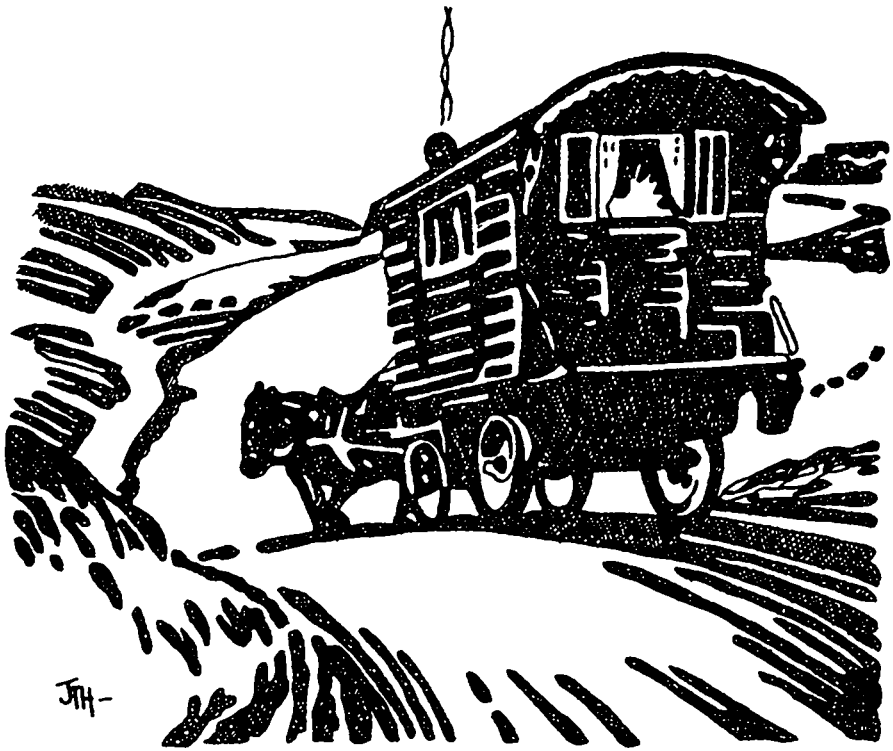
CAKE AND COCKHORSE



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BANBURY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Details of the Society's activities and publications will be found inside the back cover.

Cake and Cockhorse

The magazine of the Banbury Historical Society, issued three times a year.

Volume 14 **Number Seven** **Autumn/Winter 1999**

It is impossible at this time to avoid a mention of the Millenium, but that having been made, we celebrate in this final issue of the twentieth century an account which is firmly of *this* century, Michael Clifton's footplate journey on the old Banbury and Cheltenham Direct (by then B.R. from G.W.R.) from Banbury as far as Hook Norton (in this issue). To most of our readers the 1950s will still seem not long ago, but they are as much a part of history as events a thousand years ago.

Our book reviewing may seem a bit incestuous, but this is merely because in the fairly small world of local history the experts inevitably know each other – and, we like to think, can criticize knowledgably, fairly and without bias. It is gratifying that in this pre-millenium number we have, in Barrie's and Christine's reviews, contributions from two of the stalwarts of the first two decades of our Society's existence.

Cover: From Michael Hoadley's *A Romany Tapestry*.

WHO ARE THE ROMANIES?

Michael Hoadley

Recently, Jack Straw, the Home Secretary, made a blank statement about 'travellers and crime'. Sadly he was not entirely clear about what he meant by 'travellers' and did not make, as many people do not, a clear distinction between true Romanies, Tinkers, Didikais and Travellers (New Age or otherwise).

So, just who are the Romanies? Barry Cockcroft wrote, 'no single word in the English Language evokes more responses than Gypsy...' Whether they are wanderers or sedentary, the Romanies have successfully retained their identity in the face of the most extraordinary prejudice and hostility. Indeed, these days, most Romanies are primarily sedentary and only take to the road, like a pilgrimage, from time to time.

European Gypsies call the men of their own race Roms (hence Romanies). The race is, however, not the same everywhere – a clear distinction can be made between Gypsies of the east and west. Nevertheless, there are few people with Romany blood who are not proud to admit it. The Romany inheritance is one of fierce independence and extraordinary vigour but few people know much about their origins.

It has long been recognised that the Romany language is Indian of Aryan origin related to the original Sanskrit. It has been suggested that they were even wanderers in their homeland. Various ancient texts suggest that there was a Romany presence outside India long before 1000 AD. Early references imply that they were itinerant fortune-tellers and horse-dealers.

We do not know with certainty when Romanies first entered Britain but they are mentioned by the name 'Gypsy' in the accounts of the Lord High Treasurer for Scotland in 1505. The reference to a new incursion indicates they were in this country before that date.

In England, the Gypsies are first mentioned in *A Dialogue of Sir Thomas Moore, Knight*. They are referred to in poems by John Skelton in the 1500's.

Various acts of Parliament were set in motion to repress 'many outlandyeshe people callynge themselfes Egyptians' and to stop further immigration. As with the Jews, western law was the vehicle for the

condoning of a persecution of people that others saw as 'racially impure'.

An Act of Parliament was passed in England in 1530 that deprived apprehended Gypsies of their goods and forced them to leave the country within fifteen days or face imprisonment. In 1544, Gypsies were apprehended in Huntingdonshire and deported to the continent. Another group in Lincolnshire was sent to Norway. It was not unusual for Englishmen to consort with Gypsies, as legislation against this indicates. Men and women were hanged for it.

The last time the death penalty was enacted against a Gypsy for being a Gypsy was at the end of Cromwell's protectorship when thirteen were hanged at the Suffolk assizes. Repressive legislation was still enacted as late as 1908. Deportation remained a common form of repession.

In Ireland, the word 'Tinker' is used to describe travelling folk. They are not real Romanies. Diddikai's have some Romany blood but are a mix with Gorgios (non-Romanies). Travellers are often wanderers of no fixed abode, many are society's drop-outs and, today, there are a lot of New Agers. While Romanies can be travellers, travellers are not Romanies. Mr Straw, take note.

While many Romanies lead quite diverse lifestyles, most are fastidious, moral and have great personal integrity. They are an uncompromising race and their freedom of spirit, even while leading a sedentary existence, sets them apart from others and, no doubt, is partly at the root of their persecution. Their own dislike of Tinkers and Travellers stems from the fact that they frequently get the blame for the misdemeanours of those others.

Phoney fortune-telling and sharp business practice are not necessarily crimes if 'a fool and his money are soon parted.'

I have never personally seen a Romany behave in the way Mr Straw described, and I have only ever known one person, of Romany extraction, who was completely lacking in personal integrity.

For many enlightened persons, the Romany sense of freedom and the call of the open road has a very romantic appeal.

Michael Hoadley is the author of *A Romany Tapestry*, published by Capall Bann, 1999.

THE KINGHAM STOPPING GOODS, Part 1

Michael Clifton

In the first half of this century, a mention of 'railways' to most people, even to those with little or no interest in the subject, would invariably conjure up a vision of an express passenger train, and probably one of the titled trains to boot. These formed the glamorous side of the business, of which the railway's public relations officers made the most.

At the other end of the scale was an entirely different kind of train, one having a vastly more mundane task, though it was, nevertheless, just as important as the express passenger train in its own way. This type of service would certainly never appear as a typical example of railway operations to most people, though to the communities it served, it was, to some degree, their lifeblood, and rather more important to them than the 'Cornish Riviera' or the 'Cheltenham Flyer'. I refer to the 'lowly' stopping goods, examples of which at one time ran over nearly all of the GWR system, connecting the numerous outposts with the main goods centres. Consisting perhaps of around twenty wagons and a goods brake, and pulled by an engine which was often 'domed and long-funnelled', they trundled from station to station on main line and branch, putting off and picking up traffic on demand.

One such train was the 10.10am Banbury to Kingham and the 2.30pm Kingham return, which I worked on a number of occasions when a fireman in No. 6 link at Banbury. However, this train was a relatively recent addition to the workings over the eastern section of the Banbury & Cheltenham line.

