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Notes for Contributors

We invite contributions on all aspects of the history and archaeology of Banbury and its surrounding region, often referred to as 'Banburyshire'. Material from amateurs and professionals is equally welcome. The Editor will be pleased to send guidance notes to potential authors, so as to ease the process of submitting a piece for consideration.

Cake and Cockhorse

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

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Brian Little

As we go to press the very sad news of Brian Little's unexpected death has just reached us. Brian had been on our Committee since 1991. His weekly contributions to the *Banbury Guardian* made him "Mr History" to all its readers. An obituary will follow, but meanwhile we express our deep sympathy to Margaret, who in many ways has partnered him in support for our Society.

The Banbury History Society library at the Banbury museum opens to the public on April 3; many months after Jeremy Gibson's donation of his books to the Society, but the wait has been worth it. The collection has been merged with that previously belonging to the museum, the whole now being housed in handsome, specially commissioned bookcases. This is a real benefit for all members who can get to the museum, where they will find the library staffed by volunteers. The local history books cover Oxfordshire, Warwickshire, Northamptonshire and Buckinghamshire, though obviously the main focus is on Banbury. Also available are general reference books and helpful guides to genealogy and archival sources. There are lots of photographs of Oxfordshire and Banbury as well as runs of journals such as *Oxoniensia, Northamptonshire Past and Present* and, of course, *Cake & Cockhorse*. Opening hours are 2.00-5.00 pm every Wednesday for all to come and browse; we look forward to welcoming you! And if you, too, would like to help (and why wouldn't you?) please contact Helen Forde (see inside cover). If you can spare as little as three hours a month to supervise an afternoon's opening, that would be of great assistance. In any case, do please come along to check out the library: you will, we hope, be intrigued and impressed by what is available for you to consult. It is a major resource for the history of people and places in our area.

Cover: Canons Ashby (see pages 34-36)

New Perspectives on the Winter Parlour at Canons Ashby

Peter McCallum and Michael Trapp

Background

The painted decoration on the panelling of the Winter Parlour at Canons Ashby has puzzled and challenged interpreters since it was uncovered by National Trust conservators 38 years ago. The arms, crests, emblems, a variety of 'technical' instruments and Latin maxims clearly meant something important to the Dryden family members who had them put there. But what exactly did they mean, and which family members were responsible for them? These puzzles challenge us to work our way back into the world and ideas of the landed gentry of the late Tudor and early Stuart period. Solving them is made more complicated by the fact that some of the pieces of the decoration are missing and others are damaged and difficult to read. Earlier theories that spoke of the Arms as a Freemason Membership List, of Rosicrucian symbols and a Puritan stance on religion now seem inadequate; but what can we put in their place? Dynastic pride, virtues and values, and Renaissance learning inspired by Greco-Roman antiquity all seem important, but in what sort of combination?

The recent re-discovery of a hidden chamber, large enough to accommodate three slim adults – provided they had showered recently and had the agility and climbing skills necessary to gain access – has only added to speculations about the room's purpose.

New Perspectives

As volunteers at the house will know, Peter McCallum has been studying the Winter Parlour decoration, with a special emphasis on the arms and the emblems, for over three years, and has regularly updated the Canons Ashby community on his findings. Michael Trapp's interest began just over four years ago with the Latin maxims, writing up a provisional report for the Room Guides in 2013 but extending more recently to the emblems and the drawings of instruments. Our new and still-emerging understanding of the room suggests that all earlier assumptions and theories need to be challenged. A clue to part of the new perspective lies in Michael's academic title: Professor of Greek Literature and Thought at King's College London. The non-heraldic elements of the room might be described as Renaissance reflections of events 1,400 - 1,800 years prior to the Elizabethan age.

The Heraldry

So far as the arms are concerned, Peter's progressive identification of more families is now leading him to challenge the seemingly reasonable assumption that it is Dryden family connections that are the common denominator binding them together. A test case is this damaged set of arms (probably vandalised in 1710). Do these belong to an upwardly mobile Dryden relative from the north-east of England – or might they belong to the most powerful man in England for at least two decades in the late sixteenth century?

Family Background

The Winter Parlour decoration is in some sense about Dryden family identity and values, and also clearly dates from the relatively early days of the family's presence in this part of the county. But who was the John Dryden who arrived in Northamptonshire from Cumberland, who married Elizabeth Cope in 1551 and, together, built Canons Ashby House?

Our sources present us with an intriguing range of alternative identities:

- He was 'a school master who was well-acquainted with Erasmus of Rotterdam' (Anthony Wood, historian, c.1690)
- He owned lands in Adstone, near Copes Ashby, prior to 1550 (John Bridges, *History of Northamptonshire*, *c*.1710)
- a house and land in Copes Ashby were 'parcel of his inheritance' (George Baker, *History of Northamptonshire c*.1830)
- The Drydens were descended from the St Clairs of Dryden, near Roslyn, Scotland (Brian Lawrence Dreadon, in *Dryden of Canons Ashby*, 2015)
- He had no 'noble' lineage (an interpretation of the Dryden entry in the Appendix to the *Visitations of Northamptonshire 1564 and 1618-19*)
- He purposely hid his ancestry (a suspicious interpretation of the same *Northamptonshire Visitation*)
- He was a sheep stealer and cattle rustler (an allegation by Hugh Bocher, a contemporary from Adstone (Star Chamber Proceedings, 1553, National Archive STAC 3/1/92)

A scholar/intellectual? A land-owner? A common thief and leader of a vicious gang – another allegation by Mr Bocher? Whichever John Dryden is the real one there is no doubt that he and Elizabeth Cope founded a dynasty. In the second generation, at least three of John's sons attended Magdalen College, Oxford. His heir (Erasmus) became a knight, an MP and Sheriff of Northamptonshire. The fourth generation produced a Poet Laureate. Generation fourteen included the man who reportedly convinced John F. Kennedy that the United States could win the space race with Russia 'by putting a man on the moon… and bringing him home again' (Hugh Latimer Dryden, Deputy Director of NASA).

The Marston St. Lawrence School Dispute

Walter Stageman

Nowadays, the subject of the relationship, when it comes to schools, between the state and the churches is one that arouses very little interest. No one now would be prepared to go to prison because they felt so strongly about the matter one way or the other. It was not always so: in Victorian and Edwardian England very strong passions indeed were awakened. Even now, however, relationships are not always as amicable as they might be: in 2013 the Roman Catholic Church ruled out opening any more new schools under the government's favoured academies programme unless the cap on the number of places which could be reserved for churchgoers' children was removed; that happened in 2018.

Notwithstanding such disagreements, generally speaking, the relationship between the Church and its schools and the state has been cordial and accommodating: but there was one well-known and contro-versial exception to this happy state of affairs and it came about in the little south Northamptonshire village of Marston St. Lawrence in the early years of the twentieth century.

Marston had had a school since 1846 or thereabouts.[1] It had been erected by John Jackson Blencowe and the Rev. Charles Blencowe and had been accepted as a National School – that is, one supported by the National Society for Promoting the Education of the Poor in the Principles of the Established Church. However, the school remained the private property of the first-mentioned Mr Blencowe.

The new school had been preceded by other church-supported initiatives: the 'Report on Educational Provision 1840' refers to a weekday school for the education of girls and a Sunday School for 42 boys and girls. It also states that the parish's population was 440, but this is quite misleading as, according to the 1841 census, 242 of the parish's total population of 540 (i.e. 44.8%) lived in the hamlet of Westhorpe which is geographically part of the village of Greatworth which had had its own National School since 1822 – and Westhorpe's children attended there.[2]

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[1] Francis Whelan, *History, Topography and Directory of Northamptonshire*, (Whitaker and Co., London, 1874)

[2] 'Rep. on Educational Provision 1840' (NRO, NS 38a), in Rosemary Dunhill, *Northamptonshire National Schools*, Northants Record Society (2017)

As Marston School was privately owned, and as it was supported by voluntary contributions, there was little interference from outside authorities, either local or national. One consequence was that the vicar was quite free to close the school whenever he pleased and have the children brought along to the nearby parish church on saints' days and holy days (of which there were many) for special services. These services always took place at eleven o'clock and are frequently referred to in the school log books.[3] For example, 'Feb. 24th 1893 St. Mark's Day. Registers marked at opening of school so that children might go to Church at 11 a.m.' In that year the children's other trips to church took place on, amongst others, the saints' days of Matthias, Thomas, Peter, James, Luke and All Saints plus Ascension Day, Ash Wednesday and other festivals.

