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NORTHAMPTONSHIRE PAST AND PRESENT
1989-90

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All communications regarding articles in this and future issues should be addressed to R. L. Greenall, the Hon. Editor, Adult Education Department, University of Leicester

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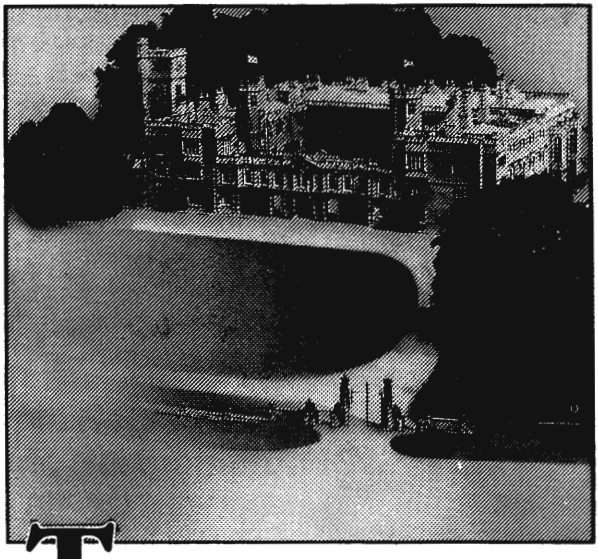

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NOTES AND NEWS

This number is the first of a new volume of this journal, Vol VIII. *N.P.& P.* has been going strong for 41 years now. Miss Wake started it in 1948 as an annual journal for the members of the Record Society, and was succeeded in 1960 as hon. editor by Sir Gyles Isham, who served in that capacity for 14 years. John Steane followed, and was editor until moving to Oxfordshire in 1978, since when I have been doing the job. With 12 issues and over 800 pages published to date, the challenge of going for Sir Gyles' record is tempting.

I doubt if Miss Wake would be other than proud of the journal and the society if she could see them now. She would of course notice that over the years the subject matter of *N.P.& P.* has changed. It has fewer architectural and gentry pieces and is more concerned with economic, political and adminstrative history. Articles are also longer and more academic these days. This has less to do with editorial policy, than with what is submitted. Very few articles are actually commissioned. I tend to publish what I select from what is sent, and what arrives inevitably reflects trends in historical research. With the expansion of higher education there has been a corresponding growth in the number of academic studies in history using local archives. When it started *N.P.& P.* was designed to be both scholarly and popular, and that is what the aim still is. However, the fact that *scholarly* frequently means overdetailed is one of your editor's headaches.

I do not believe Miss Wake would be disappointed with the progress of the Society either. Membership keeps up pretty well, and the standard, and regularity of appearance of our main series publications has not fallen, despite the high cost of publishing books these days. Promised for the near future are volumes on the Northamptonshire National Schools Society in the 19th century and the Tillemans drawings from the British Library, both of which I anticipate will prove popular with members.

Next year the Record Office is scheduled to move to a new home at Wootton and, provided satisfactory terms can be made with the County Council [and there seems little doubt they will be, given the goodwill which exists on both sides] the Record Society will move its offices and Library to the same building. In many ways it will be a wrench to leave Delapré Abbey, which Miss Wake and the Society did so much to save after the War, but ambience and efficiency do not always march together. Delapré as it stands today would cost millions to repair and refurbish, and, because of planning restrictions, cannot be extended to meet anticipated future County Record needs.

Society members who attended were treated to two splendid annual lectures this year. The first was by Canon Higham, the cathedral librarian, on the history of the library of Peterborough Cathedral. The story he told on 22nd October 1988 was by turns heartening, sad and funny. The library of Peterborough Monastery was twice built and twice scattered, by the Danes and by the Dissolution, most of what survives of its treasures [such as the Peterborough Anglo Saxon Chronicle] now being preserved elsewhere. The existing library is the survivor of that started after the Restoration and owes much to Dean White Kennett, about whom there are a fund of good stories. Members were much amused by Canon

Higham's injunction 'always write in your books', not least because it makes life easier for future librarians and scholars.

This year's Spring lecture at the annual general meeting on 20th May, 1989 was given by Dr Geoffrey Martin, formerly Keeper of the Public Records, and before that Professor of History at Leicester. He spoke urbanely and wittily on Medieval Northampton and the Charter of 1189, the eight hundredth anniversary of which is currently being celebrated by the borough council and inhabitants. In his time at the P.R.O. Dr Martin presided over the great celebration of the ninth century of the Domesday Book. Against the background of the Great Survey he offered a series of observations on Norman England and the significance of emergent boroughs such as Northampton acquiring the right the take into their own hands the collecting of their own taxes, appointing their own reeves and mayors, and having their customs and privileges recognized by royal charter.

Tailpiece on the Peculiarities of English English: [a note for Americans and others]. The 'hon' in 'hon editor' is not, as some correspondents assume, short for 'honourable'. It stands for 'honorary', as in voluntary, one who does it for love rather than money. 'Honourable' means something else [indeed, *several* other things]. But be warned: 'hon' not meaning 'honourable' does not mean your hon editor admits to being *dis*honourable. Absolutely not. Scout's honour!

R.L.G.

Notes on contributors

Dr Cyril Hart has recently retired as a medical practitioner. A contributor of several articles to this journal, he is a notable scholar of the history of pre-Conquest England.

H. J. K. Jenkins writes internationally on Caribbean operations *circa* 1793–1815. He is also deeply interested in traditional East Anglian vessels, and is Chairman of the Fenland Lighter Project.

Trevor Hold is a Northampton-born composer and poet and lives at Wadenhoe.

Susan Ranson, a former archivist, and teacher and writer on local history, lives at Ashton, near Towcester.

Dr Tim Ashplant teaches in the School of Humanities and Social Science at Liverpool Polytechnic.

Dr Marie Dickie is a Northamptonian and is a member of the Northamptonshire County Council

R. J. B. Morris is Chief Executive and Town Clerk, Northampton Borough Council.

Acknowledgements

Thanks are due to Northamptonshire Leisure and Libraries service, and particularly to Miss Marion Arnold, for assistance with illustrations in this number, and to the Northampton Borough Council for permission to use their logo as our cover illustration.

OUNDLE: ITS PROVINCE AND EIGHT HUNDREDS

CYRIL HART

While preparing a recent course of extension lectures for Leicester University held at Oundle, I had occasion to review once again the evidence relating to the history of the early administrative units associated with the place-name of the settlement there. Much has been uttered already on this topic, but the last word has not yet been said, and indeed the discussion is likely to continue for many years to come[1]. The historical sources are by no means exhausted and there is also scope for more archaeological investigation. Above all, much remains to be done on the interpretation of materials already known to us. This present paper should be considered as a contribution to the debate, made in the hope that it will provoke further comments by others, for full examination of the Oundle evidence is central to our understanding of the impact of the Danish settlement on English local governmental institutions.

The name 'Oundle' is very old, so old in fact that one cannot now determine whether its roots are Germanic or Celtic[2]. Whatever its etymology, one feels that the name is likely to reflect the remarkable situation of the medieval settlement within a reversed 'S' bend of the River Nene. As far as I know, the recent excavation of the first- to fourth-century Roman industrial area to the east of the North Bridge, at the junction of the ancient roads from Norman Cross (via Polebrook) and Chesterton (via Elton), has not revealed any habitations beyond those serving the needs of the craftsman; no public or military buildings were uncovered, and the limits of the occupation area were left undetermined[3]. Surface finds suggest that this was considerably more extensive than the excavated area, but the major question remains unanswered: was the Roman settlement confined to the east bank of the River Nene, or is the excavation site merely part of the eastern, transpontine suburb of a more substantial Roman complex underlying the existing town? If, as seems likely, a Roman bridge spanned the Nene just downstream from the medieval one, then we may safely assume that the main Roman occupation area was taken over by Anglian settlers in the fifth and sixth centuries. Such continuity has been established at other sites in the Nene valley.

