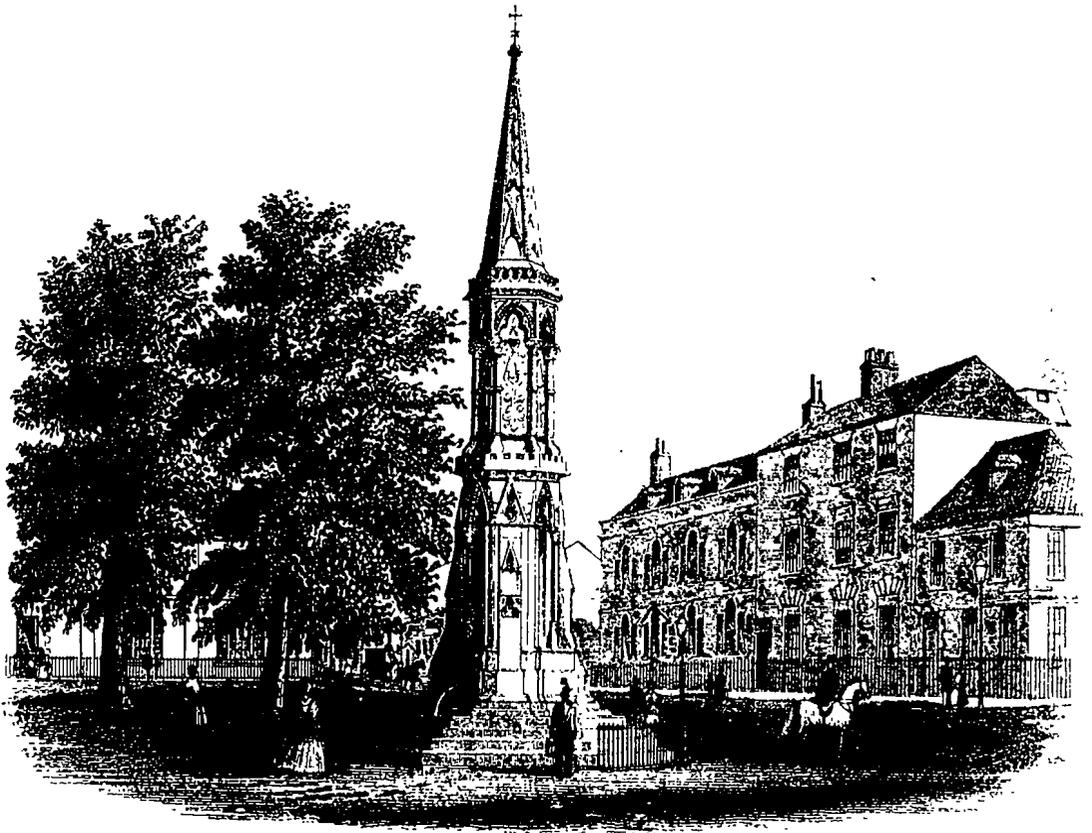


CAKE AND COCKHORSE



Banbury Historical Society

Winter 1967

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CAKE AND COCKHORSE

The magazine of the Banbury Historical Society. Issued to members four times a year.
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NEWS	Society Activities	182	
NEW LIGHT ON	Paul Harvey	Where Were Banbury's Crosses	183
BANBURY CROSS	Barrie S. Trinder	The Re-building of Banbury Cross	193

Every newcomer to Banbury wants to know about the history of the Cross, and until recently it has been difficult to say very much about it. A little information about sites, the scantiest of descriptions in Leland, plus some rather imprecise references to their having been destroyed is all that it has been possible to relate about the original crosses without stepping beyond the bounds of history into those of fantasy.

It is fitting therefore that we should be able to mark the tenth anniversary of the founding of the Historical Society with the publication of Mr. Paul Harvey's article. He has established firmly that the High Cross was in the Market Place, he has shown that the High Cross and the Bread Cross were not one and the same. His researches in the records of the Court of Star Chamber have revealed for the first time the detailed story of the destruction of the High Cross in 1600.

In the ten years of its existence the Historical Society can claim considerably to have advanced local historical studies in Banbury and district. The value of records publications and "Cake and Cockhorse" articles already published will be increasingly appreciated in the future, and material in preparation promises to be of equal interest.

Mr. Harvey's article demonstrates how desirable it is that the many early Banbury deeds in various collections should be "rounded up", and that a complete inventory of them be published. This is a task which the Society would do well to consider during its second decade. This period will see the publication of the Banbury volume of the Victoria County History, most of which has been written by Mr. Harvey. His work on the Cross problem is a tempting appetiser.

Our Cover: shows an early view of the present cross, looking towards Linden House and West Bar, published originally by G. Walford.

SOCIETY NEWS AND ACTIVITIES

Winter Programme

Thursday, 25th January, 7.30 p.m. Conservative Club (Next to Martins Bank) High Street, Banbury. "THE BAWDY COURTS OF BANBURY". Talk by Dr. E.R.C. Brinkworth on the Church Courts of Banbury in the Elizabethan and early Stuart period. Dr. Brinkworth is hoping to show the value to people interested in local history of the Church Court records which he has studied in this area. His talk will be based on further research into a field in which he is a recognised authority.

Thursday, 22nd February, 7.30 p.m. Conservative Club. "THE VILLAGE OF EYDON". Mr. D.M. Kench. Mr. Kench has put together a delightful study of his village combining tape-recording and colour slides which give a charming and effective survey of Eydon. This will be supplemented by a complementary visual programme on other local historical topics.

March (date to be announced) Talk by Trevor Rowley on "DESERTED VILLAGES".

Autumn Meetings

In September Mr. R.H.C. Davis, of Merton College, Oxford, gave a most entertaining talk on "How to be a Medieval King". We are grateful to the staff of the Library for making this available to us at extremely short notice. The visit to Aynhoe has been postponed, and it is now hoped to hold it in April, 1968. In its place, to mark the 625th anniversary of the battle of Edgehill, 1642, we were fortunate in having Brigadier Peter Young, the leading authority on military aspects of the Civil War, to speak to us, at a deservedly crowded meeting. His book "Edgehill, 1642", will be reviewed in our next issue.

Christmas Card

Members are reminded that this year's card, of Banbury Steeple Chase, 1839, is available at 12/- per dozen (including envelopes), and their support is essential to make the card an economic proposition. These and former cards, of St. Mary's Church and North Bar, and of the Town Hall and Cowfair, both at 9/- per dozen, and of Banbury Cross, 1860, and of South Bar, 1850, both at 6/- per dozen, are available from Dr. G.E. Gardam, 11 Denbigh Close, Broughton Road, Banbury (tel. Banbury 2841).

