

JOHN CHENEY (1929–2013)



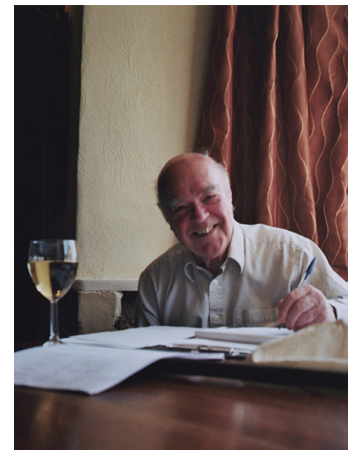
John was born at Broughton Road, Banbury in 1929, son of John and Mary Cheney and brother to Margaret and Christine; born, in fact, into a dynasty of printers of great distinction. Much of his education was in Quaker schools and at the Downs School at Colwall he became interested in art, music and writing English, all of which remained central in his life.

John started on the shopfloor at Cheney and Sons in 1947 and then did National Service from 1949–1951 in the Royal Artillery where he generously spent time writing their letters for his less educated comrades.

After National Service, he returned to Cheneys where he remained for the rest of his working life.

From Banbury he moved to Adderbury and then 25 years ago to Deddington which he said was 'very kind to him.' He had developed a talent for entertainment at dinners and similar events, a talent which expressed itself in Deddington in his 'Poetry Please' evenings and his involvement with the Deddington Festival. His verse writing was highly accomplished – as was his painting.

John formed strong friendships in our village, for instance with his fellow Questioning Gardeners, and was regarded with affection by the community in general, being so evidently a large part of the spirit of the place. He was a cheering presence and his determined enjoyment of life – people, food, drink, the arts – was exemplary. His kindness to his employees is remembered and many Deddingtonians will have experienced it personally too.



John preparing for one of his 'Poetry Please' evenings

His self-deprecation was a large part of his charm but there is no doubt that we have lost a man of great distinction of character who contributed enormously to the life of this village as to that of the other communities in which he lived.

Hugh White

CHENEY & SONS ARCHIVES

The archives of the Cheney & Sons printers are held in the Bodleian Library, Oxford.

'Cheney & Sons were printers of Banbury in Oxfordshire from 1767 to 2001 (though by then they had ceased being an independent family firm for a few years). They were essentially jobbing printers, who also published books under their own imprint. The archive acquired from Offa's Dyke Books is a remarkable witness to their ability to adapt to the changing technology of the industry and the changing society both within and beyond Banbury.

The archive contains: chapbooks printed by Cheney and fellow Banbury printer Rusher [see *The Banbury Chapbooks*, by Leo De Freitas, Banbury H.S. vol. 28, 2004]; a vast range of jobbing work including advertisements, posters and forms, which reflect day-to-day life in and around Banbury from the 1760s to the 1920s; 45 broadside ballads, moralities, murders and executions – the majority of which are of exceptional rarity and interest, with over half apparently unrecorded. Material produced by nine other Banbury printers and seventeen others from the local area is also present.