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

Cake and Cockhorse

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

Volume 17 **Spring 2008** **Number Five**

On 28th June 1608 the Borough of Banbury was granted its Second Charter. It is gratifying that our present Town Council is recognising this fourth centenary throughout 2008 with appropriate events. We congratulate the current Mayor, Mr Keiron Mallon, and the Mayor-elect, Ann Bonner, who takes office in May, on their initiative. The "year" opened in February with a reception appropriately held at the Museum, with the original Charter and other relics of the Borough on display. Our Society has already showed its support by presenting to the Town Council office a copy of *Banbury Corporation Records: Tudor and Stuart* (BHS 15) and two binders with copies of *Cake & Cockhorse* containing over twenty articles about the Borough Council and its activities during those centuries.

Banbury's first Charter was granted in 1554. The 1608 Charter brought about numerous changes in the town's government, but the most noticeable was the change in its chief citizen and royal representative from Bailiff to Mayor. A list of these, compiled by Ted Brinkworth, was published in 1954. Subsequent research has identified or corrected more, and we now know names for all but four of the four hundred years – this revision will appear in our next issue.

April sadly marks the retirement of Dr Malcolm Graham. Over 37 years he has created in Oxfordshire Studies an outstanding resource for Oxfordshire's historians. Thank you, Malcolm, for all you have achieved and which most of us have taken for granted. We wish Carl Boardman well in the enforced amalgamation with the Oxfordshire Record Office.

THE TRADE (AND DEBTS) OF A BANBURY SHOEMAKER IN THE 1870s: WILLIAM CAVE and his solicitor George Crosby

Alan G. Crosby

In *Victorian Banbury* Barrie Trinder discusses the decline of the town's traditional small crafts during the mid-Victorian period, as they were challenged by competition from larger units of production beyond Banbury.[1] He notes how a growing number of shops sold articles manufactured elsewhere, and that in some sectors there were no significant moves towards the establishment of a factory system of production which would have been more able to compete on equal terms.

Among the trades which are singled out in this analysis is shoemaking, which was once one of Banbury's most important occupations (and is forever immortalised in the view from Herbert's window). In the *Victoria County History* the earlier importance of the trade is analysed, drawing upon the evidence of the Banbury wills (shoemakers and cordwainers being the second largest category among the occupations of Banbury will-makers 1551-1820) but pointing to a dramatic reduction in relative significance after 1640.[2] Until that date they were, by a considerable margin, the largest category of tradesmen, but thereafter their dominance was rapidly eroded, and this is correlated with the parallel rise of the Northampton shoemaking trade. It is suggested that the town had hitherto produced shoes for a geographically wide market, but that Northampton's rise put an end to that since the market was 'captured by the rival town'.

Nonetheless, shoemaking, and the very closely related leather trade, remained an important element in the overall economic structure of the town, and the *VCH* article suggests, quite reasonably, that this was at least in part a function of Banbury's continuing pre-eminence as a trading centre for cattle and other livestock, the horse fairs and cattle fairs being of course of national importance.

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[1] Barrie Trinder, *Victorian Banbury* (BHS vol.19; 1982), especially pp.89-90.

[2] Alan Crossley (ed), *Banbury: A History* [reprinted from *VCH Oxfordshire* vol.10, 1984 by Oxon County Libraries; originally published 1969] pp.63-64.

The *VCH* analysis returns to the later role of the shoemakers, noting that the number recorded in *Rusher's Lists* increases from 17 in 1832 to 29 in 1850, some 16 of the latter being described as 'manufacturers' (the usual term for those tradesmen who employed more than their own family members, and who traded with a more than purely local market). It also indicates that in 1851 more than 100 people in the town and its hamlets in Oxfordshire were engaged in shoemaking so that this was, with weaving, the largest of the 'traditional' trades.[3] Trinder's analysis is more detailed, suggesting that numbers of shoemakers grew during the 1850s, reaching 182 at the time of the 1861 census, but then fell steadily to 135 in 1871. His research, conducted in the late 1970s, predated the release of the 1881 census, but unquestionably a further decline took place. Barrie Trinder also points out that in terms of size some of the shoemaking establishments in mid-Victorian Banbury were towards the upper end of the 'domestic' level of production – in 1861 William Shearsby employed 13 people and Amelia Dumbleton 10 – but that the crucial progression from this to small factory units never materialised.[4]

The 1870s and 1880s saw economic and commercial stagnation in the town, a period meticulously described by Trinder under the chapter heading 'Going Downhill'. He highlights the range of economic consequences of the protracted agricultural depression, crucially important in a town so dependent on its rural farming hinterland, and also shows how emigration and rural depopulation, uncertainty in manufacturing, and widespread poverty within the town sapped the strength of the community. Although in this period Banbury may have benefited in relative terms from the even more rapid decline of places such as Deddington, nobody with any sense would have put money on its future prosperity. Yet, as Barrie also indicates, the hinterland served by Banbury was huge, and in the mid-century the growth of the town's role as a railhead encouraged the carriers to expand the network of routes which they plied, so that by 1881 there were 191 carriers making a total of 438 journeys each week into Banbury.

Among the traders who were chilled by the cold winds of competition was the shoemaker William Cave, who more or less went bankrupt in 1875. He was born in Banbury in 1830, the son of Thomas Cave, cordwainer (born 1800) and his wife Mary (born in the same year, also in

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[3] As fn. 2, *Banbury [VCH]*, p.66.

[4] Trinder, *Victorian Banbury*, p.90.

Banbury). In 1851 the Cave family was living at 29 Parson's Street, and in the census returns Thomas, the father, was described as a cordwainer, employing five men (two of his employees presumably being his sons William and John – then aged 16 – who are also described as 'cordwainer'). A decade later William and his wife Hannah were living at Constitution Row in Neithrop, and he was described as a cordwainer, but in 1871 (living at the same address with their six children) he was a 'bootmaker'. However, *Rusher's Lists* do not include William under his own name until 1870, and it is clear that for the previous twenty years at least he had worked for his father Thomas. When the 1871 census was taken the only resident of 29 Parson's Street was Mary Ann Cave, 'formerly shoemaker's wife', aged 70, and it appears that Thomas himself had died only a short time before. In 1870 William, their son, is for the first time entered in *Rusher's Lists* as a boot and shoemaker, but his address is given as 29 Parson's Street. Since he actually lived in Neithrop this indicates that he did not work from home but from the premises where his mother still lived and which had been used for the shoemaking trade for several decades. The directory entries are unaltered from 1870 to 1876, at which point he disappears – though a W. Cave, boot and shoemaker, who may have been the same person, is recorded at Broughton Road (on which Constitution Row lies) in 1886-1891.[5]

The implication of this miscellany of evidence is that William Cave worked as an independent shoemaker, trading in his own name, only from 1870 to 1876. However, it is well-known that directories, even ones as local as Rusher's, have a certain amount of inertia, and we must be cautious about taking their evidence as infallible. Entries are repeated unchanged from year to year, and because the volumes went to press some time before their nominal current date they may include information which was obsolete by the time of publication. This appears to have been the case in the recording not only of William Cave, who in reality went out of business in the summer of 1875, but also of my great-grandfather, George Crosby (born 1849), who was practising as a solicitor in Banbury by that date but does not appear in the lists until 1877. I will refer to him hereafter as George Crosby III, to distinguish

[5] Census returns and Rusher's Lists were checked at Centre for Banburyshire Studies (Banbury Library), and cross-referenced with the index of Banbury trades. As always, it is a pleasure to acknowledge with thanks the assistance given by the staff at Banbury Library.

him from his father George Crosby II (born 1820, a borough councillor from 1860, mayor in 1872-1873, and alderman thereafter until his death in 1886) and his grandfather George Crosby I (1800-1879, a baker of, *inter alia*, High Street). George Crosby III had been articled first to Kilby & Son of Banbury, and then to Thomas Wallace Goldring, a solicitor of Lincoln's Inn, and passed his final examinations and was admitted to practice in November 1870. He married, in 1872, Thomas Goldring's younger sister, Kate, and they returned to Banbury and lived at West Street, Neithrop. There their first three children, Norman, Katherine and Eleanor, were born between 1874 and 1876. The primary evidence for the rest of this article is derived from a document among George Crosby III's papers, some of which form part of the huge Stockton and Fortescue (solicitors) collection at the Oxfordshire Record Office.

In 1875 William Cave was clearly in financial trouble, occasioned primarily by the large number of trade debts which had been built up and were owing to him by purchasers of boots and shoes in the Banbury area. He in turn owed substantial sums of money, which he was unable to repay. He was technically on the verge of bankruptcy, and in early August 1875 was party to a complex agreement between himself (the first party), George Crosby III (the second party), and (on the third part) Theophilus and John Cozens, trading as Cozens & Co., of Wolverhampton; George Crosby II of Banbury, brewer; and Thomas Pain and Philip Perkins Hawtin, solicitors of Banbury. In this document the significant trading element is that concerning Wolverhampton, for Cozens & Co. were leading tanners, curriers and leather dealers there and also in Walsall. Cave had been unable to pay bills for leather, totalling £53 5s 9d; had apparently employed my great-grandfather to handle the ensuing legal action but now also owed him £36 11s 3d; and had previously used the services of Pain & Hawtin and owed them money as well. My great-grandfather, who was unfortunately not the wisest of men, decided to resolve the situation to his anticipated benefit, by taking over the book debts due to Cave, paying off the debts to Cozens of Wolverhampton and Pain & Hawtin, the fellow (though rival) solicitors of Banbury, and then recovering the small debts which were previously due to Cave.[6]

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[6] The document in question is from the uncatalogued collection: Oxfordshire Record Office, Stockton and Fortescue Collection, box 5 bundle J, papers of George Crosby, solicitor of Banbury.

As part of this transaction, a complete copy of Cave's debt book was appended to the agreement, and this gives a rare detailed insight into the trade of a small Banbury shoemaker in the mid-Victorian period. Indeed, as the trade itself was by then undergoing a rapid decline in the face of strong competition from Northampton, it is likely that the existence of such extensive indebtedness was symptomatic of the wider problems of the town's boot and shoemaking trade, and was representative of a more deep-seated financial instability in this ancient Banbury craft. By analysing the details given in the debt book we can identify some key features of the business which undoubtedly reflect on the broader context of the commercial and social influence of Banbury in the years of stagnation and doubt.

