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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.

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Banbury Historical Society proposes to award a prize of £100 for the best piece of local historical research submitted by 30 April 2009 with the further possibility of publishing results in a future issue of *Cake and Cockhorse*. The competition is open to all and the result will be announced at the Annual General Meeting of the Society later in 2009. We would like to receive entries from local history societies in the area, and also from individual historians.

Such work could be the transcribing of probate documents, research into old houses, the recording of gravestones and memorials in and around a parish church, the history of a village school, the creation of a photographic archive, or any other of the many topics which local historians, in societies, groups and singly, are investigating. Some of this work may not be suitable for full publication in such a journal as *Cake & Cockhorse,* but could be written up as a report and recorded as such. If on a large scale, it could be published in full as a records volume in the BHS series.

Entrants are requested to submit two copies of the details of their current or completed research to the Honorary Secretary by 30 April 2009. Completed work should be submitted in its entirety. If it is in the form of current research a sample of the text should be submitted, together with the likely date of completion and the anticipated final format of the work – e.g. as an article, as a submission to a degree awarding body or as a book. The panel of judges, formed from the committee of the Banbury Historical Society, reserves the right to decide the final format for publication.

For further information, or to discuss possibilities, please contact Helen Forde or Deborah Hayter (addresses, phone numbers and email opposite).

Cover: St Freomund as depicted in Burton Dassett Church.

SENT TO COVENTRY:
The Great Migration of Banbury Plush Weavers

Barrie Trinder

Patterns of migration during the Industrial Revolution were complex. Movements of skilled workers were vital to economic development and census returns show colliery managers (or viewers) from Northumberland and Co. Durham settling in other coalfields, Cornishmen making their homes wherever there were non-ferrous ores to be extracted, and pattern makers, iron moulders, turners and fitters from Lancashire, Yorkshire, Shropshire and the Black Country working at foundries in market towns throughout England. Skilled pottery workers moved to and fro between North Staffordshire and other centres of the trade, and puddlers and iron rollers between the Black Country and Shropshire. There were also movements of less skilled people, principally of the young, into the industrial towns that were growing in the second half of the nineteenth century, taking up shoemaking in Kettering or hosiery manufacture in Leicester. Such movements of industrial workers overlay older patterns of short-distance migration, of apprentices in retailing and such urban crafts as tailoring, normally recruited by masters in towns no more than 50 miles away, and of female household servants, who normally found places within the circuit of their local carrier's cart. It has long been part of the received wisdom of Banbury's history that some of the town's plush weavers migrated to Coventry.[1]

This article attempts to quantify that movement. The census returns for 1861 have been examined for the whole of the county of Coventry, including the parishes of Bedworth, Exhall, Foleshill and Stoke. The plush weavers and skilled ancillary workers in the trade born in the Banbury region have been identified (see Table One, page 230). The results show that the received wisdom is well-grounded, that many plush workers and their families did indeed move to Warwickshire in the 1840s and '50s, and that by 1861 they dominated the industry. More than a hundred plush weavers and dyers with birthplaces in Banburyshire have been identified in the Coventry area in 1861,

[1] V. Hodgkins & C. Bloxham, *Banbury and Shutford Plush* (Banbury: Banbury Historical Society, 1980), p.8.

representing a population movement far beyond the normal interchange of migrants between towns less than 30 miles apart.

Banbury in 1851 had a population of less than nine thousand but was the dominant market centre within north Oxfordshire and the southern parts of Warwickshire and Northamptonshire. It was primarily a commercial town where most people gained their livings from retailing, services and small-scale craft manufactures. The only substantial industries serving distant markets were textiles, principally the making of plush, and engineering, but the two together gave employment to fewer than 300 people, about seven per cent of the working population. One reason for Banbury's prosperity was that the nearest towns of comparable or greater size, Oxford, Northampton, Stratford, Warwick and Coventry were all situated at a distance of between 20 and 30 miles.[2]

Coventry differed from Banbury in many respects other than its size. While much of Banbury was razed to the ground in the Civil War, and few of its buildings date from earlier than 1650, Coventry remained a largely medieval city. J.B. Priestley observed in 1933 that it was a town that had often changed its trades but had always managed to come out on top, and nevertheless remained genuinely old and picturesque. He remarked, with what proved to be black irony, that its half-timbered and gabled houses, its soaring stone and carved wood, were a suitable setting for a production of *Die Meistersinger*.[3] That city was destroyed by the Luftwaffe on the night of 14-15 November 1940.

Some of the plush weavers from Banburyshire settled in the close-packed courts that had been built on the gardens and yards of ancient houses in the city centre that, by 1861, had been duly numbered by the Local Board of Health, established in 1849. Coventry's growth in the early nineteenth century had been constrained by common land, and many of its new houses had been built on enclosed properties beyond the common fields in areas like Hillfields, where villas built from 1828 were soon surrounded by workshops and terraced housing, and in Foleshill, Stoke and Radford, two or three miles from the centre. The population of Foleshill grew from just over 3,000 in 1801 to more than 8,000 in 1861.[4] Many migrant Banburians made their homes in these outer suburbs.

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[2] B. Trinder, *Victorian Banbury* (Chichester: Phillimore, 1982), pp. 16-37, 202.

[3] J.B. Priestley, *English Journey* (London: Heinemann, 1934), pp. 69-70.

[4] J. Prest, *The Industrial Revolution in Coventry* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1960), pp. 19-42; R. Chaplin, 'Discovering Lost New Towns of the Nineteenth Century', *The Local Historian*, X (1972), pp. 189-90.

Coventry's influence extended past Exhall and Bedworth to Nuneaton eight miles to the north through a coalfield whose character was memorably captured by George Eliot:

'*In these midland districts the traveller passed rapidly from one phase of English life to another: after looking down on a village dingy with coal-dust, noisy with the shaking of looms, he might skirt a parish all of fields, high hedges, and deep-rutted lanes; after the coach had rattled over the pavement of a manufacturing town, the scene of riots and trades-union meetings, it would take him in another ten minutes into a rural region, where the neighbourhood of the town was only felt in the advantages of a near market for corn, cheese, and hay ... The busy scenes of the shuttle and the wheel, of the roaring furnace, of the shaft and the pulley, seemed to make but crowded nests in the midst of the large-spaced, slow-moving life of homesteads and far-away cottages and oak-sheltered parks. Looking at the dwellings scattered amongst the woody flats and the ploughed uplands, under the low grey sky which overhung them with an unchanging stillness as if Time itself were pausing, it was easy for the traveller to conceive that town and country had no pulse in common, except where the handlooms made a far-reaching straggling fringe about the great centres of manufacture*'.[5]

The 1831 census recorded only 260 plush weavers in England and Wales, most of them in the Banbury area. The term plush refers to a range of fabrics, whose common feature was a long pile, which for many kinds of cloth was cut. Most plushes were mixture fabrics in which cotton or worsted warps were combined with silk, worsted or mohair wefts. The weights and uses of plush fabrics varied from exceptionally heavy pieces, sometimes called 'strongs', employed in the finishing of other kinds of cloth, to lightweight fabrics for kimonos in Japan or for covering silk hats.[6] The best-known uses were for upholstery and uniforms. The technology of plush manufacture was expertly described by Vera Hodgkins in 1980, and need not be repeated here, except to emphasise its complexity – even commercial plush went through more than 30 processes – and the variety of methods of finishing fabrics. From 1837 Gillett's were able to emboss plush using a machine designed for

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[5] George Eliot, *Felix Holt: the Radical* (Blackwood edn., n.d.), p. 5.

[6] G. Herbert, *Shoemaker's Window* (3rd edn., Banbury: Gulliver Press, 1979), pp.3-4.

them by Henry Bessemer, which passed to their successors in Banbury and to Wrenchs of Shutford in 1909.[7]

Textile manufacturers in the Banbury area were specialising in the production of plush by the 1790s. When a Royal Commission reported on the industry in 1838 it appears to have been prosperous. There were three firms in Banbury: Gillett, Lees & Co., managed by the Quaker family who owned one of the town's banks, R. & J. Baughen, and Harris, Banbury & Harris. Gillett, Lees & Co. had 150 looms, Baughens' 120 and Harris, Banbury & Harris 160. Plush-making remained a rural and domestic industry in which the workers were able to maintain wage rates by restricting entry to the trade. Many weavers lived in the villages around Banbury, 35 at Shutford, 34 at Bloxham, 34 at Adderbury, and there were 105 in Banbury itself. The extent of the trade in the early nineteenth century is revealed by the birthplaces of weavers living in Banbury in 1851 which included: Adderbury, Bloxham, Bodicote, Brailes, Byfield, Chacombe, Claydon, Drayton, Fritwell, Hook Norton, King's Sutton, Marston St Lawrence, Middleton Cheney, Shotteswell, Shutford, South Newington and Wroxton. George Herbert, whose father was a weaver, provides some impressions of the 'factories' in Banbury, Harris on the east side of North Bar, Baughen's on the opposite side, and Gillett's on the east side of South Bar near Banbury Cross. They accommodated hand looms – there were 30 in Baughen's establishment – but were also places from which domestic weavers collected yarn and to which they returned finished pieces. Baughen's applied a steam engine to work spinning machinery, but none of the companies introduced power looms.

