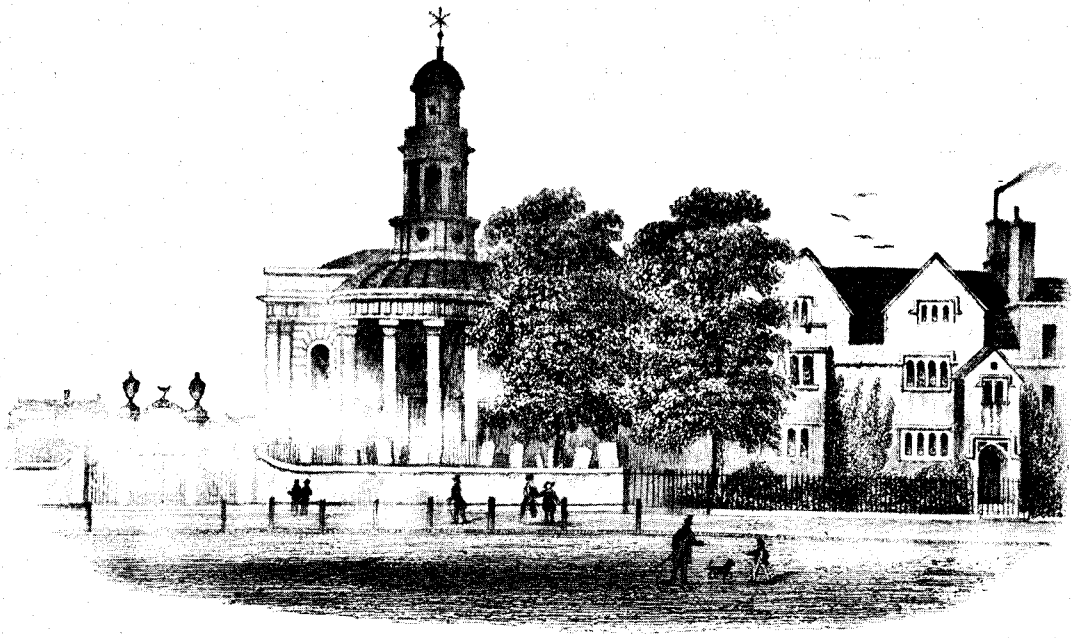
# CAKE AND COCKHORSE



Banbury Historical Society

Autumn 1972

20p

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The Society was founded in 1957 to encourage interest in the history of the town of Banbury and neighbouring parts of Oxfordshire, Northamptonshire and Warwickshire.

The Magazine *Cake & Cockhorse* is issued to members three times a year. This includes illustrated articles based on original local historical research, as well as recording the Society's activities. Publications include *Old Banbury – a short popular history* by E.R.C. Brinkworth (2nd edition), *New Light on Banbury's Crosses, Roman Banburyshire, Banbury's Poor in 1850,* and *Sanderson Miller of Radway and his work at Wroxton,* and a pamphlet *History of Banbury Cross.*

The Society also publishes records volumes. These have included *Clockmaking in Oxfordshire, 1400–1850; South Newington Churchwardens' Accounts 1553–1684: Banbury Marriage Register, 1558–1837* (3 parts) and *Baptism and Burial Register, 1558–1723* (2 parts); *A Victorian M.P. and his Constituents: The Correspondence of H.W. Tancred, 1841–1850*; a new edition of *Shoemaker's Window*: and *Wigginton Constables' Books, 1691–1836. Banbury Wills and Inventories, 1591–1650, Bodicote Churchwardens' Accounts, 1700–1822* and *Banbury Politics, 1830–1880* are all well advanced.

Meetings are held during the autumn and winter, normally at 7.30 p.m. in the Town Hall. Talks on general and local archaeological, historical and architectural subjects are given by invited lecturers. In the summer, excursions to local country houses and churches are arranged. Archaeological excavations and special exhibitions are arranged from time to time.

Membership of the society is open to all, no proposer or seconder being needed. The annual subscription is £2.00, including the annual records volume, or £1.00 if this is excluded. Junior membership is 25p.

Application forms can be obtained from the Hon. Secretary or the Hon. Treasurer.

# CAKE AND COCKHORSE

The magazine of the Banbury Historical Society. Issued to members three times a year.

Volume Five Number Four Autumn 1972



No guide book to Oxfordshire would be complete without its catalogue of the barbarous and wanton acts of architectural vandalism committed by past generations of Banburians, and the rulers of the town in the 1960s and 70s have striven manfully to make the list longer. Of all the acts of destruction in the town's history, the demolition of the ancient parish church seems on the surface the most heinous. The practice of listing Banbury's dismal record was begun by that greater lover of the Gothic, Alfred Beesley the historian. He found faint excuses for the pulling down of the Cross (it was honestly believed to be infected with Papist supersitions) and the Castle (it was thought that its survival might again bring prolonged fighting to Banbury) but thought the pulling down of the church 'this last and far greatest act of vandalism'. He quoted his friend J.H. Parker to show that the church which replaced the medieval building was altogether not to the taste of early Gothic revivalists with High Church sympathies. Understanding of Banbury's history is not really helped by this 'unparalleled record of destruction' thesis, however much recent events may have suggested that it is true. Like the pulling down of the Cross, described by Dr. Harvey in this journal in 1967, the demolition of the medieval church and the erection of the classical replacement demands detailed investigations and sober consideration.

Along with the Castle which featured in our last issue, Banbury parish church is a subject which everyone wants to know about, but about which information has been generally difficult to find, although *opinions* in print have abounded. The medieval church will be fully described in the coming Banbury volume of the *Victoria History of Oxfordshire*. Meanwhile we are delighted to publish Nicholas Cooper's account of the construction of the present church, the appearance of which aptly coincides with the 150th anniversary of its completion in October. The Historical Society was in part responsible for the deposit in the Bodleian Library of the documents which provide the new material in Mr. Cooper's article, and it is pleasing that the efforts made to secure the documents' survival have been proved so worthwhile.

Not the least merit of Mr. Cooper's article is the eloquent case made for a sober consideration of the architectural merits of the present church, and the doubts raised about what would have happened to the medieval building had it not been demolished in the 1790s. There were in the late 18th century several instances of the collapse of medieval churches. The tower of Old St. Chad's, Shrewsbury, for example fell in, destroying most of the rest of the building, in 1787, fortunately in the small hours of the morning when the church was empty. What would have happened if the tower of St.Mary's Banbury had collapsed during a service? And at least the old church died a manly, honest death. Would the treatment which Henry Back and his friends might have afforded it in Victorian times have been any less an act of vandalism? There will not be universal agreement about the answers to these questions, but to raise them does show that we must not take the 'unparalleled record of destruction' thesis too much as a matter of Gospel truth.

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**Our cover**: shows Banbury Church and Vicarage, as illustrated in *The History of Banbury*, by W.P. Johnson, published by G. Walford at the 'Advertiser' and 'Beacon' Offices, 72 High Street, Banbury.

# SOCIETY NEWS AND ACTIVITIES

The summer programme of visits and activities was well supported and enjoyed. We would like to express our thanks to the incumbents of Adderbury and Kings Sutton Churches who gave their consent to visits by parties under the enthusiastic guidance of Mr G. Forsyth Lawson. Thanks are also due for the gracious way Lady Wardington and Mrs F. Couse conducted us round their homes at Wardington Manor and Epwell Mill. Finally we are grateful to Mr L.C. Arkell for his hospitality at Donnington Brewery.

Some members of the Society have been helping Mr Peter Fasham's splendid work on the Castle Site and we would like to report the exhibition mounted by the Society and the Banbury Museum at the Broughton Castle Medieval Roustabout held on July 15th.

## *Autumn Programme*

*Thursday 21st September.* **'A Defence of Oliver Cromwell'**. Mr Maurice Ashley, D.Phil.(Oxon.), B.A.

*Tuesday 24th October.* **'Oxfordshire Recusancy c.1580 – c.1640'**. Dr A. Davidson. We have given a fair amount of attention over the past years to the Anglican and Nonconformist churches of the area and are now very pleased to present a lecture on the Roman Catholics during this era of persecution. Dr Davidson is an expert on Recusancy in this county and his talk will concentrate mainly, though not entirely, on the Catholic families of this part of Oxfordshire.

*Friday 24th November.* The **Annual Dinner** will be held at the *White Lion Hotel.* The guest speaker will be Dr A.W. Pantin of Oriel College, a well-known medievalist and ecclesiastical historian. Invitations will be sent out to members in October. Please book this date.

