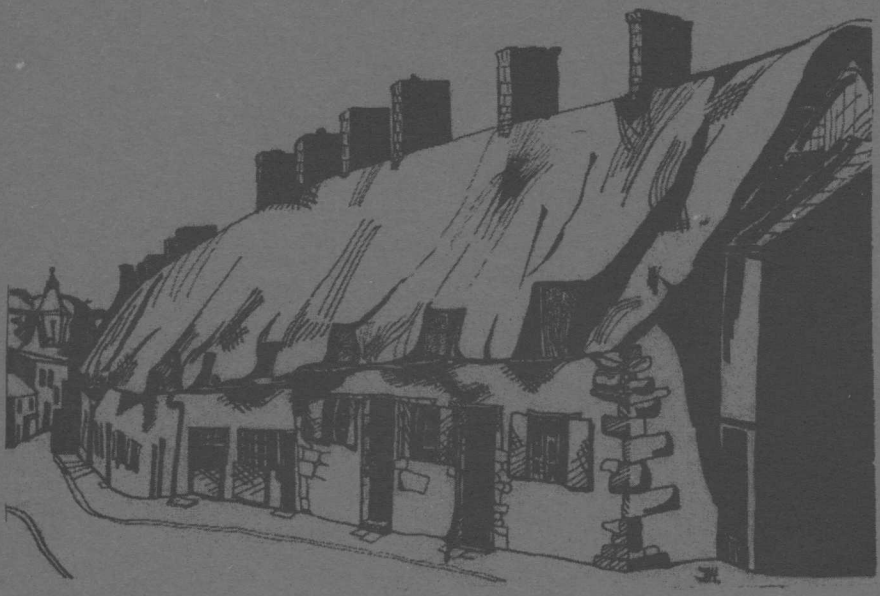
# CAKE AND COCKHORSE



## BANBURY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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# BANBURY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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**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 16** **Number Four** **Autumn/Winter 2004**



Assiduous readers of the inside cover of our journal will have noticed some changes in committee personnel. After many years as Chairman, Brian Little has moved sideways into the office of 'Research Adviser', a post first created for our co-founder Ted Brinkworth. Brian's contributions to the *Banbury Guardian* mean that for long he has been identified as 'Mr Banbury History', so no one could be more appropriate to fill this office.

In his place our Committee is now chaired by Deborah Hayter, already well-known to members from her talks to the Society and her inspiring tutoring at a number of local history courses in Banburyshire.

Kay Smith, a long-serving member, and the only one of us on the committee to be been Banbury born and bred, has stood down,. Her current-Banbury-orientated attitude has always been a salutory reminder that history stopped (temporarily) yesterday, and was not something only years or centuries past.

In her place we welcome Chris Day. He too will be familiar to members from talks and tutoring local history courses. Formerly on the staff of the *Victoria County History (Oxfordshire)* he was much involved with Vol. XI, *Wootton Hundred (North)*, which covers the area from Woodstock north to Deddington (where appropriately he now lives).

*Cover:* Houses in Hobley's Lane, Neithrop, very similar to those in Rag Row (p.144).

# BANBURY
## in
# THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES CATALOGUE

*Jone Garmendia*

Did you know you can access over nine and a half million historical document descriptions within minutes using The National Archives online catalogue on the internet? Less than five years ago you would have had to visit Kew and trawl through a hundred metres of paper lists to search for documents from central government, courts of law and other UK national bodies.

The majority of our users (70% of both physical and remote visitors) are interested in family history but records in the catalogue may refer to a variety of other subjects including medieval tax, criminal trials, UFO sightings, atomic energy, Prime Minister's papers or the history of many countries.

Almost seven million searches have been carried out on the Catalogue (formerly PROCAT) since its launch in 2001. Most of these searches have been triggered by family historians from the USA, the United Kingdom, Australia and Canada. Everybody can access the Catalogue over the internet at http://www.catalogue.nationalarchives.gov.uk (remember that it is not necessary to have a reader's ticket or to sign in to use it). Although the Search and Browse screens are the most widely used, first time users should not miss the Research Guides screen, as it provides a means of searching the content of a variety of guides (formerly known as information leaflets). The guides contain specific advice that can be applied when using the Search or Browse screens in the Catalogue.

A great part of the catalogue data comes from the old paper lists (*Class Lists)*, the *PRO Guide* and information leaflets. Bear in mind that improved and new descriptions are being loaded onto the Catalogue daily at the staggering rate of 24,000 entries per week! These new descriptions are the result of two processes: the transfer of new records from government departments and the cataloguing work being carried out by staff at The National Archives. If you would like to know more about current cataloguing projects and the process that we follow to enhance the Catalogue, consult the 'About' pages from the Catalogue welcome page.

The internet has unearthed an amazing wealth of sources to family and local historians but it has also presented some interesting challenges. For instance, free text searching sometimes delivers wonderful gifts in the form of unexpected results that represent a real break-through in our research. On the other hand, we have to learn to handle the sheer amount of irrelevant hits that databases may return when we search for common family or place names. Using the Catalogue search screen, users can avoid the retrieval of spelling variations and retrieve only exact matches of a term by enclosing it with double quotes (e.g. "Stephens" will not find Stephen). It is also possible to use dates or to restrict searches to parts of the catalogue in order to narrow down your searches further.

Internet searching may become a time-consuming affair, as initially we tend not to trust search engines fully and may end up running similar searches with the purpose of comparing the number of results in order to verify the reliability of the source database (e.g. test searches for the same keywords with and without quotes, with and without dates, etc.). When we search for the term Banbury in The National Archives Catalogue, the system delivers 1,311 catalogue references but when we search for its exact spelling using double quotes 1,303 references are returned.[1] This is in fact quite encouraging as the small discrepancy is due to the fact that the initial search for Banbury also retrieves the form Banburye.

It should also be mentioned that the Topic Index screen (accessible under 'show advanced search options'), provides a different means of searching for place names. A large selection of personal names, corporate names, subjects and places have been verified and linked to the most relevant areas of the catalogue, as part of the cataloguing process. They provide special access points into the catalogue. This type of search does not find every occurrence of a term (as the free text search does) but it is most useful to limit the number of search results to a few references for the richest parts of the catalogue about a term. For example, a Topic Index search for Banbury only retrieves the four whole record series relevant to this place (rather than broader instances where the term may appear as a person's surname or as a place in other contexts).

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[1] Some readers may notice that, when this article was first published in the April 2004 issue of the *Oxfordshire Family Historian*, there were 1,293 hits for this search.

## Results summary:

Refine search >

You ran a search on **"Banbury"**.
There are **1311** results within the Catalogue, grouped below by department. Click on a number under the results column to confine your search.

**Catalogue:**

page 1 2 3 4

| Catalogue Reference | Title/Scope and Content | Covering Dates | Results |
|---|---|---|---|
| C | Records created, acquired, and inherited by Chancery, and also of the Wardrobe, Royal Household, Exchequer and various commissions | | 184 > |
| E | Records of the Exchequer, and its related bodies, with those of the Office of First Fruits and Tenths, and the Court of Augmentations | | 159 > |
| BT | Records of the Board of Trade and of successor and related bodies | | 138 > |
| HO | Records created or inherited by the Home Office, Ministry of Home Security, and related bodies | | 91 > |
| RAIL | Records of the pre-nationalisation railway companies, pre-nationalisation canal and related companies, the London Passenger Transport Board, and successors | | 89 > |
| HLG | Records created or inherited by the Ministry of Housing and Local Government, and of successor and related bodies | | 83 > |
| ED | Records created or inherited by the Department of Education and Science, and of related bodies | | 74 > |
| WO | Records created or inherited by the War Office, Armed Forces, Judge Advocate General, and related bodies | | 69 > |
| MT | Records created or inherited by the Transport Departments and of related bodies, and of the London Passenger Transport Board | | 46 > |

*Table 1. Results Summary Screen for Banbury*

The 1,311 hits for Banbury delivered by the first search (free text) are displayed in a summary table organised by originating government department. Thus, we can carry out an overall assessment of the success of our search. 184 results appear under the Chancery records (C), 159 under the Exchequer and related bodies (E), the Board of Trade (BT) provides a link to a further 138 hits, the records of the Home Office (HO) provide 91 and there are 89 relevant entries under the records of the Railway Companies (RAIL). The list of results for Banbury continues providing links to further results in the following areas of the catalogue: Ministry of Housing and Local Government (HLG), Department of Education (ED), War Office (WO), Ministry of Transport (MT), Ministry of Health (MH), Census of population (RG), Ministry of Agriculture (MAF), Ordnance Survey (OS), Treasury (T), etc.

This presentation of results by originating department allows users to focus their research and rule out sets of data from an early stage in the process. It also sums up quite well the variety of sources that The National Archives offers to those interested in researching about their local communities. If an initial search for a place name delivers an unexpectedly low number of results it may be worth investigating further by browsing the list for some of the department codes mentioned above.

The catalogue entries found under the Chancery records (spanning the years 1288-1903) can be split into two categories: hits for the name Banbury and an interesting combination of entries on this place. Amongst the latter there are a number of depositions and proceedings involving people, rents, and land in Banbury. The manors of Banbury, Broughton, Newington, some proceedings involving the mayor of Banbury and a master of the Leper hospital of St Leonard in Banbury stand out from the list.

