CAKE & COCKHORSE

BANBURY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Annual Edition 2022 | Volume 24 | ISSN 0522-0823

***Cake & Cockhorse* Editorial Committee**

Editor: Helen Forde: editor@banburyhistoricalsociety.org
Assistant Editor: George Hughes
Deborah Hayter, Barrie Trinder, Ian West

Notes for contributors
We invite contributions on all aspects of the history and archaeology of Banbury and its surrounding region. Detailed contributors' guidelines are available from the Editor.

Typeset by Meriel Lewis | Printed by Banbury Litho banburylitho.co.uk

CONTENTS

CONTRIBUTORS

Chris Day was an historian and teacher who worked for many years on the Victoria County History and taught local history in both the UK and the USA. He died in March 2021	
TJ Guile is a teacher and author with a particular interest in Catholic recusancy	timguile@yahoo.co.uk
George Hughes is a retired Chartered Engineer and a keen amateur historian	davidgeorge.hughes@outlook.com
Clare Jakeman is a keen but amateur historian	sjakeman51@aol.com
Roger Neill is an arts historian with a particular interest in the musicians, singers, artists and writers of the *fin-de-siecle*	rogern@perdiemprojects.com
Ellie Read is a Local Studies Librarian at Oxfordshire History Centre	elliereid@aol.com
Edward Shawyer majored in History at the West London University, and has led the North Oxon Archaeology group since 1996	edwardshawyer@hotmail.co.uk
Barrie Trinder has written extensively on industrial, social and urban history	barrie@trinderhistory.co.uk
Pamela Wilson, member of Council for British Archaeology	pamslwilson@gmail.com

Abbreviations used in the articles

BA	*Banbury Advertiser*
BB	*Banbury Beacon*
BG	*Banbury Guardian*
C&CH	*Cake & Cockhorse*
JOJ	*Jackson's Oxford Journal*
ODNB	*Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*
OXO	*Oxoniensia*
OT	*Oxford Times*
St George	St George for merrie England: a musical play for Empire Day
SMA	South Midlands Archaeology
TNA	The National Archives
VCH	Victoria County History

EDITORIAL

This issue of *Cake & Cockhorse* is dedicated to Chris Day who was the editor from 2013 until 2020; as a tribute we have included two of his articles 'Oxfordshire's Own Pooh-Bah: Thomas Walker, Man of Everyone's business' and 'Deddington and its Castle'. Both were originally given as talks and have therefore been slightly edited but the scholarship and enthusiasm for both his subjects shines out. The story of Thomas Walker clearly demonstrates how much there is still to discover about late eighteenth century local politics when an accomplished historian brings together disparate sources to create a full picture of a very busy man. And the article on Deddington Castle shows how widely Chris ranged, dealing with archaeology in the medieval period as easily as the social life of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Historians who use both types of evidence do much to round out what might otherwise be a rather sketchy history.

The last few years have provided many opportunities for archaeological work in the area around Banbury as the painstaking work at Swalcliffe Lea demonstrates; and now we have the headline discoveries as well, at Chipping Warden and Broughton, both mentioned by Pamela Wilson in her round up of excavations during the past year. The story of Catholicism in north Oxfordshire and the part played in its survival by the Fermor family provides a useful reminder that local Protestants and Catholics quite often dwelt together amicably, despite tensions further up the hierarchies. Religious issues were also very much in the mind of Mrs Redford, Banbury's self-styled female martyr. George Hughes has picked out nuggets of local history and interest from the predominant expressions of faith which clearly sustained Mrs Redford through her troubled life, throwing a light on the problems faced by those on the breadline in the mid-nineteenth century. By contrast, Ellie Read has looked at the entertainment offered by pageants to the middle classes in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Shorter pieces include entertainment in the form of hunting for royalty in the area, the celebration of the 50th anniversary of the publication of the Victoria County History volume for Banbury and the area, further details of the Orchard family and an introduction to the history of cycling in Banbury, which will be followed by publication of the complete article on the BHS website. Snippets from the Archives are variously amusing and slightly horrifying, the latter being a remarkably candid account of a murder by the perpetrator. Readers are invited to carry out more investigation into the topics and biographies listed by George Hughes; if they stimulate more such queries or articles for further issues of *Cake & Cockhorse*, that would be very welcome.

I am grateful to all the contributors who have worked so hard on their contributions, to those institutions which have given permission to publish illustrations, to Colin Hill and Cathy Stoertz who contributed to the article on Swalcliffe Lea excavations when the author was stranded in China during the pandemic, to Rosemary Leadbetter, Ian West and Brian Goodey who have devised another pictorial quiz and to George Hughes who has taken on the task of assistant editor and provides a very useful additional scrutiny of texts. Finally, thanks must go especially to Meriel Lewis who deals with the numerous corrections and additions to texts which are supposedly complete, with great good humour and expertise.

Helen Forde (Editor)

OXFORDSHIRE'S OWN POOH-BAH: THOMAS WALKER, MAN OF EVERYONE'S BUSINESS

Chris Day

Thomas Walker is perhaps known to few, though many will be familiar with his house in Woodstock, known as Fletcher's House, now the county museum. He lived there from 1795 until his death in 1804, and his impressive revamping of the already substantial 17th century house that stood there was largely responsible for its present layout and appearance. Those with good eyesight may have seen, even if not deciphered, his memorial, high up in a gloomy space above the south door of St Mary Magdalene church across the road. It records that 'Near this place are deposited the remains of Thomas Walker, Esq., many years auditor to His Grace George Duke of Marlborough and Receiver General of this county'.

Thomas Walker (Thomas Gainsborough)

So, who was this man, as rich in years as he obviously was in money, and why is he of interest over 200 years after his death? He was baptised Thomas Walker on 19 November 1723 at East Dereham, Norfolk, son of William Walker, gent. The first reference to him as an adult is in Oxford in 1749, when he leased some property from Brasenose College in St Michael's parish. That may mark his arrival in the city. In 1750 he was recorded in the University Matriculation Register as University Solicitor. Not quite the high-powered and influential position that it might seem at first sight, but an impressive achievement for a young man of 27.

The survival in the Bodleian Library of a draft of the settlement drawn up on his marriage to the 20-year-old Susannah, member of the prominent Treacher family, casts an interesting light on the sort of connection that was to characterize his whole career. The draft, dated 1751, bears annotations in the hand of George Nares, town clerk and later Recorder and MP for Oxford. The Treachers were related to Nares by marriage, and so eventually, therefore, was Thomas Walker. He was not one to pass up such an opportunity. Already part of the

Fletcher's House (Chris Day)

Sir George Nares (1716-86), judge, Recorder and MP for Oxford City (Nathaniel Hone the Elder)

Sir William Blackstone (1723-80), jurist and Tory politician (Thomas Gainsborough)

university establishment, he was now firmly ensconced within that of the city. Inclusion in the establishment soon followed. George Nares's father was chief steward to Willoughby Bertie, 3rd Earl of Abingdon (d. 1760). This was a small world. Alderman Treacher was, as it happens, a creditor of the earl, whose estates were hopelessly encumbered. The earl owed Treacher £2,000. Unsurprisingly, in the 1750s Walker acted as the earl's man of business, working with William Blackstone to sort out that nobleman's finances. Another job, another opportunity: he became something of a protégé of Blackstone, who was a Fellow of All Souls College, Oxford and the greatest jurist of his day. His book *Commentaries on the Laws of England* was long the basis of legal education in this country and the United States. The network was already becoming almost impenetrable, and Walker's career still had 50 years left to run. A common factor to be stressed in the network of connections he so assiduously cultivated was the Tory politics that characterised both the university and the city and, indeed, county grandees such as the earls of Abingdon.

The Earl of Abingdon's affairs, at the time of his death in 1760, were in desperate straits, described as 'deranged and distracted'. Walker and Blackstone went through masses of material, sorting things out for the executors. Large-scale sales of the new Lord Abingdon's property were inevitable. In 1764 another Tory grandee, the 4th Duke of Marlborough, purchased Chesterton from the Abingdon estate, and in 1765 West Lavington (Wiltshire), the negotiations in both cases being conducted by Walker. It had originally appeared that it was that work which led to what was to prove the most significant connection of all in his career with the duke. However, it later became clear that the duke had already appointed Walker as his 'auditor and superintendent of all landed estates', in 1763. Which means, of course, that in the cases of Chesterton and West Lavington, Walker was acting both for vendor and purchaser. By 1766, when he was working exclusively for the duke, letters to him when in London were addressed to Marlborough House in Pall Mall, where he had his own apartment.

It seems not to have been Walker's habit to surrender one post on acquiring another but neither the duke of Marlborough nor Lord Abingdon appear to have raised any objection. In 1756 he had succeeded George Nares as town clerk of Oxford whilst continuing to serve as University Solicitor. He remained town clerk until 1795, combining that office from 1767 with the town clerkship of Woodstock. In the latter year Blackstone felt compelled to rebuke him for inaccuracy in drawing up some deeds on behalf of Lord Abingdon. Blackstone referred with mild irritation to the 'multiplicity of your other business'. The rebuke might not be surprising; what is surprising is that not more such complaints have been found.

Marlborough House in Pall Mall (William Alexander Le Petit)

One way that Walker coped was by drawing others into the network, notably his brother John, and James Morrell. Morrell, who seems also to have been a protégé of Blackstone, went into partnership with both Walkers in 1763. The way the connection worked can be seen in the stories of the Botley causeway and the Oxford Improvement Act. The scheme to turn the near derelict Botley causeway into a turnpike, linking it to a new toll bridge that would replace the ferry at Swinford and thereby transform the western approaches to Oxford, was William Blackstone's idea. So bad was the road in from the west that carriages travelling from Witney to Oxford preferred to pass through Long Hanborough to the Oxford-to-Woodstock Road, thus approaching Oxford from the north and avoiding the Botley road altogether. Blackstone's motivation was financial. Much of the land towards Swinford, and the ferry (soon to be a toll bridge) belonged to the earls of Abingdon, and this was to be an opportunity of bolstering the family's fortunes. The role of the Walker brothers in the scheme was to act as intermediaries with the university and the city in securing support and subscriptions. Blackstone wrote that 'As societies as well as private

Swinbrook Toll Bridge (Philip Halling)

men love to be waited on (especially when they are to give money), it would perhaps be right for your brother to call on the bursars of the several colleges to know and set down the amount of their contributions. I leave you to apply to the citizens in such manner as you think the most effectual.' The works were completed in 1769.

The Oxford Improvement or Paving Act of 1771 was the most important measure of the age so far as that city was concerned. In physical terms it marked the end of medieval Oxford, as the old city gates were removed, bridges were rebuilt, and streets paved, lighted and cleared of obstructions. Though the alterations were civic, the Paving Act was essentially a university initiative, closely supervised by the Vice-Chancellor. James Morrell, for the university, and Thomas Walker, for the city, shuttled back and forth between Oxford and Westminster, helping smooth the Bill's potentially tricky passage through Parliament. The successful operation of the Paving Commission represented a great breakthrough in town-gown relations, the two bodies learning for the first time to co-operate in administering the city. Walker and Morrell, with their close connections with both bodies, deserve some credit for this.

A further venture of that improving age, and one that involved Banbury closely and directly, was the Oxford Canal, which reached Banbury in 1778 and Oxford in 1790. It will by now come as no surprise that there, working assiduously in the background, were a certain Thomas and John Walker, respectively Treasurer and Clerk of the Oxford Canal Company.

It would be tedious to list the various clerkships and treasurerships of turnpike trusts, navigation commissions, hospital boards and militia committees that in the late 18th century bore the names of Walker and Morrell. However, in this connection one particular office is worth flagging up, that of Receiver General from 1768 for the Land Tax, the Window Tax and other taxes for the county. That, of course, was the public office that Thomas Walker chose to have recorded on his memorial. The Receiver General of Taxes was a significant office, not least because the office-holder could lend out on profitable short-term loans the taxes raised. Incidentally, Walker was succeeded as Receiver General for Oxfordshire by Henry Austen, brother of the more famous Jane. (Henry lacked Thomas Walker's financial acumen, however: his failure to secure adequate securities on taxes loaned out led to his bankruptcy). It seems that there would soon be hardly a public or private body of any significance in the county that was not being serviced by the Walkers or the Morrells with all the main bases of influence covered: the university, the unreformed corporation of Oxford, the new movers and shakers in that city, and the great county families.

'Polling' (William Hogarth)

Another area of Walker's activities was parliamentary elections. He played a small part in the notorious parliamentary election for Oxfordshire in 1754, an election that is estimated to have cost the candidates a total of £80,000. He certainly handled Lord Abingdon's contribution of at least £300 to the election fund of

one of the candidates. It seems likely, moreover, that a poll book for the election, now in the Bodleian Library, was his work. Sir James Dashwood, a candidate, had found that his canvassing information was 50 years out of date (which indicates, of course, how relatively unusual it was to have a contested election for the county). He commissioned a Mr Walker to produce a revised list of voters. This Mr Walker is elsewhere described as Sir James's agent. Since Sir James was a trustee of the Abingdon estates and one of those to whom Blackstone and Walker regularly presented their accounts, it seems likely that the Mr Walker in question was Thomas. The election was that satirized as 'Guzzledown' in William Hogarth's Humours of an Election series.

'Entertainment' (William Hogarth)

In the context of discussing elections, it is relevant to note at this point that Blackstone's and Walker's policy in administering the stricken Abingdon estates was not simply one of selling. If the right opportunity presented itself, they were also prepared to buy, financial constraints or no. Thus, in the 1760s they were in the market for burgage tenures in Westbury, in Wiltshire; the key word to note being 'burgage'. Westbury was a rotten borough whose two MPs were elected by a mayor and sixty burgesses. Lord Abingdon already owned fifty burgage plots but had nevertheless lost the election of 1761 on petition. Blackstone and Walker managed to buy up several more, including two inns. Inns, of course, were needed to treat the electors. Two inns might seem excessive for only 61 voters, but they were needed also to accommodate non-resident electors. Moreover, owning all the inns denies their use to the opposition. It worked, and Blackstone's reward was election to the seat in 1768.

Westbury Town Hall (Neil Owen)

Even more interesting were parliamentary elections for the city of Oxford. Walker, as town clerk, was well placed to extend the Blenheim interest, and he was active on the duke's behalf, though, given his office, one might expect him to have been neutral. In 1760 the duke secured one of Oxford's two seats. Then, in 1766 an opportunity presented itself to cement his influence. The corporation, in financial crisis, approached the sitting MPs, suggesting that they discharge the city's debts of £6,000. The council hinted that it had

already been offered £4,000 for the representation of the city. It was 'probably the price of the seats, rather than the principle, which caused them, after a significant delay, to refuse the council's proposal'. The council then turned to the duke, who struck a deal with the earl of Abingdon to discharge the city's debt jointly and to share the representation. In January 1768 news of the deal became public, and the MPs 'reported to the House of Commons as a breach of privilege the council's proposal made a year and a half earlier'. The mayor and bailiffs for 1765-6 and seven councillors were summoned before the bar of the House and sent to Newgate for five days. While in prison, where they were well provided for, they continued to negotiate with the duke, though they broke off relations with the earl, whom they blamed for the leak. Though the duke kept a discreetly low profile thereafter, the Blenheim interest remained dominant into the 19th century.

Thomas Walker was undoubtedly deeply implicated, though he did his best to cover his tracks, even taking a trip to foreign parts when things were at their hottest. There is in the British Library a letter to him, dated November 1767 from his clerk at the town clerk's office in Oxford. It accompanied an account of all the Oxford freemen who were 'treated upon the canvass' and noted that there were still 'many victuallers who have not yet sent in their accounts for freemen entertained'. Not surprisingly, the account itself seems not to have survived, but enough is understood about 18th-century elections to know what had been going on.

Even more interesting is a letter in the Blenheim archives that is undated but was likely to have been written early in 1768, shortly after the scandal erupted. It came from Marlborough House, and it was written by a Robert Palmer. Before acquiring his apartment at Marlborough House Walker used to stay at 'Mr Palmer's, an attorney in Chancery Lane', who was probably the duke's London attorney. Palmer told Walker that he was writing the letter hurriedly, in the presence of the dukes of Marlborough and Bedford. They were all of the opinion that 'the books of the corporation ought not to be altered on any account or consideration whatsoever ... it is of all acts the most rash and much worse than any one that has been already done'. Sadly, there are no torn sheets, ragged edges, or rubbed entries in the corporation's books, but the gift of £6,000 is still there, gratefully and naively recorded in the book of benefactions.

4th Duke of Marlborough and Family (Joshua Reynolds)

Walker eventually resigned the town clerkship of Oxford in 1795 but continued to promote the Blenheim influence there. The duke wrote to him that 'I have no objection to you resigning it, but you should think of someone to take it. I don't know how the town clerk is elected. Would Mr Morrell be a proper man, or would he take it? I suppose the corporation would like a man of business?' Walker was clearly still involved

behind the scenes. In later life the duke grew reclusive, and opponents of the Blenheim interest in Oxford saw an opportunity. Consequently, Walker's involvement with electoral matters grew, if anything, even heavier during the last two decades of his life. It was no longer enough to treat the freemen of Oxford to the occasional venison from Blenheim Park. In 1795 the new town clerk, WE Taunton, wrote to Walker that 'I cannot conceal from you what in the course of my late canvass I saw with the deepest regret in many parts of the city – a sensible decline in the interest of a family to whom you and I are especially obligated.' Walker had to cut short a trip to Norfolk because 'many things may require my personal attendance'; he may have resigned, but clearly, he had not retired.

His time was increasingly taken up with ducal business. He had given up acting for the Earl of Abingdon as long ago as 1768, no doubt partly because of the ill-feeling engendered by the Oxford election fiasco, but also due to the increasing demands on his time being made by the duke. In 1775 he drew up what he called 'the state of his case respecting the duke of Marlborough's affairs'. He pointed out that when appointed the duke's auditor and land agent in 1763, he spent two or three days a week on the duke's affairs, for which he asked £700 p.a. (His income previously, from a 'large and extensive practice', had been £1,400). In 1768, 'the contest for the city of Oxford began. Since then, there had been two general elections for the county, two for the city, two for Woodstock, and one for Heytesbury, Wiltshire, besides a re-election for Oxford and two for Woodstock, in all of which Mr Walker had an infinite deal of trouble and expense in supporting 'his grace's interest'. He further noted that he had been involved with many law-suits on the duke's behalf. He had purchased for the Blenheim estate property worth £300,000 and sold estates worth £120,000. At 1% commission he might have expected to receive over £4,000. Walker maintained that for the past five years his time had been almost wholly taken up with the affairs of the duke, his family, their estates, and their private domestic matters, but his salary had remained £700 a year.

What he was building up to was that when he began to work for the duke he left his house in Woodstock (which was presumably too small) and leased a house in Begbroke. The lease expired in 1769 but in any case, the duke had already intimated that he wanted him to live in or near Woodstock, and that he wanted the estate office to move from the palace to Walker's house. The duke built the house: Hensington House, a large H-shaped pile designed by Sir William Chambers that stood opposite the Hensington Gate into the park. The rent was £300 a year, out of his salary of £700 and to maintain the house, he had to spend the income of a landed estate that had cost him £23,000.

Hensington House c.1900, it was demolished in the 1920s (photographer unknown)

Woodstock Town Hall (Chris Day)

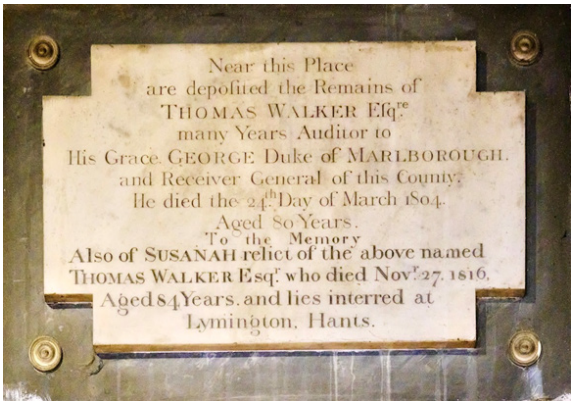
The statement ends at that point, leaving us somewhat up in the air. But it is clear that Walker was dissatisfied with his salary, feeling that he had lost out financially through his devotion to the Blenheim interest. Possibly he was hoping to be offered something he later asked for outright, unsuccessfully; Hensington House. His worries about money do, perhaps, account for the crippling workload that he took on and it helps explain why, in 1790, at the age of 66, he started up the University and City Bank in Oxford, in partnership with Edward Lock, the goldsmith, William Jackson the newspaperman, and Joseph Brooks, who was to succeed him as the duke's agent, who became mayor of Woodstock and opened a bank there in 1805. The Oxford bank stood next to the Mitre, at No. 7 High Street, occupying a property bought from the duke and previously occupied by Lock's goldsmith's business. There, almost in a nutshell, is the tight little network in action once more. Walker perhaps thought that since the duke seemed to regard him as a bank anyway, he might as well make a business of it. A typical note from the duke might read 'I shall want some money tomorrow or next day. If you have £200 by you, I should desire it in notes.'

For all his protests Walker was hardly poor. In Oxford he was a man of importance, in Woodstock he was a grandee. He had been town clerk there since 1767. Only too aware from bitter experience of the financial demands of a large electorate, he kept the freeman body small and the council compliant. His letters to the council were unfailingly polite and proper, but the tone was that of someone to whom it has not occurred that his wishes would not be met.

If to some extent it is possible to gauge Walker's opinion of his fellow townspeople, it is much more difficult to ascertain what they thought of him. Elsewhere, election agents were resented as meddlesome and domineering. But Thomas Walker was much more than an election agent. He was, to all intents and purposes, a Woodstock man, so there was little of that sense of a total outsider foisted upon the community. On a personal level, he had long since shown a diplomatic adroitness and apparently a sympathetic personality that allowed him to work without apparent resentment for individuals and bodies with ostensibly opposing interests. A chance find in the British Library of a letter from him petitioning for a place for the son of a Dissenting teacher amply demonstrates that even a man at the very heart of the Establishment did not have to be biased. It isn't much to go on, but perhaps offers a clue.

Thomas Walker's involvement in the family affairs of his employer is also worth mentioning. The duke came to rely more and more on his trusted advisor, especially as he became increasingly reclusive. Walker had become a family friend. Not their equal, but a friend, nevertheless. For a period, he seems single-handedly to have kept his employer's family together. When relations between the duke and the marquis broke down, Walker was the honest broker. In 1791 he was asked by the duke and duchess to talk Blandford out of an unsuitable marriage – 'this preposterous alliance', as the duke called Blandford's love-match – at the same time as he was trying to sort out Blandford's hopeless finances; in 1796 his debts stood at £16,000. Three years later an exasperated

duke wrote that he was astonished that his latest debts (then a mere £10,600) 'should all have been contracted in three years. There is £258 to a *leather breeches maker*. I wrote him a short answer saying that the bills were enormous, that I saw no way of extricating him, and that his staying in town was ridiculous'. Would Walker please come and discuss the matter?



Thomas Walker's Memorial (Chris Day)

Walker's health seems to have been robust and only in his later years are there references to illness. In his last few years he and Susannah spent much time enjoying the healthier air of Lymington, Hampshire where his brother Richard had a living. But it was in Woodstock that he died in 1804. He is buried in the church and is commemorated by a memorial plaque. Unlike his old friend James Morrell, he founded no dynasty bearing his family name, which may account for the rapidity with which memory of him faded. His only son, also Thomas, died at Begbroke in 1769, aged 14. His only daughter died in 1781.

In summary, Thomas Walker was someone who deserves recognition for the role he played for more than 50 years in the public life of north Oxfordshire. He rose to prominence on merit and through hard work and the skilful cultivation of influential people. He was particularly fortunate to have been 'trained' by William Blackstone. What Blackstone's biographer calls his 'almost excessive love of order and regularity' provided a rigorous training that was to stand Walker in good stead throughout his career. The Blenheim estate records of the later 18th century, where his orderly hand is everywhere, make it clear how well he had been schooled. His diplomatic skills gave him a central role in civic affairs both in Woodstock and Oxford, in county politics, and in the fractious affairs of the great landed families of the region. He was a superb agent for others. He made no attempt to secure a parliamentary seat, which he could have achieved, nor does he seem to have had any interest in a leadership role for himself. It seems that he was not a front man by nature. More widely, Thomas Walker's career has significance for historians in contributing to the detailed understanding of the governance, administration and social networks of Georgian society.

This article is based on the lecture originally given by Chris Day to the Banbury Historical Society on 20 November 2020. It has been impossible to track down the quotations he gives to original material in the Blenheim archives, the British Library, the Bodleian Library and The Oxfordshire History Centre or to published sources as he did not record them with his script of the paper. Banbury Historical Society is grateful to Alison Day for permission to print both this article and that on Deddington Castle in his memory, together with some of his photographs.

SOMERTON, TUSMORE AND THE FERMORS

T J Guile

Throughout the turmoil of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries the history of Somerton, six miles north-west of Bicester, is intertwined with that of the Fermors, who as lords of the manor, were for three hundred years the dominant Catholic gentry family in this part of north Oxfordshire. Their support for Catholics in Somerton lasted from the time of the Reformation until their sale of the manor to the Earl of Jersey in 1829 and made Somerton a centre of Catholicism in Oxfordshire during that period. William Fermor is reported to have purchased half of the manor of Somerton in 1498, and in 1512 he was granted the other half by the Crown which had acquired it after Sir Francis Lovell had forfeited it in 1495 for high treason. On completing his purchase, William built himself a large new manor house on the hillside above the village to replace a medieval manor house in the village – where the school was until the twentieth century. This new manor house was grand and imposing but nothing, except for one wall of the separate chapel, remains to this day. In 1665, Somerton House was returned for the Hearth Tax as having twenty-two hearths. It was said to have had a central hall with mullioned windows, a great parlour above and flanking wings. It is not clear when the chapel was built but it was small and also served the spiritual needs of the local Catholic population. The family remained very attached to Somerton parish church of St James and they were happy to fund improvements to it.

William Fermor held several positions of authority. In 1509 he was coroner and attorney in the King's Bench at Greenwich; he was a J.P. both for Oxfordshire and the City of Oxford; he was one of the Commissioners for the Ploughley Hundred, the subdivision of Oxfordshire taking in the north-east corner of the country including modern day Bicester; and he was High Sheriff for Oxfordshire in 1533 and 1543. He served in 1530 on the commission enquiring into Cardinal Wolsey's possessions, and in 1535 was appointed a Royal Commissioner for Oxfordshire, responsible for collecting the payments no longer to be paid to Rome. He held on to these positions despite the fact that he was a staunch Catholic. Blomfield, a local historian, reported that 'Mr Fermor showed no marked opposition to the King's measures'.[1] William was childless and left the manor of Somerton to his nephew Thomas, son of his elder brother Richard. Blomfield describes Thomas Fermor, as 'large-hearted and tolerant of opinions differing from his own' as well as being 'obedient to existing authorities'.[2] By contrast William's elder brother Richard, who had bought the manor of Easton Neston in Northamptonshire, had his estates seized for having given help to his former confessor, Fr. Nicholas Thayne, then imprisoned in Buckingham gaol, although Henry VIII eventually forgave him and his property was largely restored.

From 1537 until 1552 the rector of Somerton was Robert King, a distinguished conservative reformer who opposed those who 'want to pull down the images of saints and who denied that the Virgin and Saints are mediators'.[3] King went on to become Bishop of Oxford, a position he retained when Queen Mary re-established Catholicism after her accession in 1553. As such, he sat in judgment on Archbishop Cranmer, who

1. JC Blomfield, *History of the Deanery of Bicester – III* containing: Part iv, History of Middleton and Somerton, Bristol, (1888), 105.
2. *Ibid*, 196.
3. *Ibid*, 105 note 3.

was burnt at the stake in Oxford in March 1556. In 1552 King was succeeded in Somerton by his own curate, Thomas Gardiner. It may therefore be assumed that little changed, despite the coming into force of the revised Prayer Book the same year.