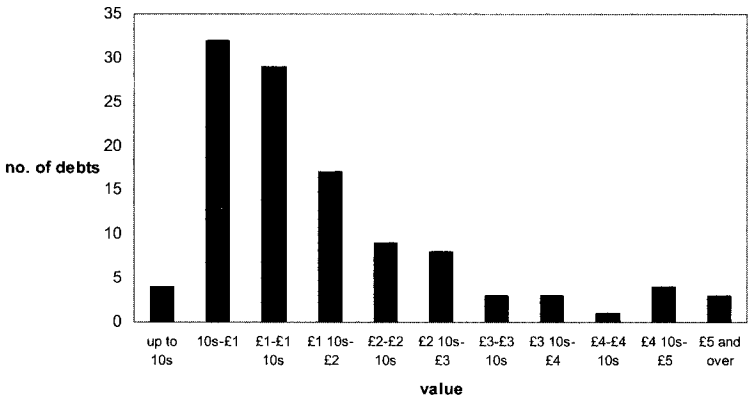


Fig.1 The debts of William Cave in 1875, shown by size of individual debt.

The first approach involves analysing the financial implications of the list. In all, 113 debts are listed, with a total value of £205 15s 9d. This means that the average individual debt was only £1 16s 5d. The smallest debts were for 8s 6d each, owed by Mr Page junior and Mr Eden junior, both of Middle Tysoe. The largest was for £9 10s 6d, owed by Mr John Lamb of Sibford. However, as figure 1 indicates, the great majority of debts were for small sums, of under £2 10s. The implication of this pattern of trading is very clear. William Cave, like the other boot and shoemakers in the town, dealt direct with the customer. That meant that almost all orders were for single pairs of footwear, which explains the small

size of the debts. In terms of competitiveness, such a reliance on piecemeal individual orders from different customers, no matter how loyal those customers might be, placed Cave and his colleagues at a major disadvantage. Because most of what they produced was probably made to measure, rather than bespoke, they had less opportunity to build up a stock, and were perhaps less responsive to fashion. Since all their output was handmade, there were no economies of scale and no possibility of, for example, machine-cutting and stitching. A further disadvantage was that as the tanning and leather industry itself became concentrated in a relatively few areas and in the hands of a smaller number of suppliers, it was much harder for small shoemakers to obtain their essential materials at competitive rates because those rates required bulk purchase, which was not what they wanted. That, in turn, implied higher retail prices, though that difficulty would be to some extent offset by the lack of a middleman – the retailer or shopkeeper – and by the more modest overheads of a domestic trade conducted in a backroom or workshop. But if William Cave was in any sense typical of Banbury's shoemakers in the 1870s, their vulnerability to the large-scale, fashion-responsive and economically more adaptable competitors from Northampton and the other East Midlands footwear centres is very obvious.

place	*number of debts*	*place*	*number of debts*
Tysoes (all)	40	Greatworth	2
Banbury town	11	Wellesbourne	2
Neithrop	9	Claydon	1
Drayton	6	Deddington	1
Bodicote	5	Epwell	1
Farthinghoe	4	Gaydon	1
Hanwell	4	Halse	1
Wroxton	4	Harbury	1
Bourton (Great)	3	Marston St Lawrence	1
Grimsbury	3	North Newington	1
Shenington	3	Shotteswell	1
Sibfords (both)	3	Shutford	1
Burdrop	2	Warmington	1

Fig.2 The location of William Cave's debtors in 1875.

Analysis of the geographical pattern of debts is of value, since they can be used as a helpful indicator of Banbury's approximate sphere of *influence – its commercial hinterland – at a stage when the regional* railway network was still expanding and the commercial carriers continued to ply the country lanes and high roads from outlying villages to railhead. Barrie Trinder notes that Banbury, though of comparatively small size, was the focus for a very extensive market area and that its trading role extended widely across the south midlands. As with all towns, the hinterland was shaped by various factors. Perhaps the two most important were communications routes (or their absence) and the proximity of other competing centres. In the case of Banbury the larger rivals – Oxford, Northampton, Warwick and Stratford – were all about 20-25 miles distant, while the nearer village markets, such as those at Deddington, Shipston, or Kineton, had dwindled away almost completely. The most serious competition, perhaps, came from places such as Daventry, Chipping Norton and, especially, Brackley, which was the closest (only eight miles away) and like Banbury an old borough with a well-established market tradition.

Overall, therefore, Banbury was blessed with an unusually large hinterland, albeit seriously truncated to the south where Oxford's powerful influence was exerted as far north as the Bartons and the Astons, and substantially reduced to the south-east because of the proximity of Brackley. In terms of communications it was helped by the presence of the main GWR line, which made its station a major railhead, but also by the absence of satisfactory railway routes to the west and, especially, the east. The north Cotswolds, as noted above, were still an area of carriers' carts and road traffic and remained so. Banbury's main local trading area was thus a broad swathe of countryside and villages extending into Northamptonshire to the east, northwards towards Southam and Wellesbourne, and westwards towards Shipston and Hook Norton. A web of carriers' routes connected the villages in this area with Banbury market and, after 1850, railway station.

The distribution of William Cave's debts exemplifies this more general impression. There were some 23 debts from Banbury proper, Neithrop and Grimsbury. This must seriously under-represent the extent of Cave's local trade, since it was much easier to 'encourage' local people to repay their debts than to apply pressure on distant villagers. The balance of the debts was from the rural hinterland, and figure 2 shows their location. As is immediately obvious, the Tysoes represented much the most important

place with which Cave had trade dealings. While it is conceivable that Tysoe people were unusually bad at repaying their debts, it is much more probable (since they were surely honourable folk!) that this concentration of indebtedness was simply the consequence of the fact that the three villages of Tysoe – Lower, Middle or Church, and Uppe – were the largest single market for William Cave's footwear. Sadly, Joseph Ashby, Tysoe's most famous son, is not recorded among the debtors, but he was only in his teens at the time.

The debts were owed by 33 different individuals, so it was evidently not the case that a shopkeeper in Tysoe had bought goods wholesale from William Cave in order to retail the stock locally. There may be other, hidden, reasons for the close links between Tysoe and Banbury in the case of William Cave's trade, but as yet any such factors are unclear. Tysoe was in Warwickshire but, far from a railway and with poor road connections northwards, it looked naturally enough to Banbury as the nearest major market town. The debts owing to William Cave indicate that he was selling goods to many people in Tysoe, and it is apparent from the pattern of debts that the villages between Banbury and Tysoe were also important for the shoemaker's trade—places such as the Sibfords, Wroxton and Hanwell were Banbury's exclusive hinterland, and remain so to this day. On the other side of the town, some of the rural villages in the western tip of Northamptonshire were also part of the 'natural' trading sphere of Banbury people. That Farthinghoe, Halse and Marston St Lawrence, for example, appear in the list illustrates the way in which historians should look at patterns other than those indicated by ancient administrative boundaries. Figure 3 shows the geographical distribution of the places served by William Cave – or at least, those where debts were owed – and my perception is that the pecked line which I have drawn gives a convincing impression not only of Cave's trading patterns but also of the primary commercial hinterland of Banbury itself.

A closer look at the network of carrier's routes helps us to understand the distribution of the products of Banbury's tradesmen and craftsmen. Tysoe was, as we might surmise, particularly well served – there were five carriers and nine services per week, which represented a major artery of communication. Carriers transported parcels, goods, packages, deliveries and people, so the boots and shoes for which Tysoe people still owed money had been sent to them by one or other of the carts operated by Messrs. Hirons (from the *Windmill*, Thursday); Butcher (the *Plough*,

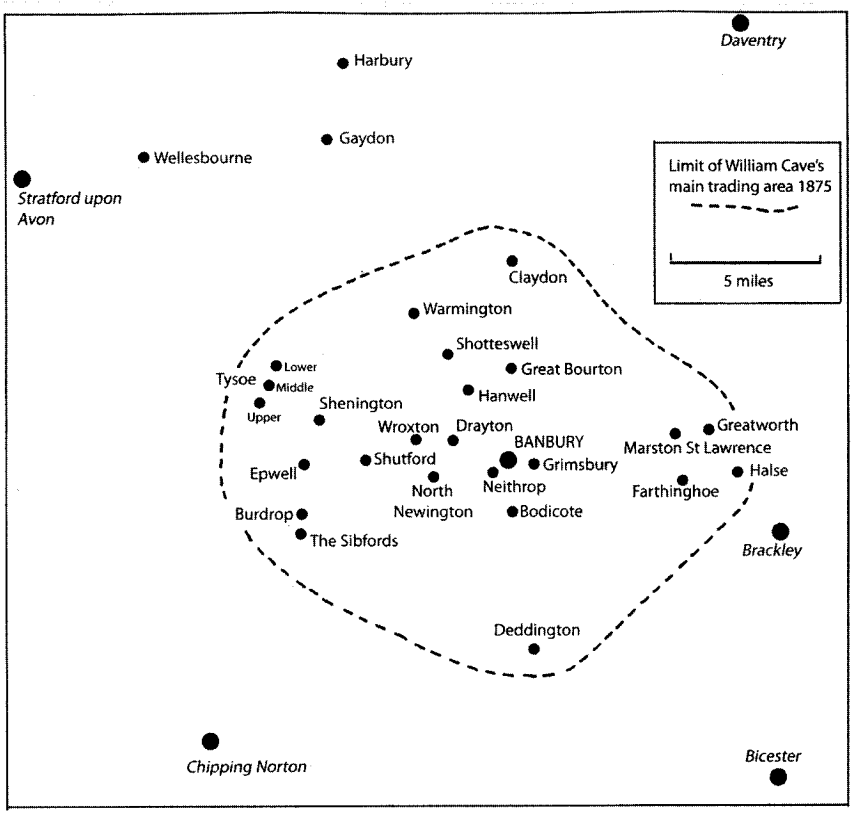
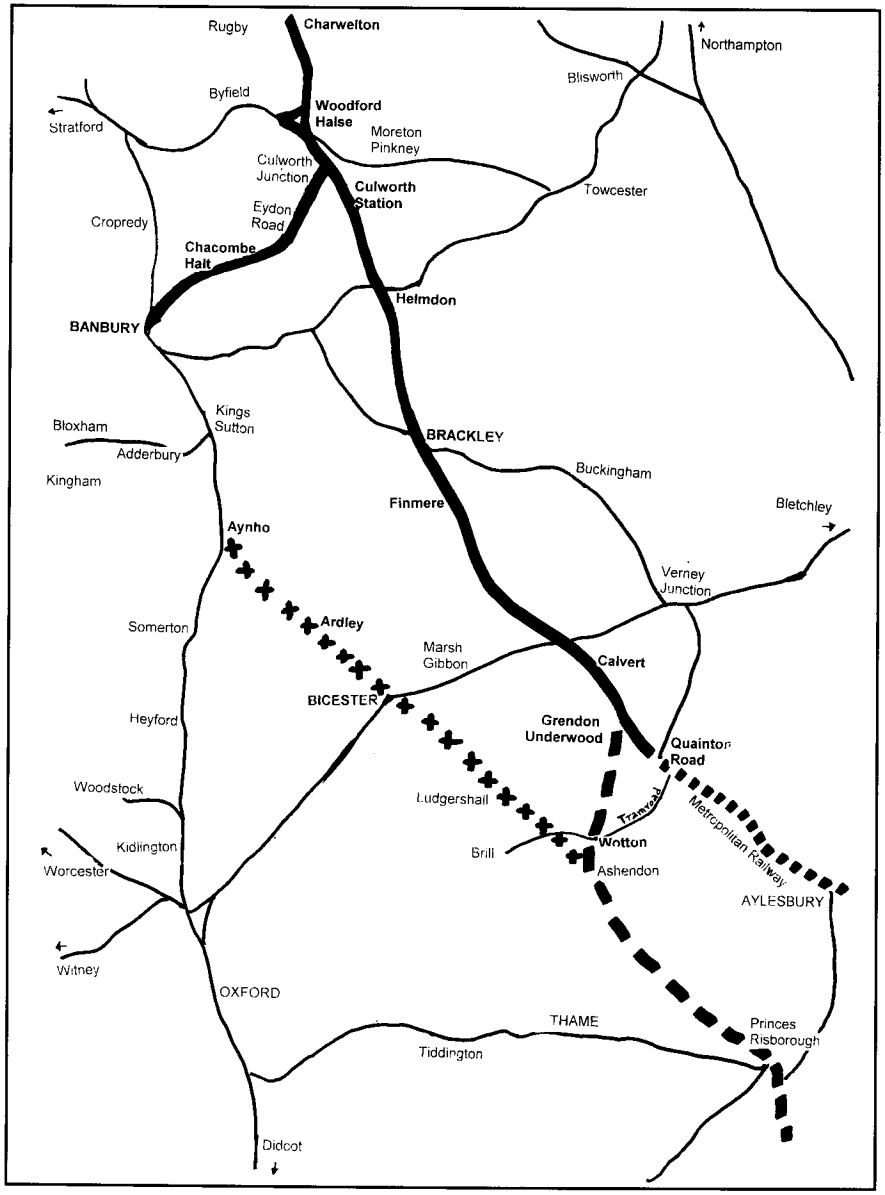