ARCHITECTURE

In these days when so often one notes apparently wanton destruction of attractive old buildings in the town centre, and elsewhere, and their replacement by featureless glass and concrete boxes, it is particularly pleasing to record the tasteful restoration of two of Banbury's most important 17th century houses.

The Vicarage, which has already been extensively altered inside (uncovering a fine fireplace in the process) has now been refaced. The tablet over the porch has been cleaned and recut, revealing the inscription: 1649, S.W., the initials of Samuel Wells, the vicar of the time. To accompany those of Henry Back on the 19th century enlargement we are pleased to note those of the present incumbent, D.I.T.E., have been cut above the front windows.

The former premises of E.W. Brown's cakeshop, 85 High Street, which occupy the western end of the house built by Edward Vivers in the mid-17th century, were recently sold. The purchasers have employed Messrs. Alcocks to undertake much needed repair and restoration. Both Mr. H.R. Alcock and Mr. R.W. Alcock are members of this Society, and they deserve congratulation for way in which this has been carried out. Inside too the magnificent fireplace on the first floor has been beautifully repaired and the unsightly Victorian tyles removed. Our only regret is the replacement of the original 17th century glass in the blank window over the Tchure. The Ministry of Housing and Local Government has given a grant of £1,500 towards the cost of renovating the building - for once a really worthwhile expenditure of taxpayers' money!

There is nothing for which Banbury is more famous than for its Cross and it may seem surprising that it should be possible to question the conclusions of the town's past historians as to this cross's site. However, as they rightly tell us, the town's principal cross or crosses had been destroyed by the inhabitants in the early 17th century, so that Richard Corbet, who included an account of Banbury in a poem he wrote between 1618 and 1621, saw only their bases:

'The crosses also like old stumps of trees
Or stools for horsemen that have feeble knees
Carry no heads above ground'

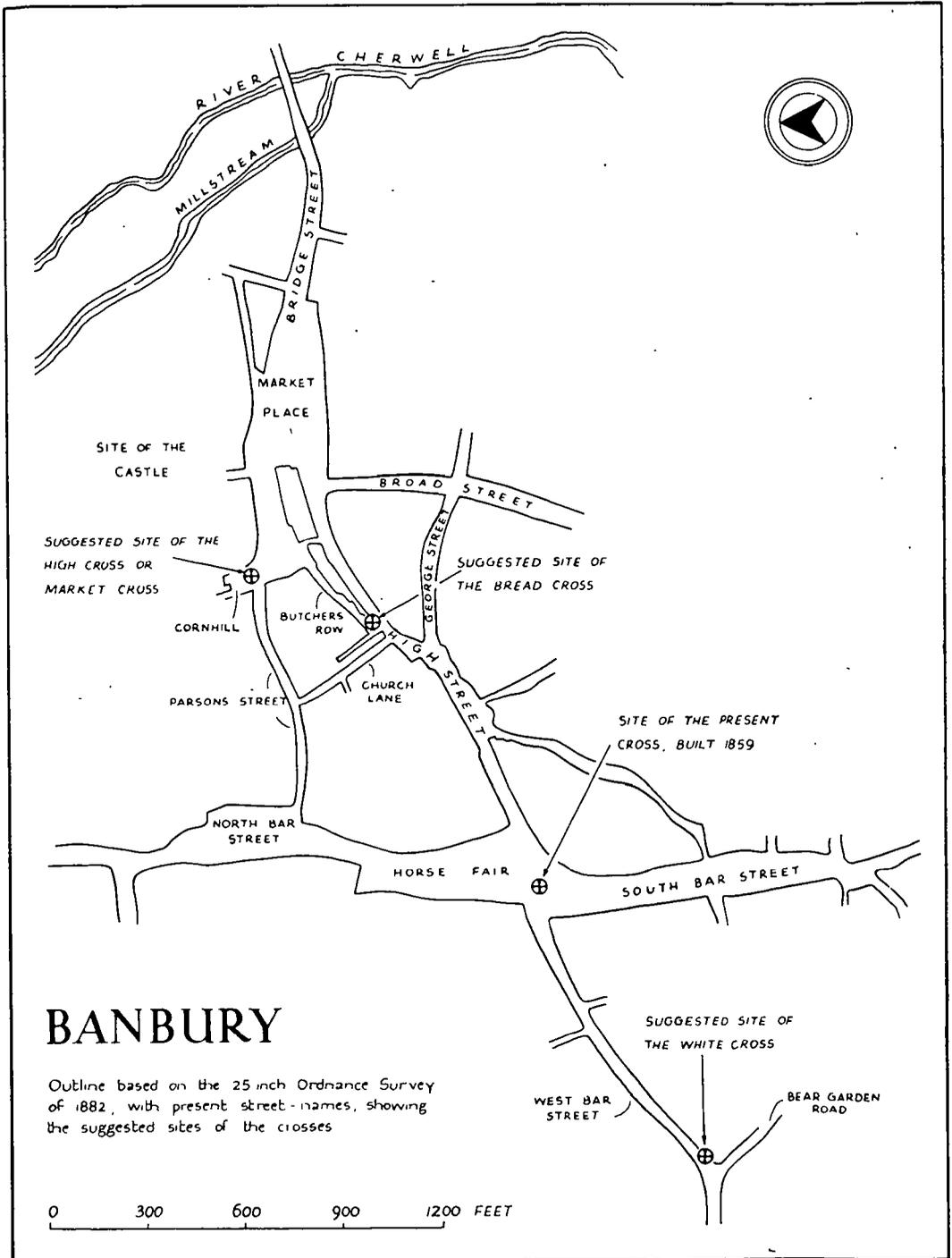
By the time historians tried to identify the site of the cross commemorated in the famous nursery rhyme all traces had vanished, so that written records formed the only evidence.

The first to attempt the task was Alfred Beesley, whose 'History of Banbury' was completed in 1841. He mentions references to a High Cross, a Market Cross, a Bread Cross and a 'White Cross without Sugarford Bar', but for reasons that we shall examine later he considered that 'the principal Cross at Banbury' must have stood in the Horse Fair. However, he identified the 17th-century Breadcross Street with the western end of the modern High Street and suggested that if the Bread Cross had stood at the point where this joins the Horse Fair, it might well have been this that was 'the principal Cross at Banbury'. It was presumably as a result of Beesley's conclusions that the present cross, which was put up in 1859, was placed in the Horse Fair. Another result was an incident related by George Herbert in his reminiscences of Banbury: when trees were being planted in the Horse Fair in 1885 the street's oldest inhabitant asked to be allowed to plant the one at the corner (presumably of Horse Fair and High Street), explaining 'I have always thought that was where the original Cross stood!'