William Fermor died in 1552, having been married four times but with no issue. His will of 11 September 1552, made eighteen days before his death, made it clear that he was to be buried in the church: 'under the new arch between the aisle of the south side, and the choir wherein I used to kneel'.[4] His heir Thomas, lived at Somerton for twenty-eight years and quietly resisted the changes of the Reformation period. Possibly at the same time as founding the school as his first act on arriving in his manor, Thomas built both a chapel and a priest's residence in the grounds of the old castle, and also set aside land for Catholic burials. In the nineteenth century a small silver crucifix was excavated on the site which may have been from this burial ground. There is evidence to suggest that there was still a medieval chapel in the castle yard at this time, which was used for Catholic services during Mary's reign. When Thomas died in 1580, he instructed that this chapel should be turned into an endowed free school for boys to be instructed in 'virtue and learning'. A school continued on the same site until the twentieth century and was attended by some villagers alive today. The dedication of the new chapel did not last long. Under Elizabeth, the laws against Catholics were tightened so that they could no longer hold public assemblies, including attending Mass. The chapel therefore fell into disuse, and in 1580 it became part of the school. Catholic services must have continued but in a private chapel at the manor on the hillside above the village.

Thomas continued to support the parish church of St James financially and specified burial there in his will of 15 June 1580. His is the tomb in the south-eastern corner of the Fermor chapel: Thomas resting with his second wife, Brigitta, with images of his children, living and dead, carved below, along with arms including those of his first wife, Frances. The tomb is of particular interest because the original contract for its design and erection still exists. It is dated 20 September 1581 and was made between Thomas's executors and Richard and Gabriell Roiley of Burton-upon-Trent, with detailed provisions for the effigies.[5]

Thomas Fermor and his second wife Brigitta

Thomas's young son Richard did not come of age until 1596. About 1625 he moved his seat from Somerton to Tusmore, five miles away to the north-east, which he had bought at some point before 1612 with monies accumulated by his father's executors during their trusteeship and which was to become the principal residence of the Fermors. The servants and tenants on the Tusmore estate were largely Catholic, and a free-standing chapel was later built there. Somerton, however, remained in the ownership of the family; the manor house was still occupied by members of the family in 1665; and Richard and his heirs continued to be buried in the Fermor chapel.

4. The National Archives (TNA) PROB 11/35/365.
5. Blomfield, 108.

The tomb of John Fermor, Richard's eldest son, who predeceased him in 1625 and was buried in the chapel at St James church

Early in the seventeenth century, the Fermors appointed another talented and remarkable priest to be the rector of Somerton, William Juxon (1582-1663). He went on to become President of St John's College in Oxford, though he continued to return to a house in Somerton during the vacations. Later he became the Bishop of London and as such, he prayed with Charles I on the scaffold before the king's execution. After the Restoration of the monarchy in 1660 he spent the last years of his life as Archbishop of Canterbury. Juxon was what we might today call High Church or Anglo-Catholic, and would have been happy to accept the Fermors' continued role in the church locally. By the eighteenth century however more and more of the rectors were non-resident and the church gradually fell into decline as did the Catholic chapel on the hillside.[6]

Henry Fermor, who succeeded his father in Tusmore in 1643, maintained a sensible neutrality during the Civil War. These must have been difficult times for the Catholics of Somerton but the Fermor chapel in St James' church, has monuments not only to Henry's father Richard but also to Colonel Thomas Morgan, killed in 1643 at the first battle of Newbury, who was the husband of Jane Fermor. The Parliamentary Committee for the Advance of Money referred to him as a 'notorious papist and delinquent'.[7]

It is reasonable to assume that the sixteenth century chapel recorded at the manor house in Somerton before 1718 by the antiquary Rawlinson had been built by Thomas Fermor for more private worship when the castle chapel there ceased to be used.[8] It was this chapel which remained the centre of Catholicism in the village for more than a hundred years after the Fermors departed in the seventeenth century. John Watson, the rector of Somerton from 1728 until 1769, reported in 1738 that the Catholics held monthly mass there, despite the chapel being in a poor state by this time. The family kept up their attachment to Somerton parish church. Up until the last male descendant, William, who died in 1828, they were buried there, and they continued to support the Catholics of Somerton directly, many of whom must have been their tenants. This was the reason given by the rector, John Watson, in his responses to queries from his bishop in 1738:

> 'Our Parish has always been remarkable for a great many Papists, which I suppose proceeds from most of the Inhabitants being Tennants to Mr. Fermour a Roman Cathk. gentlm. who lives at Tusmore about three miles from us; I am informed that formerly near half the Families in the Parrish were Papists, but they are considerably diminished of late years.'[9]

6. https://somertonoxon.co.uk/st-james-church/church-guide/
7. *Calendar of the Committee for the Advance of Money* 6th Dec 1643.
8. https://somertonoxon.co.uk/st-james-church/catholicism-in-somerton/
9. *Articles of enquiry addressed to the clergy of the diocese of Oxford at the primary visitation of Dr Thomas Secker 1738*, ed HA Lloyd Jukes (Oxfordshire Record Society, 38, 1957), 135.

In fact, the figures show that the number of Catholics in the village had not significantly declined. Watson also reported that a Catholic priest from Tusmore or Godington had celebrated Mass in the Manor's chapel till it became a ruin, and that thereafter a Tusmore priest would occasionally say mass in a Somerton farmhouse. More regularly, though, Somerton Catholics attended services at Tusmore itself. The Rector concluded his letter to the Bishop defensively by saying:

> 'I have formerly been advis'd by my superiours not to be troublesome to the Roman Catholicks so long as they live quietly and peaceably, and get no ground amongst us. The Protestants and Papists by long living together in the same Parrish are so blended and united together, having for several years married one among another, that shou'd we put the laws in execution against the Papists, I am afraid that instead of bringing them over to the Church, it would be a certain means of driving some of our own people away.'[10]

The continuing strength of Catholicism in Somerton, even after the manor house was abandoned, is shown by the numbers. They did not vary very much for many years. Somerton around 1600 records 50 names, excluding those of the Fermors themselves. In 1676 there were 51 recorded Catholics, in 1706 there were 45, and in 1738, 47 Catholics and 48 Anglicans so an equal balance. The Returns of Papists of 1767 shows 42 Catholics at Somerton and a combined Catholic population of about 170 in the parishes of Somerton, Souldern, Fritwell, Hardwick, Godington and so on in north Oxfordshire.[11] In 1811 Somerton still had 48, but then the decline set in and by 1854 there were only 20 and by 1888 just two. In addition to the chapel at Somerton Manor in the seventeenth century, the Fermors had a chapel at Tusmore (1612 to 1828), which was served at least some of the time by Jesuits. There is a story that the pond at Tusmore House was constructed by a priest posing as a gardener. The Day family had a chapel at Hardwick Manor Farm from 1768 to 1830. At Fritwell, the Longueville family had a chapel at Fritwell Manor, which closed in 1729. It is said at one time that a room off the long attic above the drawing room, which had a fireplace but no window, could have been used to hide a priest. At the same time the Fermors purchased Ormond Manor, now Lodge Farm, in the village and leased it to a Catholic gentleman.[12]

At some time the Fermors also acquired land at Hethe, two miles south-east of Tusmore, and in 1676 ten Catholics working for the Fermors were living there. A Roman Catholic population numbering less than ten survived in Hethe throughout the eighteenth and early part of the nineteenth centuries, and some of them were still working for the Fermors. They attended Mass at the chapel in Tusmore until the Fermors closed it for rebuilding in 1768. Thereafter they attended Mass at a chapel created in the attic of the manor house at Hardwick, halfway between Hethe and Tusmore. The present-day Holy Trinity Catholic parish of Hethe owes its existence largely to the long presence of the Fermor family in the area.

Hugh Throckmorton, of the famous Catholic family who became embroiled in the Gunpowder Plot in 1605, resided at Souldern, three miles west of Tusmore, and was a patron of the village church. The first recusant recorded there, in 1577, was John Stutsbury, who is again mentioned as a leading recusant in 1592. He was the father-in-law of Robert Weedon, and this family remained Roman Catholic throughout the seventeenth century, John and Eleanor Weedon being first fined as recusants in 1603. From the early seventeenth

10. Secker Visitation, 137.
11. *Returns of Papists, 1767-11: dioceses of England and Wales except Chester*, ed. ES Worrall vol 2 (Catholic Record Society Occasional Publication 2, 1989).
12. https://somertonoxon.co.uk/st-james-church/catholicism-in-somerton)

Richard Fermor, died 1642

century there was a comparatively large Catholic community in the area. About eight recusants were fined, and in 1643 nine were assessed for the charge on Papists. The numbers increased: in 1676 there were 21, in 1690 the constables reported 19, and 25 in 1706. Besides the gentry, there were a carpenter, a tailor, and some labourers, servants, and poor people. During the eighteenth century the number varied between 10 and 14. In 1767 the community consisted of Samuel Cox and his household, a tallow-chandler, a shopkeeper, and a labourer with their families, and a single woman who earned her living by spinning. Documentary evidence shows that the majority of Catholics in these villages were peasants and small traders. It was the encouragement of the gentry and the availability of Mass and the sacraments which enabled them to persist in the old faith, despite discouragement from the Anglican authorities. Although the eighteenth-century visitations state that there was no place of Catholic worship in Souldern except a small one in the attic of the Manor House, and there was almost certainly never a resident priest, in 1877 a priest's hiding-place was discovered under a floor, also in the Manor House. The chapel ceased to be used for worship in 1781 but was reopened in 1852. In 1869 the lady of the manor erected the chapel of St Joseph in the grounds of Souldern House in memory of her husband. All this led to a revival of the declining faith and at the end of the century the community consisted of about nine families. The building still exists but is not a church.[13]

The Fermors can therefore be credited with the maintenance of the Catholic faith in the villages in north Oxfordshire. But it must be remembered that the atmosphere of toleration, which they deliberately fostered and encouraged, also ultimately depended on the goodwill of the whole community. In Somerton under the Fermors the Anglicans and Catholics had indeed been, as the rector put it, blended and united together. It is difficult not to see the decline in the Catholic population in north Oxfordshire villages in the nineteenth century as linked to the history of the Fermor family in the area. William, the last male Fermor, never married and moved away early in the century. When he died in 1828, the estate was inherited by Captain John Ramsay of Croughton, four miles north-west of Tusmore, who had married William's adopted daughter Maria Whitehead. The Ramsays continued to have their memorials in the Fermor Chapel at Somerton, but they were Anglicans. A short while later they sold the estate and Catholics were no longer permitted to worship in the chapel next to the house.[14] By 1832 it was obvious that

13. https://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/oxon/vol6/pp 301-312.
14. Helen Mary Stapleton, *A History of the Post-Reformation Catholic Missions in Oxfordshire* (Forgotten books reprint, 2018).

Catholics in north Oxfordshire needed their own church. The bishop at the time wanted it to be built at Bicester, then a small but growing market town. The faithful in the villages of north Oxfordshire had other ideas. They petitioned the bishop to have their own church where they lived. At that time there were more Catholics in some of the villages than there were in the town of Bicester. The priest from Hardwick managed to get funding and had Holy Trinity church built at Hethe to serve the Catholic population in the surrounding villages. It was built in the gothic style but the name of its architect is unknown. A school room known as St Philip's School was built behind the church to educate the local Catholic children. It is now the parish room.[15]

Flora Thompson, the author of *Lark Rise to Candleford*, who grew up in Juniper Hill and later, Fringford, writing in the 1940s about life towards the end of the nineteenth century, said that the Catholics who went to church at Hethe were looked on with contemptuous intolerance. The villagers regarded their religion as a kind of heathenism. As a child, she was told that Catholics were 'folks as prays to images' and that they worshipped the Pope, who was a bad old man that some said was in league with the devil. 'Their genuflexions in church and their 'playin wi' beads', were described as 'monkey business. Yet her grandfather, on hearing the Angelus bell rung at 12 noon and at 6 p.m., would take off his hat and after a moment's silence murmur 'In my Father's house there are many mansions''. Flora reports seeing the Catholic families from miles around travelling to the church at Hethe on foot or by horse and trap. The local children would from time to time, run after them and shout 'There go the old Catholics! Catholics, Old lick the cats! ....' Sometimes a lady in one of the high dog-carts would smile forbearingly, otherwise no notice was taken'. The young men and big boys went on foot. The local children knew not to annoy them, as at times they had turned around and given them a cuff. From a safe distance, the local children would sometimes mock and chant in a sing-song voice:

'O dear Father, I've been to confess.'
'Well, my child, and what have you done?'
'O dear Father, I've killed a cat.'
'Well, my child, and what about that?'
'O dear father, what shall I do?'
'You kiss me, and I'll kiss you!'

Flora describes this attitude as being due to 'the seeds of ignorant bigotry'.[16]

Strangely, her niece Violet married a Catholic and for many years she and her family attended Holy Trinity Catholic church at Hethe; Violet is buried in the churchyard. The same bell mentioned in the book, which dates back to the eighteenth-century and was in the chapel at Tusmore for a long time, still rings out today. When a church was built in Bicester for the growing Catholic population, its rector lived in the presbytery beside the church at Hethe. Recently, the two parishes were merged and the church at Hethe is now served from Bicester.

This is a shortened form of a talk given on 15 February 2020 after the first Mass to be celebrated in St James, Somerton, since the Reformation.

Photographs of the Fermor tombs by kind permission of Matthew Beesley, author of the 2014 conservation report on the tombs.

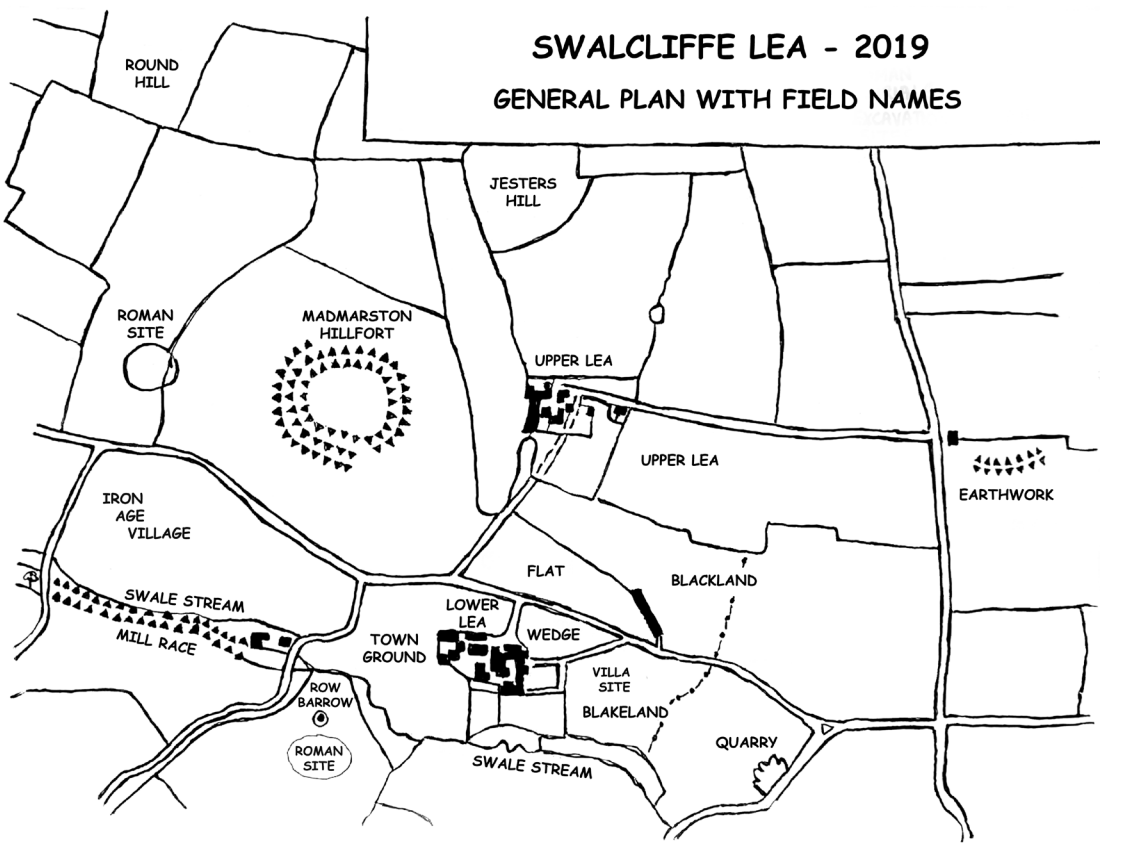
15. Joy Grant, *Hethe-with-Adderbury: The Story of a Catholic Parish in Oxfordshire* (Archdiocese of Birmingham Historical Commission, 2000), 78.
16. Flora Thompson, *Lark Rise to Candleford* (Oxford University Press, 1945), 231-233.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL DISCOVERIES AT SWALCLIFFE LEA

Edward Shawyer

Swalcliffe parish was part of the Bishop of Lincoln's estates in the Banbury Hundred and part of the 50 hide Banbury manor mentioned in 1086. The ancient parish was a large one, containing a number of townships: Swalcliffe, Epwell, Shutford East and West, Sibford Ferris and Sibford Gower. In addition, there were two hamlets: Burdrop, lying between the two Sibfords, and the Lea, to the north-east of Swalcliffe.

The Lea settlement comprised a manor house, a mill, a chapel and labourers' houses. The manor house and chapel are mentioned in 1227, when the owner of the manor, Ralph de Wilby, wanted to endow the chantry with a chaplain. The mill was first referred to in 1279, when it was part of the Wykeham manor, and was still working as a corn mill in 1851.[1] Swalcliffe resident Kitty Gilkes, in memoirs recorded in 1978, recalled taking corn to be ground there just before the Great War.[2]



Swalcliffe Lower Lea Roman Settlement, General Site Plan (drawn by Edward Shawyer)

1. *Victoria County History, The Banbury Hundred* (Victoria County History, 1972) vol X, 225-260. Online edition: https://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/oxon/vol10, pp 225-260.
2. Kitty Gilkes' memoirs were published by the Swalcliffe Society in 'From the Archives', *Swalcliffe and Tadmarton Link*, August 2021.

The Lea had 14 people assessed for a poll-tax in 1327 and 38 individuals were assessed in 1377. The decline of the hamlet was probably due to the landlord converting his arable land to sheep farming, which was more profitable after the Black Death; however, it is likely that this was a gradual and not a sudden change. In the 1660s the Lea was still mentioned as one of the seven villages of Swalcliffe, along with Swalcliffe Grange and Old Grange farm.

In 1718 Richard Rawlinson, the antiquary, saw ruined houses at Swalcliffe Lower Lea, on land called Town Ground. The buildings he saw were certainly the remains of the shrunken medieval hamlet; later on, in 1732, it was reported that locals had been taking away all the building stone. Excavation of one of the house platforms in 1959, by the Oxford University Archaeology Society, revealed a building dating from the 13th to the 17th centuries.

The manor house remained, along with the mill, under a number of owners until 1786, when the estate was broken up to pay for the debts incurred by Sir Henry Watkin Dashwood, a notorious spendthrift. The manor house was largely rebuilt in the 19th century and became part of a compound of farm buildings, but it retained some of its 16th-17th century features.

Modern archaeological investigation of the settlement began with the Oxford University Archaeological Society's digs of 1957-59. Shipston-on-Stour Historical Society dug from 1965-68, and a small excavation of a timber-lined well took place in 1978, before North Oxon Archaeology started digging in 1996.

The earliest signs of activity around the Lea date from the Neolithic period, around 3000-2400 BC, in the form of worked flint tools and leaf shaped and lop-sided arrowheads which have been found around the hillfort. The earliest settlement dates to the Late Bronze Age and is a possible timber palisade enclosure on the top of Madmarston Hill. This site was re-evaluated around 2000 by Oxford archaeologist Tim Allen.

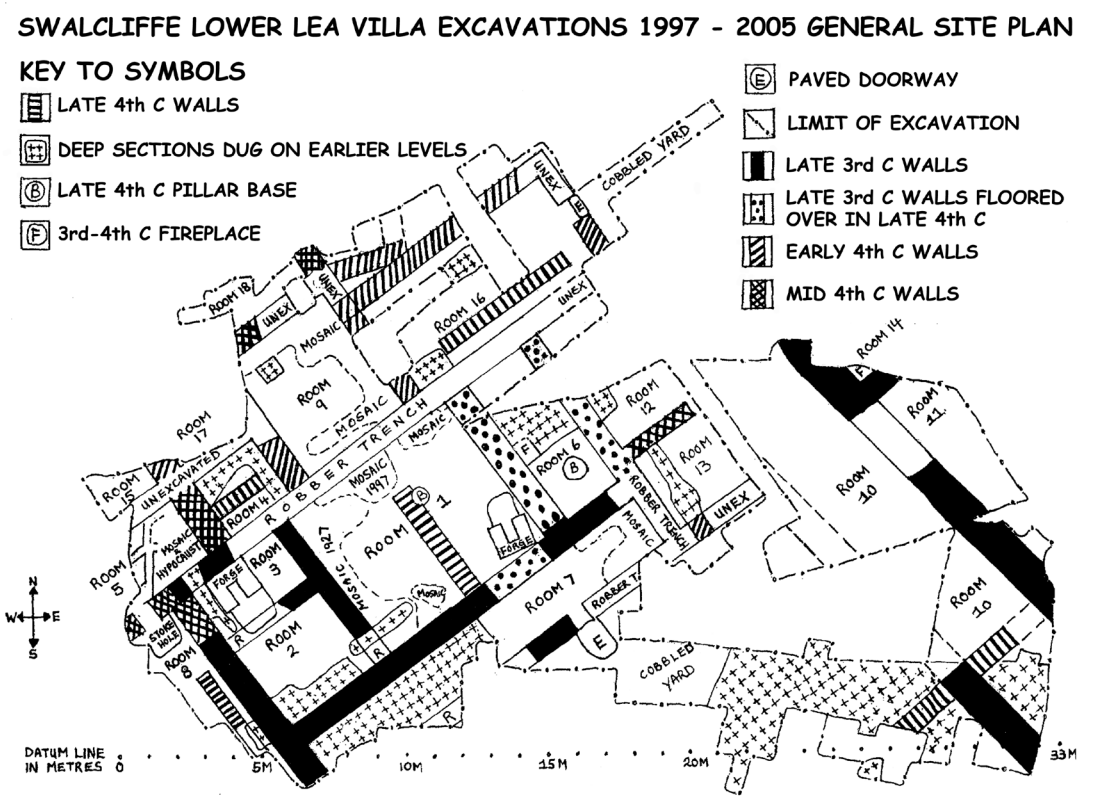
The hillfort had 2-3 banks around the summit, which had been made out of mixing the local soil with thick bands of bluish and yellow clay. The entrance looked out to the south-east. Within the enclosure the archaeologists found pits for rubbish and others for ritual uses. Finds included iron currency bars, quern stones, pottery and traces of ironworking.[3]

At the foot of the hill just to the south, aerial photographs taken by Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England (RCHME) in 1996 recorded the evidence of an Iron Age settlement in the form of hut circles.[4] This was described by Tim Allen as a 'linear pit cluster', which means a line of hut circles with rings of post holes. This type of settlement is typical of the Middle Iron Age (from 400 BC). In 2007 part of this settlement was excavated and the pottery was dated by Paul Booth as Early to Mid-Iron Age (from 800 BC).

An early ditch that was cut into by a large sunken area had two cooking pits and a clay lined storage pit joined by an irregular shaped gulley. A few possible post holes were nearby, and the conclusion was that this was a sunken cooking area with some kind of shelter above it. Apart from shell tempered Iron Age pottery, flint scrapers, a ceramic or jet bracelet and a bone comb with seven tines used for weaving, were found in the sunken area or close by.

Having established that both the village and hillfort were Early to Middle Iron Age, the question of what happened in the Late Iron Age presented itself. Previous excavations of the Roman settlement in 1959 and 1965-8 had found Iron Age ditches and pottery under

3. PJ Fowler, Excavations at Madmarston Camp, Swalcliffe, 1957-8'. *Oxoniensia* vol XXV 1960, 1-49.
4. For aerial photographs, consult the Historic England Archives at The Engine House, Fire Fly Avenue, Swindon, SN2 2EH. Email: archive@HistoricEngland.org.uk.



Swalcliffe Lower Lea Villa, Excavation Plan, excavated 1997-2003 (drawn by Edward Shawyer)

the early Roman levels, as well as flintwork.[5] Then in 1997-8 part of a first century AD roundhouse was found, with a stone lined hearth and clay floor underneath a 1st-2nd century Roman building. This gave a good indication of where to look and in 2019 a geophysical survey by Roger Ainslie revealed the presence of three roundhouses and associated enclosures on Upper Lea. This made sense of the detection of two rectangular enclosures identified by aerial photography some time before 1998. In addition, some small trenches dug on Upper Lea in 2018 revealed a ditch which had partially cut through an Iron Age storage pit.

Recent discoveries in the Banbury area include an Iron Age site at Ells Lane, Bloxham and another at Bretch Hill, Banbury. Both have yielded environmental samples which show that wheat and barley were cultivated on these farms.[6] So together with Roman corn-dryers at Hanwell Fields and Hook Norton, there is now solid proof that both the Iron Age and Roman people practised mixed farming, arable and pastural. It is believed that Swalcliffe was inside the Dobunni tribal territory and coin finds made since 1854 bear this out. Eleven coins have been found and recorded, of which nine are Dobunnic, one

5. For reports by the Oxford University Archaeological Society and Shipston-on-Stour Historical Society, consult the Historic Environment Report (HER) in Oxford: Jeffrey May, 'Excavations at Madmarston Oxfordshire – Interim report', and WJ Ford and JMC Toynbee, 'A Romano-British sculpture from Swalcliffe, Oxfordshire' *Journal of the British Archaeological Association*, vol 140/1, 191-4.
6. S Ford, 'Middle Iron Age Occupation at Ells Lane, Bloxham, Banbury, Oxfordshire' *Oxoniensia* vol LXXIV, 113-125. For Hook Norton and Bodicote see the *South Midland Archaeology annual reports* (Council for British Archaeology) 2019 Hook Norton 12, Bodicote, 115-16.

belonging to the Coritani tribe of the East Midlands and the other to the Catuvellauni who were based in Hertfordshire but who expanded west at the expense of the Dobunni. This was examined in the work of Eberhard Sauer around Bicester and Grim's Ditch in the 1990s and earlier, in 1963, by the findings made at Rainsborough Camp by Michael Avery.[7]

It is worth noting that Iron Age fortifications assume the form of hillforts in the highland area of the Jurassic ridge and that they are all in line of sight of each other and at their centre is Crouch Hill, which may have had some religious or ceremonial function.

The description of the Roman settlement has, for simplicity's sake been organised into a field-by-field account using the names of the fields in the 1854 description of the site. The best evidence for the transition from the late Iron Age to Early Roman comes from the villa site in Blakeland field. Here, the round house was replaced by a number of rectangular buildings with clay floors, stone-lined cooking pits and trench-built stone walls bonded with local clay and earth. These buildings probably were thatched, since no slates were found. The remains of these early structures cover quite a big area and probably represent significant buildings.

We also found early levels with similar walls and floors on the other sites we excavated in the settlement; in Blacklands field, the Flat, Town Ground and the land between. Most of these early buildings seem to be the same dimensions as the later ones that followed them and were on slightly different alignments but seemed to mark property boundaries. Evidence for early occupation was also found in the out settlement of Round Hill, where there are Iron Age finds. The impression is that Swalcliffe was a prosperous settlement of Romanised Britons.[8]

By the late third century AD there were signs of growing affluence in the village. New houses had replaced the early ones and both the villa site and the compound farm site on Town Ground were using lime mortar to bond their walls, white limestone slates to roof their buildings and painted plaster designs to put on the wall. The village also had a number of deep cut wells, which the present owners have filled in for safety's sake. One 2m deep, timber-lined well was excavated near the villa before the fishponds were dug in 1978. We found a post-Roman well on Town Ground and this may be the one discovered in 1856, on the edge of the farmyard. However, the fourth century, as was the same for Britannia as a whole, was the richest period in the life of the settlement.

The complex of buildings in Blakeland field developed into a proper villa, with tufa (a white decorative stone) lined windows, mosaics and a hypocaust. Affluence is also evident in the increase of rich table wares such as decorated Samian bowls, a kind of glazed pottery from the Rhineland and olive oil and fish paste amphorae from Spain. The owners probably derived their wealth from agriculture: analysis of animal bones from the villa mirrored the finds made at Hook Norton recently where cattle and sheep were prevalent, though there were also reasonable percentages of pig and horse as well as some chicken bone in the form of a wishbone.