Surviving historical evidence indicates the presence of two early Anglian features well worth archaeological investigation. Point no. 23 of the late tenth century perambulation of the Oundle bounds establishes the location of one of the pagan community's cemeteries (grid reference TL 030 893), and point no. 9 of the same perambulation reveals the probable site of the (presumably eremetical) chapel of St Cett, which must date from soon after the

1. The two most recent surveys are: P. Courtney *The early history of the Eight Hundreds of Oundle,* 1979, Leicester University Department of Local History, MA Dissertation (unpublished typescript: copies available at Northamptonshire Record Office and Peterborough Central Library); and Glenn Foard 'The Administrative Organisation of Northamptonshire in the Saxon Period', in *Anglo-Saxon Studies in Archaeology and History* 4, 1985, 185-222 (hereafter Foard, *Administrative Organisation).*

2. J. E. B. Gover, Allen Mawer and F. M. Stenton *The Place-Names of Northamptonshire,* English Place-names Society Vol. X, Cambridge, 1933, 213-4. (hereafter *PN Northants).* See also O. Arngate, 'The Place-Name Oundle', and 'Again the Place-Name Oundle', in *Notes and Queries* 26, 1979, pp. 4-5, 389.

3. J. Hadman and S. Upex 'The Roman Settlement at Ashton near Oundle', in *Durobrivae* (Journal of the Nene Valley Research Group) 3, 1975, pp. 13-15. Further reports appear in subsequent volumes until 1984.

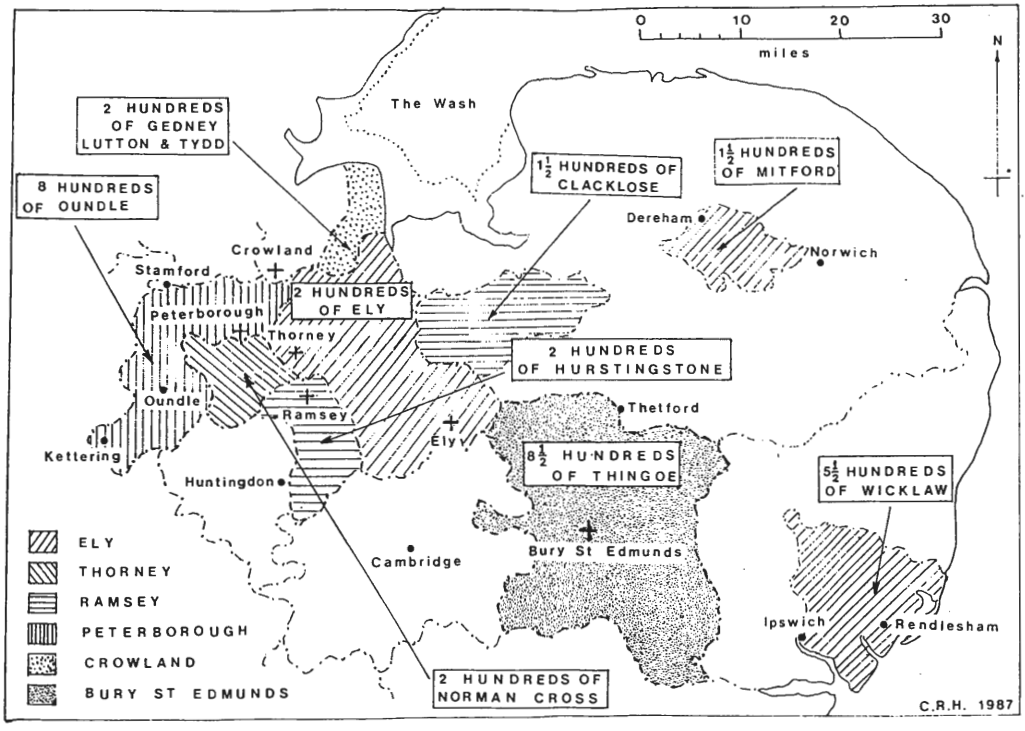

FIG 1. LIBERTIES OF THE FENLAND ABBEYS.

conversion (grid reference TL 030 877)[4].

Our earliest written references to Oundle are all concerned with the province named after it, within which no doubt the settlement itself lay. Bede tells us that in 709 St Wilfrid, the turbulent bishop of York, ended his days *in monasterio suo, quod habebat in prouincia Undalum sub regimine Cudbaldi abbatis;* elsewhere he calls it *in prouincia quae uocatur 'in Undalum'*[5]. Eddius, Wilfrid's biographer, describes his death-place as lying *ad monasterium eius, quod in Undolum positum est,* where he had once dedicated a church to St Andrew. Eddius tells us further that 'certain exiles of noble birth who were ravaging with an army, because of some wrong done to them, burned the whole of the above-mentioned *coenobium in Undolum,* except for the house in which the saint had died'; later he says that the flames devoured one side of a great thorn-hedge which surrounded the monastery, but stopped before a wooden cross which had been erected on the site of the bath-house there[6].

We know (from Hugh Candidus, a late but reliable source)[7] of an abbot Cuthbald

4. See Appendix: 'The bounds of Oundle in the late tenth century'. For St Cett, see D. W. Rollason 'Lists of saint's resting-places in Anglo-Saxon England', in *Anglo-Saxon England*, 7, 1978, pp. 61-93, esp. p. 63. Foard, *Administrative Organisation,* p. 194, would associate St Cett with St Sithe, who gave her name to a lane, chapel and a field south west of Oundle; but see *PN Northants* p. 214 n. 1, where St Sithe is identified as St Osyth (presumably of Aylesbury, rather than Essex). Her cult spread widely in the post-Conquest period.

5. *Bede's Ecclesiastical History of the English People* ed. Bertram Colgrave and R. A. B.Mynors, Oxford. 1969, pp 516, 528 (Bk v, Ch 19). (hereafter *Bede, HE).*

6. *The Life of Bishop Wilfrid by Eddius Stephanus* ed. Bertram Colgrave, Cambridge, 1985 edn., pp. 80, 140, 144-6 (Chs 40, 65, 67). (hereafter Eddius, *Vita Wilfridi*).

7. *The Chronicle of Hugh Candidus* ed. W. T. Mellows, Oxford, 1949, pp. 15, 21-2. (hereafter *Hugh Candidus*).

who in 675 succeeded abbot Saxulf, who had founded the abbey of *Medeshamstede* (later Peterborough) some time around 660-670[8]; Cuthbald was succeeded in turn by an abbot Ecgbald, certainly no later than 687[9]. *Medeshamstede,* like Wilfrid's monastery is said to have been dedicated originally to St Andrew[10]. If, as has often been suggested, we are to identify Wilfrid's monastery with *Medeshamstede,* then two corollaries follow: Peterborough lay within the province of Oundle, and Wilfrid himself held *Medeshamstede* (continously or intermittently, but in any case intially under Cuthbald) from some time in the period 675 x 687 until his death in 709.

However, we have evidence from Bede that *Medeshamstede* lay not in the province of Oundle, but *in regione Gyruiorum,* a Middle Anglian people who lived in the eastern fenland, and that Saxulf was its *constructor,* as well as being its first abbot[11]. Moreover, the reliable early Peterborough memoranda show that Saxulf continued to foster the interest of his foundation long after he had been appointed bishop of the Mercians[12]. Wilfrid could hardly have been in competition with him. All this, to my mind, adds up to decisive evidence against Peterborough as the site of Wilfrid's monastery.

It is not difficult to suggest a possible alternative. Cuthbald, Saxulf's successor at Peterborough, founded a number of satellites, and placed monks in them. These included Brixworth, 8 miles from the boundary of the later Eight Hundreds of Oundle, and only 21 miles from Oundle itself[13]. Brixworth might well have lain within the early province of Oundle, nor is it at all unlikely that it was first dedicated to St Andrew, and only much later to All Saints. Clapham described the surviving church at Brixworth as 'perhaps the most imposing architectural memorial of the seventh century yet surviving north of the Alps' and Taylor agreed with him[14]. A fitting church for Wilfrid to take charge of *'sub regimine Cudbaldi'*. I suggest he held it for a while after his release from imprisonment by King Ecgfrith of Northumbria in 681, and retained an interest in it throughout his later years, returning there eventually to end his days, once more in exile from his see of York.