These matters rested until the late Mr. William Potts discussed the question in his two books, 'Banbury Cross and the rhyme' (1930) and 'A history of Banbury' (1958). He made use of some documents that Beesley had not come across, and on their evidence agreed with Beesley's suggestion that the Bread Cross and 'the Banbury Cross' were one and the same. However, he rejected the Horse Fair as its site, and placed it 'somewhere in the upper part of the present High Street, the wide Guler Street of the Middle Ages'. This cross he identified with the High Cross mentioned in the 16th century, and he distinguished two other crosses within the borough: one standing in the Market Place and the other the White Cross 'which stood on the Borough boundary outside the Sugarford or West Bar'.

It might seem that this finally settled the question. Later writers on the town's history have on the whole accepted Potts's conclusions: that there were three crosses in Banbury, of which the principal one (the High Cross or Bread Cross) stood either in the Horse Fair or else very close to it at the west end of High Street, while the others stood in the Market Place (the Market Cross) and on the Broughton Road (the White Cross). It may seem foolhardy to question a conclusion so strongly supported, and I will begin cautiously by discussing the one part of it that we are all agreed on.

This is the position of the White Cross. It is mentioned only twice in surviving records, in 1554 as 'the white cross outside the gate called Sugarforde Yate' and in 1606 as 'the great stone called the White Crosse'. In each case it was given as one of the bounds of the borough, and this enabled Beesley to fix its site very exactly: 'The White Cross Stone stood at the west end of the present West Bar Street, probably about eight paces eastward from where a lane [i.e. the present Bear Garden Road] turns off southward into the Bloxham road'. This was the westernmost limit of the borough in his own day, as it probably had been ever since the charter of 1554; the boundary is shown thus on the Tithe Map of 1852, the earliest large-scale map to mark the borough bounds, though the Ordnance Survey 25-inch map of 1882 shows that it must soon after have been moved some 50 yards further east. The form of the cross is more obscure. It may be that (like other crosses in the town) it had been destroyed at the beginning of the 17th century so that in 1606 it had only recently been converted to a 'great stone'; more likely, however, the stone was the remains of an ancient cross that had worn away through exposure, or even a stone



on which a white cross had been painted.

Original records refer to Banbury's other crosses more often than to the White Cross, but still not very often. In all I know of twenty possible references, the earliest dating from the early 13th century, the latest from 1648. Probably others exist and will someday come to light, but I think that those we have are sufficient to enable us to reconsider the evidence for the site of the town's principal cross or crosses.

The only really explicit description we have is that of John Leland, who visited Banbury at some time between 1535 and 1543. In the account of the town in his 'Itinerary of England and Wales' he writes:

'The fairest street of the town lieth by west and east down to the river of Charwelle. And at the west part of this street is a large area environed with meetly good building, having a goodly cross with many degrees [i.e. steps] about it. In this area is kept every Thursday a very celebrate market. There runneth a prill [i.e. stream] of fresh water through this area.

'There is another fair street from south to north; and at each end of this street is a stone-gate. There be also in the town other gates besides these. Yet is there neither any certain token or likelihood, that ever the town was ditched or walled.

'There is a castle on the north side of this area.....'

Clearly if we could understand exactly what Leland meant in this description we should know exactly where Banbury Cross stood, and it is because they differed in their interpretation of this passage that Beesley and Potts reached slightly different conclusions. Beesley took 'The fairest street of the town', running from east to west, to be the modern High Street; as this opens at its west end into the spacious Horse Fair he identified this with the 'large area environed with meetly good building' where the cross stood. But the Horse Fair forms a part of the principal street in Banbury that runs north and south and which Leland must have intended when he wrote of 'another fair street from south to north'; he does not associate this with the 'large area' at the west end of the 'fairest street', and this is Potts's reason for looking elsewhere for the 'large area' and its cross: 'As he [i.e. Leland] proceeds to refer to the south to north street he would have placed the cross there had he there found it'. Potts identified the 'large area' with the western part of the High Street, which, he suggested, was considerably wider before its southern side was rebuilt after the Civil War. He was led to this conclusion by references in a rent-roll, or rental, of the Bishop of Lincoln in 1441 to a cross standing in Guler Street (Guler-strete). Later we will examine this document's evidence in detail; here it is sufficient to say that Potts demonstrated that one tenement listed under Guler Street lay at the western end of the present High Street and, interpreting guler as 'broad', he established 'The position of Guler Street as the spacious area at the west end of High Street'.

But neither of these interpretations is the one that would occur most readily to someone who, on reading the passage in Leland, turned to a map of Banbury. The street that he would first notice as corresponding to the description 'lieth by west and east down to the river of Charwelle' is Bridge Street; and on seeing that at its west end this opens out into a wide Market Place he would have little doubt that Bridge Street was Leland's 'fairest street of the town' and that the Market Place was the 'large area environed with meetly good building, having a goodly cross' in which, still following Leland's description, 'is kept every Thursday a very celebrate market' and on the north side of which stood the castle. Yet both Beesley, by implication, and Potts, quite explicitly, reject this most obvious interpretation. Why?

Beesley seems to have based his conclusion on the assumption that 'the fairest street of the town' must be the present High Street. Certainly it was one of the town's chief thoroughfares and part of it had, as we shall see, for many years been the site of its sheep market. But it was not necessarily the town's 'fairest' or even its most important street. It does not seem even to

have been called the High Street as yet; the earliest occasion I know of when any part of it was given this name was 1556. But, it might be argued, the High Street is so called (or rather in its Latin form, alta strata) in the rental of 1441. As already mentioned we shall later examine this document's evidence more closely; here I need only say that the alta strata of 1441 was probably not the present High Street, but the present Horse Fair or South Bar Street which two early 16th-century documents describe as 'the high street [here again, alta strata] of St. John the Baptist' or 'the high street called Saynt Jones Strete'. Certainly we need not take it as axiomatic that the present High Street was 'the fairest street of the town' in Leland's time.

Potts, unlike Beesley, considered carefully the possibility that the cross described by Leland stood in the Market Place, and appreciated how difficult it would otherwise be to explain Leland's description of the castle as lying to the north of the 'large area'. He based his argument partly on the 1441 rental, but what he considered to be conclusive evidence that the cross lay in the west part of the modern High Street was provided by a list, drawn up in 1548, of properties that had belonged to the former Guild of Banbury; these included a shop, leased to one John Hartlet, described as 'lying towards le Highe Crosse', and he assumed that this must be the property mentioned in a bye-law of 1564 allowing sheep-pens to be set up 'from the east side of Master Hartlett's gate'. Because, he argued, the sheep market lay in the west part of the High Street, this was where the cross stood. But there is no reason why the shop mentioned in 1548 need be the same as the property of the 1564 bye-law. John Hartlet may well have owned or leased several different buildings in the town, and the shop of 1548 can be far more convincingly identified with one of the two shops and another building mentioned in a document of 1549; these, which likewise belonged to the Guild, were leased to John Hartlett and two other tenants and lay in the Market Place. In short the document of 1548, far from pointing to a site in the High Street, strongly indicates the Market Place as the site of the High Cross.