All the building materials for the entire settlement were sourced locally, save perhaps for the tufa blocks. The walls were made of local ironstone and the white limestone slates probably came from outcrops near Swalcliffe common rather than from Stonesfield.

7. See https://doi.org/10.1017/S0079497X00014109
8. For extra details of the activities of the North Oxon Archaeology Group (NOAG, previously the North Oxon Field Archaeology Group), see *South Midlands Archaeology reports* 1998 no 28, pp 63-70, 1999 no 29, pp 53-61, 2000 no 30, pp 50-57, 2001 no 31, pp 49-55, 2002 no 32, pp 49-53, 2003 no 33. pp 64-73,2005 no 35, pp 54-61 (for 2003) and pp 61-65 (for 2004),2006 no 36, pp 42-44, 2007 no 37, pp 34-38, 2008 no 38, pp 57-60, 2009 no 39, pp 39-40, 2010 no 40, pp 33-37, 2011 no 41, pp 44-46,2012 no 42, pp 48-50, 2013 no 43, pp 58-60, 2014 no 44, pp 64-67, 2015 no 45, pp 66-672016 no 46, pp 70-72, 2017 no 47, pp 68-69,2018 no 48, p 89.

The lime for the mortar was extracted from local ironstone and the clay and sand were also from local outcrops found at Lower Tadmarton. As for the tesserae, white blocks were made from white limestone found nearby and the blue tesserae were made of blue limestone found in outcrops near Edgehill. The red blocks were made out of pottery.

Ceramics were mostly from different parts of the country, such as the Oxford potteries, Hartshill and Mancetter, the Nene Valley, the Severn Valley, Milton Keynes, Savernake and the New Forest. As a whole, over 55% of the pottery was plain grey ware and cooking pots, then red wares, including Samian and Oxfordshire colour coated made up to 30% of finds, then grog ware 9%, mortaria (mixing bowls) from Oxford and the Nene Valley 2% and white wares 2%. Foreign wares, as a whole, made up 1-2%.

A section through the main road which went through the settlement was also dug. This road ran ultimately from Salinae (Droitwich) from the salt mines and was classified route 56a, by the Roman road expert Ivan Margary. It began at the Roman town of Tiddington, by the River Avon, ran past the Roman settlement at Brailes and on to Swalcliffe.[9] The Swalcliffe Lea section showed that it had a ditch on its south side, was around 5m wide and had about 50 cm of different surfacing starting with cobbles at the base followed by other cobble layers above and ironstone gravel on the final top, and fourth century layer. The road in this section was then covered with silt which ran off the fields above it. By medieval times, the highway had moved 10m to the north. Other paved lanes in the settlement have exposed courtyards also, so the village had proper roads and not just dirt tracks. Along the main road, stone coffins and stone-lined graves have been found.

Another indicator of wealth is the amount of coinage in circulation at any one time. In 2006, a report detailed the 491 coins of the Painter collection, 87 coins from the Shipston society and 148 coins that we had found. If unreported coin finds and a coin hoard found in Blakeland field are included, it is clear that over a thousand coins have been recovered from the settlement. Analysis showed that the wealthiest periods were in the late third century and the Constantinian period, which is consistent with other sites in Britain. Mintmarks on the coins showed they came from all over the empire; London, Trier, Lyon, Arles, Sisak (Croatia), Constantinople, Carthage, Rome and Antioch.[10]

The pottery had stamp marks of potters in Gaul, with names such as Aelianus, Genitor, Sannus [?] and Mar. Also a rare graffiti on a sherd of Samian ware, found on the Round Hill site, bore the name Antoninus Severus. Small finds in the village, besides pottery and coins, included bronze rings, bracelets, bronze and bone needles, brooches, metal strap fittings, gaming counters, dice, tools and even door lock mechanisms.

As for the buildings uncovered, first there was the villa in the south-east quadrant, then houses grouped around a yard, often referred to as compound farms. Three such complexes have been identified and partially excavated so far and two more sites have been shown up by geophysical surveys. There are also some large rectangular buildings, which might be compounds and beneath that in size small 2-3 roomed houses. All these buildings belong to the 3rd-4th centuries.

The villa about which we know most[11] started off around the late 3rd century as a rectangular structure with 5 rooms and a corridor. Just to its east was a building at right angles to it but not attached. The complex overlooked the valley to the south-east. By the early 4th century the two buildings were attached and a north range added. Then by the mid fourth century the north

9. Debate about the further continuation of this road is ongoing.
10. For details of the coins found see NOAG report in the Banbury Reference Library (not available elsewhere).
11. Descriptions of the villa have been based on expert opinion, such as tufa windows and mosaics (David Neal), a food preparation area (Professor Nick Whitebread) and the structure and height of the walls (Andrew Baxter).

Swalcliffe Lea Roman Villa, Room 9 Mosaic, excavated 2003 (Cathy Stoertz, 2003)

range was modified and mosaics and a hypocaust installed. This layout lasted until c.375 AD, when a fire broke out in the east wing and burnt down part of the main building. Rather than rebuild it as a fine house, a large barn was built which contained two smithies coinciding with a shift to agriculture and industry rather than ostentation. This was the final phase and lasted until the late fifth century. Among all the metalwork we found two fifth century five spiral type Saxon saucer brooches, the only evidence for anything Saxon.

Approaching the villa from the south, where the main entrance stood, a path probably led through formal gardens up a steep slope to the villa, which stood on the brow of the hill. From a formal doorway leading into a small stone-paved yard the main building would be directly in front. Interestingly, the manor house just to the west that succeeded the villa preserved many of these same characteristics. The white limestone slated roof would have been supported by yellow ironstone walls with a number of small, white tufa-lined, clerestory windows, below which would have been a similarly roofed corridor perhaps supported by stone columns or wooden beams. A mosaic floor with a meander or swastika pattern paved the entrance from the central doorway. Next came room 1, which was joined to room 9 to make a large double dining room. The mosaic in room 1 was similar to the one in the portico with a meander pattern, though the central design has been lost. The walls of both rooms would have been covered with painted plaster designs and would seem very gaudy to modern eyes. Room 9 would have been where the important guests sat on couches around a low table, and below them was the best mosaic. It was an intricate design of spaced and staggered octagons separated by squares and lozenges. The central octagon contained a conventional Cantharus (Greek drinking vessel) design, while another had a medallion of elongated Z patterns enclosing a flower with 12 overlapping petals. Two square compartments survived, one with a mat of guilloche and the other an adapted form of swastika pelta, with a central guilloche knot with detached peltae developing tendrils. The lozenges had two patterns, one was a two petalled flower and the other a quartered and particoloured design. Around the mosaic were the normal white bands and a guilloche pattern.

The mosaic is very similar to one found around the same time at Pillerton Priors in Warwickshire. Cantharus designs have been found there, at Swalcliffe and at Great Tew villas. All these mosaics have been grouped together, by experts, in the Saltire group of mosaicists who had their notional base at Cirencester.[12]

A pair of nail cutters found on site (Edward Shawyer, 1978)

Just to the west of the double dining room were two small rooms (2 and 3), which were probably bedrooms. To the east of room 1 was a long narrow room (6), which had a mortar floor and a central hearth against its west wall. This may have been a kitchen. Just to the east of this room were rooms 12 and 13 which were slightly sunken and may have been two cold storage rooms. Even further east was the east wing (10, 11, 14). These rooms had simple clay floors and may have been the servants' quarters. Rooms 10 and 11 had many animal bones scattered over them, particularly many jawbones, which suggests this was a butchery and food preparation area. To the west of rooms 2 and 3 was room 8, which had a stokehole for room 4 in its northern wall and also had a mortar floor which was laid down upon a layer of white limestone tiles that must have acted as a kind of damp course as well as a hard foundation. Both rooms 12 and 13 had similar floors like this. To the north of the central building another range of rooms was added. Starting in the west was room 5 which had a fine mosaic resting on a channelled hypocaust, which had collapsed. Only a part of this room was uncovered. To the east was room 4, perhaps another small bedroom. Then further east was room 9, part of the double dining room and finally 16, a large reception room with a doorway leading out of the east wall to a cobbled yard. The reception room had a mortar floor and painted plaster walls. More rooms existed to the north, west and east, having also been detected by a resistivity survey in 1997. So far 17 rooms have been discovered.

The above describes the settlement of the Lea up until around 375 AD, when the villa fire took place. Since it spread from the cooking area, it probably wasn't due to any barbarian raid. A barn with two smithies replaced the fine house. This process of conversion of living space to industrial or agricultural use is found elsewhere in the settlement. The large rectangular "strip" building found by the Shipston society in the 1960s was also converted into smithies, which had large stone slab floors. A similar late slab floor in a building in the wedge field was found and the compound farm in Blacklands field had two of its rooms converted to animal sheds with stone floored stalls. At this time, Madmarston hillfort was repaired and small buildings were built inside its ramparts. It may have been used as a temporary refuge for herding animals and people into a defensible spot. This is probably what it was used for in the Iron Age as well, since cattle were highly prized and the Celts had a tradition of cattle rustling.

Swalcliffe Lea settlement seems to have been abandoned sometime in the fifth century AD but we now have evidence for Saxon settlement at Bodicote in the form of sunken pit houses as well as around Alchester and Dorchester upon Thames.

This paper and the illustrations have benefited from contributions from Colin Hill and Cathy Stoertz.

12. SR Cosh, 'Roman mosaics in 1998' *Mosaic* (Association for the Study and Preservation of Mosaics newsletter) vol 46, 1999, 14-15; E Shawyer, '*The Roman villa at Swalcliffe*' vol 27, 2000, 10-11; E Shawyer, '*The Roman villa at Swalcliffe, Oxfordshire revisited by Edward Shawyer*' vol 31, 2004, 12-13.

PERFORMING THE PAST: THE PAGEANT MAKERS OF BANBURYSHIRE

Ellie Reid

In June 1905, a novel form of historical pageant, staged by the playwright Louis N Parker (1852–1944) at Sherborne in Dorset sparked a nationwide craze for similar events.[1] Parker's style of historical pageant involved the dramatization of episodes of local history, performed outdoors by local people, to a largely seated audience. Thousands of historical pageants were written and performed throughout the first half of the twentieth century.[2] They became a popular form of entertainment, staged in places large and small, in cities, towns and villages. The largest historical pageants involving hundreds, and even thousands of performers, were staged with the assistance of professional pageant masters. Two of the most influential pageant masters were Frank Lascelles (1875–1934) and Gwen Lally (1882–1963,) both of whom had grown up in the Banbury area and had begun as performers on the local theatrical scene.[3]

This article describes local people's participation in 20th century historical pageantry in Banburyshire. It also explores the paradox that Banbury, despite its historical associations and touristic appeal, did not produce a civic pageant of the kind introduced by Louis Parker, by relating the story of the abortive preparations for a Banbury Pageant in 1949.

Parker's Sherborne Historical Pageant, staged in June 1905 in the grounds of Sherborne Old Castle ruin, was the centrepiece of celebrations to mark the twelve-hundredth anniversary of the founding of Sherborne town, bishopric and school by St Ealdhelm.[4] The pageant which Parker devised, comprised eleven dramatic episodes drawn from local history, AD 705-1593. It included morris and maypole dancing, and a final patriotic tableau followed by a march past of all of the performers. The cast of more than 800 local people, both adults and children, performed with the accompaniment of an orchestra and narrative chorus. After months spent making props and costumes, learning their parts and attending rehearsals, this massive community effort attracted 30,000 spectators. It was such a well-reported success that other historic towns and cities clamoured to be the location for Parker's next venture. Following a suggestion in the *Daily Telegraph* that Warwick would make a suitably historic location, the town was able to engage Parker to be Pageant Master for a Warwick Pageant to be performed in the grounds of Warwick Castle in July 1906.[5] News of the preparations for the pageant, which was to be on an even grander scale than the Sherborne event, was widely reported in national and local newspapers including the *Banbury Guardian.*

As Warwick's pageant got underway, the *Banbury Guardian* ran an article: '*What is a pageant? Mr Louis N. Parker's definition*'.[6] It posed a question that might well have been on the minds of local people given that Banbury was not unacquainted with historical pageantry.

1. R Ensor & N Banerji, 'Parker, Louis Napoleon (1852–1944), musician and playwright', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*: www.oxforddnb.com
2. www.historicalpageants.ac.uk *The Redress of the Past* pageant database and publications.
3. J Piggott, 'Lascelles, Frank William Thomas Charles Christian Culpeper (1875–1934), pageant master', ODNB; D Ryan, 'Lally, Gwen [real name Gwendolin Rosalie Lally Tollandal Speck] (1882–1963), pageant master and theatre producer', *ODNB.*
4. https://oldshirburnian.org.uk/sherborne-pageant-1905/Sherborne School Archives.
5. Peter Ashley-Smith, 'Louis N. Parker and the Warwick Pageant', *Warwickshire History*, vol 13 no 3 (Summer 2006), 113-126; 'The Warwick Pageant of 1906', https://historicalpageants.ac.uk/featured-pageants/warwick-pageant-1906 .
6. 'What is a pageant? Mr Louis N. Parker's definition'. *Banbury Guardian* 5 July 1906, 7.

'Lady on a White Horse' (Mrs Hayward) and attendants, 1897 Diamond Jubilee celebrations. Banbury (Oxfordshire History Centre: POX0165190)

Those with an interest in local history may have known that the granting of Banbury's first charter in 1554, was celebrated by a pageant. Many more were likely to have been aware of the debated origins of 'Ride a-cockhorse to Banbury Cross, to see a fine Lady ride on a white horse...' which Alfred Beesley had remarked (in 1842): 'would lead us to believe that some piece of pageantry was periodically used at Banbury, similar to those of Coventry and some other places'.[7]

The Borough's celebrations for Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee on 22 June 1897 had included an extensive procession of local organisations, some in fancy dress representing historical themes such as: old uniforms of the British Army, the Fire Brigade of 1837, the evolution of the bicycle and Robin Hood and the outlaws of Sherwood Forest. The historical section of the procession was concluded by a Lady on the White Horse 'accompanied by jesters, armed attendants, and a band of musicians attired in 15th century costumes and playing a tune of the period upon instruments of like antiquity'.[8] Also, within memory, were the visits to Banbury of the colossal circus shows of Barnum and Bailey in 1899, and Lord George Sanger in 1900. The vast processions of their circus's attractions (which included historical re-enactments) around Banbury to promote their shows, were advertised as 'pageants'.[9] Further afield, in July 1897, a procession of locally themed floats advertised as a 'Grand historical pageant of local history' was part of the revels directed by pageant master D'Arcy Ferrars (ER D'Arcy Ferrars (1855-1929) at Honington Hall, Shipston-on-Stour in aid of Tredington Church Restoration fund.[10]

Louis Parker's concept of a pageant had been influenced by his continental upbringing. As a well-travelled multi-lingual musician and playwright, he drew some inspiration from Germanic folk plays performed by local communities, such as Friedrich Schiller's *William Tell* at Altdorf, Switzerland, *Der Meistertrunk* at Rothenburg ob der Tauber, Bavaria, and the Oberammergau *Passion Play*. The *Banbury Guardian* reported that Parker said: 'he was getting a little impatient with the people that would not understand what he aimed at in the pageant'. He described his type of pageant as 'the history of a town or district compressed into two-and-a-half-hours' entertainment.' It was to be 'a modern affair' that differed from medieval mystery plays or Elizabethan masques and (as he insisted) had nothing to do with the circus. His pageants were not free street processions but an outdoor

7. Alfred Beesley,*The History of Banbury*, (Nichols & Son, 1842), 159-160, 222-226.
8. Borough of Banbury, *Programme of the public celebration of the diamond jubilee of Her Majesty Queen Victoria on Tuesday, June 22nd, 1897*, (W. Potts, 1897); 'The jubilee celebration in Banbury', *Banbury Advertiser* 17 June 1897, 8; 'Celebration on the Queen's diamond jubilee in Banbury', *BG*, 24 June 1897,4.
9. 'Barnum And Bailey Show, *BA*, 20 October 1899, 5; Lord George (The original) Sanger [Advertisement], *BG*, 15 March 1900, 3.
10. R Judge, '*D'Arcy Ferrars, R Ernest Richard,(1855–1929), musician and pageant master*'. *ODNB*; *BA*, 29 July 1897, 4,8; *BG*, 5 August 1897, 7.

theatrical spectacle that was viewed from seats in a grandstand by a paying audience. His idea was that locally recruited performers, known as pageanteers, would re-enact scenes from the lives of their forebears to create a vision of the past. His type of pageant sought to be both entertaining and educational and the whole event was intended to encourage local patriotism and civic pride.

Whilst Parker became known as the originator of modern pageantry, his kind of theatrical pageant clearly had other precedents. Tableaux vivants in which performers posed to create a famous scene, were a common-place form of entertainment. At Banbury, for example, living pictures, including a military scene, a fire scene, 'the Dragon and George' and other patriotic representations, were amongst the entertainments at a Japanese Fair held between 24 and 28 January 1899 in the Exchange Hall in aid of the Banbury Detachment of the 2nd Volunteer Battalion, Oxfordshire Light Infantry.[11] Outdoor theatrical performances were part of the entertainments at two fund-raising fêtes held in the grounds of Neithrop House in 1898 and 1901. As Miss D Bromley recalled in an interview with Dr Brinkworth in 1970, the pastoral plays organised by Canon Porter and performed by his Oxford friends included the future pageant masters Frank Lascelles and Gwen Lally.[12]

The actor, artist, and pageant master Frank Lascelles was born Frank Stevens (1875-1934) at the vicarage in Sibford Gower, son of the vicar, Edward Stevens (1832-1898) and his wife Isabella.[13] Frank was educated locally at the village school and at the Friends' School, taking art exams through the Friends' School branch of the Banbury School of Art. He subsequently read English at Keble College, Oxford (1895-1899) but was unable to graduate, ill-health having interrupted his studies and final exams.[14] He became a leading member of Oxford University Dramatic Society (OUDS), and it was his connections that brought the actress Dorothea Baird (1875-1933) and an OUDS cast to perform pastoral scenes from Shakespeare's *As You Like It*, and the balcony and tomb scenes from *Romeo and Juliet*, as part of the Fête al Fresco held in the grounds of Neithrop House in August 1898.[15]


Mr. FRANK STEVENS as ROMEO.

Image from: Fête al Fresco, Neithrop House, Banbury, 26 July - 1 August 1898, official programme (Potts, 1898).

Stevens took the parts of Romeo and Orlando as well as performing in a third play *Creatures of Impulse*. Miss Dorothea Baird's Rosalind reportedly 'took Banbury by storm' and in gratitude to Frank Stevens for his part in organising the pastoral plays, the organising committee presented him with a travelling clock.[16]

11. *The Japanese Fair Official Guide* (Potts, 1899).
12. 'Banbury at the turn of the century', *C&CH* 5.2(1972), 23-26.
13. https://thesibfords.uk for a wealth of information on the Stevens family and a transcription of Edward Stevens's diaries.
14. Ethel L Jones, 'A master of pageantry: from country parsonage to Delhi Durbar', *Friends' Quarterly Examiner*, vol 68 no 272 (Tenth month, 1934) 370-376.
15. *Fête al Fresco, Neithrop House, Banbury, July 26th to August 1st 1898, Official Programme* (Potts, 1898).
16. 'Fête al Fresco at Banbury', *The Queen*, 6 August 1898, 52; 'The Fête al Fresco', *Banbury Beacon*, 6 August 1898, 5.

A similar fête held in August 1901 in aid of Banbury National Schools, once again saw performances of *Twelfth Night* with Frank Stevens as Orsino and Dorothea Baird as Viola. Being a male-only society, the OUDS sought professional or aspiring-professional actresses for the female roles.[17] 'Local talent' as the *Banbury Advertiser* put it, included Gwendolin Speck who played Olivia and was commended for her 'almost regal appearance and bearing' of her portrayal.[18]

Gwendolin Speck (1882–1963) was the eldest daughter of Rev Jocelyn H Speck, vicar of Wroxton between 1892 and 1907 and a former curate at Banbury, between 1887 and 1890.[19] Frequently amongst the names of those contributing to church and village entertainments, her performance when aged 19 at the Neithrop House fête with members of the OUDS and alongside a professional such as Dorothea Baird, records one of her first steps towards a professional career in the theatre. By 1901 Stevens had begun his professional acting career having taken the name Frank Lascelles and by 1904 was performing in the company of actor-manager Sir Herbert Beerbohm Tree. Gwendolin Speck, too embarked on a professional career in the same company, establishing her career under a variation of her own name Gwen Lally.[20] The Banbury newspapers reported news of their early careers, and in the case of Lascelles, the bouts of serious ill health which may have contributed to a change of direction in his career.[21]

Frank Lascelles was one of the many people from the local area who in July 1906 attended Louis Parker's Warwick Pageant. Parker had recruited 2,000 performers who performed the 11 episodes which included the story of Guy of Warwick who slayed the Dun Cow – the monstrous head with rolling eyes and smoking nostrils being one of the more remarkable props created. Parker was an adept publicist, ensuring the pageant was widely advertised and even filmed.[22] The pageant was seen by more than 40,000 spectators, the town was packed with visitors and a substantial profit resulted. Lascelles, who attended with a party of Oxford friends, at once saw the possibilities for an Oxford Pageant.[23] By the end of November 1906 the *Banbury Guardian* had reported that Frank Lascelles was to be Pageant Master of an Oxford Historical Pageant to be held the following year.[24] The pageant which was held 27 June-3 July 1907 was organised by a collaboration of city people and members of the university. More of a spectacle than an attempt to re-tell the complex history of Oxford, and staged in a year when there was competition from similar events at St Albans, Romsey and Bury St Edmunds, the Oxford pageant did not share the unqualified success of Parker's Sherborne and Warwick events, but nevertheless was a remarkable event that produced a profit for distribution to local charities. Most of the pageanteers were local people, but Lascelles made use of his personal and professional contacts which included Gwen Lally who played Queen Eleanor in a re-telling of the story of King Henry and Fair Rosamund.[25] Banbury played a small part in the Oxford Pageant, as Banbury printers Cheney & Sons were chosen as the publishers of the handsomely produced and illustrated *Souvenir of The Oxford Historical Pageant* in which both Lascelles and Lally are depicted.[26]

17. Humphrey Carpenter, *OUDS: a centenary history of the Oxford University Dramatic Society*, (OUP, 1985), 62.
18. *BA* 1 August 1901, 5.
19. *Crockford's Clerical Directory* 1909.
20. *BG*, 14 February 1907, 7.
21. Eg *BG* 25 June 1903, 5; *BG* 25 May 1905,3.
22. https://player.bfi.org.uk/free/film/watch-warwick-pageant-1906-online
23. Accounts of Lascelles and the Oxford pageant include: Deborah Sugg Ryan,'Pageantitis: Frank Lascelles' 1907 Oxford Historical Pageant, visual spectacle and popular memory', *Visual Culture in Britain*, 2007, vol 8/2, 63-82; Ayako Yoshino, *Pageant fever: local history and consumerism in Edwardian England*, (Waseda University Press, 2001); Ellie Reid, 'Serious outbreak of pageantitis', *Oxfordshire Limited Edition*, February 2015,25-29.
24. *BG* 29 November 1906, 5.
25. Ellie Reid, *Pageanteers in the Archives 1*: *Gwen Lally: a Pageant Master in the making* https://historicalpageants.ac.uk/publications/blog/pageanteers-archives-1-gwen-lally/.
26. *Souvenir of the Oxford Historical Pageant* (Cheney & Sons, 1907).

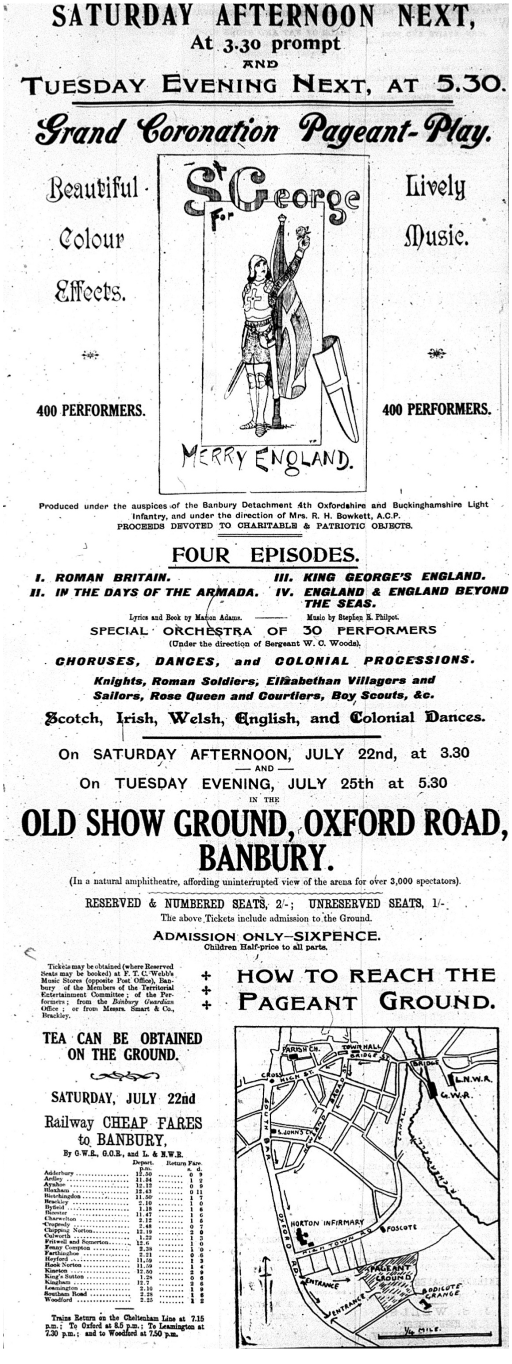
Performers in the 1911 Grand Coronation Pageant-Play: St George (Jack Underwood) and knights (WG Wincott, O Haslop & H Bandy) (private collection)

Lascelles brought his own ideas to the creation of historical pageantry. The spectacle he created at Oxford launched him on a career as a pageant master that was soon to eclipse that of Louis Parker, who retired from large-scale pageant making in 1909. In 1908 Lascelles directed the Quebec Tercentenary Pageant and pre-1914 went on to be pageant master of huge pageants at Bath 1909, Cape Town, South Africa in 1910, at the Festival of Empire held at Crystal Palace, Sydenham in 1911 and Calcutta, India in 1912. His success enabled him to create his own distinctive manor house at Sibford Gower where his achievement is recorded on the blue plaque placed on the gateway.[27] Many more pageants followed post-war and a tribute volume,with contributions by friends and admirers was published in 1932.[28] His premature death in a Brighton boarding house in May 1934, left unfulfilled his philanthropic ambition to establish in Oxfordshire, an international school of nations to promote the causes of peace and international co-operation.

Banbury's 1911 coronation pageant

Although Lascelles and Lally made their professional careers elsewhere, Banbury was not without its own pageant organiser. Frances Ann Bowkett (née Goodway, 1874-1978) the well-respected headteacher of Cherwell Infants School (appointed 1898), gained a reputation for successfully organising public performances of musical and theatrical entertainments by her pupils to raise funds for charitable causes such as The Children's Breakfast and Boots fund, the Banbury Soup Kitchen and the Banbury Nursing Association.[29] As part of the local celebrations for the coronation of George V in June

27. http://www.oxonblueplaques.org.uk/plaques/lascelles.html ; Deborah S Ryan, 'The man who staged the Empire: remembering Frank Lascelles in Sibford Gower 1875-2000', in Marius Kwint, *et al*, eds, *Material memories* (Bloomsbury Academic, 1999), 159-157.
28. Earl of Darnley, ed, *Frank Lascelles: our modern Orpheus* (OUP, 1932).
29. Eg, *BA*, 4 March 1909, 5; *BA*, 6 May 1909, 8.