The trade suffered from recession in the 1840s. Harris, Banbury & Harris ceased production in Banbury in 1843-44, which may have stimulated the movement of weavers to Coventry. The Gillett family withdrew from manufacturing in 1850, although their business was continued in the 1850s by Lees & Co., who also operated from Bury Lane in Coventry, and from the early 1860s by William Cubitt, once their commercial traveller. In 1851 there were 123 weavers and 16 ancillary workers in Banbury; plush-weaving continued in Shutford where there were 36 weavers, but the numbers in most villages where the industry had flourished were reduced. There were 19 at Bloxham, 18 at Brailes, 11 at Adderbury, six at Middleton Cheney, and 11, mostly

[7] Hodgkins & Bloxham, as fn. 1, pp.12-17.

members of the Watts family, at Chalcombe, as well as five at Bodicote, four at Drayton and at Great Bourton, two at Wroxton, one at Sibford and one at Wardington. By 1861 there were 71 weavers in Banbury, 16 at Shutford, 14 at Chalcombe, eight at Brailes, seven in Bloxham, three in Adderbury, and two at Wroxton, but none at Middleton Cheney, King's Sutton, and Hornton.[8]

Plush manufacture was never prominent in the spectrum of Coventry's industries. The city's principal manufacture was the weaving of silk ribbons, gauzes, trimmings and some broad fabrics, together with the production of the yarns of which they were made, employing more than 8,000 of the city's population of just over 40,000 in 1861, a reduction from the total of rather more than 10,000 out of about 36,000 people recorded a decade earlier. The ribbon trade was a largely domestic industry, protected from foreign competition by tariffs until 1860. It was long-established and in 1835 there were six silk throwsters in the city, 77 ribbon manufacturers, and 13 silk dyers, as well as specialist makers of shrouds and trimmings, and numerous people producing looms, weavers' harnesses and other items necessary for the industry.

James Hart, whose family firm had the largest ribbon business in Coventry, was employing 400 men and 580 women and girls in 1861, although most companies were much smaller. Ribbon manufacture was dominated by locally-born workers. Studies of the 1851 census have shown that in the weaving district of Hillfields, 80% of heads of households were born in or around Coventry, and in the older district of Gosford Street the figure was even higher, at 85%. There was nevertheless some inward migration of weavers and dyers from other centres of the silk trade, from Bethnal Green, Bishopsgate, Clerkenwell and Spitalfields in London, from Macclesfield, Congleton and Leek, and from Reading, where silk-working had declined almost to nothing. Most looms were worked manually, and the occupations of many teenage boys were recorded as 'turns a loom'.

The principal innovation in the trade was the construction from about 1850 of 'cottage factories', in which weavers working in their own homes were able to use power from communally-owned steam engines, transmitted by shafts to workshops on the floors above the living quarters. The best known example is the model factory built in 1857 by

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[8] Trinder, *Victorian Banbury*, pp. 32-3, 86-7; A Taylor, *Gilletts: Bankers at Banbury and Oxford* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1964), pp.76-99.

John and Joseph Cash[9] who completed only 48 of the planned 100 units, and in 1862 converted the upper-storey workshops to a single factory running over the tops of the dwellings. The factory remains on the banks of the Coventry Canal off Cash's Lane. Weavers struggled to maintain a list of fixed prices for labour, which was difficult in an industry in which there was no restriction on entry, and where many of the workers were children. The list was abandoned after a bitter strike in July and August 1860, soon after the treaty with France negotiated by W.E. Gladstone removed the duties which had repelled foreign competition.[10]

The city's other principal industry was watchmaking which employed nearly 2,000 people in 1861. The trade was specialised and required high levels of skill. Its prosperity attracted skilled migrants particularly from Holborn, Hoxton and Clerkenwell in London and from Prescot in Lancashire. The watch industry provided part of the foundation for the growth of engineering in Coventry in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, as did the carpenter-loom makers of the city, such as James Moore of Little South Street who employed 29 people, and William Inchley of King William Street who had 20 workers. Heavy engineering, based on the making of iron castings, was of less importance in Coventry in the mid-nineteenth century than it was in Banbury.

The plush industry in Coventry was smaller than some of the most specialist branches of the silk trade, and by 1861 it was mostly carried on by the 101 workers from the Banbury region listed in Table One. It is difficult to make a precise calculation of the numbers of Coventry-born plush workers in the city, since some of those preparing, weaving or dyeing silk could have been involved in plush-making, and some individuals were simply called 'weavers' in the census. Nevertheless the census identifies scarcely more than a dozen Coventry-born people who were with certainty called plush weavers, together with a scattering whose origins were elsewhere, some from Kettering and Rothwell where

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[9] Their sister Eleanor in 1857 married fellow Quaker Henry Stone, a Banbury bookseller. In 1869 John invented a filing box, the patent of which he gave to his brother-in-law, the origin of the Banbury 'box factory' of Henry Stone & Son. See *Victoria County History, Oxon.*, 10, *Banbury Hundred* (1972), p.66.

[10] J. Prest, *The Industrial Revolution in Coventry* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1960), pp. 96-135; Bill Lancaster, 'Who's a Real Coventry Kid? Migration into Twentieth Century Coventry', Bill Lancaster & Tony Mason, *Life and Labour in a Twentieth Century City: the Experience of Coventry*, (Coventry: Cryfield Press, 1987), pp. 57-59.

the making of lightweight plushes for covering hats had prospered in the early nineteenth century. Benjamin Riley, silk manufacturer and merchant of London, was a Coventrian, living in Rothwell in the 1850s, who employed some 350 people.[11] There were also specialist workers from London such as William Veassey, a plush printer who lived in a court in Hill Street, and Edward Reynolds, an embosser of plush and table cover maker, who had been born at Waltham Abbey and lived in Croft Cottages.

In the 1830s there were two manufacturers of plush in Coventry, both of whom had links with Banbury and with London: Harris, Banbury & Harris of Fleet Street, Coventry and Ironmonger Lane, Cheapside in London, and Lees & Co of Bury Lane. Two of the partners in the former company were living in the city in 1861, Thomas Banbury, aged 75, a leading member of the Reform party in the city in the 1830s who had retired from plush manufacturing and lived at No 5 Fleet Street, and Allen M Harris, aged 26 and born in London, who was lodging at No 3 Oxford Terrace.

Coventry had more than four times the population of Banbury in 1851. There were long-standing relationships between the two towns. Connections were maintained in 1851 by vans that left Thomas Golby's warehouse in Bridge Street four times a week, by carriers from Southam and Tachbrook, and by canal boats. From 1852, when the Great Western Railway was extended from Banbury to Birmingham, it was possible to reach Coventry by train by changing at Leamington. George Herbert remembered a clerk from Coventry at a plush factory in Banbury and recalled that his uncle, once a plush weaver, had moved to Coventry where he had made his living as a silk warper, and took George Herbert's father to see one of the first Jacquard looms to be used in the city. Some plush weavers from Adderbury, according to a note with the 1851 census, had moved with their families to Coventry during the previous decade. From the mid-1830s and through the 1840s there was correspondence between Poor Law authorities in the Banbury and Coventry areas concerning migrants who were claiming poor relief.[12]

Table Two (page 237) shows that there was movement in both directions, that seven families of plush workers who had experience of working in the Coventry area were living in Banbury and Shutford in

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[11] B Trinder, *Industrial Archaeology in Northamptonshire*: unpublished report for Northamptonshire Heritage, (1998), p. 32.

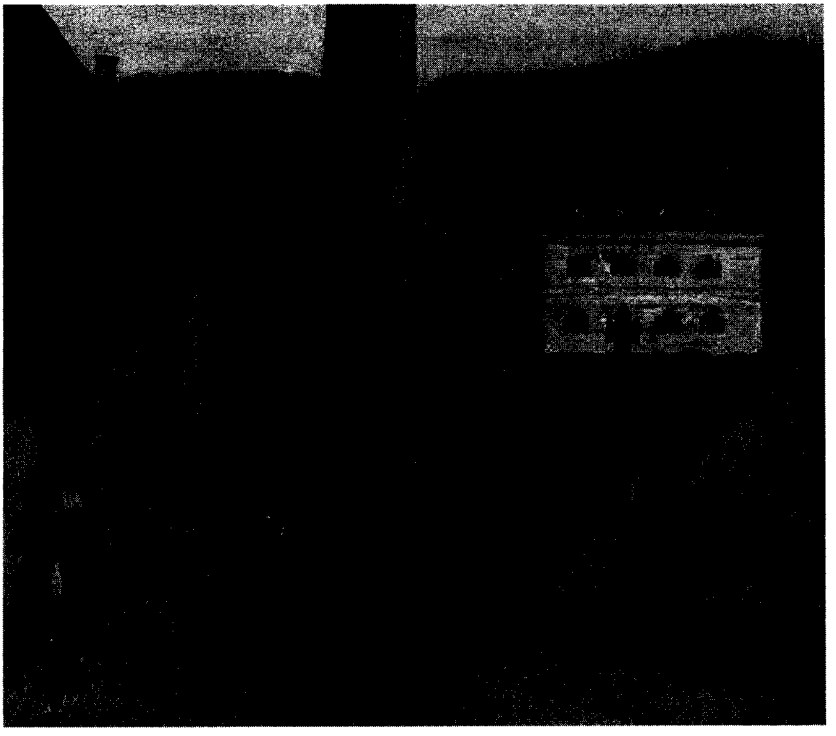
[12] Herbert, *Shoemaker's Window* (fn.6), pp. xiii, 3-5; Taylor (fn.8), pp. 87-90.

1861, but that number emphasises the scale and significance of the migration of more than a hundred workers in the other direction.