In the years after the turn of the century, iron ore traffic (and returning empties) along the branch between Kings Sutton and Hook Norton provided the majority of goods movements, and such coal and general merchandise traffic as was delivered to or picked up at the various stations was attached to those trains, which for the most part were 'through' workings (to or from Brymbo, Bilston, Oxley Sidings, Gloucester, etc). These services were mostly hauled by 0-6-0 and 2-6-0 engines. However, a stopping goods service from Banbury to Kingham had been introduced by the summer of 1914, leaving Banbury at 2.50pm and returning from Kingham at 8.50pm, calling at Adderbury, Bloxham, Hook Norton, Rollright (when required) and Chipping Norton in each direction, and additionally at South Hill Siding (between the southerly viaduct and the northern portal of Hook Norton tunnel) to pick up transfer mineral traffic for Hook Norton. The train was subject to retiming, and by 1920 had been adjusted to leave Banbury at 11.40am, and Kingham at 8.55pm; 9.00am and 6.50pm (respectively) by 1928; and 10.35am and 6.40pm (respectively) by 1932, around which timings it stabilized until the Second World War. At this time, the train was scheduled for a '2301' class 0-6-0.

During that war, the departure time of 10.10am was introduced, and remained thus. In 1948, due largely to the decrease in goods traffic conveyed, the Saturday train completed the journey to Kingham in 3½ hours instead of the weekday figure of 7½, and left Kingham at 2.30 instead of 6.05pm

In June 1951, the auto passenger services were withdrawn from the Banbury & Kingham section, leaving the branch goods as the only regular train running over the section between Kings Sutton and Chipping Norton: from 1952/3, the goods was running on a 10.10am Banbury and 2.30pm Kingham schedule throughout the week.

Unlike the auto train, each day saw a different composition of vehicles behind the engine, which constantly changed as we made our way from station to station. Let's turn the clock back forty-odd years, and look at the sort of day facing the crew of the 'Kingham'.

Having booked on at 8.55am, a quick look at the duty roster told me that we had a '43', No.5317, which was standing outside the shed on No.4 road, and looking very smart after some attention from the engine cleaners. Since the war years, these engines had been rostered regularly on the Kingham goods, but they had been a familiar sight on the line for many years prior to that, being the motive power for the Swansea & Newcastle expresses during the 1920s and 30s. We had this engine yesterday, and as there were padlocks for the toolboxes. I had locked everything up, so if the engine wasn't used overnight, everything should be as we had left it.

I made my way to the tool house to obtain the keys and a pair of headlamps. Having walked to the engine and climbed onto the footplate, I saw that nothing had been touched, which was an advantage when preparing an engine. A glance at the gauges showed 100 p.s.i. on the steam gauge, half-a-glass of water in the boiler water gauge, with a nice heap of fire under the doors of the firebox. The smoke plate (or deflector plate) lay in the corner of the cab against the side sheet – all was just to my liking.

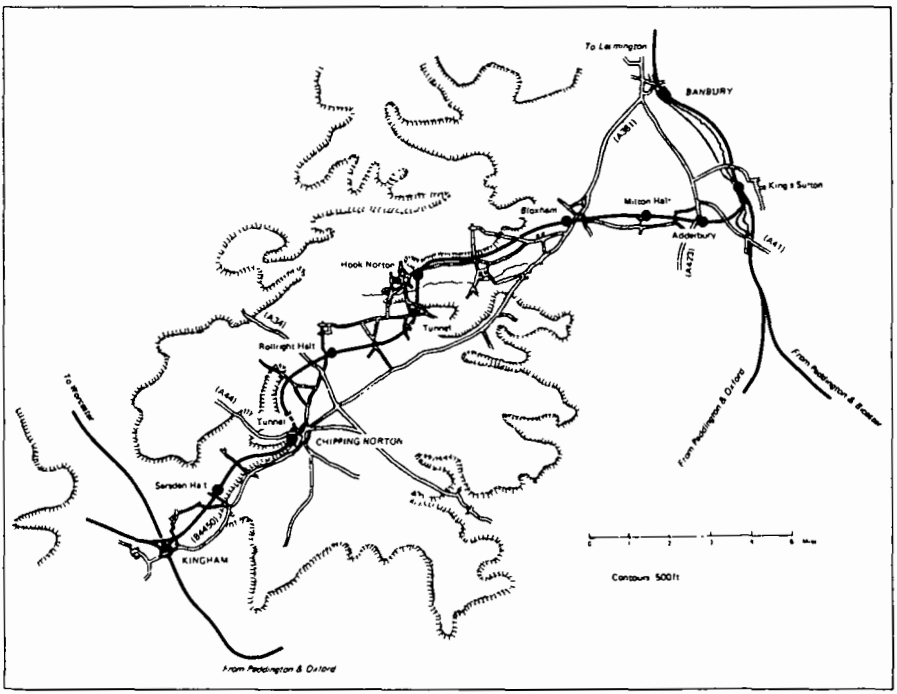
When my mate arrived, I asked him to look at the ashpan for me when he went underneath to oil the shaft – it didn't need both of us to go under there. Next, a quick look in the firebox confirmed that the fusible plugs were all right, and the tubeplate was clean and dry, but then they should be. We hadn't knocked her about the previous day.

On my walkround, I checked the sandboxes and smokebox, then returned to the footplate to start working on the fire. Meanwhile, my mate had finished underneath, and was oiling the rods and axle-boxes. On completion, he joined me on the footplate, and we moved 5317 back to the column for water. While the 'bag' was in the tank, I tidied the footplate and wiped the dust off the front and controls with some oily waste.

My mate went to make a can of tea, and on his return we prepared to move up to the shed signal. There was already another engine up there – I expect it was

the 10.00am Bletchington. We duly arrived at the shed signal and stood behind the Bletchington, which was held up by something coming on the down main. I noticed that the down train hadn't got the distant, so it might be going via the down goods loop from Banbury North to Banbury Junction. I rang the signalman in Banbury South box to tell him that the '10.10 Kingham' engine was behind the Bletchington engine (or 'standing second' as we said) at the shed signal.

Shortly afterwards, a rather grubby '28XX' on a train of pools for Banbury Junction passed slowly in front of us. It must have had at least 80 wagons behind, and a seemingly-endless 'de-dum, de-dum, de-dum' rhythm from the wagon wheels marked its progress. Finally, I heard the longer-spaced 'plonk, plonk' as the longer-wheelbase brake van rolled past. The points moved over, and the shed signal lowered with the indicator showing up main, and the Bletchington engine moved off the shed. When the Bletchington had travelled about 50 yards, the signal reversed, then lowered again, telling us that the signalman wanted us to follow the Bletchington over the main line and down the up loop (this ran along the back of the passenger station) to Banbury North, which was classed as a two-way road. There were three dummies to watch for



The Banbury and Kingham line.

when going 'wrong road' down the up loop, although we probably wouldn't be involved with the third this morning because that signal took the engine into the big yard.

We had the first dummy, which took us either to the 'up bay' at the North End, or 'wrong road'. The Bletchington was standing at the second dummy, which took engines either 'wrong road' or towards the local yard via the 'middle road' (alongside the loop, behind the passenger station), waiting to be called back into the yard. In this instance, even though the dummy was off, it would not be passed without authority from the yard staff, because we were entering their domain.

The train meeter appeared under the Middleton Road bridge and called the Bletchington engine back into the yard. The engine stopped by the North End shunter's cabin. The train meeter then called us back into the yard, and by the time we had reached the North End shunter's cabin, the Bletchington had been called down the yard and onto its train. I could see that the shunter had turned the hand points, and he now called us back down the yard and onto our own train.

When we had buffered up to our train, I got off and walked back to remove the headlamp from the back of the tender. The first wagon's label read 'Adderbury', so, as this was obviously our train, I nipped in between and threw the tender coupling onto the wagon hook. When I came out, I saw the guard walking from the brake-van up to the engine to give us the load, which seemed to be about a dozen wagons and the brake. I climbed the cab steps, walked along the outside of the cab, and put the spare headlamp on the lamp bracket by the firebox. When I got back on the footplate, the guard was having a cup of tea and giving my mate the load. We had four box vans for Adderbury, a 5-plank open with a sheeted load for Bloxham, nothing for Hook Norton, two of coal for Rollright and five 'Chippies' (two coal and three vans).

