

From the Chair

We made the most of the exceptional weather this summer, enjoying an unusual number of events that included a visit to the Chiltern Open Air Museum, exchange visits with the Charlbury Society, our annual social (at Castle House), and a guided walk in the Windrush valley around Fulbrook. It will be comforting, with darker evenings and colder weather just around the corner, to plan events or visits that members might enjoy in the summer of 2004. Please let us know if there is somewhere or something you have enjoyed that you think would be suitable.

One date that you should pencil into your diaries is Saturday 22 May. We have been asked to host the annual meeting of the Oxfordshire Architectural and Historical Society. It is a great honour for us and is indicative that our society is acquiring a wider reputation. It should also provide us with a welcome financial boost. There will be more news nearer the day.

Chris Day

Programme for 2003-04

10 September Paul Booth on Roman Oxfordshire

8 October Verna Wass From the 'oss's mouth [see www.hobbyhorsefestival.co.uk]

12 November John Wooley on The great train robbery

10 December Christmas social

Our meetings take place at 7.30 at the Windmill Centre on the second Wednesday of the month.

The Friends over sixty years

As 2003 is sixty years since the *Country Planning* survey of 1943* was carried out in this area it seemed an appropriate time to review the current situation and look at any obvious changes.

To start with a small item first, under 'Places of Worship' the survey states 'three of the four Society of Friends Meeting Houses are closed'. Do they still remain and is the one still open and what is the story of the four?

Meetings of the Friends have been going on for over three hundred years, but increased quite considerably in the second half of the seventeenth century when one of their main founders, George Fox, gradually became their leader.

Born in 1624 at Fenny Drayton, Fox together with 60 to 70 itinerant Quakers was travelling around the south of England from 1652 spreading their message and they are known to have first visited Banbury in 1654.

Many thousands began to accept the Quakers' message, but in time they began to be persecuted, they refused as matter of principle to swear oaths in court and to pay tithes and church rates.

The first visitors to Banbury in 1654 held meetings at the site of Banbury Castle and at Hardwick House in the town. A number of people following the meetings were arrested for a variety of offences and at the Oxford Sessions some were imprisoned for differing terms. Lord Saye and Sele of Broughton sent two Quakers to gaol in 1658 for failing to lift their hats to him; he evicted some of his tenants for being followers.

In the late 1650s Meetings were held in forty Quaker households in and around the Banbury area. In 1657 a Meeting House was built behind the 'Flower de Luce', it was only a temporary structure and a permanent one was built on the site

in Horsefair. It was the first Non-Conformist building in Banbury and remains today. The authorities endeavoured to stop, without success, Friends from outlying villages travelling to Banbury. It was not until 1689 that Meeting Houses were acceptable under the law.

During the later years of the seventeenth century a number of acts were passed, many during the reign of William and Mary, some giving freedom of worship and others rescinding them under pressure from the Anglican church.

The four villages in the area researched, with the dates of their first meetings were:

Adderbury	1656
Hook Norton	1668
South Newington	1663
Sibford	1668

though their actual Meeting Houses were not built until later:

Adderbury	1675
Hook Norton	1705
South Newington	1692
Sibford	1631

From this it would seem the actual premises only came into being, after the villagers had been holding meetings for some time.

In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries the numbers declined for several reasons, one main one being much as today, the reduction in the rural population. With cheap imports and with the repeal of the Corn Laws there was less work in agriculture where many Quakers were employed.

One of the main families in the area in the early part of the nineteenth century was the Gilletts who, after starting and running several businesses, went into banking about 1850 eventually having branches in

* *Country planning*, C S and C S Orwin, Oxford, 1943. This book formed the basis of the film *Twenty-four square miles*: the survey was updated in 1975.

Banbury, Brackley, Chipping Norton, Woodstock, Witney and Oxford. In 1919 Gilletts Bank merged in with Barclays Bank.

They were very much concerned with a number of schools during this time including Sibford Ferris School, started in 1842 and still going today.

From the Survey in 1943 it appears that only one of the four known Meeting Houses remained in action on a regular basis. Adderbury was built in local stone in 1675 by Bray Doyley at that time Lord of the Manor and he was in fact imprisoned for the building.

The building is unusual in that it has a loft on three sides of the Meeting Room and has a thatched cottage adjacent for the use of the women. This was demolished in 1955. The Meeting House was last used on a regular basis in 1910 when it was closed. It is however still used once each year on the second Sunday in June when a large number of Friends from the region gather.

Adderbury is of interest in as much as the Members in the eighteenth century were engaged in cottage industries, one in particular being Robert Gilkes, a clock and watch maker who first made clocks for wall hanging, and later John Fardon who, with Tom Fardon a blacksmith, made the clock for Deddington Church.

The Hook Norton Meeting House had ceased to exist in 1943. The original Meeting House was built in 1705, though meetings had been going on since 1668. The Meeting House was the first Non-Conformist building in Hook Norton, but without a burial ground. During the nineteenth century the Meeting House was closed several times with Members joining with either Sibford or South Newington. It was in use about 1883 when there was an influx of labour involved with building the Banbury to Cheltenham Railway, when joint meetings were held with Sibford. It was opened and closed numerous times between 1888 and 1943 when it closed finally, the building demolished and the site left vacant.

South Newington was built in local stone in 1692 and, unlike many Meeting Houses, had a burial ground adjacent. The first meeting was held in 1663 when numbers were in single figures and presumably held in members' own houses,



From top to bottom: Adderbury Friends' Meeting House, South Newington village hall and Sibford Gower Friends' Meeting house. Photos taken by the author in 2003. [The incorrect photo of Addrebury was used in the printed edition, this photo by the editor.]

but numbers increased and by 1676 were up to 30. In 1781 the Meetings were merged with Hook Norton and held alternately. Meetings stopped in 1825 and transferred to Hook Norton, the Meeting House then being used sometimes by the Methodists.