*Tuesday 30th November.* **'The Oxford Canal'**. Mr J.M. Taphouse. It was thought appropriate to have a lecture on this subject during the year of the Canal Exhibition at the Museum Mr Taphouse is an experienced canal user who lives in Oxford and apart from looking at the historical and technical aspects of the canal he will show slides bringing out its intrinsic beauty.

All lectures are in the Town Hall at 7.30 p.m

The **Son et Lumiere** at Banbury Church is being well publicized locally. It is being held in October and November and several members of the Society including Miss Bloxham, Dr Brinkworth and Mr Fothergill have been involved in preparations for this dramatic event. We can thoroughly recommend it.

## *Archaeology*

Mr B.K. Davison is returning to Sulgrave Castle for further excavation from 2nd to 28th October. Volunteers prepared to work Mondays to Saturdays (no Sunday work) and others requiring more information should write to him at 13 Finches Gardens, Lindfield, Sussex.

Mr Peter Fasham is conducting a 24-session University Tutorial Course on behalf of the W.E.A. on *Urban Archaeology*, Wednesdays, 7.30–9.30, at N.O.T.C., from 27th September, course fee £3.

## BANBURY FRIENDS OF THE MUSEUM

The possibility of forming a Friends of the Museum society is being considered. Anyone interested in joining such a Society should inform Miss C. Bloxham Banbury Museum Marlborough Road, Banbury, who will be pleased to supply further details.

## *New Books on Banbury*

Two important sociological studies of Banbury are likely to appear within the next twelve months. Many members of the Historical Society will have had some contact with their authors some years ago, and will keenly await their publication. The first is *Persistence and Change: a second study of Banbury* by Margaret Stacey, Colin Bell, Anne Murcott and Eric Batstone, which will be published by the Oxford University Press in 1973. The move to Banbury of Birds Ltd., now General Foods, will be reported in *Workers on the Move* by J.M. Mann, to be published by Cambridge University Press late in 1972 or in 1973.

# THE BUILDING AND FURNISHING OF ST. MARY'S CHURCH

St. Mary's church has not always been admired. The present church replaces a medieval one pulled down in 1790, and when people have mourned the loss of the old St. Mary's they have sometimes tended – not very logically – to deplore its successor. The town carried the debt from building the new church for 50 years, and this cannot have made it popular either. A writer of 1910[1] expressed quite well what people have often thought: 'Such a town as Banbury is a grief and despair to the antiquary. In the 18th century it replaced its glorious church, rather than repair it, by the existing frightful structure . . Banbury is now rather a centre for excursions than a place of interest in itself, thanks to the triumph of vandalism.' Unfortunately the vandalism still goes on, but at least taste changes and one can now admire Banbury church for the fine classical building that it is.

Quite a lot is known about the old church of Banbury: many engravings and drawings survive, together with a sketch plan which seems reasonably accurate. The old church was larger and finer than any of the fine churches of the district – Adderbury, Bloxham, Deddington and King's Sutton – but it was in a deplorable condition. The north aisle and the crossing had been unsafe for years, what medieval sculpture there had been was smashed by Puritans in the early 17th century, and the stained glass (mostly armorial) had perished too. The Georgians had added a gallery and box pews, a heavy doorcase to mask the medieval west door, and ungainly buttresses to hold up the tottering west wall.

From 1773 to 1790 a number of architects and contractors reported on the fabric. Last of these was James Wyatt, consulted as 'the architect for the rebuilding of the Cathedral Church of Hereford' where he had repaired the nave after its partial collapse. Wyatt had more experience than anyone at the time of how to deal with a gothic building; he had also worked at Durham, Salisbury and Westminister and though his drastic treatment of much in these places earned him the nickname later of 'Wyatt the Destroyer', he was as skilled as anyone in saving a shaky medieval structure. His report does not survive, but it seems certain that he must have recommended demolition. On the 20 March 1790 the parish called in Samuel Pepys Cockerell to report further on the fabric, and to consult with Wyatt on what ought to be done. Cockerell must have agreed with Wyatt that the church was dangerous and ought to be replaced.

It is not known why Cockerell got the job of designing the new church. He may have been recommended by Wyatt, who had a huge practice and may have been too busy to take it on himself. Cockerell was born in about 1754, had trained under Sir Robert Taylor, architect to the Bank of England, and in his early years had collected a number of worthwhile, if unromantic, jobs such as Clerk of the Works at the Tower of London, and surveyor to a couple of big London estates (the 18th century equivalent of being architect to a property company). Cockerell's architecture and his design for St. Mary's will be discussed later.[2] It is enough at present to say that the design he produced was for an imposing, classical building which differed from the church now standing only in treatment of the half-dome over the portico. Cockerell's design is illustrated, and in due course it will be shown why it was not followed exactly.

Once the old church had been finally condemned, the first question was how its replacement should be paid for. The parish could not possibly do so out of its regular income, and so a special Act of Parliament was necessary since, as the Act put it, 'it will require a very considerable sum of money which cannot be raised without the aid and authority of Parliament.' The Act began with a list of Trustees for building the new church.[3] These comprised the Mayor and Corporation, many of the local gentry, and a long list of most of the more substantial citizens who were also members of the Church of England. Clearly it was felt desirable to involve as many people as possible. Anyone else could be a Trustee who subscribed £50 to the cause, the Trustees could borrow up to £6000, and could levy a rate of 3/6d in the £ to pay for the building work and to service the debt. A few cottages belonging to the Parish, mostly in what is now Parson's Street, were to be sold and the proceeds applied to the new building.

*Figure 1*. St. Mary's, Banbury: The old church, viewed from the south-east. A drawing by John Wells. (Bodleian Library, Oxford).

The Act required the Trustees to erect 'a new Church, and a Chancel, or Place for administering the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, and also a Tower . . . upon the Scite of the present Church, or as near thereto as maybe.' Everything was to be ready within four years from laying the foundation stone. They held their first meeting on 21 June 1790, formally appointed Cockerell as their architect, and briefed him to design a church to seat 2000 people. The next month advertisements appeared in the local and London papers, headed 'To Masons, Quarriers, Carpenters, Slaters, Plumbers and others' and inviting tenders for the proposed work. The principal contract, for masons' work, was awarded to the Oxford firm of Townsend and Weston. But before the new church could be started, the old one had to be pulled down.

First of all anything saleable had to be sold. Lead, stone, and whatever materials were not required in the new church were sold by tender. On 5 November 1790 there was a sale of furnishings at the *White Lion*. These included 'an Altar Piece of good English Oak, with four marble* Tables on which are inscribed the Lord's Prayer, Ten Commandments and the Belief . . . also the Rails and Communion Table in exceeding good order having been lately repaired; an excellent good painting of the King's Arms in Oil on Canvas, in a Frame of wood painted and gilt; a considerable quantity of large Doors of Various Dimensions . . . part perfectly well adapted for Coach Houses . . .' So perhaps someone's Jacobean dining table is really Banbury's old altar, and perhaps there are still some Georgian doors from the church in the stables of houses in the neighbouring countryside.

And so demolition began. Stories of how gunpowder had to be used to demolish the old church were later quoted as proof of its basic soundness, but it is more likely that explosives were only needed to break up recalcitrant fragments of ancient masonry that were too large to cart away as they were. Another story is of how a team of ten horses failed to pull down the west end – but this is hardly surprising since it had earlier been shored up with colossal buttresses. In any case much of the church came down without anyone's help. On 12 December, a Sunday morning, the crazy north aisle finally collapsed. The *Oxford Journal* reported 'the crash was heard near two miles from the spot. On the following day the tower likewise collapsed, to describe the grandeur and beauty of which is impossible. The arches on which it stood first gave way, which occasioned a Chasm from the bottom to the top, and instantly the whole Tower became cracked, and shivered in a variety of directions, admitting the light through each, but yet preserving a perpendicular Fall, even in its pinaccles.'[4]

It has often been regretted that the old church could not have survived until what have been called 'happier times', when it might have been restored rather than pulled down. But it is all too easy to imagine how such a restoration would have been carried out. The arcades, the west end and the tower would have been entirely rebuilt, and would now look just over a century old. The Georgian seating would have gone, and would have been replaced by deal benches or chairs. Damaged sculpture would have been replaced, and insipid faces given to all the saints and angels. The roof would have been reconstructed in stained oak, and the floor relaid with mass-produced encaustic tiles. Banbury church, in fact, would have been a Victorian rather than a medieval one.