While we had been sorting ourselves out, the 10.00am Bletchington had departed, and the shunter told us to pull up to the cabin when we were ready; the guard wanted to stop there to get a bucket of coal and to leave the broom (for sweeping brake van floors). As he walked back to his van, we pulled gently down towards the cabin. The guard got his coal and returned the broom, climbed back into his van, and gave me the tip to proceed, which I passed on to my mate.

Our route out of Banbury would take us up the main line, past Astrop and on to Kings Sutton, where we would turn off right onto the B & C line for Kingham. The train meeter told us that we had the road, and from the signals in front of the bridge, I saw we were going out onto the up loop again, behind the station. Sometimes we would use the 'middle road' as far as the stop board at the South End yard and wait, clear of all running roads, until the South End shunter gave us permission to travel through the yard to the up loop at the other end. But not today, and we pulled up to Banbury South. The first board cleared,

then the left-hand one of the bracket, which put us up the loop to Astrop, then lastly, the third board lowered and away we went. The 'Bobby' said nothing to us as we passed the South box, so the Bletchington ahead of us must have gone main line from here, and that would have given them a chance to clear Kings Sutton before we reached Astrop – hopefully, giving us a good run.

We rolled steadily forward on the loop, passing Banbury Gasworks on our left and then Banbury engine shed to our right. We could see the best part of a mile of straight track in front, with the old three-arch bridge at Franklow Knob in the distance.

To our left, the old L & NWR branch to Brackley, Buckingham, Verney Junction and Bletchley, connecting at Cockley Brake Junction with the Stratford & Midland Junction line to Towcester, disappeared in the distance towards Farthinghoe. The Franklow Knob bridge had three arches: one large one in the centre for the up and down mains, and a smaller one on each side for the up and down loops. As soon as we had passed through the left-hand arch, we could see the four lines curving away to the right, with Astrop up distant about forty yards away, and in the middle distance, Astrop box.

As we approach Astrop, just over two miles from Banbury, the loop signal lowered and we turned onto the main line. The Astrop 'Bobby' gave us the tip that we were 'right away'.

Having entered the cutting at Astrop, we passed, on the left, the site of the old ironstone loading dock, but all that remained was a stone retaining wall. Shortly afterwards we passed Twyford Mill on our right, ran under an accommodation bridge carrying the private lane to Kings Sutton Lodge, and curved left before passing under the Kings Sutton - Banbury road.

Once under the Banbury road bridge, we had a clear view, in the middle distance, of Kings Sutton station and the up home signal, which was on, but cleared as we approached. The Kings Sutton down starter was off, and as we reached the station, a '49' class engine, running light, passed us on the down main - which explained why we hadn't got the road beyond. As we rolled gently through the station towards the bracket signal controlling the junction, the points slid over and the branch signal cleared for us to enter the B & C line. With the application of a little steam my mate tightened the couplings, and as we approached the box, which was close up against the far side of an occupation bridge over the line, the 'Bobby' gave us the tip 'right away'. With a little more regulator, we ran across the junction and onto the down line of the double-track branch, over the flood arches set in a water meadow, and with flanges singing (there was a 20mph permanent restriction over the junction and right-hand curve), we set off for Adderbury, 1½ miles distant.

Having passed over the River Cherwell and Oxford Canal, we could see, on the right-hand side, the sites of the Sydenham and Adderbury ironstone quarries, which were side by side. All that remained now were the engine shed and the

bases of the kilns, which we now approached. Near the top of four of the kilns' bases there was a hole, rather like a port hole, and in the hole of the centre base I saw the occupant, a Little Owl (which is a daylight owl). That owl (or a relative) was there nine times out of ten when we passed the spot on the Kingham Goods.

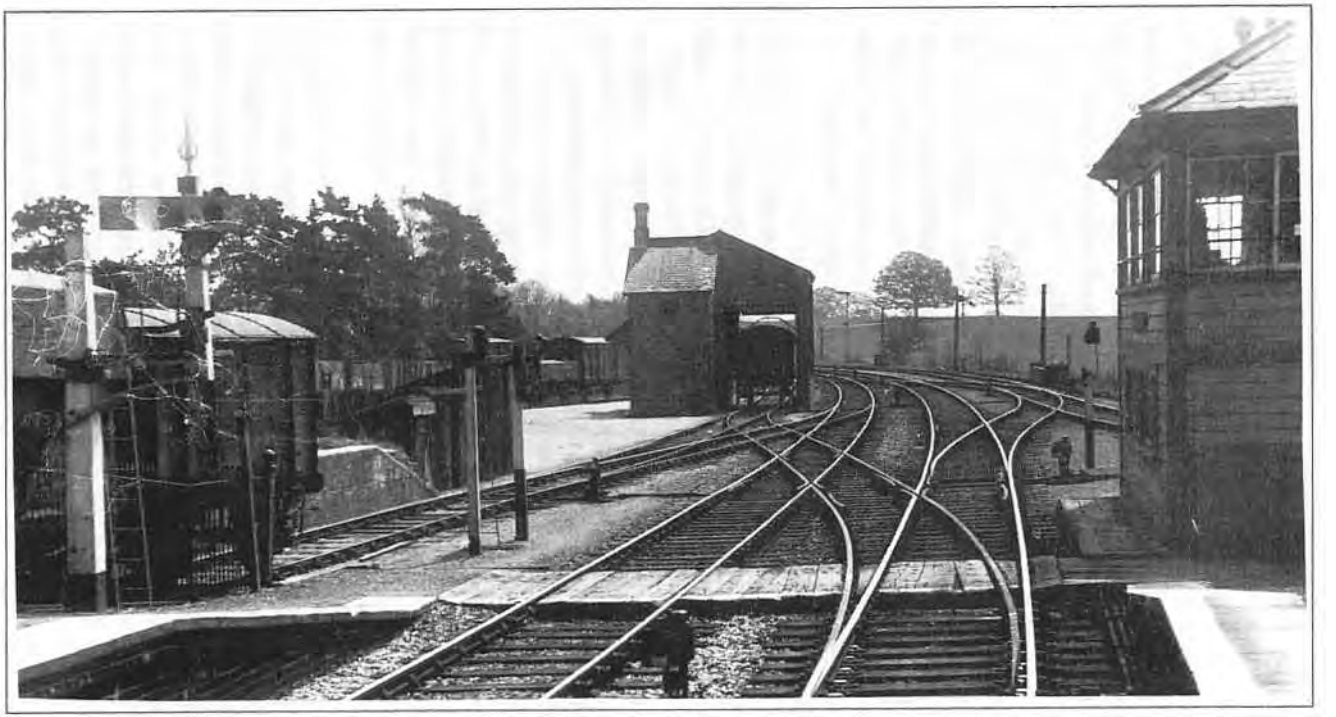
The line passed under the bridge carrying the A41 trunk road, curved to the right and entered a cutting about a third of a mile long. This gave way to an embankment, from which we could see the Adderbury down home signal, and beyond that Adderbury box and station. My mate looked back towards the brake van – being on a right-hand curve, he could see the brake – and our guard signalled that he wanted us to stop at the home signal, which we duly did.

Having applied the brake on his van, the guard walked up to the engine, cutting off behind the four Adderbury box vans on his way. The 'Bobby', who had been watching the proceedings, pulled off the home signal, and we moved up to his box with the four vans. Leaning from his window, he told the guard where to put the vans – two, which were loaded, were required in the 'works' (behind the signal box on the down side), whilst the other two (which were empty) were to be left on the goods shed road.

We were therefore at the wrong end of the vehicles for some of the shunting required, so we had to run around. Under instructions from the guard, we pulled forward into the down platform road and stood clear of the dummy and the crossover, which trailed back into Kingham end of the goods shed. When the dummy came off, we propelled the vans across the up main and into the goods shed, where we secured them, clear of all roads and points. Then we uncoupled from the vans, and noted that the dummy from the goods shed back across the up main to the down platform was off, so we ran forward to the down platform line once more.