So, as a rule, schools such as Marston St. Lawrence's carried on quite happily, largely unconcerned with the educational concerns of the wider world – but there was one area of potential struggle and that was to do with the question of inspection.[4] Running a school was expensive and from 1839 government grants were available: but only to schools whose promoters agreed to inspection, and this, after much dispute, was eventually accepted by the church.

Later, after the 1870 Education Act, three conditions were attached to schools receiving public aid: they must be efficient; they must be open to undenominational inspection; and a conscience clause must be attached.[5] This conscience clause was especially important in villages such as Marston where no other form of elementary education was available: it meant that parents had the right to withdraw their children from such things as religious instruction and having to attend church services and this applied even to villages such as Marston where the abovementioned 1840 Report blithely and wrongly asserted that there were no Dissenters in the parish.

Also blithely, the vicars of Marston St. Lawrence kept on providing services for the children at eleven o'clock on the many holy days. As time went on it became clear that this was an infringement of the

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[3] Marston St. Lawrence School Log Books, 1877-1905 (Northants Record Office SLB/106) and 1905-1953 (NRO SLB/107)

[4] Lois Louden, *Distinctive and Inclusive: The National Society and Church of England Schools 1811-2011* (National Society Publications, London, 2012)

[5] S.J. Curtis, *History of Education in Great Britain* (University Tutorial Press, 1968)

regulations: religious instruction should be at the start of the day or at the end of the day so that it was possible for conscientious objectors to remove their children from such instruction.

Matters really came to a head after the passing of the 1902 Education Act which abolished School Boards (such as the one at Greatworth which was educating many of Marston's children) and set up Local Education Authorities instead. Voluntary Schools (also called non-provided schools) were to have six managers, up to four of whom, the foundation managers, were appointed according to the trust deeds of the school, and two by the L.E.A.[6] That had the effect of strengthening the political dimension of the running of schools – and it is essential to remember that, by and large, supporters of the Conservative Party were Anglicans and that non-conformists supported the Liberal Party. The 1902 Act seemed to please no one (except the Roman Catholics): County Councils became responsible for maintaining schools, except for the buildings; the church could use the premises at all times when they were not being used for elementary education and they could insist on all the teachers being members of the Church of England.[7] This placed most of the costs on the authorities but left most of the control in the hands of the church. Many non-conformists felt this was a 'sell-out' to the Church of England and the Roman Catholics. David Lloyd George ranted that 'Rome had been put on the rates' and 70,000 non-conformists, in a campaign of passive resistance, refused to pay their rates. Controversy and argument raged: a whole book (of 109 pages) was written about just one part of one section of the 1902 Act. It was entitled 'The Maintenance of Denominational Teaching' and it alluded to the Marston St. Lawrence dispute.[8]

One other consequence of the 1902 Act was that non-conformists were increasingly being appointed as school managers. One such was Joseph Tyrell, a Liberal and a Methodist, who was appointed a manager of Eydon School. He was also a member of the local Syresham District Sub-Committee of the County Education Committee and a press report

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[6] Roger Ottewill, 'Education, education, education: researching the 1902 Education Act', *The Local Historian*, Vol. 37, No. 4 (2007)

[7] W.H.G. Armytage, *Four Hundred Years of English Education* (Cambridge Univ. Press, 1965)

[8] Hakluyt Egerton [nom de plume of Arthur Boutwood], *The Maintenance of Denominational Teaching: A Note upon Section 7(I) of the Education Act, 1902* (George Allen, London, 1905)

of 23rd February 1905 states that he 'again brought' the fact of the Rev. Charles E. Blencowe taking the schoolchildren to church to the notice of the sub-committee. This was despite the fact that the County Council had decided, in the summer of 1904, that, 'Children must not be taken from school to church between the hours of 9 and 4.30'.[9]

At Marston St. Lawrence, however, 'the Blencowes reigned supreme', as Syd Tyrell, Joseph's son records.[10] For centuries, since about 1446, in the time of Henry VI, their forebears had been lords of the manor, squires and, very often, vicars. Charles E. Blencowe was the sixth Blencowe to hold the living as vicar,[11] and he was not the sort of man who gave up easily.

Neither was Joseph Tyrell. After being fobbed off at another meeting of the education sub-committee he took matters into his own hands. On the next saint's day he took time off from his tailoring and went with his son, Syd, in their trap to Marston St. Lawrence. They arrived shortly before eleven o'clock and, sure enough, they saw the schoolmistress marching the children round the corner to a church service. Joseph went along and attended the service himself; then he returned home and sent off a letter to the secretary of the L.E.A. in Northampton. This led to a spate of correspondence that continued, off and on, for years. Matters escalated, and to many it seemed that Marston St. Lawrence was fighting for the rights of the established church everywhere.

The main point of escalation occurred on 27th March 1905 when Mr D. Elliott, a school inspector from the county, visited and wrote the following in the school log book: 'The School was closed this morning – the Northants Education Committee having transferred the teachers.' The next log book entry is dated 3rd April: 'The illegal procedure above recorded having rendered it impossible to carry on the School until this Date, the School was reopened today by Direction of the Managers, being temporarily placed in the charge of Mr John Cherry [one of the school managers and a churchwarden] today, and the timetable was carried out in its entirety. Seventeen boys and six girls were present, and the registers were marked in due form. Signed C.E. Blencowe, Correspondent.'

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[9] *Banbury Advertiser*, 23 February 1905

[10] S.J. Tyrrell, 'Syd Tyrrell's Eydon', Eydon Historical Research Group (2001), pp.139-40

[11] ed. J.W. Blencowe, 'The Blencowe Families of Cumbria and Northamptonshire and Their Descendants' (The Blencowe Families' Association, 2001)

So began a long and bitter struggle which eventually reached a conclusion (only very grudgingly accepted) in the High Court in London. The first thing that happened was that Mrs. Mary Ann Green, the schoolmistress, in order to continue receiving a salary, commenced teaching up at Greatworth on March 28th and her assistant Miss Mabel Gardiner was transferred to another local school. Mrs. Green did not stay long at Greatworth – on March 31st she was 'absent (removing furniture to Greatworth)' and on the same day she 'ceased duty here.' By April 5th there were 'no children from Marston St. Lawrence' attending Greatworth School. This was because Marston School had reopened and, following on from Mr Cherry, a succession of temporary teachers was taking charge. These teachers continued the practice of taking the children round to the church – for example, on Ascension Day, June 1st. During Holy Week of 1906 they went round to the church daily at eleven o'clock.[12]

Thus, school life was carrying on much as before all the controversy had started. The difference was that the county council was no longer paying the staff; their cost was being met by Mr Blencowe and his supporters and friends. Mrs Green, in her deposition to a firm of solicitors for the forthcoming case of Blencowe vs. the County Council had realized that her salary was being paid by the council and she also recollected a visit on 19th January 1905 from Mr Harrison, the inspector, altering the school timetable and cancelling the note thereon about saints' days and holy days.[13]

It was at about this time that Mr Blencowe enlisted the help of the Church Schools Emergency League, a body that was fearing that lay prescription of religion would become proscription. It is worth observing that nonconformists were rallying to the National Passive Resistance League in their opposition to the 1902 Act. From a twenty-first-century perspective this League may be thought of as being immoderate and somewhat extreme, but their views accorded with Mr Blencowe's and by 3rd April they had taken up the case of Marston School: their secretary, Canon Cleworth, along with their solicitor, had already visited Banbury. All of the council's financial assistance to the school had been cut off. National attention to the case had also already occurred; *The Times* of

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12 Marston St. Lawrence School Log Book 1905-1953 (NRO SLB/107)

13 Deposition of Mrs. Mary Ann Green to Withers, Bensons, Withers & Davies, Solicitors, London, (within NRO 205/P35)

April 4th 1905 outlined the case thus far and stated that the parents had held a meeting to express resentment about having to send their children to school in another village.