Banbury Guardian *20 July 1911, p3*

1911, Frances Bowkett suggested the staging of a patriotic pageant-play *St George for Merrie England* which she was willing to organise.[30] Relating her reminiscences to Pamela Horn more than 60 years later, she remarked: 'At the time pageants were a great thing. Banbury couldn't be left behind'.[31]

The Banbury Territorial Detachment minstrel troupe had proposed the Coronation Day entertainments with a pageant in mind but on consultation with Bowkett, realised that 'a pageant on the scale of those given in larger places was beyond the means of the Detachment alone'.[32] The children's Empire Day pageant-play, St George for Merrie England was chosen as it was intended for outdoor performance and included many of the elements of a modern pageant.[33] The local newspapers reported on preparations which showed many parallels with larger pageants. On 11 May the *Banbury Guardian* reported that Mrs Bowkett 'has still vacancies for three gentlemen to take the character of Roman soldiers' reflecting the shortage of male performers frequently experienced by pageant organisers.[34] Effective costumes were an essential ingredient in a successful pageant and newspapers frequently reported their preparation. Banbury was no different. All of the costumes were designed by Mrs Bowkett and made locally by a large group of volunteers. The *Banbury Advertiser* reported: 'The costumes etc., have been made as historically correct as possible, with an eye also to the picturesque', declaring the spectacle of the 400 costumed performers a novelty for Banbury.[35] The lawn at Messrs. Lucas & Co.'s Britannia Road linen factory provided a venue for a full dress-rehearsal.[36]

Illustrated advertisements for the Grand Coronation Pageant-Play to be performed on Saturday 17 June in the natural

30. *BG*, 13 April 1911, 3.
31. Pamela Horn, 'Mrs. Frances Ann Bowkett: a Banbury Schoolmistress at the turn of the century', *C&CH* 7/4 (1977), 116-120.
32. *BG*, 8 June 1911, 8.
33. Marion L Adams and Stephen R Philpot, *St. George for merrie England: a musical play for Empire Day*, (Egerton & Co., c.1909). N.B. The published script includes both spellings of 'Merrie' and 'Merry'.
34. *BG*, 11 May 1911, 5.
35. *BA*, 8 June 1911, 7.
36. *BG*, 8 June 1911, 8.

amphitheatre of the Old Show Ground off the Oxford Road, appeared in the newspapers the preceding weeks.[37]

There were four episodes: I) Roman Britain, II) In the days of the Armada, III) King George's England and IV) England beyond the seas. They were to be performed by 400 adult and child performers and a special orchestra of 30. Tickets ranged from 1/- to 4/- with children half-price with discounted rail fares advertised from the surrounding area. Newspaper reports gave a synopsis of the plot and the advertisements promised: 'Beautiful Dresses!! Delightful music!!' and 'Choruses, dances and colonial processions. Knights, Roman soldiers, Elizabethan villagers and sailors, Rose Queen and courtiers, Boy Scouts etc'. The plot of the pageant was not a local history but involved St George with his knights, seeking his two sisters and their friend who have gone into the world seeking to heal the sick. A prophecy from three 'weird wise women' sends St George on a quest through the ages in search of a 'greater Britain' at a time when '*When England o-er seas puts forth her hand to merrie England's help*' and ends with his two sisters resolving to train as Empire nurses.[38] The full reviews of the pageant in the following week's newspapers, describe the arrangements and proceedings, and also name all the performers including the members of musical director Captain WC Potts' orchestra, and those who had helped make the costume and props.[39] The *Banbury Advertiser* stating 'there is reason for much self-congratulation that the town possesses sufficient enterprise, talent and power of organisation' to produce such a 'great success'. The event had attracted 1,600 spectators and had made a profit, so two further performances in July at 'popular prices' were announced.

'The Lady on a White Horse' at Banbury Cross, Banbury Peace celebrations, 19 July 1919 (private collection)

The performances were once again a success and the *Banbury Guardian* in a lengthy report of proceedings paid tribute to Mrs Bowkett, Sergeant Potts, the performers, and other volunteers. The final episode was judged the most appealing as it was: 'a marvel of

37. *BA* 8 June 1911, 4; *BA* 15 June 1911, 5.
38. *St. George*, 7.
39. *BA*, 22 June 1911,7; *BG* 22 June 1911, 8.

organisation, colour and completeness of detail, and was worthy of Mr Louis Parker or Mr Frank Lascelles themselves'.[40] At the following Christmas, there was a pageant play reunion party attended by most of the performers in their pageant costumes, which was testimony to the community spirit which Mrs Bowkett and the organisers, had generated.[41]

Peace pageants, which took various forms, were performed in the immediate aftermath of the war, including the 1919 Oxford Pageant of Victory.[42] Banbury's peace celebrations on Saturday 19 July 1919, included a pageant procession with parades and dressed vehicles from the many organisations and groups of workers in the town associated with the war effort, as well as other clubs and businesses.[43] It processed through the town to the People's Park (formerly the grounds of Neithrop House), for the park's official opening. The final spectacle, which concluded the procession,was Miss Ruby Bradshaw as '*The Lady on the White Horse*' riding a white Arab charger that had served in the war and had been lent by Brigadier-General Rankin of Shutford Manor.

South Newington Pageant 1924

South Newington Pageant 1924: St Margaret, played by Miss Vivien Renshaw, a cousin of Miss Harper (private collection)

During the inter-war years, historical pageants were used as a vehicle for social and economic regeneration, and as a way of fundraising for specific causes. One aspect of this was the proliferation of village pageants; a subject that was to provide material for writers such as Virginia Woolf's *Between the Acts* (1941) and EF Benson's Mapp and Lucia novels. A village pageant performed at South Newington on 17 June 1924 is an excellent example. The pageant was written and produced by local historian, Miss Elizabeth Mary Harper (1874-1959), who had moved to South Newington in 1922 having purchased an old 'Tudor cottage' that she intended to restore.[44] She was the daughter of Henry Andrew Harper (1835-1900), a landscape artist who published illustrated accounts of his travels in the Holy Land. The eight scenes of the pageant were based on village history and the wall paintings in the village church.[45] Miss Harper dressed as a Saxon Lady, introduced each scene by explaining the local history it depicted and the documentary sources she had used. The pageant was performed in the rectory garden which was said to be the

40. *BG* 27 July 1911, 8.
41. *BG* 4 January 1912, 7.
42. https://historicalpageants.ac.uk/pageants/1146/
43. 'Peace rejoicings at Banbury', *BG* 24 July 1919, 2.
44. *BG*, 12 October 1922, 5.
45. *Saint Peter ad Vincula church guide* (2010);'Historic village pageant at South Newington', *BG*, 19 June 1924, 5.

site of a monastery. In Scene 1 'Saxon Days', the vicar Rev Pryce Williams portrayed a Saxon abbot teaching the children of the village on the very spot where, just as Parker would have advocated, such an event may well have taken place.

In the second scene, the wall painting of St Margaret of Antioch slaying the dragon was enacted and in the third, the painted scene of the murder of Thomas Becket was recreated. Scene 4 depicted the court of Henry VII and his queen Elizabeth of York, who may have passed through the village on their way to Woodstock. Their likenesses were based on church porch carvings then thought to depict them. Scene 5: 'Henry VIII and his knights', saw the king ride into the arena on a charger and deliver the injunction that the South Newington painting of Becket should be destroyed. Scene 6: Some beauties of South Newington of 400 years was a musical episode in which Misses Wise, Busby, Holton, Austin, Page, Miller, Hatton, and Brown sang the pedlar's song from Shakespeare's *The Winter's Tale* and the song, *Red Red Rose*. In Scene 7 The Lady on the White Horse was played by Bessie Tweedie with Miss Harper, in her introduction, stating that the story may refer to Queen Elizabeth on her progress. Finally, Scene 8 turned to empire themes with 'Converts of all nations', a costume parade depicting Christians of many nations, to illustrate the continued spread of Christianity. All the performers then assembled for a final tableau which was followed by a procession round the village to the war memorial.

Miss Harper recruited 350 local people to perform and gained the services of the Tadmarton Band and other musicians. Preparations took five months and included making many of the 350 costumes which were 'excellent copies of the original'. The pageant was organised in aid of the church restoration fund and the South Newington branch of the Women's Institute that had been formed the previous year and was later recorded in the WI's 1929 history of the village.[46] The *Banbury Guardian* reported that 'Miss Harper and those assisting her, overcame all difficulties and the result was voted a marvellous achievement, bringing out, as it undoubtedly did, the latent ability of a village community, which when put to the test can rise to the occasion'.[47] A few weeks later, the villagers of South Newington performed their pageant to a Banbury audience. On 22 July a fête in aid of the restoration of the interior of St. Paul's Church, Neithrop, was held in the grounds of the Gillett family's home Wood Green. Mrs Gillett, the chief organiser, invited Miss Harper and the villagers who repeated their pageant in its entirety to much acclaim.[48]

Gwen Lally and the Banbury Pageant

During the 1920s, Gwen Lally had turned to pageant-making. She became associated with the National Federation of Women's Institutes as an adjudicator of county drama competitions and as a producer of WI pageants. In July 1930 she had been the producer of the WI's *Spirit of Warwickshire Historical Pageant* performed by 5,000 performers at Warwick Castle.[49] Other large-scale pageants that she produced during the period were pageants at Runnymede (1934) and Birmingham (1938).[50] After the Second World War, she sought to revive her pageant-making career. In September 1948 it was announced that she had been commissioned to stage a pageant in Banbury in June 1949.[51] Col. MW Edmunds, the prime mover behind the project, who had engaged Lally as pageant master, persuaded the Banbury local historian and broadcaster ERC (Ted) Brinkworth to write the script

46. *The book of Newton: a history of South Newington near Banbury, Oxfordshire*, gathered together by the members of the Women's Institute 1929 (Oxfordshire History Centre PAR180/17/PR3/1).
47. 'Historic village pageant at South Newington', *BG*, 19 June 1924, 5.
48. *BG*, 24 July 1924, 5.
49. *Warwick Historical Pageant: official souvenir and book of pageant* (Fleetway Press, 1930).
50. www.historicalpageants.ac.uk for information and a database of pageants.
51. 'They will make Banbury pageant conscious', *BA* 15 Sept 1948.

which was to trace the history of Banbury from the granting of the charter in 1184. At a meeting of Banbury Rotary Club, in January 1949, Lally outlined a plan for the Banbury Pageant and the need to recruit 1,000 performers. During her presentation Lally spoke of the importance of preserving national heritage and that she believed 'pageantry taught history without tears'. She said that Banbury, with its popular association with Ride a Cock Horse and Banbury Cakes had 'a tremendous history'. The seven episodes of the proposed pageant:

- Visit of Bishop Hugh (later St. Hugh) to Lincoln
- John Stanbridge of the Grammar School
- Ride a cockhorse to Banbury Cross
- The Puritans' Day of vengeance (scold ducking, hanging of the cat and destruction of Banbury Cross)
- King Charles I at Edgehill, followed by the siege of Banbury Castle
- Capture of Mansell Sansbury(highwayman) in 1742
- Meeting of the Warwickshire Hounds at Banbury Cross in 1850.

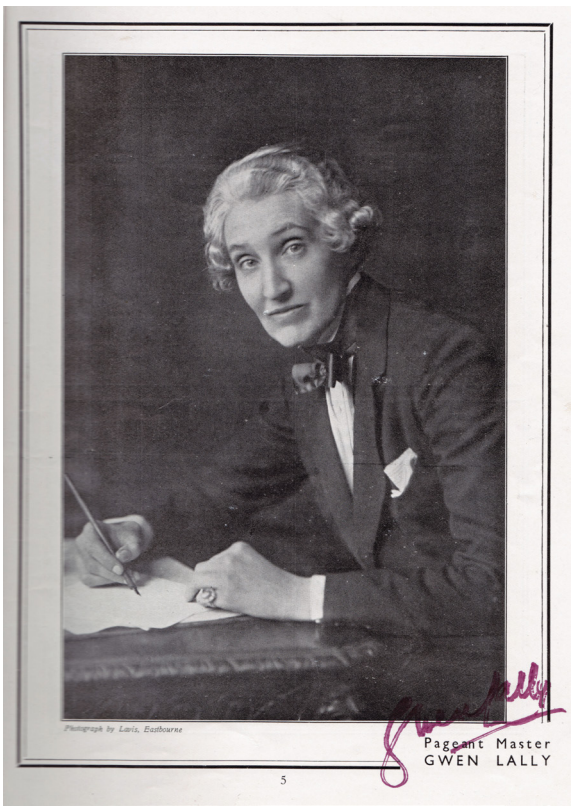


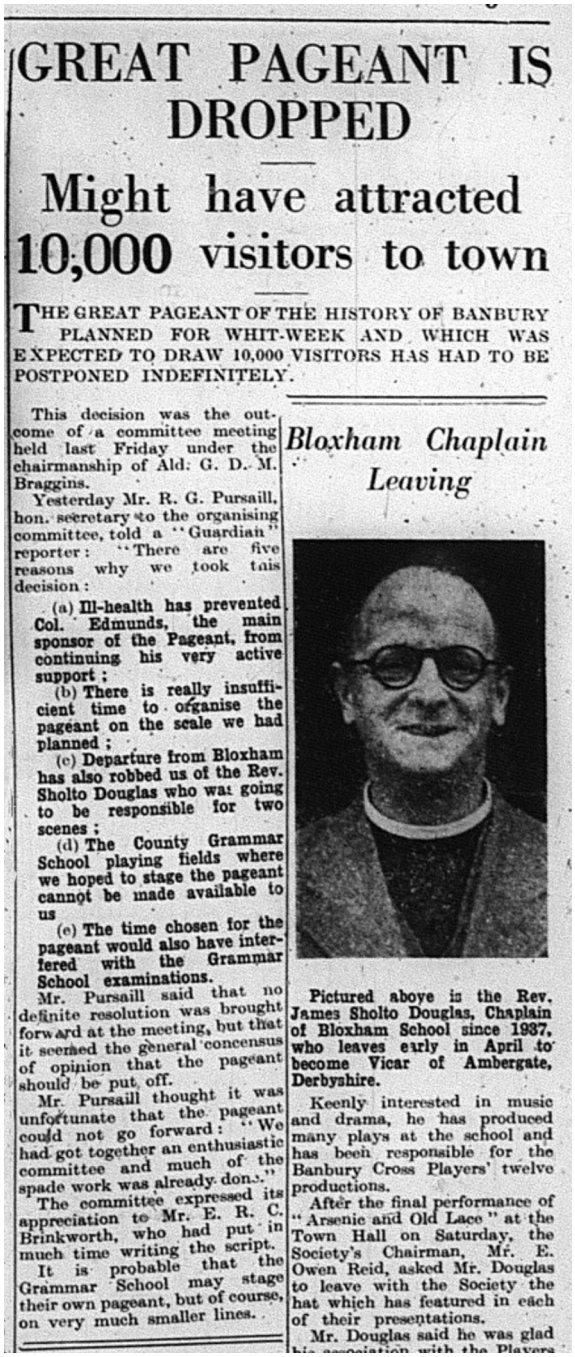
Image from The book of Battle Abbey Pageant 1932 *(private collection)*

However, she emphasised that 'producing a pageant was not as easy as it sounded and involved a great deal of preparation.' When questioned about the cost, it was reported that the expenses would be around £3,000. An issue to be resolved was the site of the pageant ground – a problem which proved to be part of the undoing of the project.[52]

Within weeks, the project was dropped for reasons which were stated to be some 'insurmountable difficulties' and lack of time to make adequate preparations.[53] Ill-health prevented Colonel Edmunds from continuing his support, and the Rev. James Sholto Douglas, Chaplain and Director of music at Bloxham School, and producer for the Banbury Cross Players, who was to have organised two scenes of the pageant, announced that he was moving to Derbyshire. The organisers had hoped to stage the pageant in the Grammar School playing fields, but the site could not be made available as the preparations for the pageant would have interfered with the Grammar School examinations. As a result of these difficulties,the pageant was postponed indefinitely.

52. 'Plans are being prepared for a Banbury Pageant in June', *BA*, 5 January 1949, 1; 'Pageant fixed for Whit-week', *BG*, 6 January 1949, 5.
53. 'Great pageant is dropped', *BG*, 20 January 1949, 5.

Numerous pageants were staged nationally in the early 1950s as part of celebrations for the Festival of Britain in 1952 and for the Coronation in 1953. Gwen Lally, herself, produced a pageant at loss-making Dudley in 1951 and Anthony Parker, the grandson of Louis Parker, produced the Warwickshire Coronation Pageant at Warwick Castle in July 1953. Locally, the Oxfordshire Federation of Women's Institutes and the Oxfordshire Rural Community Council organised a 'Pageant of Seventeenth Century Oxfordshire' at Blenheim Park, Woodstock in 1951. The pageant, which was filmed in colour by Mr N Blinkhorn, included a scene '1642: Civil War – secret meetings at Broughton Castle' and counted Lord and Lady Saye and Sele among the local people who took part.[54] But from the mid-1950s, large scale pageants became less common, as the costs associated with staging the events were increasingly difficult to recoup and people were drawn to other leisure occupations – not the least being competition from television. Lally's 1951 Dudley Pageant had made a loss of nearly £3,000, the very same amount that the Banbury Pageant had been projected to cost, so perhaps the abandonment of the project was fortuitous.[55] However, in Oxfordshire, village pageants were and sometimes still are performed, not the least being the pageants organised by Bloxham historian Yvonne Huntriss (1918-2020) whose success and profit-making Bloxham Pageant, 'the village through the ages', in May 1975 was a notable example.[56]



GREAT PAGEANT IS DROPPED

Might have attracted 10,000 visitors to town

THE GREAT PAGEANT OF THE HISTORY OF BANBURY PLANNED FOR WHIT-WEEK AND WHICH WAS EXPECTED TO DRAW 10,000 VISITORS HAS HAD TO BE POSTPONED INDEFINITELY.

This decision was the outcome of a committee meeting held last Friday under the chairmanship of Ald. G. D. M. Braggins.

Yesterday Mr. R. G. Pursaill, hon. secretary to the organising committee, told a "Guardian" reporter: "There are five reasons why we took this decision:

(a) **Ill-health has prevented Col. Edmunds, the main sponsor of the Pageant, from continuing his very active support;**

(b) **There is really insufficient time to organise the pageant on the scale we had planned;**

(c) **Departure from Bloxham has also robbed us of the Rev. Sholto Douglas who was going to be responsible for two scenes;**

(d) **The County Grammar School playing fields where we hoped to stage the pageant cannot be made available to us**

(e) **The time chosen for the pageant would also have interfered with the Grammar School examinations.**

Mr. Pursaill said that no definite resolution was brought forward at the meeting, but that it seemed the general concensus of opinion that the pageant should be put off.

Mr. Pursaill thought it was unfortunate that the pageant could not go forward: "We had got together an enthusiastic committee and much of the spade work was already done."

The committee expressed its appreciation to Mr. E. R. C. Brinkworth, who had put in much time writing the script.

It is probable that the Grammar School may stage their own pageant, but of course, on very much smaller lines.

Bloxham Chaplain Leaving

Pictured above is the Rev. James Sholto Douglas, Chaplain of Bloxham School since 1937, who leaves early in April to become Vicar of Ambergate, Derbyshire.

Keenly interested in music and drama, he has produced many plays at the school and has been responsible for the Banbury Cross Players' twelve productions.

After the final performance of "Arsenic and Old Lace" at the Town Hall on Saturday, the Society's Chairman, Mr. E. Owen Reid, asked Mr. Douglas to leave with the Society the hat which has featured in each of their presentations.

Mr. Douglas said he was glad

Great pageant is dropped, Banbury Guardian *20 January 1949, 5*

A version of this paper was presented at a talk to Deddington & District History Society in 2018.

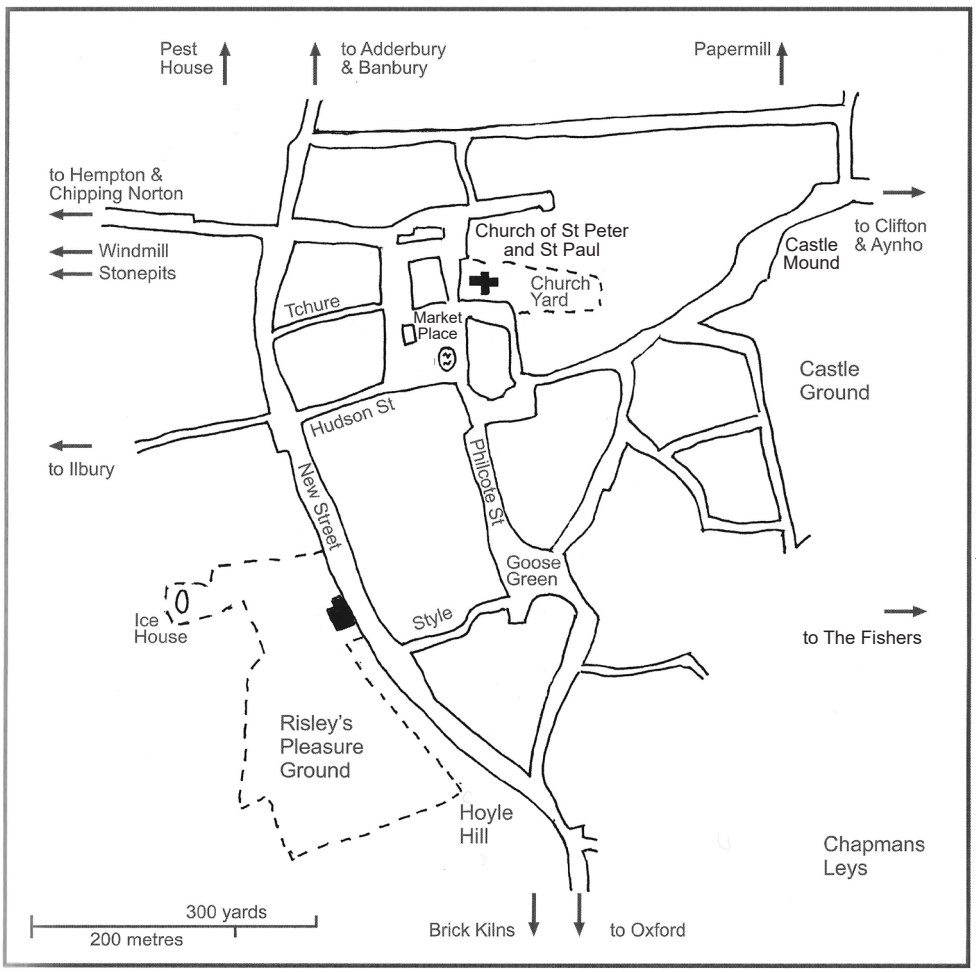
54. *BG* 7 February 1952, 3.
55. 'Big loss on pageant', *Evening Despatch*, 25 June 1951.
56. 'Pageant makes money', *BG* 15 May 1975,3.

DEDDINGTON AND ITS CASTLE

Chris Day

Castles and castle sites have been the focus of attention for archaeologists, for military and architectural historians, and for those interested in the high politics of an age. It has to be admitted, the smaller the castle, the less intense the interest, but even a Deddington (the sort of site that is most common in this region) merits the attention of scholars and it is interesting to try to find out about the role played by a small castle in the life of its local community across the whole of its existence.

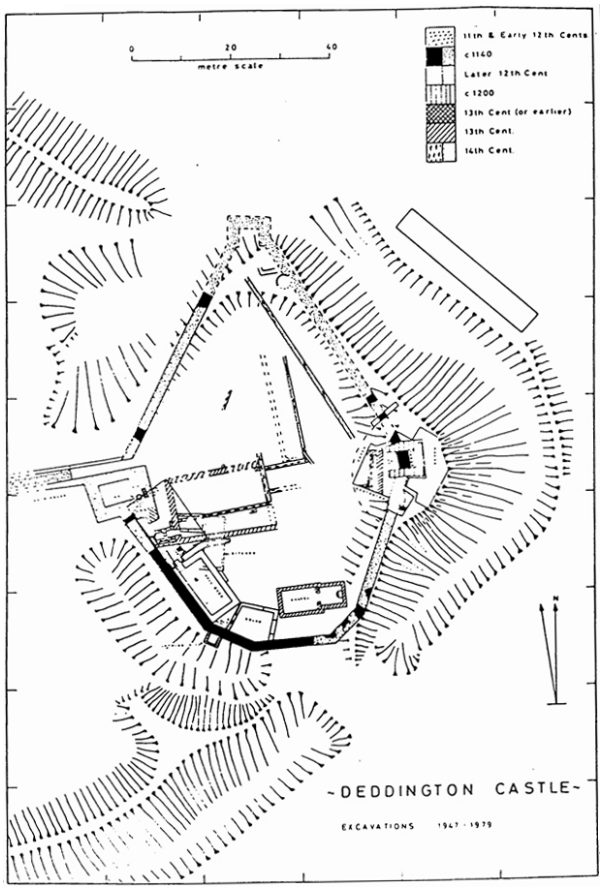
What follows covers something about those who built, fortified, and lived in Deddington castle and about those who profited from it when it had ceased to be inhabited. What was the site used for? Who had access to it? How did the castle and its owners influence Deddington's development, topographically and socially and finally, how did the castle shift from being a stronghold through private estate to public amenity? Much of the story, though peculiar to Deddington, has a much wider application.



Map of Deddington 1848 (BHS 29, 2007 endpapers)

Deddington castle in the Middle Ages

There have been two archaeological excavations of the castle site, led by Professor EM Jope in 1947-51 and by RJ Ivens in 1977-9. The site lies at the eastern edge of the village and comprises an impressively ditched and embanked area of c.3.4ha, at the eastern end of which is an inner bailey of c.0.4ha. The outer bailey has never been excavated, although Late-Saxon pottery has been unearthed there. Within the inner bailey Late-Saxon artefacts and traces of a building confirm pre-Conquest occupation of the site, presumably by the Saxon thegn and his family.



Deddington Castle, Oxfordshire: A Summary of Excavations 1977-1979 'by RJ Ivens (Council for British Archaeology, Newsletter 13, 1983. Published by permission of the CBA)

After the Conquest Deddington was granted to the Conqueror's half-brother, Odo of Bayeux, warrior bishop. It was the richest of 456 holdings granted to this most powerful of men and it formed the chief manor of his huge estates in Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire.[1] It is unlikely that Odo ever visited as he was deprived of his estates for rebellion in 1088. As Howard Colvin laconically observes in his *History of Deddington*, 'What reputation he left in Deddington can only be surmised, but if (as the archaeological evidence suggests) it was he who ordered the making of the castle, it is likely to have been that of an alien and absentee lord whose rights could be maintained if necessary by military force and whose hand lay heavily on the Oxfordshire landscape.[2]

It is assumed, though without evidence, that it was Odo who ordered the construction of a substantial earthwork motte, or mound, (its diminished shape visible today) which would have been surmounted by a timber keep. We do not know what happened to Deddington on Odo's fall: it was perhaps retained in the king's hands. The first substantial stone defences at the castle were most likely erected in the mid-12th century when Deddington was in the hands of William de Chesney, a member of what has been described as a 'minor knightly family' originally from a place called Quesnoy, near Caen. During the civil war of 1135-53 between King Stephen and the Empress Matilda, daughter of King Henry I and widow of the Holy Roman Emperor Henry V, William was a strong supporter of Stephen, for whom he served as military governor of Oxford and its neighbourhood. Deddington castle was

1. RJ Ivens, 'Deddington Castle, Oxfordshire, and the English Honour of Odo of Bayeux', *Oxoniensia*, vol 49, 102-15; Victoria County History, Oxfordshire, vol 11, 91-6; HM Colvin, *A History of Deddington, Oxfordshire,* (1963), 17-53.
2. Colvin, *History*, 19.

strengthened by a curtain wall 2m. thick around the inner bailey and by the construction of a stone keep. The castle was presumably garrisoned and used as a supply base but military action, when it came, was not here but near Oxford where in 1153 William was defeated by Matilda's son Henry of Anjou, later King Henry II.