The signalman called us back 'wrong road' along the down main, past the box to the dummy controlling the crossover between the two running lines, and as this was off, we continued tender first across onto the up main. Here, we stopped clear and beyond the points running into the goods shed at the Banbury end. The points slid over for the shed, the dummy cleared, and we moved forward to the goods shed to pick up the two vans for the works.

Shortly after we had coupled the two vans to the front of the engine, the dummy for the shed road to the up main came off, and the guard sent us back onto the up main, where we stopped, clear of the points. The switches in front of us then turned back for the up main route, and those at the east end through crossover slid into a full crossing position, but the dummy remained at danger until the guard put his pole between the point blades and used it as a lever - then the dummy cleared; perhaps the detectors for the crossover needed a slight adjustment. Propelling the vans, we ran forward, turned left from the up main, crossed straight over the down main and onto the works siding behind the box. Coming to a halt, we detached the two vans and left them, with brakes pinned down, behind the box for the works staff to deal with.



Adderbury goods yard, looking east towards King's Sutton. The goods shed was of a common pattern with those at Bloxham and Hook Norton, probably brought into service at or shortly after the opening of the King's Sutton – Chipping Norton section in 1887. Behind the signal box, the line serving Twyford Seeds Ltd continued as an extension of the refuge siding. This traffic gave Adderbury a rather busier appearance than was found at other stations on the line during the final years. SWINDON RAILWAY MUSEUM: Coll. the late J.H. RUSSELL

The 'Bobby' reset the points for the down refuge, from which the works' siding extended, and we reversed clear of the points, beyond the dummy that controlled access forward on a crossover to the down main. With the dummy off, we rolled forward onto the down main, waited for the points dummy, then backed towards our waiting train, which was now minus the four vans. The complexity of shunting movements that could take place in even the smallest of yards may be apparent from the foregoing, which was relatively straightforward in the general scheme of things.

In the period between January and April, and between late August and October, this work would have been performed by the engine of the 'Special' which ran during the 'seed season'. The 'Special' brought empty vans from Banbury, taking as many as 40 vehicles on occasions, or at times went light engine or 'engine and van' to Kingham to pick up empty vans there before returning with them to Adderbury, in both instances returning to Banbury Junction with a similar number of loaded vans at the end of the day. The works were used by Twyford Seeds Ltd from about 1946 until the mid-'sixties, but before that, during the 1939-45 war, they were operated by the Northern Alluminium Company on behalf of the Ministry of Aircraft Production as a depot for scrapping damaged aircraft, from both sides.

Before my time, there was yet another quarry at Adderbury. This one was situated behind the works mentioned above, and the loaded wagons – for Clay Cross Ltd – had to be pulled through the works premises to get to the branch.

There might be some traffic to pick up on the way back: I noticed a half empty coal wagon on the coal road, and if it had been emptied by the time we arrived back here, we should have to call and collect it.

But that was all for Adderbury at that moment, so we backed gently onto our train of eight wagons. The guard coupled up, climbed into his van, and gave us the tip: my mate touched the whistle, and we pulled up to the box. The ganger for this length was in the box, and asked for a lift to the halt at Milton. My mate agreed, and the PW man climbed onto the footplate, bringing with him the staff for the section from Adderbury to Bloxham; we were now facing single-line operation for the eighteen remaining miles to Kingham. My mate satisfied himself that it was the correct staff for the section, and gave it to me to hang in the corner. The 'Bobby' lowered the down starting signal at the far end of the platform, and the down advanced starting signal on the other side of the Oxford-Banbury road bridge.

We set off for Bloxham, accelerating away through the platform, under the Oxford road bridge and up a slightly steeper gradient for about a quarter-of-a-mile until we crossed over the road bridge at West Adderbury, where the Bloxham church spire appeared ahead of us in the distance. As the incline lessened, my mate eased off on the regulator and we ran for about half-a-mile before he closed it, then opened it again immediately to a position that operated

the jockey valve, which allowed lubrication to the valves and cylinders. That done, he grasped the reversing lever with both hands – the left at the top and the right at the bottom to operate the catch – and dropped it to the 45% cut-off notch: this was the best position for coasting on an engine with piston valves.

It was not an easy matter to alter the position of the lever when the engine was moving. The weight of the valve gear and the movement of the valves could take the lever from the driver's hands if he was caught unawares, and the lever would fly into full fore gear. This could also occur on screw reverse engines when working hard, and Michael Yates recently recounted a story to me about an occasion when he and my father were working the 2.35pm Birkenhead to Paddington express onwards from Banbury (via Bicester) one evening with the usual Old Oak 'King'. They were on the London end of Souldern No.1 viaduct when my father went to drop the lever a bit to increase the valve travel. He gripped the reversing screw with one hand and knocked the catch out with the other, but before he could do anything, the reverser was torn from his grasp. The screw duly spun into full fore gear. Michael said he had never seen anything like it – there was a column of fire leaving the chimney and going straight up into the sky, where it dispersed like a fountain and came down in the fields all around them. My father tried his hardest to get the screw back, but before he could they were in the mouth of Ardley tunnel, and Michael couldn't see him for soot and steam. After much effort, the reverser was re-positioned, by which time they were halfway through the tunnel – it was an experience neither man forgot.

We coasted gently towards the halt at Milton, which was on the down side of the line, and stopped briefly for the ganger to alight. Shortly after restarting from Milton – about a ¼-mile beyond on the up side – we passed the derelict engine shed on the site of the extensive sidings of the Bloxham Ironstone Co., which closed in 1929. The line of the workings ran northwards from the centre of the sidings. As we rolled past the far end of the site, I could see the start of a cutting, at the far end of which was Bloxham Station.

Having covered three-quarters of the length of the half-mile cutting, we approached the single-arch bridge carrying the Bloxham to Barford road, and through the arch I could see the Bloxham home signal, which was off, with a lattice work footbridge carrying a right of way immediately behind it. Beyond the footbridge, the black-painted girder bridge carrying the Banbury to Chipping Norton road came into sight as we curved gently round to the right. We eased through the facing point onto the double-track section, under the girder bridge and continued on the gentle right-hand curve into Bloxham Station.

As we ran into Bloxham station, the 'Bobby' left his box to met us at the far end of the platform, took the staff from me, and told the guard what work was required in the yard. Bloxham possessed a small goods shed on the up side, with its road extended in each direction to serve a dock at the west end of the

Bloxham station, located at the south-western limit of the village, looking east towards Adderbury. The Banbury and Chipping Norton road crossed the railway on the girder overbridge beyond the platform, the fourth bridge to cross the line from Adderbury within a short distance. The single line staff set down and pick-up posts (and the lamp post) can be seen at the far end of the up platform, in front of the bridge L & GRP

passenger station, and to form a headshunt at the Kingham end. A single siding, the coal road, ran behind the shed, although another, serving the Clay Cross Ironstone Co., had diverged from that.

The five-plank open with the sheeted load was destined for the goods shed, and we learnt that one of the wagons on the coal road was empty (needless to say, it was the inside one), and therefore had to come out. We planned to pick up the empty coal wagon on the way back, so we had to position it for ease of access. The best place for it was on the Banbury end of the goods shed road, but putting it there was another matter, as there was already a van on that road, which would have to be moved first. This involved a number of movements between the goods shed and coal road, running in from the Kingham end of the yard.