Indeed, Wilfrid's biographer tells us that directly after his release from captivity under Ecgfrith, Wilfrid went in exile to Mercia, where he was given land by a *praefectus* called Berhtwald, a nephew of King Æthelred of Mercia, upon which he founded a monastery[15]. This, surely, must have been identical with the monastery *in Undolam* where Wilfrid was eventually to die. Of course, one might postulate that Wilfrid's monastery was sited at Oundle itself, or even at St Cett's chapel nearby. But neither of these is included among the monastic satellites of *Medeshamstede* listed in the Peterborough memoranda, and I think that Bede's phrase *sub regimine*

8. 'Soon after the middle of the seventh century': F. M. Stenton *'Medeshamstede* and its colonies', in *Preparatory to Anglo-Saxon England,* Oxford, 1970, p. 179 n. 3. (hereafter *Medeshamstede).*

9. *Charters of Barking* ed. C. R. Hart, Oxford, in preparation.

10. No early reference to this dedication survives, but a late addition to the 'E' version of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, which was written at Peterborough, claims that the monastic church was dedicated in 656 to SS Andrew, Peter and Paul, and that Wilfrid was present at the dedication. The authority of this statement is, however, very doubtful. The references to St Andrew and to Wilfrid's presence at the dedication may result from a mistaken deduction from Eddius's *Vita Wilfridi* by whoever was responsible for the late additions to the Peterborough Chronicle. No other source ascribes the dedication of *Medeshamstede* to St Andrew.

11. *Bede HE* iv, 6.

12. *Medeshamstede* p. 182.

13. *Ibid.*, p. 185. It was not until this paper had been completed that I encountered Henry Mayr-Harting's suggestion, made on stylistic grounds, that Brixworth was one of Wilfrid's monasteries; see *The Coming of Christanity to Anglo-Saxon England,* London, 1972, p. 158. The choice of Brixworth for the title of the newly created suffragan bishopric in the Peterborough diocese would appear most apt.

14. H. M. and Joan Taylor *Anglo-Saxon Architecture,* Cambridge, 1980 edn., I, 108.

15. Eddius, *Vita Wilfridi* c. 40.

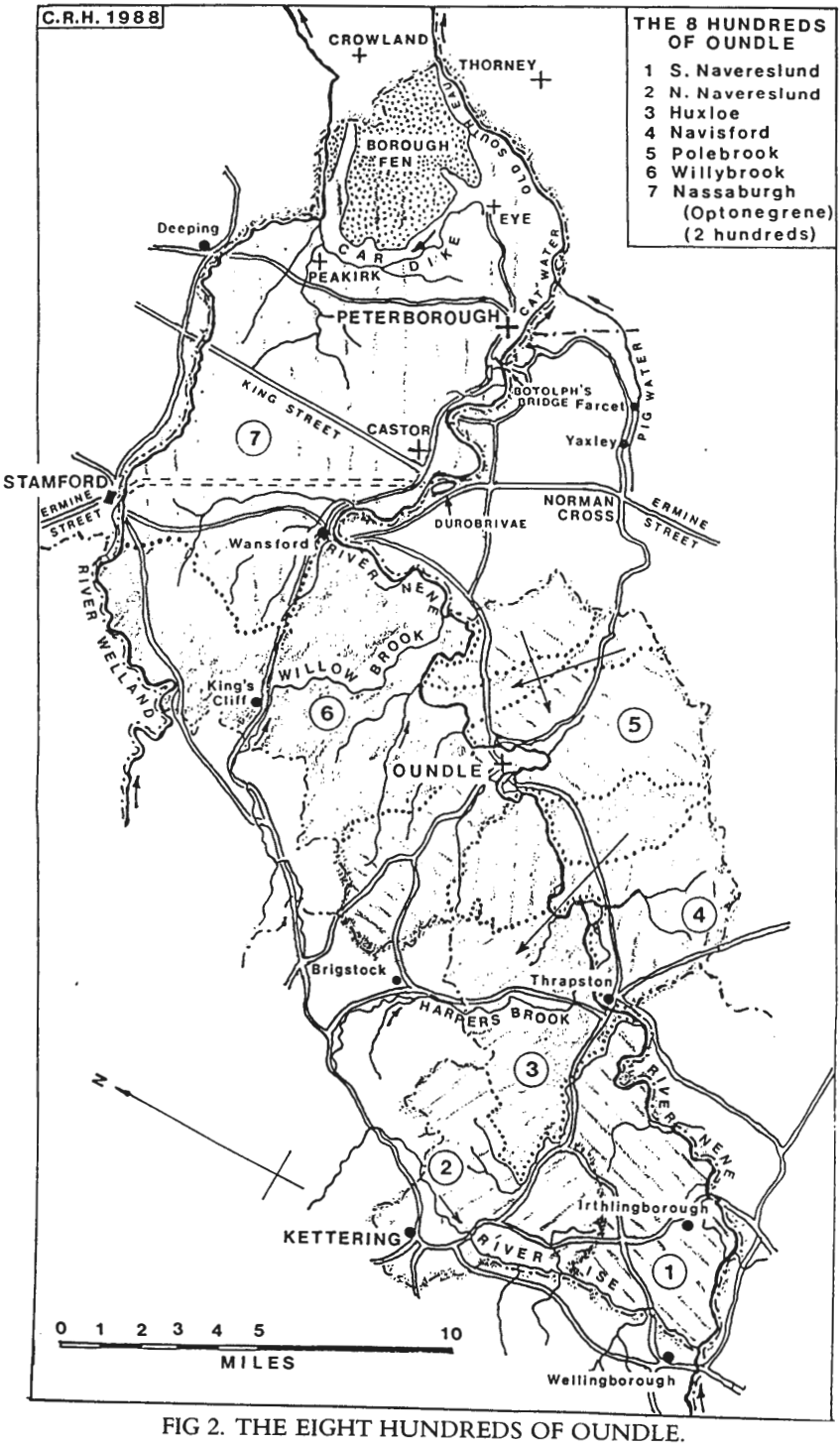

FIG 2. THE EIGHT HUNDREDS OF OUNDLE.

Cudbaldi implies that Wilfrid's monastery was in ecclesiatical subjection to Cuthbald in some way. No known site other than Brixworth meets all the criteria necessary for the identification of Wilfrid's monastery.

One might suggest that King Æthelred's nephew Berthwald was at the time *praefectus* (at this period, sometimes an alternative title to *princeps)* of the whole of the *provincia* (an alternative title to *regio*) of Oundle, which formed one of the major divisions of Outer Mercia[16]. To the north east, the provincial boundaries of Oundle marched with those of the *Wideringas* (as indicated by the positions of Wittering and Werrington), well short of *Medeshamstede;* but one supposes that the territory of the province would have occupied a significantly larger area to the south west than that of the later Eight Hundreds of Oundle, though not reaching as far as Northampton.

We encounter Berhtwald in only one other early source, a Malmesbury charter dated 30 July 685 in which he is described as *rex*, and grants to the abbey an estate at Somerford Keynes in Gloucestershire, which was at that time in the territory of the Hwicce[17]. The charter claims to have been drawn up at *Bregford*, perhaps Burford in Oxfordshire, but the surviving version has no witness list. There is no reason however to doubt its authenticity. Berhtwald could have been a son of King Wulfhere, acting first as *praefectus* to his uncle King Æthelred in 681, with charge Oundle, then as *subregulus* in 685, with charge of Hwicce, in the same way as Peada (d.656) was *subregulus* first of the Middle Angles and then of Southern Mercia under Kings Penda and Oswui of Mercia.

The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle tell us that in 877 a Danish army settled a tract of country which had Northampton for its military and administrative centre and stretched north eastwards as far as the River Welland. Oundle (and much if not all of its *provincia*) was included within this territory. It is important to appreciate the nature and scale of the Danish settlement. The indigenous peasant population was not wiped out; all that happened was that lordship of the individual estates passed from the hands of their English landowners (whether the king, church, nobility, or thegns) to those of their successors, members of the local Danish army and often, one suspects, of humble origin, who had secured their land by conquest and shared it out by lot.