To complete the story of the castle's buildings as revealed by archaeology, a gatehouse and wall tower were added c.1200. At its greatest state of development in the 13th century the castle included a chapel, a hall, a solar (living room above the hall), and several outbuildings. None of this is apparent today.[3]

Earthwork motte or mound (Chris Day)

In the post-war settlement, the Chesneys were allowed to retain some of their lands, including Deddington. The family must have been helped by the meteoric rise of William's brother Robert (d.1166) who was made Bishop of Lincoln (and thereby, incidentally, overlord of Banbury, which belonged to the bishops of Lincoln) the day after his ordination as a priest in December 1148.[4] Inheritance to the estates was later disputed, with the result that in 1190 Deddington was divided into three manors, a division that more or less persisted thereafter and had long-lasting implications for the place. That is not to say that ownership of the three manors was without dispute. This was an age of great political uncertainty and of shifting allegiances in which, as has been observed, 'the courtier of one reign might become the outlaw of the next'.[5] Thus, the Castle manor had passed into the hands of the de Dive family,[6] related to the Chesneys by marriage and, like them, originally from near Caen (Dives-sur-Mer). The Dives were strong supporters of Richard the Lionheart against his troublesome brother Prince John. Their right of ownership was disputed by the Murdac family, which had enjoyed the favour of Henry II but not that of Richard – a good example of the shifting fortunes referred to above. In an attempt to restore their fortunes Ralph Murdac supported Prince John when he rebelled against his brother the king in 1194. Had John's rebellion succeeded the Murdacs would have ousted the Dives. As it was, Ralph forfeited his estates. He compounded his error of political judgement by dying in 1198, before his patron John came to the throne. When, therefore, Guy de Dive fell from favour on John's accession in 1199, Ralph was revolving frustratedly in his grave. Guy's lands were returned to him in 1204, except, that is, for Deddington castle, which, in the words of the royal grant, 'we wish to keep in our own hands'. In other words, the castle's custody was a matter of royal concern. Not surprisingly, the king was reluctant to relinquish the castle until he could

3. EM Jope, 'Excavations at Deddington Castle, 1947', *Oxoniensia*, vols 11-12 (1946-7), 167-8; RJ Ivens, 'Deddington Castle: Summary of Excavations 1977-9', Council for British Archaeology *Newsletter*, No. 13 (1983), 34-41.
4. *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography (ODNB)*, under the name Robert de Chesney; Colvin, *History*, 19.
5. Colvin, *History*, p 22.
6. *ODNB*, de Dives family.

be sure of Dive's loyalty. That took another year and, no doubt, a substantial sweetener to the ever-needful royal treasury. Guy died in 1214, leaving behind an under-age heir: another financial opportunity for the Crown. King John exercised his feudal prerogative by marrying Guy's widow to Robert de Harcourt (of Stanton Harcourt) and by taking the castle back into his own hands, entrusting it to his old supporters and rivals of the Dives, the Murdac family.

Despite prolonged litigation after King John's death in 1216 none of the feuding families succeeded in making good its claim to another's estates, and the three manors descended separately. The manor of the Dive family, was known, unsurprisingly, as the Castle manor and the castle was still significant enough, in status if not in military substance, for successive lords of the manor to describe themselves as 'lord of Deddington castle'.

There seems to have been something about the lordship of Deddington castle that clouded political judgement. William de Breauté, who had possession during a minority in the Dive family in the early 13th century, died in rebellion against the Crown. John de Dive took up arms in support of Simon de Montfort against Henry III and was killed at the battle of Evesham in 1265. The Dives forfeited their lands but were allowed to recover them on payment of a substantial fine. Thereafter, the family seems to have kept its collective head down, but on its shoulders at least. They left the exciting life to the lords of the other Deddington manors such as Osbert Giffard, who in 1284 abducted a possibly not unwilling nun of Wilton and took her overseas, 'to the peril of her soul and the scandal of many'.[7]

There must have been considerable excitement in Deddington in June 1312 when Piers Gaveston, one of the most powerful men in the kingdom, was brought there as a prisoner. He was the son of a professional soldier from Gascony who had risen high in the favour of King Edward I. Brought up in the royal household, Piers Gaveston formed a deep and lifelong friendship with the young Prince of Wales, later King Edward II. Gaveston's rise to eminence owed much to the favour of his royal companion, though he was a man of great natural gifts. Singularly missing from those gifts were sensitivity and tact. He alienated the greatest barons in the land by his arrogance and tactlessness, to the point where they took up arms against him and the king. His end came when he was forced to surrender himself to the earls of Pembroke and Warwick in Yorkshire. He was escorted by Pembroke to London on the promise of a safe conduct. On 9 June they reached Deddington, where Gaveston was lodged under guard while Pembroke rode over to inspect his manor of Bampton, near Witney. Before dawn the next day the earl of Warwick appeared, seized Gaveston and took him back to his castle at Warwick. A hastily convened trial of sorts condemned Gaveston to death and he was beheaded on 19 June at Blacklow Hill, between Warwick and Leamington.[8] It is usually assumed that Gaveston was lodged at Deddington castle, but its state of disrepair at that time made it unsuitable and he was, in fact, lodged at Castle House, which stands immediately north of the church. Castle House is the rectory, and it is so named because it was usually leased with the Castle estate. Sadly, therefore, the event most closely associated in people's minds with the castle did not take place there at all.

Castle House (Charles Latham)

7. Colvin, *History*, 31-2.
8. *ODNB*, Piers Gaveston.

The castle was, as noted above, in a state of decay. Although described in 1277 as 'an old demolished castle', enough remained to be the focus of the only recorded warlike incident in its history when in 1281 Robert of Aston and his associates broke down the gates and doors.[9] It is impossible to be certain, but the Aston in question here is likely to be North Aston. Significantly, an earlier Robert of Aston, mentioned in the early to mid-13th century, was the husband of an Alice Chesney. The attack may have been yet another episode in the family dispute over the lordship of Deddington. Henry de Dive was recorded at his death in 1277 as holding of the king an 'old demolished castle'.

In 1310 the castle was described as 'debile', meaning weak, diminished, or worn out. It nevertheless retained a chamber and a dovecot, the chamber perhaps lodged in by a keeper.[10]

In 1377 the canons of Bicester Priory were given permission (for a price: 5 marks) to enter the castle and cart away '*omnes lapidos vocatos hewedstones murorum*', i.e. the dressed stone from the walls.[11] After which the rubble infill would soon disappear. It is tempting to assume that the stones are still to be found in Deddington village houses but dressed stone, timber, and roofing materials were valuable commodities. The castle's owners would have taken good care to protect their investment.

The archives of St George's Chapel, Windsor, contain many references in the 15th and 16th centuries to repairs at Castle House (the rectory) but, significantly, none to buildings at the castle.[12] When the antiquarian John Leland visited Deddington in the early 16th century, he noted merely that 'there hath been a castle at Deddington'.[13] Leland was travelling the country collecting towards what would have been, had he completed it, a mammoth history and gazetteer.

There may have been nothing above ground worthy of Leland's notice, but plenty remained below. It was noted in 1819 that people were digging for building materials at the east end of the site.[14] *Gardner's Oxfordshire Directory* of 1852 recorded that about ten years previously the keep had been excavated for materials. Even despite those, and possibly other, depredations, there remained stonework for 20th-century archaeologists to uncover.

The castle and urban development

Deddington was one of many new towns established in England and Wales in the late 12th and 13th centuries. No documentary evidence survives, such as a charter that relates specifically to the setting up of the borough, with a nice convenient date. Instead, other documents offer clues. If only one of the three manors in Deddington possessed burgage plots (the basic tenements in a town), it could be assumed that they were established after 1190, when the manor was divided into three. The fact that burgages are to be found on all three manors therefore argues that they were created before 1190. It is probably safe to place the borough's creation in the late 12th century.

What role might the castle, or rather its owners the Chesneys, have played? It was fairly common in the Anglo-Norman period for the creation of boroughs to be associated with castles, or with abbeys, and since Deddington had a castle it might seem at first sight to be such a case. But the close association of borough foundations with castles was less common in southern England than elsewhere – notably, of course, in Wales. Moreover, a glance at

9. *Calendar of Inquisitions Miscellaneous*, vol 1, 367.
10. *ODNB*, de Dive Family; *Calendar of Inquisitions Post Mortem*, vol 5,145; VCH Oxfordshire, vol 11, 90; Colvin, *History*, 14.
11. Colvin, *History*, p 14.
12. Deddington material can be found in St George's Chapel Archives, notably SGC IX, XIII, XV, XVI, XVII and XXXV.
13. Leland, *Itinerary*, ed. L Toulmin Smith, vol 2, 38.
14. JN Brewer, *Topographical and Historical Description of Oxfordshire*, p 465.

the map shows that Deddington castle and the marketplace have no apparent relationship – topographically, at least (see above).

Despite political instability in the late 12th century, the borough of Deddington was not planned with defence in mind. A new town did not need to be placed in the defensive lee of a castle. Deddington was a commercial development, taking advantage of its position at the junction of important through routes. The marketplace and burgage plots were laid out in relation to those routes rather than to the castle, which was less convenient for such a purpose. In effect, the marketplace replaced the castle gate as the focus of the community. In other towns (for example Windsor) the castle dominated the town. Not here. The unobservant traveller in the marketplace might not know that there was a castle here at all.

It might be supposed that, nevertheless, the town was set up to supply the needs of the great family and its retainers living at the castle. That is unlikely. Such households tended to get their supplies from their own estates, while luxury goods would be imported directly or bought at major regional markets like Oxford. There would undoubtedly be a demand for goods and services that would provide some stimulus. Deddington, however, fits better into that category of small boroughs which made a living providing goods and services not to a great household but to a rapidly expanding rural economy, supplying woollen and linen cloth, leather goods, iron goods, fish, salt, and tar. Only the annual fairs would attract more specialised traders travelling long distances. Deddington in the late 12th century was a composite place, combining rural and urban functions. When one of the Chesney family, presumably, laid out the marketplace and burgage plots he was taking advantage of, rather than creating trade.

What was in it for the lord? A new town was a speculation, and if it was successful it could be highly profitable to its owner. He got rents from burgage plots and market stalls, and he received tolls from traders coming in from outside. He also profited from control of weights and measures, and he received the fines imposed on offenders. Later on, he got additional fines and rents by allowing building encroachment in the marketplace. Such encroachments are seen in most market towns, and there are good examples in Deddington, notably the block presently occupied by shops and a restaurant, and Wychway House. They are usually regarded as originating in temporary market stalls that later became illegally permanent. It seems, though, that market owners often encouraged such buildings (albeit to the dismay of townspeople who would be inconvenienced by them) in return for additional rents.

What about the townspeople? They were in a privileged position. They got a tenement for a straight money rent, free of the burdensome and sometimes humiliating services owed by tenants of agricultural holdings. What is more, town tenements were freely transferable, offering a possible source of profit or of making provision for one's children. The initial tenant of a burgage plot always had the opportunity, if the town was successful, of subdividing his plot, perhaps covering his entire rent from what he charged his own sub-tenant. Many medieval burgesses, especially in a small place like Deddington, were also farmers. They therefore had good opportunities to make a profitable living, and they had a hedge against bad times. It is a false dichotomy to see a place as either rural or urban. It could be, as Deddington was, both.

St George's Chapel, Windsor

The Dive family's long association with Deddington came to an end in 1364 when they sold their estate to the Warden and Canons of St George's Chapel, newly founded by Edward III in Windsor Castle. The canons held it for 500 years until in 1866 the title passed to

the Ecclesiastical Commissioners. The Ecclesiastical Commissioners sold the site to Deddington parish council in 1945.[15]

Leadenporch House (Helen Forde)

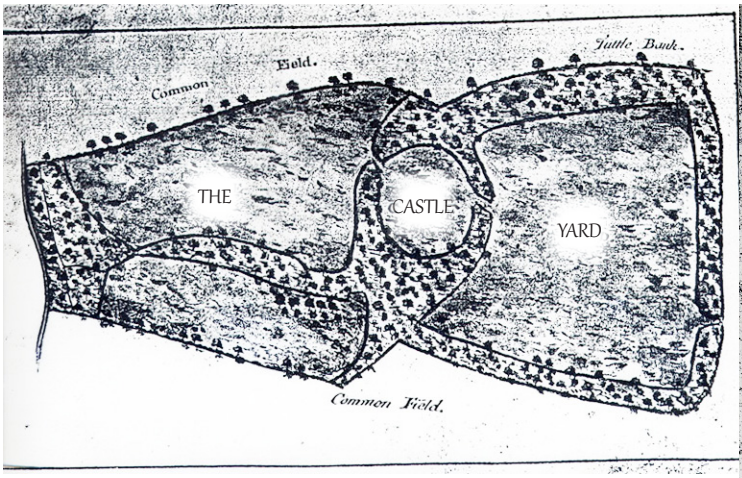
Under the canons' ownership, the castle site embarked on a new chapter; instead of being the decaying stronghold of a declining knightly family, intermittently involved with national politics and warfare, it became part of what in modern parlance might be called the property portfolio of a leading institutional body. The canons already owned the rectory estate at Deddington, and the castle with its associated land and houses was a logical purchase. In the 1460s or 1470s the canons added to their portfolio an ancient freehold estate of 80-100 acres called the Leadenporch, whose name derives from the house of that name still standing in New Street. The estate directly associated with the castle is described in a rental of 1557. It divided the estate in two. One, described as 'the castle and park', was an enclosed area comprising the castle and grounds, and including a pond, a fishery and a warren; the other part comprised 12 acres of pasture and 30 acres of meadow that contained a '*gurgite*', meaning a weir. That fish weir, as it is elsewhere called, lay in the area still known as The Fishers. The canons' insistence that their tenants regularly scour the ditches is one reason why they remain so impressive today.

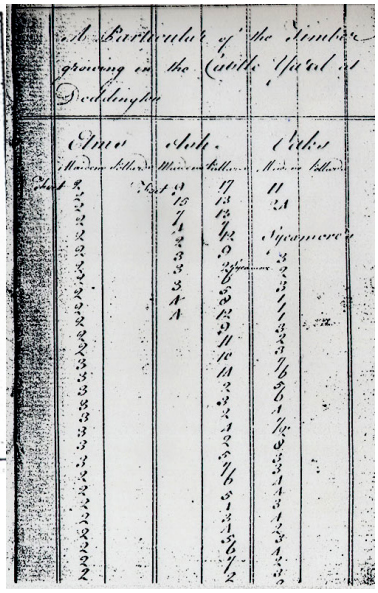
To the canons of St George's, all these things were an investment that was expected to show a return. In 1393 Richard II granted the canons the right to hold two annual fairs, each of three days' duration, starting on 15 July and 11 November. Intriguingly, the grant refers to the fairs as being held at the castle. If so, that would be an early, and possibly short-lived opening up of the grounds to the public. Later fairs were held in the marketplace.

The canons preferred to lease the estate rather than run it themselves. Documents relating to such an arrangement can be frustrating as little record is left of what a tenant was actually doing. There is enough evidence, however, to make clear the importance of the grounds for pasture and for timber. Fortunately, the canons took a particularly keen interest in their timber, a slow-growing crop that a careless or greedy tenant could easily ruin. Tenants were occasionally visited and required to account for missing trees, as when in the reign of Henry VIII, John Rogers was grilled about nine trees, 'the best in the lordship', worth 53s. 4d.

The importance of the timber is demonstrated in a small notebook of the late 18th century recording the number and height of each species growing in the 'castle yard'. Ash trees (231) were the most numerous, followed by elms (156), oaks (103), sycamores (66), and poplars (55). That is a startling number, and many more than there are now. There are no English elms, and no poplars; the stump of a single oak remains. There are plenty of ash, and horse chestnuts that were planted in the 19th century. Many of the trees recorded in the notebook were less than 3 feet high, suggesting that saplings were being planted densely and subsequently thinned out. It also suggests careful management rather than a site abandoned and left to grow over.

15. Colvin, *History*, 27; Deddington PC records, mss re purchase of castle grounds, 1945; letter to the author from the clerk of Deddington Parish Council, 25 April 2001.





Timber in Castle Yard, Deddington

The modern history of the castle site

In the early 19th century the castle grounds could be visited, though it was not permanently available for public recreation. In 1836 the vicar recorded in his diary that 'I went into the castle grounds to see their cold bath'. One would dearly like to know what and where that cold bath was. For events, special permission was needed. It was usually granted, if the cause was deemed worthy.

The gradual opening up of the grounds to the public illuminates aspects of changing patterns of social, especially sporting, life so characteristic of the period. Trade directories, newspapers and diaries reveal a growing range of activities being accommodated at the castle grounds in the 19th century. A horticultural society was established in 1838, its annual show occasionally housed in a marquee at the grounds where the gentry awarded prizes to cottagers. Cricket was being played there by 1838.[16] The Deddington Rifle Corps, formed in 1860, carried out perhaps the first military parades at the castle for 700 years.[17]

However, the activities hosted at the castle grounds were primarily for the better off. The cricket club, later expanded to include archery, was hardly inclusive, as its title of Gentlemen's Cricket Club made clear. Indeed, the club and the archery club employed a professional cricketer and groundsman who lived at the castle grounds lodge. The point was reinforced by the first building of any size to be erected there since the Middle Ages. In 1860 a large pavilion for the archery and cricket clubs was built in the south-west corner of what had been the outer bailey. A ball held there in August of that year was attended by 114 people.[18] According to one account, it was 'so large that it contained a spacious ballroom with musicians' gallery, cloakrooms and a refreshment room. The whole was covered with an immense roof of thatch. Inside the ballroom walls were hung with glistening chintz in a floral design and at intervals gas jets were arranged around in star-like clusters. Dance music was provided by a band from Oxford, invariably including a harp. The society gatherings there were brilliant and

16. G Smedley-Stevenson, ed, *Early Victorian Squarson: the Diaries of William Cotton Risley 1835-48*, (BHS 29) 2007, 37-8, and *passim; ibid.*1849-69, (BHS 32), 2012, 482; *JOJ*, 29 August 1863.
17. *North Oxon Monthly Times*, 5 Jan 1860.
18. Smedley-Stevenson, *Early Victorian Squarson* (BHS 32), 2012, 444-5, 451, 453.

exclusively 'County'. Deddington could have no share in those functions except such satisfaction as might be obtained from gazing upon the smart equipages which went towards the entrance gate full, returning empty to park in the marketplace'.[19] Some indication is given by the prosecution of a labourer in 1865 for the theft of champagne from a party there.[20]

Thatched Pavilion (photographer unknown)

Jackson's Oxford Journal in August 1863 recorded celebrations at the castle grounds for the anniversary of the Deddington Reading Room. A game of cricket was played at 11.00am – apparently behind closed gates. The grounds were only opened to the public at 2.00pm. Tea and cake were served to c.400 people in the marquee. A band played. Children enjoyed games. The Journal correspondent recorded who was there: 'we noticed on the ground and at the tea tables the Revd WC Risley and Mrs Risley…', and there follows a list of the great and the good of the neighbourhood.[21] Either no-one else was there or, more likely, they were not considered worthy of record. In much of this the goings-on at the castle grounds were, of course, the world writ small.

Organised sport in this period had, under the influence of the public schools, been taken up with enthusiasm by the middle classes. Rural labourers might be admitted and even encouraged to join in, once the middle classes realised that sport could be equated with virtue and leisure activities with improvement. In Deddington, as elsewhere, one can observe this evangelical and teetotal ethos in a plethora of voluntary associations: the Reading Room and Lending Library in 1858, a Penny Bank in 1859, a Sunday School Shoe Club in 1861, a Choral Society in 1862, a short-lived coffee tavern in 1881, and so on.[22] As Howard Colvin has noted, Deddington in the reign of Victoria was transformed 'from the town where the people proverbially 'sold the bells to buy gin' into as sober and self-respecting a community as any in Oxfordshire'.[23]

Many Deddingtonians, however, lacked the time for leisure activities or the money to pay for them. In sport, specifically, the formation of a football club in 1886 may be seen as heralding a change.[24] The club played its matches at the castle grounds, and it is perhaps not too fanciful to see this as the start of opening up the site to the whole parish. In 1911 the *Post Office Directory* announced that the castle grounds are 'used as a parochial recreation ground, managed by a syndicate.' In 1912 a rifle club was set up, using the outer bailey for a firing range, firing into the embankment. The club was disbanded in 1914.

Mrs Mary Vane Turner lamented in 1933 that the only uses to which the grounds were put were a faltering flower show, a bowling green, and football. Cricket had moved elsewhere. The great pavilion had been demolished not long before on account of the cost of repairing its thatch. She was especially concerned at the lack of provision for children's

19. M Vane Turner, *The Story of Deddington* (Deddington W.I. 1933, reprint Deddington & District Hist. Soc. 2008), 73.
20. Smedley-Stevenson, *Early Victorian Squarson,* (BHS 32), 423 n 8.
21. *JOJ*, 1 August 1863.
22. *VCH Oxfordshire* vol 11, 90.
23. Colvin, *History*, 79.
24. Bodleian Library G.A. Oxon. 4o 78, 237.

games.[25] The purchase of the castle grounds by the parish council in 1945 led eventually to the provision of the facilities that Mrs Vane Turner had demanded. A playground was laid out, and changing rooms were built for the footballers. The Rifle Club was reborn in 1945, formed from the disbanded Home Guard. Happily, they replaced the practice of firing across the range with a purpose-built range comprising three Nissen huts bought from Enstone aerodrome. The site was levelled using a bulldozer. It is unlikely that any archaeologist was invited to keep a watching brief. The Deddington Scout Troop took over the building in 1980, and it was demolished in 1982.

The opening of the Windmill Centre off the Hempton road in 1987, with its playing fields and facilities, transferred organised recreation from the eastern to the western edge of the village. The castle grounds remain open to all and are a highly valued local amenity. The issues that arouse strongest feelings now are probably those relating to planning and the likely impact of housing development and the motor car, those quintessentially modern concerns. But that is as it should be; the castle has always reflected aspects of national as well as local life. Any rounded picture of English history must take account of the Deddington castles as well as the Windsors.

Castle Site in the Snow (Chris Day)

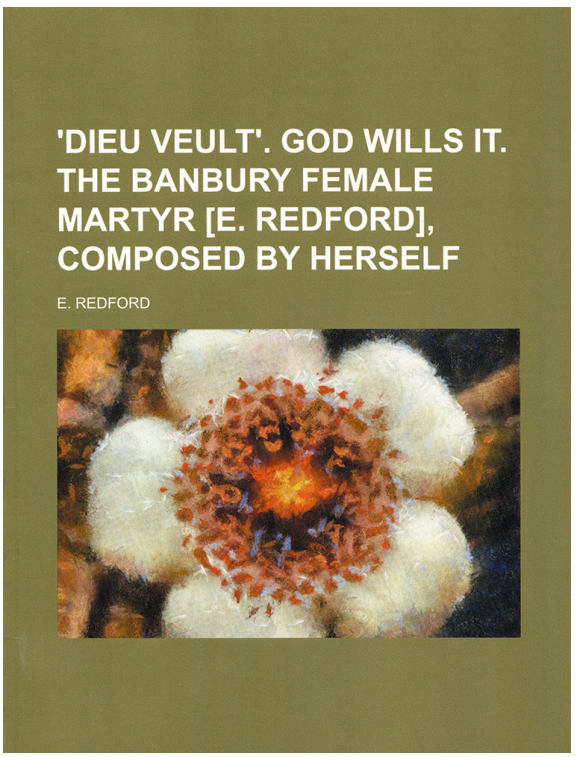
This article is based on original research by Chris Day. It has been impossible to track down some of the original illustrations or references to published sources as he did not record them in his notes. Banbury Historical Society is grateful to Alison Day for permission to print both this article and that on Thomas Walker in his memory, together with some of his photographs.

25. Vane Turner, *The Story of Deddington*, 74.

THE BANBURY FEMALE MARTYR

George Hughes

A recent search on the internet found interesting links to Banbury surrounding a certain Elizabeth Redford. Four references related to *Cake & Cockhorse;* the first, in 1966 in which *'Mrs. Redford, a ropemaker of Back Lane'* described how in the 1850s her 16-year-old daughter went into service at a Rectory near Banbury, was seduced by the rector and subsequently bore an illegitimate child.[1] The second, in 1975 related that *'Much of the detail about of the Walls and the Grimsbury chapel comes from Mrs. Redford (probably a nom de plume): The Banbury Female Martyr, a rare and curious pamphlet written by an employee of the Walls'*.[2] The third, in 1982 stated that much of the available information on *'the Disciples of Christ comes from a strange paranoic autobiography, 'The Banbury Female Martyr' written by one Elizabeth Redford about 1863'*.[3] It also explained that the Walls were in fact Thomas Wall and Ebenezer Wall, owners of a rope making business in Castle Street, the business having been established by John Wall of Burford and, following his death in 1847, left to Thomas and Ebenezer, two of the children of his half-brother James Wall.



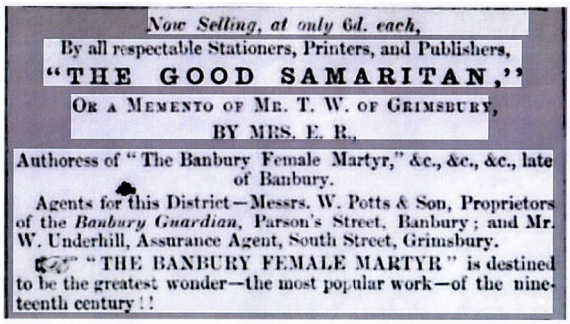
Cover of Dieu Veult (General Books LLC)

Finally, in 2003 Barrie Trinder clarified that *'Elizabeth Redford, née Eustace, was born at West Hanney, on 27 April 1816, and went into domestic service in her early teens. In the 1830s she married a sack-maker, and herself began to work for a sack-making business in Wantage, where she became an active Wesleyan Methodist about 1840. She was the mother of twelve children, only three of whom survived beyond infancy. Her husband broke his leg when drunk which forced the family to apply for parish relief, and in the hope of getting him away from temptations in Wantage she took a job about 1851 with the brothers Ebenezer and Thomas Wall, makers of ropes and sacking in Castle Street, Banbury'*.[4] Where could a copy of the autobiography be found? The answer was the Rare Book Club[5] – all quotations listed below are taken from Elizabeth Redford's book.

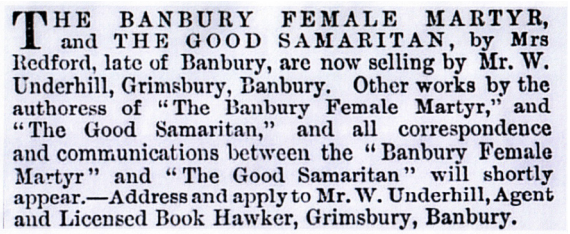
The autobiography provides a first-hand picture of her life some 200 years ago, its high points, but mostly its grinding poverty, its associated ills, the perils of pregnancy and childcare and of dissolute

1. *C&CH* 1966 vol 3 no 6, 121.
2. Barrie Trinder, 'Religious sects in 19th Century Banbury', *C&CH* 1975, vol 6 no 4,78-80.
3. *C&CH* 1982 vol 8 no 8, 207-221.
4. Barrie Trinder, 'Memoirs of the 19th and 20th Centuries' *C&CH* 2003, vol 15 no 9, 287-303.
5. *Dieu Veult. God Wills It. The Banbury Female Martyr (E Redford) composed by herself* (RareBooksClub.com, 2012).

husbands. The publisher's note in the front cover of her book highlighted that Elizabeth's story *'was composed by a mother who could not write, and written by a daughter under ten years of age in an almost incredibly short period of time – less than ten weeks.*' An advertisement in the *Banbury Guardian*, 1863[6] stated excitedly that *'The Banbury Female Martyr is destined to be the greatest wonder – the most popular work of the 19th century'* – perhaps a slight exaggeration.


Now Selling, at only 6d. each,
By all respectable Stationers, Printers, and Publishers,
"THE GOOD SAMARITAN,"
OR A MEMENTO OF MR. T. W. OF GRIMSBURY,
BY MRS. E. R.,
Authoress of "The Banbury Female Martyr," &c., &c., &c., late of Banbury.
Agents for this District—Messrs. W. Potts & Son, Proprietors of the *Banbury Guardian*, Parson's Street, Banbury; and Mr. W. Underhill, Assurance Agent, South Street, Grimsbury.
☞ "THE BANBURY FEMALE MARTYR" is destined to be the greatest wonder—the most popular work—of the nineteenth century!!

Banbury Guardian *1 October 1863*


THE BANBURY FEMALE MARTYR, and THE GOOD SAMARITAN, by Mrs Redford, late of Banbury, are now selling by Mr. W. Underhill, Grimsbury, Banbury. Other works by the authoress of "The Banbury Female Martyr," and "The Good Samaritan," and all correspondence and communications between the "Banbury Female Martyr" and "The Good Samaritan" will shortly appear.—Address and apply to Mr. W. Underhill, Agent and Licensed Book Hawker, Grimsbury, Banbury.