The guard cut off behind the Bloxham wagon and sent us forward, and with a quick look at the signal to see that we had the road, we pulled down over the points onto the single line until the guard stopped us. He walked over to the hand points in the yard and set them for the goods shed, and we waited for the main to yard dummy to come off. When it did, the guard called us back onto the goods shed road and we picked up the van standing there. We then moved forward with the five-plank and the van to clear the point, backed into the coal

The goods shed at Bloxham, looking towards Hook Norton. Under the postwar 'zonal' system of delivery and collection, small consignments of goods were handled by lorries from the sub-railhead at Banbury rather than by the 'station truck' system to individual stations. In 1939, such traffic was conveyed by 'roadside' wagons from Banbury and Hockley to the four main stations on the branch by the down (10.40am Banbury) stopping goods, and in wagons for Hockley and from Paddington on the return (6.52pm Kingham) goods. Coll S BOLAN

road and picked up the two coal wagons. We then pulled forward past the point with the four vehicles, and backed into the goods shed road again, putting off the (now leading) empty coal wagon on it. After moving forward again over the point, we reversed with the five-plank, van and the half empty wagon, placing the latter back on the coal road where the coal merchant could finish unloading it. We then pulled up to the 'top' (throat) of the coal road and cut off the van on it, leaving the vehicle just clear of the goods shed road. Next, we backed onto the goods shed road again with the five plank open, uncoupled it and left it clear of the coal road. Back then to the coal road for the box van, which we coupled onto and moved forward clear of the point. We then reversed the van onto the goods shed road, coupled to and pushed the 5-plank and then the empty wagon all through the goods shed until the empty coal wagon was on the Banbury side of the building. Having pinned down the hand brake, the empty was cut off and we pulled the van and the five-plank into the goods shed, where the latter was secured and left. The box van was then pulled outside of the goods shed at the Kingham end and left, secured, where it was found.

That was all the work we had to do then at Bloxham, and with the dummy off, we ran out of the goods shed road and through onto the single track, where we stopped. There was no dummy for setting back onto the down main through the station, but the signalman pulled off the starting signal, which confirmed that the points were locked in the 'down' position, and the guard called us back onto our train and coupled up, calling 'next parish' to us.

The Bloxham 'Bobby' walked towards us with the staff for the section to 'Hooky', and I strolled back to meet him to shorten his walk. By the time I had walked back to the engine and climbed on to the footplate, the advanced starting signal was off and we were 'right away' Hook Norton with seven wagons and the brake van.

The Kingham branch climbed all the way from Adderbury to Rollright Halt, varying between 1 in 180 and 1 in 100, with the steepest part between Council Hill Siding and Rollright, although I always got the impression that the steepest part was from Milcombe going towards Hook Norton as it enters the Cotswolds proper. With our light load, it didn't present us with any problems.

Passing through a cutting, we ran along the northern edge of the village of Milcombe (which didn't have a station because it was too close to Bloxham) as the line climbed more steeply towards Hook Norton.

At the top of the bank, near the village of Wigginton, we passed the stop board for freight trains travelling in the up direction, the location at which wagon brakes were pinned down to increase the braking power on trains descending towards Bloxham. Although the incline was not that steep (1 in 100) when compared to some, it did continue for 2¼ miles.

Hook Norton, looking towards Bloxham. The Brymbo kilns (at the site of Council Hill Sidings) can be seen on the right, just under a mile from Hook Norton station. SRM/JHR

A very short 10.10am Banbury to Kingham goods arriving at Hook Norton behind the inevitable '43XX' class 2-6-0, in this instance Banbury's No. 5361, c.1950. This picture shows the signalman collecting the Bloxham section staff from the fireman as the train coasted gently towards the station, rather than having to walk to the set-down post at the opposite end of the station site. The crew on the engine may have been Engineman George Gardner and Fireman Tommy Burton, both of Banbury shed. Trains entering the running loops from the single line at Hook Norton were subject to a 25mph restriction, though that did usually trouble us unduly on the goods. S.R.M./J.H.R.

After another mile, we passed the site of the extensive Brymbo Ironstone Works on our left, which I believe were called Council Hill Sidings, where ironstone from the Hook Norton quarries was loaded before being sent to the Brymbo Steelworks, near Wrexham. The site had comprised four calcining kilns, fed from the extensive quarries by narrow gauge tramways which arrived at the site from both sides of our own line. Standard gauge trackwork had descended westwards into the works, with three or four sidings at the entrance, and more around the calcining apparatus further inside the site. Access to the sidings had been by means of a key attached to the electric train staff for the section, and work there was apparently carried out with the aid of a shunter from Hook Norton.

We travelled about half-a-mile around a left-hand bend, and with Hook Norton down home signal off, we entered the station's double-track section before rumbling across the bridge over the Bloxham to Hook Norton road, which had run closely alongside the line since leaving Milcombe, and eased into the down platform of Hook Norton station. The running loops through the station had been extended in the early years of the century, possibly to accommodate the crossing of traffic with the new Swansea & Newcastle expresses that were introduced at that time. I believe that the signal box had also changed location twice, tied in with the opening of the sidings on the south side of the station, and again with the extension of the running loops after the closure of the quarry network. The first box was apparently located on the down side, just off the southern end of the platform, whilst the second was actually on the down platform, to the 'Chippy' side of the small waiting shelter. The final position was at the Banbury end of the up platform, where I remember it.

To be continued.

This account first appeared in 'The Great Western Railway Journal', No. 23, Summer 1997. We are most grateful to the Editor, John Copsey, and to its author, Michael Clifton, for their enthusiastic agreement to its republication in this local rather than railway-orientated context. We also thank the copyright owners of the illustrations, who are acknowledged in the captions.

The text is not quite identical with that appearing in 'G.W.R.J' 23, as we were supplied with a disc which had been subsequently edited in minor ways. Our text is therefore closer to Mr Clifton's original. It is a long article, and further parts will appear in our next two issues. However, 'G.W.R.J.' 23 is still in print, so the whole article with more and better reproduced illustrations can still be acquired from Wild Swan Publications Ltd., 1-3 Hagbourne Road, Didcot, Oxon. OX11 8DP, for £5.00 including postage and packing.

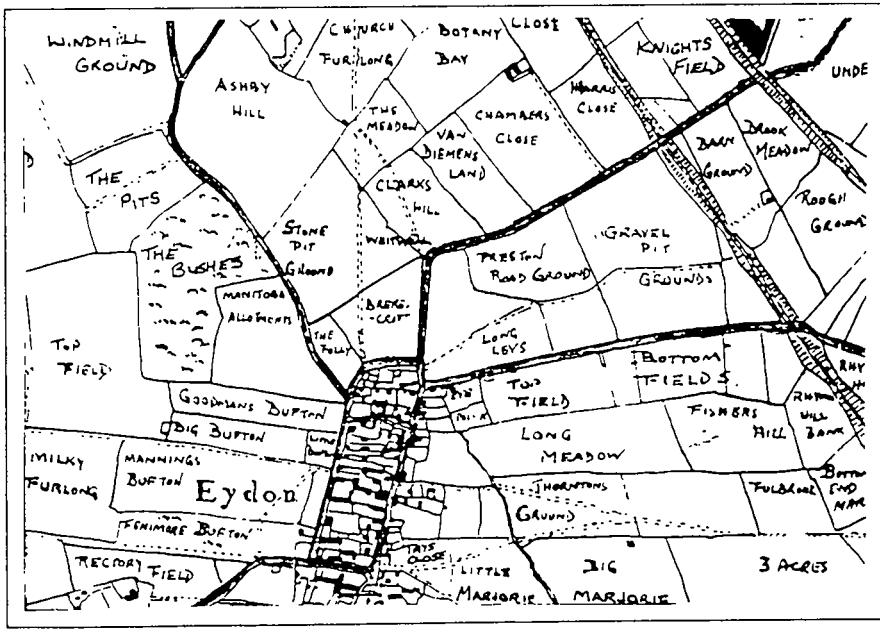
EYDON FIELD NAMES

Christine Howes

The study of field names is interesting for many reasons. They offer some evidence of what was present when the names were given, and they can tell us the history of the land over the intervening years. We can see, for example, what kind of crops were grown, the conditions of the land itself, whether it was stony, hilly or wet, and they tell us the names of those who owned and worked the land.

In 1932, the school in Eydon drew up a parish map on pieces of tracing paper with most of the field names marked on it. This was then printed as one big map, but the original one can still be seen in Northamptonshire Record Office. It is interesting to compare it with a modern map to see whether the field boundaries have changed (by and large they haven't much) and it gives a starting list for Eydon's field names.

Obviously, over time, the field names get changed, either because the old ones get forgotten, or because new owners want to show that the land is now theirs. Also, the spelling gets changed as successive generations of clerks write down legal documents and charters and base the spelling on the way that the words



Part of the 1932 Field Map of Eydon

now sound to them. For instance, in 1281, a name is written as 'Fulbrok', in 1767 as 'Fulbrooke' and in 1932 as Fulbrook. Many of Eydon's field names were introduced after the Inclosure Act of 1762 when the new owners were allocated parcels of land. Many therefore include people's names, for example, Ashby's Low Field, Iven's Meadow, Shaw's Hill, Smith's Close and so on.