The following is one of the colourful descriptions that can be found amongst the proceedings: *C 1/46/104 William Andrews, of Banbury, fishmonger. v. The mayor and bailiffs [of Oxford].: Verdict against him in action of trespass brought by John Kettill, of 'The Swan,' Oxford, fishmonger, relating to some garlic. Judgment deferred pending appeal to chancery. Certiorari 1386-1486.*

There is also an interesting entry under C 104 which is a series that contains court exhibits delivered by plantiffs and defendants as evidence in their suits: *C104/264 Bundle No 20: Abstract of survey of land and*

Browse from reference: RAIL 539 Go>

Reference Hierarchy

| Title/Scope and content | | Covering dates | Last Piece Ref. |
|---|---|---|---|
| - RAIL | Records of the pre-nationalisation railway companies, pre-nationalisation canal and related companie ... | 1634-1982 | |
| - Division within RAIL | Records of the privately owned railway companies (and their predecessors) taken over by the British ... | 1807-1981 | |
| - RAIL 539 | Northampton and Banbury Railway Company | 1847-1866 | 9 |
| + Subseries within RAIL 539 | Minutes etc. | | |
| + Subseries within RAIL 539 | Stock and Share Registers | | |
| + Subseries within RAIL 539 | Miscellaneous Books and Records | | |
| + Subseries within RAIL 539 | Petitions and Memorials | | |
| + Subseries within RAIL 539 | Stock and Share Registers | | |

*Table 2. Browse Screen by hierarchy for RAIL 539*

*property in Banbury of Charles Stuart, late king, 1650.* This bundle contains a 1650 conveyance indenture with pendent seals.[2]

Banbury also appears consistently in the descriptions of the Exchequer records, with over 150 entries retrieved in the Catalogue. The resulting list includes crown leases, particulars of pensions, accounts of tax collections and a variety of tax-related depositions relating to Banbury people, manors and land. As expected, the record series E 179 (records of taxation of lay people and clerics in England) offers many entries on both the hundred of Banbury and the parish of Banbury; and the researcher will find in the documents cited many lists of names of taxpayers, notables and some other inhabitants of the town from medieval to early modern times. A popular area of local research, fairs and markets, also features amongst the Exchequer results. In addition, this search for Banbury also finds a sub-series of entries for the whole of Oxfordshire under E 367 (Crown leases and some sales) that provides rich descriptions for the county.

The Board of Trade records are always likely to shed light about local businesses. The task of identifying the relevant hits is straightforward, as some hundred results are actually the records of seamen from Banbury (entries starting with the reference BT 372). Local historians will also be able to spot quickly which of the dissolved companies files relate to this town. These are some of the likely ones: Banbury Corn Exchange Company, Banbury Water Company, Banbury Grand Theatre Company, Banbury Woollen Manufactory, Banbury Cattle Plague Mutual Association and the dissolution files for several railway companies.

A useful way of narrowing down the number of results for Banbury would be to use AND to link two search terms. For example, a search for 'Banbury AND fair' retrieves five references, 'Banbury AND school' locates 37 catalogue references, whereas a search for 'Banbury AND company' hits over 70 references.

The key source for information on local railway companies are the records of the privately owned railway companies that were taken over by the British Transport Commission under the Transport Act 1947. The 89 descriptions retrieved under the department code RAIL pull up entries on a variety of subject matters: contracts, agreements, development,

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[2] A comparison of this document is needed with E 317/Oxon/8, a survey of former Crown properties in Banbury taken in July 1653, published in *Banbury Corporation Records: Tudor and Stuart*, ed. J.S.W. Gibson and E.R.C. Brinkworth, B.H.S. **15** (1977), pp.190-1193.

building and maintenance work, etc. The references to whole record series deserve special mention. Catalogue references for record series are made up of a department code and a single number, i.e. RAIL 539, whereas references for pieces and items have at least a forward slash and an additional number, i.e. RAIL 539/1, RAIL 539/2, RAIL 539/3. Pieces can be whole boxes, large volumes, etc. Items are smaller units, generally files, folders or small bundles. The fact that a keyword search delivers references for one or several record series (in this case RAIL 18, RAIL 538, RAIL 539 and RAIL 540) means that the whole record series matches our search requirements (i.e. RAIL 539 as a whole refers to the Northampton and Banbury Railway Company). It is also likely that the keyword 'Banbury' and the company name in the title of the series do not appear repeated again in every single piece or item description under RAIL 539. The terms 'minutes', 'reports', 'accounts books', 'stock and share matters' etc. do appear instead. As a result, those individual low level (piece/item) descriptions were not included in the list of search results and researchers need to look up an increased number of real hits. This should be good news for researchers although it represents some additional research work.

The important tip for researchers is: start by using the Search the catalogue screen and move on to the Browse screen if you get a search result for a whole record series such as RAIL 539. This will allow you to assess the real magnitude of information available and its relevance. The Browse screen works a bit like a paper list: it allows users to browse from any record series in order to look up all the descriptions under an area of the catalogue.

It is worth returning to the original summary list of results for Banbury now to sum up the content highlighted in the rest of the hit lists. The Home Office results cover an interesting mixture of materials on mines, burials, by-laws and census returns for 1841 and 1851. Census returns from 1861 onwards together with some birth, marriage and death registers are under the General Registry Office records (RG).[3]

The results listed under HLG (Housing and Local Government) include relevant descriptions on buildings, works, housing confirmation orders, planning schemes, planning applications, maps and plans.

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[3] To search the 1901 census returns on-line access http://www.1901census.nationalarchives.gov.uk

Descriptions retrieved under the headings War Office (WO) and Prerogative Court of Canterbury (PROB) refer to people born in Banbury or called Banbury .

The Department of Education entries (ED) provide a variety of hits including instruction files, schools statements, attendance and endowment files for a number of local schools.

Correspondence with the Poor Law Unions (1834-1900) features prominently under the Ministry of Health (MH) area of the catalogue. Unfortunately, record descriptions for the 46 hits here only display the term Banbury and it is necessary to access manual subject indexes to gather more information about the content of the records in MH 12.

The results for Banbury in other areas of the catalogue (Ministry of Agriculture, British Transport Commission, Inland Revenue, Ordnance Survey, Ministry of Munitions and Labour departments) populate the screen with entries featuring the following keywords: apportionment, redemption of rent charges, station plans, drawings, station reports, manager's files on the reconstruction of Banbury station (1944-1963), tithe files, tax inspectors ledgers, Ordnance Survey maps, the Gun Ammunition National Filling Factory at Banbury, work conditions and collective agreements for local ironstone miners, quarry workers or flour millers.

This account of search results for a free text search for Banbury in The National Archives Catalogue should be regarded as an illustration of what a quick online search over the internet may reveal. No comprehensive research about sources for local history or about Banbury has been carried out. Having said this, one hopes that it may come in handy for family and local historians who wish to start using online resources and primary sources from The National Archives.

*Jone Garmendia is Senior Archivist in the E-Access Department of The National Archives (formerly the Public Record Office).* *An earlier version of this article appeared in the 'Oxfordshire Family Historian', **18**.1, April 2004.*

# BANBURY'S VICTORIAN LODGING HOUSES

*Barrie Trinder*

Common lodging houses were as characteristic of nineteenth century market towns as corn exchanges, carriers' carts, canalside coal wharfs or Wesleyan circuit chapels. A lodging house, however lowly the estate of its inmates, was significant in retailing, entertainment and as a refuge for the unfortunate. It provided links with distant places, particularly with London. Lodging houses were rightly regarded as problems by most social and sanitary reformers. Nevertheless they served vital functions in market towns, and deserve to be analysed as institutions that were rather more than sources of medical and moral infection.[1]

Banbury in the mid-nineteenth century was a market town whose significance was greater than its modest population of rather less than nine thousand in 1851 might suggest.[2] More carriers' carts travelled to its weekly markets than to those of some much larger county towns, more than to Northampton, Oxford or Shrewsbury, for example. The town had substantial shops that specialised in their own trades. It had numerous social institutions. The fervour of its dissenting congregations and the skills of its craftsmen, expressed in patents, were notorious. It is not surprising therefore that Banbury was well-provided with common lodging houses, two of which are notable for their longevity, and will form the principal focus of this article.

## Lodging Houses: Contexts

There was no commonly-accepted definition of a lodging house in the nineteenth century. Some establishments so-named were small households in fashionable areas of provincial towns where a lady, living partly on investments or on the profits of a shop, might supplement her income by providing, with the aid of resident domestic servants, accommodation for two or three fairly wealthy people. In High Street, Chipping Norton, in 1861, Sarah Hopkins, a 52-year-old spinster, sold

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[1] For a discussion of lodging houses in a wider context see B. Trinder, *The Market Town Lodging House in Victorian England* (2001), Leicester: Friends of the Centre for English Local History.