The census of 1851 reveals the previous homes of some of the more recent migrants to Coventry. Two weavers from Shutford, probably brothers, had moved during the 1850s to houses in the same part of Luckhurst Lane, Foleshill. Thomas Griffin's wife and two-year-old daughter were born at Foleshill, but the couple had apparently returned to Shutford for the birth of a child who was seven months old in April 1861. Henry Griffin and his wife similarly moved from Shutford after their youngest child was born in 1851. Henry Randle, from Bloxham, spent census night in 1851 in the village with his widowed father, a farm labourer, but he and his Bloxham-born wife probably moved to Stoke between 1843 and 1855 since their 26-year-old daughter, by 1861 a silk weaver, was a native of Bloxham, but her brothers, the eldest of whom was 18, had all been born at Stoke. William Jackman, not then married, was living alone in Adderbury in 1851, one of many plush makers of that name in the parish. Another, the James Jackman living in the House in the Hollow on Foleshill Road in 1861, was probably the widower living a few doors from George Herbert in High Street, Banbury, ten years earlier. William Hitchman, of Freeth Street, Coventry, had been living in Calthorpe Street in 1851 when his place of birth was then recorded as King's Sutton, although the Coventry enumerator recorded it as Adderbury.

John Baughen (not one of the partners in the plush-weaving company) was living in Radford in 1861 and in Back Lane (i.e. Factory Street), Banbury, in 1851, although the previous summer he was a resident of Upper Paradise, Neithrop.[13] His son, also John, was already a weaver at the age of 14 before the family left Banbury, and was still making plush in 1861. Thomas Penn, lodging with a family of Banbury weavers at Foleshill in 1861, was the son of Daniel Penn, a plush weaver, who had been living in 1851 with his parents, two brothers, two sisters and a plush weaver lodger on the eastern side of Paradise Lane. Not far away in a terrace in Townsend Square was the home of Francis Mascord, who had four children in 1851, but six in 1861 after he and his wife had moved to Radford. His son, Henry, had followed him into plush-weaving. Another resident in the centre of Banbury in 1851 was George

[13] B. Trinder, 'Banbury's Poor in 1850', *Cake & Cockhorse* III (1966), pp. 85, 97-111).



"In those days [*c.*1833] *there were a great many weavers in Banbury and neighbourhood, and many lived in South Bar. They, and others, held their after-dinner Parliament, as it was called, round the Monument every day for half-an-hour, and all the topics of the day were warmly discussed. The man with the wooden leg, seen in the painting, was chairman of the meeting. His name was Clarke...*

T.W. Boss, 'Reminiscences [1903]', reprinted in *C&CH* 16(2), p.74.

Detail from painting of South Bar, The Monument (demolished in 1845) and The Green, 1833, by Joseph Scarcebrook, in Banbury Museum, and reproduced in *Banbury Past through Artists' Eyes*, page 33.

Reproduced by kind permission of Oxfordshire Museums Collection.

Bushill, then living with his parents in Catherine Wheel Yard, and working as a labourer, who had settled in the centre of Coventry with his Towcester-born wife and taken up or returned to plush-weaving by 1861.

The Pain family of plush weavers occupied three houses in the Tanyard in North Bar in 1851, and the William Payne living in High Street, Coventry, appears to have been the man who was living there with his widowed mother, a native of Plymouth and once a winder of yarn. Henry Hunt, who was resident with his wife, seven children and a lodger, in what must have been an overcrowded house in a court off High Street, Coventry, was a native of Little Bourton, birthplace of his daughters aged 14 and 12. The family moved to Banbury where they lived on the west side of Hobley's Lane (later Foundry Street), where a daughter who was two in 1861 had been born, but a son aged three months was a native of Coventry. A neighbour in Banbury would have been Charles Betts, a resident of Radford in 1861, who had previously lived in Lampitt's Yard, a terrace of four cottages near to the foundry that stood alongside Orchard House. While living in Banbury Charles Betts would frequently have passed down Horsepool Lane (Union Street) which was the home of George Enoch, a plush weaver then aged 19 who in 1851 was living with his widowed father, a plush weaver born at Barford, a brother and two sisters. He moved to Coventry and married a ribbon weaver, who gave birth to a son in 1857.

Monument Street with adjacent parts of South Bar was a traditional haunt of weavers.[14] The John Galsworthy resident at Radford in 1861 was living there ten years earlier with his wife and five children. His parents Richard and Mary Galsworthy, together with his plush weaver brothers George and William, lived nearby. William White, then unmarried, was living in 1851 with his father Charles White, also a plush weaver, and his mother, his sister and a lodger in the house in the terrace on the west side of Oxford Road nearest to the former Easington Farm.

At least 120 Banbury-born spouses and children were living in Coventry with the workers listed in Table One, but since many men migrated in early adulthood their children tended to be born after they had settled in their new homes. The birthplaces of plush workers' children show that migration from Banbury to Coventry took place throughout the 1840s and '50s. The introduction of plush manufacture in Radford about 1844 may have provided a 'pull factor', drawing weavers

[14] Herbert (as fn.6), pp. 69-70, 74-75.

from Banbury to Coventry. By contrast, weavers who moved in the 1850s were probably propelled by the 'push factor' of company closures in Banbury. Silk plush weaving remained amongst the Coventry manufactures listed in a directory of 1870-2, but it scarcely gains a mention in any of the standard economic histories of the city. The migration of plush weavers was more significant as a loss to Banbury than it was as a gain for Coventry.

The plush weavers were not the only migrants from Banbury to the Coventry area. Some of those who moved worked in other branches of the textile industry. About half-a-dozen men born in the Banbury area were working as silk or ribbon weavers, while a similar number of women migrants had married men from the Coventry area who followed those occupations. The number of textile workers who migrated was probably rather larger than the total recorded in Table One. There were also some Banbury-born building workers in the city as well as a scatter of young women amongst the city's domestic servants, and two apprentices serving time with an ironmonger in Broadgate. A few skilled tradesmen had moved to Warwickshire, including John Thomas, a member of a well-known family of cutlers, William Morgan, a saddler, James Berry, a basket maker born in Cropredy, a cooper, a miller and a baker. Frederick William and Richard Riley, members of the Banbury family of millwrights and engineers, were living respectively in Spriggs Row and Junction Street.[15]

Other Banbury-born migrants included a cab driver and a labourer on the canal wharf, and a wagoner born at Sibford. At least three women from Banburyshire had married Coventry-born watchmakers. Reuben Hancox from Chalcombe and Thomas Stafford from Rollright had occupations that they could not have followed in their native villages, working as coal miners at Foleshill and Exhall. A couple born in Chalcombe kept a grocer's shop on Stony Stanton Road, and a man from Bloxham at Bell Green, Foleshill, a man from Tadmarton was a general dealer in Victoria Street, while Richard Austin from Bloxham traded as a furniture broker. The most successful of the Banburyshire-born retailers appears to have been Arthur Atkins who employed seven assistants in his grocer's shop at Radford. Andrew Allitt from Hanwell kept the *Bear & Bacchus* public house in Foleshill. Joseph Callow, who

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[15] Trinder, *Victorian Banbury*, pp.31, 33-34; Trinder, *Banbury's Poor in 1850*, p.112.

had been born at Bloxham, was practising as a full-time itinerant preacher in Radford, though of which denomination the census does not make clear, but William Jeffs, born in Banbury, was a travelling Mormon elder living in Foleshill, where John Jones from Middleton Cheney ran an ale and porter business. These patterns of migration between towns with adjoining hinterlands were interesting but not unusual. They emphasise that the movement of more than 100 plush workers and their families, probably about 300 people in all, was exceptional.

Plush weaving in Banburyshire continued to contract in the 1860s. By 1871 there were only 52 weavers in Banbury, employed at the factories of William Cubitt, and of James Hill, born at North Aston in 1823, who operated his Banbury-based business from his home at Souldern. In 1861 he was employing 39 people, more than half of them children, but had only 26 workers in 1871. Smaller factories grew up in villages where there had been concentrations of hand loom weavers. William Wrench, already established at Shutford by 1851 as a 'Manufacturer of Livery Plushes, Crepes and Velvets', employed 23 in 1861 and 28 in 1871, and introduced a steam engine in 1885 to operate power looms. Edward Gascoigne employed five weavers at Bloxham in 1851, and James Gascoigne nine weavers in 1861 and seven in 1871. A few weavers continued to work in their homes at Adderbury, Barford, Drayton, Epwell, Milton, Sibford and Wroxton. James Hill's company remained in business until about 1900, while the goodwill of Cubitts, the last firm to make plush in Banbury, was sold to Wrench's of Shutford in 1909. Thereafter the industry was confined to Shutford where it continued until after the Second World War.[16]

There were four significant textile industries in Oxfordshire in the early nineteenth century. Lacemaking in the eastern part of the county remained a domestic industry and declined rapidly in the last decades of the century. The woollen cloth makers of Chipping Norton and the blanket makers of Witney successfully adopted the factory system, and continued to flourish into the second half of the twentieth century. The plush manufacture of Banburyshire did not supply mass-markets and had less potential for expansion. It was of only minor significance by the 1870s, but its contraction in the region was due not so much to market or technological factors but to a significant movement of plush makers to the Coventry area in the 1840s and '50s.

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[16] Hodgkins & Bloxham (as fn.1), p.12.

Table One:

Plushworkers from the Banbury region resident in the county of Coventry in 1861.

