle Aston 81

Middleton Cheney 21, 32, 54

Milton 71

Mollington 54

Morgan's Hill 48

N

Netherby Manor 81

Netherlands 12

New Haven, Connecticut 58, 60

New York 12, 51

New Zealand 12, 15

Northampton 36

North Aston Hall 81

North Newington 15, 18

Norwich 36

Nottingham 6, 42

Nuneaton 11

O

Oxford 6, 7, 15, 17, 28, 31, 36, 37, 38, 39, 47, 65, 71, 72, 73, 75, 76, 78, 79, 82, 85

P

Poland 17

Polesdon Lacey 31

Portishead 48

Port Meadow 85

Portsmouth 21, 22

Providence 40

R

Ripley 28

Rochester, NY 33

Rock Island, Quebec 58

Roke 7

Rousham House 85

Rugby 51

S

Salem 40

Salisbury 48

Scarborough 43, 44

Scotland 15

Sheffield 33, 41, 58, 69

Shotteswell 17

Shutford 16

Sibfords Ferris & Gower 74, 76, 77, 80

Smethwick 17

Somerset 15

Somerton 17, 51

South America 12, 51

South Northamptonshire 78

Southsea 21

Spain 79

Spalding 35

Sri Lanka 12

St David's 72, 73

Steeple Morden 71

Stoke-on-Trent 34, 35

Stonehenge 81

Strasbourg 74

Stratford-upon-Avon 36, 38, 39

Sudbury 73

Sulgrave 36, 40, 43, 44, 45

Sunrising Hill 39

Sutton-under-Brailes 59, 68, 69

Swalcliffe Lea 80

Sweden 10

T

Switzerland 15

Tamworth 12

The Netherlands 12

Tolpuddle 82

Trowbridge 16

Tunbridge Wells 43

Tyburn 76

U

United States of America 12, 36, 40, 48, 82

Upper Heyford 80, 81

Upton House 39

V

Verney Junction 31

Virginia 13

W

Waddesdon 72

Wales 48

Wallingford 7

Wargrave 27

Warkworth 9

Warwick 36, 78

Washington DC 40

Wednesbury 31

Wells 72, 73

Westbury 16

Willesdon 47

Wiltshire 15, 23

Winchcombe 16, 43

Winchester 71, 72, 73

Windsor 72

Witney 47

Witton 25

Woodstock 84

Woodston 72

Wroxton 32, 38, 43, 44

Wroxton Abbey 79

Wykham 9

Wykham Farm 80

Wykham Park 18

Y

York 73