Many of our field names end in generic words like 'Close' and 'Piece', which came into the English language from the French in the Middle Ages, and are often used to describe a parcel of land, for example, Chambers Close, New Piece, Tays Close and so on. 'Ground' often refers to large pasture fields and in Eydon 'Grundes' is mentioned as early as 1281. We have Barn Ground, Bush Ground, Far Hill Ground, Old Ploughed Ground and many others.

'Furlong' literally meant 'the length of a furrow', but later developed separate meanings. It was either used as a linear measurement, or a division of a common field in which furrows lie in the same direction. In Eydon we have 'Church Furlong' and 'Ridgey Furlong'.

Some fields that were created after Inclosure in 1762 are named 'Allotment', hence 'Allotment Gardens' and 'Manitoba Allotments'. Manitoba is a province in Canada that was won by the British from the French in 1763.

'Yard' is another common name, which comes from the Old English 'geard', and was used to describe small enclosures especially those near dwellings, or with specialised uses. For example, we have 'Brickyard', and 'Hopyard', which was presumably used for the growing of hops for local consumption! 'Meadow' means a grassland that is mown for hay, so there is Brook Meadow, Hunts Meadow and so on.

Some of the names in Eydon date back to before medieval times, and there are lovely names like 'Barchimore' meaning 'barley-spring marsh' and 'Bretch' (written as 'La Brech' in 1200) meaning land broken up for tillage. There are other names recorded in the twelfth century which do not appear on the modern map, like 'Bearman Furlong' (written 'Bealmunt' in the twelfth century and 'Belemound' in 1313) meaning a 'fine hill'. Also named are Oathill (Otehill), Ruwell (Riewelle), Stanchill (Stanithulles) meaning 'stony hills', and Whethill (Whitehull).

Some names indicate their geographical position in the parish, for example, 'The Mere' and 'March' both mean 'land on the boundary'. 'Lands End', 'New Zealand', 'Van Diemans Land' (the original name for Tasmania) and 'Botany Bay' are all fields that are a distance from the village and their names imply remoteness. One field called 'Bunker's Hill' is named after a famous battle in the American War of Independence in 1775. It became quite a popular name, and many fields across the country were named 'Bunkers Hill' presumably by way of celebration for a rare British victory!

'Bufton' or 'Bove Town' means 'land above the village', and, leading away from Lime Avenue up the hill, there is a group of fields called 'Goodmans Bufton', 'Big Bufton', 'Little Bufton', 'Mannings Bufton' and 'Fenimore Bufton'. Manning and Goodman are the names of the people who once farmed those fields.

There are also some fields towards West Farndon named 'Ham', for example, 'Penny Ham' and 'Mill Ham'. A 'hamm' was an enclosure near water, particularly in the bend of a river, and these fields nestle against the banks of the Cherwell.

Other names are interesting because they show the different activities that occurred in the fields. These include names like Dairy Ground, Brickyard Meadow, Sheep Pen Ground and Stone Pit Ground. Two of the fields are named in relation to other villages. Trafford Field reminds us of the now abandoned medieval hamlet of Trafford that lies on the parish boundary between Eydon and Chipping Warden at a point where two streams meet. Warden Road Ground is on the road (now a bridle way) to Chipping Warden. This was the road that the villagers took when they travelled to Banbury, and it has all the signs of once being a Roman road, that perhaps led to the Roman villa at Edgcote.

So, it is apparent that just by looking at the Field Names, it is quite possible to build up a fairly accurate picture of the nature of Eydon's farmland. Geographically, it is described as hilly (Barnish Hill, Grange Hill, Bank Piece – meaning land on a slope), and so on. It has gravel pits, stone pits and a mill – Mill Close, Mill Meadow. There are streams as in Brook Meadow and the 'Hams', and water – New Well, Whitwell and Bottom End Marsh. It is thinly wooded, there is only one 'Wood Close', but several names describing bushy scrub land, 'Bush Brake', 'Bush Ground' and 'The Bushes'. It has many pasture fields supplying hay – all those names ending in 'ground' and 'meadow', and names like 'Dairy Ground' and 'Sheep Pen Ground' telling us that the land was good for keeping livestock. The field names tell us a little bit about the people too: for example, we can tell that they grew barley ('Barchimore' and 'Brerecroft'). After the Inclosure, although the church still owned some land, 'Church Furlong' and 'Rectory Field', many people owned their own fields (Ashby, Fisher, Goodman, Gibbs), and so on, too. Finally, we can tell that as some of the names are Anglo-Saxon, this land has been farmed for a very long time.

Sources

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Note. For pre-inclosure Eydon's fields, see David Hall, *The Open Fields of Northamptonshire*, Northamptonshire Record Society, vol. 38, 1992, 'Eydon', p. 263.

This article is reprinted, by kind permission, from *Graffiti, Pigs and Old Lace! – Tales from Old Eydon*, Eydon Historical Research Group, 1998 (see pp.183-4).

Lecture Reports

Brian Little

Thursday 14th October 1999.

***'Birmingham's Jewellery Quarter'* – Ken Hughes**

Ken Hughes, pathologist turned blue badge guide, will long be remembered by those who were fortunate enough to hear his account of Birmingham's Jewellery Quarter. Second stop on the new Metro service from Snow Hill, this area still fascinates even though its origin in silver plating has been blurred by a range of other activities. The story of these came across with infectious enthusiasm and gusto.

The Colemores were instrumental in setting out this part of Birmingham in the guise of a late 1400's housing estate. A pattern of streets emerged across what was essentially Green Belt. Each street carried the Christian name of a member of the family. The accompanying town houses were both large and small and it was these that saw conversion to workshops by the early 1800's.

Jewellery making arrived in the mid-nineteenth century – a time of gold rush activity as well as prosperity for the British Empire. Into the various workshops came craftsmen prepared to be involved in different processes. Visitors to today's Jewellery Quarter will find as many as ten workshops per house with much inter-dependence. However, a former over-all 70,000 workforce has scaled down to between 5,000 and 6,000.

Another good reason for visiting this part of Birmingham is to savour the unique architecture which reflects the phases of growth and which is recognised in the establishment of four conservation zones. Very special buildings emerged which were crucial to the area, namely the Assay Office and the School of Jewellery in Vittoria Street, dating from 1890. With the growth of technical education this school claimed its place and is now part of the University of Central England.

The future is perhaps a little uncertain. Gomm's badges are now part of local memories but if all else fails the development of a Discovery Centre at Digbeth will ensure the survival of Ken's story which future audiences will enjoy every bit as much as B.H.S. members in October 1999.

Thursday 11th November 1999.

***'Chastleton House'* – Mike Hemming**

This was more than overview, it was a sympathetic and sensitive appraisal of a property by a custodian whose roots seemed firmly established.

Given the surrounding area's long history of occupation it is no surprise to learn of a succession of owners. Two names especially shine out of the years before 1700, namely Chaucer and Catesby. The latter family had Guy Fawkes connections and conveyed Chastleton to Walter Jones. Was this money the means of providing gunpowder?

Sadly little is known about the Catesby property and in any case it was demolished by Walter Jones to make way for a new home for a new dynasty. His design ideas were to exploit the central courtyard and so permit rooms with a view.

Even in its new format, Chastleton was still a rural backwater in which small farmsteads predominated, with the odd detached feature such as a dovecote of 1762.

The house of Jones incorporated Jacobean symmetry with the staircases embedded in towers. The problem from then onwards was maintenance – always a struggle for this family with its Royalist sympathies. However, it must be said that the history of the house reveals more success for women than for men. Characteristic of this trend in more recent times has been Mrs Clutton Brock whose twentieth century time in the house was marked by a preponderence of cats. By the 1990s it was storm damage not cat ravages that encouraged her to sell. Cue for the National Trust entry on the scene. From 1991 their central task was to get the property watertight.

This necessitated next best to a miltary operation as the house was in poor shape. Dealing with central heating meant a scrounge for radiators even from railway stations!