If in fact we can identify Leland's 'large area' with the present Market Place we eliminate one further difficulty in the way of placing it elsewhere: Leland's statement that 'In this area is kept every Thursday a very celebrate market'. Both Beesley and Potts met this difficulty by explaining, quite correctly, that as early as the 16th century the weekly market was not confined to the Market Place but had spread into other streets, some of which had come to be associated with particular produce. Thus the Horse Fair was known as the Horse Market by 1525, and part of the present High Street as the Sheep Market by 1441; thus, it is argued, Leland's 'large area' being the site of the weekly market would be no obstacle to locating it in one of these streets. Yet it seems indisputable that, wherever else the market may have spread, it was the Market Place that was in Leland's time the site par excellence of the weekly market. The name le Market Place first occurs in 1549, but there is reason to suppose that the area had been the site of the weekly Thursday market certainly since the early 13th century, and possibly ever since the market was first recorded in 1155.

From this it follows that there is no reason why Leland's 'large area' should not be the present Market Place, which would thus be the site of his 'goodly cross'; his 'prill of fresh water' would be the Cuttle Brook, which ran along its north side. If this is the correct interpretation, whereabouts in the Market Place did it stand? An answer is suggested by a bequest by William Saunders, in 1478, 'for the repair of the stone cross situated in front of my property on Barkehyll'. Barkhill, or Barkhill Street, was the name given from the 15th to the 17th century to the houses on the north side of the Market Place, including Cornhill. That there, in Cornhill, was the site of the cross is confirmed by a bye-law of 1564 ruling that 'no fisher stall' should be placed nearer 'the Cross' than William Longe's house to the south and Thomas Longe's shop to the north; the Longe family held six properties in Barkhill in 1606, and if the two mentioned in 1564 were among them they must have stood in the present Cornhill, not the adjacent north side of the Market Place, as only there do the buildings run in a row from north to south. It follows that the cross stood in Cornhill, probably at its southern entrance so that John Hartlet's shop in the Market Place could be described as 'lying towards' it.

It has been argued at such length that this was not only a possible, but the most likely, site of Banbury's principal cross because once this is accepted the other records of crosses at Banbury

begin to form a new and intelligible pattern. In particular this interpretation fits in with what records we have of the destruction of the cross there. The only one that was known to Beesley was a passing reference made in 1632 by the Attorney-General, William Noye, to the iconoclastic activities of the puritans thirty years earlier at the end of Elizabeth I's reign: 'At Banbury they pulled down the cross there', he said by way of illustration. This tells us something, but not very much, and Potts was able to give very much more information from a letter written by a London Jesuit, Father Antony Rivers, to a friend at Venice in 1601 or 1602:

'The inhabitants of Banbury being far gone in Puritanism, in a furious zeal tumultuously assailed the cross that stood in their market-place, and so defaced it that they scarcely left one stone upon another. The Bishop of Canterbury thereupon convened the chief actors before him, and by circumstances discovering their riotous proceedings, hath enjoined them to re-edify the same, and bound them over to receive condign punishment before the Lords in the Star Chamber.'

Rivers probably did not know Banbury at all; even so it is worth noting that he places the cross in the Market Place.

However, since Potts wrote, a far fuller account of the cross's destruction has come to light; this is a series of written answers given by one Matthew Knight of Banbury in connection with a case in the court of Star Chamber which must be the actual hearing mentioned by Antony Rivers. No other record of the case has survived. It was brought by one George Blinco (his role in the affair is obscure) against William Knight and four others of the principal members of Banbury corporation who, it seems, were all related by blood or marriage. The case was concerned with the defendants' alleged mis-use of their position as aldermen in Banbury, and more than half of the deposition is a detailed account of the part they played in the destruction of two market crosses in Banbury: the High Cross on 26 July 1600 and the Bread Cross on the same day or a little earlier. The deposition is disappointingly reticent over the crosses' exact location. However, it is stated that both crosses stood on the king's waste ground (i.e. in public places) 'in the chief market places' at Banbury, and that the High Cross stood 'in the middle or face of the chief market place', within sight of Matthew Knight's shop. This accords well with the site at the entrance to Cornhill, for we know that Matthew Knight held property in Barkhill Street in 1606. Further, Knight's deposition tells us that the High Cross was the place where public proclamations had formerly been made; this accords with a bye-law of 1558 which ruled that on fair-days the corporation was to go in procession and make proclamation (presumably to declare the fair open) 'at the market cross'. In other words the High Cross and the Market Cross were different names given to the principal cross at Banbury, which stood in - or just beside - the Market Place.

But if Matthew Knight's deposition gives us only corroborative evidence of the High Cross's site, it gives us our fullest accounts of its form and of the circumstances of its destruction. It was built of stone, and at the base were eight 'grises or steps', corresponding to Leland's description of it as 'a goodly cross with many degrees about it'. These steps surrounded the cross on all four sides, and the lowest was 24 feet long each way and 2 feet broad. At the top of these steps was a block ('a stock of stone') which formed the base of a tall shaft ('a very large and long spire stone'), and at the top of this were 'certain pictures', i.e. carvings. These were of a crucifix on one side, with other carvings on either side of it, though as originally written the description reads as though it were four-sided, not three-sided, at the top and had a crucifix carved on both east and west sides. Knight's description in fact confirms Potts's reconstruction of the probable appearance of the town's principal cross, which he based solely on Leland and on the reference to the 'picture' of Christ in Richard Corbet's poem. On the steps, Knight tells us, people used to sit and display their wares on market days.

As originally written Matthew Knight's deposition ended with his explanation of why the High Cross and Bread Cross were destroyed: they had been objects of superstitious veneration by one John Traford of Grimsbury, who had been used to take off his hat when he passed them. However, this passage has been crossed out on the deposition, possibly by Knight himself; this may



William Knight, the leading Banbury puritan who was probably more than anyone else responsible for the destruction of the Cross, from a drawing of the half-length portrait bust originally in Banbury Church.

The inscription on the monument read: "To the pious memory of Will. Knight Gent. sometime justice of peace and Quorum in this Burrough, who having had his education both in the University and Innes of Court, continued in the love & practice of good studyes, gave good example of morality and piety, finished his course in the true faith, & was here laid up in the hopes of a glorious resurrection 20 Sep. 1631, aged 73."

Arms: Argent, 3 bends within a border gules; on a canton sable a spur or.