Oxford Times *8 October 1864*

It seems probable that William Potts, grandson of his namesake who founded the *Banbury Guardian* in 1838, must have taken a leading hand in having Elizabeth Redford's script published. Someone must have converted the very poor original script into recognised English text, had it printed, proof read it and added the introduction and preface to make it into an interesting and compelling read. The book was still being offered for sale a year later in the *Oxford Times*.[7] William Potts is again referenced along with a Mr W Underhill, a licensed book hawker of Grimsbury – this is William Underhill, who by trade was a boot and shoemaker of Middleton Road, Grimsbury.[8] Elizabeth's book is sometimes a difficult read, due in part to her predilection for the highly religious prose of the times. Very few of the cast of characters are mentioned specifically by name, their initials only being given, which adds to its complexity. With the judicious use of censuses, parish records and local newspapers most of the characters cited have been traced with their real names, introduced to bring Elizabeth's narrative to life.

Many points need amplification–Elizabeth's husband John Redford had been married previously, leaving Elizabeth to take on a stepson, yet another John Redford. At the end of her first year of marriage Elizabeth had her first child, William Redford, who was born in 1834. However, William contracted small pox at the age of 11 months from his elder step-brother – whilst John survived, William succumbed. The mention of her husband's broken leg during a drunken bout[9] warrants more explanation– it occurred in 1849 and left an indelible impact on Elizabeth. John Redford worked as a sack weaver for a well-respected sacking manufacturer in Wantage, Thomas Arding. His son William Arding often took John out on sales trips to local markets that moved afterwards to the local hostelry to satisfy, as Elizabeth put it *'his besetting sin – drink'*. This time William Arding, who was tooling the trap, was more intoxicated than her husband, leading to the accident which left John with a broken leg – this startling news being brought to her door by Elizabeth Arding, daughter of their employer, at 11 o'clock at night. It was some time before John could be seen by a doctor, a Mr B, who found that the leg was seriously swollen, being broken in two places and had to be left a couple days before it could be set properly. Elizabeth's main concern was that her breadwinner was now laid up and that the direct cause of her

6. *Banbury Guardian*, 1 October 1863.
7. *Oxford Times*, 8 October 1864.
8. The National Archives (TNA), RG 9/920f 97 p 3; GSU roll: 542721.
9. *Dieu Veult*, 6.

financial discomfiture was the drunkenness of her employer's son,who was the apple of his mother's eye. She let Mrs Arding know the strength of her feelings saying to her *'Look at me and my family, a husband brought home with a broken leg and me not long since having buried two children'*. Not only did she have to find the money for the doctor's bill but also the household bills, including rent for their small cottage. At this time, she managed to secure 5 shillings a week by applying to the Board of Guardians of the Poor Law Union which helped. Thomas Arding, her employer, against the will of his miserable and parsimonious wife, being a kind man and carrying the guilt of his son's actions, did his best for Elizabeth by bringing her essentials and giving the family a few shillings for the time that John was laid up – some 14 weeks. Although Elizabeth managed well her fortitude plummeted when a County Court summons was brought to her door for the doctor's bill.

The total of Elizabeth's bill from the doctor would probably have been about 5 guineas made up of call out fees, the original visit to review the state of the leg, a return days later when the swelling had reduced to set the two breaks, plus pain relief for the patient. The consequence was that she became indebted to her landlord for £1 16s 8d for outstanding rent during the period of her husband's incapacity – which equates to some 2s 6d a week. The size of the bill is therefore the best part of a year's rent, a blow of immeasurable proportions to Elizabeth's finances. In her usual fashion Elizabeth simply referred to the doctor as Mr B. Local records for Wantage[10] show that he was most probably Walter Rice Howell Barker, who served as the medical representative for the workhouse in the Wantage area for some forty-five years. It appears from Elizabeth's story, that Mr Barker was influenced in issuing his court summons by the spiteful Mrs Arding who told him that Elizabeth earned a wage between 12 and 14 shillings a week and was well able to pay him. Suffice it to say that Mr Barker was successful in his suit as the Judge ordered Elizabeth to pay off the bill to him at the rate of 2 shillings per month. Although no record of the court case exists to confirm it,[11] Elizabeth's description of leaving the court is uplifting;*'when we came out the people crowded round the doors to cheer me, for every payment I had the money given.....nothing shall prosper that is done through envy'.*[12]

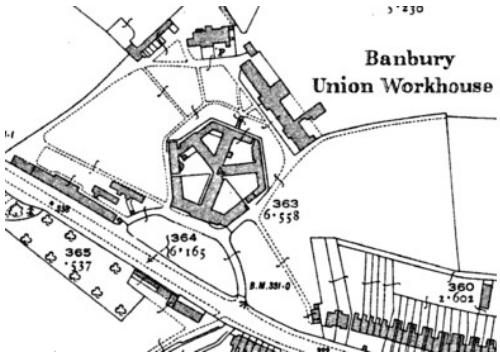
The other surviving child of John and Elizabeth, Sarah Ann Redford, born in 1836, seems to have been a bit of a handful from the start. Elizabeth noted her birth with *'my daughter Sarah was born, which at the time caused me great joy – but sorrow is mixed with joy. I soon found that the rose is not without the thorn'*. Early on, she suffered a serious burn to her leg followed a few years later by contracting a severe case of small pox. Sarah, however, survived childhood and the next reference to her in Elizabeth's story is when she was engaged as a lady's maid in Evenley, Northamptonshire around the time that Elizabeth and her family moved from Wantage to Banbury – about April 1852. The service that Sarah Ann entered was as a lady's maid to a Miss P, Bertha Proctor, who lived at Rectory Farm, Evenley with her father Samuel Cheatle Proctor, a farmer of some 600 acres. Rectory Farm was located next door to the Rectory which belonged to The Hon Phillip Sydney Pierrepont, a member of the landed gentry who resided at Evenley Hall.

About two weeks later Elizabeth was summoned to Evenley to discuss the contents of a letter she had received, written by Mr Proctor's cook. The cook outlined in her missive *'I have seen enough to convince me that your daughter is, or will be ruined forever'*. Elizabeth tackled Mr Proctor face to face saying *'I mean to take my daughter away from here and have you well punished, for I understand you are acting very inconsistent towards her ... you a man of sixty-two years of age and my daughter only sixteen'*. Parish records show that Samuel Cheatle

10. Hazel Brown, 'Berkshire Old & New No. 27', *Journal of Berkshire Local History Association*,(2010), 20.
11. Berkshire Records Office confirmed that County Court records have not survived for this period.
12. *Dieu Veult*, 7.

Proctor was born in Hints, Staffordshire in 1792 and was therefore 62 in 1854.The upshot was that Samuel Proctor dismissed his cook who,with her parting words, said to Mr Proctor *'Thank you, I consider it quite a disgrace to remain in your house'*.[13] Sarah Ann went to London, with Samuel Proctor's help where she eventually had his child, a little girl called Harriett Redford. In her book Elizabeth noted *' At that time I had her little girl, belonging to that wicked deep old man. I kept the child myself and was her mother for four years'*. Harriett was listed as the 4-year-old daughter of John Redford and Elizabeth in the 1861 Census[14] but 10 years later she was listed as a pauper inmate in the Union Workhouse in Warwick Road.[15]

Elizabeth Redford departed back to Banbury, on the train, to seek legal advice from Mr L, a solicitor; he was John B. Looker with offices in Parsons Street. Although very sympathetic, he could offer no solution to Elizabeth's predicament as Sarah Ann was, by taking Mr Proctor's advice and money, not helping her case. Looker was recorded in the book as saying to Elizabeth *'I have no doubt according to your statement but what Mr P is guilty'*. Samuel Proctor being a man of the world and vastly more experienced and litigious in nature, did



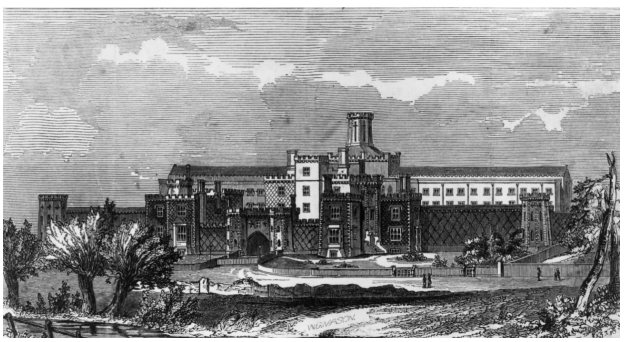
Banbury Union Workhouse, Warwick Road, Banbury (source unknown)

not let the grass grow under his feet; he instructed his solicitor, a Mr S of Buckingham, to make Elizabeth an offer of 4 shillings a week to look after the child – this was Henry Small, a solicitor based at the Town Hall, Buckingham[16] with whom Samuel Proctor had had a long association. Elizabeth gave Samuel Proctor his marching orders saying in no uncertain terms *'I should like to have him thrown into the canal and ducked ... I do not want his money at all'*.[17] Henry Small reported Elizabeth's negativity back to Proctor which led to Mr Small setting up a meeting with Sarah Ann and a 'gentleman' friend (whom she had met in London after her confinement), to offer, unbeknown to Elizabeth, a one-off payment of £20 from Samuel Proctor to settle the affair. Sarah Ann was beginning to show her true colours and it seems possible that Samuel Proctor was an old pawn in the plans of a flattering and scheming young woman blessed with good looks and even better dress sense, but it has to be said, with fairly loose morals.

At this point Sarah Ann announced that she was to be married to her respectable 'gentleman' friend, simply recorded in Elizabeth's narrative as a Mr H of Reading. But she was in trouble yet again; not only did Mr H take all the money she had received to settle

13. *Ibid*, 13.
14. TNA RG 9/918, f 104, p 20; GSU roll; 542721.
15. TNA RG10/1466, f134, p 1; GSU roll; 838789.
16. *Buckingham Advertiser & Free Press*, 20 October 1855.
17. *Dieu Veult*, 15.

the whole sordid affair, he also took all her clothes, left her alone and penniless at Reading Station and disappeared with his wife! As Elizabeth noted she was *'surprised to find that this respectable man was the greatest rogue of the three!'*. Nine months after being jilted by Mr H, Sarah Ann had yet another illegitimate child – this time a boy named George Redford, who, in the 1861 Census,[18] was living as a boarder with Henry Millin and his wife Martha Millin in Fish Street, Banbury. By now back in Banbury, the loose-moralled Sarah Ann found yet another victim. A neighbour's son in Back Lane began to pay his addresses to her and promised that if her mother kept Harriett, the daughter of old Samuel Proctor, he would take the little boy George, son of Mr H, as his own and never tell of all that had passed. The plan came to fruition with Sarah Ann marrying Thomas Gardner in May 1859,[19] Thomas being the eldest son of, as Elizabeth called him, *'BG, a local bailiff'*. This was William Gardner, who was indeed a County Court bailiff and, if Elizabeth is to be believed, not a very pleasant character as she noted *'he is never better pleased than when he is in a person's house in charge of their furniture'*. It has to be said that Sarah Ann and Thomas' marriage was not a happy one and Elizabeth commented in her narrative that *'he treated her with the greatest cruelty ... he was, and still is, a confirmed drunkard and one of the most unnatural of all human beings'*.[20]



Reading Gaol (Getty Images)

At this point, January 1862, David Burgess, a draper and a most unscrupulous character, entered the scene when Sarah's husband, Thomas Gardner, was summoned to the County Court in Banbury to answer a claim for £1 14s 9d from a certain Mr Burgess for articles of dress supplied to the defendant's wife.[21] The report is interesting as it painted a telling picture of how people lived and described the character of the new Mrs. Gardner as *'a handsome, lady-like woman, but for all that, she was a very bad woman – a bad lying woman*'. It also contained a testimony from the bailiff, William Gardner, who spoke of *'the well-known character of his amiable daughter-in-law'* and dropped a bombshell by revealing that she was currently locked up in Reading gaol on a charge of swindling.

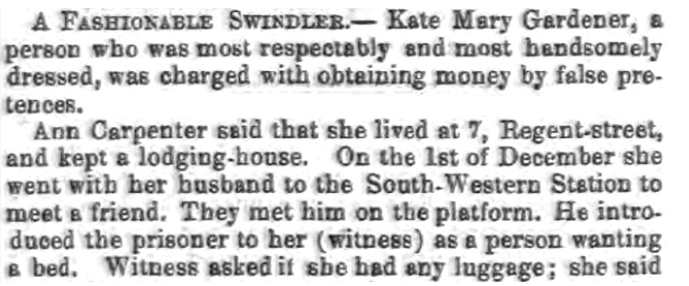
Burgess was, in fact, a peripatetic draper known as a tally man; in basic terms a man who exhibited goods in local villages, acting as an agent and paid a commission, not on the cost of the item but the total amount charged. He supplied persons, usually married women, with goods on tally that were paid for over a set period of time. Local newspapers recorded literally hundreds of cases where the hard-working men from Oxfordshire, Bedfordshire, Northamptonshire and Buckinghamshire were taken to court by him for non-payment of goods received – on one day in 1861 at least 20 summonses were taken out by Burgess against very poor people right across Buckinghamshire. He was challenged in the Gardner case when Thomas went back to court in April 1862 arguing that he himself was only responsible for any costs while he had been living with his extravagant wife.[22]

18. TNA RG9/919, f 99 p 1; GSU roll; 542721.
19. *Oxfordshire Family History Society* Anglican Parish Registers PAR21/1/R317.
20. *Dieu Veult*, 16.
21. *BG*, 16 January 1862.
22. *BG*, 17 April 1862.

Francis Francillon, a well-known Banbury solicitor, commented *'on the manner in which the plaintiff was in the habit of doing business, taking his accounts by such small sums as it might be supposed married women could manage to crib from their husbands'*.[23] The presiding Judge agreed, commenting *' that Burgess did not always know when women owed him money and that he had between three and four thousand of them on his books'* and in his summing up gave judgement for the plaintiff saying *'that he hoped that traders of Mr Burgesses description would be cautious how they went round the country persuading married women to buy articles which were not necessary in the absence of their husbands. The result of their not being so, would be that the law effecting the responsibility of the husbands for wives' debts would have to be changed'*.

This did little to curb the excesses of David Burgess and he continued to ply his contemptible trade well into the late 1870s.[24] The victim had no way of knowing how extortionate the cost of her goods was as she was mostly buying goods without having seen them –and the actual article itself, when it was delivered, might well not meet expectations.[25] David Burgess made a really good living as a tally man, with nearly all the court cases going in his favour and with this judicial backing countless people were paying their bills, and his court fees, at 2 shillings a month.

What in the meantime had happened to Sarah Ann Gardner who, at Thomas' court case, was noted as being locked up in Reading gaol? Elizabeth Redford wrote, when visiting Sarah Ann,*'I went on the Monday morning; it was the day on which Prince Albert was buried at Windsor'*. No sooner had she arrived and sat down than Sarah Ann urgently asked *'Mother, have you got any money?'*; at this point there was a knock at the door and a policeman came in and arrested Sarah Ann for deception. It transpired that Sarah Ann had been introduced to a Mrs C at Reading Station, as the wife of a 'Major Penley', recently arrived from India – an interesting fabrication of her imagination. Sarah Ann had said she was seeking a room for a few days whilst she conducted business with her solicitor,and was to receive £500 (nearly £30,000 in today's money) that he was holding in her name.



A FASHIONABLE SWINDLER.— Kate Mary Gardener, a person who was most respectably and most handsomely dressed, was charged with obtaining money by false pretences.

Ann Carpenter said that she lived at 7, Regent-street, and kept a lodging-house. On the 1st of December she went with her husband to the South-Western Station to meet a friend. They met him on the platform. He introduced the prisoner to her (witness) as a person wanting a bed. Witness asked if she had any luggage; she said

Berkshire Chronicle, *28 December 1861*

Mrs C was in fact Ann Carpenter, the wife of Henry Carpenter, a boarding house keeper in Reading who had been gullible enough to go shopping with the defendant and had purchased several dresses and other fripperies for her, to the value of £7 6s 9d. The upshot of this spending spree was a court case, held at Reading County Court in January 1862,[26] entitled by the local newspaper '*A Fashionable Swindler*', where all of Kate Mary's dirty washing was aired for public consumption. She was described as *'a person who was most respectably and most handsomely dressed, was charged with obtaining money by false pretences'* – for some reason she was charged under the name Kate Mary rather than her baptismal name. She was found guilty of all charges and sentenced to 3 months imprisonment, with hard labour, at Reading Gaol.

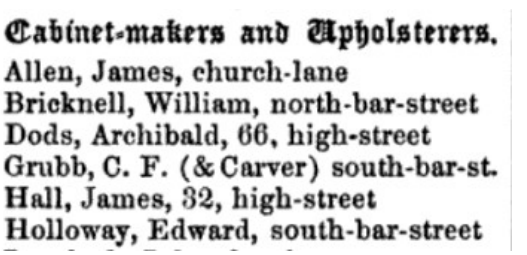
23. *BG*, 17 April 1862.
24. *Post Office Directory*, 1877; David Burgess, draper of Mount Pleasant, Stony Stratford.
25. Hamish W Frazer, *The Coming of the Mass Market 1850-1914* (The Macmillan Press, 1981), 89.
26. *Berkshire Chronicle*, 28 December 1861.

Elizabeth's relationship with the Wall Brothers of Banbury is also part of the story. Ebenezer Wall, suffered deeply when his mother died in 1842. She was buried in the graveyard attached to the Baptists' Chapel in Bridge Street, Banbury where Ebenezer had been a trustee[27] leaving him prey to all sorts of negative feelings. He went on to visit London where he met Mary Fisher, the daughter of James Fisher, builder of Great Winchester Street, London whom he married in the Baptist Chapel, New Road, Oxford.[28] Mary died in 1849 and was buried close by Ebenezer's mother at the Baptist Chapel,[29] leaving Ebenezer a widower, though he soon remarried, this time to Mary's younger sister Susannah Fisher in April 1850 in London.[30]

Elizabeth wrote that *'soon after we had to seek a house and very difficult it was to find one, there were so few houses vacant ... we had not been in Banbury long when we began to see, as well as feel, that we had in some instances bettered our circumstances yet in others we had not done so'.*[31] As far as can be ascertained Elizabeth and her family moved to Banbury in early spring 1852. At the same time a house became vacant right next to that of Ebenezer Wall in Back Lane. The tenant, a John Hooper, a weaver working for Ebenezer in his rope factory[32] was taken up and charged with robbing his employer and sent to prison in April 1852.[33] This allowed Elizabeth *'to live in the same house that he left that was right next to the spinning room'*. Is this a coincidence or had this man been manipulated and sacrificed by Ebenezer Wall to make room for his new larger work force? From her initial dealings with the Wall family Elizabeth's narrative notes that there arose a deep-seated jealousy and a vindictiveness on the part of Ebenezer – *'no woman has ever had to endure what I have from such a master as Mr EW, everything I did in connection with the trade he declared to be all self on my part, so it was for the more work I did the more I earned and it always grieved him very much'*.[34] The inference must be that Ebenezer Wall did not want Elizabeth and her family to better themselves, but to know their place and not get above their station.

Elizabeth also quoted the case of a *'Mr EH, who was a regular customer at the Rope Yard shop and had been known to Ebenezer Wall for several years', and added that 'one more nasty action of his I wish to name because he could not get his own ends served, he tried in every possible way to do me injury'*. The action surrounded the provision of three quality bed sackings to Mr EH, who was Edward Holloway, a cabinet maker of Banbury.[35]

It appears that he paid Elizabeth cash for the sackings upon delivery, late on a Saturday night. He needed them for the refurbishment of some flock beds. Elizabeth, calling round to see him the next day to find out if he had used them, found to her consternation *'that the nasty dirty little fellow Ebenezer Wall had been up to Mr H and to several other tradesmen in the town, and tried with all his might to make out that I intended to keep the money for the three bed sackings because I did not go down after*


Cabinet-makers and Upholsterers.
Allen, James, church-lane
Bricknell, William, north-bar-street
Dods, Archibald, 66, high-street
Grubb, C. F. (& Carver) south-bar-st.
Hall, James, 32, high-street
Holloway, Edward, south-bar-street

The Banbury Almanac and Local Directory, *1856*

27. *C&CH* vol 6 no 4, 79.
28. *BG*, 12 September 1844.
29. *C&CH* vol 6 no 4, 79.
30. *England & Wales, Civil Registration Marriage Index*, 1837-1915 City of London vol 2, 215. https://www,familysearch.org/search/collections
31. *Dieu Veult*, 11.
32. TNA HO 107/1734 f502 p15; GSU roll; 193644.
33. *BG*,4 March 1852.
34. *Dieu Veult*, 11.
35. *The Banbury Almanac and Local Directory 1856* (William Potts & Son).

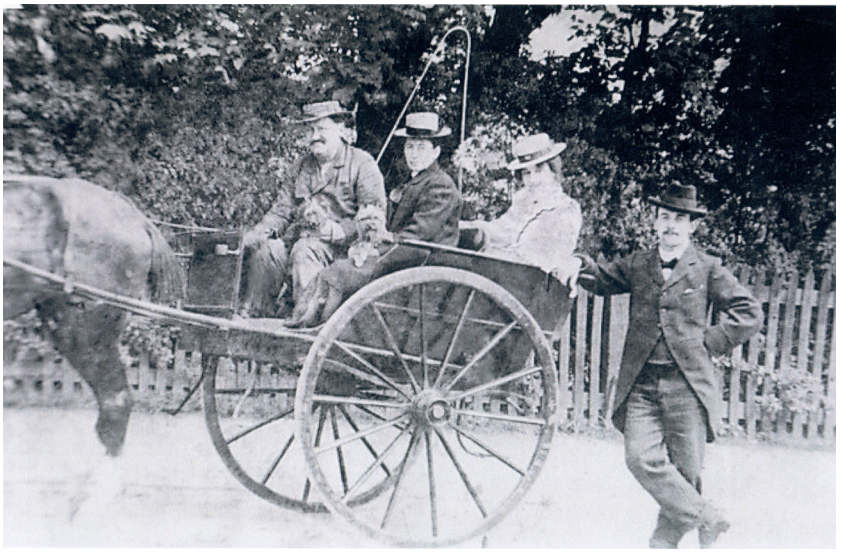
10 o'clock to pay the money in'.[36] The disharmony went back to a letter, quite libellous in nature, from MAW to Mr TW dated 27 September 1860; the letter, reproduced in full in the book along with many others, is from Mary Ann Wall of Burford, the eldest sister of Ebenezer Wall. It appears that Ebenezer had visited Burford to see his sister and poisoned her mind against Elizabeth Redford. Mary Ann Wall recounted in her letter to her brother Thomas, with all the venom and vitriol she could muster *'Ebenezer has told us that you are unduly intimate with your work woman Mrs Redford; he says she has been entrusted to sell goods for you, but has never paid for them ... your tea drinkings with her are very wrong in you as her master, you thereby put yourself in a wrong position'*.[37]

Clearly, Elizabeth was *persona non grata* with all the Wall family, and their spouses, apart perhaps from the much-maligned Thomas Wall, who, being a kindred spirit in God, as Elizabeth wrote *'was like The Good Samaritan, he did not stop to enquire into the matter, but did his duty as a Christian master'*. She also mentioned that her husband John Redford was obviously listening closely to the jungle telegraph and its rumours as, after an altercation with him, she recorded *'a few days before I left home, my husband threatened my life, and called me your brother's harlot and all sorts of nasty names, which no prudent woman would stand'*.[38] It is clear from all the references above that the situation with Elizabeth was only one of the difficulties that had arisen between the brothers, others including Thomas' lack of input into their business, his generosity to the poor and his obsession with religion which Elizabeth described, relating '*how Mr Thomas Wall spends his time. He does not go into the factory after breakfast and family prayer ... he begins the day with God, continues with him and walks and lives with him'*.[39]

Eventually, there was a parting of the ways between the brothers with Ebenezer expanding his business in 1864 by buying out Frederick Jelleyman of Bloxham, maker of rope, twine, rick and wagon cloth.[40] Thomas Wall continued with his 'Good Samaritan' ways, helping the poor people of Banbury as best he could until his death in Adderbury in 1888 aged 67 years – his will was valued at just £273 (worth slightly over £18,000 today).[41] Brother Ebenezer on the other hand thrived in business, and lived up to his namesake Mr Scrooge, dying in Banbury in 1910 at the ripe old age of 90 years. In his will he left the sum of £25,437 0s 2d (slightly under £2 million today).[42] It must be noted here that as no further records of Elizabeth Redford can be found, it has to be assumed that she died around 1864; where she rests remains unknown to this day.

Finally, what of the scribe of the book, Elizabeth's youngest child, Elizabeth Ann Redford, aged just 10 years? As her mother Elizabeth wrote in 1863 *'the poor child, she has seen more within the last three years than I hope she will ever witness during her whole life, whether it be long or short, I trust that He who hath watched over her mother, will be her God and her guide'*.[43] Where did Elizabeth Ann learn to write so well? Elizabeth clarified this point, outlining that she left her husband for a time and took up residence in Bristol from where many of her letters to Ebenezer Wall and his family are written to *'escape as a bird from the snare of a fowler, with my little girl who is now writing this book ... I put my little girl out to school with a friend living in Croughton in Northamptonshire'*.[44] As luck would have it for Elizabeth Ann, the school she was sent to was run by the Reverend John Lister, a guiding light in Victorian

36. *Dieu Veult*, 25.
37. *Ibid*,18.
38. *Ibid*, 28.
39. *Ibid*, 17.
40. *BG*, 25 August 1864.
41. National Probate Calendar (Index of Wills) 1858-1995 – Thomas Wall, probate dated 16 February 1889.
42. National Probate Calendar (Index of Wills) 1858-1995 – Ebenezer Wall, probate dated 14 May 1910.
43. *Dieu Veult*, 5.
44. *Ibid*, 21.



Elizabeth Ann, her husband Thomas Webb and her daughter and son-in-law (by kind permission of Morgraine Eddington, 3xgreat grand-daughter)

education. He was the Rector of Croughton from 1848, until his death in 1891. John Lister was the subject of an in-depth study by AJB Hawkins, an ex-headmaster of the school, who extolled his work with the poor.[45]

Elizabeth Ann, after her fairly torrid early life, married Thomas Webb of Leeds, a merchant and traveller in fine arts. She lived a long life, which would have pleased her mother, dying in 1938 at the age of 85 years and she is buried in Hunslet, a couple of miles from Leeds City Centre.[46]

45. AJB Hawkins, 'The Rev. John Lister (1848-1891)' *C&CH* vol 13, no 6, 166-178.
46. https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/226892917/elizabeth-ann-webb

EMPRESS ELISABETH OF AUSTRIA GOES HUNTING AT ASTROP

Roger Neill

Some recent work on the decline and fall of the Austro-Hungarian Empire brought back recollections of the day that the Empress Elisabeth of Austria went hunting at Astrop in South Northamptonshire. That was on 21 March 1876, and she was not alone. Among her entourage were her younger sister, the ex-Queen of Naples (or more properly the Two Sicilies), Maria Sophia of Bavaria, (1841-1925) and her husband Francis II, the last Bourbon King, together with their various friends and retainers. Elisabeth (1837-1898) was born in Munich, a member of the Bavarian royal family, and married the twenty-three-year-old Austro-Hungarian Emperor Franz Joseph (1830-1916) in 1853. She was just seventeen, a renowned beauty and already a passionate horse rider. Franz Joseph's teenage bride was bullied by her mother-in-law, the Archduchess Sophie, and from the start she took a strong dislike to the rigidities of court life. Accordingly, although theirs was initially a love match, they lived apart for much of their long marriage, Elisabeth eventually encouraging Franz Joseph to take a long-term mistress, the Viennese actress Katharina Schratt. Elisabeth's sister Maria Sophia had married Francis in 1859. At eighteen she was a year older than when her sister was married. However, their reign in Naples was short-lived. Garibaldi's troops entered the city in 1860, forcing Francis and Maria Sophia to leave. They took refuge at the coastal fortress of Gaeta, 50 miles north of Naples, but, following a siege, retreated to Rome and in due course Victor Emmanuel II became King of a united Italy. As former royalty, from time to time they joined Elisabeth's entourage in her travels, including to Northamptonshire. Both Elisabeth and Maria Sophia were regarded as great beauties.