[2] B. Trinder, *Victorian Banbury* (1982), B.H.S. **19**, and Chichester: Phillimore, pp.2-3, 77, 162-64.

grocery, stationery and earthenware, and with the assistance of a niece, accommodated two elderly ladies of independent means, and an organ builder. There were lodging houses in spa towns and seaside resorts that provided for visiting families, although in the Isle of Thanet by the 1870s the term 'lodging house' had gained such unsavoury connotations that accommodation for respectable visitors came to be called 'apartments'. There were lodging houses catering specifically for members, usually recent graduates, of the universities of Oxford and Cambridge. The numbers of lodging house keepers recorded in the printed volumes of nineteenth century censuses cannot be regarded as reliable, for the totals include many keepers of establishments of the kinds described above, that were not common lodging houses, and excluded many that were. Most of these were households that contained many lodgers, but where the male head of a household is described by his principal trade, and no occupation was given for his wife who probably managed the establishment.

A writer explaining public health legislation in 1906 defined a common lodging house as 'that class of lodging-house in which persons of the poorer class are received for short periods, and though strangers to one another, are allowed to inhabit one common room'. He acknowledged that there was no satisfactory legal definition.[3] The lodging houses considered in this article accommodated lodgers in the Registrar General's definition of that term for census purposes, that is, people who provided themselves with food in common kitchens shared with other inmates. The enumerator of a Shrewsbury establishment in 1861 noted that it was a licensed lodging house, and 'all board in the same room'. According to the Registrar General, a 'boarder' was someone whose food was provided by the householder. Lodging houses of this kind were open to passing travellers, although they might also accommodate long-term residents.

In the 1830s and '40s, with the threat of cholera and a growing awareness of the unhealthiness of urban life, reformers became anxious to control lodging houses. Edwin Chadwick regarded legislation to be necessary 'for the protection of the inmates as well as the public'. Lodging houses were the first working class dwellings to be subjected to legislative control. The Nuisance Removal and Diseases Prevention Act, 1848, empowered local authorities to demand that they be adequately

[3] J.W. Harrison, *Lessons on Sanitation*, London: Griffin, 1906, p. 81.

cleaned. The Common Lodging Houses Act, 1851, required authorities to register and regulate lodging houses, and directed keepers to give access to officials and to notify them of cases of infectious diseases, to keep their premises clean, and specifically to limewash walls and ceiling in the first week of April and October each year. The legislation was extended by the Common Lodging Houses Act, 1853, which required potential keepers of lodging houses to produce character references, to provide supplies of clean water for inmates where this was practicable and, when requested, to reveal information to the authorities about vagrant inmates. The Labouring Classes Lodging Houses Act, 1851, which gave powers to local authorities to build or purchase lodging houses, was initially ineffective, although in the 1890s its provisions enabled boroughs to construct houses for families. The legislation of 1851 and 1853 was subsequently consolidated and reinforced by the Public Health Acts of 1866 and 1874.[4]

The hub of a common lodging house was its kitchen, which was commonly lined with benches, had a table at its centre and was focused on a fireplace, around which a few frying pans, gridirons and long forks were provided on which inmates could cook herring, saveloys or bacon. A tin teapot might be provided, while jam jars usually served as drinking vessels. The management did not provide cutlery, but regular inmates carried their own clasp knives. The sexes were not normally segregated in sleeping accommodation, although families might be provided with separate rooms. Beds were commonly shared. It was a recognised feature of lodging house culture that inmates remained anonymous. They were admitted without giving their names on payment of the appropriate fee of 3d or 4d a night, with Sunday nights free for those who stayed for a week. Some inmates were recorded on census returns by the nick-names that were commonly used in lodging houses. A 21-year old dressmaker at the house of John Bustin in Oxford in 1861 was recorded as 'Huzza King', an Italian musician in Bishop's Castle in 1891 called himself 'Abraham Lincoln', and a bricklayer and a carpet weaver travelling together and staying in Hereford in 1861 were known as 'Necodemus Salt' and 'Michael Pepper'. The numbers staying at lodging houses fluctuated night by night. The average number of inmates in 1861 was around nine,

[4] E. Gauldie, *Cruel Habitations: a History of Working Class Housing 1780-1918* (1974), London: Allen & Unwin, pp. 241-46; Harrison, *Letters on Sanitation*, pp. 81-90.

and the maximum forty-five. Many charitable organisations attempted to set up 'model' lodging houses, whose regulations were usually the reverse of common lodging house traditions – inmates had to register, they were provided with food, and sleeping accommodation was segregated.

There was a complex relationship between lodging houses in market towns and those in the East End of London. The capital could be perceived as 'the Mecca of the dissolute, the lazy, the mendicant, the rough and the spendthrift'. Charles Booth recorded in 1889 that there were precisely a thousand common lodging houses registered in the Metropolitan area and the City, with a nominal capacity of 31,651 inmates, but that many lodging houses were not registered.[5] Henry Mayhew observed in the 1850s that many vagrants spent the winter in London, where charitable support was generous, but perambulated the provinces between April and the end of October, and this practice was still prevalent 40 years later.[6]

Lodging houses can be set in a chronological context. Institutions like common lodging houses first became an object of concern in London during plagues in the 1720s. Peter Clark has suggested that in the eighteenth century private householders were deterred from taking in lodgers by the law of settlement, but that travellers were readily accommodated in alehouses.[7] By the early nineteenth century there was a growing prejudice against travellers amongst alehouse keepers, and the common lodging house, while it served many who were not itinerant, came to be the overnight stopping place for those who journeyed on foot utilising the network of turnpike roads created between 1750 and 1830. Like country carriers, such travellers continued to use such roads long after stage coaches and long-distance wagon services had succumbed to railway competition. The numbers of lodging houses increased markedly in the 1840s. While, as indicated above, census totals are unreliable, the rise in the number of lodging house keepers in England and Wales from

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[5] C. Booth, ed., *Life and Labour of the People in London* (1892), London: Macmillan, pp.205-19.

[6] H. Mayhew, *London Labour and the London Poor* (1864), London: Charles Griffin, vol. I, pp.258-61, 310-11, vol. III, 88, 373; G. Stedman-Jones, *Outcast London: a study in the relationships between classes in Victorian Society* (1971), Oxford: Clarendon Press, p.89.

[7] P. Clark, *The English Alehouse: a social history 1200-1830* (1983), London: Longman, pp.311-14.

10,250 in 1841 to 23,089 in 1851 must represent a real increase, and a detailed study of Chester shows that there was a substantial rise in numbers in that city during that decade.[8] The reasons for the increase included the development of the railway construction industry, with many thousands of navvies seeking temporary accommodation, the increase in immigration from Ireland particularly as a result of the Famine from 1846, and the effects of the new Poor Law of 1834 that, according to Henry Mayhew, encouraged vagrancy by establishing casual wards in workhouses. The number of lodging houses steadily decreased in the late nineteenth century, although many of substantial size are recorded in the censuses of 1891 and 1901, and some, as in Banbury, continued well into the twentieth century.

Common lodging houses should also be seen in the context of a hierarchy of accommodation that was available for travellers. Few of those who used the principal coaching inns, the *Red Lion* or *White Lion* in Banbury, or the *George* in Oxford would ever have stayed at lodging houses. Below such prestigious establishments was a range of inns, at the lower end of which were establishments whose inmates might well on other occasions use lodging houses. At an inn in Sheep Street, Northampton, in 1851 there was a resident staff of four and eight guests including a cloth manufacturer born in Manchester and an auctioneer, but also two Irish dealers in fancy goods, and an Irish couple who were hawkers of earthenware, occupations that might equally well have been found in a lodging house. At a level slightly above lodging houses were households whose heads, engaged in particular industries, were accustomed to take in, often for short periods, members of their own trades who had migrated to the town, something that can readily be observed amongst shoemakers in Northampton, or hosiery workers in Leicester. Mayhew's observations show that itinerants graded lodging houses and drew distinctions between those that were open to all and those where some kind of test of respectability was imposed.[9] Below lodging houses in the hierarchy were the mendicant houses, such as that operated near the bridge by the Banbury Mendicity Society between 1834 and 1838.[10] The equivalent in Oxford, the 'Receiving House of the

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[8] M. Glazier, 'Common Lodging Houses in Chester 1841-71', R. Swift, ed., *Victorian Chester* (1996), Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, pp.58-59, 64.

[9] Mayhew, *London Labour*, Vol..I, pp. 258-61.

[10] Trinder, *Victorian Banbury*, p.67.

Society for the Relief of Distressed Travellers' opened in Castle Street in 1844 and, managed by Thomas Butler, an ex-soldier born in Kidlington, had a much longer life. Such establishments usually offered a night's free accommodation to a traveller on condition that he left the town the next day. At the bottom of the hierarchy of choice were the union workhouses, whose authoritarian regimes were a source of dread to the poor, but whose casual wards did provide some guarantee of tolerably clean overnight accommodation to the itinerant.

**The Ward family lodging house**

The lodging house of the Ward family in Banbury lasted as an institution, usually one of ill-repute, for more than half a century, although it changed locations. It originated in 'Waterloo', a collection of about fifteen houses in the parish of Banbury but at the Northamptonshire end of the bridge that conveyed the main road leading eastwards over the River Cherwell. Waterloo was regarded by 1834 as 'that great public nuisance', and the shoemaker George Herbert recalled that it was 'a lot of disreputable inhabitants, lodging houses and otherwise, of the lowest character'. Waterloo was demolished, to the satisfaction of Banbury's respectable citizens, when the Great Western Railway was built through the Cherwell meadows in 1846.[11]

The earliest documentary reference to Waterloo appears to be the baptism in August 1831 of the daughter of a labourer who lived there. The first known lodging house in the settlement was kept by Benjamin Trusty, an umbrella maker and hawker, who had moved to Banbury about 1827, and was living in Calthorpe Street in 1828. He was recorded as a lodging house keeper at Waterloo in the parliamentary election of 1837. He had no lodgers on census night in 1841, but his lodging house was being used as a base for crime in 1844. Another lodging house in Waterloo in 1841 was kept by Thomas and Elia Robinson, and had twenty-one inmates.