It also seems that the school did not have the backing of the National Society – after all, the argument was primarily just about the timing of Religious Instruction and church visits and there was no actual threat to these practices. The Emergency League, however, was a 'militant organization' and was not giving up easily: it had published a leaflet (2d.) about 'The Illegal Closing of the Marston St. Lawrence School'.[14]

Very many articles were being published in national and local newspapers, as were intemperate and often ill-informed letters. By August 1905 the six school managers had joined in a writ against the Northamptonshire County Council for damages and a declaration that the Council had acted beyond its powers and that consequently the Council should be compelled to maintain the school as a public elementary school.[15] In September the government's Board of Education certified the school as being efficient under the Elementary Education Act of 1876 which meant it was a school at which children may attend, but it did not mean the Education Committee of the County Council had any financial responsibility. In October it was announced that Mr. Justice Warrington would hear the case in the Chancery Division of the High Court and over nine months later in August 1906 the case came before him – but things came to a standstill in order to await a decision in the Court of Appeal of a not dissimilar case involving the West Riding of Yorkshire County Council.

The case resumed at the end of January 1907[16] and eventually, as recorded in a Law Report of *The Times* of 14th February 1907, after a hearing in the Supreme Court of Judicature's Court of Appeal, the Master of the Rolls and another judge found in favour of the County Council although they did observe that Mr Elliott had too hastily assumed that the school should be closed. He had also forgotten that it was competent for the managers, if they could raise the necessary money, to carry on as a certified efficient school which the children

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[14] Church Schools' Emergency League, *Emergency Leaflet XX, Persecution of School Managers, Parents & Scholars, The Illegal Closing of Marston St. Lawrence School and Withdrawal of Maintenance* (The League, April 1905) (within NRO 205/P35)

[15] *Northampton Mercury,* 18 August 1905

[16] *Ibid.* 1 February 1907

could attend without breach of the by-laws. 'In fact within a few days afterwards the managers obtained the necessary support and reopened the school with other teachers'. They also found that Mr Elliott had not committed an act of trespass and that the local authority was clearly issuing instructions about secular education as they were entitled so to do.

Two weeks later Mr Blencowe was writing to the *Banbury Guardian* complaining about newspapers reporting that the children were being taken to 'Mass' and that they were using this word to 'excite prejudice', but of course there is no accounting for 'the vagaries of the 'Nonconformist Conscience''.[17] Canon Cleworth of the Emergency League was not very happy either: he wrote to the papers questioning the jurisdiction of the courts and claiming that Englishmen had the right to go to the King for justice and to be freed from the tyranny of a Government department.[18] Come June 1907 there was 'A Useless Application for Time' (i.e. extra time) in which to appeal but this failed and the application was dismissed with costs.[19] Sixteen months later the school came 'Under the County Council Again' after it was satisfied that the managers intended to comply with the regulations of the Education Committee 'including those with regard to the time of commencement of secular instruction and the place in which religious instruction in school hours should be given'.[20]

Three years later the *Banbury Guardian* reprinted an article from Marston St. Lawrence's parish magazine which bemoaned having to comply with the regulations – they do so with 'great regret' in having to forsake the 'old custom of this parish.' They only comply 'under emphatic protest' and still think the L.E.A.'s interference was 'quite illegal'.[21]

Nevertheless, it does seem that there was a much closer adherence to the regulations of the authority, although the children continued, quite properly, to enjoy holidays on festivals such as Ash Wednesday and Ascension Day. In 1946, to celebrate the school's centenary, the children were taken to church at 9 a.m. where they sang a 'Mass of

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17 *Banbury Guardian,* 28 February 1907
18 *South Wales Daily News,* 16 May 1907
19 *Northampton Chronicle & Echo*, 17 June 1907
20 *Ibid*, October 1908
21 *Banbury Guardian.* 13 April 1911

Thanksgiving'.[22] By then Mr Blencowe had passed away. In 1916 he had moved from the vicarage, when his older brother died, with his wife, two unmarried daughters and three servants into Marston House itself. He died in 1926 but the family link with the village continued until 1988 when the last Blencowe living there died.

The life of the school continued until 1971 when falling numbers brought about its closure. The children were henceforth taken up to Greatworth School which had opened in 1878. It had opened then because, several years earlier, the premises of the church's National School had been found to be unfit and the Board of Education had closed the school. The village then had no day school at all, so a group on nonconformists, in accordance with the 1870 Education Act, formed a School Board, borrowed £1,000 from the government and opened a new school. It is not hard to imagine what the Rev. Charles Edward Blencowe would have thought about this chain of events.

Pupils at Marston St. Lawrence school, circa 1905

22 *Banbury Guardian*, 4 July 1946

Banbury cheese and its conundrums

Helen Forde

Banbury cheese retains a profile in the history of the area despite not having been made – as far as can be ascertained – for a considerable period of time. Martin Thomas listed some of the references to Banbury cheese in his article in *Cake and Cockhorse*,[1] outlining the national as well as local reputation which it had acquired; this article adds a few more references, demonstrating the reputation the cheese enjoyed nationally but also the difficulty of assessing the levels of local cheesemaking.

A century after the Duke of Bedford had sent 14 Banbury cheeses to France[2] – together with a multitude of other goods including 4,000 mushrooms, 200 bows and three casks of salmon – Banbury cheese again featured nationally in the form of gifts (or, more likely, attempted bribes) to Thomas Cromwell. In 1531 William Tresham of Banbury wrote to Cromwell, thanking him for his good treatment of his brother in law who was sending him a small gift which included half a dozen Banbury cheeses.[3] Two years later a more direct attempt at bribery was made by Nicholas Glossope who wrote:

> *'I send you 12 Banbury cheeses, half hard, half soft and wish they were worth £20,000. I am almost four score years old, lame of the gout and cramp and one of my eyes has gone…my mistress, your mother, was my aunt…'.*[4]

History does not relate whether he was successful in achieving the pension for which he was presumably petitioning. However, a desperate attempt in 1538 by the Abbess of Godstowe Abbey to forestall dissolution by sending Cromwell two Banbury cheeses (as thanks for preventing the mayor and commonalty of Oxford from entering the commons which the abbey had held for 400 years),[5] was clearly

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1 *Cake and Cockhorse* vol **18**.8 (2012) p. 274-6
2 *Calendar of Close Rolls 1429 – 36*, p. 74
3 11 July 1531. The National Archives [TNA] SP1/66 f 156
4 1533 TNA SP1/77 f 77
5 26 June 1538. TNA SP1/133 f 200

unsuccessful; it was dissolved the following year. Whether Thomas Cromwell had a penchant for cheese is unknown – but clearly the inhabitants of Oxfordshire regarded the local product sufficiently highly to use it in the context of petitions.

Camden mentioned the town as being famous for its cheese[6] in 1586 and the same variety was specified by Richard Jones in his recipe for a cheese tart in 1594.[7] Even Robert Burton in the *Anatomy of Melancholy* admitted grudgingly that Banbury cheese would be his choice if it was essential to consume any milk products.[8] At much the same date Barnaby Googe recorded his preference for Banbury cheese over that from Suffolk, Essex and Kent, but also quoted a less complimentary proverb collected by John Heywood

> *'I never saw Banbury cheese thick enough, but I have seen Essex cheese quick enough'.*[9]

Thomas Hawtayn, too, had been rather more forthright in his assessment, sometime before 1576, when he sent cheese as a gift to friends as thanks for their hospitality;

> *[I send] 'two couple of our country cheeses, being one of the best pleasures that our barren soil will yield us to bestow of our friends'. ... 'These 'Banbury cheeses' show what a thin and a hard, hungry country I dwell in, the cheeses may well be resembled to our riches, as the paring of the cheese being cut away on both sides, there is little left behind'.*[10]

Shakespeare concurred about the thin quality of the cheese, expressing an insult to Abraham Slender as *'You Banbury cheese!'*[11]

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[6] *Britannia or a chorographical description of the flourishing kingdoms of England, Scotland and Ireland* by William Camden, ed. Richard Gough London 1789 vol 1 p. 286

[7] *The good huswifes handmaiden for the kitchin* Richard Jones ed. Stuart Peachey (Stuart Press, 1992) p. 38

[8] *The Anatomy of Melancholy* Robert Burton 1621 ed. Holbrook Jackson (Dent, 1977) part I p. 219.

[9] Barnaby Googe The *Whole Art and Trade of Husbandry,* 1614 p. 139. John Heywood (c.1497-c.1580) was a poet, a writer and a collector of proverbs and epigrams.

[10] Surrey History Centre LM/COR/3/683

[11] *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, 1.1.126

Figure 1. Possible shape of Banbury cheese
[http://blog.fabulousfoodie.com/banbury-and-the-bard/]

While other regional cheeses may have been equally popular it is clear that, however it was perceived, Banbury cheese was well known in this period.