Name & declared age 1861	*Place of Birth*	*Occupation*	*Spouse's name, declared age & Place of Birth*	*Residence 1861*	*Likely settlement date in Coventry area*
Austin, David, 40	Bloxham	Plush Weaver	Ann, 46, Coventry	23, Court 1, Gosford Street	
Barton, John, 61	Middleton Cheney	Plush Weaver	Ann, 39, Sibford Ferris	Radford	--
Baughen, John, 51	Banbury	Plush Weaver	Caroline, 50, Kidderminster	Radford	Post 1852
Baughen, John, 24	Banbury	Plush Weaver	Unmarried	With father, John Baughan, 61, Radford	Post 1852
Beasley, James, 37	Banbury	Plush Weaver	Unmarried	Lodger with James Wain, 58, in Far Gosford Street	-
Beesley, John, 70	Banbury	Plush Weaver	Hannah, 59, Neithrop	Albion Street	Post 1840
Bennett, Stephen, 36	Brailes	Weaver	Emma, 28, Coventry	Lower Wellington Road	-
Betts, Charles, 34	Banbury	Plush Worsted Weaver	Fanny, 35, Banbury	Radford	-
Bicknell, Henry, 51	Middleton Cheney	Plush Weaver	Elizabeth, 44, Thenford	Fountainpenny Row, Foleshill	Post 1843
Billington, Charles, 48	Banbury	Silk Dyer	Sarah, 49, Bedworth	1, Court 6, Thomas Street	-
Bloxham, John, 64	Bodicote	Plush Weaver	Widower	Lodger with Henry Griffin, 42, Foleshill	-
Bloxham, Thomas, 35	Milton	Worsted Weaver	Eliza, 35, Coventry	Stoke Knob, Stoke	Pre 1850
Bloxham, William, 70	Bodicote	Worsted Weaver	Widower	Stoke Knob, Stoke	-
Bonham, Joseph, 69	Oxfordshire	Plush Weaver	Ann, 61, Warwickshire	Little Heath, Foleshill	-

Name, 1861	*Birthplace*	*Occupation*	*Spouse*	*Residence*	*Settlement*
Bonham, Samuel, 81	Bodicote	Worsted Weaver	Widower	Lodger with son, Samuel, 49, Silk Weaver & Shopkeeper, 138 Much Park Street	-
Brain, Thomas Benjamin, 47	Fritwell	Plush Weaver	Maria, 40, Coventry	Draper's Field	1856-59
Bricknell, George, 30	Middleton Cheney	Cotton Plush Weaver	Ellen, 27, King's Sutton	Booth's Fields, Foleshill	Post 1857
Bricknell, George, 57	Middleton Cheney	Plush Weaver	Susanna, 65, Kineton	Radford	-
Burley, John, 38	Banbury	Plush Weaver	Unmarried	Lodger with John Baughan, 61, Radford	-
Busby, Henry, 24	Banbury	Plush Weaver	Unmarried	Lodger, Lockhurst Lane, Foleshill	-
Bushill, George, 30	Banbury	Plush Weaver	Sarah Ann, 32, Towcester	3, Court 2, Grove Street	Post 1850
Cakebread, Joseph, 52	Bloxham	Plush Weaver	Ann, 49, Bloxham	Hall Green, Foleshill	Post 1842
Cakebread, William, 50	Bloxham	Weaver	Martha, 53, Bourton	4, Court 4, Leicester Street	Pre 1843
Calcutt, Charles, 30	Banbury	Weaver	Eliza, 33, Foleshill	4, Court 5, Brewery Street	Pre 1851
Calcutt, Henry, 37	Neithrop	Plush Weaver	Eliza, 37, Radford	Radford	Pre 1852
Calcutt, Thomas, 28	Sibford	Plush Weaver	Eliza, 30, Banbury	Little Heath, Foleshill	1852-59
Callow, John, 24	Deddington	Cotton & Mohair Weaver	Unmarried	Lodges with William Turbitt, 60, Radford	-
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Name, 1861	*Birthplace*	*Occupation*	*Spouse*	*Residence*	*Settlement*
Castle, Alfred, 32	Banbury	Worsted Plush Weaver	Elizabeth, 29, Coventry	Stony Stanton Road, Coleshill	Pre 1855
Clay, George, 52	Greatworth	Wool & Cotton Weaver	Charlotte, 53, Grimsbury	Windmill Lane, Foleshill	Post 1844
Clay, John, 36	Bourton	Worsted Plush Weaver	Widower	Stony Stanton Road, Foleshill	Pre 1847
Clay, Uriah, 44	Bourton	Cotton Weaver	Mary, 41, Foleshill	Booth's Fields, Foleshill	Pre 1844
Cosford, George, 12	Oxfordshire	Plush Weaver	Unmarried	With Uncle, John Griffin, 58, Lockhurst Lane, Foleshill	-
Enoch, George, 28	Banbury	Worsted & Cotton Weaver	Ruth, 24, Coventry	13, Court 4, High Street	Pre 1857
Evrard, John, 53	Oxfordshire	Plush Weaver	Widower	Boader with John Griffin, 58, Lockhurst Lane, Foleshill	-
Galsworthy, John, 48	Banbury	Plush Weaver	Ann, 44, Banbury	Radford	1854-60
Griffin, Henry, 42	Shutford	Plush Weaver	Elizabeth, 41, Brailes	Lockhurst Lane, Foleshill	Post 1851
Griffin, John, 58	Shutford	Plush Weaver	Mary, 49, Bourton	Lockhurst Lane, Foleshill	Post 1841
Griffin, Thomas, 36	Shutford	Plush Weaver	Sarah, 41, Foleshill	Lockhurst Lane, Foleshill	Post 1859 **
Gutteridge, Edward, 68	Banbury	Plush Weaver	Widower	23, Court 3, Gosford Street	-
Hartwell, Thomas, 58	Banbury	Plush Weaver	Rebecca, 64, Banbury	Radford	-
Herbert, Elizabeth, 37	Banbury	Plush Weaver	Thomas, 35	With husband, Stony Stanton Road, Foleshill	Pre 1848
Herbert, Richard, 53	Banbury	Worsted Plush Weaver	Sarah, 48, Foleshill	Stony Stanton Road, Foleshill	Pre 1843
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Name, 1861	*Birthplace*	*Occupation*	*Spouse*	*Residence*	*Settlement*
Herbert, Thomas, 35	Oxfordshire	Worsted Plush Weaver	Elizabeth, 37, Banbury	Stony Stanton Road, Foleshill	Pre 1848
Hitchman, William, 40	Adderbury	Plush Weaver	Rebecca, 36, Banbury	1, Court 4, Freeth Street	1855-60
Hoare, John, 48	Radway	Silk Dyer	Jane, 46,Tadmarton	3, Court 35, Gosford Street	1850-56
Hone, David, 25	Neithrop	Worsted Plush Weaver & Cotton Dyer	Sarah, 28, Coventry	Stony Stanton Road, Foleshill	-
Hunt, Henry, 36	Little Bourton	Worsted & Cotton Weaver	Elizabeth, 33, Neithrop	7, Court 3, High Street	1859-60
Hunt, William, 26	Banbury	Broad Silk Weaver	Elizabeth, 24, Coventry	4, Court 1, Mill Lane	-
Jakeman, James, 50	Adderbury	Plush Weaver	Matilda, 40, Bicester	House in the Hollow, Foleshill Road	Pre 1857
Jakeman, John, 30	Adderbury	Plush Weaver	Ann, 40, Foleshill	Old Brook Lane, Foleshill	Pre 1848
Jakeman, William, 46	Adderbury	Plush Weaver	Caroline, 53, Grimscote	Lockhurst Lane, Foleshill	-
Joines, John, 49	Deddington	Plush Weaver	Elizabeth, 40, Adderbury	Lockhurst Lane, Foleshill	1843-1854
Jones, James, 34	Banbury	Worsted Plush Weaver	Mary Ann, 37, Sowe	Stony Stanton Road, Foleshill	Pre 1848
Keene, Samuel, 63	Banbury	Dyer's Assistant	Widower	8, Court 11, West Orchard	-
Keene, Thomas, 67	Banbury	Plush Weaver	Sarah, 69, Coventry	Baines's Buildings	
Killpack, David, 28	Banbury	Plush Weaver	Unmarried	Lives with father, David (below)	Post 1833
Killpack, George, 66	Banbury	Plush Weaver & Wire Drawer	Rebecca, 71, Banbury	57 Leicester Street	Post 1833
Killpack, Jonathan, 33	Banbury	Worsted Weaver	Ann, 39, London	With brother: 2 Tower Street	-
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Name, 1861	*Birthplace*	*Occupation*	*Spouse*	*Residence*	*Settlement*
Killpack, Richard, 35	Banbury	Plush Weaver	Susanna, 36, Adderbury	6 Brewery Street	Pre 1856
Killpack, Richard, 69	Banbury	Plush Weaver	Elizabeth, 60, Bloxham	35 King William Street	-
Lyon, Thomas, 46	Banbury	Plush Weaver	Kezia, 41, Banbury	Lockhurst Lane, Foleshill	Pre 1845
Mascord, Francis, 38	Neithrop	Plush Weaver	Amelia, 43, Steeple Claydon, Bucks	Radford	1855-58
Mascord, Henry, 16	Neithrop	Plush Weaver	Unmarried	With father, Francis Mascord, 38, Radford	1855-58
Mold, Daniel, 30	Horley	Worsted Weaver	-	With brother in Law, Samuel Killpack, 47	-
Morby, John, 62	Hornton	Plush Weaver	Widower	Keresley	Post 1834
Morby, William, 27	Hornton	Plush Weaver	Unmarried	With father, John Morby, 62, Keresley	Post 1834
Newby, Martin, 57	Haunton, Oxon, Hornton?	Plush Weaver	Ann, 48, Spitalfields, London	Radford	-
Owen, George, 20	Neithrop	Cotton Dyer	Unmarried	Lodger with David Hone, 25, Foleshill	-
Owen, John, 39	Banbury	Worsted Plush Weaver	Hannah, 41, Banbury	Stony Stanton Road, Foleshill	1857-61
Palmer, James, 41	Middleton Cheney	Plush Weaver	Jane, 43, Middleton Cheney	Little Heath, Foleshill	1843-45
Palmer, Stephen, 38	Middleton Cheney	Cotton Plush Weaver	Ann, 26, Middleton Cheney	Foleshill	Pre 1849
Payne, William, 27	Banbury	Plush Weaver	Lucy, 28, Banbury	45 High Street	Pre 1858
Penn, Thomas, 20	Banbury	Plush Weaver	Unmarried	Lodger with James Wild, 55, Foleshill	-