Maria Sophia of Bavaria
(Franz Xavier Winterhalter, c.1860)

Elisabeth of Austria
(Amanda Bergstedt, 1855)

Elisabeth in riding habit (Ludwig Angerer, 1863)

In the 1870s the Empress Elisabeth embarked on a life of travelling around Europe, often incognito, without her husband, staying wherever she could take long walks and go riding. She first came to Britain in search of foxhunting in 1874 – initially in August to the Isle of Wight, then in October on to Burley-on-the Hill near Melton Mowbray in Leicestershire where she rode out with the Duke of Rutland's hounds. In March of 1876, together with her sister and brother-in-law, she stayed at Easton Neston[1] near Towcester in Northamptonshire so that she could go hunting with the Bicester Hounds. On the journey to Easton Neston, the Empress and her party visited Baron Ferdinand de Rothschild at Leighton House in Buckinghamshire. Because of snowfall, they did not hunt, instead visiting the stud at Mentmore. The Austro-Hungarian Imperial family maintained close relationships with the Rothschild family, a key source of funding. Their first day hunting in Northamptonshire (11 March) was from the village of Thorpe Mandeville, but ten days later the meet was at Astrop Park, mid-way between King's Sutton and Newbottle. The *Banbury Guardian* reported 'There was a very large field, most of the leading families in the neighbourhood being represented. The Empress arrived in a carriage and pair and, having lunched at Astrop house, the hounds drew off for Sir W Brown's covers. A fox was found at Rosamund's Bower and ... the hunt went on to Farthinghoe, Purston, Warkworth, Chacombe and Thenford before it snowed heavily and the fox was lost'.[2]

Their host at Astrop was the fairly recent acquirer of the property, the baronet Sir William Richmond Brown (1840-1906).[3] Previously based in Liverpool, the Browns had made their money shipping linen and cotton from the United States, Sir William's grandfather, baronet Sir William Brown (1784-1864), being leader of the firm. The Browns had bought Astrop Park as their country estate around 1866. Grandfather Sir William, the first baronet, was a major player in early nineteenth century Liverpool: he became an Alderman in 1831, MP for South Lancashire in 1846, High Sheriff of Liverpool in 1863, and was created a baronet that same year – named for his home on Richmond Hill, Anfield. He promoted reform of the Liverpool Docks, helped to establish the Bank of Liverpool, and was a leading campaigner for free trade, for the penny post – and for decimal coinage! He endowed Liverpool's William Brown Free Public Library and

1. Easton Neston was designed by Wren and Hawksmoor in the 1680s.
2. *Banbury Guardian*, 23 March 1876, 8.
3. Astrop Park was built in 1735-37 for Sir John Willes by Francis and William Smith of Warwick. In 1805 Sir John Soane added single-story wings, to which were added two further stories in the nineteenth century. The wings were demolished in 1961.

Museum at a cost of £40,000 – a very large sum of money at that time – 'a gift to the inhabitants'. William Brown Street in Liverpool is now the busy highway running up from the city to the Mersey Tunnel entrance.

Astrop Park (Stephen Richards)

Sir William Richmond Brown and his wife, Lady Emily, had seven children, all of whom lived at Astrop when they were not at their London house in Belgravia.[4] He served as a JP for Northampton and was High Sheriff for the county from 1873. It seems that their eldest son, the third baronet Melville (1866-1944), moved elsewhere, because it was their second son, Frederick, who is buried at King's Sutton, together with three of his sisters. The youngest, Dora (1880-1971), her husband Julian Lawrence Fisher and their children lived at St Rumbolds in King's Sutton, as some local people still remember. Following her time in Northamptonshire, the Empress returned regularly to hunt in England and Ireland: in 1878 she returned to Northamptonshire, staying for six weeks at Cottesbrook Park and hunting with the Pytchley Hounds, the current master being Earl Spencer, a devoted admirer of the Empress; in 1879 she went to hunt with the Royal Meath in Ireland 'with the Wards and Kildares'; and in 1881 she was in Cheshire (staying at Combermere Abbey), going on to hunt a second time with the Duke of Rutland's hounds at Burley-on-the-Hill near Melton Mowbray. It was during her first visit, staying at Easton Neston and hunting with the Bicester Hounds that Elisabeth met Captain William George 'Bay' Middleton. He was a fine rider and renowned huntsman, and he was to become a close personal friend of the Empress and possibly her lover. At 46 he fell from his horse and died during a steeplechase at Kineton in Warwickshire in 1892.

Elizabeth survived him by 6 years but was murdered, at the age of 60, by an Italian anarchist in Geneva on 10 September 1898. Maria Sophia, having sided with Austria-Hungary and Germany in World War I was rumoured to be involved in sabotage and espionage against Italy in the hope that the kingdom of Naples would be restored. She died in Munich aged 83 on 19 January 1925.

4. The first reference to 'Sir W Brown at Astrop' has him 'batting for the Marrieds versus the Singles of King's Sutton in October 1866. He scored 10 and 1. For the Singles, Mr Fortnum opened the batting and also bowled.' (*Bicester Herald*, 12 October 1866).

A 2022 JUBILEE

Barrie Trinder

The year 2022 marks the Golden Jubilee of the publication of Vol 10 of the Victoria History of Oxfordshire.[1] The volume was edited by Alan Crossley with four members of the Oxfordshire editorial staff; there were named contributions by Christina Colvin, Nicholas Cooper, Paul Harvey and Barrie Trinder, while much information from Jeremy Gibson, Ted Brinkworth, Ross Gilkes and Michael Laithwaite is acknowledged in footnotes. The section on Banbury occupies 127 pages, just under half of the volume, while chapters on other parts of the Banbury Hundred, Charlbury, Cropredy, and Swalcliffe, written by others, occupy 83 pages. The Banbury section was reviewed at length in this journal by the late George Fothergill (1933-2011), and the volume was the subject of two distinguished and lengthy reviews by Professor Alan Everitt (1926-2008).[2] The Banbury VCH followed the somewhat old-fashioned policy of rigid compartmentalisation of topics which has been discarded in some subsequent volumes concerned with towns.[3]

The anniversary is the occasion for some brief reflections. The volume owed much to the work of the Banbury Historical Society established 15 years earlier. There are numerous references to records series publications and articles in *Cake & Cockhorse*, often to scholarship that would probably not have been undertaken without the stimulus provided by the Society.

All local historians must be grateful for the volume's comprehensive accounts of medieval and early modern Banbury, not least for Paul Harvey's magisterial account of the destruction of the town's crosses, which destroyed much fanciful myth-making. A fuller account appeared in this journal and in *Oxoniensia*.[4]

The VCH was also a stimulus to research. For example, within a decade of its publication our understanding of the Dissenting churches in Banbury was increased by the use of four quite unexpected sources, the *Banbury Female Martyr*, discussed elsewhere in this issue, brought to the attention of Ted Brinkworth, the account of the origins and progress of the Dissenting congregation meeting at the 'New Chapel' in Church Passage, discovered by Jeremy Gibson while working on baptismal records, in the National Archives, the reprinting by the Blockley Antiquarian Society of *The Autobiography of Richard Boswell Belcher*, a onetime Banbury Dissenter, and the report on the visit to Banbury of Alexander Campbell (1788-1866), founder of the Disciples of Christ, in *The Christian Messenger* or *The British Millenarian Harbinger*, bound volumes of which were among the records of a Shrewsbury family descended from a dancing master who fled the French Revolution. One member had temporarily veered from Roman Catholicism to the Disciples in the 1830s. The volumes are extremely rare and were deposited in Dr William's Library which previously had no copies.[5]

1. *A History of the County of Oxford, vol 10, Banbury Hundred*, ed A Crossley, (Oxford University Press, 1972).
2. *Cake & Cockhorse*, vol 5 (1974), 156-59 (the Cropredy and Swalcliffe sections were reviewed by others); A Everitt, 'The Primary Towns of England', Urban History Year Book (1974), 'The Primary Towns of England', The Local Historian, vol 11 (1975).
3. *A History of the County of Shropshire, vol VI part I* (ed WA Champion & AT Thacker, (Boydell & Brewer, 2014).
4. PDA Harvey, 'Where were Banbury's Crosses?', *C&CH*, vol 3 (1967), 183-92; PDA Harvey, 'Where was Banbury Cross?', *Oxoniensia*, vol 32 (1966), 84-85.
5. Barrie Trinder, 'Schisms and Divisions: the Origins of the Dissenting Congregations in Banbury 1772-1860' *C&CH* vol 8 (1982), 207-21.

It is tempting to speculate how different a VCH volume published after another 50 years may be. Our understanding of the nature of Roman settlement in 'Banburyshire' is certain to have changed, as a result of excavations that are ongoing, and it is to be hoped that more will be known of the post-Roman period. Any future volume will also have to chronicle the changes of the late twentieth century which could scarcely have been foreseen in 1972, the closure of the cattle market and of the aluminium factory, the impact of the M40 motorway, and an increase of population that has been substantial (the town's population in 2001 was 43,867) but less than the 70,000 envisaged in a contentious planning document of the 1960s.

The 1972 volume remains the foundation of any serious research on Banbury's history. While it is still available in libraries, the online version, published by British History online is available to all at *https://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/oxon/vol10*. The progress of the Victoria History nationally and locally has been far from steady, and we should be grateful that Banbury's past was so effectively chronicled. Many towns are not so fortunate.

THE 13TH CENTURY EPWELL SEAL

Angie Bolton

The seal matrix is made of gold with a dark green jasper setting, engraved with the portrait of an unknown veiled woman, although there has been a recent suggestion that the portrait may be depicting a male. The intaglio is believed to have been carved in either Paris or London and is set in gold, with a legend round the outer edge reading

SIGILUM:SECRETI:hEN.

translated as the '*Secret seal of Hen*'. It is not known to whom it refers, who the owner was or whether it originated in Oxfordshire. The seal was found by a metal detectorist in 2015 but is now on display at the Oxfordshire Museum in Woodstock, having been saved for the county thanks to a fundraising campaign and support from the Headley Trust, the V&A Purchase Grant Fund and the Friends of The Oxfordshire Museum.

Epwell medieval seal, 13th century (the Oxfordshire Museum)

BANBURY STAR CYCLISTS' CLUB

George Hughes

A search for some family members who were deeply involved in the sporting clubs of Banbury in the late 1880s, viz: the Banbury Harriers, the Banbury Star Cyclists' and the Plough Public House and Reindeer Inn Quoit teams, led to an agreement that benefitted everyone. In return for permission to use one of the photographs on the Star Cyclists website I wrote the history of the club and provided them with a report on the background information of their committee and officers. The relatives of these early pioneers may still live in the town and may not be aware of either it or their forebears' involvement in the development of cycling in Banbury.

Further investigations were made into the formation of the cycling clubs in Banbury to establish if the Star Club was in fact heading towards their 150th Anniversary, since an 1895 framed montage of the Banbury Cyclists' Club suggests that this celebrated the 21st season of the Club, which would mean in turn that the club was formed in 1874. The results proved a little more complicated. Banbury, however, was clearly at the forefront of the cycling phenomena sweeping the country with Charles Lampitt manufacturing his Vulcan machine in 1869 at his Vulcan Foundry in Neithrop; they were offered for sale by the Taylor Bros. in town for £6 10s –slightly over £400 today and probably out of reach of the working man.

This development came about a year before the formation of the World's oldest cycle club 'The Pickwick Bicycle Club' founded in 1870 in Hackney Down in north London. The club was christened after Charles Dickens' first novel *The Pickwick Papers* and is both the oldest cycling club and Dickensian society still running in the world today. The full report on the BHS website carries a wonderful photograph of the Pickwick Club in 1885 showing young gentlemen, along with the obligatory moustache, each sporting a straw

Banbury Star Cyclists' Club members outside Banbury Town Hall on the occasion of the 130th Anniversary Ride, 8 August 2021 (BSCC)

boater carrying a ribbon embroidered with PBC, leaning up against a shoulder-high 'ordinary or high wheeler', later nicknamed the 'Penny Farthing' for its likeness to the two coins in circulation at the time. The penny farthing was actually a beast of a machine with the report highlighting that some of these machines had 54-inch front wheels and weighed some 42 lbs. Propelled at a goodly rate, this was a dangerous machine on the rudimentary roads.

The first cycling club of Banbury, the Banbury and District Bicycle Club (BDBC), was formed in 1874, just 4 years after the Pickwick Club, changing over the years to become the Banbury Bicycle Club and later its final iteration being the Banbury Cyclists' Club to cater for the growing popularity of tricyclists. However, in 1891 a rival club was formed taking the name the Banbury Star Cyclists' Club (BSCC). Rumours have it that the 'Star' reference was a romantic association with the Club's first run to Middleton Cheney on an evening in April 1891 since it would have been getting dark on arrival back in Banbury – with the 'stars' coming out.

One further interesting fact discovered researching the history of BSCC was the role of the club bugler. The earliest club photo, taken around 1900 clearly shows a man with a bugle (second left, front row) – probably Mr E Barden. The club bugler was an important person in cycling club life in the early 1890s. On club rides, he rode next to the club captain and used his bugle to call out signals to other riders: to speed up, slow down, dismount, or ride single or double file. The club minutes also reveal there was always a sub-bugler and both posts changed on a fairly regular basis. It would seem that the role of the club bugler ended sometime in the 1930s.

The article now on the Star Cyclists' website (www.banburystar.co.uk) investigates the proposals made to amalgamate the two clubs, the rejection of these overtures by their very different memberships, the withering and dying of the originating Club and the progression of the newcomer and how it flourished and remains alive and well today, having celebrated its 130th anniversary in 2021.

See Banbury Historical Society website (www.banburyhistoricalsociety.org) for full article entitled 'A further investigation into the origins of the Banbury Cycling Clubs'.

Banbury Star Cyclists' Club circa 1900 (BSCC)

INTERESTING BIOGRAPHIES AND TOPICS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

George Hughes

Over many years I have read with interest the articles included in *Cake & Cockhorse*. I've always been intrigued as to where people have found their subject matter and how they've ended up researching and putting it all down on paper. Sometimes it must be bit daunting staring at a blank sheet of paper and wondering 'where shall I start and what shall I write about'.

In an effort to encourage others to dust off their keyboards, take the plunge and exercise 'the little grey cells' I've listed below a few interesting people and topics, along with a very short précis of their lives and interactions with others, that I've come across in Banburyshire who are worthy of further investigation.

Good hunting and I hope your researches result in good articles for publication.

Name	**Date**	**Subject for further investigation**
William Peckover	1748	William Peckover of Aynho (b 1748) did not follow the rest of the family into the local farming community, but went to sea instead. I don't think you could find anywhere further from the sea in the UK than Aynho, but he joined up and sailed on the three journeys of Captain Cook. After Cook was killed in Hawaii, Peckover came back to England and, as if he hadn't had enough signed up for another journey this time with a man called Bligh. Yes, none other than Captain Bligh of the *Bounty* fame, making William Peckover one of the most travelled sailors of the 18th century and one of a handful who joined Bligh.
Martin Jackman	1648	In his PCC will proved 7 April 1649 Martin Jackman says '*To my brother Thomas Jackman* (baptised 5 October 1626 at Middleton Cheney) *all my tobacco shipped home this year and also all my debts in Virginia and also my moveable and unmovable in England and all bills and bonds*'. The pilgrim fathers only landed in America in 1620 and here we have a local man from Banburyshire referencing his tobacco plantation in Virginia less than a generation later.
Mark Anthony	1780	Was buried 29 May 1780 at All Saints' Church, Middleton Cheney. Mark Anthony is noted in the parish records as being a black servant to Mr Everard (Rev. Charles Everard (1726-1792) rector of All Saints' church).

Name	Date	Subject for further investigation
John Stockley	1811	John Stockley of Middleton Cheney died on 16 May 1811 at the battle of Albuera, Spain in the Peninsular War. John Stockley was the brother of Richard Stockley, who died in Masonville, Delaware, USA.
Richard Richards	1656	Innholder of Banbury who has a morbidly humorous monumental inscription in St Mary's church, Banbury – reproduced in Alfred Beesley, *History of Banbury*, (Nichols and Son, 1842), 497.
William Pratt	1786	William Pratt was the landlord of the *Red Lion* in High Street, Banbury and also the Mayor of Banbury in the year he died in 1802. The Shakespeare Birthplace Trust Archives (ref. PR 228), 6 April 1786 records a bill from William Pratt, innkeeper of Banbury to Thomas Jefferson and John Adams, the second and third Presidents of the USA.
Elizabeth Dryden	1791	In the 1791 will of Dame Elizabeth Dryden (TNA PROB 11/1204/222), the relict of Sir John Dryden of Canons Ashby, she states '*I leave to Edward Page Apothecary of Adstone fifty pounds upon condition he cuts my wind pipe right across to the back part of my head and in case he should refuse or does not want to do it in the manner directed after certain that I am dead then the aforesaid fifty pounds to be given to Mr. William ... surgeon of the county hospital*'. A recorded case of Taphophobia, the fear of being buried alive.
Robert Barker	1631	Clement Harby was the son Thomas Harby of Adstone and Katherine Throckmorton of Coughton Court, Warks. Clement's first wife was Sarah Poyntz, the daughter of Ferdinando Poyntz. His second wife was Susannah Barker, daughter of Robert Barker, the printer to the king. Barker was most notably the printer of the King James Bible, one of the most influential and important books ever printed in the English language. Barker and his partner Martin Lucas published the infamous '*Wicked Bible*', which contained a typographical error omitting the word '**not**' from the Lord's commandment 'Thou shalt not commit adultery' – a *faux pas* of the highest order. About a year later, Barker and Lucas were fined £300 (roughly equivalent to £36,000 pounds today) and were deprived of their printer's licences.
John Cheney	1810	John Cheney, one of the printing family of Banbury, married Elizabeth Gardner in Banbury in 1810. Elizabeth was the youngest daughter of Robert Gardner who in the 1841 census is recorded as the governor of Banbury Borough gaol living there with his wife Mary Dumbleton and their 6 children. Robert Gardner died in 1843 and in his effects was a part of a gibbet (thought to be part of the gibbet cage support used to despatch local criminals) which passed to his daughter and hence to the Cheney family.

ARCHAEOLOGY ROUNDUP 2021-22

Pamela Wilson

The last year has been a bumper one for archaeologists, not least those around Banbury. The course of HS2 continues to provide fruitful evidence of past settlements while the Banbury area has made national headlines a couple of times, and there have even been 'world-beating' discoveries nationally.

On 13 January 2022 the *Banbury Guardian* devoted a 2-page spread to the uncovering of a substantial Roman trading centre near Chipping Warden at Blackgrounds – so-called after its dark soil – by an 80-strong team from MOLA (Museum of London Archaeology). A 10m-wide Roman road was found amid evidence of workshops, kilns and wells plus many impressive artefacts including coinage, glass vessels and jewellery. Close proximity to a pre-existing Iron Age settlement led to the conclusion that peaceful co-existence, indeed Romanisation of Iron Age inhabitants had developed, a point emphasised by Alice Roberts when describing this site in *Digging for Britain* (BBC 2, 11 January 2022). Interestingly Banbury Museum has a display of 6 bronze axe-heads (palstaves), dated 1000-800BC, from a hoard found previously near Chipping Warden – evidence of multi-period occupancy?

A year earlier, on 19 March 2021 the *Banbury Guardian* also devoted a spread to the very large Roman villa in the grounds of Broughton Castle discovered by Keith Westcott (the metal detectorist who had previously found the Broughton hoard of Civil War silver coins) who gave a packed lecture to the Banbury Historical Society on the subject. Both Oxford Archaeology and Time Team have been involved in excavating the villa but tantalisingly, apart from mentioning finds of roof tiles, pottery and brick, details of the project are sparse and a final report is still awaited.

Meanwhile in advance of warehouse development at the M40, a small Iron Age settlement was found,[1] while on the Daventry Road side of the motorway Roman ditches and pits were noted.[2] Excavations in Bodicote have shown a number of Neolithic or Bronze Age ring ditches, one large (possibly a barrow) and others smaller, together with Iron Age pits containing human remains.[3] Edward Shawyer of the North Oxfordshire Archaeology Group reports on the continued exploration at the Swalcliffe Lea Roman site elsewhere in this issue. It appears that the Dobunni were pro-Roman and became very prosperous during their rule.

The northern edge of Hook Norton has been the focus of a comprehensive project which has shown 2 phases of Roman occupation from the 1st to late 3rd centuries.[4] Evidence of crop processing and animal husbandry suggested a farming settlement; however, the site also included two decapitated burials interred within stone-lined cists, the only such examples in the Upper Thames region.

A fascinating BHS lecture given by the archaeologist Stephen Wass featured Hanwell Castle gardens and the ongoing excavations to reveal the 17th century Observatory and the polygonal 'House of Diversion'. A very successful open weekend ('Stars and Archaeology') was held at Hanwell in September 2021 to showcase this work.

1. 'Banbury, Central M40, Overthorpe Road', *South Midlands Archaeology*, 2020, 94.
2. 'Daventry Road, Banbury', *Oxoniensia* 86, 2021, 388.
3. 'White Post Road, Bodicote', *Oxo* 86, 2021, 389.
4. 'Catalyst Bicester' *SMA*, 2020, 98.

A little further afield there have been several discoveries of interest. Near to the Bicester-Towcester Roman Road a late prehistoric / Roman cremation cemetery was found;[5] south of Woodstock a late copper-alloy Yeltholm-type shield was excavated;[6] and at Finmere Quarry a couple of Neolithic or Bronze Age barrows were found.[7] At Stoke Mandeville the massive HS2 archaeological project at St Mary's church continues.[8] Last year the ruined church and extensive burial ground featured on *Digging for Britain*: in late 2021 the site was revisited and an excited Alice Roberts explained that under the Norman church a probable Roman mausoleum had been unearthed, together with a couple of stone torsos, matching heads, burials, grave goods, glass vessels and much else.

Stowe Landscape Gardens are currently under extensive restoration.[9] Polyolbion Archaeology has been excavating the site of the Temple of Modern Virtue, built as an elaborate ruin in 1737 to signify the state of contemporary politics (*plus ça change*!). It sits adjacent to the Temple of Ancient Virtue. By way of contrast the Upper Heyford Airbase with its surviving Cold War structures includes a collection of war art on the walls – 122 examples, the largest such in Europe.[10] Stowe and Upper Heyford are the focus of outings by Banbury Historical Society in summer 2022.

Finally, much excitement has been generated nationally by the finding of mammoth bones near Swindon, and a huge ichthyosaur fossil at Rutland Water. But, best of all, the development of the intrusive tunnel which would cause massive disruption to the Stonehenge funerary landscape has been rejected:[11] watch out for the fabulous Stonehenge exhibition starting mid-February at the British Museum.

5. A Simmonds and J Boothroyd, 'Roman Occupation and Burials at Sibford Road, Hook Norton', *Oxo* 86, 2021, 243-292.
6. 'Woodstock southeast' *SMA*, 2020, 98. Yetholm-type shields date between 1200-800 BC and are good examples of large sheet-bronze work in the later Bronze Age period in Europe.
7. 'Finmere Quarry' *Oxo* 86, 2021, 388.
8. M Pitts, 'Little Church by the Railway: Romans, Normans and Victorians at Stoke Mandeville', *British Archaeology*, Jan/Feb 2022, 36-47.
9. 'Stowe Gardens' *SMA*, 2020, 67-68.
10. 'Upper Heyford Airbase' *SMA*, 2020, 114-115.
11. 'The Battle of Stonehenge', *The Week*, 31 July 2021, 13.

A FIFTY-YEAR ENGAGEMENT

Clare Jakeman

Edith (Edie) Orchard looked radiant in an early photograph of her taken at the time of her engagement in 1895, when she was 26. Her fiancé, William (Willie) Potts, also 26, '*was a big man in every sense of the word. He stood 6'6" tall, his head was large, his fleshy face lit by wide open green eyes, and his tread was heavy. He wore a wrist watch as big as a pocket watch, and he used a fountain pen twice as large as the usual size. He had a loud voice and a hearty laugh*'.[1] However, William and Edie never married. It is reputed that William had a platonic relationship with another Banbury lady and Edie refused to share him although they remained devoted to each other until his death in 1947.[2]

William Potts had inherited the ownership and editorship of the *Banbury Guardian* in 1892 following the early death of his father, John Potts. He was an outstanding writer. About the same time Etheldreda (Ethel) Orchard, nine years younger than Edie, was concentrating on music, taking the graduate examination of the College of Violinists in 1898 at the age of 20. Thirteen years later (29 July 1911) she married Richard Jakeman, her third cousin. Ten months afterwards their son Kenneth (Ken) Jakeman was born and three years later, his sister Evelyn Mary, both at Worksop where their father was described as manager of an oxygen factory. The following year Richard moved from Worksop to Hope, in Derbyshire. He was looking after three factories for British Oxygen, the third being at Sheffield and moved between all three.

While Evelyn was still young, she was very ill. Dr Clive Gardiner-Hill, a young doctor from Horsefair in Banbury, travelled to Hope to examine her. Following his diagnosis, it was decided that Ken and Evelyn would live and be educated in Banbury. The spinster Orchard aunts and childless Orchard uncles were delighted.[3] Thus, Ken and Evelyn acquired another set of parents, Aunt Edie Orchard and Uncle Willie Potts in Banbury while Ethel and Richard Jakeman remained up in Hope.

In 1935 Evelyn started keeping a Journal,[4] Ken was in his last year at Manchester university while she was still in Banbury. During this year Evelyn seemed to live a life of constant dissipation, frequently taken by Uncle Willie, with Aunt Edie, to the theatre in various locations and to other events in Banbury –

> 1935
>
> May 9: In the evening Uncle Willie escorted Auntie Beth (Helen Elizabeth Orchard) & me round the town to see the jubilee illuminations.
>
> May 12: In the afternoon went with Uncle Willie to the interdenominational service in the Park ... Afterwards inspected the new Police Station, still in course of construction ... At half past 9 Uncle phoned to say they had just put the floodlights on again. St John's looked very nice, especially at the top, where the shadows on the pinnacles showed them up to perfection. The effect of the top of St Mary's lighted in red from the gallery was very striking. It looked like beacon hung in the sky.

1. ET Clark, 'The Potts Family and the Banbury Guardian' *C&CH* 10 6 1987, 155.
2. Personal information from Evelyn Jakeman.
3. *Ibid.* There were nine siblings but Ethel was the only one to have any children; see *C&CH* vol 23, 62-65.
4. Miss Evelyn Mary Jakeman's Journal, 1935 -1962. (privately owned).

William Potts (left) and Edith Orchard on her engagement (right) (Clare Jakeman)

They were fans of Gilbert and Sullivan attending *Ruddigore*, *The Gondoliers*, *Patience* and *Iolanthe* at the end of May. Expeditions were made with Uncle Willie and Aunt Edie to Oxford, where they took a river steamer down to Dorchester (on-Thames). It was a busy summer with further trips to Buckingham, Stratton Audley and Whipsnade. That Christmas '... Mother & Daddy arrived at about half past four after a pretty slippery journey till Lichfield ... Uncle Willie came up to see if they had arrived safely'. A few weeks later 'to the Palace [cinema] to see the pictures of the King's funeral'.

As the international outlook became bleaker, she commented 'Monday Aug 28 1939 ... Uncle Willie came up tonight. He is a nice optimistic person to talk to'.

Inevitably, the older generation of siblings began to die off: on 2 March 1941 Ethel died. She was only 63 but had been ill a long time. The following year Auntie Beth's condition deteriorated and she died on 13 September; four years later Uncle Willie died on 17 February, like so many, exhausted by the war. Evelyn now concentrated her energies looking after her father, Richard, until he died in 1962 aged 80 but Aunt Edie remained on a much-loved companion. She, the last Orchard sibling, lived to the age of 98 and died on 2 October 1967; Evelyn was with her when she died muttering "I am not going to share him".[5]

5. Personal information from Evelyn Jakeman.

NEW YEAR'S EVE AT THE MANOR, KING'S SUTTON, 1868[1]

'One visit is perhaps worth recording. My father's mother was a Miss Willes[2] of an old family living on the borders of Northamptonshire and Oxfordshire – regular country people. One of her brothers, Charles, was married to a certain Polly – I think she was a Miss Waller, but anyhow they were a plump, old-fashioned pair. She was supposed to keep a book in which were recorded the names of over a hundred nephews and nieces, and to sell a pig to give a present to any one of the number who married. On the last day of 1868 my brother Gilly[3] and I went with our Aunt Georgiana to stay with this charming old couple at King-Sutton Manor House near Banbury.