Thomas and Bridget Ward, natives of Co. Mayo, the former born in 1800-01 and the latter in 1795-96, settled in Banbury about 1836. Thomas Ward, like Trusty, was described as a lodging house keeper in the poll book for the election of 1837. The Wards, who occupied two adjacent cottages, gave shelter to twenty-one lodgers on census night in

[11] *Banbury Guardian* 21 May, 4 June 1846; Trinder, *Victorian Banbury*, p.10; G. Herbert, *Shoemaker's Window: Recollections of Banbury in Oxfordshire before the Railway Age* (3rd ed., ed. B. Trinder, 1979), Banbury: Gulliver Press, p.80 (2nd ed., also ed. B. Trinder, B.H.S. **10** and Phillimore, 1971).

*Rag Row, a terrace of cottages on Warwick Road, Neithrop.*

1841, eight of Irish and eight of foreign birth. After their premises were demolished in 1846 they moved, by the beginning of 1850, to three cottages in Rag Row, a terrace of ten three-storey, stone, thatched cottages on Warwick Road near to the site of the present *Duke of Wellington* public house. Rag Row was notoriously unhealthy. A single privy served all ten houses and several children staying at the lodging house died from fever. In 1851 the owner charged a rent of 1s. 6d. per week per house.[12] On census night in 1851 there were twenty-six inmates in the three houses managed by the Wards, and nineteen in 1861. By 1871 Bridget Ward was a widow, and was assisted in managing twenty-four lodgers by her bachelor son, James, a labourer. Ten years later the establishment was being run by the Wards' widowed daughter, Mary Dunn and her two grown up children. They had twelve lodgers. By 1891 the Wards and their descendants had disappeared from Warwick Road, and about this time Rag Row was demolished.

**Lodging House Yard**

Banbury's other long-lived lodging house was in a short alleyway called Lodging House Yard that linked South Bar with Calthorpe Street, just north of the junction between the two roads. One was centred on Banbury's first Wesleyan Chapel, built in 1791 and sold when the congregation moved to larger premises in Church Lane in 1811. References to a lodging house in South Bar (or St. John Street, as it then was known) begin to appear in the parish registers in 1823. The first identifiable keeper was Thomas Poney, who declined to use his vote in the general election of 1837. He died in the following year and was succeeded by his widow, Ann, who had nineteen lodgers on census night in 1841. Ten years later the census recorded nine dwellings in Lodging House Yard, two of which were lodging houses, one kept by James Atkins with forty-three lodgers, the other by James and Maria Tobin with sixteen. The Tobins had been born in Ireland and had previously lived at Tenterden, Reading and Woodstock. In 1861 there were still two lodging houses, one kept by Thomas Colley who had twenty-two inmates, the other by Henry Johnson who had thirty-one. By 1871 the houses in most streets and passages in Banbury had been numbered. The lodging house that occupied Nos.1, 2 and 3 Lodging House Yard, was being managed by Francis, son of James and Maria Tobin, who had been

[12] B. Trinder, 'Banbury's Poor in 1850', *Cake & Cockhorse*, 3.6 (1966), pp.105-6.

born at Reading about 1844. He had twenty-six lodgers. The other, at No.9 and accommodating eleven inmates, was in the charge of James Boss, a tinker, who in 1861 had been an inmate of the Wards' establishment in Rag Row, one of many travellers who became keepers of lodging houses.[13] Ten years later, Francis Tobin's establishment occupied Nos.1, 7 and 8 Lodging House Yard, and accommodated 32 lodgers. By this time it was the only lodging house in the yard. In 1891 Tobin and his wife had seven children at home, but still could accommodate forty-five lodgers. The 1901 census showed that Tobin, by now a widower, still had six children and two grandchildren living with him, alongside fourteen lodgers. The Tobin family lodging house continued in business until the mid-1930s, when it was demolished as part of a slum clearance scheme. It made a strong impression, as the place where German bands stayed and as a source of odours of herring cooking, on the minds of those who grew up in Banbury in the early twentieth century, even if, as the offspring of respectable parents, they were discouraged from visiting the upper parts of Calthorpe Street.[14]

**The Irish**

In Banbury, as in most towns, lodging houses were associated with the Irish community. The Wards and James and Maria, founders of the Tobin dynasty, were born in Ireland, although the other keepers detailed above were all English: James Atkins was a Banburian, Henry Johnson was born in Lincoln, Thomas Colley at Maids' Moreton, Buckinghamshire, and James Boss at Rothley, Leicestershire. People of Irish birth were also to be found amongst lodgers. There were four at Ann Tobin's house and eight staying with the Wards in 1841. Irish lodgers in Banbury in 1851 comprised eight staying with the Wards, including a family of five who had recently arrived in England, three agricultural labourers at Tobins', and a colliery labourer and his wife, both born at Castlereagh, County Roscommon. In 1861 there were three Irish-born inmates staying with the Wards, and a house painter from Belfast, a seaman from Limerick and a labourer with his wife from County Cork with Johnson. Subsequently numbers of Irish lodgers were insignificant.

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[13] B. Trinder, *Market Town Lodging House*, p.34; H. Mayhew, *London Labour*, vol. I, p.253.

[14] J.L. Langley, 'Memories of Late Victorian Banbury', *C&CH*, **2**.4 (1963), p.53; J.L. Langley, 'Further Memories of Late Victorian Banbury', *C&CH*, **3**.3 (1966), p.40.

The numbers of Irish lodging house keepers and lodgers in Banbury were small in comparison with those found in other places, in such diverse small towns as Ramsey, Huntingdonshire, and Newport and Bridgnorth in Shropshire, for example. It seems likely that Irishmen set up lodging houses in towns that before the Famine of the 1840s were traditionally stopping points for Irish harvesters. Many lodging houses established in the 1840s or '50s remained for several decades in the hands of Irish families, but only a few continued to cater primarily for Irish inmates. Banbury was not, like many market towns, a base from which gangs of Irish farm labourers went out daily to work in the surrounding countryside. There were only 78 people of Irish birth in the town in 1851, less than one per cent of the population, and while the Wards and Tobins were characteristic Irish lodging house keepers, Banbury had an unusually small Irish community for a town of its type.[15]

**Inmates**

At a national or regional level the inmates of common lodging houses can be classified into ten principal occupational groups:

- itinerant skilled workers
- farm labourers
- railway navvies
- actual or potential paupers
- the military
- itinerant retailers and craftsmen
- scavengers
- popular entertainers
- general labourers
- beggars and tramps

Most of these groups can be found amongst the inmates of Banbury's workhouses. The data that follows is derived from census returns, but they can give only a limited picture of lodging house life. Except in 1841 the censuses for which returns are available were taken in March or April, and so show nothing of the migrations of harvest workers. The 1841 census that was taken in June lists many itinerant Irishmen who were haymaking the Lincolnshire Fens. Fairs drew many lodgers to towns. The census of 1841 was taken on the eve of the Charter Fair on

[15] B. Trinder, *Market Town Lodging House*, p.37-42; B. Trinder, *Victorian Banbury*, p.45.

Trinity Monday in Rothwell (Northants.), while that of 1851 preceded the Mid-Lent Fair at Stamford. Both towns were shown to have had bloated populations of drovers, butchers and popular entertainers. Unfortunately no census was taken in Banbury during the week of the Michaelmas Fair.

Many craftsmen in the nineteenth century spent a period 'on the tramp', gaining experience of their trades in other towns, in the interval between completing their apprenticeship and settling to work on their own account. George Herbert travelled to Kent, where he met his wife, and was subsequently proud that as a master shoemaker he was able to use the talents of some of the best craftsmen in England whom he employed when they passed through Banbury before the start of the university terms in Oxford.[16] Commentators acknowledged that many respectable skilled men stayed at lodging houses and feared that their respectability was thereby put at risk. Many proposals for model lodging houses assumed that the archetypal lodger was a skilled craftsman, either on the tramp after completing his apprenticeship or wandering in search of employment.

Many lodgers in Banbury were shoemakers, builders, tailors or blacksmiths born in distant parts of the country, but some followed more specialised trades. An Irish-born tobacco pipe maker was staying in Waterloo in 1841. James Atkins' lodgers in 1851 included a teacher of mathematics, a brass founder born in Bilston and a stone carver who was a native of Pimlico. In 1861 Thomas Colley accommodated a turner born in Edinburgh with his wife and six children, while a Coventry-born weaver and a Wantage-born saddler stayed with the Wards. Francis Tobin's inmates in 1871 included a wood turner from Essex and an electro-plate worker born in Stourport, and two Bristolian stone dressers were accommodated in Rag Row. In 1881 Tobin's inmates included a coach painter and two Birmingham-born pump makers, and in 1891 a slate miner born in Caernarvonshire, an engine driver born at Uppingham and a whitesmith from Guildford. By 1901 the only lodger falling into this category in Lodging House Yard was a shoemaker. Lodging houses were in decline by the turn of the century, one cause of which was that men were less inclined to go on the tramp, and in later life used other accommodation when travelling in search of employment.