Fig.3 The probable geography of Banbury's trading hinterland in 1875.

Monday, Thursday, Saturday, or Friday en route to Stratford); Gardner (the *Reindeer*, Monday, Thursday and Saturday); Eden (the *Bear*, Thursday) or Page (the *Dog and Gun*, Thursday). The one debt owed from Harbury, up towards Leamington, resulted from a pair of shoes which might have been sent on one of the three carriers' services which trundled along the back roads every week roughly following the line of the canal – more likely that, I think, than *via* the Great Western Railway which, though quicker, was more expensive and lacked the personal touch. A carrier knew the people whose goods he carried, and the people to whom they were to be delivered. That counted for a lot. Every place included in the list of debts owing was served by a carrier service from Banbury, and many a pair of boots or shoes, carefully wrapped and labelled, was consigned in this fashion.

The graph, table and the map together give a vivid picture of the trading patterns of a small Banbury craftsman of the 1870s. There is every reason to think that, although the serious level of indebtedness might have been unusual, the nature of the trade typified the wider character of the town's business activities in this period. Though there were larger undertakings, the analysis which Barrie Trinder undertook thirty years ago highlights the essentially modest and unambitious quality of Banbury's business community in that troubled time. William Cave was probably unusual only insofar as his private trade debts became, by an unpredictable process of archival creation and preservation, public property. And what of my great-grandfather, who took on those debts? He did not have a business head on his shoulders, and his legal practice came to a sticky end. In the late 1880s he left Banbury and went to London (thus, annoyingly, depriving me of the honour of having a grandfather born in Banbury, since his younger son was born in Herne Hill). In London he went from bad to worse, succumbed to drink, and in 1905 died a pauper vagrant in Marylebone Workhouse Infirmary. Perhaps William Cave's debts were part of his decline – and therefore if the William Cave, shoemaker of Broughton Road in the early 1880s, was the same man, the shoemaker got by far the better deal!

Note. Alan Crosby (whose Banbury credentials are given on page 152) is the editor of *The Local Historian.*



————	Great Central Railway Extension to London.	*Scale:*
– – – – – –	authorised or in course of construction, early 20th century	Approx.
- - - - - - - -	Running powers from Quainton Road to London	10 miles
+ + + + + +	Later G.W.R. section (1910) Ashendon to Aynho	per inch

BANBURYSHIRE'S LOST MAIN LINE

The Great Central Railway: A short history

Alan Donaldson

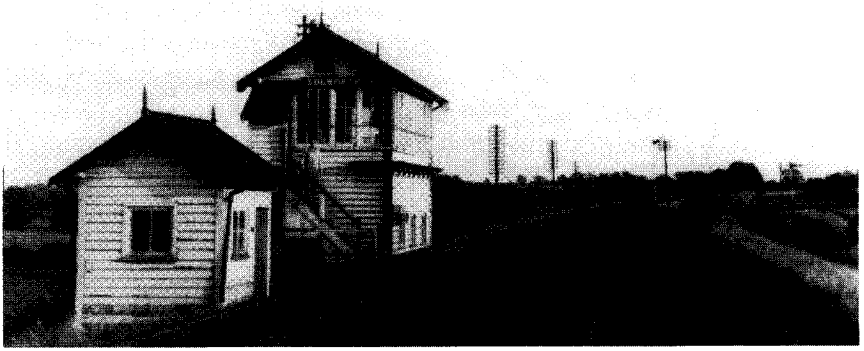
In the last decade of the nineteenth century the Manchester Sheffield & Lincolnshire Railway (a northern concern, as its title indicates with a west-east trans – Pennine main line) constructed an extension railway to London. The new line ran from Annesley, just north of Nottingham, to a new station in the centre of that city to be named, like so many of its contemporaries, after the reigning queen. It then progressed south through Leicester, Rugby and Brackley, before meeting the existing Metropolitan Railway line from London at Quainton Road, a few miles north of Aylesbury. This station was already a junction, situated on the Aylesbury-Verney Junction line, whence an eccentric little tramroad, promoted by the Duke of Buckingham in the 1870s, diverged westwards to the hill-top village of Brill. The London extension then used the Metropolitan line as far as the north London suburbs, where it constructed its own line partly through tunnels, including one under Lord's cricket ground, to a new terminus of its own at Marylebone.

So, in contrast to the other main lines constructed 50 or 60 years earlier, it penetrated the capital from the provinces and not vice versa. In this respect its only similar predecessor was the Midland Railway, which in the 1860s had similarly reached its own new terminus at St Pancras. The original plan had been to terminate the new line at Boscobel Gardens, a little to the north, but this was opposed by the artists' colony in St John's Wood, led by Alma Tadema, in alliance with the M.C.C. in defence of the sacred turf of Lord's, and the bill was thrown out. One speculator who built a hotel in anticipation of the original site saw the final line by-pass his building. In this respect his frustration differed from that of Captain Lampet who built his hotel locally to us at Tadmarton in readiness for a line which never came. A second bill located the new terminus at a more central site fronting the Marylebone Road, and the cricketers were placated by an undertaking to 'cut and cover' the new line where it passed under the corner of their ground, subsequently restoring the turf to its pristine condition. In its revised form the London Extension Bill finally received the Royal Assent at the end of March 1893.

The London Extension of the M. S. & L. was, as a latecomer to the capital, finely engineered, using mechanical excavators instead of the pick, shovel and wheelbarrow of its predecessors; and moreover built to the larger continental loading gauge. The company's chairman, Sir Edward Watkin, was the very epitome of a Victorian entrepreneur, and nursed aspirations to use the new line as part of a through route from the north of England, via the Metropolitan underground railway, beneath the Thames, and then along the South Eastern Railway (also under Watkin's control) to the coast. It would then use a channel tunnel (upon which preliminary work actually commenced) to reach Paris and beyond. Watkin even attempted to build a copy of the Eiffel Tower at Wembley (inevitably to be known as "Watkin's Folly") but it only got as far as the lower stage of one of the four legs which stood close to where, two decades after its removal, the first Wembley Stadium was to be constructed. It is ironic that it is at St Pancras, over a century later, that Watkin's vision of a route to the continent is now being partly fulfilled. For the whole of the twentieth century the M. S. and L.'s London extension was usually referred to as 'Britain's last main line' but with the opening of the dedicated channel tunnel route from St Pancras in November 2007 the change of adjectival vowel in the title of this brief account may be apposite.

Two years before the opening of the new line in 1899, the company changed its name to the more imposing-sounding Great Central Railway. Appropriately it shared with that other great Victorian corporation, the City of Birmingham, the single-word motto of 'Forward'. Also in 1899, the financier Sir Alexander Henderson became chairman of the company. He held the post until the end of its separate existence in 1922, being created Lord Faringdon in 1916.

In the depths of the Northamptonshire countryside, in the small village of Woodford Halse, the Great Central built not only a junction station but also a locomotive depot, marshalling yards and, to serve them, a miniature Crewe railway town. About a mile south of Woodford, at Culworth Junction, the Great Central opened in 1900 an important link line (paid for by the Great Western Railway) for about eight miles to a junction with that company's Paddington – Birmingham line just north of Banbury, always later known simply as Banbury Junction. This link enabled traffic to travel from the north to the south, the west and Wales and also later permitted John Betjeman in his poem (not one of his better ones) 'Great Central Railway – Sheffield Victoria to Banbury' to 'leave



Culworth Junction Signal Box. The link line to Banbury of 1900 can just be seen diverging to the right while the extension to London of 1899 continues straight on, just to the left of the signal on the right of the picture.

the old Great Central Line for Banbury and buns'. Presumably the future Laureate felt that the more accurate and appetising 'cakes' were insufficiently rhyming or assonant for his purpose. The G.C.R. built two modest halts, rather than stations, at Culworth and Chacombe respectively on this short link, although the former was known as 'Eydon Road', to avoid confusion with Culworth station which stood on the new main line itself about a mile and a half from Culworth village, and in fact closer to Moreton Pinkney.