Manor House, King's Sutton (Tim Glover)

'It is a queer old house like one in a storybook, full of corners, my washstand was in a recess with a window, separated from the rest of the room by doors so that it looked like a chapel.[4] We had dinner between six and seven, a real Christmas dinner with nearly twenty people – great uncle Charles, great aunt Martha, great aunt Sophy, George Willes, Willie Willes, the clergyman Mr Bruce, Aunt Polly herself beaming at the head of the table, turkey and beef stuck with holly, and the plum-pudding brought in, in flaming brandy ... A few more people came after dinner while we were in the drawing room and the dining room was being cleared for dancing. Two fiddlers and a blowing-man were then perched on a table in a corner and dancing began – quadrilles, lancers, jig, reel and valse carried on with the utmost energy, by Aunt Polly in particular, till about half-past eleven when muffled bells began to ring in a church close by and the dancing stopped that we might all listen. At twelve o'clock the muffles were taken off, Aunt Polly charged with Xmas cards into the midst of their company, punch was brought in in great cups, silver I believe; everyone kissed, shook hands and wished everyone else a Happy New Year, the bells rang a joy-peal and we had supper and then began dancing again till between one and two in the morning. After many efforts Gilly succeeded in catching Aunt Polly under the mistletoe and kissing her.' I do not know what a 'blowing-man' may have been but have a vivid recollection of Aunt Polly trying to dance everyone down in a perpetual jig and of the portly figure of Uncle Charles who had to be accommodated with two chairs at dinner'.

Margaret Child-Villiers, *Countess of Jersey*

1. *Fifty-one years of Victorian Life* by Margaret Elizabeth Leigh Child-Villiers, Countess of Jersey (E P Dutton & Co, 1922, pp 54-6).
2. Margarette Willes, daughter of Reverend William Shippen Willes of Astrop House, Northamptonshire.
3. Gilbert Henry Chandos Leigh (1851-1884).
4. A bedroom in the Manor is still known as the Jersey bedroom (information given to the editor).

OXFORDSHIRE WITHIN LIVING MEMORY

Mrs Margaret Rudge (11 July 1914 – 29 April 2014) resident of Swalcliffe for most of her life and known to all as simply "Mrs Rudge". (Photo courtesy of Doug Seymour and Swalcliffe Archive.)

"My memories of Swalcliffe begin on April 1st 1938, when I moved with my husband[1] and nine-month-old baby into 3 Brick Row on the edge of [Swalcliffe]village.

On the flag stoned ground floor was a living room with a small black range and the door to an old baking oven in the inglenook, and a small pantry, with a spiral staircase leading up to a landing and bedroom and from thence up to an attic divided into two by a wall, not quite reaching the ceiling, and a tiny window. The upper floors were of wide elm boards, with many crannies, some polished and the attic stairs and floors were scrubbed white. The casement windows were small, one of metal with leaded panes and the other, wood, which had to be removed to get the bedroom furniture in! The light came from an oil lamp on the table, and candles for upstairs. Water was piped from springs to a stand-pipe out in the lane, if it failed unexpectedly, it meant a walk along the village, and the tap had to be lagged well in winter. The toilet was a bucket arrangement at the top end of the row, emptied into a hole in the garden at dead of night. Three doors down in the opposite direction was a large dry stone hovel as high as a house, with a wash boiler, and space to store fuel, cycle, etc.

1. Leslie Rudge.

Brick Row; no. 3 was the nearest part of the tall brick building (Colin Hill)

Much to my surprise, the landlord called with his bailiff, after a few days and suggested we might need something, wallpaper for living room and bedroom, walpamur for attic and stairs. The pantry floor was worn hollow after a few hundred years of wear and I asked if he could do anything? I received a pattern book, (with pages marked) for wallpaper, paint and whitewash – and cement and sand for my husband to level up the floor. The wallpaper only cost 4½ d per roll but at least it was fresh and clean. Our rent was 3/6d per week!

Most cooking was done on the living room range, no problem in winter when the oven was usually hot. In summer the fire might be lit in time to cook the evening meal, bringing a lovely smell of woodsmoke round the village. A Primus stove was very useful especially for early mornings. Food storage was a problem in summer, without a proper cool larder, meat and fish really needed to be bought and cooked on the same day. A good food safe was necessary, and tins and jars etc., with well-fitting lids, because of insects and cockroaches – finally eradicated with Borax and removal of flagstones for concrete floor.

The milkman, baker, fishmonger and grocer called regularly and bacon and day to day needs could be bought at the village shop. Sometimes there would be rabbit or chicken, and pig killing time was a great event – bringing fresh meat and rosemary scented lard – and ham and bacon to be cured and hung in the chimney corner for winter.

Fruit and vegetables came from gardens, fields and hedgerows, and the town on market days. (A pram could be hired for 3d to push baby and purchases around). The Sunday roast could be cooked at the bakery for 6d. Many men worked on the land, and The Park and Manor employed women and men, indoor and outdoor staff, until the war. The Village Hall was well used, for reading, billiards and other games, whist, dances and meetings."

"The public telephone and post box stood in the centre of the village and a small lending library operated from the schoolroom, as well as the clothing club. Other clubs were run from the *Stag's Head*. The Village Carrier operated on market days, and given a note and bag, would shop for a variety of goods.

The Church had a good choir, a Sunday School and Bellringers. And the passing bell was tolled on the death of a parishioner (except during the war). Children from 5 to 14 years attended the Village School until the new Act when the 11 plus were taken to Hook Norton. The Charity Coal was distributed to each house at Christmas.

It seemed to be a very healthy village, many people living to a good old age. 3d. a week was collected for the Nursing Association, covering nurses and midwife fees, but not the doctor's visits for births. Home remedies were often used, such as poultices of comfrey, bread, mustard and linseed, as well as fruit vinegars for sore throats. Warts were said to be charmed away.

Childrens' games and celebrations varied with seasons, whips and tops, skipping, Empire Day etc. On May Day girls carried the May Garland from house to house, sang the carol[2] and received pennies. The Summer Fête with its usual attraction, ending with dancing on the lawn. Harvest Festival with fruit and vegetables and giant marrows, Christmas Party and carol singing were all part of the village year – some seemed to fade out when war was declared.

With the coming of war, evacuees arrived, some agriculture workers were replaced by the women's Land Army; the Manor became their hostel. The Park[3] became a Red Cross Convalescent Home. The Home Guard and Air Raid Wardens and W.V.S. were around – a time of black-out, ration books and gas masks. Rationing brought problems and some very weird recipes. We preserved everything we could, one way or another made do and mended and carried on old crafts of rag rugs, knitting and toymaking, wasting as little as possible.

A bomb did fall in a field in November 1940 but fortunately no-one was hurt. When, at last the war was over, most evacuees went home, service men and women were demobbed, but rationing continued to plague us. The school was closed, with fewer children and they joined Tadmarton School. Electricity was supplied to most cottages in the early 1950s[4] and mains water about 1956; but mains drainage had to wait another 13 years.

By 1960 things were changing, and children of the war years, now grown up, were finding it difficult to stay and live in their own villages."

Mrs Rudge, well known to many in the village, was buried in Swalcliffe on 9th May 2014.

Mrs Rudge

This account[5] was read to a Tadmarton Women's Institute meeting in 1990 and edited by Colin Hill, Swalcliffe Society.

First published: The Tadmarton and Swalcliffe Link, March 2021.

2. "The Swalcliffe May Carol", music and words are displayed in Swalcliffe Barn and the band "Magpie Lane" has made a recording of it.
3. Swalcliffe Park, former medieval manor, home of the Swalcliffe Wykehams, now Swalcliffe Park School.
4. Electricity was brought to Swalcliffe in 1933 but it took many years for all homes to get connected.
5. Swalcliffe Society reference SDA-2001-2.

POEM WRITTEN BY JAMES LAYTON FROM BANBURY GAOL, 1849[1]

Stop passenger a moment wait,
a mournful tale to hear
And when the same I do unfold
You'll surely shed a tear;
Within a cell at Banbury
I now lamenting lie
For attempting to murder my own wife
I now expect to die.

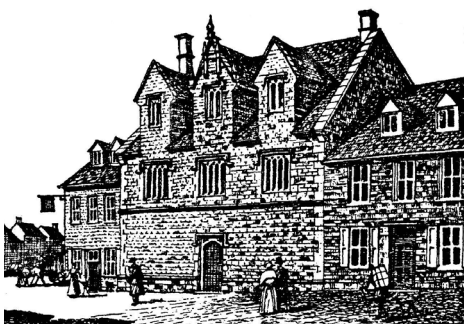
It was on the 7th day of May
I to Banbury did repair
And took my wife with me
Devoid of grief or care
I drew a pistol quickly
As on the road we went
And to murder there my own dear wife
It was my full intent.

I shot her thro' the head
As she on the ground did fall
I then drew forth a knife
While for mercy she did call;
I cut and wounded her full sore
Regardless of her cries
Upon the ground she lifeless fell
I thought no more to rise.

As a builder I was rear'd
James Layton is my name;
At Leamington I did dwell
And many know the same;
A thousand pangs now rend my breast,
Such as no tongue can tell,
I find no rest, I find no peace
My conscience feels in hell.

Then I was taken prisoner
To Banbury gaol with speed
To appear at the assizes
For the dreadful bloody deed
May God have mercy on my soul
O Lord look down on me
When at the bar I do appear
To hear my destiny.

In dungeon dark and irons bound
I bitterly do weep
The midnight bell and thought of death
Deprive me of my sleep.
My injured wife to me appears
Her wounds she does display
No rest at all then I can get
She's with me night and day.



1. Published as a news sheet by Jones, Printer (Reading, 1849) and advertised in an auctioneer's catalogue; current location unknown. The account written by the accused appears to be correct judging from the report of his trial at the Leamington Spa Assizes in July 1849 (*Leamington Spa Courier*, 21 July 1849) when he was judged to be insane. He was suffering from delusions about being defrauded of property he owned in Leamington and was on his way to Banbury to consult a lawyer; his wife, Martha, accompanied him but she, unbeknown to him, was going to enquire about leaving him. At the trial he pleaded not guilty as he said he had seen his wife recently. The poem suggests that this might have been his delusions. Witnesses alleged that he was known to spend time sharpening knives, that he had been contemplating moving to France to avoid prosecution for perjury (it was not clear that he had actually committed the crime) and that he frequently appeared in a highly excitable and unstable state. Despite attempts to save Martha, she died some days after the attack on the Southam road. The news sheet was illustrated with rather crude woodcuts of the incident which unfortunately couldn't be reproduced.

Helen Forde

NEWBOTTLE AND CHARLTON SCHOOL

Extract from the School Managers' Minutes, July 3rd 1874[1]

Proposed by T.L.M. Cartwright Esq. and seconded by Mr. Dagley that three months notice be given to Mr. John Taylforth the Schoolmaster to give up his appointment as Master of the Charlton School. Carried nem. con.

This resolution has been come to in consequence of Mr. Cartwright having brought before the meeting

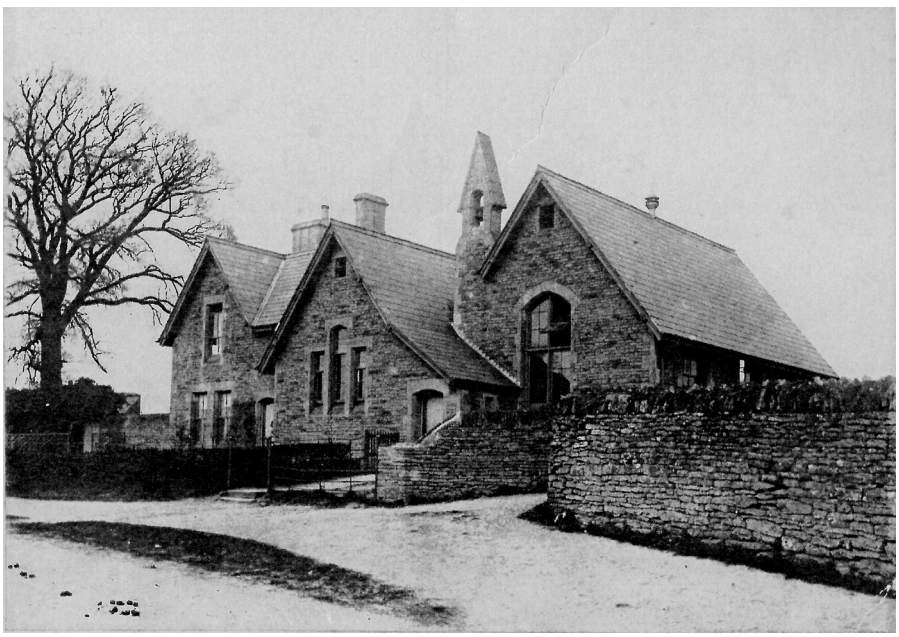
1) The irregular manner in which Mr. Taylforth seems to be carrying on in the school.

2) The incompetency of his sister Miss Taylforth to discharge the duties properly as sewing-mistress.

3) And that it would be better to have a married man and his wife.

The letter subsequently sent to the Schoolmaster makes clear that he has impressed at every Government Inspection, but that he has been '*frequently absent from school during School hours*', leaving everything in the hands of the pupil-teacher and monitor. The letter also describes how the needlework of the Girls' Department was unsatisfactory, and deemed to be so by the Ladies of the Ladies' Committee '*who have kindly undertaken its superintendence*'.

Deborah Hayter



Charlton School c.1900
(by permission of Charlton and Newbottle Church of England Primary School)

1. Minute book in the school's archives.

BOOK REVIEWS

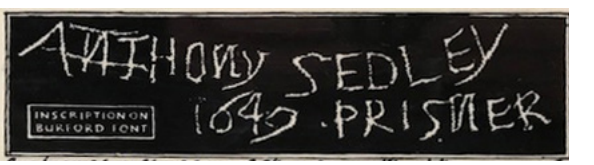
Delayed Expectations, by Abigail Shirley, (independently published, 2021), 306 pp £7.99 ISBN 979-8736766796

Delayed Expectations is the author's second book and a prequel to her first, *One Fine Lady,* which featured a young girl growing up in canal-side Banbury life. Set in the 1840s, *Delayed Expectations* tells the tale of two orphaned sisters who work in the bar of the Whately Coaching Inn, and who are intent on finding the man of their dreams and embarking on family life, encountering various setbacks along the way. A number of well-known Banbury landmarks appear: St Mary's church – a "*beautiful fresh-looking new building*", the *Three Pigeons Inn*, and St John's chapel in Bodicote with its crumbling tower, then there's Lock 29, the Michaelmas Mop Fair – and of course Banbury cakes (but no cheese!). The author received help from Margaret Little of the Banbury Historical Society in verifying details. It's an uncomplicated read which will no doubt be enjoyed by local Banburians.

Pamela Wilson

The Uncivil War of Anthony Sedley: The Personal Cost of War by Pauline Gregg, ed Ros Meiggs, (independently published, 2021) 258 pp, illus. £8.99 ISBN 979-8545612819

The Uncivil War is a novel of historical fiction, the story of Anthony Sedley and his involvement in that war, highlighting the social and political upheavals which led to many family divisions. No historical information is available about Anthony Sedley other than his graffiti in Burford church, so the author has provided an imagined career around known and well researched historical events.



Anthony Sedley's graffiti in Burford church (Helen Forde)

His birth took place in a large house near Banbury in 1625, the year Charles I came to the throne. His father, John, was a merchant and clothier and his elder brother, Robert, a devout Puritan. Anthony determined to be a writer and poet. Local landmarks occur throughout the book such as Banbury Cross, erected by the Puritans, and Broughton Castle, the home of the Fiennes family; Anthony attended *Hamlet* there and was so enthralled that he learned some of the big speeches by heart. The man who played the Player King reappears at important stages in Anthony's life, providing another theme round which the story is woven. Civil war was a reality in the Midlands where the opposing sides met in frequent skirmishes and battles, such as at Edgehill where Robert received a gunshot wound and died from gangrene. For his part Anthony said to himself: 'The sleeping and the dead are but as pictures. Nothing of this is real'. He was traumatised by the experience of war but Robert's death stiffened his resolve.

Fighting continued and Anthony ultimately found himself in London assisting with printing pamphlets issued by the Levellers (Parliamentarians) with a great call for justice, and subsequently with their troops. Anthony's father, John, had by this time joined Cromwell, though the latter was implacably against some of the more passionate Levellers, leading to further family division. Ultimately however, many of the Levellers could not stomach the

prospect of Cromwell being their adversary. Anthony reached Burford on May 13 1649 with a small contingent of men complaining of arrears of pay and the prospect of having to go to fight in Ireland. They planned to sleep in the church and laid down their weapons but were surprised by Cromwell; some three hundred and fifty were herded into the church to await an unknown fate. Anthony, who had concealed his dagger on his person when taken prisoner, carved the letters of his name on the lead surround of the font, where it is still to be seen. After three nights of captivity Cromwell determined to take four soldiers and dismiss the rest. Lots were drawn. Three were shot against the churchyard wall while the remnant was made to watch from the roof of the church looking out to the peaceful valley of the Cherwell. The last of those drawn by lot was led back into the church where he preached repentance.

So, Anthony found his freedom and gave his account of these events. His story ends in 1660 by which time Cromwell was dead and Charles II was on the throne. Visiting Burford church once again with his own son and seeing the three bullet marks on the churchyard wall Anthony said: "*We have not forgotten*".

For a number of years the author, Pauline Gregg, conducted, and published academic research on the Civil War of the seventeenth century. However, in this book she wove historical fiction into the facts, although she never finished it. Her daughter, Ros Meiggs, spent many hours during lockdown completing the story from the versions that Pauline left, finally bringing it to publication.

Elisabeth N Fisher

The Best Burglar in the County: Joan Wake and the Northamptonshire Record Society by Neil Lyon (Northamptonshire Record Society, 2021) vol 52, 555 pp, illus. £20 ISBN 978-0901275790

This is a stimulating volume and quite different from most of those in the Record Series, even if the subject herself would not have thought it a suitable candidate for publication. But, if one is looking for a person for our time and a very readable book with an important message, this is it. Miss Wake was quite certain that no one read the Record Series Volumes, especially those in Latin, but this should not be this book's fate.

Research has recently highlighted the work done by women in the early years of the Victoria County History, in the Ministry of Works (ancient monuments and buildings), in record societies and record offices as well as in the British Records Association. Joan Wake is one of that number; other notable examples are Ethel Stokes, Irene Churchill and Kathleen Major. However, on the basis of the records she 'knowingly' left, and of her knowledge and experience of county society and national affairs in the first half of the twentieth century, there is so much more to be added to this present record – in the records of those individuals and organisations she dealt with and in notes for an autobiography which give wonderful vignettes of her childhood and relationship with her family.

This volume is perhaps hampered by being primarily focussed on the history of the Northamptonshire Record Society in its centenary year. The fact is that the excitement of the study is Joan Wake herself and her work in saving and preserving the county's records but, given the author's interest in Northamptonshire estates and houses, many stories relating to them creep in, whether or not they have a direct bearing on the Record Society. That doesn't make them any the less interesting and they provide a fascinating glimpse of a past way of life; as Neil Lyon rightly says another book about her visits to

Northamptonshire estates and those in other counties is needed. What the centenary history does is to skewer the story away from the archives which were arguably her main concern. Her proposal for a Record Society/Office, in very modern terms, reads:

> 'The History of Northamptonshire lies buried in the muniment rooms of country houses, among the records of local authorities, in the registry and library of Peterborough Cathedral and in the chests of Parish Churches throughout the county ... It is therefore proposed to form a Society with the objects of preserving and rendering accessible to historical students through the co-operation of owners and custodians of MSS such records as have survived to the present day'.

From the very beginning she recognised and strove for good storage facilities and accessible reading rooms. She developed catalogues and indexes, exhibitions, talks and a lecture series and recognised how essential volunteers are; perhaps more could have been said about them in this history. A Miss Joan Payne, for example, who turned up for work at Lamport during World War II wasn't told what to do and had certainly not been told that she would be expected to work all day. She was given chocolate and bread for lunch.

Joan Wake was a great advocate and persuader and although she may have called herself 'the best burglar in my county' (9 May 1959), in the same speech she described herself as a ferret. Professor Galbraith, at the Record Society's 1965 AGM, when Miss Wake retired as General Editor, described her as '*a 'bonnie fechter*' [fearless fighter], and for many years a '*femme formidable*' to Lord Chancellors, Masters of the Rolls and Deputy Keepers'. At one meeting of the British Records Society, she rose in her seat, waving an enclosure award over her head like a sword, and exclaimed that these were exactly the records, of huge importance locally, which were about to be lost as solicitors cleared their cellars and strongrooms.

Everyone knew what she was doing – she told them. At least one owner (Sir Michael Culme-Seymour) said that the only way of *not* doing what she wanted was not to meet her; those who did, or had to, were persuaded and notably all supported her, persuaded by the necessity of saving the history of '*my county*' as a good in itself and for future generations.

Where is that support now? We need more Joan Wakes and more Record Societies which have her mission as their mantra. That was one of her stated legacies to 'my' Record Society in 1959.

Rachel Watson Cadell

ANNUAL REVIEW, 2021 -2022

This year has been as unusual as the last in terms of arranging events for the Society as well as trying to ensure a good service for members. However, the two summer visits, to the Rollright stones and to the village of Adderbury were well supported and much enjoyed, thanks to the arrangements made by Rosemary Leadbetter. The AGM was held at All Saints' church in Middleton Cheney, after which members were treated to guided tours of the church and its spectacular William Morris and Edward Burne-Jones windows by Brian Goodey and David Thompson. The autumn and winter lectures have been held at the museum where, as the restrictions gradually eased, we were able to offer members the opportunity to attend in person again, though many still access the online version. The lecturers much prefer to be able to talk to a live audience if possible and it is certainly easier to respond to questions in person, but we will continue to offer a hybrid solution. Simon Townsend has developed a very efficient system using the Teams technology available to the museum, and where that has not been possible, Colin Hill has been most generous in offering and organising a Zoom facility.

We have continued to offer lectures on a wide variety of topics, some local, others not; in the autumn Simon Wenham talked about crime and punishment in Victorian Britain while Nick Lipscombe described tactics in the Civil War. Covering topics nearer home, Annie Byard spoke on recording found objects in Oxfordshire and Paul Clark about work done by the Oxfordshire Buildings Record in Chipping Norton and Hook Norton. After Christmas Simon Townley talked about recent work by the Victoria County History team in Oxfordshire, Mark McKerracher explained about new approaches to understanding Anglo-Saxon agriculture, Robin Darvell-Smith debated the position and importance of Oxford scholars in the eighteenth century and Steven Parissien returned to give another lecture to the BHS, this time on railway station buildings. Deborah Hayter organises the series which is characterised by the impressive expertise of the speakers; we are most grateful to her and also for the e-newsletter she sends out to members with details of BHS lectures and events.

Great advances have been made in cataloguing the books in the library; Sue Jaiteh, a professional librarian, answered the call for assistance and has been tirelessly working away, with two colleagues, over the past few months, turning the library into a real asset of the society. They have transformed the temporary arrangement of the books, have weeded out duplicates and entered hundreds of titles into the online catalogue. It is hoped that the latter will be available to members later this year and that we will be able to open the library on a regular basis; the trio deserve the gratitude of all. We are also grateful for the gifts of books from various members.

The committee lost two very long serving members this year – Barrie Trinder was one of the earliest members of the society but is still offering his support as vice-president and on the editorial committee, and Clare Jakeman who, for many years, sent out mail and *Cake & Cockhorse* to members, as well as organising book sales at meetings. We miss them both and are grateful for all they did. In their place we welcome Verna Wass and Sue Jaiteh, who has agreed to become the society's librarian. None of the above activities could be undertaken without the work of the committee members, to whom we are enormously grateful.

Helen Forde, co-chair

Pamela Wilson, co-chair

ACCOUNTS

Banbury Historical Society
Registered Educational Charity 260581
Income & Expenditure Account for year ending 31 December 2021

	2021	*2020*
INCOME	£	*£*
Subscriptions	3,319	*3,305*
Gift Aid tax refund	491	*688*
Sale of publications	722	*1,675*
Visitors' fees and other income	71	*41*
Legacy from former member David Partridge	500	*0*
Records Volume Grants	0	*2,200*
Total Income	5,103	*7,909*
EXPENDITURE		
Cake & Cockhorse	1,875	*2,299*
Meetings	1,113	*1,017*
Postage and other administration costs	998	*1,431*
Archiving *Cake & Cockhorse*	0	*325*
Bookshelves	198	*0*
Records Volume	0	*5,429*
Total Expenditure	**4,184**	**10,501**
SURPLUS (Deficit) for the year	919	*(2,592)*
Balance Sheet as at 31 December 2021		
Balance of funds at 1 January 2021	6,248	*8,840*
Surplus (deficit) for the year	919	*(2,592)*
Balance of funds at 31 December 2021	7,167	*6,248*
Represented by:		
ASSETS		
NatWest Bank Current Account	2,572	*1,136*
NatWest Bank Reserve Account	5,002	*5,002*
Cash	28	*27*
Sundry Debtors – Museum sales & sums due	1,055	*1,188*
TOTAL ASSETS	8,657	*7,353*
LIABILITIES – Subscriptions in advance	(1,490)	*(1,105)*
NET ASSETS at 31 December 2021	7,167	*6,248*

Geoff 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 2021.

Howard Knight FCMA, CGMA 4 February 2022

PICTORIAL QUIZ

1. What, and where is this?

2. What is the Foundation date of the company whose ghost signs are preserved on Bridge Street?

3. Buildings fronting Banbury Bus Station; one earlier purpose is hinted in a preserved sign on the side wall. What was it?

4. Banbury Lock c1980. What was the name of the building between trees and chimneyed properties at the rear?

5. What was the previous use of this building and what is its function now?

6. How has 16 Market Place, Banbury changed recently?

7. Closed door on a former Grimsbury pub. Which pub and what was the origin of its name?

8. Once well known locally for auctions. What is the location and name?

9. This 1976 promotion for a new Banbury shopping area fails to capitalise on the best-known feature of the area. Where, and what is it?

10. Where might the Sovereign Leamington-to-Banbury coach change horses, marked by two large coaching inns, the *Craven Arms* and *Kings Arms*?

11. What establishment was originally housed here?

12. Where is this?

ANSWERS TO PICTORIAL QUIZ

1. Oval Pavilion on the Terrace Walk, Farnborough Hall.
2. Foundation date of 1839, incorporated in text on south face of the building. In the 20th century this building was occupied by Lamprey & Sons, Hardware.
3. The re-painted sign reads 'Baths Hot and Cold'. Public baths originated at a time when most people in urban areas did not have access to private bathing facilities. In 1846 the Public Baths and Wash-houses Act was passed, empowering local authorities to fund the building of public baths and wash houses. The Act was intended to encourage cities to voluntarily build such facilities but was not mandatory.
4. Staleys Warehouse (built 1837) later Corporation Wharf. (For further information see RC Kinchin-Smith, C*&CH*, (1992) vol 12/6, 148.)
5. *The Grimsbury* pub was built by Hunt Edmunds in 1950 and named *Blacklocks* after Blacklocks Hill, nearby. It was re-named *Buffalo Bill's* and highly decorated with a western theme. The basic structure has been re-modelled as Tesco Express and fast food outlets.
6. Substantial and sensitive conservation has brought a change of image from the 'Tudoresque' black and white to a more original tinted wash.
7. *The Elephant and Castle*, Grimsbury, a former local with lodgings, opposite site of Banbury's Merton Street Station. The pub name, first used at the south London location in 1765, seems derived from the 1622 arms of the Worshipful Company of Cutlers with the elephant referring to ivory cutlery handles.
8. *The Prince of Wales* pub built at the junction of Centre and South Streets in the freehold area of Grimsbury.
9. White Lion Walk, developed in the backland of a major early nineteenth-century coaching inn. It has been suggested that the massive conserved wisteria here was brought from London between 1820-50 by a coach traveller.
10. Southam, a major route crossing.
11. Blue Coat School, Market Place, Banbury, founded 1705.
12. All Saints, Middleton Cheney. A medieval church restored by Sir G. G. Scott with William Morris 1864/5.

Brian Goodey, Rosemary Leadbeater and Ian West

INDEX

Personal Names

Place Index