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Making cheese was a way of preserving a food item that was in surplus during spring and summer (and which might otherwise spoil) for consumption at a later date when food was in shorter supply. Rural households often kept a cow – frequently the most valuable single asset of the householder – and the surviving inventories of those whose wills were proved in the Peculiar Court of Banbury between 1550 and 1724[12] clearly demonstrate where the main dairy herds round Banbury were. Granted that this evidence is neither complete (most men and women did

[12] 939 inventories were reviewed from several sources of which 112 contained either cheeses, cattle or cheese-making equipment of one sort or another; *Household and Farm Inventories in Oxfordshire* ed MA Havinden (Oxfordshire Record Society no. **44**, 1965), (Havinden); *Banbury Wills and Inventories 1621-1650* ed ERC Brinkworth and JSW Gibson (Banbury Historical Society 1976 vol **14**), (BWI 14); *Banbury Wills and Inventories 1591-1620* ed ERC Brinkworth and JSW Gibson (Banbury Historical Society 1985 vol **13**), (BWI 13).

Unpublished transcripts of wills and inventories from the Peculiar Court of Banbury 1659-1724 by Barrie Trinder who kindly gave me access to them. (BT transcript with Oxford History Centre reference)

not make wills) nor necessarily accurately recorded by contemporaries nevertheless Neithrop and Nethercote both figure strongly as cattle owning areas. Unsurprisingly the larger herds (though none comprised more than 26 animals) were usually owned by gentlemen, husbandmen or yeoman with the sole exception of Titus Buckingham, a blacksmith in Banbury who also owned 13 cows and cheese making equipment in 1643. Descriptions of the animals varied; cows, kine or milche beasts were self-explanatory terms and the frequently found 'beast', spelt in a number of ways, usually refers to beef cattle but there are ambiguities in the inventories which makes precise numbers difficult to calculate. Herds also included heifers, yearlings and calves of various ages.

Of the forty-five testators who owned one or more cows just under half also owned cheesemaking equipment and a few inventories referred to quantities of cheese in their houses – in 1585 Katherine Doylye, widow of the lord of the manor of Merton, had

> *'in the Daye howse a cheese presse 6s.8d… 15 cheesevates…'* and *'in the buttery 2 dosen of trenchers and cheese trenchers'* worth 8d. and *'In the cheese chamber 80 cheeses worth £2.13s.4d, ..2 cheese bordes..a cheese racke'*.[13]

However, she was one of the richest widows in the county and the cheeses were probably for household use. In 1598 John Greene, husbandman of Nethercote owned

> *'Fyftie hard cheeses, eightee soft cheeses and salte butter.'*[14]

which together were appraised at £2.4s. Fifty years later, in 1649, the inventory of Robert Morton, yeoman of Hardwicke and owner of the largest herd of cows, included:

> *'In the dary house 150 cheeses. £5.'*[15]

But the monetary value of cheese declined as the century wore on as the entry in the 1669 inventory of Christopher Binsley, chapman of Banbury demonstrates:

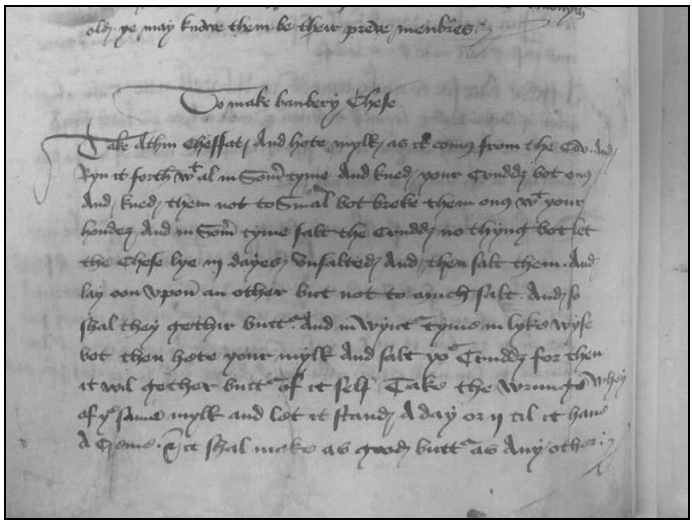
> *'In the Litle room over the Hall. One litle trundle Bedd, one flock bedd, one flocke pillowe, one little Rugg, on Blankett, one Coffer, Two Stooles & half a hundred weight of cheese with other implements'*

[13] Havinden, p. 193
[14] BWI 13 p. 151
[15] BWI 14, p. 162

all of which were appraised at a total of £1.10s.0d.[16] The hard cheeses were probably under two pounds in weight each, suggesting that this represents a minimum of 26 cheeses.

The above examples are the nearest approach to any large-scale cheese making documented in the Banbury area and the majority of those who owned a few cattle did not have any cheese making equipment recorded in their inventories. So, who was using any surplus milk they produced?

The only extant recipe for making Banbury cheese comes from a fifteenth century source –



‘To make banbery Cheese

Take a thin cheese vat and hot milk as it comes from the cow and run it forth withal in summer time and kned your curdds but once and kned them not too small but breke them once with your handes And in summer time salt the curdds nothing but let the cheese lie three days unsalted and then salt them And lay one upon an other but not too much salt and so shall they gather butter And in winter time in like wise but then heat your milk and salt your curdds for then it will gather butter of itself. Take the warm whey of the same milk and let it stand a day or two til it have a creme and it shall make as good butter as any other’ [17]

[16] BT transcript, OHC no. 477

[17] BL Sloane Mss 1201

A couple of centuries later Gervase Markham's expectation of the daily yield of a cow in summer was that she would normally produce a gallon of milk but that could double occasionally.[18]. The best season for making cheese was the summer, when the grass had lost its early spring richness and become thinner and browner, more suitable for cheese production than for feeding new-born calves. The casein (phosphoprotein) found in this later milk is also a major component of cheese. In winter the yield dried up since probably only those cows which were in calf were kept, emphasising the importance of making use of the milk while it was available. Additionally, some calves would be slaughtered in the summer for rennet or meat. He places considerable importance on maintaining meticulous cleanliness in the dairy, in contrast to the basic fifteenth century advice. Much of the equipment he mentioned is found in the sixteenth and early seventeenth century inventories, though in some cases insufficient items were mentioned by the appraisers to complete the process of making cheese. Were the appraisers careless or inconsistent, or were the items regarded as too commonplace to note?[19]

In the Banbury area two varieties of cheese were made of cows' milk, a hard one, and a softer version which was made after Michaelmas.[20] (This latter style was revived in the 1840s but does not seem to have survived very long.) The former would have been manufactured before being stored for several months on shelves; a medium hard cheese was made in Cropredy in May, June and September which matured more quickly in six to eight weeks; softer cheeses made before May would be consumed immediately.[21]

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[18] Markham, Gervase *The English Huswife* 1623, p.175-6.

[19] These are not the only omissions from inventories which are puzzling; see Margaret Spufford 'The misleading nature of the probate inventory; eds John Chartres and David Hey *English Rural Society 1500-1800: Essays in Honour of Joan Thirsk* (Cambridge University Press) p.149.

[20] 'Industries', *A History of the County of Oxford: Volume 2*, ed. William Page (London, 1907), pp. 225-277. *British History Online* http://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/oxon/vol2/pp.225-277 [accessed 2 December 2018].

[21] Anne Pamela Keegan *The Town of Cropredy* 1999 p. 917 (https://www.cropredyvillage.info/historicalsocietypublications.htm)

Figure 2. Nineteenth century cheese mould [Pinterest]

The circular shape was common to many cheeses from antiquity; the aim was to aid the reduction of moisture in the cheese with a large surface area and to make them less susceptible to damage in transit. Moulds were sometimes decorative, made of wood or pottery and had drainage holes to allow the whey to drain away. In larger establishments cheese was made in a day house – probably a lean-to building on the north side of the house where the temperature and humidity would suit the stored cheeses. Twent-six of the inventories mention either a day house or a cheese chamber with the former term dying out towards the end of the seventeenth century in favour of the latter. In poorer households the cheese was probably made in the kitchen or the dairy where shelves were frequently found for storage and where they were turned daily to encourage an even distribution of fat.