Perhaps the greatest loss was the monuments in the old church. The rebuilding Act provided for their careful removal at the expense of the families concerned, but clearly few people bothered. Many of the monuments were already ancient, and it would have been hard to trace responsible descendants even if the Trustees had tried to do so. The sexton appropriated one medieval effigy to his own future use, and it still stands in the churchyard, weatherbeaten and shapeless. Only four were re-erected – in the South staircase lobby – and it is sad so few monuments remain to the great figures of Banbury's past.

With the old church out of the way, the building of the new one could begin. The Trustees had been authorised to borrow £6000, and this they did by issuing bonds to bear 4% interest. But this was in March 1791 when work was already in hand. The recurrent financial crises that dogged the Trustees for the next 50 years can largely be explained by their folly in starting work before the money was available. An even greater piece of folly was revealed in June when they wrote to Cockerell that they 'were much alarmed at the size of his estimates.' Surely they

*Probably of wood, marbled, rather than of actual stone.

*Figure 2.* St. Mary's Banbury: The church as designed by Samuel Pepys Cockerell in 1790, viewed from the south-west. An aquatint by J. Wells. (Bodleian Library, G.A. Oxon. a.76, f.11/12).

ought to have got estimates before they signed their contracts nine months earlier? By September 1792 the Trustees were displaying symptoms of panic: interest owed to the bond holders was 18 months in arrear, and they were writing letters to Townsend and Weston that 'a most rigid performance of their Articles will be insisted on and that by their Negligence and Inattention the Town and Hamlets are considerably injured.'[5] Townsend and Weston may have been going slow because payments were behind, or perhaps, because the Trustees were getting into a mess, they were looking for someone to blame.

There was also trouble over the supply of stone. It is not clear what the trouble was – probably the quality of the stone available was unreliable – but frequently during the years of building the Trustees approached local landowners for permission to open quarries to search for suitable material. This may have been the origin of the various stories circulating later about the sources of stone for the church. In the event the earlier work seems to have been done with stone from Adderbury and Bretch Hill and the later with stone from Burton Dassett. The columns in the nave are of Attleborough stone, brought down on the newly opened canal. The capitals, the carving of which had been specifically omitted from Turner and Weston's contract, are probably not of stone at all but of the ceramic composition known as Coade Stone, much used for achitectural detail at the time.

Yet another kind of trouble occured in August 1794 when the foreman and one of the workmen were killed. The walls of the church were up to cornice height and these two were standing on top of the wall, steadying a block which was about to be lowered into position, when the tackle broke. The stone crashed down, knocking off the top courses and bringing the foreman and his mate with them. A third man just saved himself by clutching at the top of the standing wall until a rope could be thrown to him. The Trustees don't seem to have paid anything to the men's widows: perhaps they had none, perhaps the Trustees thought it was the contractors' fault (which it was), or perhaps there was just no money available.

By 1795 the financial position was so grim that the Trustees were offering payment to the contractors at the rate of 25% in cash and the rest in bonds on which the interest was now to be 5% – which for the age was high. They offered the same interest in new bonds for sale, and this brought in a certain amount more money, mostly from local sources but including two bonds of £50 each to Eleanor Coade of Lambeth. Eleanor Coade was the proprietor of the artificial stone works, and the only likely explanation for her being involved in a shaky speculation in the provinces is that she was professionally involved. Nothing else in the church is of Coade stone, but the Ionic capitals of the nave almost certainly are. Another economy, decided on late in the same year, was to abandon for the time being the completion of the tower and portico. The stump of the tower was to be covered up with boards until more cash was available.

By 1796 finishing touches were in contemplation. Nobody seems to have bothered about the four-year term stipulated in the Act, nor that the Act required the completion of the tower as well. Paths in the churchyard were to be laid out, which suggests that the principal contractors were off the site. The internal columns were ordered to be painted the same colour as the window surrounds, though we do not know what colour that was; and 'the entablature and circular architrave colour grained and branched in imitation of wainscot', though since the original chancel was square-ended, rather than apsidal as it is now, it is hard to imagine what this refers to. Though people in Banbury were quite capable of having the base of the dome painted to look like wood, one hardly likes to think what their smart architect would have said.

With the completion of the church, the Trustees could come into their own. For the last five years they had stood helplessly by, watching the contractors, abetted, as they must have felt, by the architect, frittering away ever more frightening sums of money. Now they could go to town. As early as 1791 they had considered whether the pulpit should be placed centrally, in the manner frequently adopted in Georgian preaching churches, or to one side, and had presumably decided for the latter. Now they could have tremendous discussions about the sizes of the numbers to go on the pews, whether door hinges were to be of brass or of japanned iron, and what sort of locks they were to have. (These last, after hunting round ironmongers in the town, were brought all the way from Birmingham). At one meeting they had the satisfaction of recording that 'The application of the Mayor of this Town respecting an alteration of the seats allotted to the Corporation, having been taken into consideration, the same is regarded as

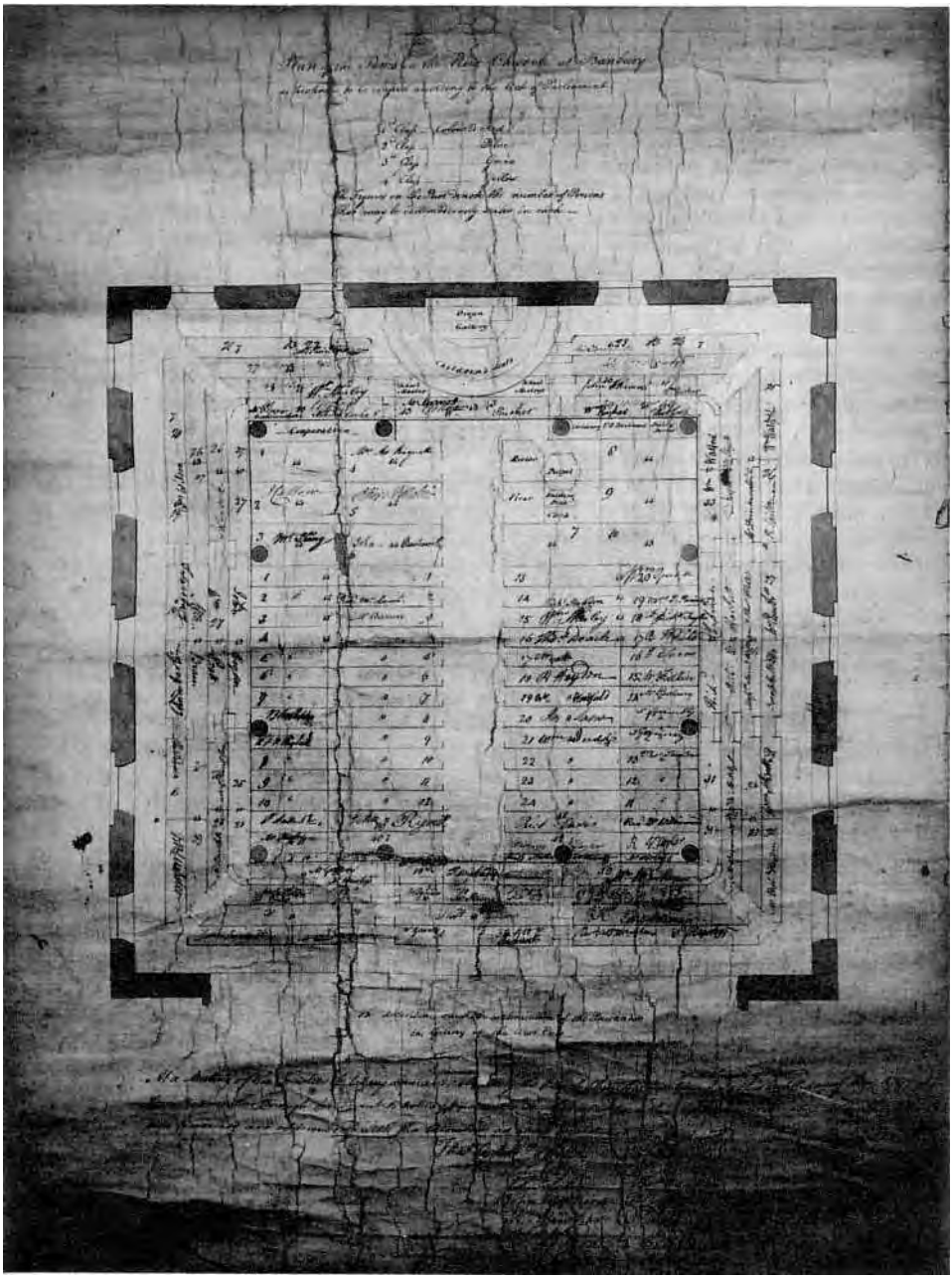

*Figure 3.* St. Mary's, Banbury: seating plan for the new church, 8 May 1797 (three months before the opening). The Trustees signing this were Thos. Taylor, Wm. Pratt, John Clarke, John Salmon, John Hopkins, Wm. Rusher, Wm. Wilson, John Callow, John Rushworth, Thos. Wells, Wm. Riley, Thos. Deacle, Thos. Sansbury, Jon. Wyatt, Richard Taylor, Richard Herbert and John Roberts. (Bodleian Library, Ms.D.D.Par. Banbury a 1(R)).

frivolous.'[6] It must have pleased them to have snubbed the mayor; it certainly gave them a great sense of their importance to allot the rest of the pews.