Beyond the house, gardens range from formal topiary to utter wilderness. Within this setting, a rare lily survives and space for croquet is seen as a cradle area for that game.

With no shop, no tea room and very little traffic, Chastleton does well to achieve some 20,000 visitors a year – seen as manageable. They come to view restored rooms and walk across the gardens of a fine English stately home. The memory of Mrs Clutton Brock lives on but now she is all but 90 and down to two cats!

Book Reviews

The Changing Faces of Grimsbury, by Brian Little (96pp., illustrated), Witney: Robert Boyd Publications, 1999, £8.50 (available from bookshops or direct from R.B.P., 260 Colwell Drive, Witney OX8 7LW – add £1.50 for p&p).

This is a cheery collection of anecdotes and pictures, mixed in with a few original sources. The author admits that his objective is not to write an exhaustive history of Banbury's eastern suburb but to highlight personalities who have contributed to a distinctive environment. He succeeds in that aim, and also produces an entertaining book which is more than just entertainment. Much of the material is unavailable elsewhere, and anyone with a serious interest in Banbury's history will need a copy for their library.

The photographs are full of interest and are well-reproduced. Some of the more memorable are those of Dr Dwyer's chauffeur at the wheel of a magnificent vehicle parked in Middleton Road, William Paxman from Lismore in Ireland and his son Dick presiding over their butter-blending business in South Street, the fine horse cart from which J. Adkins and Sons sold fruit and vegetables in the 1930s, and an Edwardian postcard of the shops along Middleton Road. From reminiscences we learn how Dr Dwyer obtained his chauffeur, although not how he managed to do so at the height of World War I. We discover how Banbury Twenty Club was formed, and what it was like to live in the Causeway and Merton Street when the cattle market was at its busiest. We learn a little of many small businesses, corner shops, bakeries, garages, pubs and the Lido on Middleton Road, and some larger ones including Lamprey's brickworks in Duke Street and the Cold Store alongside the marshalling yard in Old Grimsbury. Changes in schools and churches are duly recorded, and it is commendable that due attention is given to the Sikh and Pakistani communities which have settled in Grimsbury in the last four decades.

It could nevertheless have been a much better book. The building developments of the mid-nineteenth century which established present-day Grimsbury are not well explained. Some interesting original sources are quoted, but they are not fully digested, and a straightforward account with dates of the establishment of the Freehold Land Society and the development of its estate would have been a better introduction for the reader unfamiliar with the details of Banbury's nineteenth century history than the quotes from deeds and sale notices, however interesting the latter may be. There are many places where the reader will wish for an editorial insertion of a date or an identity. When an interviewee says that the Mill House was occupied by 'a man called Field', the author might be expected to provide from directory evidence a more precise

identification, and the interesting and important identification of the developer who built the Fergusson Road estate from 1937 is buried in a paragraph on motor cycle racing. A chapter on the prominent Lester, Webb and Stroud families does not compare well with the splendidly informative published reminiscences of Marjorie Lester.* Above all the book is ridden with spelling errors: - 'Lamely Fisher' for Lamley Fisher on p.13, 'Surey' for Storey on p.20, 'Hopecraft & Norris' for Hopcraft & Norris on p.28, 'Guiness' for Guinness on p.29, 'Winn' for Wynne on p.53 and 'Sunlock' for Sunloch - twice mis-spelt on p.39 although the correct spelling appears on a reproduced document. The list does not claim to be definitive. Careful proof-reading might also have raised a query about the extent of the brickworks between Duke Street and Causeway – more than 3,000 acres seems rather excessive!

Much more could have been written about Grimsbury, but the author's ambitions and the space available to him were limited. He has largely succeeded in his purpose, and one might urge a sequel, but at the same time hope that it might be rather better edited and proof-read.

Barrie Trinder
University College Northampton

Memories of Banbury: an illustrated record of an Oxfordshire childhood*: and *These Golden Years: an illustrated record of an Oxfordshire market town from the 1930s*: both by Marjorie Lester, 1986 and 1992 (privately published). The latter is most relevant to Grimsbury. Reviewed in *C&CH*.12**.4 (Autumn 1992).

Banbury Past and Present (Britain in Old Photographs), by Malcolm Graham and Laurence Waters (144pp., illustrated), Sutton Publishing and Oxfordshire Books, 1999, £9.99 (available from bookshops or direct from Sutton Publishing Ltd., Phoenix Mill, Thrupp, Stroud, Glos. GL5 2BU – add £1.50 for p&p).

This book is part of the series 'Britain in Old Photographs', and follows the standard Sutton format of full or half page black and white photographs with concise captions. The old photographs are largely drawn from the collection in the Oxfordshire County Council photographic archive, while the modern ones which show what the same places look like today are specially taken by Laurence Waters.

The book is divided into nine sections: Introduction; Banbury Cross and the Market Place; High Street and Bridge Street; Castle Street and Southam Road; Old Town Hall Wharf and Calthorpe Manor; South Bar and Easington; Neithrop and Ruscot; Canal and Railway; and Grimsbury and Nethercote.

The book concentrates on buildings rather than people, and the captions explain the developments and changes over the years, including some recent changes such as photographs of White Lion Walk taken ten years apart. There

are some wonderful photographs, for example Bartlett's taxidermists, *c.*1910, and the old Town Hall rebuilt in Lower Cherwell Street, and some fascinating kitchen interiors in Springfield Avenue, although here it would have been interesting to know what sort of people lived in the houses.

There are some curious omissions, perhaps because of lack of readily available photographs, such as the Samuelson's works which were so vital to the Banbury economy of the late 19th century, and Midland Marts, once the largest stock market in Europe, which has recently closed, and there are few detailed photographs of shop facades. There is a tendency to show places that have changed rather than stayed the same, so there is no photograph of St. Mary's church. It would also have been useful to have a map of Banbury to show the location of the various streets mentioned, and perhaps a bibliography.

However, these are only minor quibbles; there is much to be learnt from the photographs, and the book is full of interest, well researched and written, with excellent quality photographs. It is fascinating to see old and current photographs juxtaposed, and it will be of interest to all who love Banbury.

Christine Bloxham

The Warwickshire Scandal, by Elizabeth Hamilton (xiv, 450pp.), Michael Russell (Publishing) Ltd., 1999.

I was given this book by one of my oldest friends and a long-term member of our Society, and its author is another member of long-standing. So I embarked on it with a sense of duty. Forty-eight hours later I reluctantly reached its last page, except that I then enjoyed reading the 'Notes', which are sadly at the end of the volume rather than in their proper place as footnotes on the relevant page.

I think that is my only significant criticism of a totally absorbing book.

It is a story of what is now a totally unimaginable world of aristocratic wealth, privilege, and manipulation of law courts and 'expert' medical evidence.

Sir Charles Mordaunt was the wealthy 30-year old owner of several estates, with his principal residence at Walton Hall between Kineton and Wellesbourne. He wanted a wife, and the aristocratic but impecunious Moncreiffe family had a surplus of pretty daughters. So enthusiastic was Sir Charles that he agreed to his young wife seeing whoever she wanted, whilst he went off on his shooting, hunting and fishing, and occasional Member of Parliament, interests. She took full advantage of this, being visited in her London salon by various admirers of whom the most notable was the Prince of Wales (later Edward VII).

In due course she found herself pregnant, whilst her husband had been abroad for months. She then became terrified that the child, whose father could have been one of several, might be infected by 'the disease'. When she eventually gave birth, whilst still in Warwickshire, rather safely back in London where her doctor might have disposed of the child as 'still-born', she hysterically

'confessed' to several unreliable confidants, and to her husband. But for this confession, he would have accepted the child. As it was, he determined on divorce. Then her father arrived, and to prevent such an action, and its financial consequences, he persuaded her to act as if she was mad, and therefore not to be responsible for her statements.

The treatment she was subsequently treated to effectively achieved this object. A young and perhaps nymphomaniac girl was pressured into insanity by an aloof husband and financially motivated parents. An horrendous lawsuit followed, which did indeed eventually end in divorce and her lapse in total insanity. But her daughter was brought up by the Moncreiffe family and in due course married the heir to the Marquis of Bath.