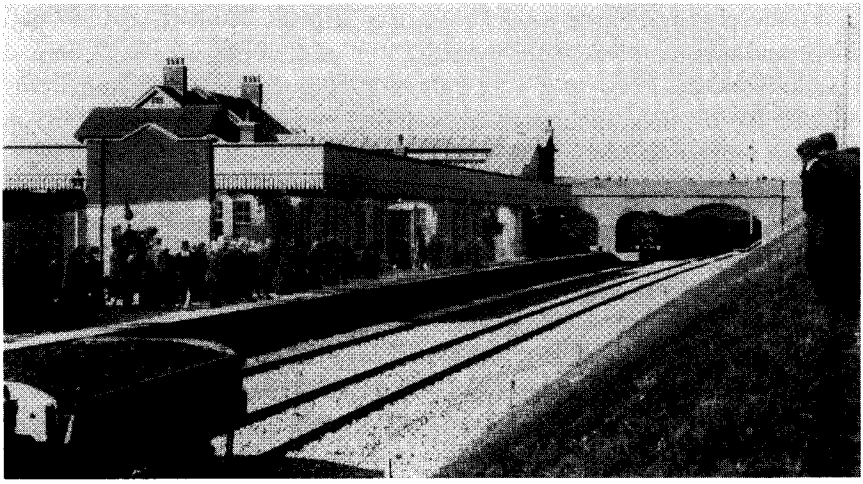
Fortunately for posterity, a young Leicester photographer with the euphonious initials of S.W.A. Newton was so fascinated by the construction of the line that he photographed every aspect of it during the 1890s – not just the engineering works of cuttings, embankments, tunnels, bridges and viaducts, but what preceded them, including the city slums and rural woods which were swept away, and also what followed, including the stations, the locomotive depots (including the one at Woodford Halse), the first proud employees and their families, and the first trains. Even the workmen (or "navvies") with their temporary huts and mission halls did not escape his camera. A good selection of his photographs, edited by the prolific engineering author L.T.C. Rolt (of *Narrow Boat* fame and lasting Banbury connection) was published under the title *The Making of a Railway* by Paul Hamlyn Ltd. in 1971.

Travelling almost directly from north to south the new line crossed several existing railways which ran roughly east to west. Chief among these in our area, at Rugby, was the London & North Western Railway (formerly the London & Birmingham, opened in 1838) whose vast installation was, with the adjoining canal, crossed by a long girder bridge, known locally as 'the Birdcage'. This so obscured the L.N.W.'s signal gantries that the G.C.R. had to pay for them to be re-sited. The last vestiges of the Birdcage were not removed until Christmas 2006.

The G.C's somewhat inappropriately named 'Central' Station at Rugby stood a mile or so to the south in Hillmorton Road. As Betjeman put it, in the same poem,

"And quite where Rugby Central is
Does only Rugby know."

Further south lay Braunston and Willoughby Station, where the L.N.W.'s Leamington – Weedon branch was crossed (so Braunston then had two stations, one on each line). There were viaducts at Willoughby, Staverton and Catesby. At Catesby there was also a tunnel with an 1897 datestone, and this was followed by Charwelton station with its iron-stone quarries, and then by Woodford (originally known as 'Woodford and Hinton'). Immediately south of Woodford stood a junction with the



Brackley Central Station - opening day 15th March 1899. A civic welcoming party awaits the first south-bound express, hauled by a locomotive decorated for the occasion, which is about to stop at the platform. Note the pristine state of the track, the permanent way wagon in the foreground, and the immensely tall home signal beyond the bridge.

Stratford-upon-Avon – Blisworth main line of the Stratford and Midland Junction Railway, known from its initials as the 'Slow Mouldy & Jolting'. For a time a through service operated from Marylebone to Stratford via the G.C.R and the S.M.J. Further on Culworth Junction was followed by Culworth and then Helmdon Stations. Helmdon also had two stations, the earlier one standing on the Banbury – Northampton branch, as well as a long brick-built viaduct. The G.C's station name board proclaimed 'Helmdon for Sulgrave' although the latter village is some three miles away.

Brackley back garden view 1966. A Marylebone-bound train has just left Brackley's 'Top' (Central) Station and is approaching the 22 span viaduct recalled by Flora Thompson, although it is hardly 'roaring'. The line was to close later that year and the viaduct was subsequently demolished. The scene is now largely occupied by residential development and the town's by-pass.

Just south of Brackley Station, which stood at the north end of the town, there was another, 22 span viaduct. This structure achieved, a little anachronistically, modest literary immortality in the second chapter of Flora Thompson's *Larkrise to Candleford* – "three miles away trains roared over a viaduct carrying those who would, had they lived a few years before or later, have used the turnpike". In fact the author was 22 when the line opened, long gone from Juniper Hill, and writing more than 30 years later. At least she was more prescient than she knew. The 'turnpike' is now (2008) the dual carriageway A43, carrying traffic – especially freight – which she could not have dreamed of, and which many would prefer to see transferred back to the railway.

Brackley Central Station just after closure, looking south through the arch shown 67 years earlier on page 164. The station building on the right is still (2008) extant, but everything else has been swept away. The footbridge crosses the north-bound 'down' line to give access to the stairs leading down to the single 'island' platform, on each end of which stand water tanks.

At the town's south end Brackley also had a station on the Banbury – Verney Junction – Bletchley branch of the L.N.W.R. The two stations were known, logically enough, respectively as the Top Station and the Bottom Station. The new line crossed over the branch line about a mile further on. Finmere station followed (about a mile from that village, but later to do good business with Stowe School). Calvert Station was reached shortly after the new line crossed the Oxford – Verney Junction – Bletchley branch line of the L.N.W.R., and about five miles further on the junction was made at Quainton Road. Not one of the railway lines mentioned now exists, except for the West Coast main line at Rugby.

For reasons of economy, the G.C.'s smaller stations, including all the ones mentioned, were constructed with a single 'island' platform instead of the traditional two platform affairs which have one for each track. At an 'island' station the two tracks diverged, with a single platform lying between them. This gave problems of access, so that a staircase usually led down to platform level from a bridge above the line (as, for example, at Rugby and Brackley) although at Woodford there was a subway with steps leading up.

The early express trains usually comprised only about four coaches and were hauled by light-weight 4-4-0 locomotives designed by the Great Central's chief locomotive engineer Harry Pollitt (not to be confused with his much later communist namesake). In 1900 John G. Robinson succeeded him in that post, and from the Company's works at Gorton Manchester he produced a stream of capable and handsome locomotives. In 1903 the first of his 'Atlantic' 4-4-2 express engines appeared. Their curvaceous elegance led to their nickname of 'Jersey Lilies' after the daughter of Dean Langtry of Jersey, a celebrated, perhaps notorious, actress of the day who was currently enjoying much of the attention and expenditure of the monarch. On occasion these locomotives would work through to Banbury over the Woodford – Banbury link and even beyond.

The line never saw heavy passenger traffic, mainly because as a latecomer to the capital with a main line serving mainly quiet towns and remote countryside, it struggled to compete with the established services of the L.N.W.R from Euston and the Midland Railway from St Pancras.

The G.C.R. did however operate fast, long and frequent coal trains from the Nottingham fields to London. These trains were nicknamed 'Annesley Runners' and in their last few years, when British Railways put their heavy 2-10-0 freight locomotives to work them, as 'Windcutters'. They would run at up to 50 mph and, being unbraked, had an immense stopping distance. For this reason two sections of track ahead (the distance between signal boxes) had to be kept clear for them. instead of the usual one. The noise they made when racing south through the Birdcage at Rugby had to be heard to be believed.

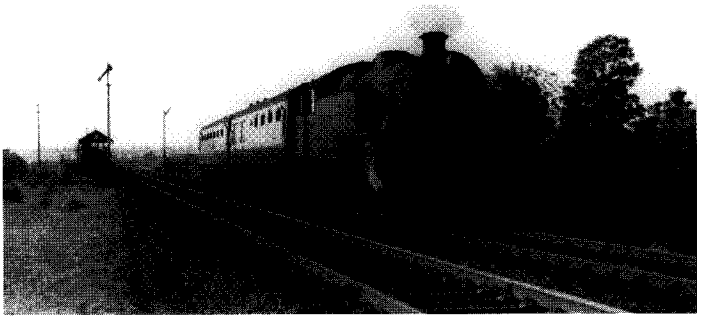
The G.C.R.'s principal express trains ran initially through to Manchester, but in later years only as far as Sheffield or Bradford. Two of these were graced in British Railways days (post 1948) by titles – 'The South Yorkshireman' and 'The Master Cutler'. On occasion they were hauled by the well-known A3 Pacific locomotives of Sir Nigel Gresley, including 'Flying Scotsman' herself (or himself), happily preserved and still mobile in 2008 at the age of 84.

Towards the end, in the late 1950s and 1960s, the trains ran through only to Nottingham, but even they were occasionally hauled by locomotives of the 'Royal Scot' class of the old L.M.S.

The line also saw for about fifteen years slip carriage workings, whereby the rearmost carriage (or carriages) were detached from express trains at speed to serve intermediate stations, to obviate the need to stop the complete train. Just before the First World War the G.C.R. detached

"Quite where Rugby Central is does only Rugby know". Perhaps the most celebrated locomotive ever constructed, Sir Nigel Gresley's Pacific 4-6-2 60103 'Flying Scotsman', hauling the 'South Yorkshireman' from Sheffield to London, has however managed to find the station in February 1952, and the driver awaits to receive the signal to depart for Marylebone.

a slip carriage from the 6.20p.m. Marylebone-Bradford train at Woodford, to serve Stratford-on-Avon. For a year or so after hostilities ended the slip took place at Brackley instead but this was however soon replaced by a reinstated Woodford slip, and from 1922 an additional one at Finmere. This latter was for the convenience of a member of the board and a number of his friends who happened to have their country houses nearby, and also the staff and pupils of Stowe School.



A Banbury – Woodford Halse lunchtime local train has just passed Chacombe Signal Box on the 1900 link line in October 1963, just under a year before the service was withdrawn. The 2-6-4 tank locomotive and two carriages were built by the old L.M.S.R.

All this came to an end however with an accident in December 1935. The Finmere slip had taken place uneventfully, but on the approach to Woodford, after the detached slip coach dropped back as intended under the control of its guard, the brakes on the main train, which should have steamed non-stop through Woodford into the distance, became defective and brought the train to an unscheduled halt. Escaping steam obscured the guard's view ahead and the solitary carriage, in a sequence worthy almost of Buster Keaton, 'overtook' the main train, striking the rear at about 20 m.p.h. and telescoping into it. Both the main train's and the slip coach's guards were badly hurt and eleven passengers received minor injuries – one being (according to a press report) the servant of a local M.P. The Inspecting Officer subsequently blamed the company for using inadequate equipment.

From February 1936 the two slips on the 6.20 p.m. down were replaced by brief stops at Finmere and Woodford. In passing, it is hardly necessary to add that among the pre-nationalisation companies the most enthusiastic exponent of slipping was the Great Western, particularly at Bicester and Banbury on its Paddington-Birmingham-Wolverhampton expresses using the new 1910 line. Indeed the last slip in the British Isles took place at Bicester from a down express in September 1960. The writer recalls that two Banburians (the late Dr. Pat Hewlings and Mr. John Cheney) in giving separate reminiscences of pre-war Banbury both began by describing the detachment of a slip carriage south of Banbury Station from a north-bound Great Western express and its collection and pulling into the platform by the station's pilot engine. It was obviously a major event in the daily life of the town.