This drawing is reproduced, by kind permission, from William Potts' 'History of Banbury'. Another version, on which this may have been based, is in Beesley's MS 'History of Banbury' in Banbury Reference Library, Vol. V, f. 41.

have been because it was not strictly relevant to the questions asked. Nevertheless it does confirm the statements of Antony Rivers and William Noye that puritan zeal caused the destruction of the High Cross. The defendants in the case in the Star Chamber - William Knight, John Gill, Richard and Thomas Wheatley, and Henry Shewell - were probably among the chief of those who were making Banbury a by-word for puritanism; indeed, Richard and Thomas Wheatley were probably relatives of William Whately, the puritan writer who was vicar of Banbury from 1610 to 1639.

Matthew Knight's account of the destruction of the High Cross is detailed but straightforward. Standing at the door of his shop soon after dawn on 26 July 1600 he saw two masons start to cut away the block at the foot of the cross's shaft. He told them 'not to intermeddle any more to deface so ancient a monument as that is, alleging unto them that it served for many good purposes'. They accordingly stopped work and went off, leaving their tools which William Alsopp and some others thereupon flung away. Matthew Knight went to three other senior aldermen of the town - Thomas Longe, William Bentley and William Halhead - to tell them what was happening and to get their support in preventing the cross's destruction, but when he returned to the cross he found the two masons levering up the base of the shaft with iron bars, being actively aided and encouraged by William Knight. Around the cross stood Richard and Thomas Wheatley, Henry Shewell, some borough officers with staves, and at least 100 (altered from 150) other people, of whom not all approved of what was going on. As Matthew Knight came up the spire fell, whereupon Shewell 'Cried out with a loud voice and in a rejoicing manner said "God be thanked, their god Dagon is fallen down to the ground" ' (Dagon was the god of the Philistines). He then proceeded to smash the images from the cross into small pieces. Matthew Knight, fearing public disorders, urged those bystanders who opposed the cross's destruction to take no action but to return to their homes, and thereupon the crowd broke up. No record is known to survive of the hearing before the Archbishop of Canterbury mentioned by Antony Rivers; there is no evidence that his order to rebuild the cross was carried out, so it seems that from that day until 1859, when the present cross was built a quarter of a mile away, there was no Banbury Cross.

But Matthew Knight's deposition refers to the destruction not of one cross but of two: the High Cross and the Bread Cross. This finally disposes of Beesley's tentative suggestion and Potts's more positive assertion that the High Cross and the Bread Cross were one and the same. Where then did the Bread Cross stand? The latest known reference to the Bread Cross suggests that it stood in a street called Sheep Market Street, for it is a mortgage, in 1648, of property in Banbury 'in a street there called the Sheep Market Street over against the Breadcross'. On the other hand a document of 1616 gives Breadcross Street as an alternative name for Bowling Street. The apparent contradiction is resolved by a description of property in 1603 as standing 'on the north-side of the street there called the Sheepstreate or Bowlinge Streate'. Where Sheep Street or Sheep Market Street was (the names are used interchangeably), there Bowling Street and Breadcross Street and, thus, the Bread Cross were also. This was Beesley's reason for locating the Bread Cross in the western portion of the present High Street for, as he wrote in 1841, 'this was recently known as Sheep Street; but the Paving Commissioners, when they put up the names of the streets in 1835, included it as a part of High Street'. But if in the early 19th century the name Sheep Street was applied to the western portion of the present High Street, it need not follow that it had the same meaning 200 years earlier. Certainly in the 15th century the eastern end of the present High Street was known as the sheep market, for a deed of 1469 describes property in the sheep market as lying opposite the end of Pubbullane, i.e. Pibble Lane, the old name for Church Lane. That the sheep market lay, at least in part, in the eastern portion of the modern High Street should cause no surprise, for after the cattle market it was the earliest specialized marketsite in Banbury to occur as a street-name, and one would expect it to lie close to the original Market Place. It can be shown that even as late as 1653 the houses on High Street just north of the entrance to George Street were said to be in Sheep Street. We know that in 1656 the corporation moved the sheep market from one site to another, though neither can be exactly identified; it may have been then that the market left the eastern end of High Street either for the western end of the street or for the Horse Fair, where it was held in the late 19th century.

It is argued then, that certainly in the 15th century and possibly until 1656 Banbury's sheep market was held in the part of the present High Street east of its junction with George Street, and that the name Sheep Street was applied to this part of the street, whether or not it was also applied to the western end of the street, the Sheep Street of the early 19th century. Bearing this in mind, let us now turn to the rental of 1441.

Basically what the rental of 1441 gives us is a list, street by street, of the properties in Banbury which paid rents to the Bishop of Lincoln. The bishop owned most, but not all, of the houses in the town; thus there is no reference in the rental to Parsons Street probably because the houses there all belonged to the Prebendary of Banbury. It is arranged in an orderly tour of the town. It starts at the west end of Bridge Street on the north side, proceeds to the bridge over the Cherwell, back along the south side of Bridge Street to Newlond and Colbar (which together probably formed the present Broad Street), then along Froggelane (almost certainly the present George Street) to the Sheep Market. Under this heading it lists five tenements which presumably lay in the part of the present High Street east of its junction with George Street and probably (I suggest) all on the south side of the street. It continues along the south side of Gulerstrete, which must have been the western half of the present High Street, then covers South Bar Street, West Bar Street, the Horse Fair which, as we have seen, it calls the High Street (*alta strata*), and North Bar Street, first the west side, then the east. It then lists properties in Barkhille and Pybyllane which, again as we have seen, were respectively the north side of the Market Place with Cornhill, and Church Lane. Finally - and for our purposes this is the most significant part of the perambulation - it gives the north side of Gulerstrete, then Cokerowe with Shoprowe, which were probably the west end of the Market Place and the north side of Butchers Row, and it concludes with two rows of stalls (*scamella*), a southern row and a northern one; these were respectively the north side of the present High Street west of its junction with Butchers Row, and the south side of the Market Place and of Butchers Row.

Now the last two entries under the heading of the north side of Gulerstrete are of two properties said to lie 'on the hill next to Crossepodell' - that is Cross Puddle or Cross Pool - and of two others 'on the said hill standing next to the said Cross'. If it has been correctly assumed that the tenements under this heading have been listed from west to east, and that those listed earlier as in the Sheep Market lay all on the south side of the street so that nothing need intervene between Gulerstrete and Cokerowe with Shoprowe on the north side, it follows that the most likely site for the Cross Pool and the cross would be somewhere around the west end of Butchers Row and its junction with the present High Street. At a guess the properties 'on the hill next to Crossepodell' may have fronted onto the alley that runs north-west from this point; a deed of 1448 shows that they formed a row from north to south, and though the slope of this alley might scarcely justify its description as a hill, it is at least as much of a hill as Cornhill is. That the cross was there is confirmed by the rental's description of the first stall in the south row as 'next to the cross', and that this was the Bread Cross is confirmed by a royal grant of 1549; this refers to a shop, which must have been in about the same position as this stall, as 'next to le Bredde Crosse'.