It appears probable that the administration of the territory settled by the Danish army based on Northampton was very much along the lines established by their northern compatriots, army settlers from the five boroughs of Stamford, Lincoln, Derby, Leicester, and Nottingham. The Danes were illiterate pagans, but only the very fit survived, and these formed a close-knit community, versatile and formidably active. They had brought with them from Scandinavia well-developed legal, agricultural and trading customs, very different from those of their English predecessors. Even their units of measurement and account differed profoundly from those of the native systems; they counted in dozens rather than in tens, and taxed their land solely by its arable capacity, instead of basing their assessment (as with the earlier English cadastre) on the whole agricultural package including pasture, woodland and meadow.

Moreover, unlike many of the English former landowners, who had farmed their estates through the agency of reeves (i.e. stewards), the Danish settlers were practic-

16. For 'Outer Mercia', see C. R. Hart 'The Kingdom of Mercia' in *Mercian Studies* ed. Ann Dornier, Leicester, 1977, pp. 43-61.

17. W. de Gray Birch *Cartularium Saxonicum,* 3 vols, 1885-99, I, no. 65 (hereafter CS, followed by charter number); listed in P. H. Sawyer *Anglo-Saxon Charters,* R.Hist.Soc., 1968, no. 1169 (hereafter S, followed by charter number). The church of Somerford Keynes has an early doorway, said by some to be of seventh-century date.

al people who lived and worked on their own estates and had both the incentive and the ability to exploit them efficiently. Very probably they were less heavily taxed than the former English landlords, and often therefore they needed to impose less severe burdens on their peasantry. They had no church dues to pay, and instead of a heavy geld liability to the Mercian king they had merely to support the upkeep of their earl in Northampton, and the defences of its *burh*. At first they did not even have a coinage of their own, though this was soon remedied by the institution of local mints at Northampton and Stamford, where initially designs on English coins were copied.

Justice in the areas of Danish settlement was no longer dispensed by the local ealdorman or reeve, according to laws promulgated by the king and the church. The royal writ no longer ran in their territory; their land was held not by charter nor by folkright but by lot, and it could be handed down or traded locally without interference from church or state. A land market quickly developed; portions of estates were sold off or exchanged to meet the practical requirements of local agrarian management, and over the years individual Danish holdings became further fragmented by division for inheritance. Title to land (and sometimes its stock) was guaranteed by sureties taken from among those who witnessed the transactions at the local assembly (the 'thing'). Decisions made at these assemblies of army settlers were by popular acclaim, manifested by the brandishing of their weapons (the 'wapentake'). Disputes were settled by a jury of 'lagemen', a feature unknown to the previous legal administrative set-up.

Likewise, trade within the Danelaw was uninhibited by old-established customs and tolls, and both locally and externally its direction underwent a radical change. Fresh trade routes were established, and in response many old markets disappeared and new ones were created. Locally there was probably more self-sufficiency on the estates, and sharing of resources with neighbours. Externally, instead of having to make long hauls by land and sea to deal in foreign tongues with strange merchants on the Continental and Mediterranean littorals, traders sent out by the Danish settlers had ready access via the rivers Nene and Welland to the Wash and the North Sea, and so to their kinsmen, either up the coast in the great trading city of York, or directly across the sea in their Scandinavian homeland.

Many of these aspects of everyday living were alien to the English tradition; the new administration was rougher no doubt, but simpler and more effective. The settlers of the Danelaw soon became richer than their English predecessors, and when in the early tenth century the English leaders of Wessex and of the unoccupied parts of Mercia reconquered some of the Danish territory, they wisely left intact much of its new administrative framework; the English paid the Danes the compliment of remodelling their own local government arrangements (and even, to some extent, their land law) along Danish lines.

We do not know the precise extent of the Northampton army's settlement area, nor the precise arrangement of its internal subdivisions, but there is no doubt that the long-term effects of that settlement were profound. The density of settlement was greatest to the north and east of the army's territory, between Oundle and Peterborough[18], and here (especially in the two hundreds of Nassaburgh) most if not all of the Danes appear to have been left on their estates, largely undisturbed, when English rule was restored in 920. Further south and west, after the restoration very many estates were taken directly into the royal fisc, and here the Danish influence became less marked as the years went by.

Very soon after the English reoccupation the shire of Northampton was created, of

18. C. R. Hart *The Hidation of Northamptonshire*, Leicester, 1970, p. 43 n. 1. (hereafter *Hid. Northants*).

20 hundreds, each assessed initially at 100 hides; 4 'hundreds and a half', each of 150 hides; and 3 double hundreds, each of 200 hides, giving a total of 3,200 hides for the shire[19]. The hundredal structure was modelled on that of the Danish wapentakes; indeed sometimes the hundreds at the Danish end of the shire continued to be called wapentakes[20]. It is unsafe to assume, however, that all the newly created hundreds (or 1½ hundreds, or double hundreds) of Northamptonshire had the same boundaries as the Danish wapentakes before them. Sometimes this may have been the case, but there appears to be no way of proving or disproving the identity for any particular hundred, or hundredal grouping.

As with the wapentakes, the hundreds were divided into units each of 120 nominal acres, but whereas such units had been called ploughlands by the Danes (and appear as carucates in Domesday Book), in the English hundreds they were renamed hides, an Old English term which had originally been applied to the complete agricultural package held by a single family. Due to this important Danish influence on the new cadastre, the newly created hidation differed radically from the one obtaining before the Danish settlement, and this is true even in those parts of England into which the Danes had not penetrated. However, whereas the Danes had grouped their ploughlands duodecimally in groups of 6 and 12 for purposes of assessment, the new English hides were arranged decimally in groups of 5 and 10. The subsequent history of the Northamptonshire assessment has been described elsewhere[21].

It was presumably at this time, i.e. in 920 or very soon afterwards, that the eight hundreds at the Danish end of Northamptonshire, along the valley of the River Nene from Peterborough to Kettering, and forming one quarter of the whole county, were organised into a largely autonomous judicial unit administered from Oundle[22]. This autonomy may have reflected local Danish influence, for there is no evidence of any special ecclesiastical control of the Eight Hundreds at that time; indeed, *Medeshamstede* (later to be called Peterborough Abbey) had not yet been refounded and still lay in ruins, with its early land endowment and judicial rights all dispersed and mostly in lay hands. As has already been remarked, there is also no evidence that the outer boundaries of the Eight Hundreds were related closely to those of the former province of Oundle.

We next hear of Oundle in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle entry for 956, as the burial-place of Wulfstan I, archbishop of York. Like his predessor Wilfrid, Wulfstan was in exile from York at the time of his death; it has been surmised that during his exile he had been given the see of (Mercian) Dorchester, in which Oundle then lay. Could he have been given also the temporal jurisdiction over the Eight Hundreds of Oundle during his exile? I think not. It is true that Oscytel, his successor at York, also had local connections, and that before his succession he too had been bishop of Dorchester. Moreover, Eadulf, who succeeded to York a little later, had been abbot of Peterborough and as such (as we shall see) became lord of the Eight Hundreds. These associations of four early archbishops of York (Wilfrid, Wulfstan I, Oskytel and Eadulf) with Oundle are very curious, but after due consideration I am of the view that they are probably fortuitous. Over 250 years separate the first two cases, and no particular pattern in the relationship is discernible. Wulfstan I may have been

19. *Hid. Northants* p. 39.

20. e.g. in Domesday Book (hereafter *DB Northants*), Hwiccleslea ff. 219b, 220b, 225a, 228b; in CS 1130, Nassaburgh (see *Anglo-Saxon Charters* ed. A. J. Robertson, Cambridge, 1956, no. XL, p. 76) (hereafter Robertson, *Charters*). See also *PN Northants* pp. xxvi, 223–4.

21. *Hid. Northants* p. 38.

22. The earliest reference to the Eight Hundreds of Oundle occurs in CS 1130 (Robertson, *Charters*, XL), in a section of the text which describes events dated before 984.

merely visiting Oundle, or passing through, when he died there or somewhere nearby. All that we may safely infer about Oundle from this entry in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle is that it had an important church at that period, an opinion reinforced by the preservation there of the relics of St Cett, an early local saint. This mother church of Oundle may well have been collegiate, but there is no need to assume that it was monastic; English monasticism was at a low ebb at the time.