[16] G. Herbert, *Shoemaker's Window*, pp.12-17, 22.

Market town lodging houses served as dormitories for farm labourers who trudged daily to work in closed parishes up to six miles distant. Towns where this was particularly prevalent in 1865 included Basingstoke, Much Wenlock, Stone and Eccleshall. In 1864 a Fellow of the Society of Arts described the town where he lived as crowded with agricultural labourers who had to walk several miles to their work on estates where there were no more than two or three cottages.[17] Census enumerators usually took care to distinguish between agricultural labourers and general labourers doing any available unskilled work. There were farm labourers in Banbury's lodging houses – five in Waterloo in 1841, and five at Tobins' and eight at Wards' in 1851, but thereafter the numbers were small. Banburyshire was not a region where gang labour was prevalent on farms, and Banbury's lodging houses consequently housed fewer agricultural labourers than those in towns in counties like Shropshire or Lincolnshire where it was more usual. Drovers were specialised agricultural workers who naturally made much use of lodging houses, in Banbury as elsewhere. They included a Towcester-born drover staying with Henry Johnson in 1861, and an Irishman and a native of Cleobury Mortimer who were in Lodging House Yard in 1881.

Between 1830 and 1851 a network of main line railways of some 6,000 route miles was built in Britain, which grew to over 20,000 route miles by the outbreak of World War 1. Railway construction consistently employed thousands of men throughout the reign of Queen Victoria – nearly 40,000 were recorded in the 1851 census. Navvies were naturally itinerant, going from one part of the country to another as lines were finished and the construction of others commenced. They made use of many kinds of accommodation, camps with huts and tents, inns, lodging houses and private homes that did not normally take lodgers. Navvies were normally called 'railway labourers' on the census returns. The numbers to be found in the lodging houses of a particular town naturally varied with the rate of railway construction in the district. In 1851 the railway from Banbury to Birmingham was still not open, although most of the engineering work near the town had been completed several years

[17] British Parliamentary Papers, 1865, XXVI, 7th Report of the Medical Officer of the Privy Council, Appendix 6, Dwellings of Rural Labourers, pp.102, 259-260, 267; *Journal of the Royal Society of Arts*, vol. XVII (1864), p.476.

previously.[18] Four railway labourers were recorded in that year with James Atkins, natives of Bristol, Cardiff, Stratford-upon-Avon and Wiltshire, but many more would have been in the town a few years earlier. At the time of the 1871 census some work was in progress on the Northampton & Banbury Junction Railway, but it was some distance from the town, since the company, which opened in the following year, used the existing tracks of the London & North Western Railway from Cockley Brake Junction near Greatworth into Merton Street Station. There were no railway labourers staying at Banbury's principal lodging houses in that year but there were five at the *Black Horse* public house in Bridge Street. Three who were staying at Tobin's lodging house in 1901 were probably passing through the town, since the Woodford-Banbury branch of the Great Central Railway had been completed in June of the previous year.

The Poor Law bastille, the workhouse, built by the local Board of Guardians established by the Poor Law Amendment Act of 1834, was a feature of the outskirts of Banbury as of most market towns, yet in almost every union only a minority of paupers was accommodated in the workhouse. The new Poor Law had been designed to constrain the relief afforded from public funds to able-bodied males and their dependants, and made scarcely any specific provision for other categories of pauper, the elderly, the lame, the blind, single mothers and children.[19] There was much reluctance amongst the working class to apply for poor relief, and for the person or family with minimal resources the common lodging house offered a marginally less humiliating alternative to the workhouse.

Many inmates of Banbury lodging houses might otherwise have been in the workhouse, although the information available in the census returns is too sparse to draw firm conclusions. It was considered shameful for a family to seek accommodation in a lodging house, which was regarded as the last resort before the union workhouse. Some families, like that of a Bicester-born miller who, with his wife and three locally-born children, was in Lodging House Yard in 1891, could well have been driven there by poverty, but others, such as a Bristol-born bricklayer and his wife staying with James Atkins in 1851, who had

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[18] B. Trinder, *Victorian Banbury*, pp.77-81.

[19] F. Driver, *Power and Paupers: the workhouse system 1834-84* (1993), Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p.1; A. Kidd, *State, Society and the Poor in Nineteenth Century England* (1999), London: Macmillan, pp.27, 34.

children born at Northampton, Wisbech and Bromyard, were obviously accustomed to an itinerant way of life. A few unmarried mothers with their children are recorded in Banbury lodging houses, for example, Julia Murphy, a 35-year-old Irish cotton spinner who had a son aged two, also born in Ireland, who was staying with the Wards in 1851. There were rather more widows seeking shelter with their children, including, at Tobins in 1871, Mary McDonald, a 40-year-old washerwoman from Edinburgh, who had children aged four and two born at Workington. Lodging houses in many towns provided shelter for the very old – one man supposedly aged 105 was staying at the establishment kept by John Cox in Holyfields Yard, Oxford, in 1861. There were relatively few very old people in Banbury's lodging houses, but they included William Bannister, a 92-year-old blind fiddler, born in Northamptonshire, who may have been travelling with a 40-year-old blind spirit refiner of Cornish origin.

Lodging houses were nodes in a pattern of retailing that provided for most country dwellers and many of the urban poor. Hawkers, usually assumed to be traders in towns, and pedlars, who by custom sold their wares in the countryside, formed one of the largest occupational groups amongst lodging house inmates. The scale of this informal network can be judged by the number of hawkers and pedlars recorded in the 1851 census – 30,553, rather more than the total of non-specialist shopkeepers (29,800), and to that number should be added some of the 7,299 people classified as 'General Dealers, Hucksters and Costermongers' and most of the 956 dealers in small wares. One historian of retailing considered that the number of itinerant traders continued to grow until the third quarter of the nineteenth century.[20] Joseph Ashby maintained to his children that there were fewer pedlars visiting Tysoe in the early years of the twentieth century than in the days of his childhood, when he recalled a foreign-looking female pedlar with a tray full of cottons, a bearded itinerant draper with rolls of cheap fabrics and packs of black woollen stockings, and sellers of bibles, tracts and religious pictures.[21] Hawkers sold fabrics, particularly linens, haberdashery, medicines, crockery, hardware, baskets, stationery, books, brushes and matches. In some

[20] M.J. Winstanley, *The Shopkeeper's World 1830-1914* (1983), Manchester: Manchester University Press, p.6.

[21] M.K. Ashby, *Joseph Ashby of Tysoe* (1961), Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp.201-02.

towns wholesale establishments that provided itinerant hawkers with their stock were situated near lodging houses, and George Herbert recalled that in the 1830s an ex-soldier with a wooden leg, living in Lodging House Yard, bought deal planks which he split up and dipped to make matches which he supplied to 'nearly all the old cadgers [*i.e.* vagrants staying at the lodging house] [who] used to hawk matches.'[22]

Hawkers born in many parts of the British Isles are listed in most Banbury lodging houses in most of the censuses. Details of what they sold are revealed less frequently than in some other towns. A 50-year-old widow, a native of Carlisle who hawked toys, was staying with James Tobin in 1851. An itinerant doll-maker was lodging at a pub in Butchers' Row ten years later. Three sellers of artificial flowers, John Bossi, born in Belfast, and his wife and son both born at Sheerness, stayed at a short-lived lodging house in the lower part of Calthorpe Street in 1871. Some itinerant retailers stayed at inns that were possibly marginally more respectable than the town's best-known lodging houses. There were three Irish dealers in linen at the *Queen's Head* in 1851, and three travelling drapers of whom two were Irish at a pub in Butchers' Row in 1861. Umbrella makers, sellers and repairers frequented lodging houses in some numbers, and were to be found in Banbury in 1851 and 1881. Some travellers provided services rather than goods. A saw-cutter born in Essex was staying in Lodging House Yard with his Welsh wife in 1851, and there was a grinder in Rag Row in 1881. The continuing role of itinerant tradesmen in rural areas is indicated by the presence in Tobin's lodging house of twelve hawkers in 1891, and seven hawkers and a pedlar in 1901. If this kind of trade was declining, it was declining slowly.