The March 1597 inventory of Annis Robins includes

> *'in the maydes chamber: a cheese racke' and 'in the dayhouse … a chese presse stone, 6 ches fates, a suter [a board to put between cheeses in the press].'* [22]

but even there the location of the cheese rack in the maid's room is indicative of how some of the equipment might be stored in odd places around the house, especially during the period of the year when cheese was not being made. Like the cheese itself none of the equipment was worth much; Edward Keelinge's cheese press was valued at 1s.6d. in

[22] BWI 13, p.141-2

1607 (although it must have been a substantial item)[23] and in 1639 Thomas Halhed, a woollen draper of Banbury had

> *'In the cockloft over the hall 2 bedsteads an old iron cheese racke and shelves. 15s.4d.'* [24]

Figure 3. Wooden cheese press
(*https://www.homesteadingtoday.com*)

Pamela Keegan reckoned that 21 households in Cropredy were making cheese at the beginning of the seventeenth century but struggled to find all the evidence for what she knew was being carried out[25]. Whether all this adds up to the comment made by Margaret Spufford in her article on the limitation of information from probate evidence[26] that

> *'an increased rarity of comment thus perversely argues a spread of usage'*

is unclear but undoubtedly more direct evidence of cheese making is available in the earlier, as opposed to the later seventeenth century.

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[23] BWI 13, p.192
[24] BWI 14, p. 135
[25] Anne Pamela Keegan *The Town of Cropredy* (1999,) p. 917 (https://www.cropredyvillage.info/historicalsocietypublications.htm)
[26] Margaret Spufford 'The misleading nature of the probate inventory'; eds John Chartres and David Hey *English Rural Society 1500-1800: Essays In Honour of Joan Thirsk* (Cambridge University Press) p. 150

By the beginning of the eighteenth century references to equipment were much rarer and tended to indicate that it was a very ordinary household item; in 1706 the inventory of John Longe, an innholder in Neithrop included

'In the Hogg yard…chees Rack and other Lumber' [27].

But the national reputation of Banbury cheese was alive and well; Daniel Defoe wrote in 1727 that

'Banbury has a considerable trade, especially in cheese.' [28]

and in 1756 Richard Pococke stated

'I came to Banbury, a very indifferent town but has a great trade in cheese.' [29]

This is in the face of a reducing agricultural industry in the area[30] and it may be that the reputation of the cheese was maintained when in fact it was seriously in decline as a product of the region. It could also have become a less dominant food as other forms of protein became more common.

Questions still remain, including the location of the cheese market in Banbury. It does not figure in the bailiffs' accounts of the receipts of market tolls[31] though it was probably held close to the old High Cross, now thought to have been situated in the northwest corner of the modern marketplace[32]. The only reference occurs following the reorganisation of the market by the new corporation in 1836 when the first Thursday after Old Michaelmas was noted as

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[27] BT transcript, OHC no. 737

[28] Daniel Defoe, *A tour thro' Great Britain* 3rd edition, 1742 vol 2 p. 206

[29] Richard Pococke, *Travels through England* Volume 2 p. 240

[30] Christina Colvin, Janet Cooper, N H Cooper, P D A Harvey, Marjory Hollings, Judith Hook, Mary Jessup, Mary D Lobel, J F A Mason, B S Trinder and Hilary Turner, *A History of the County of Oxford: Volume 10, Banbury Hundred*, ed. Alan Crossley (London, 1972), *British History Online* http://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/oxon/vol10 [accessed 3 December 2018].

[31] *Banbury Corporation Records: Tudor and Stuart* ed. J S W Gibson and E R C Brinkworth (Banbury Historical Society vol **15**, 1977)

[32] Paul Harvey, *Cake and Cockhorse* vol **3**.10 (1967) p. 183-191

a cheese fair[33]. Thomas Ward Boss, who amongst other things was the librarian of the Mechanics Institute in Banbury, noted that that cheese fair was attended by 'a large number of farmers' wagons and other vehicles …from Warwickshire, Worcestershire and other districts, and large cargoes of cheese might have been seen stacked all over Cornhill. Our local cheesemongers and many others from a large district were busily engaged tasting weighing buying and carting away to the purchasers' warehouses and consigning to other towns'.[34] Thursday was the traditional day for fairs in Banbury and this was probably a continuation of an older, undocumented custom, yet by 1848 cheese was no longer on sale at the Michaelmas Fair, only one cartload having arrived in the previous year.[35] This appears to have been part of a general trend for a reduction in the numbers of cattle sold at the Michaelmas Fair by the middle of the century. Was cheese an ordinary everyday item, too common to mention, sold very largely for domestic consumption by those who had a surplus? If that is the case, where did the highly regarded Banbury cheese, mentioned over a period of at least 300 years by eminent writers, come from? Who was selling it, and where? The eighteenth century decline in compiling and recording inventories might account for lack of evidence by the time of Pococke, but the earlier period has plenty of evidence of domestic activity. None of the inhabitants of Banbury and the surrounding area in the probate material from the Peculiar Court are identified as cheese sellers or cheesemongers, suggesting that it was an ancillary trade in an age in which many people had multiple jobs; was it too common to be mentioned?

Other questions include the mis-match of the location of the herds – large and small – and the ownership of cheese-making equipment. It seems highly likely that there was an informal network of supply and demand for the surplus milk which resulted in some of the richer

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[33] Christina Colvin, Janet Cooper, N H Cooper, P D A Harvey, Marjory Hollings, Judith Hook, Mary Jessup, Mary D Lobel, J F A Mason, B S Trinder and Hilary Turner, 'Banbury: Economic history', in *A History of the County of Oxford: Volume 10, Banbury Hundred*, ed. Alan Crossley (London, 1972), pp. 49-71. *British History Online* http://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/oxon/vol10/pp.49-71 [accessed 3 December 2018].

[34] 'Reminiscences': Thomas Ward Boss, Barrie Trinder ed. *Victorian Banbury-shire* (Banbury Historical Society vol **33,** 2013) p. 178

[35] Trinder, Barrie *Victorian Banbury* (Phillimore, 1982) p. 36

householders making cheese for sale but many of the poorer inhabitants making cheese solely for home consumption. Appraisers of the goods of the deceased were supposed to follow a complicated set of instructions as to what should be included; as a rule, items for sale were to be appraised whereas perishable items could be omitted. Consequently, many items for domestic consumption were never mentioned, including cheese. A further possibility is that some of the equipment may have been used to make cheese from ewes' milk though there is no written evidence to confirm that; however, plenty of local flocks of sheep were appraised when the inventories were drawn up and the milk was widely used in other parts of the country for cheese.

Whatever the answers to some of the conundrums relating to Banbury cheese there is no doubt that it enjoyed a widespread reputation through several centuries; if it was being sent to France in the fifteenth century it must have been well known before then, suggesting it had qualities which included both taste and longevity.

The slow decline of the industry is unsurprising in the face of changes in agriculture in the area and industrial development but that the reputation of Banbury cheese lasted so long is a tribute to its quality, even if it was lampooned for its thin shape.

Jackson's Oxford Journal – Saturday 26 October 1765

ALL Persons who have any Demands on the Estate and Effects of the late Mr. VALENTINE GARDNER, Grocer, Seedman, and Cheesemonger, of Banbury, in the County of Oxford, deceased, are desired immediately to send an Account thereof to his Executors, John Hill and James Gardner, both of Banbury aforesaid: And all Persons indebted to the said Estate are desired forthwith to pay their respective Debts, or they will be sued for the same without further Notice.

The only eighteenth century reference to cheese in Banbury found in our local newspaper.