We come now to the period of the Benedictine monastic revival in England, and to the untiring efforts of Bishop Æthelwold of Winchester (with strong royal support) to refound and re-endow the ancient fenland abbeys of Ely, Peterborough, Crowland and Thorney. Ramsey Abbey was also founded at this time; in fact it was the pioneer of the reformed abbeys of the fenland, but unlike its successors it was an entirely new foundation, and instead of Bishop Æthelwold it had for its spiritual patron Bishop Oswald of Worcester.

The process of the monastic revival in the fenlands may be studied most conveniently by dividing it into three periods. The first starts in 969 with the foundation of Ramsey, and ends in 975 with the death of King Edgar, by which time all of Bishop Æthelwold's fenland abbeys had been refounded; the likeliest dates are Ely in 970, Peterborough in 971[23], Thorney (and perhaps Crowland) in 973[24]. The second period, from 975 to 978, is that of the anti-monastic reaction following King Edgar's death, when landowners tried (on the whole, unsuccessfully) to regain possession of estates which had been used for the monastic endowments. The third period, from 978 until Bishop Æthelwold's death in 984, was one of consolidation, in which the foundation endowments were buttressed by acquisition of other estates nearby. Bishop Æthelwold kept written records of the land transactions undertaken in building up these endowments, many of which have survived. They can be examined for Ely in the *Liber Eliensis*[25], and for Peterborough and Thorney in their cartularies, called respectively the Black and Red Books[26]. The Ramsey endowment can be studied in the *Chronicon Rameseiensis*[27], but unfortunately all the early Crowland records were destroyed by fire soon after the Norman Conquest, and no reliable copies have come down to us.

It seems probable that Peterborough itself and its berewicks, together with Oundle and its berewicks and Kettering, came into the hands of King Edgar, and were granted to Bishop Æthelwold by royal charter in or soon after 971. If so, the original charter was subsequently lost or destroyed, possibly during the attack on the abbey a century later by Hereward the Wake and his companions, or perhaps in the disastrous Peterborough fire of 1117, recorded by Hugh Candidus the abbey's first historian. There was undoubtedly an authentic foundation charter of some kind; all the newly reformed foundations had one. The surviving text of the Peterborough foundation charter is however a post-Conquest forgery[28]. It appears to incorporate some reliable traditions, and the separate set of bounds which have survived for Oundle[29] are certainly authentic; they may have been those which were drawn up for the original charter of

23. Ely: C. R. Hart *The Early Charters of Eastern England*, Leicester, 1966, pp. 42-3; Peterborough: C. R. Hart *The Early Charters of Northern England and the North Midlands*, Leicester, 1975, p. 326. (hereafter ECEE; ECNE).
24. ECEE pp. 173, 185.
25. *Liber Eliensis*, ed. E. O. Blake, R.Hist.Soc., London, 1962; (hereafter LE).
26. Black Book: London, Society of Antiquaries MS 60; Red Book: Cambridge University Library Add. MS 3020-1. Pre-Conquest charters from the Black Book are listed in ECEE and ECNE, and those from the Red Book are edited in ECEE.
27. *Chronicon Abbatiae Rameseiensis*, ed. W. Dunn Macray, Rolls Series, London, 1886.
28. CS 1258, 1280-1; S 787; ECEE 15; ECNE 8.
29. CS 1129; S 1566; see Appendix.

donation. It appears probable also that the jurisdiction of the Eight Hundreds was attached to the lordship of Oundle, and was granted by the king to Peterborough (or more likely to Bishop Æthelwold in the first instance) along with the ownership of the three principal estates. Initially, according to Hugh Candidus, Æthelwold planned to site his new monastery at Oundle itself, but the queen persuaded him to place it instead at Peterborough.

The forged foundation charter speaks of a market and tolls at Oundle, but none of the authentic texts of foundation charters for other monasteries endowed at this period mention markets, and one would not expect that the original Peterborough charter was an exception. Our earliest reliable reference to a market at Oundle is in Domesday Book[30]; by then it was the largest of the three markets recorded for Northamptonshire, and there seems little doubt that it was already an ancient institution. The importance of Oundle's market is that it underlines the nature of the town's origin; from Roman times onwards, it was a commercial centre, well placed for east-west and north-south trade by river and by road. As far as one can tell, it was never a military centre, never walled (though its river defences were formidable), never (unlike Northampton, Stamford, and even Peterborough) a *burgh,* and never therefore, in spite of its trade, the site of a mint.

Although we have no early charter for Oundle, a copy survives in the Peterborough *Black Book* of a royal diploma dated 956, granting Kettering to the thegn Ælfsige[31]. It was probably this thegn who had already been given estates at Ailsworth near Peterborough[33] and Yaxley[34] in Huntingdonshire. His father is named Brihtsige in the record of one of these transactions, and it is evident that his family held widespread estates in other counties, but insufficient evidence survives to place them in the pedigrees of any of the holders of the great ealdordoms of the day. The Yaxley and Ailsworth estates were exchanged by Ælfsige's son Wulfstan Uccea with Bishop Æthelwold for land in Sussex[35]. Presumably Kettering came into Æthelwold's possession by a similar route, the transaction being made secure by a royal charter; it is not impossible however that the estate was re-acquired from Ælfsige for the royal fisc by forced sale, or even by forfeiture.

Whatever the exact nature of the Peterborough title, directly after King Edgar's death dramatic events ensued, for a thegn named Leofsige, whose relationship (if any) to Wulfstan Uccea is uncertain, took into his possession Peterborough, Oundle, and Kettering, and with them presumably their berewicks and sokelands, together with the jurisdiction of the Eight Hundreds[36]. There was uproar on the estates, and for two whole years no land was ploughed and no seed sewn. The same sort of upheaval was going on throughout many other of the properties which had been used to endow the monasteries of the Benedictine reform, and there was evidently a power struggle between the families and followers of Ealdormen Æthelwine of East Anglia and Byrhtnoth of Essex on the one hand, and Ealdorman Ælfhere of Mercia and his son-in-law Ælfric Cild on the other, as to who should control the court and policies of Edgar's successor Edward, who was a minor. Eventually the

30. *DB Northants* fol. 221b.
31. CS 943; S 592; ECNE 5.
32. CS 871; S 533; ECEE 163.
33. CS 893; S 556; ECEE 6.
34. CS 940; S 595; ECEE 8.
35. ECEE p. 162. The berewicks of Peterborough and Oundle are first mentioned in a list of the gifts of Bishop Æthelwold to Peterborough, preserved in the Peterborough *Black Book*, see Robertson, *Charters,* no. XXXIX. The Oundle berewicks are listed in Domesday as estates in Thurning and Dry Stoke, and its sokelands are listed in the same source as estates in Lutton, Armston, Kingsthorpe, Hemington, Luddington, and Winwick (*DB Northants,* fol. 221bcd). All the Oundle sokelands lay in Polebrook hundred, as did Oundle itself.
36. LE pp. xxi, 84-8.

issue was solved nationally by the murder of the young King Edward, and succession of his half brother Æthelred the Unready.

Locally matters were brought to a head by the slaughtering of Leofsige by Ælfwold, Ealdorman Æthelwine's brother. Ælfwold went to Bishop Æthelwold barefoot as a penitent and (not surprisingly) was absolved of his crime[37]. After meetings of the witan in London and of the shire court at Northampton the three estates and their appurtenances were returned to the possession of Peterborough Abbey. At a further meeting of the Eight Hundreds of Oundle held at Wansford (on the Nene at the border of Northamptonshire and Huntingdonshire) Leofsige's widow Siflæd was forced to forfeit further estates to Bishop Æthelwold, in compensation for her late husband's confiscation of Peterborough properties. The nature of the alleged title of Leofsige to the Peterborough estates does not emerge from the record of these events preserved in the *Liber Eliensis*, but in it Leofsige is described as the son of Brihtsige. As we have seen already, a man named Brihtsige was the father of Ælfsige and grandfather of Wulfstan Uccea; if, as seems likely, the two Brihsiges were in fact one and the same, then Leofsige was Wulfstan's uncle, and his action in taking over these estates may have resulted from his disapproval of his nephew's surrender of such important family properties for the use of the church.