Enumerators' returns suggest that there was a nationwide network of entertainment sustained by performers who perambulated between lodging houses. Their performances were rarely reported in newspapers, nor are they identified in standard histories of music or the theatre. The numbers of entertainers increased substantially in the second half of the nineteenth century. There were 4,200 musicians in 1851, for example, but 38,606 in 1891, and the number of actors increased from just over 2,000 to 7,321 in the same period. Circus performers often stayed in lodging houses when no accommodation was available for them in caravans. Nineteen of the thirty-nine members of Fossett's circus staying

[22] G. Herbert, *Shoemaker's Window*, p.67.

in Daventry in April 1891 were in lodging houses, including musicians, equestrians, a gymnast and three lion tamers. There were two foreign, probably Italian, musicians in the Wards' lodging house in 1841, together with a group of five foreign-born men who could well have been a German band. An English-born musician was staying nearby with Thomas Robinson. Most of the later censuses mention few entertainers, perhaps because there were no fairs, wakes or club days in Banbury in the early spring. Nevertheless in 1861 no fewer than fifteen German musicians, all aged between 15 and 24 except for one man of 32, were staying with Henry Johnson, and visits of German bands to Banbury, when they traditionally stayed in Lodging House Yard, continued until the outbreak of World War 1. Flora Thompson recalled their annual visits to Lark Rise (Juniper Hill).[23] Touring England as a member of a band was an initiation rite for young men in many parts of Germany. While no birthplaces of German musicians are given in the Banbury census returns, those from elsewhere list natives of Hanover, Hamburg, Prussia and Bavaria. In 1880 there were 880 German musicians in England and Wales, plus 38 from Austria-Hungary, totals that increased in the next decade to 1,198 and 86. They are listed in census returns in many towns. They were in Shrewsbury in every census from 1851 to 1891. They usually played in groups of five or six. The total of fifteen in Banbury in 1861 is exceptional, perhaps a coincidental meeting of two or three bands, although there were ten musicians, with the wife of the leader, at a lodging house in Peterborough in the same year. At a national level, native-born musicians outnumbered foreign players. Two born in Birmingham staying with Francis Tobin in 1891 are among the relatively few found in the Banbury census returns.

A close connection was widely assumed in the mid-nineteenth century between lodging houses and prostitution, but while some prostitutes doubtless stayed from time to time in lodging houses, the brothels where they normally worked were much smaller households, usually consisting of two or three young women, often with one or two small children, and a man who might be pimp or client. Such places, that were, confusingly, sometimes called lodging houses, could be found around the *Jolly Waterman* beerhouse in Mill Lane, in Roushill in Shrewsbury, or in the Water Lanes district of York. In Calthorpe Street in 1851 two 'nymphs

[23] F. Thompson, *Lark Rise to Candleford* (1939), Oxford: Oxford University Press, p.132.

of the pave' were amongst the five lodgers at the *Royal Oak*, a notorious haunt of prostitutes, but there appear to have been none in Lodging House Yard. Crime was also associated with lodging houses, and that of the Wards was the base in 1844 for a couple called Gloucester Eliza and Bill. The former decoyed men attending Banbury races to secluded spots where the latter robbed them. In 1850 a woman, a one-legged man and a one-armed man were running a begging letter racket from the Wards' new establishment at Rag Row.[24]

There is little to be said about general labourers, men who were available on a daily basis for any unskilled work on offer. They were to be found in Banbury's lodging houses in some numbers as they were in every other town. Members of the army and navy, particularly recruiting parties, are listed in lodging houses in most towns but, curiously, not in Banbury, perhaps because none of the censuses was taken at the time of the town's fairs, which were the occasions when men were traditionally pressed to take the Queen's shilling. Some lodging house inmates made their livings by collecting rags, bones and old iron from country-dwellers, sometimes exchanged for cheap crockery or trinkets. The establishments where they deposited such re-cycled materials and obtained items for which they could be traded were called 'marine stores', and were often located in the same streets as lodging houses. There do not appear to have been any such establishments in Banbury, although a marine store dealer born in Marlborough was staying with Thomas Colley in 1861. Many of the inmates of Banbury's lodging houses doubtless made their livings from begging, but enumerators in the town rarely made this clear on the census returns, as they did in some other places, and were content to allow vagrants to be listed as labourers or hawkers.

**Perspectives**

Banbury's lodging houses should be seen in relation to those in neighbouring market towns. In Oxford, as indicated above, there were some lodging houses catering specifically for members of the university, but along High Street St Thomas (now St Thomas Street) from the Quaking Bridge to the parish church of St Thomas, was one of the most notorious concentrations of common lodging houses in England, extending into Hollybush Row and yards like The Hamel. In 1851 there

[24] B. Trinder, *Victorian Banbury*, p.75; *Northampton Herald*, 1 February 1850.

were thirty lodging places in the parishes of St Thomas and St Peter-le-Bailey, accommodating over 300 inmates. By 1861 there were only fourteen, with 149 inmates.[25] This concentration was matched by a similar grouping along the Newmarket Road in Cambridge.

In Northampton there were groups of lodging houses in Bridge Street and Broad Lane (Broad Street) in 1851, and by 1861 a greater concentration in the latter area, where there were eight establishments with 93 inmates. In Daventry the chief concentration was in Brook Street and the courts that ran off it, where 90 lodgers stayed in six lodging houses in 1851. On the corner of Court No.2 was a huge establishment kept by Thomas Robinson, which extended through two houses and accommodated 33 inmates. In the court itself, one house was occupied by a bone collector, one by an old iron dealer and one by an umbrella maker, all occupations closely related to lodging houses.[26]

Lodging houses also flourished in smaller towns. An establishment on Goose Green, Brackley, run by a baker, had seven lodgers in 1851, including a travelling pedlar and a navvy, while another on Cross Lane, kept by an agricultural labourer, had fourteen, including two cutlery grinders and a French polisher. At the former in 1861 there were ten lodgers including hawkers of mats and brushes, a saw sharpener and a bonnet maker, while another establishment in the parish of St James, kept by a labourer, had six lodgers. Towcester made its living before 1838 from thoroughfare trade on the Holyhead Road, most of which vanished with the opening of the London & Birmingham Railway in that year, but pedestrian travellers continued to frequent its lodging houses. The Hart family kept the town's principal lodging house in Park Street over several decades. In 1851 William Hart, a coal dealer, accommodated five lodgers. By 1861 the house had passed to his daughter-in-law Elizabeth Hart, who combined keeping the house with lacemaking, and accommodated sixteen inmates on census night. By 1871 she had remarried, to a groom, Charles Dolby, who was described on the enumerator's return as the keeper of the lodging house, which had twenty-one inmates.

There were five lodging houses in Chipping Norton in 1851, one of them, in Church Street, kept by Thomas Bull, a grocer, with eighteen inmates. Ten years later twenty-one people were accommodated in an

[25] B. Trinder, *Market Town Lodging House*, pp. 30-31.
[26] B. Trinder, *Market Town Lodging House*, pp.18, 28, 31-32.

establishment on Rock Hill kept by Thomas Holtham, a joiner. Lodging houses flourished in the vicinity of Blenheim Palace at Woodstock, where an Irish 'dealer', John Madden, had twenty-eight inmates in 1851, and there were a dozen in another house kept by one John James. There were large lodging houses in Abingdon and Henley-on-Thames, and even in tiny Watlington there was a modest establishment with four inmates in 1851, kept by a dealer in marine stores born in Newry, County Down, and his wife, who came from County Tipperary.

The number of common lodging houses diminished in the second half of the nineteenth century as more respectable alternatives, such as temperance hotels, proliferated, as the practice of going 'on the tramp' fell into decline, as village shops began to sell most of the goods that had previously been handled by pedlars, and as patterns of agricultural employment changed. Nevertheless, in the 1930s George Orwell described institutions that had all the characteristics of Victorian common lodging houses,[27] and Banbury's most prominent establishment continued until the same decade.

Banbury was a flourishing market town in the mid-nineteenth century, and it is unsurprising that its lodging houses were well-populated and long-lived. The Wards' establishment lasted between forty and fifty years, and that in Lodging House Yard had a continuous existence for about a century. Like lodging house keepers in many towns, the Wards and the Tobins had Irish origins, but at no time did they cater primarily for Irish inmates. Banbury's lodging houses were particularly important as stopping places for skilled men 'on the tramp', and for hawkers and pedlars. They also provided accommodation for some people who might otherwise have been driven to the workhouse, and for some farm workers, but to a lesser extent than in some other towns. The available data shows less evidence than might be expected of popular entertainers staying in Banbury, although it is obvious that German bands were regular visitors to Lodging House Yard, and none whatsoever of military lodgers, but this may result from the lack of festive occasions in the town in the early spring.

Common lodging houses were found in every market town in mid-nineteenth century England, even in communities that were icons of

[27] G. Orwell, *The Road to Wigan Pier* (1962 edn.), Harmondsworth: Penguin, pp.5-16; G. Orwell, *Down and Out in Paris and London* (1963 edn.), Harmondsworth: Penguin, pp.186-88.

urban elegance, in Stamford, Ludlow and Bath, and in such small communities as Watlington and Woodstock. They were, with good reason, a cause of alarm to those responsible for the health, welfare and good order of urban communities, but they should not be seen simply as social problems. They had important functions in providing for the needs of skilled workers seeking employment or experience, in the informal pattern of retailing that supplied many of the needs of country people, in the provision of popular entertainment, and in the re-cycling of waste materials. They provided many links between provincial towns and the wider world, with London, with the state of trade along the routes tramped by skilled men looking for work, with most parts of Ireland, and with Germany. If we are to understand how towns worked in the nineteenth century we need to look at the operations of lodging houses.

# Lecture Reports

## *Brian Little et al.*

**Thursday 9th September 2004.**

***Banbury Plush* – Christine Bloxham.**

Christine is a familiar friend, and her returns to Banbury are always welcome. As long ago as 1980, for the Oxfordshire Local History Competition and Exhibition, our Society mounted a display of Banbury and Shutford Plush, which earned us third prize against a multitude of excellent entries (see *C&CH*.**8**.3, Summer 1980). Christine was one of the sub-committee organising it, and joint author with Vera Hodgkins of the booklet of this name. Long unavailable, it has now been reprinted and was first on sale at the meeting. Thus a description of the talk is superfluous, which in addition to matter covered in the publication was very much a hands-on walk-about in the upper museum gallery. Here was the Museum's own display of a plush weaving loom and examples both from this and from exhibits brought from the Museum store at Standlake (itself the location for a Society visit some years ago). **J.G.**

*Banbury and Shutford Plush*, Vera Hodgkins and Christine Bloxham, B.H.S., 2004 reprint, A5, 32pp., illustrated. **£3.75** (incl. p&p) from B.H.S.., c/o Banbury Museum, or J. Gibson (address on inside cover). Cheques payable to Banbury Historical Society.