In the 18th century and earlier in the 19th, pews in church were status symbols. People rented or bought their pews outright, and the richest and most prominent citizen made sure that he had a pew in the public eye. The new church had been paid for by subscription as well as from the sale of bonds, and pews were allotted by ballot among subscribers according to how much they had given. The £100 subscribers were ballotted first, and all chose pews on the north side of the church behind the Corporation pew. The £50 subscribers chose pews on both sides about equally, but generally further back, and subscribers of lesser amounts had seats elsewhere in the church. The Charity Children were to sit in the Eastern gallery next to the organ, a special seat was reserved under the pulpit on the south side for churchings, and curtains were ordered for the Corporation pew. The Trustees must have felt very pleased at so ordering Banbury's elite. As the great day for the opening drew near, more people came forward with subscriptions for pews for fear that they would be left out in this scramble for a place in the social sun, and altogether the Trustees seem to have made perhaps £5000 in this way.

So on 15 September 1797, the church was opened, with solemn music, choristers from Magdalen College, the bishop, 20 constables to keep order, and wands of office for the Trustees to carry in procession. And the Trustees had no further meetings for six weeks, because even if

'Dirty Banbury's proud people
Built a church without a steeple'

they had at least built it though they had pawned their future for decades to come.

The next twenty years were comparatively uneventful. No changes seem to have taken place in the church except for more or less constant trouble from the rain getting inside the uncompleted tower under its temporary wooden covering. Various expedients were recommended, and in 1817 the wooden cap was replaced by sheet iron. The financial troubles that continued to dog the Trustees were mainly due to the churchwardens' failing to collect the rates or embezzling them when they had. Collection seems to have been inefficient in any case; in 1807, for instance, the Trustees suddenly realised that they were still owed most of the rate for 1801.

By 1816, however, it was felt that the Borough could afford to finish the tower and the portico. The Trustees had £2500 in hand, and Cockerell advised that the job could be done for £3500. Some work was necessary in any case, since besides the trouble with rain in the roof the lintel of the west door had now cracked. The original drawings, and apparently a model of the church, had been left in the care of the original Clerk of the Works, John Blaby, but since he had lost them Cockerell was asked for new ones. It is partly this that explains the slight difference between the original design for St. Mary's and the church as built. By this time, too, the Trustees were doing business not with Samuel Pepys Cockerell but with his young and immensely talented son Charles Robert, and C.R. Cockerell produced a design for a tower taller and more elegant than his father's and a different and cheaper treatment of the roof to the portico. Young Cockerell criticised his father for the neglect of the foundations that had led to the cracking of the lintel, but when the work was almost finished he criticised himself as well for not having carried the cornice above the portico 15 inches higher.[7] There is no doubt that its appearance would have been improved if he had.

Work on the tower and portico was put out to tender, but when only two were received, both too high, local resources had to be called on. A leading light among the Trustees was James Paine, partner in Banbury's largest firm of contractors. Paine and Bartlett agreed to do the job (Paine voting at the Trustees' meeting that approved the proposal) on condition that the Trustees advanced £800 before work began – an unusual contract, to say the least, but one which did Paine and Bartlett very little good in the end.

The suggestion was made at the time that the Trustees might obtain a grant from the Commissioners for Building New Churches – a body established by Parliament in 1816 to provide churches for the teeming, godless new cities of the Industrial Revolution. They wrote to the Hon. Frederick Douglas, the town's M.P., saying that 'At the time the Act was passed the Town of Banbury was in a flourishing state, having a large plush manufactory carried on there, but which has since totally failed, and in consequence of that and other events is very heavily

*Figure 4.* A panoramic view of Banbury from the 'Bear Garden', a wash drawing done in 1820 by George Shepherd. The new church with its unfinished tower and cap of sheet iron dominates the scene. In front of it are the trees of Horse Fair and South Bar, the houses on The Green (seen from behind), their gardens and the wall of the Shades pathway. The small tower showing up against the trees in the middle distance, to the right of the church, was probably the clock tower on the town hall. (Banbury Museum).

burdened with poor. The Trustees have already expended the sum of £25,000, £6000 is still owing upon bond, and it will take at least £4000 to finish the church. Under the circumstances the Trustees hope Mr. Douglas will be enabled to obtain from the Committee some pecuniary aid to assist them in completing the Church.'[8] Whether Douglas did approach the Commissioners is not known; if he did so they are likely to have replied, quite reasonably, that Banbury had got itself into a mess and they saw no reason why the tax-payers' money should be spent to get Banbury out of it.

The tower was finished by 1820, and the portico, after some debate about whether to continue it or not, in 1822. On 25 October Cockerell was able to report that the work was completed – and it is that day that should really be celebrated as the church's anniversary. Cockerell spent the day in Banbury, and travelled back to London overnight on the Birmingham mail, travelling outside. The Trustees were pleased, and made the magnanimous gesture of recording that their architect's claims should be settled 'with all convenient speed'. They rather spoilt the effect by also recommending that payment be made for painting the clock face 'when there were sufficient funds'. The bill for painting the clock was for six guineas, and Cockerell was not paid for 19 years.

But the worst financial crisis was yet to come. The church was finished in October, 1825. Almost simultaneously the rating assessments for the Borough were changed. The Trustees congratulated themselves at the prospect of rating all the buildings that had been put up in Banbury since the passing of the Rebuilding Act thirty-five years earlier, and at the thought of paying their architect 'with all convenient speed'. But all too soon.

It was Thomas Cobb, the banker, who probably for political reasons of his own – he was a Nonconformist and his family had a tradition of Radicalism – pointed out what might otherwise have escaped attention – that the terms of the Act confined the Trustees to the assessments then valid. When the Trustees instructed the churchwardens to collect the church