The Bread Cross, then, stood at the junction of the present High Street with Butchers Row, in a part of the street that at different times from the 15th to the 17th century was variously known as the Sheep Market (or Sheep Street), Guler Street, Breadcross Street, Bowling Street and High Street. Beesley, considering that the Bread Cross stood at the west end of the High Street, associated the name with a distribution of bread to the poor which took place in South Bar Street on Good Friday. However, Matthew Knight in his deposition of 1604 tells us that both butchers and bakers used to have stalls at the Bread Cross, so it seems most likely that it was given this name because bread was sold there. He tells us less of its form than he does of the High Cross, but we learn that it was built of stone and covered with slate, so that market people with stalls there were kept dry from the rain. Evidently it was a large covered market cross, as at Chichester or Salisbury, while its association with the Cross Puddle in 1441 must mean that then, at least, there was a well or small pool nearby. Of its destruction he tells us only that it occurred before the High Cross was destroyed and that one of the aldermen had sold some of the

stone for his own profit. However, his evidence means that we can read literally Richard Corbet's description of seeing broken crosses (in the plural) at Banbury. Although a deed of 1648, as already mentioned, describes a house in Sheep Market Street as 'over against the Breadcrosse', this need not mean that the cross had been rebuilt, for such descriptions of property were often copied verbatim from much earlier deeds.

So far nothing has been said of what Potts takes to be the earliest reference of all to a cross at Banbury. This occurs at the end of another rental of the Bishop of Lincoln's property in Banbury, which probably dates from the early 13th century; in this rental the streets where the properties lay are not named. Payment from each of two tenements is described, in the original Latin, as de incremento domus sue apud Crucem and Potts translates this as 'for his market house near the Cross'. In fact de incremento domus sue means 'from the increase [i.e. in rent] of his house', and it is difficult to see why Potts speaks of a 'market house' unless he mistook incremento on the original manuscript for some form of the word mercatum (a market); in the hand of the manuscript the two words would look similar. For apud Crucem 'near the Cross' or, better, 'at the Cross' is a reasonable translation, but it seems not impossible that Crucem here is not the Latin word for cross at all, but is a latinized form of the name Crouch - i.e. Crouch Hill, which is usually referred to in medieval documents as Cruche or Croyche. In this case what we have are references not to houses beside a cross at Banbury, but to houses outside the town on or near Crouch Hill. A record of a coroner's inquest in 1347 names Crouch as one of the townships nearest Banbury, and this shows either that there were such houses at Crouch Hill or, alternatively, that the name Crouch was sometimes given to Wykham or some other nearby hamlet. This interpretation of the entries in the rental accords both with the use of the word apud as the preposition (Potts's translation of it as 'near' is a little forced) and with their position very near the end of the rental.

The conclusions of this article can be summarized briefly. There are records of three early crosses at Banbury. The principal one, known as the High Cross or the Market Cross, stood in the Market Place, probably in its north-west extension now called Cornhill; the earliest indisputable reference to it is Leland's description between 1535 and 1543, but it is probably this cross that is mentioned in 1478. It was in the form of a single shaft with a crucifix and other images carved at the top, and a flight of steps around its base. The second cross, known from at least 1549 as the Bread Cross, stood at the corner of the present High Street and Butchers Row; it is first recorded in 1441. In form it was a covered market cross. The third, the White Cross, marked the western limit of the borough on the Broughton Road in 1554, but in 1606 was referred to simply as a 'great stone'. The High Cross and the Bread Cross were destroyed in 1600 by orders of the ruling clique on the corporation, probably because they considered that local Catholics were according them superstitious veneration. The White Cross may have suffered the same fate. There is no evidence of rebuilding, and the last documentary reference to any of the crosses is in 1648. There is no evidence that any cross stood in or beside the Horse Fair earlier than 1859.

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Editorial Note: We are most grateful to the Editor of 'Oxoniensa' (the journal of the Oxfordshire Architectural and Historical Society) for allowing us to publish this shortened version of an article by the same name, by Mr. Harvey, which will shortly be appearing in 'Oxoniensa', Volume XXXI, 1966. That article gives in detail all known documentary references to the medieval crosses, and includes the full text of Matthew Knight's deposition. We are also grateful for the use of the map specially prepared for that article.

MARRIAGE

OF THE

PRINCESS ROYAL.

MANY of the respectable and influential Inhabitants of the Town hearing with regret that, instead of some lasting memorial being erected in the town to celebrate the Marriage of the Princess Royal, a subscription has been set on foot for a Ball only, by which any money that may be subscribed will be frittered away to no lasting good ; ask their fellow-townsmen to pause before they subscribe to so paltry a way of showing their loyalty on this occasion. Let an historical cross, or some other substantial memorial, be erected, which will not only do honour to the occasion, but be a lasting credit and honour to the town.

AN INHABITANT.

Banbury, January 20, 1858.

G. WALFORD, PRINTER, "ADVERTISER" OFFICE, BANBURY.

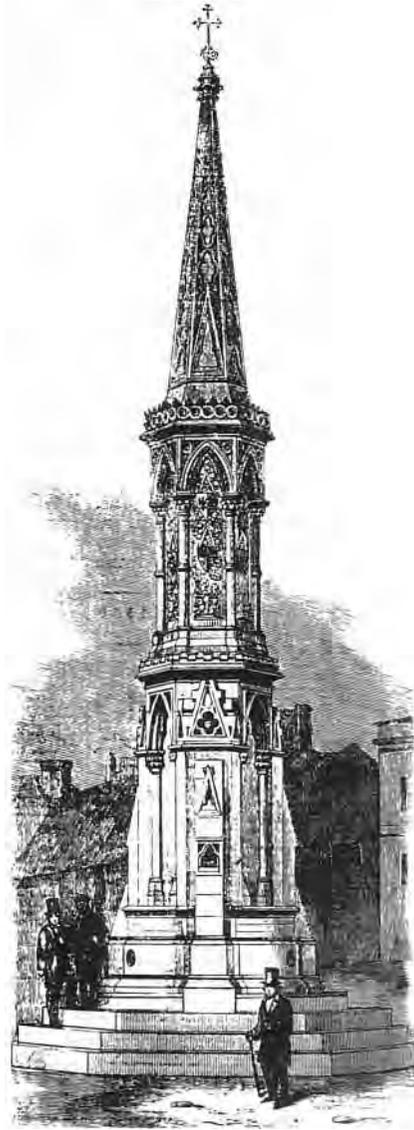
The poster of January 20th 1858 on which the project for re-building the cross was first publicly mentioned.

The present Banbury Cross, as traffic engineers are only too clearly aware, stands in the middle of what is now the principal highway through the town. Its siting raises no historical problems, its age is well established, and it is altogether less of a mystery than the original cross. Passions are aroused only by proposals for its demolition. Its building is nevertheless an interesting incident in the town's history, which illuminates much about local society in the 19th century. Even now, the details of the decision which led to its erection are difficult to unravel, and while it is possible to offer here new information not previously published, the story is still by no means complete.