That jurisdiction of the Eight Hundreds descended with the ownership of Oundle is nowhere stated clearly in any early authentic record that has survived, but may be inferred from what happened when other hundredal manors changed hands.

Whenever Bishop Æthelwold secured a property for the endowment of his foundations he sought to obtain also the soke or jurisdiction. Thus when he obtained East Dereham in Norfolk from King Edgar for Ely[38], he got all that pertained to it, including its jurisdiction, which emerges in Domesday Book as the Hundred and a Half of Mitford[39]. We have another interesting example in the case of the double hundred of Gedney, Lutton and Tydd in Holland, which Æthelwold purchased from the East Anglian ealdordom, presumably for the endowment of Crowland (although in the event his intentions were frustrated). As part of the transaction, he paid separately for the soke[40].

Each of the fenland abbeys acquired important liberties in this way, which in the course of time formed the framework upon which the present local government of the area still hangs (or did so until very recently). Thus the liberty of the Two Hundreds of the Isle of Ely with which Ely Abbey was endowed by King Edgar was always an autonomous jurisdiction within Cambridgeshire, and eventually became a county council in its own right. The Two Hundreds of Nassaburgh, the most northerly quarter of the Eight Hundreds of Oundle, became the Soke of Peterborough, with similar autonomous status. The Eight Hundreds as a whole formed just one quarter of the 32 hundreds of Northamptonshire. Huntingdonshire was formed from four double hundreds, of which the jurisdiction of the Two Hundreds of Norman Cross (later a deanery and petty sessional division) was given to Thorney; similarly, that of the Two Hundreds of Hurstingstone was given to Ramsey, which aquired also at a later date (1047) the Hundred and a Half of Clacklose

37. Byrhtferth of Ramsey, *Vita Oswaldi*, ed. J.Raine *Historians of the Church of York*, Rolls Series, London, 1879, i, p. 446. Strictly speaking, of course, absolution is from the penalty for sin, not crime; but Ælfwold appears to have approached Bishop Æthelwold in his double capacity of priest, and lord of the Eight Hundreds, where (apparently) the crime was committed; in this instance, sin and crime do not seem to have been distinguished one from the other.

38. LE pp. 113-4; ECEE p. 228.

39. E. Miller *The Abbey and Bishopric of Ely*, Cambridge, 1951, pp. 30-1. (hereafter Miller, *Ely*).

40. ECEE pp. 180-1.

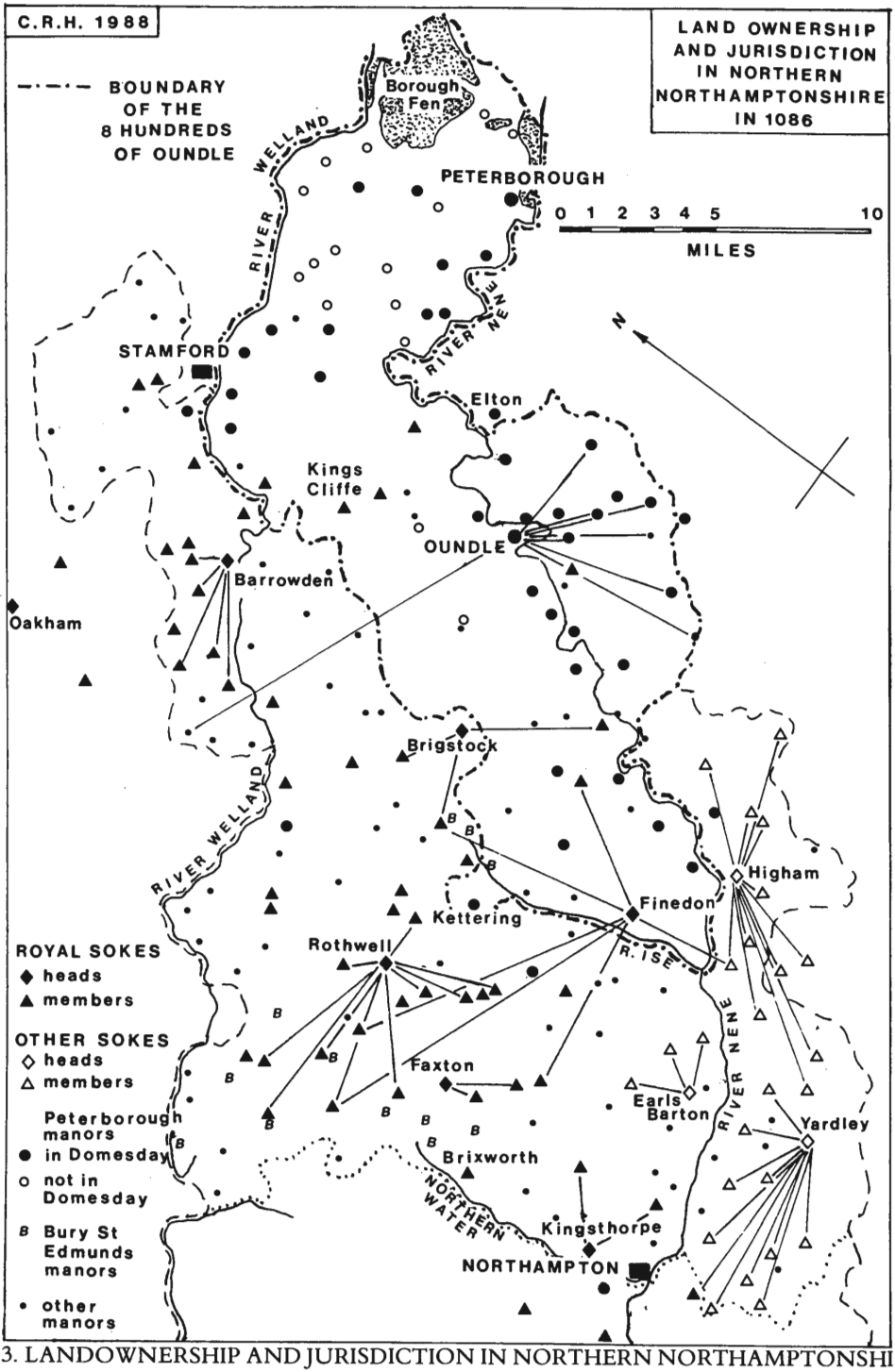

FIG 3. LANDOWNERSHIP AND JURISDICTION IN NORTHERN NORTHAMPTONSHIRE IN 1086.

in the Norfolk Marshland[41]. The liberty of the Eight and a Half Hundreds of Thingoe with which King Edward the Confessor later endowed Bury St Edmunds became the county of West Suffolk; formerly (like Rutland) it had been part of the dowry of Cnut's queen[42], as the Isle of Ely is said once to have been that of St Etheldreda[43].

These monastic liberties are shown in Fig 1, which helps us to view the Eight Hundreds of Oundle from a wider perspective. This map should be compared with the series of maps of the ancient royal demesne recently prepared by Dr Elizabeth Hallam, using evidence gathered from the Domesday Survey (*Domesday Book Through Nine Centuries,* Thames and Hudson, 1986, particularly maps 8 and 10). It is noteworthy how very few royal manors lay within the boundaries of the fenland abbey franchises. For example, Peterborough Abbey was tenant-in-chief of over half of 117 Domesday holdings within the Eight Hundreds of Oundle; of the remainder, the king possessed only eight, mostly in Willybrook hundred. A similar disproportion existed throughout the franchises of Ely, Ramsey, Thorney and Bury. Clearly the abbots enjoyed great power within their liberties, largely unhampered by the sheriffs, reeves and other officers of the crown. This was particularly the case during the last century of the Anglo-Saxon state; after the Norman Conquest their autonomy was diminished somesomewhat, but as we shall see later, a further two centuries were to pass before the crown was able to mount a really effective challenge.