SNIPPETS FROM THE ARCHIVES: 13

Steeple Aston's Seventeenth Century Rectory and Living

Deborah Hayter

From Oxfordshire History Centre, MS Oxf. Archd. Oxon. b.40

On March 3rd 1693 William Belcher and Thomas Fox, who were that year elected Churchwardens of the parish of Steeple Aston, wrote out a 'terrier', a list of everything that belonged to the church in that parish. They begin with the house in which the Rector lived:

*'**Imprimis** A dwelling house consisting of the Rooms following (viz) One parlour wainscotted with Oak & haveing a boarded floor with a Chamber over it & Cockloft over that Two other lower rooms adjoyning with Chambers & Cocklofts over them Two butteries also adjoyning with Chambers & Cocklofts over them*

One Entry & a hall with two Chambers over them One Kitchen with a Corne loft over it with two Corne garners therein the roofs of the rooms are covered with thatch save that the gutters thereof are slated the floors of the low rooms foregoing are earthen (except that the kitchen is Stone)

***Item** two low rooms one being a dish house & th'other a meal house with chamber & cockloft over them having the roof slated*

***Item** one barne called the upper barn conteyning [?] baies of building thatched*

***Item** one new built dovehouse slated*

***Item** one Malt house (with kiln & [?]baking stone) consisting of between four & five baies of building thatched*

***Item** the lower Barne with a Stable adjoyning consisting in estimacion of about seven baies thatched*

***Item** one Cowhouse with another stable adjoyning in estimacion four baies of building thatched*

***Item** one hen house at th'end of the dwelling house being one bay thatched*

***Item** Two pigsties at th'end of the lower barne by the way of lean to the said barn thatched*

***Item** one other pigstie in the same yard about one bay thatched Item one yard & rickyard well mounded with stone walling*

Item *one little garden with a house of office slated & well walled round*
Item *one great garden or orchard to the estimacion of one rood of ground & well walled round*
Item *one close consisting in common estimacion of Three Acres of ground well walled round divided with a quickset Hedge.'*

This is a very substantial house, with five or possibly six rooms on the ground floor, one of them with wooden panelling. There are eight chambers upstairs (rooms for sleeping in, some possibly for storage) and then cocklofts above those – what we would call attic rooms. Outside there was a farmyard with barns, stables & pigsties, and a rickyard where the corn harvest would be stacked until it was threshed. The new dovehouse is significant: at this period only manorial lords were allowed to have dovecotes. The churchwardens are being careful not to miss anything and include the very respectable loo (house of office), with its good slate roof and stone walls.

The Rector of Steeple Aston was running a large enterprise there at the end of the seventeenth century. The glebe land which was the endowment of the Rectory, and which the churchwardens went on to describe strip by strip right round the Open Field system, provided only part of the 'living'. The rest came from tithes, an obligatory payment of ten per cent of all the produce of the whole parish. (Vicars didn't do so well, as they only got the 'small' tithes.) But after the process of Parliamentary Enclosure the Rector found himself a lot better off, as did his colleagues up and down the country.

In most Parliamentary Enclosure acts the tithes (always unpopular with farmers) were abolished by giving the parson an extra allotment of land in lieu. In many places he was given as much as one acre out of every seven – and didn't have to pay a share of the expenses. The house so painstakingly described by William Belcher and Thomas Fox no longer exists. Like almost every other parsonage house in this area it was no longer grand enough for the newly enriched incumbent, so it was knocked down and replaced by a handsome Georgian/early Victorian house, complete with sash windows and servants' quarters, more in keeping with the gentry style that the well-to-do Rector felt himself entitled to.

An Archaeological Dig at Berry Close, Chacombe

Pamela Wilson

In Spring 2018 a project was launched by the Chacombe community to commission an archaeological evaluation of the parcel of land known as Berry Close adjacent to the thirteenth-century Church of St Peter and St Paul. This land was tenanted and had previously been used for grazing sheep until bequeathed to the village by Mrs Bennet in 2006. Former predictions that the plot included the site of a Saxo-Norman manor house were based upon aerial photography, magnetometry and LIDAR (light detection and ranging) studies which showed abandoned medieval buildings. A previous dig in 2014-15 revealed medieval pot-sherds, a post-hole pad, burnt daub with wattle imprint and a clay floor. The village now proposed an extension to the church graveyard, and accordingly the Northamptonshire archaeological planners required trenches to be excavated to delineate any potential remains. In addition, as the site of the annual village bonfire adjacent to the graveyard was thought to be close to that of the putative manor house, it was decided to include that in the area under investigation.

The trustees of the Berry Close Charitable Trust engaged Stephen Wass of Polyolbion Archaeology to lead the project, with the assistance of Peter Spackman to help with finds. Geoff Jones, Chacombe Archaeology Administrator, facilitated the organisation which also involved Brian Goodey and Bob Hunter of the Middleton Cheney History Society. Advice was gleaned from Liz Mordue, Northants Assistant Archaeological Adviser.

The event attracted a number of volunteers (myself included) who came from local villages and further afield – from Belgium and even Australia! They possessed varying degrees of experience but uniform levels of enthusiasm.

The objectives of the project were firstly to identify unrecorded archaeological features and deposits of interest down to a level which would allow appropriate interpretation, and secondly to assess the impact of the annual bonfire upon any possible underlying structures. A plot of 400sq.m. was planned, along the north and east sides of the churchyard. Although previous surveys had demonstrated medieval settlement remains extending over much of the site it was felt that the

ditch and significant inclination of the scarp towards the east of the church indicated the most likely site of the manor house. Four trenches were therefore dug, two adjacent to and across the ditch, and two at the bonfire perimeter and centre (Fig. 1).

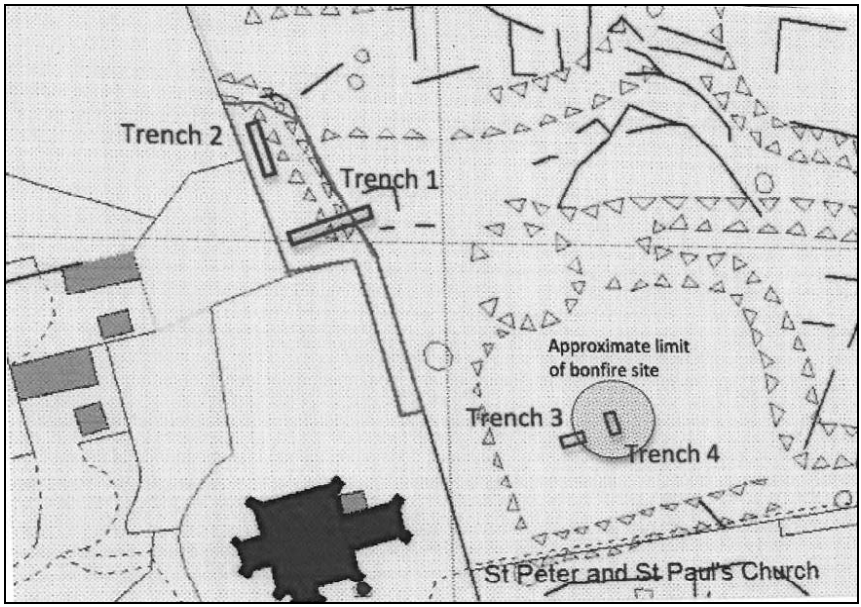

Fig. 1. Location of trenches in relation to the church
(courtesy of Stephen Wass)

Digging lasted over nine days and included extensions to the main trenches. Beneath the uppermost layer of silting were found significant quantities of local ironstone rubble; eventually a bank and three ditches were exposed in the main long trench. Three walls were delineated – a poorly constructed drystone wall, probably post-medieval, overlying an earlier wall of possible medieval date, together with dressed stone, stone roof tiles and a piece of possible ceramic roof ornament. A third rather modest little wall was noted, over clay subsoil. All in all however, no important findings of occupation were elicited which would characterise existing settlement evidence.

Meanwhile at the village bonfire site, excavation showed stratigraphic layers demonstrating the effects of fire upon subsoil – stones, ash and numbers of clay plugs, former parts of fireworks.

What were the finds?

The most recent find was a plastic finger tip and nail within the top-soil of the bonfire area: no doubt its absence will be felt at Hallowe'en!

Fig. 2. Chacombe shoe buckle (courtesy of Stephen Wass)

More specific finds included a late medieval copper alloy shoe buckle (Fig. 2), and a number of pot sherds from tenth to twentieth century in date, including one piece of polished glazed pot, possibly from Brill. There was also a tiny medieval silver coin which was probably a farthing.

(The above account is based upon the interim report of the excavation by Stephen Wass of Polyolbion Archaeology, to whom I am grateful.)

Why volunteer to dig on an excavation?

The area around Oxfordshire and South Northants is rich in archaeological remains of all periods. There's lots of Roman stuff of course but also findings from the Neolithic period right up to the present day. Participating in a dig provides an opportunity for satisfying one's curiosity in a healthy outdoor pursuit open to all ages and often accompanied by considerable camaraderie. Many digs don't require previous experience or will give training – so go for it!

Pioneers of planned languages in Banbury, or Banbury No Tower of Babel

Bill Chapman

Volapük is a constructed language, created in 1879 and 1880 by a Roman Catholic priest called Johann Martin Schleyer in Baden, Germany. Volapük was designed to be easy to learn, with a system of simple roots derived from European languages, and regular affixes which attached to the roots to make new words. Although its vocabulary is based on English and the Romance languages, the word roots in Volapük have been modified to such a degree that they are virtually unrecognisable; for example, *lol* is from the English 'rose', *nim* is from 'animal'. The name of the language is made up of the words "world" and "speak". Despite its relative complexity it was the first invented language to gain widespread success and was the first international auxiliary language to have an organisation to promote its use. In around 1900 Volapük was eclipsed by Esperanto, which had been published in 1887.