The cross was erected as part of the town's celebrations marking the wedding of Queen Victoria's eldest daughter, Victoria Adelaide Mary Louisa, Princess Royal, to Frederick William, Prince of Prussia, on January 25th 1858. The wedding was celebrated with festivities throughout the country on a scale which would have been unimaginable at the beginning of Victoria's reign. The Queen wrote to her uncle, the King of the Belgians, "The nation looks upon her (the Princess Royal) as England's daughter, and as if they married a child of their own, which is very satisfactory, and shows in spite of a few newspaper follies and absurdities how really sound and monarchical everything is in this country". A month later she considered the changes in attitudes in the eighteen years since her own wedding: "For what has not my beloved and perfect Albert done? Raised monarchy to the highest pinnacle of respect, and rendered it popular beyond what it ever was in this country".

In Banbury preparations for an elaborate celebration of the wedding were made, and sixty Banburians took advantage of a special four day excursion offered by the G.W.R. to go to London to see the wedding. A subscription was raised by a few individuals, to which the mayor contributed £30, with which it was proposed to hold a dress ball on the evening of the wedding day, and a free concert on the following day. Both events were to be held at the recently opened Central Corn Exchange (now Mansfield's toy showrooms). Great national occasions were usually marked in Banbury by a procession of the trade societies, a public open air feast and old English sports, but no doubt the season of the year made such activities impossible. The holding of a dress ball caused some ill feeling, and there were demands that a celebration which was financed by public subscription should be open to all. It was suggested that all cleanly dressed inhabitants of the town should be given free food and drink at the town hall, and that a band should be provided for country dancing. These proposals came to nothing, and the fashionable ball went ahead. 350 people attended to dance to music from a quadrille band and drink toasts in champagne provided by the mayor. The free concert the following evening was extremely successful. 2,430 people of all classes went to hear music by Arne, Mozart and Mendelssohn, together with various songs and pieces by lesser composers, all directed by Mr. Aspa of Leamington. A Banbury Temperance Society meeting on the same evening was poorly attended in consequence.

About a week before the wedding discussions began in private about some more permanent memorial than the ball or the concert. It seems that Thomas Clarke of Banbury Mills first put forward the idea of rebuilding Banbury Cross, though the idea was not at first generally accepted by those who wanted a memorial. On Tuesday January 19th, Thomas Beesley, a chemist, and Arthur Rye, a surgeon, canvassed several eminent citizens about a monument of some sort, and the following day an informal meeting was held in Beesley's drawing room. Beesley and James Battle Austin, another chemist, were appointed secretaries of a committee, and a poster was published regretting that there was to be no permanent memorial of the wedding, and concluding "let an historical cross or some other lasting memorial be erected which will not only do honour to the occasion but be a lasting credit and honour to the town". On Saturday January 23rd a meeting was held at the Red Lion to discuss the question. There was disagreement between those who wanted a fountain and those who supported a cross. A fountain was demanded because it would be useful, the most ardent proponent being James Cadbury, the Quaker and temperance agitator. William Wilson, the vicar, wanted a cross, and suggested that people throughout the kingdom would subscribe to re-building the cross of the rhyme. He suggested, apparently for the first time, that the cross should follow the pattern of the Martyrs' Memorial in Oxford, though since the erection of the latter had aroused such fierce antagonisms between



This little known view of the cross appeared in the "Illustrated London News" of January 21st 1860. We are grateful to Mr. C.E. Tongue of the Northamptonshire Record Office for bringing it to our attention.

Evangelicals and Tractarians it was perhaps not a happy precedent. Thomas Beesley opposed the idea of a cross on historical grounds, because evidence about the original was lacking: "If they inquired as to the cross, they could not show anyone the real cross of history, nor the cross to which the rhymes refer, even supposing that they were connected with any Banbury Cross at all". The meeting did not settle the form the memorial should take, but it was decided unanimously that it should be placed at the intersection of the four main roads in the Horsefair. It was agreed to ask for designs before making a decision on the final form of the memorial.

The meeting was well supported by Banbury's ruling classes, members of all of the main political factions and most religious denominations being present. W.T. Douglas said that "he believed all parties were very fairly represented". Money for the project soon came in. Thomas Ward Boss, a stationer, and John Lee Merry, a malster, collected over £90 from the traders on one side of High Street alone. By January 28th over £140 had been collected, but there was already considerable opposition to the project.

It was generally believed that a monument would be erected straightaway. The only major problem was the form of the memorial, and by March 18th, when a meeting was called of "a committee for the superintending of the erection of a cross combined with a conduit at the intersection of the roads in the Horsefair" a compromise had evidently been reached between those who supported a cross and those who wanted a fountain. The committee considered several designs, but had no hesitation in choosing that of Mr. J. Gibbs of Oxford for a structure in Decorated Gothic with six niches for statues. There was considerable optimism about the project, and it was prophesied that the monument would be "as ornamental as a whole as is the Martyrs' Memorial at Oxford" and that "our town will shortly be furnished with an erection of a very superior character to anything that had previously been anticipated".

At the meeting James Austin announced that Ephraim Hutchings of Manchester had offered to mount an exhibition of stereoscopic views in aid of the fund for the cross. Hutchings was a Banburian who had moved to Manchester where he had become secretary of the Mechanics' Institute. He had organised a similar exhibition in Banbury in 1855 in aid of the local Mechanics' Institute and the Old Charitable Society. The "photographic dissolving views" in the exhibition illustrated English cathedrals, snow pictures, Swiss scenery and the ruins and monuments of Egypt and the Holy Land. First impressions were enthusiastic: "No exhibition ever shown in Banbury before can at all compare with this combining as it does much instruction with a great deal of pleasure", but later reports suggest that it was not well patronised. The sum of seven guineas was raised for the fund.

By the autumn of 1858 the optimism so prevalent in the spring had evaporated, and letters began to appear in the local press demanding to know what had become of the cross and the money subscribed for it. Late in November the committee consulted the Board of Health, and on February 24th 1859 they and the Board invited subscribers to a meeting at which an amended design with only three niches was put forward. Tenders for building the monument were considered, and that of Mr. Cowley of Oxford was accepted. By the end of March the work was well in hand at the builder's yard, and several of the carvings were completed. On April 11th the architect, the builder and representatives of the committee and the Board of Health met to fix the exact site, and boards were put up around the spot.

There was no official ceremony to mark the laying of the foundation stone. The mayor; Richard Edmunds, did not attend, and the task was performed by Daniel Dixon, a sergeant at mace, and the town crier and bill poster. By trade Dixon was a shoemaker, he had once been a Chartist orator. He was a Roman Catholic, and is commemorated by a plaque in St. John's Church. After the stone had been laid the party adjourned to the Swan Inn.