For Banburians the most useful train, using the G.C.'s London extension, was the Ports-to-Ports express, which from 1907 until the outbreak of the Second World War ran from Newcastle to Barry (later extended to Swansea) on weekdays only, using the Woodford-Banbury link. On alternate days carriages of the North Eastern Railway and the G.W.R were employed. At Banbury locomotives were changed and the south-bound train then set off mid-afternoon via 'our' branch line from King's Sutton Junction to Adderbury and thence along the single line through Bloxham, Hook Norton and Chipping Norton (where the train paused to pick up passengers only) past Kingham (crossing the Worcester line by a girder bridge) and thence over the Cotswolds to Cheltenham and its final destination. The whole journey took some eleven hours, and the only travellers who regularly went from end to end were ships' pilots.

The oldest Adderbury residents recall that the whistling of the train would remind their teachers that the school day was over, whereas their Bloxham contemporaries would have had time to get to the station some 200 yards west of their school (where the A361 still rises over the railway cutting) so that efforts could be made to drop coppers down the engine chimneys as the Ports-to-Ports passed beneath them. The north-bound train would have left Banbury some two hours earlier. With the return of peace the train was reinstated to travel via Oxford and the branch line reverted to its rural calm.

The Woodford – Banbury link had a stopping service between those two towns. As part of the through route it became particularly useful in both World Wars, especially the Second, and to serve intensive freight workings extensive marshalling yards were constructed at both places.

Marylebone was in its early days a quiet station – the only London terminus where, according to the late Ronald Knox, one could hear birdsong. A contemporary surgeon, having been asked by a grateful patient to recommend somewhere peaceful for a long convalescence, is reported to have replied, "Have you thought of Marylebone Station?" Either he was being facetious or he intended to refer to the adjacent railway hotel. This still stands, no longer a place of hospitality, fronting Marylebone Road immediately south of the station. In British Railways days it was the headquarters of the whole nationalised system. Marylebone Station is, of course, a short walk along Melcombe Street to Baker Street, and thus the nearest London terminus to 221B. Sadly it opened at the end of the decade which saw the tragic incident at the Reichenbach Falls and, although Holmes was resurrected, as someone said, he was 'never quite the same again.' Perhaps for this reason the station does not appear as the departure point in any of his and Watson's subsequent railway journeys, but it is unthinkable that the Great Detective did not on occasion travel on the Great Central.

Relations between the G.C.R and the Metropolitan were never easy, the joint line became congested, and the G.C. in collaboration with the Great Western constructed during the first decade of the twentieth century a new line from Aynho Junction (on the latter's Banbury – Oxford route) through Bicester and High Wycombe to Northolt, whence the G.C. was solely responsible for a new link line (past the future site of the Wembley Exhibitions and Stadium) to a junction with the original main line at Neasden. The 'new' line was opened in stages and in 1910 throughout. It served such towns as Gerrard's Cross and Beaconsfield.

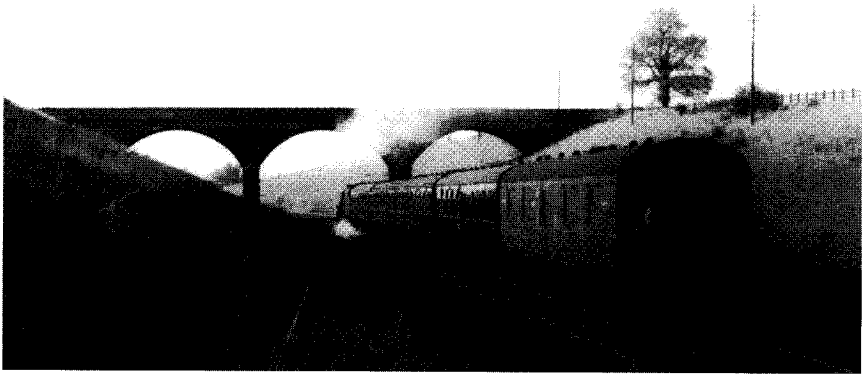
Subsequent desirable development was encouraged along that line and the original Metropolitan line through such towns as Rickmansworth, Amersham and Great Missenden by the railways in the first four decades of the last century under the title of 'Metroland', a nickname particularly dear to Betjeman. From Ashendon Junction, north of Prince's Risborough, the G.C.R. swung north to a junction with its original 1899 route at Grendon Underwood, while the G.W.R. went north-west through Bicester to Aynho Junction and Banbury. At Ashendon today's observant traveller between Marylebone and Banbury may still see (where the existing tracks diverge) the remains of the earthworks for the long-gone flyover, similar to the one still in use at the Aynho Junction over the Banbury-Oxford–Paddington line

Under the Railways Act 1921 the Great Central Railway was, with effect from 1st January 1923. grouped with a number of other major companies, including the Great Northern Railway, the Great Eastern, the North Eastern and the North British (which served Scotland) into a large concern under the title of the London and North Eastern Railway, usually abbreviated to L.N.E.R. The railways had made a major contribution to the victory of 1918, having been under government control during the First World War. Owing to the laissez-faire attitude of the powers that be during the preceding century the railway system comprised about a score of major companies and well over a hundred minor ones, in contrast to most European continental countries. Nationalisation had been seriously considered but rejected in favour of four major private companies, the other three being the London, Midland and Scottish Railway (the L.M.S.), the Southern Railway and the Great Western Railway, which alone of the four largely retained its pre-grouping identity, except for the absorption of a number of mainly Welsh smaller companies.

During the Second World War these companies, again under government control, performed herculean tasks, but in 1945 they were totally run-down. With the election of a Labour Government in that year committed to nationalisation, they were taken into public ownership in 1948, the old Great Central lines becoming part of the Eastern Region, although they were later transferred to the London Midland Region. Of the privatisation of the late 1990s the less said the better. The Great Central's London extension did not survive long enough to be sold off.

Following the Beeching report of 1963, in a short-sighted move the main line was closed in September 1966 as a through route north of Calvert.

It continues to operate that far for the use of trains carrying metropolitan refuse to a disposal site. The Banbury-Woodford local service had been withdrawn two years earlier, in June 1964, and, as was the custom of the time, the last train was packed with passengers (not 'customers' in those days) including the present writer. The Rugby-Nottingham section lingered on for local services worked by Diesel Multiple Units until 1969 when that too ceased, and with it regular passenger trains north of Aylesbury on the 1899 London extension.



The last summer of the G.C.R.'s London extension. The 4.38 p.m. from Marylebone to Nottingham approaches Helmdon on 10th May 1966, although Woodford Halse will be the next stop. The generous dimensions of the cutting and the three-arch bridge of 1899, built to the continental loading gauge, are evident. The bridge still survives to carry the Greatworth to Syresham road, but trains and track have long gone.

Thereafter the track was lifted and most of the structures demolished. All trace of Nottingham Victoria station has gone save for its clock tower which stands isolated amidst a sea of shops. Brackley's long viaduct is now the site of a by-pass and housing, but its counterpart to the north at Helmdon stands yet, in the quiet Northamptonshire countryside, like Shelley's Ozymandias, as a memorial to what once was, and what might have been.

Although the station buildings have nearly all disappeared the distinctive station-masters' houses remain, now of course privately owned. The building of the Top Station at Brackley survives however, somewhat ironically, as a tyre depot for motor vehicles. Woodford Halse has reverted to its pre-railway peacefulness, no longer echoing to the sounds of passing trains and shunting throughout the day and night, but

its terraced streets remain, once the homes of engine drivers, station staff and workshop employees but now as starter-homes for those who work elsewhere. Among its community activities there is however a thriving historical society founded two years before its counterpart at Banbury.

Equally short-sighted was the 'singling' for reasons of economy of the Aynho – Prince's Risborough section of the 'new' route in the late 1960s. With the onset of privatisation and the popularity of the services between Birmingham, Banbury and Marylebone of Chiltern Railways (one of the best performing private train operating companies) this caused foreseeable but apparently unforeseen congestion, delays and operational difficulties. The double track was accordingly re-instated at a cost of some 80 million pounds some 30 years later. As a result the fastest trains from Banbury now reach the capital in just over the hour.

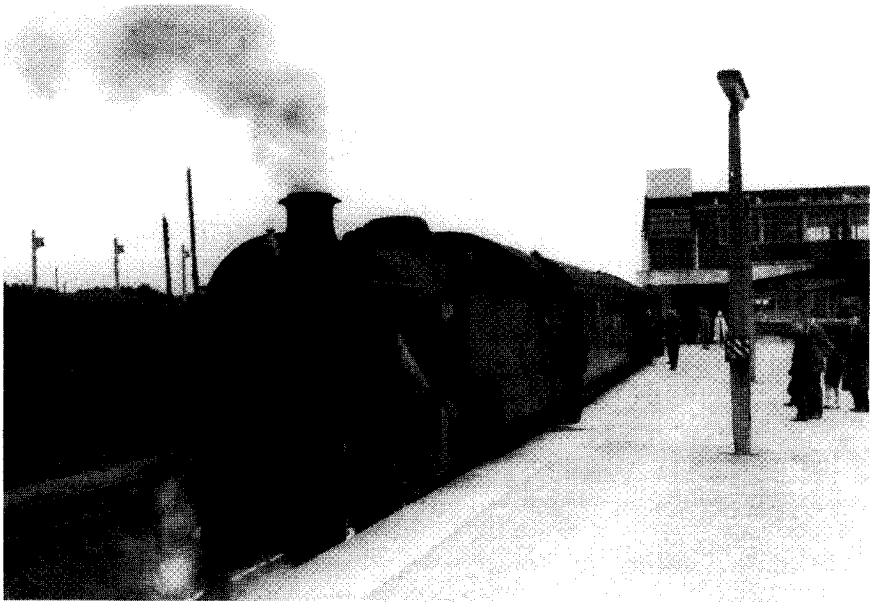
Fortunately Marylebone defied closure proposals and survives, busier than ever it was in G.C.R. days, as a terminus for mainly commuter traffic to Aylesbury over the original joint G.C./Metropolitan line of 1899, and to Banbury, Birmingham and places beyond over the 'new' route of 1910. No-one will hear birdsong there now.

Quainton Road also survives, as a steam preservation centre. A distinctive feature there is the recent reconstruction of the old L.N.W.R. station (itself contemporary with, and constructed on the same principles as, the 1851 Crystal Palace), which once stood as that company's terminus at Rewley Road, Oxford. That too had suffered the indignity of use as a tyre depot in its later days.

Further north the section of the 1899 London extension of the old G.C.R. between Loughborough and a new station in Leicester's northern outskirts is also preserved for steam operation, with the same company title. It is indeed the only preserved double track main line railway in Britain. August 2008 will see the fortieth anniversary of the end of main line steam working on British railways and, with its re-creation of steam-hauled express trains and even 'Windcutters', the present G.C.R. evokes better than anywhere else sights and sounds which, once familiar to all, will now be recollected only by the middle-aged and elderly.

Another few miles of preserved line can be seen at Ruddington, south of Nottingham, as part of the Nottingham Transport Heritage Centre but this, known as the G.C.R. (Nottingham) is separated from the revived Loughborough-Leicester section by the main line of the old Midland Railway. The G.C.R. crossed this by a now demolished bridge which will be astronomically expensive to reinstate.