Name, 1861	*Birthplace*	*Occupation*	*Spouse*	*Residence*	*Settlement*
Pryne, William, 44	Bloxham	Bleacher	Elizabeth, 38, Coventry	10 Ready Row, West Street	Pre 1847
Randle, John, 21	Bloxham	Cotton Dyer	Harriet, 21,Stoke	South Street, Stoke	-
Randle, Henry, 51	Bloxham	Plush Weaver	Letitia, 47, Bloxham,	South Street, Stoke	1836-43
Seeney, Elisha, 46	Middleton Cheney	Plush Weaver	Hannah, 43, Middleton Cheney	Hall Green, Foleshill	1844-48
Smith, William, 40	Banbury	Worsted Weaver	Harriet, 31, Coventry	3, Court 2, Agnes Lane	-
Southam, James William, 46	Great Bourton	Plush Weaver	Hannah, 42, Great Bourton	Windmill Lane, Foleshill	-
Southam, John, 48	Great Bourton	Plush Weaver, Worsted &c	Unmarried	Lodger with brother, James Southam, 46, Foleshill	-
Stockley, Elijah, 40	Balscote	Labourer in Dye House	Mary, 45, Horley	6, Court 5, Bond Street	Pre 1849
Turbitt, Caleb, 22	Banbury	Plush Weaver	Unmarried	With father, William Turbitt, 60, Radford	Post 1842
Turbitt, Edward, 26	Neithrop	Plush Weaver	Unmarried	Boarder with John Griffin, 58, Foleshill	-
Turbitt, Henry, 30	Banbury	Cotton Dyer	Unmarried	With father, William Turbitt, 60, Radford	Post 1842
Turbitt, Reuben, 23	Banbury	Plush Weaver	Unmarried	With father, William Turbitt, 60, Radford	Post 1842
Turbitt, Samuel, 38	Banbury	Cotton & Mohair Weaver	Emma, 31, Radford	Radford	Pre 1846
Turbitt, William, 60	Banbury	Plush Weaver	Rebecca, 58, Banbury	Radford	Post 1842

Name, 1861	*Birthplace*	*Occupation*	*Spouse*	*Residence*	*Settlement*
Turbitt, William, 24	Banbury	Plush Cotton Mohair Weaver	Unmarried	With father, William Turbitt, 60, Radford	Post 1842
Tustin, Thomas, 50	Hook Norton	Plush Weaver	Mary, 49, Middleton Cheney	Radford	1841-45
Wain, James, 58	Adderbury	Plush Weaver	Sarah, 56, Adderbury	Far Gosford Street	1843-46
Wakefield, Robert, 61	Barford	Plush Weaver	Ann, 62, Barford	Coventry Street, Stoke	Post 1840
Warmington, Thomas, 59	Shotteswell	Plush Weaver	Widower	Radford	-
Warmington, William, 29	Shotteswell	Plush Weaver	Mary Ann, 29, Coventry	Radford	-
Warr, John, 34	Shotteswell	Bleacher of Cotton	Dinah, 33, Horley	6, Court 3, Sherbourne Street	1854-60
White, William, 39	Banbury	Silk Plush Weaver	Selina, 37, Nethercote	5, Court 3, High Street	1852-54
Whitmill, John, 45	Byfield	Plush Weaver	Eliza, 46, Weymouth, Dorset	9 White Friars Street	Pre 1851
Wild, James, 55	Banbury	Plush Weaver	Maria, 49, Foleshill	Lockhurst Lane, Foleshill	Pre 1847
Wild, John, 27	Banbury	Plush Weaver	Jane, 27, Coventry	Lockhurst Lane, Foleshill	Pre 1858
Williams, Thomas, 62	Banbury	Plush Weaver	Mary, 60, Banbury	5, Court 3, Gosford Street	-
Williams, William	Middleton Cheney	Plush Weaver	Elizabeth, 46, Middleton Cheney	Radford	-
Wrench, John, 23	Shutford	Dyer's Help	Maria, 26, Coventry	Union Street Butts	-

Notes:

All references to Bourton and to Barford are to the villages near Banbury in Oxfordshire.

The spellings of Killpack (sometimes Killpeck) and Jakeman (otherwise Jackman or Jukman) have been standardised.

All references to London are to Middlesex.

Lockhurst Lane, Foleshill, is the current name: it was known as Lockers Lane in 1861.

Table Two: Plush workers living in Banbury in 1861 with links to Coventry.

Name & declared age 1861	*Place of Birth*	*Occupation*	*Spouse's name, declared age, place of birth*	*Residence 1861*	*Other links with Coventry area*
Banbury, N., 26	Coventry	Silk Weaver	A., 27, Banbury	Parson's Meadow	Daughter, 5, born Coventry
Bosman, William, 46	Neithrop, Banbury	Plush Weaver	Mary Ann, 44, Coventry	The Bank, Townsend	-
Cubitt, William, 60	Neatishead, Norfolk	Plush Manufacturer	Mary, 50, London	Calthorpe Road	Daughters, 33 and 31 born Coventry
Eaves, William, 62	Coventry	Warehouseman in plush manufactory	Sarah, 56, Allesley, Warwicks.	Horsefair	-
Griffin, Thomas, 61	Banbury	Plush Weaver	Alice, 73, Foleshill	The Bank, Townsend	-
Jakeman, William, 49	Coventry	Plush Weaver	Unmarried	Lodger with Jane Falkner, 58, Needlewoman, Adderbury	-
Killpack, Charles, 34	Neithrop, Banbury	Plush Weaver	Rachel, 32, Nuneaton	Horsepool Lane (Foundry Street)	Son, 7, & daughter, 2, born Foleshill, nephew, 4, born Coventry
Randle, William, 41	Coventry	Hand Loom Worsted Plush Weaver	Elizabeth, 39, Shutford	Shutford	-
Webb, Thomas, 57	Coventry	Plush Weaver	Unmarried	Lodger with Thomas Wyld, plush weaver, Monument Street	-

THE MIRACLE OF SAINT FREOMUND: A Ninth Century Political Murder

Peter M. Christopher

The author is extremely grateful to Deborah Hayter for her encouragement and advice in the production of these notes, now published in the hopes that all who read them will endeavour to visit the church of All Saints at Burton Dassett, one of Warwickshire's most beautiful and unaltered churches and, perhaps after pausing to wonder at its enigmatic wall paintings, will then be moved to make as generous contribution as possible to its fabric fund. In early 2008 a large portion of the roof lead was stolen from this increasingly fragile thirteenth century church.

Cradled in the Burton Dassett hills lies the ancient church of All Saints, close by a holy well.[1] Today, apart from the noise of the nearby M40 motorway, it is otherwise a most peaceful place, with only three or four houses and rooks cawing from the trees. Long ago, and long before county boundaries had existed, this little hamlet had been a settlement in the Anglian kingdom of Mercia[2] and very close to the boundary with yet another contemporary kingdom, that of the Hwicce. By much later in the thirteenth century it had become a thriving market town creating enough wealth to support a spacious church with extensive wall paintings.

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[1] Burton Dassett Church, one of South Warwickshire's finest, situated at Ordnance Survey ref 398514.

[2] Mercia became Christian in AD654 and later St Chad established his See at Lichfield on being made a bishop in AD699. The kingdom of the Hwicce was absorbed into Mercia and was given its own bishop who established his See at Worcester, the ancient diocesan boundary corresponding to that of the two kingdoms. This boundary divided the area of modern Warwickshire unequally, running from Tamworth-in-Arden through Warwick, Kineton and Tysoe. *The Place-Names of Warwickshire*, published by the English Place Names Society, vol xiii, identifies a field name in the parish of Radway, known as Martinmow, as very likely being the *Merclemere* or the boundary of the Mercians and the Hwicce. For further reading see *A History of Warwickshire*, by T. Slater, p.31; *In Search of the Dark Ages*, by M. Ward, p.83.

Also see *Victoria County History* for Warwickshire concerning the growth and prosperity of Burton Dassett.

These wall paintings, having been perceived as popish imagery at the time of the Reformation, were subsequently over-painted with whitewash, but are now gradually reappearing as the whitewash falls away.[3] They consist of a painted chancel arch with what is described as a Doom, a symbolism of the gates of Heaven at Judgement Day, together with several other paintings elsewhere within the church. In particular those in the north transept window continue to intrigue because of their strange depictions, added to by their indistinct but unquestionably antique appearance.

The painting on the left of the window depicts a bearded man wearing what can be described as a coronet,[4] a small crown once worn by princes or others of high status. The man appears to be looking at the object held in his right hand, an identical bearded head, seemingly his own. In his left hand he is holding what has been described as a palm frond, but so indistinct is the painting it could equally be a sword. The painting to the right again appears to show the same bearded male, now holding with both hands what might be a ciborium or lidded chalice used to hold consecrated wafers for Communion, but what has been described elsewhere as a simple cup.

The current informal opinions are that the left-hand painting relates to Saint Kenelm of Winchcombe, because of Burton Dassett's connections with the de Sudely family, and that the right hand painting might depict the Christian King Oswald of Northumbria, the cup being that which Bede states was given to the Church within Northumbria by Oswald. Others have suggested the right-hand painting may relate to John de Sudely, whom it is believed may be interred in the tomb below the north transept window; this does appear to be the oldest tomb in the church. John de Sudely may have been cup bearer to the king and perhaps the right-hand painting may relate to this in some way.

Elsewhere it has been suggested there may be some connection with the Knights Templar, but the possibility has also been raised in the past that these paintings might relate to the curious folk tale of Saint Freomund. Before expanding on this last connection more discussion is needed on the paintings' currently perceived representations.