At the end of the century the building fell into a poor state of repair, was temporarily repaired but fell into complete disuse in 1911 and was finally sold in 1927. The building was purchased and still stands in St Peter's Close and is now the Village Hall; the burial ground remains as a garden.

The one surviving Meeting House mentioned in the 1943 survey is at Sibford Gower.

The first meeting known here was in 1668 in a private dwelling, the Meeting House being built between 1678 and 1681, together with a burial ground. It was built of local stone with a stone-tile roof, but was later demolished as it had become too small and was rebuilt on a larger scale in 1861 as the second Sibford School had been opened in 1842 increasing the numbers considerably. The Meeting House remains in use today.

Whilst writing of the Sibford Meeting House it is necessary to mention the School. This started with just 52 pupils, 26 boys and 26 girls. It has continued to thrive and succeed over the many years and now has over 300 pupils with about three quarters being boarders. The School has always had a reputation for the success of its pupils and the happy times they spend there, shown by the 'Old Sibford Association' which has over 500 members all over the world who still return in large numbers.

In preparing these notes I must acknowledge the use of and references obtained from Some Rural Friends by Jack V Wood of the Religious Society of Friends, 1991.

Alan Maddison

One of our pleasant memories of the long hot summer was a visit in July as guests of the Charlbury Society. Here members are gathered outside The Corner House, prior to visiting the charming Charlbury Museum, a remarkable example of local enterprise. We were set to thinking what we might achieve here, though it is sobering to realise that 30 or 40 years of collecting lie behind the Charlbury Museum. We should start collecting, or is already too late?

Deddington in old photographs

We are indebted to Mrs Buffy Heywood for these observations on the December 2002 issue of 224 from Primrose Buckle, who lived at Deddington Manor from 1932 to 1946. It also gives the editor the chance to reprint two of his favourite photos from that issue.

I was thrilled to see this magazine, so beautifully presented. The top photograph of Castle End is exactly as it was in the early '30s when the Misses Loveday lived there. Miss Helen Loveday seemed to run a good deal in the village and was a great personality. After that Humphrey and Doreen Dixon lived there and I stayed there many times after we had left Deddington.

The Chapel Square photograph is

earlier obviously. That was our grocer on the left. In the far right corner there was a large timber yard and the doctor's surgery (Dr Hodges). In the war there was a terrible event when the timber-yard caught fire and everyone thought it was the Nazis. Was it called Hopcrafts?

Mr Well's wonderful drapery shop called 'Domestic Requisites' was next to a pub called the Unicorn in the Square. I never knew he gave tick. Miss Sanders' sweet shop was a glorious treasure house. My pocket money was 2d a week and I could buy several treats with that, licorice bootlaces and allsorts and a Milky Way. Accumulators were the precursors of batteries and were made of glass and needed constant charging ... you even had one for the wireless.

The Pied Piper pageant was a



fantastic event and a great treat. My mother, wearing a wimple, obviously had the cares of state hanging over her: we were rehearsed and rehearsed. I, (in front of her) was wearing a Swedish national costume in orange flannel, she brought back from Sweden ... it's an odd photograph, some of it looks quite ghostly.

Miss Hands, who lived next to Holcombe House and was hugely tall and gaunt, was an ideal Pied Piper, dressed in a long orange robe, very well cast and played her pipe very well.

The High Street in the 1930s looked just like this with a few additions. I understand the Three Tuns pub is still there in addition to the Volunteer. On the left there was Miss Harper's shop, fascinating to me as she wore a caliper on her leg and I had never seen one.

Mr Stockdale, the chemist, was also there; I believe it is now an antique shop. He was invaluable in taking a fly out of your eye by rolling your eyelid on a matchstick!

On the corner of Hudson Street was a garage with two pumps and, further towards Banbury, Lewis the tobacconist. On the right of the picture there was Compton's vegetable and fish shop. I used to get a banana (2d) every morning on the way to Miss Melsome's little school, also there was Mr Jones, the shoemaker, who really made shoes for my father. Beyond the Congregational church there was Mr Tibbetts' forge and one petrol pump, used by us: petrol was National Benzole at 1/3 per gallon [not much more than 1p per litre]. There were always horses waiting to be shod and it was great to watch. Mrs Tibbetts took in laundry and made a beautiful job of it. Next to them towards Oxford was Mr Bletsoe's farm. He loved playing board games with my brothers. He used to ride to his farm at Somerton every day and I often went with him. The lime trees were a good deal taller when I knew them and pollarded every year.



Readers will be interested to know that Clifton Mill, the home of members, Aubrey and Joyce Allison, which featured in 224 in June and September 2000 has been put on the market with Lane Fox of Banbury.



Any member thinking of researching aspects of the history of the area should investigate the huge holdings of the County Record Office. Their web site contains a useful guide at www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/index/things_to_do/oro.htm: we hope to publish articles about their collections in future issues of 224. They are holding an open day on 13 September and have a road show at the Woodstock Museum on 27 September.

To get an idea of what national records survive in the Public Record Office (lots!) see www.pro.gov.uk.

It might be possible to organise group visit to the county Record office or to the Public Record Office at Kew. If you think you might be interested please let Chris Day know.

If undelivered please return to: Deddington & District History Society, c/o 37 Gaveston Gardens, Deddington OX15 0NX. 224 is the newsletter of the Deddington & District History Society, published three times a year and distributed free to members.

The Society meets on the second Wednesday of the month during the season, normally at the Windmill Centre in Deddington. Membership £8/14 pa single/couples, or £2 per meeting at the door.

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