There appears however to be a future for the London extension. A grandiose scheme was proposed in the 1990s for the re-opening of the line, but that ran into the sand. However, in 2002 Chiltern Railways signed a 20-year franchise including as an 'aspiration' the construction of a new line, using largely the G.C.R. alignment of a century ago with necessary reinstatement works, to a new station north east of Rugby close to the junction of the M1 and M6 motorways, with a possible extension as far as Leicester. A first step is the construction of a new station, just over two miles north of the existing one at Aylesbury, where the line passes over the A41 Bicester-Aylesbury road, almost halfway between Aylesbury and Quainton Road. This is to be known as Aylesbury Vale Parkway and will serve the extensive residential development proposed for the area.



Banbury Station 13th June 1964. The last ever train from Banbury to Woodford Halse, consisting of two for once well-filled coaches, is about to leave for the short journey over the once important link line of 1900 behind 2-6-4 tank locomotive 42251. The platform is still there but the rails have long been lifted. In the background stand some cattle trucks – no doubt their occupants had gone to Banbury market, which stood just beyond them. Like the train, market and trucks are both now history.

Finally in January 2008 Chiltern Railways, which formed part of the Laing Group, was sold by its parent company to Deutsches Bahn (DB), the German state railway system. Whether this will amount to nationalisation by the back door, and result in any improvement to Chiltern's already commendable performance remains to be seen. One wonders what Sir Edward Watkin would think of it all.

Numerous books have been written about the Great Central Railway and its London Extension of 1899 and the 1910 'new' line, from a three-volume detailed history by the late George Dow to mainly illustrated albums with usually informative captions, especially a series by Messrs. D. Edwards and R. Pigram, and another series by Mr John Healy, now out of print but frequently obtainable. Mr S.C. Jenkins' *Great Western and Great Central Joint Railway* (Oakwood Press) is an authoritative history of the 1910 line. The same author collaborated with Mrs Ruth Irons in producing *Woodford Halse – A Railway Community* (Oakwood Press, 1999) which is a fascinating read for those interested in social as much as industrial history, and a major contribution to the history of Banburyshire. The Great Central's chairman, the first Lord Faringdon, was a connoisseur of the arts as well as an astute businessman, and his taste (ranging from Rembrandt to Burne-Jones) may still be appreciated at Buscot Park in Oxfordshire, managed by his descendants on behalf of the National Trust. A visit is strongly recommended.

I am grateful to my siderodromophiliac* friends Hugh Jones and Professor George Huxley for reading this short article through in draft, especially to the latter for his scholia, and to Anne Radford for typing it out. Any errors are of course my own work.

* Professor Huxley's neologism, from the Greek 'sidero' (iron) 'dromo' (way) and 'philiac' (lover).

Trinity Chapel, Banbury

Dr Philip Tennant writes with information about Banbury's medieval **Trinity Chapel** (not mentioned by Beesley, but Brinkworth speculates on its location).

From T.N.A.: E36/258, f.154 [Grants of colleges, chantries etc under Edward VI]:
"An olde chapell in Banbury called the Trinite chapell founded they knowe not by whom but the towne was wont to [have a prest - *deleted*] singe masse there the hous is buildede w[i]th old stone and cov[ere]d w[i]th old slate and much in decay The bodye of the churche con[tains] in length xiiii yards and in bredth vi yards. The chauncell in length xii yards and in bredthe v yards Also ther are certain Setes worth by estimac[ion] vi's.viii'd. having neither glas nor Iron about the same And the grounde whereupon it is builded in the com[m]on street is worth by yere xvi'd. and it is all worth to be sold xl's.

"*Memorand* that the said chapell was not pr[e]sented unto the k[ing']s ma[jes]t[y]s Com[m]issioners but entitled but is sithens by enformac[ion]

"There is no service usde to be said or sunge in the said chapell
[signed] Jhon Maynard
"The premisses are sold to [John Fisher] for the some of xl s. To be paid all in hand."

Note. The Chantry Certificates... , Rose Graham (ed.), Oxon R.S. vol. 1, 1919, includes the guild of Our Lady (in the church) and St John's Hospital or School, but not the Trinity chapel. Interestingly William Brasington [corrected from Barington] "of the late Guylde of our Lady in Banbury" was appointed "assistannte to the cure [at Chipping Norton]", where the school was reprieved.

Bonesetters

From Mr Philip Spinks (54 Avon Crescent, Stratford-upon-Avon CV37 7EX):
"I am researching **bonesetters** in the south Warwickshire area and am seeking information regarding the possible relationship between two bonesetting families. William Arthur Bennett practised bonesetting in and around Bloxham and later passed his skills on to his son; I think he was active at the turn of the 19th/20th centuries. The Matthews family were bonesetters and lived at Epwell (for generations men and women of the family served a radius of 20 miles and some 30 parishes). In the late 19th century George Matthews Bennett established a very successful bonesetting practice in Warwick; he died in 1913 and his son succeeded him. Is it too much of a coincidence that G. Matthews Bennett should bear the surnames of two geographically close bonesetting families and be a bonesetter himself? Did the families, at one time, intermarry? I have been unable to establish if this is the case and would welcome any information from readers who know of any intermarriage between the Matthews and Bennett families, or indeed, of any other bonesetters in the north Oxfordshire area."

Lecture Reports

Brian Little

Thursday 10th January 2008

'Six silver spoons and the second best bed':

***Life in Chipping Norton 1500-1700* - Dr Adrienne Rosen**

Chipping Norton has lost most of its records. Therefore it is all the more significant that a local research group has been busy transcribing wills and inventories of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Dr Rosen's talk was based on the outcome of this activity.

She began by painting a picture of the town in the two-hundred-year period covered by the investigation. Chipping Norton was a market town with a strong wool trade base and a generous number of inns. Although blessed with good regional communications it was essentially a westward looking place whose water resources were never quite enough to encourage much factory development.

Dr Rosen's first specific focus was the transcription of wills, almost all of which had been proven locally and offered insights into families, though not always on their day-to-day lives. Overall, within the family unit husbands and wives formed a close partnership especially when it came to business.

The speaker then turned to inventories and featured especially the inventory of Edward Avery, a shoemaker in Chipping Norton, taken in 1617. The list of his goods and chattels covers items in the shop as well as the rooms of the house. For instance, among the furniture and linen listed in the parlour there were 11 silver spoons worth £2 10s 0d and in the buttery 2 brasse pans valued at £1 0s 0d. He also owned a horse with packsaddle.

Sadly the exact location of Avery's house is not known. However, this missing information is balanced by surprising discoveries such as a lack of chairs in many domestic properties. On the death of the wife more evidence comes to light concerning the allocation of furnishings to offspring and of a well-stocked shop, which would be of benefit to local people.

Some inventories offered glimpses of local farming practices. Clearly the customary arable/pasture mix allowed the malting of barley and the operation of dairy houses.

Perhaps the most revealing were four seventeenth century inventories linked to the *White Hart* in the Market Place.

The meeting closed with a question session in which Jeremy Gibson, chairman, seized the opportunity to compare the research labours at Chipping Norton with much earlier studies in Banbury (see BHS Records Volumes 13 and 14 -Wills and Inventories Parts 1 & 2). A whole world of research awaits the person or group prepared to build on these findings and undertake a wider investigation.

Thursday 14th February 2008

No little scandal to god and Man: the extraordinary story of town-gown relations in Oxford - **Chris Day**

Members who came to the February meeting were treated to a superb analysis of how the relationship between town and gown in Oxford has evolved. In particular they were enabled to appreciate the way in which the university grew up within and at the centre of an established town.

It was not always a case of peaceful co-existence. During the 13th and 14th centuries fights between townspeople and scholars were commonplace. The greatest of all riots of which we have records occurred in the early 1450s. It started when some university men questioned the quality of the wine in the *Swindlestock Tavern*. The situation escalated into what became known as the 'St Scholastica's Day' riot, which persisted for several days with more blood being spilt than on some battlefields. As a result, both the town and the University were required to surrender their charters to the king. In the new charters the University's powers were increased at the expense of the town, giving it power to regulate markets and the price and quality of bread, ale and wine. By the sixteenth century the university had further developed its own courts and its police force patrolled the town by night whilst urban police held sway by day. Some two hundred years later and the association was more collaborative over matters such as paving, lighting and drainage.

During the Middle Ages Oxford emerged as a cloth-making centre but output migrated away from the centre and colleges seized the opportunity to grab land and property at a time when both were cheap. A consequence of this for the present day landscape is that New College gardens incorporate the best-preserved stretch of 13th century city walls. At the outset of the 16th century the town had become more dependent economically upon the University even to the extent that it was content to derive a living from supplying the student population.

Sadly this history of relationships still has one more period of major disturbances – the 19th century food riots with the University at the centre of aggravation. Boats were burned in college quadrangles (1879) and targets such as Salvationists and Socialists were attacked both by citizens and students.

Despite this background of occasional town/gown brawls on such occasions as Guy Fawkes Night and May Day, the last century saw the development of opportunities for city locals to secure casual employment within the University. The reliance on the University for employment faded as William Morris shaped his industrial quarter at Cowley. Significantly in the 1960s a sign near Oxford railway station conveyed the message 'Welcome to Oxford – home to Pressed Steel'.

Today although some tension still exists between students and city residents the two elements have evolved their own niches. Town is synonymous with a more retail orientated and outward looking approach (the Oxford region) whilst gown stands for a knowledge economy within which scientific research is a proud component.

Thursday 13th December 2007

***Going to Town in the 2000s: Banbury's Typicality as a Market Town* - Professor Brian Goodey**

Here was a lecture that intriguingly offered more questions than answers. The reasons for this approach are not difficult to seek as the only confident statement of Banbury's market town status can be found on roadside signs at the extremities of the built-up area.

Professor Goodey's first challenges were to claim that the mediaeval market image did not survive the 1990s; linked to this has been a need to redefine townscape. In their day those local studies experts Professors Everitt and Hoskins could pronounce on this with confidence but since then greater significance has attached to awareness of and concern about heritage.

Brian noted in passing that there have been many attempts to gain acceptance of plans for the commercial future of Banbury. However, themes such as a 70,000 population target or re-development of Hunt Edmunds Brewery site have filled the rejection bin.

Throughout all of these schemes key issues of public transport have remained unfulfilled and the full potential of the Oxford Canal only partly realised.

Pedestrianization has also lost its way. We need places to enjoy contemplation of our surroundings but not when these are marginal to the best of the central area or sacrificed to the gods of security and tidiness. A town famous for its alleyways both long and short has not ensured that they retain their unique characteristics.

One of our lecturer's many challenges was to suggest that present day townscape reflects the battle between communities of people and developers. This has been especially true of so-called gateways to Banbury such as the North Bar/Warwick Road junction where we have lost touch with the basic form of the town. The decline of key eye-stopping buildings from the past has not helped.