To some extent, the deep-rooted power of these units of private jurisdiction derived from the fact that their origins appear in many instances to have antedated the Danish settlement. Thus the Five and a Half Hundreds of Wicklaw in East Suffolk with which King Edgar endowed Ely may have been coterminous with the territory first ruled by the Wuffinga dynasty of East Anglia, for they contained within their bounds the early royal estate of Rendlesham and the royal burial grounds at Snape and Sutton Hoo. The Hundred and a Half of Mitford in Norfolk which King Edgar gave to Ely was perhaps the area which had been ruled by Wihtburh the daughter of King Anna, a member of the Wuffinga dynasty, from her monastery at East Dereham[44]. The Herstingas, most if not all of whose territory became the Two Hundreds of Hurstingstone[45], and the Southern Gyrwe who occupied most of the Isle of Ely[46], were both once independent Middle Anglian principalities. There was probably therefore a continuity of jurisdiction between the *provincia* of Oundle which appears in Bede, and the later liberty of the Eight Hundreds, even though they may not have had precisely the same boundaries. However modified their administrative arrangements may have been under the Danes, these units of jurisdiction seem not to have been destroyed. One recalls that the territory settled by the Danish army based on Lincoln appears to have been coterminous with the Anglian petty kingdom of Lindsey.

Let us return now to Æthelwold's refoundation of Peterborough. Once the furore of the anti-monastic reaction had subsided, he started to reinforce the initial endowment by purchases of local

41. For Hurstingstone, see C. R. Hart 'The Hidation of Huntingdonshire' in *Proceedings of the Cambridgeshire Antiquarian Society,* LXI, 1968, pp.55-66; for Cracklose, see F. E. Harmer, *Anglo-Saxon Writs,* Manchester, 1952, pp. 473-5. (hereafter Harmer, *Writs*).
42. Harmer, *Writs,* pp.435-6.
43. Miller, *Ely* p. 9.
44. LE p. 13.
45. A. Mawer and F. M. Stenton *The Place-names of Bedfordshire and Huntingdonshire,* English Place-Names Society, vol. III, Cambridge, 1926, pp. xvii, xix; C. R. Hart 'The Tribal Hidage' in *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society,* 5th series, 1971, 21: 133-57, esp. p. 145.
46. Miller, *Ely,* pp. 10-12. Miller was sceptical of the equation, but much has been discovered about the Gyrwe and their boundaries since he wrote; the issue remains in dispute.

manors[47]. These transactions were carried out before meetings of the local courts within the Eight Hundreds, and it is noteworthy that (as with many of the Cambridgeshire thegns witnessing the transactions of the Ely endowment) the local thegns who acted as surety for these land purchases had names which were predominantly Scandinavian. This is particularly the case within the two hundreds of Nassaburgh, practically the whole of which territory became Peterborough property. The initial Anglian settlement of the area between the rivers Nene and Welland was dense and early in date. The picture painted in Domesday is however very misleading, for as many as half of the total settlements in these two hundreds went unrecorded in the Domesday Survey. These may have formed the original berewicks of Peterborough; evidently their Domesday assessments are included silently under those of neighbouring estates. It is fortunate that the record of Æthelwold's Peterborough endowment transactions survives as evidence of the names of these holdings at least a century before Domesday[48].

We find that the court of the Eight Hundreds met sometimes at Oundle and sometimes at Wansford, where (after the Roman crossing at Sutton had been abandoned) Ermine Street had been re-routed across the River Nene. For minor local affairs, separate meetings were held of one or more of the individual hundreds. We know from later records that Huxloe hundred met at Huxloe Cross, half a mile south east of Lowick church[49]. Willybrook hundred met at King's Cliffe, through which the brook runs[50]. The two hundreds of Nassaburgh met at Upton Green, which was at Langdyke bush in Ufford, at the junction of the bounds of Ufford, Upton, and Helpston[51]. The hundred of Navisford met close to the River Nene, just west of where the Roman road from Oundle to Thrapston forded the small tributary of the Nene which forms the boundary between Titchmarsh and Thorpe Achurch; this was near the junction of the three bounds of Titchmarsh, Thorpe Achurch and Aldwincle[52]. The case of Finedon is particularly interesting, because it takes us back to the Danish period. The name means 'valley where the "thing" assembled'[53]; it must have been the meeting-place of the local wapentake(s). As will be seen below, it was also the head of a royal soke at the time of Domesday, and in 1329 it appears to have been the meeting-place of the two hundreds of Navereslund. The tradition could well have been an old one; in fact there seems no reason why Finedon could not have been the meeting-place of these two hundreds from the time of their creation in or soon after 920. If so, we have a rare example of evidence for something that may have been common; continuity between Danish and post-Danish local administrative arrangements.

So far, I have referred to the Eight Hundreds of Oundle as if their individual identity was not a matter of doubt. In fact no early list of the constituent hundreds survives, and for direct evidence of the composition of the Eight Hundreds we have to content ourselves with the *Placita Quo Warranto* of 1329-30, where we find that an Eyre held at Northampton listed them as the hundreds of Polebrook, Navisford, Huxloe, and North and South Navereslund, and (by implication) the double hundred of Nassaburgh[54]. The hundred of Willybrook is not mentioned,

47. CS 1130; Robertson, *Charters*, no. XL, pp. 74-83.
48. *Ibid.*
49. *PN Northants*, p.177.
50. *Ibid.*, p. 198.
51. *Ibid.*, p. 223. This was at the intersection of King Street (a Roman road) with the ridge-road from Peterborough to Barnack, an important communications centre for the two hundreds.
52. *Ibid.*, p. 216.
53. *Ibid.*, pp. xxvi, 181.
54. Helen Cam *Liberties and Communities in Medieval England*, 2nd edn., London, 1963, p. 101 n. 1. (hereafter Cam, *Liberties*).

and one can only assume that it was no longer under the jurisdiction of the abbot of Peterborough by that late date. We shall return to this later. However, on the strength presumably of these *Quo Warranto* proceedings, some recent writers have deleted Willybrook from the list altogether, as if it never did lie within the Eight Hundreds. I feel sure this is mistaken, for when the major part of Lutton (which we know to have been in Willybrook hundred at the time of Domesday) was bought by Bishop Æthelwold for the endowment of Peterborough, the witness of the Eight Hundreds was called as surety[55]. Moreover, a writ of King Edward the Confessor relating to this part of Lutton calls it the sokeland of St Peter of Peterborough[56], and I take this to refer to the jurisdiction of the Eight Hundreds. Finally, the Eight Hundreds of Oundle have a unified early fiscal history, and without naming them as such, the post-Conquest Northamptonshire Geld Roll deals with them as a group; in this important source, Willybrook is included with the rest[57]. That Willybrook was an integral part of the original territory of the Eight Hundreds will also be apparent from study of Fig 2.

I would like now to discuss briefly the evidence for other early post-Danish administrative units in northern Northamptonshire. The topography of this section of my paper can be followed from Fig 3. It seems that when in 920 King Edward the Elder forced the submission of Earl Thurferth and his Danish army of Northampton, both ownership and jurisdiction of the whole of their territory came into the direct possession of the English crown, for the king to dispose of (subject no doubt to the agreement of his council) just as he pleased. The situation revealed in the Peterborough endowment transactions[58] and in Domesday appears to be the end result of a long series of modifications of this position, in the course of which the king handed out to a number of his subjects individual estates and areas of jurisdiction. It has been mentioned already that he seems to have left in possession of their estates many of the Danes living in the two northern hundreds of Nassaburgh, lying between the Rivers Nene and Welland. From at least the time of King Æthelred the Unready onwards, the two hundreds of East and West *Hwicceslea* became part of the dower of the queens of England; after Domesday they were included for this purpose in the new shire of Rutland. It could well be however that the queen's dower extended originally to estates lying well south of the Welland; Edith the widow of the Confessor held the important manor of Finedon with its scattered sokelands[59], and Hugh Candidus tells of the influence of Edgar's queen in persuading the king to endow Peterborough[60].