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[3] See 'Notes on the Paintings in Burton Dassett Church', by E. Baker, A.R.C.A., to be found in the back of the guide to *Burton Dassett Church,* by F. O'Shaughnessy.

[4] Coronet: any small crown worn by princes or peers as a mark of rank. *O.E.D.*

Oswald was defeated by the pagan King Penda of Mercia around A.D. 642 and sacrificially mutilated to Woden, with his head being later buried initially on Lindisfarne. Quite a few religious centres subsequently claimed his other body-parts as relics. Oswald was not credited with being a cephalophore saint or head carrier, but was remembered as a hero who died a sacrificial death in battle for his Christian faith. He has not been particularly remembered for the cup he gave the Church. Kenelm,[5] a Mercian prince, may have been murdered but it is more likely he died in battle against the Welsh around A.D. 820. It is not certain if he was decapitated, although one folk tale does relate that he was beheaded in the town of Winchcombe and that his head, after being severed from his body, rolled to the spot which became a holy well. But again, Kenelm is not credited with being a cephalophore saint. In addition the folk tale relates that Kenelm was only seven years old when he was murdered, making the depiction of him as a bearded man unlikely. Both these saints have connections with the old kingdom of Mercia, although indirectly in Oswald's case, as he was a defeated Christian enemy of the then pagan Mercia.

Depictions of saintly kings or princes might be expected to have crowns,[6] but there is no particular reason to associate either Oswald or Kenelm with a palm frond. Symbols in religious iconography were often used to identify a particular saint to an otherwise illiterate congregation. A sword might accompany depictions of martyrs, especially Saint Paul, whilst a cup might most commonly be associated with John the Evangelist, a chalice with yet other saints, or a cruet with Joseph of Arimathea. John the Baptist, who was beheaded by Herod, is often associated with a lamb and a long wooden cross, or sometimes, rarely, an axe. He was invariably depicted wearing animal skin, symbolizing his time spent in the wilderness. He was particularly revered by the Knights Templar who held land close by at Temple Hardwick. These paintings depict no identifiable emblems other than a bearded severed head, a lidded chalice or ciborium, the coronets and possibly a sword.

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[5] See *Oxford Dictionary of Saints*, by D. Farmer, re Oswald, p.379, re Kenelm p.285. However Kenelm's death may be associated with the village of Kenelmstow now known as Romsley near Clent: see *Saints in the Landscape*, by G. Jones, p.120 et ibid.

[6] See Farmer, *Oxford Dictionary of Saints*, Appendix 2, Principal iconographical emblems of saints.

From the days of early Christianity in England up to the Reformation, devotion to a particular chosen saint was often a marker of local culture.[7] Dedications to saints were not made randomly but for a specific reason appropriate to the location, although dedications could change if powerful new landlords, with their particular favourite saint, so decided. It was believed that intercession in Heaven could be obtained through the saints by prayer and the more miraculous the saint the more powerful their intercession. Prayer at a shrine possessing a relic of the saint, and especially one associated with some miraculous event, amplified this accessibility. A relic could take many forms: for instance a splinter of bone or finger nail, or even a drop of blood. The possession of any relic enhanced the importance of a church and consequently its ability to attract both pilgrims and wealthy sponsors. Chadshunt church,[8] not too far distant from Burton Dassett, possessed a painted image of Saint Chad which generated a great deal of revenue for the church until the Reformation, when it was reported "*the said Picture and Ymage of Chadde* [was] *broken downe and burnte*". The wall paintings at Burton Dassett were simply covered over at the Reformation, but up until then an image such as a wall painting would nonetheless be an acceptable second best for people to pray to and make offerings to the benefit of the church.

The popularity of different saints rose and fell over centuries, though local saints' cults might retain popularity in their locality for longer and continue to be regarded as powerful protectors on earth. The stories of many early saints lives were only finally written down by the eleventh century because the Normans, contemptuous of Anglo-Saxon culture, were demanding documentary evidence concerning these early saints.[9] Perhaps local desire to snub later Norman overlords would fuel the cult of a local saint and keep memories alive for centuries after, long enough for wall paintings to be created. It could be suggested the wall paintings in Burton Dassett church might have been made by an itinerant artist

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[7] See *Saints in the Landscape*, by G. Jones, pp. 1-21, concerning evidence for the tracking of patron saints.

[8] Chadshunt Church. See *Warwickshire History; the Journal of the Warwickshire Local History Soc.* Vol xiii, No.6, p.221, 'The lost parish church of All Saints, Bishops Itchington', by P. Upton, concerning the image of Chad.

[9] See Farmer, *Oxford Dictionary of Saints*, Introduction, p.xv, concerning requirements for documentary evidence of sainthood.

who could only paint one style of male features, and that these paintings therefore relate as suggested, but the story of Freomund could give clues as to the subject of these paintings.

The life and death of Saint Freomund is regarded by many as fictional, since there are few references to him and there are differing versions of the story.[10] Reputedly a relative of Offa, king of the now Christian Mercia and also a relative of East Anglian royalty and as such, a possible claimant to the throne, he lived as a hermit but was murdered by an apostate kinsman with the help of the Danes around A.D. 866. He was buried at Offchurch, not far from Leamington Spa, and his body later removed to Cropredy near Banbury, where miracles attested to his saintliness, according to one source. Certainly around this time assassination of potential candidates to the throne was not uncommon in the struggle for power. Following the assassination near Tamworth of King Aethelbald, the Bretwalda or senior king amongst the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms, probably on the orders of Offa of Mercia, civil war erupted. This was followed by the exiling of Beornred, heir to Aethelbald, to Northumbria, where he too soon met an uncomfortable end by being burnt to death. Offa had by now seized power in an expanding Mercia. As Offa's power and prestige grew, both in Anglo-Saxon England and on the Continent as well, he visited the Pope in Rome in A.D. 797. By now he was powerful enough to order the beheading of Aethelberht, King of the East Angles. Following this execution the cult of Saint Aethelberht arose. It has been suggested politics at this time was inextricably linked with local and regional identity, but so too was religion and royalty. Up to the time of the Danish invasions, Mercia managed to produce more royal saints than any other English kingdom. Not all these saints became patron saints of local churches, but all who were the subject of hagiography, those with a written account of their lives, were commemorated in Mercian churches in liturgy or in legend. According to legend Freomund was of royal blood and died at the hands of an apostate and the pagan Danes, and performed a miracle as we shall see: almost certainly sufficient guarantee for sainthood in those blood thirsty times.[11]

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[10] See Farmer, *Oxford Dictionary of Saints*, re Freomund, p.195.

[11] *In Search of the Dark Ages*, by M. Ward, pp.80-81 and p.98, concerning power struggles etc in Mercia; also *Saints in the Landscape*, by G. Jones, p.154-155, concerning royal Mercian saints.

Elsewhere Freomund was thought to be a son of Offa and that he abandoned his life as a hermit to fight the Vikings, but was beheaded by an English traitor.[12] Saint Birinius, the bringer of Roman Christianity to the early proto-Saxon kingdom of the Gewissae, and who became its first bishop, establishing his See at Dorchester, is apparently included in one version of the tale, despite his having died much earlier in A.D. 650.

There is ample room for confusion at first sight. However, Mercia had initially been Christianised by Northumbrian missionaries of the Irish Celtic school. Irish Christianity had evolved separately from the Roman Church and was based on, amongst other things, a monasticism ruled over by an abbot, often in remote locations combining isolation, scholarship and frugality but also pilgrimage. Celtic monks around this time conducted remarkable missionary journeys into Europe, leading to the conversion of many pagans to the north of the Alps. The Roman and Celtic Churches had become notably divided on the method of calculating Easter and also the acceptance of the authority of bishops. Despite the decision made at the Synod of Whitby in A.D. 663 to accept the Roman Church's practice within the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms, Irish priests were still very much in evidence in England. Later, Mercia had expanded greatly under Offa, to the point at which he felt able to challenge the ecclesiastical supremacy of Canterbury. Offa's power and prestige was such that he persuaded the Pope to allow a new archbishopric to be created at Lichfield in the heartland of Mercia. This brash ecclesiastical policy created great hostility, only extinguished and reversed later around the time of the Danish invasions, when Dorchester also became a See once more. The inclusion of Saint Birinius of Dorchester may have been an attempt to bring some unity to the church in a later retelling of this tale, in what might otherwise have been perceived as an Irish Celtic and Mercian setting.[13]

Dedications to better-known saints, with whom we ourselves might be more familiar, were becoming increasingly common as Anglo-Saxon kingdoms merged. Following Offa's death the power of Mercia began to wane, so much so that in the time of the Danish invasion a large part of

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[12] See *Anglo Saxon Oxfordshire*, by J. Blair, pp.75-76, concerning one version of the story of Freomund.

[13] See Blair, *Anglo Saxon Oxfordshire*, concerning Irish influence on the emerging Church in the South Midlands, p.59; *Christianity in England from Roman Times to the Reformation*, Vol 1, by K. Hylson-Smith, p.200, concerning the creation of an Archbishopric at Lichfield.

Mercia was ceded to them. It is worth pointing out that up to this time there were often great differences between the regional churches in England, in particular between those north and south of the Humber.[14] Letters from Pope Leo to Charlemagne deplore the hostility between King Eardwulf and his Archbishop Eanbald in the north and Cenwulf, King of Mercia and his Archbishop in the south. All this might make it less than likely that a saint such as Oswald of Northumbria would be likely to be revered in Mercia, especially as he had originally encouraged the Gewissae, the precursors of the West Saxon kingdom and as such enemies of the expanding Mercia, to create the See of Dorchester for Birinius in the first place. Above all else however Christianity was the one great unifying factor which greatly contributed to the defeat of the Danes and ultimately the creation of a united England.