By the middle of April 1859 some people were beginning to feel concern that the funds raised would be insufficient. Their apprehensions were confirmed in May when lack of money caused a temporary stoppage of work. A new drive for subscriptions was launched, and work re-commenced in mid-June. Early in July the cross reached its full height of 52 feet 6 inches, but all but the top stage remained enclosed with boards while the carvings were completed.

Just as there had been no official ceremony at the laying of the foundation stone, so there

was no formal inauguration or dedication of the monument. The gilt cross at the top of the structure was driven into its socket by Thomas Ward Boss, who had been associated with project from the beginning. This final task seems to have been accomplished about the middle of October.

The cross was welcomed by many as part of the evidence for Banbury's increasing health and prosperity in the 1850's. The 'Banbury Guardian' praised the usefulness of the conduits and the fire hydrant which had been incorporated in the structure, and went on to associate the cross with other developments: "Within a very few years many new streets have been formed here, several churches and chapels erected, with private and public buildings of no mean order of respectability". The cross soon became a popular venue for club day processions and similar tradition festivities.

Support for the project came chiefly from the richer classes in Banbury, of all political and religion persuasions, Liberals, Conservatives and ex-Chartists, Anglicans, Roman Catholics, Unitarians and Quakers. Subscriptions of £10 came from Lord Saye and Sele, Henry Tancred, M.P., Miss Elizabeth Bradford Wyatt of Linden House, Bernhard Samuelson of the Britannia Works, Jonathan Gillett, the Quaker banker, and Thomas Hunt the brewer. There was much less enthusiasm among the less rich radical dissenters. Some no doubt objected on religious grounds. To erect a cross in Banbury, with its deep-seated anti-Catholic feelings, was bound to be regarded as a step towards popery. Others disliked the links between the monument and the royal wedding. The 'Banbury Advertiser', at that time the voice of militant dissenting radicalism, remarked that about two-thirds of those who had been asked to give money for the cross refused to do so, and that "we give enough money to the monarchy in taxes as it is". The failure to hold any formal ceremony when the cross was completed suggests that there was some fear of demonstrations against the project. 1859 was a year of considerable social tension in Banbury, and the authorities doubtless wanted to avoid a repetition of the widespread window breaking which had followed the general election in April.

The cross soon became an obstruction to traffic. In June 1859 the 'Banbury Guardian' prophesied that "this memorable undertaking of English architecture" would soon be "worthy of its far famed name and the site it occupies, which is our boulevard, which will be fitly and nobly adorned", but by the end of November 1859 there were demands for proper lighting to prevent people from bumping into the cross on foggy nights. The Board of Health soon agreed to erect two lamps to protect unwary travellers, and in December decided to widen the road around the cross to prevent obstruction.

The conduit basins were later removed from the cross and their places filled in with stone. In 1888 the cross was completely re-decorated, new gas lights were put up and railings erected. To mark the coronation of King George V in 1911 statues of the king, his father and grandmother were purchased for placing in the niches, and tablets commemorating the erecting of the monument in 1859 and the installation of the statues were affixed, though the statues did not actually arrive until just after the outbreak of war in 1914. During the Great War the plate, with its reference to the Prince of Prussia, was removed and the carving of the Prussian eagle which represented him was blotted out as the result of anti-German hysteria in the town. Several Banburians still claim the credit for removing the plate. The railings round the cross were removed in 1927, and the flower beds added in 1938.

Paul Harvey's discoveries about the position of the original crosses in Banbury are certain to re-open the debate about the removal of the present cross which has aroused such strong passions in the recent past. In this debate it must be born in mind that the building of the cross was no more free from controversy than any other innovation in the socially turbulent Banbury of the 1850's.

Barrie Trinder.

Sources

References to most of the meetings mentioned can be found in the 'Banbury Advertiser' and 'Banbury Guardian' for 1858 and 1859. An indispensable source for the history of the cross is T.W. Boss: 'Reminiscences of Old Banbury' (1903). Sarah Beesley: 'My Life' (privately published, c 1900) also contains some useful references. A copy of the original poster of January 20th 1858 is preserved in Banbury Public Library, Potts Collection, 1856, p.8.

The activities and publications of some or all of the following bodies should interest readers:

- Arts Council of Banbury (Miss B.G. Rooke, Cornerstones, St. Mary's Road, Adderbury West, Banbury). Minimum 21/-.
- Banbury and District Civic Society (J. Barnden, Hon. Tr., c/o Barclays Bank Ltd., Bridge Street, Banbury). 10/6d.
- Banbury Art Society (Hon. Sec., 24 Bloxham Road, Banbury). 15/-.
- Banbury Geographical Association (B.E. Little, 2 Burlington Crescent, Banbury). 5/-.
- Bicester Local History Circle (Hon. Sec., Miss G.H. Dannatt, Lammas Cottage, Launton Road, Bicester, Oxon.). 5/-.
- Buckinghamshire Record Society (Hon. Sec., J.G. Jenkins, Twitchells End, Jordans, Bucks.). 42/-.
- Council for the Preservation of Rural England, Oxfordshire Branch (Mrs. J. Scott-Cockburn, North Oxon. Sub-Committee Membership Sec., Hornton Hall, Banbury). Minimum 5/-.
- Dugdale Society (published Warwickshire records) (Shakespeare's Birthplace, Stratford-upon-Avon). 42/-.
- Farthinghoe Historical Society (Hon. Sec., R.E.J. Lewis, Abbey Lodge, Farthinghoe, Nr. Brackley, Northants). 5/-.
- Heraldry Society (59 Gordon Square, London, W.C.1). 30/-; or to include "The Coat of Arms", 50/-.
- Historical Association (59a Kennington Park Road, London, S.E.11) (Oxford Branch: A.J.P. Puddephatt, 93 Old Road, Headington, Oxford). 20/-; or to include "History", 35/-.
- Northamptonshire Record Society (Delapré Abbey, Northampton). 21/-.
- Oxford Architectural and Historical Society (Ashmolean Museum, Oxford). 15/- or to include "Oxoniensia", 42/-.
- Oxford Preservation Trust (The Painted Room, 3 Cornmarket Street, Oxford). Minimum 5/-.
- Oxfordshire Record Society (Dr. W.O. Hassall, Hon. Sec., Bodleian Library, Oxford). 21/-.
- Shipston-on-Stour and District Local History Society (H.G. Parry, Hon. Sec., 8 Stratford Road, Shipston-on-Stour, Warw.). 7/6d.
- Warwickshire Local History Society (47 Newbold Terrace, Leamington Spa.). 10/-.
- Woodford Halse Historical Society (J.W. Anscomb, 7 Manor Road, Woodford Halse, Rugby, Warw.). 5/-.

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