If there was one issue that Professor Goodey wanted to leave as a longer term discussion point it was how the market town image could be revitalised. He staked a claim for people and activities to gain clearer recognition: not perhaps in the way of Grimsbury's livestock market site redevelopment where the new housing has not been drawn into the town as a whole. By contrast and more centrally in Banbury, well-established views of St Mary's church may offer a lead we would do well to follow in any future planning.

Thursday 13th March 2008

Behind the scenes of 'Who do you think you are' - Nick Barratt

This excellently-attended talk, well justifying our use of a larger auditorium than usual, well lived-up to expectations. The full report is being held over to our next issue.

Book Reviews

Banbury Past through Artists' Eyes compiled by Simon Townsend and Jeremy Gibson; 128 pp, endpaper maps, over 200 illustrations, mostly in colour, biographies of artists represented, indexes of historians of Banbury, of persons mentioned in the text and of architects, artists, commentators and contributors, hard-bound and jacketed. Banbury Historical Society vol. 30 (ISBN 978 0 900129 28 5) in association with Robert Boyd publications (ISBN 978 1 899536 85 6), 2007. £15.00 + £2.00 p&p from BHS, c/o Banbury Museum. Free to subscribers.

The thirtieth publication of the Banbury Historical Society is a celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the Society, co-authored most appropriately by one of the founders of the BHS. Previous discussion over the best way to commemorate the event ranged over several possibilities but this was both the most ambitious and exciting. It combines the resources of local museums and libraries, the Royal Institute of British Architects, The British Library, Corpus Christi College Oxford, the Ashmolean Museum and private collections. The compilers acknowledge the pleasure of tracking down many of the illustrations and it is to be hoped that the publication will stimulate the investigation of other sources to add to the existing corpus. Many have not been printed before, and none in this format which invites comparisons, asks questions and poses conundrums, teasing the reader into thinking about the current landscape of the town and how it has changed. The addition of contemporary watercolours by Maurice Draper is important for the current record of old buildings – not all of particular architectural interest – in the process of change or even demolition.

As a market town Banbury might be expected to have attracted illustrators since it was important to encourage potential traders to the area as well as recording development in the days before photography. Banbury Museum has a collection of some fifty pictures of the town and it is these which constitute the nub of the book. However, they have been enhanced by additions from other institutions, making a most attractive picture book, while keeping the reader on his or her toes by asking questions and drawing attention to obscure facts. The questions are important since they highlight the licence often taken by artists in terms of what they saw or what they thought might make a good picture –

An engraving of the 1730 panorama of the town was used in Beesley's *History of Banbury* (1842) and often since. This was based on 'an original unfinished sketch' in the Bodleian Library [Gough Maps vol.26, f.40]. Now (p.19), for the first time, a detail of the ('finished') centre of the town has been reproduced (above). This shows significant differences in the juxtaposition and delineation of the buildings, enabling more positive identification of the *The Three Tuns* and of still-surviving buildings in the Market Place. Compare with the engraving below.

they question the viewpoint alleged by the artist – see the comment on what could really be seen in the view of St Mary's (p.53) or the interpretation of the circumstances of the family placed artistically by Rowlandson in the foreground of his 'View near Banbury, 1808' (p.120). The introduction makes this point forcibly, pointing out that the picture of 'The Cross' (p.62) records an 1859 official opening which never actually took place. While many illustrations have been taken from the institutions above named other sources have also been trawled, some of which are less familiar; the engraving of the public swimming baths constructed by Thomas Draper in 1855 (p 119) is a case in point, originally published in *The Builder*, or the plan and elevation of St Mary's church from *The Building News* of 1896. Even where they have been published in other local articles or books (and this is always meticulously recorded) it is helpful to have them placed in context and adjacent to other relevant material. The illustrations are clear and well printed, and the juxta-position of views of the same place by different artists entices the reader into examining details. The only drawback to this approach is the consequent need to refer to earlier or later pages, but that is probably inevitable given the size of the book and its complicated layout which on the whole works very well.

The reader is taken along a route and can follow the maps on the endpapers to verify locations. The tone of the accompanying text is cheerful and slightly provocative – 'why were there three [town halls] before [the present one]?' This is a book which is intended to amuse and engage its readers with comment which, while scholarly, is not arid. The compilers pull no punches about their feelings relating to the destruction of Banbury and its buildings by successive town councils and point out that 'First you must realise that Banburians love *demolishing* things, but sometimes replace them' (p.13). If they have done nothing more they have drawn attention to the importance of Banbury's buildings both present and past in a most engaging way. It is to be hoped that the book will add to the pressure to avoid wanton destruction of a familiar and attractive town with much still remaining of its market status. It is highly recommended for all those who know Banbury and indeed, for those who are new to the town; what better introduction could be wanted?

Helen Forde

Another viewpoint, reproduced by kind permission of "Four Shires", Dec. 2007.

Fifty years ago Banbury Historical Society came into being. It was an event which has placed Banbury well and truly on the map as far as academic historians are concerned. Look in any serious scholarly work on social, economic, or religious history and the chances are that Banbury will feature in the index. Over the years Jeremy Gibson, Ted Brinkworth, Barrie Trinder and others ensured a steady flow of material which has been joyfully plundered by hundreds of amateur and professional historians on both sides of the Atlantic. It is fitting that in this, their 50th year, they should mark the event with another little treasure chest. Their latest offering is, without doubt, the most beautiful to date. Packed with pictures of all styles and colours, virtually every page brings something fresh, attractive and interesting. Bearing in mind the title of the book it is not surprising to see only one photograph. The authors' decision to exclude photographs is both logical and sensible. Rather than reproducing the same photographs which have appeared in so many books about Banbury they have produced something new and fascinating.

This work has been compiled by Jeremy Gibson and Simon Townsend and bears all the hallmarks of good historians writing for a wider audience. It is intelligently researched and well written. By following a specific route through the town they have produced a logical structure which makes the book easy to read in its entirety or to check specific locations. Earlier work is acknowledged by a number of other members of the Society, including Dr Barrie Trinder who is now one of the country's leading historians. Others may not be so familiar to the general public but their contribution has proved equally invaluable.

One of the authors' aims was to provide entertaining text to accompany the illustrations and to my mind they have succeeded admirably. A large proportion of this text comes from writers who were contemporary with the artist and this provides a fascinating glimpse into attitudes and values of the time.

Special praise must be reserved for local artist Maurice Draper who has made a very important contribution to the study of Banbury's history. Mr Draper has for many years made a record of many of the buildings which were demolished so that future generations can see what has been lost. Many of these pictures have never appeared in print before but, thanks to his generosity in waiving his copyright fees, have been included in the book. His generosity has been mirrored by many others, without whose assistance the book would never appeared.

The appearance of this book just before Christmas is welcome. For those hunting for the perfect Christmas present for somebody interested in the history of Banbury this book is the answer. However it is more than something for Christmas. In my opinion it is the best book about Banbury and its history for years and is an indispensable addition to anyone's bookshelf. If this is what Banbury Historical Society can do for its fiftieth anniversary I'd better start investigating the possibilities of cryongenics so I can be around for their centenary!

Bob Mason

Chipping Norton: The Story of a Market Town, David Eddershaw, 136pp., illustrated. Poundstone Press (ISBN 10 0955241006), 2006. £9.99 + £2 p&p from Jaffe & Neale, 1 Middle Row, Chipping Norton, Oxon. OX7 5NH.

The author is well known to many Oxfordshire historians, having been on the staff of the County Museum service for 37 years and a frequent speaker at local historical events, one of the last before retirement at the end of 2001 being to ourselves. This history was drawn to our attention at the talk in January on Chipping Norton probate inventories. It should be acquired by anyone with interest in the town's past. Written in David's easy style familiar from his lectures, I found it absorbing and devoured it almost at a sitting. This undoubtedly is how local history should be written.

Not many of us, I imagine, realise that Chipping Norton had a castle. At least its remains survive (unlike Banbury's) as bumps in a field near the church. The town acquired a charter in 1606/7, granting it borough status with two Bailiffs and twelve burgesses, just sixteen months before Banbury acquired its second charter, by which *our* Bailiff was replaced by a Mayor. James I was lavish in granting titles to individuals, usually in return for financial benefit to the Crown, and so, it seems, it was with town charters. Chipping Norton's grant was essential to free the townsfolk from a new and exploitative lord of the manor.

The nineteenth century was dominated by the Bliss family and its tweed mills, much as Bernhard Samuelson brought modern industry to Banbury. There are many other comparisons that can be made between our neighbouring towns.

This brings me to one of my criticisms: the index. It is that misleading aid, (silently) selective. Individuals' names are only included if they are considered important. For instance, around 1448 six men collected local taxes, but only two are indexed, as they occur in other roles. Similar examples proliferate. Naturally I looked up Banbury, to find no references. In fact, understandably, our town is mentioned several times, some in passing but others reflecting what influence if any, particularly in markets and hinterland, they had on each other. The book seems to be written on the assumption that readers are *only* interested in the town, not on its interaction with other places near and far. "No man is an island." For researchers, inclusion of *all* personal and place names is essential.

Apart from a reference to the group transcribing inventories, no mention or encouragement is given to such on-going research. A brief list of "Original sources" is given alphabetically, but only knowledgeable local historians will understand their importance (see my note on page 176, above. In the description of the suppression of the chantries, pp.39-41, was ORS 1 consulted?). These would have been much more effective broken up and placed at the ends of relevant chapters; as would the bibliography.

Finally, for one who is unfamiliar with the town, the lack of an adequate, clearly drawn map, was frustrating . Two appear as illustrations (Enclosure, 1770 and Ordnance Survey, 1890s), but murkily, much reduced with excessive detail.

Nevertheless, do get the book. **J.G.**

The following questionnaire was distributed at recent meetings. A loose copy is enclosed. If you haven't replied yet, please do so now.

Banbury Historical Society
Our members matter: please let us know what you think

Would you like more talks?
Do you prefer talks to be more academic/less academic?
Do you like talks on local history/general history/archaeology/ domestic/ social history/landscape history/other (please specify)
Do you have any suggestions for future summer excursions?
Can you suggest any other activities for the Society?
Would you be willing to join the committee to direct the future of the Society and to help run it? (If yes, please give your name below)
Do you like your thrice-yearly *Cake & Cockhorse*?
What would you like more of?
What would you like less of?
Have you any suggestions for publicising the society's lectures and other activities?
In order to keep members informed we would like to set up an email list: please give your email address

Please return to:
Deborah Hayter, Walnut House, Charlton, Banbury, OX17 3DR
or email your comments to : deborahhayter@hotmail.com

BANBURY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

ANNUAL REPORT

Your Committee have pleasure in submitting the 50th Annual Report and Statement of Accounts, for the year 2007.