In the seventh and eighth centuries, following the Mercian consolidation, there had been an unparalleled number of religious houses or Minsters founded under the rule of an abbot, especially along the Upper Thames valley, usually close to rivers and hence waterborne trade.[15] Patronage of royal families ensured that not only did religious life focus around these foundations but that they also became economic and administrative centres and in effect strategic tribute-gathering centres worth controlling. As a result royal families usually installed their family members to rule these houses and control often quite large mother-parishes that covered the surrounding areas. Royal sisters or daughters were often made abbesses at such religious houses. Some of these Minsters, always collegiate, were paired in some way with secondary sites of outlying cells for priests or hermits. Cropredy, with a Minster on the upper Cherwell close to the modern Warwickshire county boundary, seems to have had one such site at Prescot. In the ninth century the monastic ideal declined although there was a brief revival in the tenth century. By the eleventh century secular clergy, now the majority, were more closely tied to powerful landlords who had built their own private chapels on their estates. These chapels were to become

[14] See Hylson-Smith, *Christianity in England*, Vol 1, concerning differences between the churches north and south of the Humber, p.198.

[15] See Blair, *Anglo Saxon Oxfordshire*, concerning Minsters in the Upper Thames valley p.56; also Slater, *A History of Warwickshire*, p.31, concerning the early Church in Warwickshire.

the basis of parish churches which began to emerge in the following century.

To return to Freomund, who, if he genuinely existed, was presumably a late Mercian aristocrat who had chosen an ascetic life as a hermit but who became involved in the fight against the pagan Danes. The story relates how, after being decapitated, he miraculously picked up his head, forgave his murderers and then walked to a specifically-named, but as yet unidentified, location between Bishops Itchington and Harbury, where he finally became inanimate. These neighbouring villages are inside modern Warwickshire and some ten miles from Prescot, but it should be understood these legendary events occurred long before the formation of modern counties later in the tenth century. The story continues: how his assassins repent their deed and take his corpse together with his head to Offchurch. Freomund is then buried in a lead coffin within the precincts of a palace there. The story then relates how, many years later, after a vision, three crippled girls find his grave marked by a column of light and, instructed by an angel, seek out and carry the coffin to a place once more specifically-named: a place surrounded by marsh, between the Cherwell and the Bradmere, where those rivers meet. This last place is quite obviously Prescot, which still retains field-name elements that do seem to connect it with both hermits and possibly Freomund himself. The story continues, telling how the girls deposit the coffin by a white carved stone and plant a willow wand as a marker. By the following morning this has grown to be a tree around which grows hay so marvellous it cures sick animals, indicating that the spot is now a holy one. Meanwhile a pilgrim in Jerusalem is told in a vision to seek a place on the Cherwell where five priests live, where also grows a willow tree under which lies a tomb containing Freomund.[16] Curiously the tale includes a miraculous sow with thirteen piglets in association with his tomb. This might hint that Cropredy and Prescot were involved in pig rearing. It is believed that some of the religious foundations around the upper Thames area had extensive pig farms. The miraculous legend of Saint Frideswide of Oxford has connections with pigs and there is an admittedly much later reference to pig farming at Bampton, itself an early religious foundation.

[16] See Blair, *Anglo Saxon Oxfordshire*, concerning the story of Freomund and associated topics, pp. 74- 76

Lastly in the story, following miracles with crowds of sick people being cured at the site of Freomund's tomb, the Bishop of Dorchester, together with our pilgrim and the priests, try to carry the coffin to the nearest monastery, but can get no further than Cropredy. There they build a shrine and chapel to Saint Freomund. This is a little confusing and perhaps hints at a late foundation of the Minster itself at Cropredy around the relics of Freomund, since references to the Minster at Cropredy are from the eleventh century. There is now no trace of a chapel to Freomund at Cropredy but it is thought the parish church once had one.

The antiquarian William Camden recorded one version of the story of the death of Prince Freomund and noted he was buried at his father's palace at Offchurch near Leamington Spa. He placed Freomund's death at place called Wydford. Whilst there is no local place today with this name, at an earlier date it could simply have implied a wide ford or one where willows grow. Taken together with the specific location in the legend of where Freomund became inanimate – between Harbury and Itchen – this could encourage the romanticist to seek a place where Freomund might have been martyred.[17]

The village of Bishops Itchington was moved to its present location in the sixteenth century from its previous and more remote location a mile to the south at Old Town. There is a strong possibility that an old road once existed running along several parish boundaries from the upper Cherwell valley close to Kings Sutton, then on past Prescot to cross the present county boundary close to Wormleighton, ultimately going past Harbury as far as Warwick.[18] There is reference to such a track certainly from Wormleighton to Warwick, once described as *"regia via inter castra de Warr' et eccl. Sci Petri de Wilmesleyton"*. The evidence for its existence south of Wormleighton is less robust but cannot be discounted. This track would have crossed the river Itchen by a ford at the point where four parish boundaries meet, namely those of Bishops Itchington, Ladbroke, Chapel Ascot and Harbury, where a water mill is thought to have existed at the time of Domesday. Although no Mercian Law Codes

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[17] The suggested location for *Wydford* is OS 399588 which also appears to correspond roughly with J. Blair's diagram in *Anglo Saxon Oxfordshire*, p.74.
See also *Historic Warwickshire* by T. Burgess, published in 1893, in which he states Camden was in turn quoting an un-named *"old chronicl"* as his source.

[18] See Appendix, page 248.

have survived it is known there were duties called the *Trimoda,*[19] incumbent on all landowners, which included the maintenance of bridges, roads and fortifications as well as supplying men to fight the king's cause. The burden of maintaining a ford here would be borne by the estates that later evolved into these four parishes. There are willows growing today here at what does seem a rather gloomy place. The valley floor is narrow with steep sides with no signs of a ford today. Just upstream is Sheepford Bridge, whilst just a little downstream is Deppers Bridge, the name Deppers stemming from Deep Ford indicating the river was forded in this area.

The legendary Freomund was an aristocrat and a warrior who if Camden is to be believed died at a ford. We could surmise a warrior prince would not be travelling alone and would be surrounded by a body guard of theigns and other soldiers. The assistance of the Danes would be needed together with a large element of surprise to ensure success in any assassination attempt. An ambush at a remote and difficult place, such as this ford, might present the ideal location.

Now it can be imagined, following a surprise attack at this ford, after his body guards have been slain, a defeated and perhaps wounded Freomund attempts to flee towards Harbury but is captured. He forgives his enemies in true Christian fashion before they decapitate him. His murderers repent and take his remains to Offchurch. His loyal body guards are buried where they fell. By a most curious coincidence, just above this old ford within the parish of Bishops Itchington there was once a field called Deadman's Bury.[20]

The seemingly mute wall paintings in the north transept of Burton Dassett church, may in fact be conveying a message that they are now the only surviving visible memorial to the legendary Freomund, prince and martyr.

Past hope, whilst Freomund lived, to speed of wished regality,
All secret and unworthy means he plots to make him dye
With naked sword, prophane, slaine he, assaileth cowardly
His lord unwares, and as he lay, behead him cruelly,

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[19] See *The Governance of Anglo-Saxon England*, by H.R. Loyn, concerning the Trimoda or trinoda neccesitans, pp.33-34.

[20] See 1838 Tithe Map for Bishops Itchington and also 1850 Greaves estate map, which would seem to place Deadman's Bury at OS 393585 along the parish boundary, *i.e.* adjacent to part of the northern section of the route described above.

At Wydford thus Prince Freomund did his glorious crown attain,
Whilst slaying guilty folk, at once himself is guiltless slaine.

From the translation by T. Burgess in his 'Historic Warwickshire' published in 1893, of a poem in Latin from an unknown source, quoted by Camden, concerning the death of Freomund

APPENDIX

The author has looked for evidence for the existence of an old track-way which may have connected the Upper Thames valley with the town of Warwick. There is some documentary evidence for its existence from Warwick as far as Wormleighton, which is noted in the English Place-Name Society's vol xiii. A statistical survey of Sites and Monuments References for Warwickshire carried out by the author revealed the suggested course of this track within Warwickshire had at least twice the number of references compared to the course of the M40 motorway within the county and also twice the references to a random search within the county. For the route south from Wormleighton, the south-west stretch of parish boundary (OS 440523) was referred to in two tenth century charters as *the straet* (see *Warwickshire Anglo-Saxon Charter-Bounds*, by D. Hooke) and the existing road to Claydon was known as Warwick Way before enclosure. Similarly the route beyond Claydon was known as Warden Way as far as Highfield (OS 481491). The suggestion is that shortly after this the route crossed the river Cherwell by a ford called *Stakamforde* . According to the *Victoria County History for Oxfordshire* the Bodleian Library holds a survey of the bounds of Wardington parish from 1552 which states the bounds pass "*from Stakamford along Edgcote Hedge to foresworne close, thence along the via regia to the hoar stone*". It is noteworthy that this stretch forms the Oxfordshire county boundary today. The Hore stone, no longer visible, was there in 1712, according J. Moreton in his *Natural History of Northamptonshire* (OS 518440). From Thenford hill, the site of a small Iron Age fort, the route may well have gone on to Kings Sutton and beyond as far as the roman road called Akeman Street, but much more work is needed with regards to this section.

British Association for Local History

The Banbury Historical Society is an affiliated member society of the BALH, and that means that all our members are welcome to join any of their organised activities in 2009. The first is a visit to St. George's Chapel, Windsor, and its Archives, on January 22nd, and at the end of February a visit to the *Who do you think you are?* Exhibition in London. There is something every month, and not all in London or the South-East. For more details, look at their website, www.balh.co.uk or write to BALH, PO Box 6549, Somersal Herbert, Ashbourne DE6 5WH.