**Thursday 14th October 2004.**

***The New Globe Theatre, London* – Margaret Thomas.**

This was a very comprehensive account of the history of past and present Globe Theatres. It ranged from issues about the original building to the realisation of a dream concept for a modern replica of Shakespeare's stage and auditorium.

The earliest mecca of playgoers was called 'The Theatre' and was located in Shoreditch. Some acting also happened in Blackfriars, but this did not appeal to the city fathers, who were afraid that theatres encouraged immorality and absenteeism and felt that gatherings of large numbers increased the risk of plague. They wished to push all entertainment onto the south bank of the Thames.

When the lease ran out for this first theatre, Shakespeare's company carried its main timbers across London Bridge and used them in building the first Globe, the site of which is still marked by a now restored bronze plaque.

Watching performances in the old theatre was not without its hazards. These included too close contact of actors with the audience, foul smells arising from buckets which served as lavatories and the ever-present risk of fire. In 1613, flames spread rapidly yet only one person was injured. People used beer in an attempt to relieve the condition known as burnt posterior.

A year later and a replacement building arose like a phoenix. However, Shakespeare had stopped writing and in any case the mid-seventeenth century Civil War resulted in ultimate demolition.

It was in the late 1960s that the idea for a new Globe Theatre was one man's aspiration. Sam Wanamaker presented a model to Southwark Council whose members were sufficiently impressed to offer land some three hundred yards from where the blackened plaque marked the site of the earlier foundations.

Wanamaker set up the Shakespeare Globe Trust and threw himself into fund raising for the scheme. He eventually gained financial support from such patrons as Gordon Getty; important figures gave encouragement and big businesses were persuaded to make substantial donations. The early years, however, were very hard when Sam used much of his own money and even mortgaged his home in order to fund the project. There was also a four-year delay when Southwark Council reneged on its promise of the site and had to be fought in court.

Meanwhile the Friends of the Globe were founded to be a pressure group and give support by running various fund raising events including giving talks to local societies to raise awareness of the Globe and make contributions towards it.

Today the Globe is a significant part of the process by which the South Bank is coming alive. Those who walk in that part of London can take in Southwark Cathedral as well. Here they will discover the Shakespeare window, a fitting reminder of the area's past association with the bard. As for the Globe, it is still not completely finished. Lottery money has helped but there is great dependence on the efforts of volunteers.

*To join The Friends of Shakespeare's Globe, contact F.O.S.G. Shakespeare's Globe, 21 New Globe Walk, London SE1 9DT, tel. 020 7902 5970, Fax 020 7902 5971, E-mail friends@fosg.org; Web-site www.shakespeares-globe.org/friends*

**Thursday 11th November 2004.**

***Medieval Villages in a Landscape (The Whittlewood Project)* –**

**Dr. Richard Jones (University of Leicester).**

This major landscape survey began in May 2000 and this phase is scheduled for completion in July next year. The team led by Dr. Richard Jones an archaeologist and Dr. Mark Page a historian has offered scope for historians and archaeologists alike to make a detailed study of an area from 500 to 1500 that is situated on the Northamptonshire/Buckinghamshire border and also historically contained a detached part of Oxfordshire. The twelve parishes surveyed are spread over an area of 35 square miles, much of which once comprised the ancient Royal Forest of Whittlewood.

Dr. Jones began by considering the techniques adopted. These included a survey of standing buildings with the help of English Heritage, field walking designed to trace settlement patterns (nucleated/dispersed), pollen analysis and geophysical procedures. At Stowe and Lillingstone Lovell the last of these enabled investigators to find a dovecot, a mill and a farmyard. No large-scale

archaeological digs were possible but some 400 test pits one metre square were dug and in one of these the remains of a skinned dog with its claws removed was found. This important discovery is the first archaeological evidence of disablement of dogs as required by forest law. Documentary evidence such as manorial accounts, manorial courts, rolls, terriers and surveys has yielded sufficient evidence to reconstruct the village landscapes around 1500.

The second half of the lecture focussed on a chronological analysis starting in pre-history and continuing through to the sixteenth century and beyond. Palaeoecological analysis showed that as early as 7500 B.C. woodland was giving way to grassland as Mesolithic nomadic groups cleared patches of woodland to make hunting more efficient. By 2500 B.C. there was more grassland than wood. Archaeological evidence from the Iron Age pointed to small groups of two or three round houses in enclosures, probably housing extended family units, and a previously unrecorded hill fort was identified at Whittlebury. Abandoned grain storage pits provided the first evidence of cereal production.

The Romans built their villas mainly on either side of the two Roman roads that cross the area. Examples were found in the modern parishes of Deanshanger, Whittlebury and Wicken but much more common were the farmsteads scattered throughout the area. They were set in an open landscape with linked arable fields and only a few trees to provide fuel. After the Romans the population declined and the woodland regenerated. The lack of pottery densities in the period up to 850 A.D. suggest that nuclear forces in rural settlement did not assert themselves until the later Saxon period.

Domesday Britain in the area studied was characterised by a lot of woodland and the evolution of farmstead villages whose open fields could extend for as far as a mile. To solve the distance problem hamlets grew up away from the main village with their own blocks of land such as those around Silverstone. The establishment of a royal forest stopped expansion in some areas.

The Lillingstones have been the subject of a micro-study backed up by historical evidence that reveal a growing population until the end of the thirteenth century followed by shrinkage during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries partly due to migration, open fields enclosed for sheep or, in the case of Stowe a little later, removal to make way for a deer park. Although those engaged on the study may have revealed a chronology right through to conclusion in some villages, it was not all bad news. Open field declined in the fifteenth century but did not disappear until the Parliamentary enclosures. Moreover the woodlands provided some job opportunities such as charcoal burning, bird catching, carpentry and fuel for potteries.

Mid-summer 2005 is the current time for concluding this project but those involved in this multi-disciplinary way of looking at the landscape hope for a second period of investigation. Only in this way can some of the remaining questions be answered.

# Book Reviews

**Printers and Publishers in Deddington, 1840-2004**, Brian Carter (A5, 40pp). Published by the author, 13 High Street, Deddington, Oxon OX15 0SJ. 2004, £4.00 (incl. p&p).

This is a gem of a booklet in that it confines itself to the media products of a decayed Oxfordshire market town, but in such a manner that it smoothly connects with the products of the last generation, since the production of *Deddington News* in 1976. The pressure from other centres, in particular of Banbury with Cheney and Rusher as competition at the general level, and Potts at the newspaper level, is indeed noted. In this light, some initiatives seem positively heroic: the best example would be John Samuel Hiron's *Woodstock Union and Deddington Directory*. The author deduces from the third issue for May 1841 that the first may have dated from 1839, revealing a swift emulation of Potts' *Banbury Guardian*, which began in 1838 as a monthly four-page sheet exploring Poor Law Union issues, and only moved to a weekly, paying the Stamp duty, in 1843. Undaunted, Hiron launched a monthly newspaper, *The North Oxfordshire Monthly Times,* in July 1849, which ran through at least 132 issues until June 1860, although alas only the first run of 62 issues to 1854 appears to survive. The use of the scrapbooks of the local solicitor George Coggins is excellent primary evidence in this booklet. Janet Cooper suggested as much in the *Victoria County History* vol. XI when she cited two minute cuttings, both of 1860, in the Coggins collection at the Bodleian Library, as evidence for this survival.

Comments on the preponderance of printed matter emanating from the church and the clergy in Victorian times is just, but perhaps the author understates the ferocity of religious controversy in the town between 1848 and 1878, which Thomas Boniface and Maurice Frost managed, in 83 years' stewardship, to alter. It follows that the fortunes of the three predominant printers, Hiron, Caulcott and Whetton, are only partly determined by economic factors of the market, and business acumen. Hiron's fall owes much to the defaulting payment of Vicar Brogden, causing him to move his business to New Street where, with a second wife (and mother-in-law enumerated in the 1861 census) he struggled until Rev William Risley ensured he lost the Stamp Office position for daring to vote (at Hornton) in the 1862 parliamentary election. Many of these details relating to the Coggins material (though this covers largely the last third of the nineteenth century) are validated by the Risley diary volumes mentioned by the author, which we trust will see the light of published day in 2005.

A section on papermaking, which flourished in Deddington until the 1860s, is greatly served by the use of private deeds held locally, and therefore adds to the *VCH* account. So many artefacts are at large in any parish: here paper with

Emberlin's watermarks, Fardon's clocks, silverware given by William Risley and a cache of copies of the *NOMT* (mentioned in the Turner volume in 1933) are part of that list. Now we know that the farmer at Church Farm, Steeple Barton, offered a mortgage to the mill and finally foreclosed and sold to Zachary Stilgoe in 1867 precisely. Perhaps we will never know whether the paper was used by local presses, but we also know the name of at least 34 Deddingtonians associated with the industry: added to the group of axletree workers and Franklin's woodworkers, this is quite an industrial base.