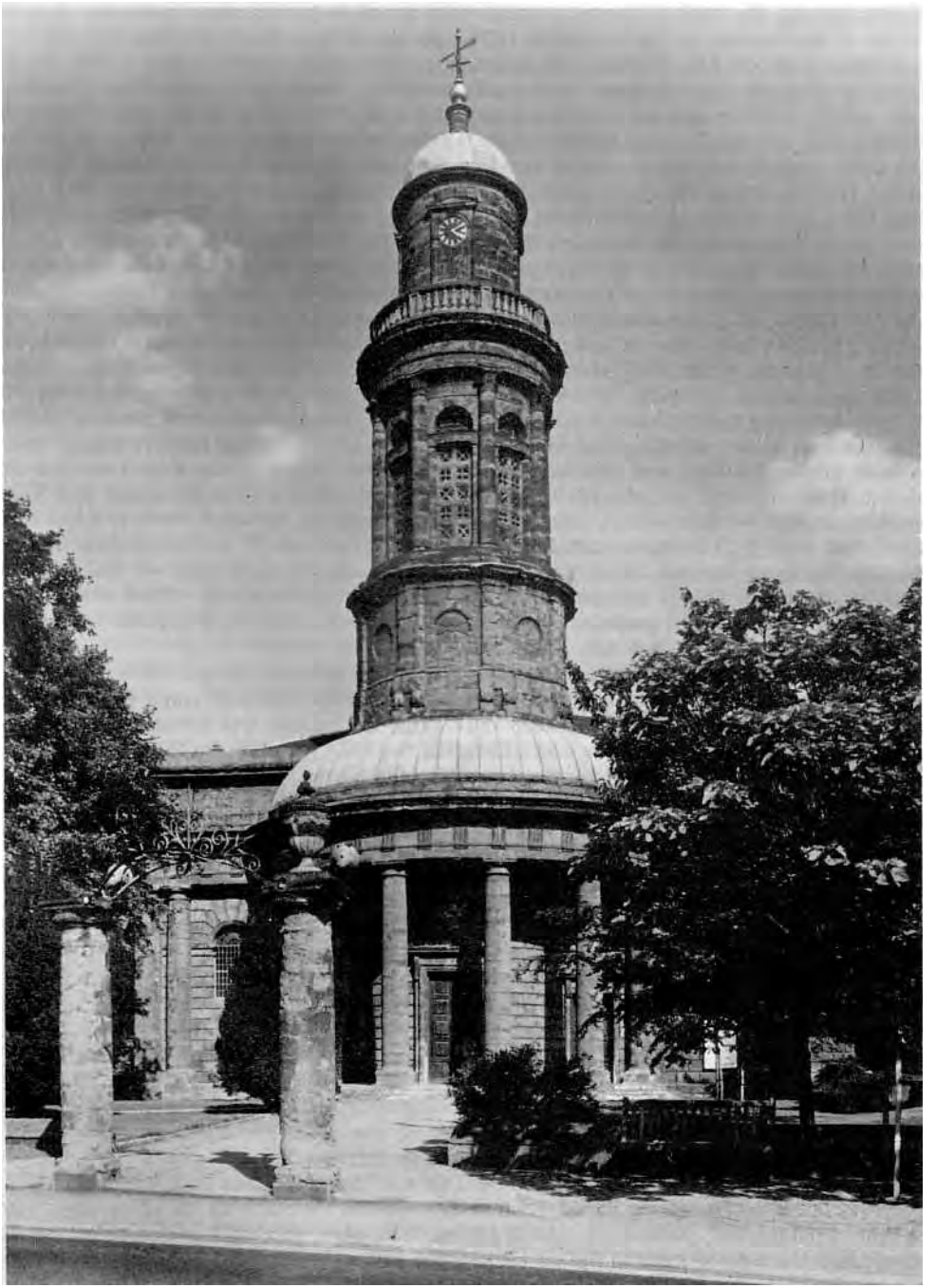

*Figure 5.* St. Mary's, Banbury: the tower and portico as completed by Charles Robert Cockerell in 1820 and 1822. Compare the eventual treatment of the roof and pillars of the portico with the original design shown in Figure 2. (Photo. Blinkhorns of Banbury).

building rate on the basis of the new assessments people began to refuse payment. A stormy meeting of the Trustees on 24 September 1824 only agreed to persist in the new assessments by the casting vote of J.G. Rusher, the chairman – who had already voted as an ordinary Committee member. The Attorney General was consulted, and he gave his opinion (paid for out of the rates?) that the new assessment was probably invalid for the purpose in question. By the following year half the Trustees themselves were refusing to pay their rates. What was more, the Cobb party were demanding to see the Trustees' accounts. It certainly seems reasonable enough that the Trustees should be able to inspect their own accounts, and while there was probably no actual fraud it is certain that the books were not being kept properly. This must have been a factor in the continuing financial troubles faced by the Trustees. The Cobb party absented themselves from all meetings of the Trustees for three years after 1824, paid no rates, and watched with satisfaction the increasing discomfiture of their enemies.

By the end of 1826 the whole of Neithrop was on a rate strike. At the Trustees' meeting on 13 June 1827, we have a rare record of what was actually said and a good insight into what was going on. Benjamin Aplin, clerk to the Trustees for 25 years, had been to see John Brownsill, the churchwarden for Neithrop, threatening legal action unless the rates were forthcoming. 'The said John Brownsill said he had not collected any money, that nobody would pay him, and that the parish were all on his side. That Mr. Tompkins (the churchwarden for Grimsbury) said he was busy among his hay, and that he would look at that (meaning the paper) another time. Ordered, that our clerk do take such proceedings aginst the said John Brownsill and William Tompkins as shall be ordered' . . . (whereupon) 'Mr. Tompkins appeared and was asked for his account and replied "I have not collected any money. I have asked, and the general excuse is, why, the Neithrop farmers won't pay, if you'll make any of them pay, we will pay." Mr. Tompkins then said that if one paid they all would, and promised he would summons the principal occupiers. And he promised on behalf of Mr. Brownsill, who was afraid to come into Banbury because of the small pox.'

In view of the doubtful legality of collecting the church building rate on the basis of the new assessment, no legal action seems to have been taken, and the Trustees' stand was increasingly seen for the bluff that it was. By October 1827 Paine the builder was threatening legal action against those of his fellow Trustees who had signed the 1818 Contract for finishing the church. By December the Trustees who had stuck out for the new rates were almost all prepared to throw in the sponge. Just after Christmas the Cobb party turned up in force at a Trustees' meeting, the first they had attended for three years. They had judged their moment well. An overwhelming majority voted to return to the old assessment, and a few months later agreed to the appointment of a committee to examine the accounts.

The money started to flow again. The 5% bond holders once more began to receive their dividends, and the bills too could begin to be paid. But it was April 1840 before Cockerell's outstanding bill of £274 could be settled, and September of that year before the Trustees finally paid the last of what they owed to John Paine, whose father was dead. Nothing was left except to pay off the last of the £50 bond holders from the product of the rates, and this was done on 16 August 1842. So the Trustees could wind themselves up after 52 years of wrestling with the consequences of taking on a burden that they must often bitterly have regretted. At this distance of time it is possible for us to think differently.

But the church completed in 1822 was not entirely as it is now. The first major problem seems to have been the need to do something about the organ and about an arrangement of galleries that, acceptable in 1795, was losing favour by the reign of Victoria. The organ had been moved from the old church, and had once been a fine instrument by Snetzler. In 1840 an appeal was launched to enlarge it, inaugurated by a musical festival with the village choirs from Bloxham, Treddington, Adderbury and Shipston. The plan, as shown in the engraving that accompanied the appeal leaflet, was to remove the eastern gallery and to divide the enlarged organ placing the pipes in cases either side of the sanctuary arch. In the event nothing was done until 1859, and whether or not the 1840 scheme was followed the result did not last long.

In 1860 one of the more distinguished of Banbury's vicars succeeded to the living – Henry Back. The living of Banbury is in the gift of the Bishop, and the bishop of Oxford at the time was the high churchman, Samuel Wilberforce, who saw in the revival of Anglican ritual a means

*Figure 6.* St. Mary's, Banbury: the interior in about 1840. This shows the original small square-ended chancel, with curtained corporation pew to the left and pulpit to the right, the east end gallery and centrally placed organ. (Bodleian Library, Ms.O.D.P.b.70.f.63).

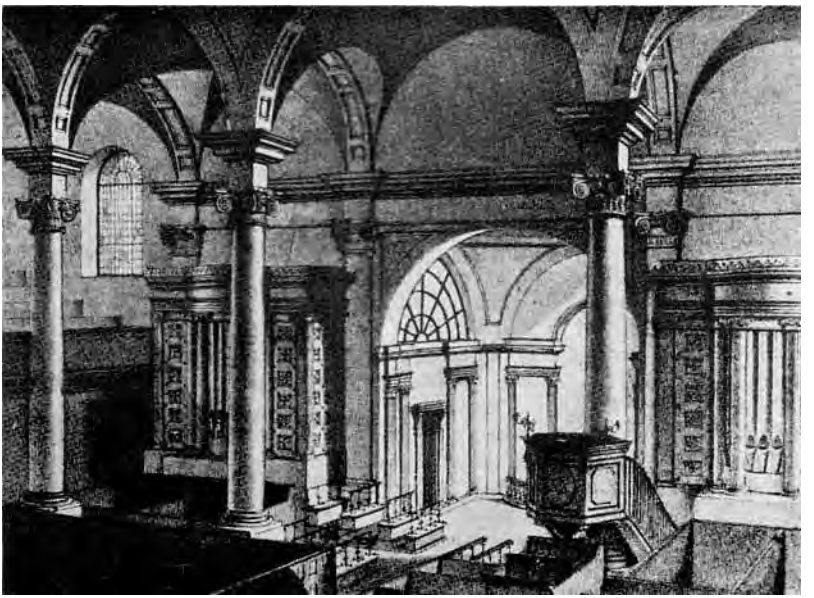

*Figure 7.* St. Mary's, Banbury: the interior with alterations proposed in 1840, with the eastern gallery removed and the enlarged organ divided with pipes on either side of the sanctuary arch. (Bodleian Library, G.A.Oxon.16°100 p.6).

of stimulating the religious life of the church. Low church people mistrusted him, and Banbury had a long, strong Puritan tradition extending back three hundred years. Banbury church had been built very much as a preaching-box, with its focus on the pulpit rather than on an insignificant altar upon which everyone in the eastern gallery anyway turned their backs. In the 1790's, at least, it was still the custom in Banbury to refer to Sunday mattins as 'Sunday meeting service' – a very evangelical term. Henry Back, the high church bishop's nominee, changed all that.