According to a review of the first ten years of Volapük, Rupert Kniele (in *Das erste Jahrzehnt der Weltsprache Volapük*, Schoy, Überlingen 1889, p 106), the Banburg [sic] Volapük Club was founded in 1888[1] and had 35 members. It was the first in the United Kingdom. Its president was a German (later naturalised as a British citizen), Dr Heinrich M. Hain who taught at All Saints' School, Bloxham. The unnamed Secretary lived at 54 Parson's Street, Banbury.

A curious source is *The Aberdeen Evening Express* which reported on 25 April 1888 that 'Twenty-four boys at All Saints' School, Bloxham, are learning Volapük'.

A long, detailed letter from Heinrich M. Hain, 'dipl. Professor of Volapük' appeared in *The Banbury Guardian* on 5 December 1889. It starts with 'I scarcely ever come to Banbury without being asked whether Volapük is progressing'. In a postscript he offers lessons *gratis* during the Christmas holidays.

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[1] B.S. Smith, *History of Bloxham School* (Bloxham School and Old Bloxhamist Society, 1978.

We learn a little about Heinrich Maria Hain in a history of the school: 'The Bavarian-born master was both a talented linguist, fluent in five languages and knowledgeable in others, and an outstanding musician with a high reputation outside Bloxham. He enjoyed the unusual distinction of being a volunteer officer in both the German army and the Oxfordshire Light Infantry'.

The Volapük Club in Banbury was clearly the first society for a planned language to exist in the United Kingdom, according to Kniele, and the school in Bloxham was certainly the first at which an artificial language was taught.

There was also an Esperanto group in Banbury, whose secretary in its founding year of 1913 was Mrs Braggins of 6 Calthorpe Road. The group met at the home of Mrs Gillett, The Elms. (Inside cover of *The British Esperantist Magazine*, March 1913).[2] Mrs M.C. Gillett became a Fellow of the British Esperanto Association in 1916. She was active in the Esperanto world for many years. She attended a conference on teaching the language in schools held in Geneva in 1922 and was a 'delegate councillor of the national Esperanto Association in 1928. In that year *The British Esperantist* recorded a decline in membership in Banbury.[3] In 1927 the secretary of the Esperanto group in Banbury was Miss G.M. Mason, Astrop Road, Kings Sutton.

Pupils at the Friends School at Sibford formed an Esperanto group in 1928.[4] Nine pupils from that school passed an Esperanto Preliminary examination in 1928.[5] A teacher of Esperanto there was Frank Parkin.

The earliest pioneer of Esperanto in the town was Thomas James Mander (1887-1918) of Bridge House. He is remembered on the Roll of Honour in Banbury Parish Church. In October 1918 Mander was appointed as Second Lieutenant in the Indian Army Reserve of Officers. Sadly, he died in Mesopotamia on 9th November 1918, and he was buried in Tehran War Cemetery. He learned Esperanto in 1906 and is listed as Esperantist 13316 in the Adresaro (Directory of addresses) published by Esperanto's creator Dr Zamenhof in 1907.

Are there early minute books of these Banbury linguistic groups' activities in existence? Did any of these enthusiasts pass on letters or postcards in the languages to later generations?

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[2] Inside cover of *British Esperantist Magazine*, March 1913.
[3] January 1928, p.17.
[4] 1928, p.27.
[5] 1928, p.40.

Book Reviews

Boats, Bells and Blossoms; reports from the Eydon Historical Research Group, vol. 11, March 2019, ISBN 78-0-9957824-1-9 60 pp, available at £6 + £2 p&p from the Group.

The eleventh volume of research by this energetic local history group includes a medley of articles on village gardens and allotments, polio and boat building, the church bells and a WWI memorial cross.

Hints about what plants, other than culinary or herbal were grown historically in Eydon gardens are rather sparse but the existence of a horticultural society there in 1886, holding its 23rd exhibition, suggests it had been flourishing for some time. Different ranks in society however meant that not all classes were open to everyone, which, while apparently discriminatory, may have meant that poorer Labourers (Class III) were not disadvantaged in competition with more affluent Farmers and Independent persons (Class I). While it is not known when a lawn mower was first introduced to Eydon it seems possible that news of the manufacture of these machines in Banbury at the Britannia works would have spread quite quickly. Not surprisingly evidence about the plants in recent and modern gardens is more available, as is the visual evidence from photographic record now kept.

David Kench outlines the difficulty of tracking down who worked Eydon allotments, given a varied pattern of ownership. The inclusion of several plans, some more detailed and accurate than others will be a great help to future historians. Caroline Bedford has put together the extraordinary story of the construction of a boat in Eydon based on original research done some years earlier by Kevin Lodge. The boat was built by Dick Syers who visualized it as being a means of gaining income for his son Godfrey, who was handicapped from having contracted polio at a young age. The construction of the *Eydon Mayde* is lovingly told with the rather sad ending that it was eventually sold due to a lack of interest from Godfrey, although it had been used for trips and the occasional hire. One suspects however that the real pleasure for Dick Sykes was the meticulous planning and construction of the craft!

The penultimate article, by David Kench relates to the historic problems with the bell frames in the church, together with the more recent restoration of the original five bells and the addition of a new treble. The reluctance of the villagers prior to the second world war to invest in a new frame led the ringers to resort to driving wooden wedges between the frame and the masonry with the result that by 1965 it was too dangerous to use the bells. Fortunately, the Loughborough firm, Taylors, which had previously rehung the bells in 1872 were again able to help and the new dedication by the Lord Bishop of Peterborough was carried out in December 1981. Finally, Michael Stevens relates the story of George Fairbrother, killed in 1918 and for whom a wooden cross was erected as a temporary grave marker. By chance the cross has survived and was mounted on the west wall of the church to mark the centenary of George's death and the end of the war.

The Eydon Group are to be congratulated on researching and producing, yet again, interesting if quirky stories about earlier villagers; their own energy is a proof of the interest that the past continues to hold for all of us. **Helen Forde**

'Useless Anachronisms?' A Study of the Country Houses and Landed Estates of Northamptonshire since 1880, by Neil Lyon. Victor Hatley Memorial Series, vol. 5. Northamptonshire Record Society, Northampton, 2018, xiv, 240 pages including 121 illustrations. Free to members of the N.R.S. ISBN 978-0-901275-76-9.

This book lists the hundred-odd large houses still with estates in 1880 of at least 1,000 acres – actually broken down into sections covering various periods. There are excellent analyses of these and their owners and fates. The text is followed by 121 photos of the houses under discussion.

Houses in 'Banburyshire', from the southern border northwards with the numbers allocated in the book, are Aynhoe Park [19], Evenley Hall [80], Astrop Park [40], Thenford House [63], Marston St Lawrence [46], Thorpe Mandeville [93], Edgcote House [32], West Hall [62], Eydon Hall [61] and Canons Ashby [31], Fawsley [7].

An excellent survey of the houses as they were in or after 1880, and the surprising number which still remain in good repair – restored to that (such as Fawsley). It is hoped to publish a lengthier review in due course.

J.G.

Annual report 2018

and recent events in 2019

From Helen Forde in the chair

The sixtieth anniversary of the founding of Banbury Historical Society was celebrated at the AGM in July 2018, held at Linden House in South Bar, the newly restored premises of the solicitors Spratt Endicott. The Society is very grateful to them for allowing us to use the premises and the gardens for the occasion. While this is now a commercial building, it was previously the residence of Jeremy Gibson's godmother, Christina Pemberton, whom he recalled visiting there as a child, together with other reminiscences about Banbury at that time. The chairman, Deborah Hayter, produced a fine cake to mark the occasion and the anniversary was toasted in suitable fashion by members while enjoying the garden at the back of the building.