Lecture Reports

Brian Little

Thursday 11th September 2008
Mayors I have known (but not necessarily liked) over four centuries – Jeremy Gibson

This talk was part of our Society's contribution towards celebrations of the former borough's fourth centenary of the granting of our second charter, whereby we were led by a Mayor rather than a Bailiff. The emphasis was mainly on the pre-1835 unreformed Corporation, particularly the turbulent Tudor and Stuart times, culled from Jeremy's research over fifty years, much published in *C&CH*.

Thursday 9th October 2008
New Robes or Old Hat – the past and prospects of the House of Lords – Sir Paul Hayter KCB

This was a lecture that thoroughly deserved the huge audience, in excess of 70. Paul Hayter began by outlining the history of the evolution of the House of Lords from Saxon days of councils known as Witans that were attended by religious leaders, magnates and the king's own advisors.

Our speaker then reflected wisely and logically on the very diverse nature of the House of Lords. Almost surprisingly and before about 1958 there were fewer Lords in the House than out of it. It was an all male preserve, solidly Conservative and rarely had more than a hundred seats filled. Since that time there has been much revitalisation, all the leading parties are well represented as are Crossbenchers and above all daily attendance has shot up. The House has come a long way since the pre-Reformation mix of nobles, bishops and abbots. Whatever the variation of composition with time, the trend, especially since 1850, has been towards a wider representation of interests and a more business-like institution – more like the Commons.

Acts of Parliament in 1911 and 1949 settled the power of the House of Lords in relation to that of the House of Commons, setting out the delaying power of the Lords. Evidence of this within the earlier Act was that Money Bills approved by the Commons became law if not passed without amendment by the Lords within one month. The effect of the 1949 Act was to reduce the delaying power embodied in the 1911 legislation in respect of Public Bills other than Money Bills.

Peerage Acts of 1958 and 1963 permitted the creation of Life Peers of either sex who were joined under the second act by hereditary peeresses and all Scottish peers. Importantly this second Peerage Act also allowed hereditary peerages to be disclaimed for life. In the decades that followed the Chamber

enhanced its appeal beyond the Conservative ranks. Partly this was due to the payment of allowances for out-of-pocket expenses and televised sessions giving opportunity of wider exposure. The House became more and more the only opposition to the Thatcher government as lobby groups, especially Trade Unions, started using the Lords.

During the supremacy of Tony Blair, Labour representation grew and the era of the hereditary peers waned. The House of Lords Act 1999 removed the automatic right of most hereditary peers to sit and vote in the House. By an amendment however 92 such peers were allowed to remain until complete reformation of the Lords. Further legislation in the form of the Constitutional Reform Act of 2005 deprived the Second Chamber of its judicial function and set up a new, independent supreme court to come into being in October 2009.

In conclusion Paul Hayter indicated that further reform can be expected, but by this stage there was already a host of issues on which questions could be framed. I doubt if he was disappointed by the lively session that ended the evening.

Thursday 13th November 2008
English Sporting Landscapes – Dr Trevor Rowley

There is no doubting the fact that here is a topic that has attracted the attention of people with a wide range of interests from the strictly academic to the level of general appeal. The work of W.G. Hoskins and responses by English Heritage reflect something of this trend, which was clear from the breadth of images used to illustrate the lecture. These reminded us that hunting was evident in the Roman world and highlighted in the Bayeux Tapestry. Amongst the animals involved were deer for the larder associated with parks and often linked to castles. The heyday for this type of park was the 12th and 13th centuries but less so in North Oxfordshire and more readily in the uplands such as the Chilterns. There was even deer coursing in some areas, most notably Windsor Park. By contrast fox hunting was late in developing, as was Point-to-Point, which itself preceded the activities of most racecourses.

Somewhat to the surprise of some members of his audience Trevor Rowley diversified his lecture to include cricket and football and focussed on how these had evolved in different locations. Cricket was viewed within the context of country house life whereas football emerged from a less sedate background, namely Shrove Tuesday tussles between sides prepared to fight. A classic example was the Shrovetide Heroes of 1910 at Chester le Street. The subsequent illustrations traced the evolution of Football League teams and culminated in the most recent phase in their histories, namely relocation. Housing landscapes were shown to be strongly linked to several sports and not merely football.

Overall this was a lecture that revealed an astounding range of sporting landscapes. However it lost something of its appeal because of the minimal application to North Oxfordshire and adjacent parts of neighbouring counties.

Book Reviews

The Diocese Books of Samuel Wilberforce, Bishop of Oxford, 1845-69, transcribed and edited by Ronald and Margaret Pugh. Oxfordshire Record Society vol. 66 and Berkshire Record Society vol. 13. 2008. xvi, 432 pp. £30.00 (incl UK p&p) from Gavin Hannah, O.R.S., c/o Summer Fields, Oxford OX2 7EN (email: <gwh@summerfields.oxon.sch.uk>).

This is the second primary source for Wilberforce's episcopate published in the Oxfordshire Record Society's series: The *Letterbooks* constituted volume 47 almost forty years ago. However, they have two things in common: first, the good fortune to have survived, perversely, by having fallen into the custody of the family rather than a Diocesan Archive (where there is much more primary evidence in the Oxfordshire Record Office), and secondly to have shared the editing hand of Ronald Pugh, whose doctoral thesis was on Wilberforce's episcopate, and who by virtue of long experience has a commanding knowledge of the bishop's awkward handwriting. They cover three counties – Oxfordshire, Buckinghamshire and Berkshire – and consist of two manuscript books, the first arising from Wilberforce's consultations with his first Rural Deans in 1846, the second parish by parish accounts of the strengths and weaknesses – "mad" and "drunk" abound – of incumbents, and of the bishop's visits, largely to confirmations, institutions of new incumbents or re-opening of restored churches.

What does it offer for a Banbury Historical Society member who chooses to dip into it? It confirms much in the diaries of one of his Rural Deans from 1845 to 1847, William Cotton Risley, though it includes little Deddington detail: it highlights some of his opponents such as Thomas Curme at Sandford, whose "countenance simply shocking from its arrogant self-righteous complacent inflation" annoyed him at a confirmation, but also includes many press cuttings by his critics.

Wilberforce tended to stay with the landed elite when travelling, such as the Foster Melliars at North Aston or the Rousbys (of *Lark Rise* connections) at Cottisford, which makes it a feather in Cotton Risley's cap that he stayed at Deddington House. There are useful references to many other clergy, such as Wilson and Forbes in Banbury, which repay using this volume, though the biographical appendix compiled from the Foster, Venn and Crockford authorities failed in a surprising number of cases [though it does include a reference to the forebear of Patsy Kensit of a "Who Do You Think You Are?" recent TV programme]. All in all, the volume is a useful addition to sources for this period, making us grateful for their survival.

Geoffrey Smedley-Stevenson

Children of Dissent, by Pauline Ashbridge; 284pp. London, Kershaw Publishing, 2008 (ISBN 978-0-9546632-1-6). £8.99.

Children of Dissent is a very detailed account of the non-conformist ancestors of three brothers, John, James and Tom Somerton, who emigrated to the South African Cape in the 1870s. Their families came largely from the area around Banbury and included Quakers, Baptists and Methodists, about whom there is a great deal of detail.

The book is arranged chronologically from the seventeenth century but with an introduction about the Cape Emigration Agent and his influential powers over the choice of emigrants in the 1870s. It then reverts to the ancestral histories of rural Baptists in the Gloucestershire Cotswolds to the Quakers in Oxfordshire who regularly defied the authorities and to the Methodists who followed them. Much of the detail relates to Hook Norton and the surrounding agricultural area, outlining the interaction between different non-conformist groups and the influence of each as it grew and then waned. Poverty and constant struggle for survival are themes throughout the book, culminating in emigration as the final hope for a better life. Others from Hook Norton had already started to emigrate to America by the mid-nineteenth century and opportunism led the Somerton families first to London and then to the wider world. The author concludes that the final fortunes of the emigrants, as contrasted with those who remained in Britain, were probably not substantial but that those who went had gained greater freedom to own land. Agricultural poverty in Britain had reduced many to a landless existence in the nineteenth century from which there were few means of escape other than emigration.

This is a useful addition to the history of those who ultimately emigrated to South Africa and a great deal of work has gone into discovering historical detail. It is a pity therefore that the structure of the book makes the overall theme rather difficult to follow. Appendix I illustrates the parallel chronology of events, as detailed by chapter, but the mere fact that it was necessary to put it in suggests that it was not easy to write this way. For the reader it is also difficult to follow the story when almost every sentence is a paragraph in its own right; greater consolidation of the text would help to keep similar ideas together and enhance the overall picture.

Finally, with such a wealth of information, an index would immediately make the volume many times more valuable, both for local historians and genealogists, as well as those interested in the antecedents of emigrants to the Cape. But at least sources are very conscientiously footnoted, including references to our own journal and other local records publications!

Helen Forde

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. Gilkes (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 (from 2009) is **£13.00** which includes any records volumes published. Overseas membership, **£15.00**.

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

Winter/Spring 2008/9 Programme

Meetings are held at 7.30pm at Banbury Museum, entrance from Spiceball Park Road.

Thursday 11th December
The Long Compton Witchcraft Murder.
Richard Ratcliffe

Thursday 8th January 2009
Eviscerating, Embalming and Boiling: Funeral Practices in Medieval England *c.*1066-1509.
Rowena E. Archer

Thursday 12th February 2009
(note this was incorrectly given as 11th February in the programme card)
The First Pompeii.
Dr Judith Toms

Thursday 12th March 2009
Oddfellows and Others: the world of the Victorian Friendly Societies.
Ron Greenall

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