The long period of silence, from about 1900 to 1976, after the ending of the Parish Magazine with which Charles Hobday was associated, is interpreted as a period of diminished community, from which the efforts of the *Deddington News* pioneers have rescued us, save that "we" are not the same, either in our religious environment or our occupations, as the Deddingtonians of the nineteenth century. Technology has changed all that, but widened horizons. However, despite the wider world of the Drakes publications and the presence of Philip Allan, the Worton influence is still here: Simon & Schuster conjures up memories of Sir George, the county councillor, just as Hiron's printed sermons reflected the Wilsons of Worton. Brian Carter considers Daniel Wilson, Bishop of Calcutta, the "most distinguished" of the family, though I note that Nigel Barley, in *White Rajah*, considers him "huge, fat, eccentric... and deaf". Joseph Wilson, founder of the Lords Day Observance Society would count for more, had he lived in an age of a vigorous press. The Deddington contribution examined in this booklet is witness to a much greater product than the standard description of the place would suggest.

**Geoffrey Stevenson**

**Oxfordshire's Lost Railways.** Peter Dale (card covers, 48pp, illus.). ISBN 1-84033-312-X. Stenlake Publishing Ltd. 2004. £7.50.

This modest paperback contains a succinct introductory history to the county's railways, and is then devoted to some two score photographs about 8" x 6" of trains and stations on lines which have long since disappeared from Oxfordshire, or, in a few cases, such as Fritwell and Somerton, Cropredy and Ardley, to now closed stations on lines which still survive. The first two, incidentally, show clearly, from the distance between the platforms, that Brunel's line from Paddington to Birmingham via Banbury was originally to his 7 foot broad gauge. The captions vary from the informative to the laconic. A helpful preface to each line lists the dates of withdrawal of passenger services and closure of stations.

The standard of pictures can however best be described as variable. We fondly imagine that the first decade of the last century was one endless sunny afternoon, and indeed shadows are visible in some of the pictures, but the overall impression is one of greyness. Indeed the reproduction of a rare photograph of Rollright Halt is appalling.

Readers of *C&CH* will naturally be mainly interested in 'our' branch line, which ran from the junction at King's Sutton on the Banbury-Oxford line, through Adderbury, Bloxham, Hook Norton and Chipping Norton to Kingham and thence over the Cotswolds to Cheltenham. The passenger service lasted from the opening of the line in 1887 to 1951, and indeed from 1907 to the outbreak of war in 1939 an express train (the 'Ports to Ports') ran once a day over it.

The book contains pictures of most of the Oxfordshire stations on the line, including three well-known ones of Chipping Norton (thanks to the Packer family) and two of Hook Norton, but none of the express, which one caption wrongly states was at one time worked by locomotives of the well known 'Castle' class. There is also some duplication. We could have foregone one of the two photographs of the shunting accident at Chipping Norton on 23rd May 1907, exciting though it obviously was to the local schoolboys, and likewise one of the two of Bletchington [*sic*] station on what seems to have been an indescribably murky day in the same year.

There are no pictures of tunnels at Chipping Norton or Hook Norton, the fine pair of viaducts or the extensive ironstone railways at the latter place, or the ironstone system which ended at Alkerton (now the local tip). Those with a deeper interest in the Banbury-Cheltenham Railway may wish to invest in the splendid 3-volume history now being published by Wild Swan Publications, of which two volumes have appeared – but they will also need much deeper pockets, and will not get much change from a hundred pounds.

Meanwhile the present paperback is good value as a reminder of the days when our railways were well patronised and proudly staffed.

**Alan Donaldson**

**Foul Deeds and Suspicious Deaths Around Oxfordshire**, Carl Boardman (card covered, 176pp). ISBN 1 903425 56 5. Wharncliffe Books/Pen & Sword Books (47 Church St., Barnsley, S. Yorks. S70 2AS). 2004. £9.99.

The only specifically Banbury item here is the account of the Kalabergo murder of 1851. The story has been told many times, with E.R Lester (duly acknowledged) devoting a whole book to it, somewhat fictionalised, in 1975. Nevertheless, as one would expect from Carl, it reads well. That doesn't excuse captioning a photograph of the High Street with the well-known three-gabled Vivers buildings prominent as being 'Butchers Row'.

The other 'Banburyshire' item is the sad affair of Eliza Nicholls, who in December 1865 gave birth to an illegitimate child at her mother's house at Hempton near Deddington, the baby being found dead 36 hours later. Poor Eliza quickly confessed to having strangled the child. She was accused of infanticide, but at her trial it is interesting to see that compassion ruled the day, with the prosecution doing its best to mitigate the circumstances. In the event Eliza was sentenced 'only' to twelve months imprisonment with hard labour. I eagerly

turned to the relevant period in the diary of William Cotton Risley, of Deddington House, which I am currently sub-editing, but, unsurprisingly, to no avail – his beloved wife was days away from death, and he can have had little thought for extraneous events.

Carl has a great knack for popularising local history without dumbing down. The 27 chapters of this book (and many more cases) make us realise that the 21st century is no more lawless than its predecessors; and, I hope, will encourage readers to research for themselves.

**Aspects of Helmdon**, No. 5, Helmdon Branch W.E.A., 2004. 60pp. £3.50 incl p&p from Audrey Forgham, The Old Barn, Cross Lane, Helmdon, NN13 5QL.

After a gap of three years it is good to see a further number in this praiseworthy series. Contents include a useful article on the shops of Helmdon and a history of the Parish Council from 1894 to date. 'A Craftsman's Notebook' discusses an unusual source, a book whose 196 pages are covered with specifications for a variety of of vehicles, farm and domestic items, and plans for cottages. It runs from 1876 to 1901, and probably was kept by Arthur Taylor, a Helmdon carpenter and wheelwright: fascinating, especially for do-it-yourself enthusiasts. 'Helmdon and the World Beyond' uses the Parsish Constable's accounts, 1653-1718, to identify the many unfortunates, particularly those formerly enslaved in Turkey or north Africa, passing through the parish helped on their way by relief, small sums of money. Comparison is made with the *Wigginton Constable's Book, 1691-1836* (ed. F.D. Price, BHS **11**, 1971), but Helmdon's constables provided more detail. The booklet concludes with reminiscences of Jim Watson (b.1911), of Helmdon in the last century, and details of the village website: www.helmdon.com

**Brailes History: Episodes from a forgotten past: 3.** Alan and Philip Tennant (A5, 56pp). Published by A.J. Tennant, 49 Hawthorn Way, Shipston on Stour, Warwickshire CV36 4FD. 2004. £1.80 (incl. p&p).

Another worthwhile issue of from the Tennant brothers. There are three articles. Colin Haydon, 'Religious intolerance at Brailes, *c.*1660-*c.*1800' (reprinted from *The Historian*) is an entertaining account of a very anti-Catholic (and Welsh) curate falling foul of the local Catholic great family, the Sheldons, through whose protection many villagers were of the same persuasion. Philip Tennant makes an exhaustive examination of Dugdale's history of Brailes in his *Antiquities of Warwickshire*, 1656, our first real county history, comparing it with subsequent editions and additions. Alan Tennant concludes with a discussion of that neglected census, of 1841, from the point of view of the picture it gives of the village rather than the individual villagers.

**J.S.W.G.**

# 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.

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).
*The 'Bawdy Court' of Banbury: The Act Book of the Peculiar Court of Banbury and Cropredy 1625-38*, ed. R.K. Gilkes (vol. 26).
*King's Sutton Churchwardens' Accounts 1636-1700*, ed. Paul Hayter (vol. 27).
*The Banbury Chapbooks*, by Dr Leo John de Freitas (vol. 28, pub'n. December 2004).

Current prices, and availability of other back volumes, from the Hon. Secretary, c/o Banbury Museum.

In preparation:

Selections from the *Diaries of William Cotton Risley,* ed. G.W. Smedley-Stevenson:
Part 1: *Vicar of Deddington 1836-1848* (publication Spring 2005);
Part 2: *Squarson of Deddington 1849-1869* (publication Summer 2005).
*Turnpike Roads to Banbury*, by Alan Rosevear.

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 Banbury Museum, Spiceball Park 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.**

# BANBURY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

**Winter 2004-2005 Programme**

*All meetings are held at Banbury Museum.*

*Thursday 9th December. 7.30 p.m.*

**The History of Oxford College Gardens.** *Michael Pirie, head gardener, Green College, Oxford.*

*Thursday 13th January 2005. 7.30 p.m.*

**Oxfordshire houses.** *John Pilling, M.A.* (based on his book *Oxfordshire Houses*).

*Thursday 10th February 2005. 7.30 p.m.*

**Church and Chapel and the Religious Census of 1851 – touching on nonconformity in north Oxfordshire.** *Dr Kate Tiller, former Academic Dean, Oxford University Department of Continuing Education.*

*Thursday 10th March 2005. 7.30 p.m.*

**Archaeology of Roman Oxfordshire.** *Paul Booth, Oxfordshire Archaeology.*

All meetings are held at the
**Banbury Museum**, Spiceball Park Road, Banbury,
at **7.30 p.m.**

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