Back preached for the first time in a surplice on the Sunday before Christmas, 1866, and it is hard now to imagine the sensation that this must have caused. Sarah Beesley recorded her horror in her diary,[9] and her shock at hearing the responses sung rather than said, and her dismay at finding that in the new church in Neithrop, where she went for evensong, things were just as bad. There was even a cross on the altar, made of flowers! She talked to the doctor, Dr. John Griffin, about it, and both their names appear on a petition that was presented to Back soon afterwards. But Back was clearly determined to go ahead with what he probably regarded as essential to bring seemliness to the services, and things were not to end simply with an improvement in ritual.

Victorian high churchmen – indeed most people in the 1860's – did not approve of classical churches at all. They tended to romanticise the middle ages as 'the Age of Faith', and so to see a revival of medieval architecture, which had been gothic, as essential if the Faith itself was to be revived. It had been this attitude that had led J.H. Parker, scholar of Gothic and founder of the Oxford Architectural Society, to say of St. Mary's in 1840 'The church of Banbury is altogether the most despicable building that bears the honoured name of Church in this or in any other country. It is a hideous square mass of stone, without form or proportion, or a single redeeming feature: its interior would make a handsome playhouse. Such a building might have been well enough adapted for the exhibitions of gladiators or of wild beasts in ancient Rome, but it is totally unfit for a Christian church.'[10] What Back had to do was to make the best of a bad job and to try and Christianise what he doubtless regarded as basicly a pagan temple.

The architect he chose for the job was Sir Arthur Blomfield, fourth son of a great Bishop of London, and generally considered the best man for this kind of job. Blomfield Christianised a good many Georgian temples, and his technique was always the same. Accepting that they were classical, and therefore in part at least Italian in inspiration, the best thing to do was to produce pale echoes of the early Italian, Christian artists that the Victorians so much admired – men such as Fra Angelico and Giotto. Blomfield raised the low chancel to form a proper sanctuary, covered its walls with paintings of Christ and the Apostles in imitation of mosaic, and the rest of the church with a decorative scheme in gold and Venetian red. This work, and most of the glass which was inserted at the same time, was carried out by the huge firm of Victorian church furnishers, Heaton, Butler and Baine. The windows are unremarkable except for the excellent pair at the eastern end of the nave above the galleries, whose artist is unknown, and for the amusing detail in one of those on the north side which contains scenes of Polar exploration redrawn from the Arctic note books of Admiral Back, the Vicar's brother. The Blomfield decorative scheme has now gone, except for the figures in the chancel; the church was redecorated in the 1960's by the diocesan architect.

It could hardly be expected in Banbury that the new scheme should have been carried out without controversy. Blomfield's first drawings were delivered in 1869, and the parish found them too much to accept. They objected particularly to any proposals to raise the chancel floor or to build steps up to the altar. There was a stormy vestry meeting at which one of the advocates of the new scheme rather unwisely said that they were needed 'for the same reason that in the theatre the stage is always raised above the people,' which was of course the obvious cue for another speaker to take up this 'singularly happy illustration when he talked about theatres, for where the restoration of churches has taken place, performances have followed as a necessary consequence. The practice of Rome – or rather a pale imitation of them – invariably followed. We have no objection to the church being beautified as much as we like, provided its Protestant character is preserved.'[11]

Blomfield had little patience with these evangelical boors, and wrote to the parishioners, 'I may say at once that it would be quite impossible for me to proceed with the work in

*Figure 8.* St. Mary's, Banbury: the interior looking east in about 1890, photographed by H. Taunt, showing the chancel as altered by Blomfield, with its steps and imitation mosaic paintings, the new and repositioned pulpit, and the rebuilt organ case. (Oxford Public Libraries, CC72/385, and National Monuments Record).

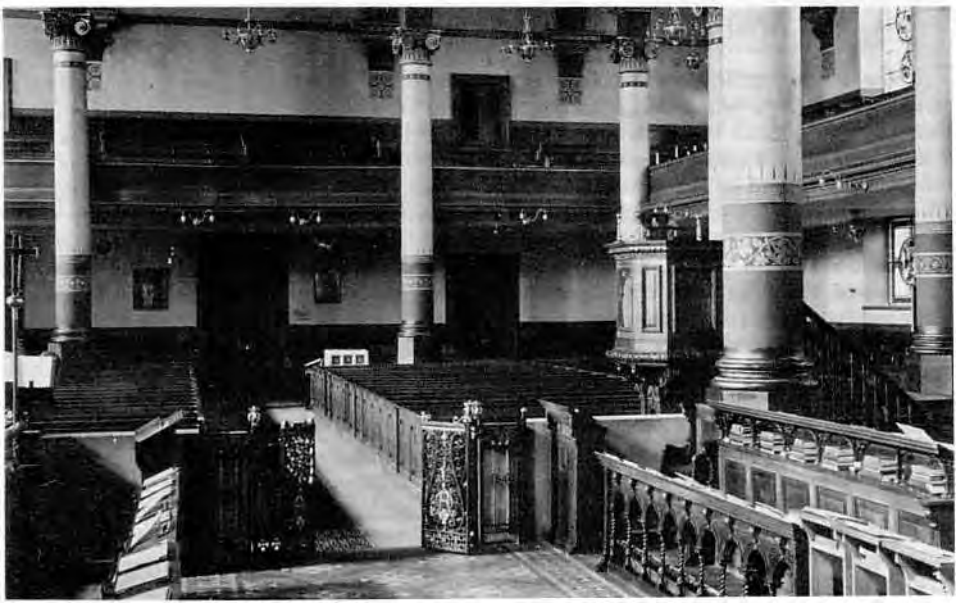

*Figure 9.* St. Mary's, Banbury: the interior looking west, in 1946. This gives a good idea of Blomfield's decorative scheme. (National Monuments Record, AA46/10128).

accordance with some of these proposals. To say nothing of my own reputation as an architect, which would naturally suffer when the work was done and the blunders apparent. I am sure that such a plan would never receive the approval of the Bishop . . .'[12] He was probably right, and when the work was done in 1873 it seems to have incorporated certain of the points which the parish had originally taken exception to. In particular they had disliked the idea of raising the chancel by seven steps; in the event it was raised by six and Blomfield might have said he had stepped down slightly.

The next fifty years saw a few further alterations. The pulpit, designed by Blomfield, was only added in 1885, made by Kett of Cambridge and set up (and paid for) by Alfred Claridge, a leading Banbury builder. Kett also carved the organ case in 1874, and the organ was rebuilt again, by Walkers. (Until 1859 it seems to have retained the case from the old church; certainly the only known view of it shows a case quite out of character with a rebuilding of the 1790's.) The chancel gates are of 1902 by Starkie Gardner. The clock was renewed in 1897 and the old one, made by Joseph Hemmins of Banbury in 1741, sold to South Newington. Also in 1879 three additional bells were hung to bring the total to eleven, enabling them to be chimed. The oldest remaining bell now in the tower is of 1667, and had been hung (with three others only one of which besides remains) in the churchyard for twenty years until the tower was built. This bell was cast at Chacombe with the inscription

'I ring to Sermon with a lusty Boome
That all may come and none may stay at home'

and it is a pleasant link with the old church that this bell at least, the largest and deepest of those rung, still sounds out over the town every Sunday as it has for three hundred and five years.

National Monuments Record,
Royal Commission on
Historical Monuments

Nicholas Cooper

## APPENDIX I – S. P. COCKERELL AND THE ARCHITECTURE OF THE CHURCH

Cockerell was remarkable for the eclecticism of his architecture, even in an age which was itself prepared to accept a wider range of architectural styles than perhaps any before or since. Cockerell could design a straightforward classical building as well as most people, as his London work and some of his country houses show. But he could, and did, do other things as well. At Tickencote in Rutland he enlarged the existing church in a Norman Revival style – perhaps the first Romanesque work in England since the twelfth century, and though not done with the scholarship that Victorian architects would have brought to the work, the remarkable thing is that it was done at all. At St. Anne's church, Soho, he designed a strange and striking tower which survived the blitz (the rest of the church did not) whose clock faces on the spire have been likened by Summerson, memorably but unfairly, to a pair of intersecting beer-barrels. And at Sezincot in Gloucestershire he built for his cousin, a retired Indian Civil Servant, a pleasure-dome in a Mogul style that foreshadowed the Royal Pavilion at Brighton.