J.G.

Aspects of Helmdon. No. 3. Helmdon Branch W.E.A., 1999. A5, 52 pp. £3.50 (payable to W.E.A. Helmdon Branch, from Mrs A.L. Harwood, The Old Bakehouse, 44 Church Street, Helmdon, Northants NN13 5QJ).

The third volume in this series consists of four articles.

The first is a record of the forty years that have passed since the Helmdon Branch of the W.E.A. was established in 1959. Audrey Harwood records the development of the branch, highlighting the commitment of individuals whose dedication and hard work enabled so many courses to be run: an informative article for those who are unaware of the work of the W.E.A. and a tribute to past and present members of the Helmdon Branch.

Next is a clinical review of the history of Helmdon Primary School by G. Ipgrave (Headmaster 1957-1978), based on school logbooks, managerial correspondence and personal recollection, dealing with different aspects of the school over its long history. In this, Mr Ipgrave has reflected the development of English education through the dual system of Church and State. Its foundation in 1852 was led by the Church, it became a board school in 1870 giving local control, and a county school in 1902. The development of the school curriculum from the slates and three R's of the past to the present National Curriculum is well illustrated.

A Victorian lifestyle conjures up pictures of outside toilets, no running water, oil lamps etc. This continued at Helmdon School well into this century: electricity arrived in 1947, running water and flush toilets in the middle '50s, indoor toilets and a telephone in 1975. The article records the introduction and demise of initiatives that improved the facilities at the school, the small schools project, and a kitchen. Mr Ipgrave brings out the increasing use of technology in the school over the past thirty years, from the school radio to computers and videos. He himself was the bridge between the limited education available in the first part of this century and the wider opportunities of today. It is an article that should be read with interest by all concerned with the school and its development.

The third article, 'Wine and Flowers', is an account and record of the wild flowers found along the old railway in Helmdon and wines that were made from them by Mrs Nancy Wheeler to July Cairns. It contains an interesting list of flowers and a plea for a present day check list to be made.

The final article consists of the childhood recollections of Marjorie Watson (neé Gulliver) at Grange Farm, Helmdon, after the first world war – a record of a way of life that has passed for today's children.

The work is well illustrated by W. Watson and is a testament to the members of the W.E.A. at Helmdon.

Allan Hawkins

Allan Hawkins' article on neighbouring Croughton School appeared in *C&CH*.**13**.6/7.

Graffiti, Pigs and Old Lace! – Tales from Old Eydon (A5, 48pp.). Eydon Historical Research Group. vol.1, Sept. 1998. Available from Mrs Leila Leeson, 12 Moreton Road, Eydon, Daventry, Northants NN11 (£4.00 incl.p&p).

On pp.174-6 we have (by permission) been allowed to reprint Christine Howes' article on field names, which in our view is a model to inspire other *really* local historians not only to get their boots muddy but also to get their fingers grubby on documents in their county record offices (unless, of course, they're forced to don cotton gloves).

This is an outstanding example of what village history societies, allied to modern technology, can produce of lasting value. It is divided into three sections. The first is 'Geography' – street names, field names (reprinted here), who lived where, and 'The writing on the wall' (hence the 'graffiti' of the title). The second is 'Events': the Enclosure Act (1761), the 'Great Fire' (1905), and 'The Mystery of the Missing Children', a census-based analysis of mobile families.

The third section is called 'Occupations and Activities'. This covers the pig club (1940-54), lace making (1841-91), steam threshing (early C.20), the 'United Brothers' (1867-1945), and a very entertaining piece on political activity from 1884 on. This starts with a useful analysis of the census records in relationship to the newly enfranchised agricultural labourers, and their actual appearance on the electoral registers. Whilst the Daventry/South Northamptonshire consituency consistently returned Conservatives (except for Liberal successes in 1892 and 1906) there were close contests. Reginald Manningham-Buller, one of the best-known of the constituency's M.P.'s, won his seat in July 1945 by only 1,170 votes. Confusingly, the caption to his photo. says he was M.P. from 1948! In 1962 he became Lord Chancellor and his successor only scraped home by 917 votes. Earlier the Rt. Hon. E.A. Fitzroy, member for Daventry, had been Speaker before the Second World War (dying in office in 1943). Reg. Prentice was a Labour M.P. who switched sides and was elected as a Conservative in 1979 and 1983. Perhaps more entertaining than these political

on-the-makes is the nitty-gritty of local influence: in 1949 Lord Brand donated a bottle of gin to the AGM tombola. Two years later it was minuted, 'the secretary to ask Lord Brand if he would like to give a bottle of something'.

Three features of this publication are particularly to be commended. Where relevant, articles end with a list of sources. The centre page spread has a map of the village, identifying places mentioned in the text of various articles. ***And there is an Index.*** Congratulations to the editors/compliers, the Eydon H.R.G.

Who are: Helen Doe, Tony Elliot, Christine Howes, David Kench, Leila Leeson, Kevin Lodge and Robert Manton.

J.G.

Wychwood Forest and its Border Places, by John Kibble (116 pp.). The Wychwood Press, 1999. £7.50.

Wychwood Forest, a major medieval royal hunting forest, occupied a large portion of Oxfordshire, from Woodstock to Chipping Norton, to Witney and Burford. John Kibble's book was first published in 1928, and has long been out of print, so it is good to see this new version, which is unaltered apart from typographical corrections, with an introduction by Roy Townsend, chairman of the Finstock Historical Society.

John Kibble was a local stonemason who was fascinated by the area, collecting all the information he could about it. The book is not a straight history, but a series of snippets about the area, covering aspects of the history of Wychwood Forest, as disparate as hunting, poaching stories, customs and folklore, how oaks from the forest were part of the booty Philip of Spain wanted brought back when he sent the ill-fated Spanish Armada in his attempt to defeat Elizabeth I, and notes about local schools.

The second section on Forest Places has information and stories about the villages around the forest area, including Leafield and its pottery, Burford, Minster Lovell and the Mistletoe Bough, the house and church at Stanton Harcourt, Stonesfield and its stone slate industry.

It is the sort of book to pick up and browse through, and contains much information on folklore and social history often omitted from local history books.

Christine Bloxham

BANBURY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The Banbury Historical 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 and 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. Well over a hundred issues and some three hundred articles have been published. Most back issues are still available and out-of-print issues can if required be photocopied.

Publications still in print include:

Old Banbury - a short popular history, by E.R.C. Brinkworth.
The Building and Furnishing of St. Mary's Church, Banbury.
The Globe Room at the Reindeer Inn, Banbury.

Records series:

Wigginton Constables' Books 1691-1836 (vol. 11, with Phillimore).
Banbury Wills and Inventories 1591-1650, 2 parts (vols. 13, 14).
Victorian Banbury, by Barrie Trinder (vol. 19, with Phillimore).
Aynho: A Northamptonshire Village, by Nicholas Cooper (vol. 20).
Banbury Gaol Records, ed. Penelope Renold (vol. 21).
Banbury Baptism and Burial Registers, 1813-1838 (vol. 22).
Oxfordshire and North Berkshire Protestation Returns and Tax Assessments 1641-1642 (vol. 24).
Adderbury: A Thousand years of History, by Nicholas Allen (vol. 25, with Phillimore – now reprinted).
The 'Bawdy Court' of Banbury: The Act Book of the Peculiar Court of Banbury and Cropredy 1625-38, ed. R.K. Gilkes (vol. 26).

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In preparation:

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Selections from the *Diaries of William Cotton Risley, Vicar of Deddington 1836-1848.*

The Society is always interested to receive suggestions of records suitable for publication, backed by offers of help with transcription, editing and indexing.

Meetings are held during the autumn and winter, normally at 7.30 p.m. on the second Thursday of each month, at the North Oxfordshire College, Broughton Road, Banbury. Talks are given by invited lecturers on general and local historical, archaeological and architectural subjects. Excursions are arranged in the spring and summer, and the A.G.M. is usually held at a local country house.

Membership of the Society is open to all, no proposer being needed. The annual subscription is **£10.00** including any records volumes published, or **£7.50** if these are not required; overseas membership, **£12.00.**

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