The first session of the autumn season was held in St Mary's church where the Revd. Canon Jeff West talked about the architecture and changes introduced inside the church in the nineteenth century. This was followed in October by a lecture from Professor Greg Larson on palaeogenetics and bio-archaeology which, delivered at high speed and very amusingly, kept the audience on their toes as they grappled with the complexities of the research and the potential for re-writing some very early history as a result of the findings. Dr Rosemary Leadbetter gave us a more localised talk in November on smallpox and its effects in Banbury and Carol Anderson, head of Oxfordshire Museums Services followed that in December with a description of the glove industry in West Oxfordshire. After Christmas another historian based locally, Dr Rowena Archer, shared her interest and enthusiasm for the formidable Alice Chaucer, the fifteenth century Duchess of Suffolk,

and the following month, February saw a more than full house for a talk by Keith Westcott on the Broughton hoard of silver coins and the subsequent discovery of a Roman villa in the grounds of the castle. Next Liz Woolley gave a very well-illustrated, and indeed disturbing talk about the prevalence of child labour in the nineteenth century and the necessity for families to augment their resources in this way and the final session in April will be a reminiscences session on Banbury in the second world war, led by Karey Morley of Banbury Museum.

A degree of changing places in the committee took place in the autumn with Deborah Hayter standing down as chair; she had led the Society in an outstanding manner for four years and richly deserved a rest. However, she has agreed to continue producing the newsletters and booking speakers for which we are very grateful. Susan Walker, who had organised summer meetings for several years and David Pym, who had done the same including a very interesting walk round the geology of Banbury buildings for one of the 2018 summer meetings, both resigned in the autumn; the committee thanked them for their contributions and were very sorry to see them go but welcomed Rosemary Leadbetter and Pamela Wilson as new members to swell the ranks. Ian West has been working on a new website for the Society and in the interim has brought the existing website, hosted by the museum, up to date and improved it with reports of the lectures and up to date information. He has undertaken a great deal of work on the new website and deserves all our thanks. The Society reviewed its data protection policy in relation to the new legislation of 2018 and issued a privacy policy which is available on the website.

During the year the Society secured a grant from Lamborn Greening for bookshelves to be built in the museum library to house the volumes donated by Jeremy Gibson. The books subsequently emerged from the boxes in which they had been stored and the library is now open to all, for reference, on Wednesday afternoons, with Society and museum volunteers acting as invigilators. This provides a very positive profile for the Society and significantly improves the services to members. It is hoped to commence the listing and cataloguing shortly to make it easier for readers to identify what they would like to use in advance.

Chris Day has continued to edit *Cake and Cockhorse.* Jeremy Gibson has at last (in his words) completed the latest volume in the Records Series: *Banbury's People in the Eighteenth Century: from Records and Accounts of the Overseers of the Poor 1708-1797 supported by other Lists and Sources,* which should be available to members from the AGM

and then on at the Museum. The Society is very grateful to both of them for the amount of work they have done during the year. *Junctions at Banbury* by Barrie Trinder, which was published in 2017, has sold extremely well.

The membership of the Society remains strong and the lectures continue to be well attended with between 60 and 70 in the audience. It is heartening, if occasionally a bit difficult, when large numbers of non-members also attend meetings but the option of using other premises on such occasions remains open and the committee will do its best to forecast which lectures are likely to be a sell-out. However, it is a tribute to the flourishing state of the Society, its members and its committee that this has to be an option.

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With the precedent of Barrie Trinder's 'trailer' for Junctions at Banbury *in the Spring of 2017, Jeremy has also provided some indication of the contents of his forthcomng book.*

Banbury's People in the Eighteenth Century: Records and Accounts of the Overseers of the Poor 1708-1797 and other Lists and Sources

The massive account book of the Overseers of the Poor, 1708-1797, remained the only major pre-nineteenth-century Banbury archive still unpublished – now to join those already made available in our Society's records series.

For the early 1720s in particular the efforts of the Vestry to help and sustain the poorest of Banbury's people are described in great detail, rare to survive for this generally invisible group of the population.

The rest of the volume is mainly devoted to administrative matters, such as the government of the Workhouse. Overseers, changing every year, and the regular lists of members of the vestry, name the many men (and some women) of the 'middling sort' whose work in raising and distributing the rates provided the borough's poor with a living.

Those who actually would be paying these taxes are revealed in lists such as parish and church rate books, a Land Tax of 1753 (the earliest survival in Oxfordshire), money from Freedoms of the Borough, wealthy pew-owners in the church, and tax-paying shopkeepers.

The background is given to the two major events of the century: building the Coventry to Oxford canal as far as Banbury, 1768 to 1778, with local share-holders named; and the disputed 1790 demolition of Banbury's medieval church, accompanied in facsimile by the Act for taking down the church.

In all over two thousand of *Banbury's people* appear and are named in the detailed Biographical Index.

Banbury Historical Society

Income & Expenditure Accounts for year ended 31 December 2018

	2018	*2017*
INCOME	£	*£*
Subscriptions	3,677	*3,024*
Gift Aid tax refund	418	*564*
Sale of publications	225	*1,319*
Contributions towards cost of bookshelves	487	*5,360*
Visitors' fees and other income	91	*239*
Total income	4,898	*10,506*
EXPENDITURE		
Cake & Cockhorse	1,215	*1,722*
Records Volumes net costs	0	*3,672*
Meetings	956	*1,036*
Reception & AGM	100	*115*
Postage and other administration costs	694	*1,401*
Bookshelves	4,431	*0*
Total Expenditure	7,396	*7,946*
Defecit *(Surplus)*	**- 2,498**	***2,560***

Balance Sheet as at 31 December 2018

Balance at 1 January 2018	13,520	*10,960*
PLUS Surplus *(Less deficit)* for the year	2,498	2,560
Balance at 31 December 2018	**11,022**	***13,520***
Represented by:		
ASSETS		
NatWest Bank Current Account	5,386	*7,708*
Leeds Building Society Account	5,989	*5,989*
Cash	47	*26*
Sum owed to the Society	0	*217*
TOTAL ASSETS	11,422	*13,940*
Less LIABILITIES – subscriptions in advance	400	*420*
NET ASSETS at 31 December 2017	**11,022**	***13,520***

GF Griffiths, Treasurer

I have reviewed and examined the books and records of the Banbury Historical Society and confirm that the accounts prepared by the Treasurer represent a fair and accurate summary of the financial transactions completed in the year ended 31 December 2018.

Peter Cottrell BA, ACCA, ACIMA
27 March 2018

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. Over one hundred and fifty issues and five hundred articles have been published. All but the most recent volumes 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 well over thirty volumes in the records series. Those still in print include:

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).

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

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

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

Early Victorian Squarson: The Diaries of William Cotton Risley, Vicar of Deddington, Part One, *1835-1848*, ed. Geoffrey Smedley-Stevenson (vol. 29).
Part 2. *Mid-Victorian Squarson, 1849-1869* (vol. 32).

Victorian Banburyshire: Three Memoirs, ed. Barrie Trinder (vol. 33).

Rusher's 'Banbury Trades and Occupations Directory' 1832-1906
(Alphabetical Digest and DVD facsimile) (vol. 34).

Junctions at Banbury: a town and its railways since 1850, Barrie Trinder (vol. 35).

Current prices and availability of other back volumes, and of *Cake and Cockhorse*, from the Society, c/o Banbury Museum.

Ready for publication:

Banbury's People in the Eighteenth Century: Vestry Book, 1708-1797 and other records.

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 or location.

The annual subscription (since 2017) is **£15.00** for one member, **£20** for two members living at the same address, which includes any records volumes published. Overseas membership, **£20.00**.

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.

Spring and Summer 2019 Programme

The April meeting is as usual at Banbury Museum, 7.30 pm,
Museum entrance from Spiceball Park Road.

Thursday 11th April 2019
Reminiscences: Banbury in World War Two: led by Karey Morley

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Thursday 16th May 2019
Village visit to Charlton: iron age hill fort; Victorian stables; blacksmith's forge and more.

Led by Deborah Hayter; meet at 5.30 pm at Rainsborough (half a mile outside Charlton on the road to Aynho); parking for access to the hill-fort. We will be walking across a field to get there.

Thursday 13th June 2019
Walking Tour of Jericho, Oxford: originally an industrial area based on the Oxford Canal

Led by David Clark; meet at 6 pm outside the Oxford University Press building in Walton Street.

Thursday 11th July 2019 at 5.30pm. **Annual General Meeting.**
To be held in South Newington Church. South Newington is on the A361 halfway between Banbury and Chipping Norton. Car park where you can in the centre of the village; after the meeting in the church (famous for its wall-paintings) we shall walk up the road for drinks in the village hall which is one of the earliest Quaker meeting houses in the area.

We expect to be distributing our latest records volume at the meeting.

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