St. Mary's church must be understood in the light of this versatility. His ideas come from a number of sources. Perhaps the most interesting of these is St. Paul's church, Deptford, built by Thomas Archer in 1739 and almost certainly the inspiration for the treatment of the tower and portico. What Cockerell got from Archer was the solution to one of the most intractable problems facing classical church architects – how to accommodate into their design the tower or spire that the English tradition demanded. Wren's churches generally dodged the issue – they simply have their towers stuck on to one end or a corner of the building. A good many 18th century churches follow Gibb's example at St. Martin in the Fields where the tower balances precariously on the ridge of the roof. What Archer did, and where Cockerell followed him, was to marry a circular tower and rectangular nave in such a way that the tower is carried to the ground as a half engaged cylinder. The lower stage of the tower is given necessary mass by the

addition of the semi-circular portico. Archer's – and Cockerell's – solution is a highly satisfactory one, and there is no doubt that Cockerell must have known Archer's church from living and working in London.

From Wren, Cockerell probably derived the scrolls that originally were to have crowned the portico. The tower of St. Mary le Bow is the likely source for these. From Wren also he obtained the plan, and the model here is St. Stephen, Walbrook. Like St. Stephen, Banbury church comprises a dome surrounded by 12 columns, three in each quadrant, supporting the spandrels. The main difference between the two is that whereas Wren links his columns by straight entablatures, Cockerell links his by arches, vaulting the intervening spaces. The weakness of Cockerell's version is that the central dome rises little higher than the vaults in the quadrants so that it seems a trifle deflated by contrast. However, the centralised, almost square plan that this arrangement made possible was ideally suited to the service of the 18th century church, which, emphasising the sermon rather than the Sacraments, placed little importance on the chancel.

A further feature of St. Mary's which would perhaps have been condemned by the most advanced architectural taste of the time but for which Cockerell could also have claimed the authority of Wren is the treatment of the internal columns. These are capped by a fully developed entablature of capital, frieze and cornice; up-to-date rationalism would have questioned the propriety of such an irrational feature in such a position. On the other hand Cockerell is wholly of his age in the massive treatment of the outside of the nave. His contemporaries much admired the crude grandeur of ancient architecture as depicted in the engravings, for instance, of Piranesi. Contemporary architects were also experimenting with designs incorporating simple geometrical forms. The heavy, featureless rustication of the lower part of St. Mary's must have appealed to contemporary taste for the dramatic in architecture, and the simple cube/cylinder arrangement of tower and nave to their formal sense.

## APPENDIX II – SOME PERSONALITIES

The Act for rebuilding the church contains a list of Trustees. Besides those who qualified by subscription, the Act names the following:

'The Mayor, and every Alderman, Capital Burgess, Assistant, and the Town Clerk of the Borough of Banbury, in the County of Oxford, the Vicar and Churchwardens of the Parish of Banbury, aforesaid for the Time being, Sir Henry Worthin Dashwood, and the Reverend Sir Richard Cope, Baronets, the Honourable George Augustus North, the Reverend Robert Dowbiggin, the Reverend William Deacle, and the Reverend Richard Nicoll, doctors in Divinity, John Loveday, doctor of Laws, John Barber, Samuel Blencowe, Francis Eyre, Charles Fox, William Holbech, Francis Pigott, Michael Woodhul, John Freke Willes, and William Richard Wykeham, esquires, the Reverend Francis Annesley, John Caswall, John Deacle, John Farrer, Edward Hughes, Phineas Pet, and Richard Wykham, Clerks, the Reverend George Hampton, A.M., Oliver Aplin, Richard Bignall, Charles William Baker, John Drury, Urban Fidkin, George Green the elder, John Goodwin, James Golby, Thomas Gulliver, William Hayward, Joseph Hawtyn, Richard Haddon, Richard Haydon, Richard Herbert, John Johnson, James King, Andrew Long, John Lamley, William Judd, John Newman, William Pratt the elder, James Roberts, John Roberts, Robert Rymill, William Shirley, Joseph Snow, Robert Taylor, Daniel Taylor, Thomas Taylor the elder, Thomas Taylor the younger, Richard Williams, William Walford, and John Wheatley, gentlemen.'

The Trustees' meeting on 17 September 1824 received a motion from Thomas Cobb that 'The attempt to alter the rate of assessment . . is contrary to the provisions of the Act of Parliament.' This was amended by Thomas Nasbey that 'it is the sense of this meeting that the rate of the rebuilding of this parish church ought to comprise . . . the whole of the . . . parish.' Those who voted for the amendment were:

Charles Bucknell, John Aplin, Simon Harrison, Robert Edwards, Samuel Gulliver, Richard Thorne, Robert Barrow, Timothy Sedgeley, Thomas Nasbey, Joshua Beane, John Barford, William Marriott, Thomas Rusher. Johnathan Drury, -. Barnes, and J. G. Rusher (voting twice).

Those who voted against were:

Richard Taylor, Joseph Paine, Thomas Tims, Thomas Wyatt, John Salmon, William Milward, James Sansbury, John Connor Field, Daniel Stuart, John Davies, James Golby, William Spurrett, Thomas Cobb, Joseph Moore, and -. Edmunds.

At the meeting on 28 December 1827, only Nasbey, Rusher and Beane maintained a stand on the new assessment. Voting for a return to the old were Thomas and Timothy Cobb, the Rev. G. Wyatt, and messrs. Milward, Golby, Paine, Salmon, Brownsill, Tompkins and Heydon. Clearly many of the Rusher faction preferred to stay away rather than acknowledge their defeat.

## NOTES

The principal source for the rebuilding of the church and for the events that followed is the MS Order Book kept by the Trustees and now in the Bodleian Library (MSS.D.D.Par.Banbury c.6). This has a copy of the Rebuilding Act bound into the front. The difficulty in using this book is that although it records the instructions given by the Trustees to their clerk it very seldom says anything of the circumstances leading up to these orders. The Parish vestry minute books do not survive: fortunately they still existed when Beesley drew on them to write his *History of Banbury*, and it is due to Beesley that we know what we do of the events leading up to the demolition of the old church. Old St. Mary's itself will be described in some detail in the Banbury volume of the *Victoria County History*, forthcoming. For the history of the present building in the later 19th century the best authority is Eleanor Draper and William Potts, *The Parish Church of St. Mary, Banbury*, 1907.

1. *Transactions of the Leicestershire Archaeological Association*, 1910, XLV, 153.
2. See Appendix I.
3. Listed at Appendix II.
4. *Oxford Journal*, 14.xii.1790. See also *Gentleman's Magazine*, LX, 1790, 647, 807, and Preface, iv.
5. Trustees' Order Book, 25.ix.1791.
6. Ib., 17.vi.1796.
7. C. R. Cockerell's MS diary at the R.I.B.A., London.
8. Trustees' Order Book, 23.iii.1818.
9. Sarah Beesley, *Story of My Life*, entry for 1866.
10. Beesley, *History of Banbury*, 555.
11. *The Builder*, 11.ix.1869.
12. *The Builder*, loc.cit.

*Acknowledgements:* We gratefully acknowledge permission to reproduce illustrations and assistance in their selection from Banbury Public Library and Museum, the Bodleian Library, Oxford, the National Monuments Record, and Oxford Public Libraries. We are also most grateful to Messrs. Blinkhorns, who specially photographed for this article the view of the church shown in Fig. 5.

## BANBURY MARRIAGES AT DRAYTON IN 1790

From 1790 to 1797, whilst the old church was being demolished and the new one built, the church congregation was allowed to use the Dissenters', or Presbyterian, Meeting House in the Horse Fair. The last marriage to take place in the old church was on 12 April 1790, and the first to take place in the Dissenting Meeting House was on 7 July following. However during the intervening May and June five marriages took place at Drayton, 'being ye adjoining parish to Banbury, the parish church having been some short time shut up and therefore deemed extra-parochial.' As these were not included in Part Two of Banbury Marriage Registers, published in 1961, the opportunity is now taken of recording them in an appropriate context:

| | | | *Witnesses* |
|---|---|---|---|
| May 27 | SNOW | Joseph, shag-manufacturer, & | Henrietta Freeman, J.R. Cosens |
| | NEWMAN | Sarah, both of Banbury, lic. | Oliver Aplin, John Newman |
| May 27 | DUNCOMBE | John, of St Martin's in the Fields, London, & | |
| | GOLDWIN | Sarah, of Banbury, lic. | Geo. Edwards, Oliver Aplin |
| May 31 | PAGE | John, hair-dresser, & | Ann Sconce |
| | SCONCE | Susanna, sp., both of Banbury, lic. | Richard Haddon |
| June 1 | SABIN | William*, wid., of Aston-le-Walls, N'hants., & | John Stacey |
| | VAIN | Mary*, sp., of Banbury, lic. | Andrew Joad, Geo. Edwards |
| June 7 | ABBOTTS | Thomas*, & | William Broof, Hannah Craigs |
| | BROOF | Elizabeth, both of Banbury | Geo. Edwards |

*indicates signature by mark.