Our half-century year has been gratifying and memorable. For the specific celebration of this anniversary, over sixty members were able to enjoy a day in the magnificent surroundings of Wroxton Abbey, with two outstanding talks and catering and weather to match. After a not unusual gap of several years, we were able to produce not one but *two* records publications, that of *Banbury Past through Artists' Eyes* again being particularly to mark our thirty volumes in fifty years – we doubt whether any other English local history society can equal this achievement. We were able to publicise this in articles in two prestigious national publications, *The Local Historian* and *The Genealogists' Magazine*.

With great regret we accepted the resignation from the committee of Nick Allen, who since 1995 has provided speakers on a wide variety of subjects for our monthly meetings. Otherwise officers and committee members continued unchanged.

Membership of the Society remains close to three hundred, most as records members. Whilst there is a steady flow of new members, this is counteracted by loss through natural circumstances. In particular we are saddened to record the death of Mr Ken Jakeman, who with his wife was a regular attendant over most of our fifty years. Nevertheless attendance at meetings has been steady and often near capacity. Posters are distributed by Deborah Hayter for display at key places.

The final meetings arranged by Nick Allen maintained their accustomed entertaining variety. Reports on most, generally prepared by Brian Little, have appeared in *Cake & Cockhorse*. Alex May described what went into the making of the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, and Will Hawkes spoke on Sanderson Miller of Radway, gentleman architect. Although a rare day of snow forced postponement of Martin Marix-Evans' description of the Battle of Naseby, fortunately it was possible to rearrange it for April.

Deborah Hayter stepped into the breach to arrange the autumn/winter season. This opened with David Clark's discussion of architectural styles throughout the county, whilst in October Deborah herself related the rise and subsequent total disappearance of Astrop Spa. We saw that perennial favourite "Twenty-Four Square Miles", with commentary by Graham Nottingham, and remained with even more recent years in Brian Goodey's revelation of what might have been in Banbury's town planning since the war.

In the summer, we had a return to our popular village 'walk-about', this time Deddington, led by Chris Day. Country-house visits were arranged by Beryl Hudson to Rousham and Wotton Underwood. In this anniversary year it was only appropriate to return for our A.G.M. to Broughton Castle, where we were as ever welcomed by our President and Lady Saye and Sele.

Wroxton Abbey on 20th October was of course the main event of the year. An account of the day has already appeared, as has an extended version of Nicholas Cooper's analysis of the building of Wroxton Abbey. Professor Black's talk on Lord North and George III was a tour-de-force that will not soon be forgotten.

The normal three issues of *Cake & Cockhorse* had contributions from Ruth Brown, Nicholas Cooper, Brian Goodey, Paul Hayter, Pamela Horn, Catherine Robinson, Barrie Trinder and from regulars Brian Little and the editor himself.

At long last we have published the first part of the *Diary of William Cotton Risley, Vicar of Deddington, 1836-1848*, entitled *Early Victorian Squarson* (a word that puzzled many). Its editor, Geoffrey Smedley-Stevenson, has been working on this for more than twenty years. It is a distillation of just fifteen per cent of the total for that period; the illuminating footnotes show the depth of research involved, all enhanced by Beryl Hudson's meticulous index. It all comes together to make one of our most readable as well as useful volumes.

Of a very different kind has been Simon Townsend's and Jeremy Gibson's *Banbury Past through Artists' Eyes*. It aims to print nearly all known non-photographic pictures of Banbury, with precise location of the originals and details of artist, size etc. George Herbert's *Shoemaker's Window* (2nd edition, B.H.S. vol. 10) provides much of the text. Work continues on the second part of Risley's diary, to 1869, and has restarted on *Turnpike Roads to Banbury*.

The high level of activity in our fiftieth anniversary year is reflected in our accounts. The funds we have been building up over the past few years, together with generous grants of £5,000 from the Greening Lamborn Trust, enabled us to pay for the two records volumes we published this year. *Banbury Past*, with its many illustrations, was particularly expensive, costing nearly £12,000 to produce, but it is selling so well that there is every prospect of much of this cost being recovered in due course. Our balance at the end of the year should be sufficient to cover the cost of the two records volumes in the pipeline.

The Anniversary Event at Wroxton Abbey was largely paid for by admission charges supplemented by generous donations from many of our members and a valuable contribution from the Exchequer by way of Gift Aid. In order that the admission charge should be affordable for all our members, the Committee decided to make a grant of £500 towards the cost of the event.

When the new Banbury Museum was being planned, a charitable fund was set up to raise money for the project. Last year we were asked whether we would be prepared to take over the charity's residual funds. We were happy to agree. £500 was immediately offset against the cost of producing *Banbury Past*, and the remaining £1656 was paid into the Brinkworth Fund, which we have renamed the Brinkworth Museum Fund. The Brinkworth Fund has supported projects of a broadly educational nature, including grants to the Museum. We made a small grant from the Fund, to be repeated in 2008, to one of the Museum's holiday projects for children.

Fifty years of activity including thirty books and a long-running journal denote a successful society, and we have seen full attendances for lectures during this season. However, some of the committee are feeling their age, and we would welcome new members with perhaps new enthusiasms and ideas. In particular, we need someone to take on the post of programme secretary, which is not too arduous or very time-consuming.

We would also welcome more contributions for publication in *Cake and Cockhorse* or more substantial projects suitable for records volumes. We know there is much activity and research being undertaken in the many flourishing local history groups which have come into being in the last twenty-five years: historians are not in competition with each other, and *Cake & Cockhorse* can provide a wider audience and a means of publication for valuable local research.

Banbury Historical Society

Income & Expenditure Account for the Year ended 31 December 2007

GENERAL FUND		2 007	*2 006*
		£	£
INCOME			
Subscriptions		2,622	*2,482*
Income Tax refund on Gift-Aided subscriptions		426	*517*
Building Society interest		450	*431*
Sale of publications		2,941	*187*
Other		67	*54*
TOTAL INCOME		6,506	*3,671*
EXPENDITURE			
Cake & Cockhorse		1,528	*1,373*
Records volumes	16,043		
Less Grants from Greening Lamborn Trust	5,000	11,043	*0*
Publications - postage & packing		1,069	*273*
Meetings		856	*702*
Reception & AGM		63	*169*
Administration		455	*383*
Contribution to Anniversary Event		500	*0*
Contribution to Cartwright Appeal		0	*1,000*
Contribution to repair of Chacombe church bells		0	*100*
TOTAL EXPENDITURE		15,514	*4,000*
DEFICIT for the year from the General Fund		**(9,008)**	*(329)*

BRINKWORTH MUSEUM FUND		
INCOME		
Transfer from Museum Charity	1,656	*0*
Building Society Interest	132	*78*
TOTAL INCOME	1,788	*78*
EXPENDITURE		
Grant to Museum's Drawing for All project	250	*0*
SURPLUS for the year to the Brinkworth Museum Fund	**1,538**	*78*

Banbury Historical Society

Balance Sheet as at 31 December 2007

	2 007	*2 006*
GENERAL FUND	£	£
Balance at 1 January 2007	16,136	*16,465*
Less Deficit for the year	(9,008)	*(329)*
Balance at 31 December 2007	**7,128**	*16,136*
BRINKWORTH MUSEUM FUND		
Balance at 1 January 2007	2,797	*2,719*
Plus Surplus for the year	1,538	*78*
Balance at 31 December 2007	**4,335**	*2,797*
TOTAL BALANCE AT 31 December 2007	**11,463**	*18,933*
Represented by;		
ASSETS		
NatWest Bank Current Account	1,850	*1,564*
Leeds Building Society - General Account	5,161	*15,344*
Leeds Building Society - Brinkworth Account	4,336	*2,797*
Cash	15	*23*
Sundry Debtors	587	*0*
TOTAL ASSETS	11,949	*19,728*
Less LIABILITIES		
Subscriptions in advance	486	*545*
Sundry Creditors	0	*250*
TOTAL LIABILITIES	486	*795*
NET ASSETS	**11,463**	*18,933*

GF Griffiths, Hon Treasurer

I have reviewed and examined the books and records of the Banbury Historical Society and confirm that the accounts prepared by the Hon Treasurer represent a fair and accurate summary of the financial transactions completed in the year ended 31 December 2007

RJ Mayne, FCMA
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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. Approaching one hundred and fifty issues and five hundred articles have been published. All but the most recent issues have been digitised and are available on the Society's website (see inside front cover). Most back issues are also still available in their original form.

There are now thirty volumes in the records series. Those still in print include:

Banbury Wills and Inventories 1591-1650, 2 parts (vols. 13, 14).

Banbury Gaol Records, ed. Penelope Renold (vol. 21).

Banbury Baptism and Burial Registers, 1813-1838 (vol. 22).
The earlier registers, *Marriages 1558-1837*, *Baptisms and Burials 1558-1812*, are now out-of-print, but are available on fiche and CD from Oxfordshire Family History Society, website at: www.ofhs.org.uk

Oxfordshire and North Berkshire Protestation Returns and Tax Assessments 1641-1642 (vol. 24, with Oxfordshire Record Society).

The 'Bawdy Court' of Banbury: The Act Book of the Peculiar Court of Banbury and Cropredy 1625-1638, ed. R.K. Giles (vol. 26).

King's Sutton Churchwardens' Accounts 1636-1700, ed. Paul Hayter (vol. 27).

The Banbury Chapbooks, by Dr Leo John De Frietas (vol. 28).

Early Victorian Squarson: The Diaries of William Cotton Risley, Vicar of Deddington, Part One, *1835-1848*, ed. Geoffrey Smedley-Stevenson (vol. 29).

Banbury Past through Artists' Eyes, compiled by Simon Townsend and Jeremy Gibson (vol. 30).

Current prices and availability of other back volumes, and of *Cake and Cockhorse*, from the Hon. Editor (Harts Cottage, Church Hanborough, Witney OX29 8AB).

In preparation:

Turnpike Roads to Banbury, by Alan Rosevear.

Selections from the Diaries of William Cotton Risley, ed. G.W. Smedley-Stevenson: Part 2. *Mid-Victorian Squarson, 1849-1869*.

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. The annual subscription is **£10.00** which includes any records volumes published. Overseas membership, **£12.00**.

All members' names and addresses are held on the Society's computer database for subscription and mailing purposes only. Please advise if you object to this practice.

BANBURY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Spring/Summer 2008 Programme

*Thursday 1st May, 6.30 p.m., at **Kings Sutton Village Hall**.*
Kings Sutton Walkabout, with John Allen.

Thursday 22nd May, 2.30 p.m. for 2.45.
Nether Winchendon House and church, off A41/A418, between Thame and Aylesbury.

Thursday 19th June, 2.15 p.m. for 2.30.
Cottesbrooke Hall and gardens.

*Thursday 17th July, 5.00 p.m. for 5.30, at **Astrop House**:*
Annual General Meeting.

Autumn meetings as usual, second Thursday of the month from September, at Banbury Museum.

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