J.S.W.G.

# 'ALONG THE CUT' – AN EXHIBITION ABOUT THE OXFORD CANAL

This is the first major exhibition to be staged in Banbury Museum, and it is to run until July 1973, so there is still plenty of time for anyone in the Banbury locality to see it. It is an extremely interesting and well-displayed exhibition, taking up the whole of the main room of the museum, and it reflects great credit on the designers, Richard Swanwick Associates, and particularly on our own Miss Christine Bloxham, the Museum Assistant, whose idea it first was and who has compiled the material and written the catalogue.

The list of acknowledgments in this catalogue is an indication of the co-operative nature of the exhibition, a very welcome trend. In addition to the Narrow Boat Trust, the Inland Waterways Association and the Waterways Museum at Stoke Bruern (visited not long ago by this Society), there are exhibits from the Science Museum in London, the Northampton, Oxford City and County, and Warwick Museums, the Bodleian and Oxford City Libraries. Of greater local interest, perhaps, are the local contributions, and here Banbury is most fortunate in having Mr Herbert Tooley, whose boatyard on the canal, his father George Tooley's before him, is still in operation. Readers will recall our recent article on this. On display from his collection are a tiller, caulking tools, a rope fender and a cooking range from a boat. There are too historic photographs of the Tooley brothers at work, of the boatyard and of the launching of the last boat to be built in the yard.

Of special interest to historians are the records of the promotion and building of the Oxford Canal between 1768 and 1790. The earliest is a map of 1768, which shows details of the Cherwell valley and proposed route of the canal, as well as of a tributary 'feeder' stream rising near the 'Sibbords' and running along the foot of Edgehill to join the canal near Fenny Compton. Another item of some 'Common Market' topicality is a German map of the canal route, undated but apparently 19th century.

An exhibit from this early period is a photostat of the first page of a pamphlet opposing the building of the canal: 'Reasons of Importance to the Publick against the Extension of the Coventry Canal to Oxford . . . a vast Tract of rich Country, now . . . Farms, must fall a Sacrifice to a Junto of interested Coal-Owners and Castle-Building Projectors . . .' This has a curiously familiar and modern ring – some forerunner of the C.P.R.E. perhaps!

In the display cases there is a wide range of canal-associated objects: Measham ware, plates ('A Present from ...'), decorated water cans and jugs (Mr Tooley is well known for his artistic skill), scale models of narrow boats, as they are known on this canal, a large-scale, truncated, narrow boat as a centre-piece (specially constructed for this exhibition), B.B.C. records of canal voices, sounds and songs, clothing and even a pair of crocheted horse's ear caps. Coming right up-to-date, there are plans and a model of the proposed Banbury Marina, for canals are nowadays a major centre of leisure activity.

Adorning the walls is a large collection of photographs and pictures of canal scenes. Many of these are of the Banbury locality, and it is a pity that more are not identified – also that labels are often at some distance and difficult to read.

But this is a very minor criticism of a really delightful display, which is sure to attract a very wide range of people, many of whom might well profess little interest in the more traditional type of museum. It is greatly to be hoped that they will be tempted up the two flights of stairs above the library to see for themselves.

J.S.W. Gibson

**Along the Cut – The Oxford Canal.** Introductory booklet to the exhibition at Banbury Museum July 1972 – July 1973. Written by Christine Bloxham 5p.

The exhibition with which this pamphlet is associated is the most ambitious enterprise yet undertaken by Banbury Museum, and the booklet reflects the high standards which have pervaded the whole project. Newcomers to Banbury and the entire younger generation in the town will never have heard the 'pop-pop-pop-pop-pop' of a Fellows, Morton and Clayton narrow boat emerging from the bridge by the Albion, with a crew member running ahead to

raise the next lifting bridge. It is timely therefore to be reminded that the Oxford Canal was not built for the tourists who now throng it, and that it has in the past been of considerable significance to the economic growth of Banbury and the surrounding countryside.

The pamphlet briefly surveys the building of the canal and its engineering features, and describes the principal traffic. There are sections on boat building and on the canal people, a tribute to canal art, a list of employees of the canal company in 1853, and a glossary of canal terms. The whole has been carefully compiled from a variety of sources, and makes a tempting appetiser for Hugh Compton's history of the Oxford Canal, which everyone concerned with local history eagerly anticipates.

Anyone who has enjoyed the exhibition may well be interested in a weekend course on 'Boatpeople of the Midlands Waterways' to be held at the Shropshire Adult College, Attingham Park, Shrewsbury, on November 24th – 26th next. There will be lectures on the Severn bargemen, life on the narrow boats in the 19th century, the boatmen of Oxford and the arts of the boatpeople, as well as films about working boats on canals. Full details can be obtained from the Warden, Attingham Park, Shrewsbury.

B.S.T.

**Milestones – Northamptonshire Roads and Turnpikes.**
**A Woman's Work, housekeeping in Northamptonshire 1600 – 1900.**
Northamptonshire Record Office, Archive Teaching Units Nos. 2 and 3. Obtainable from Northamptonshire Record Office, Delapre Abbey, Northampton.

These two recently published units maintain the high standard set in the selection of documents on Crime and Punishment which the Record Office published last year. *Milestones* illustrates almost every aspect of the history of turnpike roads which can be found in most record offices, although it is disappointing that there are no documents referring to that most unusual of early 19th century highways, Thomas Telford's Holyhead Road, which passes through the county. Plans and a drawing of tollhouses and gates should stimulate students to undertake their own field work. None of the documents relate directly to those parts of Northamptonshire near Banbury, but local historians will find the map of turnpikes in the county extremely useful. It is interesting to see that Aynho was a particularly important turnpike centre, astride the road from Buckingham to Warmington, and terminal point of roads from Bicester and Burford.

As the introduction to *A Woman's Work* admits, Unit No. 3 is largely concerning with the keeping of the great country houses of Northamptonshire. Students should gain from this collection a vivid impression of the life of a domestic servant. Items of local interest include drawings of the kitchen and laundry at Aynho in 1847, a list of servants and wages at the same house in 1830, and the notice of a theft of laundry from Canons Ashby in 1846.

These units will be of absorbing interest to anyone with a concern for local history, and not just to teachers and students. It is to be hoped that No.4 and subsequent publications will be just as good.

B.S.T.

*A new work by Professor Cheney*

Our distinguished vice-president Professor C.R. Cheney of the University of Cambridge has recently published a new book on the legal history of medieval England, *Notaries Public in England in the 13th and 14th centuries.* The book is published by Oxford University Press at £5.00.

*A. W. Pain*

On going to press we learn with deep regret of the death of our Honorary Information Officer and Founder Member of the Society, Alan Pain. We would like to record our appreciation of his services here and a fuller tribute will appear in the next edition.

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

Arts Council of Banbury (Miss Rosemary Hall, Flat 33, 20 Calthorpe Road, Banbury). Minimum £1.05

Banbury Art Society (Hon. Sec., R. Edgson, Print's Cottage, Bloxham, Banbury) £1.00

Banbury Geographical Association (B.E. Little, 2 Burlington Gardens, Banbury) 53p

Bicester Local History Circle (Hon. Sec., Miss G.H. Dannatt, Lammas Cottage, Launton Road, Bicester, Oxon.). 50p

Buckinghamshire Record Society (Hon. Sec., E.J. Davis, County Record Office, New Council Offices, Walton Street, Aylesbury, Bucks.). £2.10

Council for the Preservation of Rural England, Oxfordshire Branch (Mrs E. Turner, Woodside, Woodgreen, Witney, Oxon.). Minimum 50p

Dugdale Society (publishes Warwickshire records) (Shakespeare's Birthplace, Stratford-upon-Avon). £2.10

Heraldry Society (59 Gordon Square, London, W.C.1.). £1.50; or to include 'The Coat of Arms', £2.50

Historical Association (59a Kennington Park Road, London, S.E.11.) (Oxford Branch: A.J.P. Puddephatt, 93, Old Road, Headington, Oxford). £1.00; or to include *History*, £1.75

Northamptonshire Record Society (Délapre Abbey, Northampton). £2.10

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