Some estates and local units of jurisdiction within the newly-acquired royal territory were handed over to occupants of various ealdordoms. The most interesting example is the soke of Yardley, from which was fashioned the Hundred and a Half of Wymersley, just across the Nene from Northampton. This appears to have been made part of the perquisites of whichever of the great ealdordoms (or, later, earldoms) included Northamptonshire within its jurisdiction. We know that Earldorman Byrhtnoth of Essex (whose shires included Northampton, and who

55. Robertson, *Charters*, p. 83.
56. Harmer, *Writs*, no. 62, pp. 262-5. The Domesday entry for this holding notes that its soke 'belongs to Oundle' (*DB Northants*, fol. 221d). I know of no evidence that Willybrook had been a royal hundred before the late eleventh century.
57. *Hid. Northants*, p. 20.
58. CS 1130; Robertson, *Charters*, XL.
59. *DB Northants*, fol. 220a. Domesday does not identify directly the manors comprising this soke, but it gives the number of hides belonging to the soke in each hundred. From these figures, the manors can be identified as lying at Irchester, Twywell, Geddington, Harrington, Kelmarsh, and Hannington; cf. *Hid. Northants, passim.*
60. *Hugh Candidus*, pp. 28-9.

was killed at the battle of Maldon in 991) held Whiston, Denton and Brafield-on-the-Green, and with them a house in Northampton[61]. Nearly a century later (as no doubt in Byrhtnoth's day) these were all members of the Yardley soke, which was then owned by Earl Waltheof of Northumbria and Huntingdonshire, who also had charge of Northamptonshire[62]. He held in addition Twywell, Bozeat, and five manors in Stoke Hundred[63], and many of the extensive lands held at the time of Domesday by his widow the Countess Judith may have come to her from her husband, who was executed in 1076. Her son-in-law Simon de Senlis then succeeded to the Northumbrian earldom (and with it, presumably, Northamptonshire); he founded the priory of St Andrew in Northampton[64].

We have no information in Domesday, nor indeed in any other source, as to the ownership of the Higham soke or its constituent estates before the Norman Conquest. Like the Yardley soke its structure looks ancient, and as was the case with Yardley, it formed 1½ hundreds from the time of its creation right down to the Norman Conquest and later. Its shape and position strung out along the east bank of the Nene also suggests a similar administrative history to that of Yardley; but it shows no evidence in its Domesday ploughland and hidage figures of the unique reduction of geld liability, first from 10 hide to 9 hide units, then from 9 hide to 3½ hide units, which characterises the assessment of the 1½ hundreds of Wymersley which took their bounds from the Yardley soke[65]. For this reason I think it unlikely that the soke of Higham was a perquisite of the Northamptonshire earldom, as appears to have been the case with the soke of Yardley for the century before the Norman Conquest.

The Northumbrian connection with Northamptonshire which is remarked on above had been established well before the time of Earl Waltheof. It may have been initiated by Ælfgifu of Northampton (King Cnut's concubine and mother of King Harold Harefoot), who was the daughter of Earl Ælfhelm of Northumbria and of Wulfruna, foundress of the collegiate church of Wolverhampton[66]. Tostig, who preceeded Waltheof in the Northumbrian earldom and also held Northamptonshire as part of it, had been in possession of Potterspury and Gayton, and also perhaps part of Chipping Warden[67]. He was unpopular with the Northumbrians, who elected Morcar as their earl in Tostig's place; Morcar then (late in 1065) led the Northumbrian army into Northamptonshire and ravaged it; Tostig was banished and Waltheof succeeded to Northamptonshire and Huntingdonshire[68].

Although he never managed to add Northamptonshire to his earldom, Morcar may have owed his election as Earl of Northumbria to his Northamptonshire interests. We do not know how he gained possession of Colleyweston and Casterton[69], but his mother, the lady Ælfgifu (not to be confused with her namesake of Northampton), who was the widow of Earl Ælfgar of Mercia, held Warkton[70], perhaps by inheritance from Ælfgar, who himself had held Boughton, Weekley, East Farndon, King's Cliffe, and Scaldwell[71]. Warkton had been in the

61. C. R. Hart 'A charter of King Edgar for Brafield on the Green' *Northamptonshire Past and Present,* VII, 1987-8 no. 5, pp. 301-4.
62. E. A. Freeman 'The great earldoms during the reign of Edward' in *The Norman Conquest,* Oxford, vol. ii, 3rd edn., 1877, pp. 571-85; esp. p. 575. (hereafter Freeman, *Norman Conquest*).
63. *DB Northants,* fol. 228b,c,d.
64. J. H. Round 'Introduction to the Northamptonshire Domesday' in *Victorian History of the County of Northamptonshire,* vol. i, 1902, pp. 257-98; esp. p. 293.
65. *Hid. Northants,* pp. 29, 60.
66. Freeman, *Norman Conquest,* ii, 575.
67. *DB Northants,* ff. 225a, 226d, 228a.
68. F. M. Stenton, *Anglo-Saxon England,* Oxford, 3rd edn., 1971, p. 579.
69. *DB Northants,* ff. 219c, 225c.
70. *Ibid.*, fol. 222b.
71. *Ibid.*, ff. 220a, 222b.

King's hands in 946, when he gave it to a thegn named Wulfric[72]. It may be that the Mercian earls, from whose line Ælfgar had descended, were in competition with those of Northumbria for the inclusion of Northamptonshire within their respective earldoms.

In spite of all these alienations of estates, the royal holdings recorded in Domesday Book for Northern Northamptonshire form an impressive collection, the core of which comprised Rothwell and its soke[73]. It seems clear that this extensive group of royal estates resulted from a consistent policy, maintained throughout the tenth and eleventh centuries, to preserve within the territories reconquered from the Danish army of Northampton a large tract of land in Rockingham Forest for hunting. The twelve Bury St Edmunds manors surrounding the Rothwell sokelands at the time of Domesday formed a remarkable exception to this rule[74]. Some of these belonged before the Conquest to Earl Ælfgar, and of these Scaldwell, at least, came into the hands of the Conqueror, who gave it to Bury for the soul of his queen, Matilda. It seems likely however that the nucleus of these Bury holdings formed part of King Cnut's foundation endowment of the abbey; Earl Ælfgar's estates, including Scaldwell and perhaps Warkton, may therefore have been given in augmentation of Bury's original endowment.

To end my review, I will now describe in its bare essentials the slow disintegration of the Eight Hundreds as a unit of local legal administration. One assumes that their early control had been centred on Oundle; but after refoundation of Peterborough Abbey and the establishment of the abbatial franchise, administration of the courts of the Eight Hundreds would naturally have begun to shift to Peterborough. This process was doubtless intensified by the impact of feudalism after the Norman Conquest, when in order to meet the obligations of knight service imposed on him by the Norman monarch (the heaviest imposition of any abbey in the country), the abbot settled 60 knights on the Peterborough estates[75]. Unlike the sokemen who preceded them, these knights were not answerable for their fees through hundred courts; they held directly from their feudal lord. At about this time or soon afterwards, bailiffs were appointed by the abbot to administer his hundredal franchises. What had started as community law imposed by a popular assembly had now evolved into a powerful private jurisdiction bringing in a very considerable income of fines and forfeitures to its lord.

It was probably also about this time, soon after the inquest which is recorded in the Northamptonshire Geld Roll, that the jurisdiction of the abbot's hundred of Willybrook fell into the hands of the crown. Domesday shows that the few royal holdings then located in the north eastern quarter of Northamptonshire were all grouped together in this hundred (Nassington, Tansor, King's Cliffe, Apethorpe, and Duddington; see also, Fig 3). Unlike the Rothwell group further south, these do not appear to have been ancient crown estates, all kept continuously in royal hands from the time of their reconquest from the Danes. Indeed, Domesday itself informs us that the king's estate at Cliffe (the hundred meeting-place), had previously belonged to Earl Ælfgar[76]; it is not until 1305 that we find the place referred to by its royal title. Evidently the crown properties in Willybrook hundred formed an eastward extension of the concentration of royal influence

72. CS 815; S 520; ECNE 3.
73. *DB Northants*, fol. 219d.
74. *Ibid.*, fol. 222b.
75. J. H. Round 'The Introduction of Knight Service into England' in *Feudal England*, London, 1909, pp. 225-314; esp. pp. 278, 307.
76. *DB Northants*, fol. 220a.

in the two hundreds of *Hwicceslea*, which themselves became absorbed into Rutland, as part of the queen's dower. Already by 1125-6 we find in the Peterborough Black Book records suggesting that although the abbot continued to refer to his nominal Eight Hundreds of Oundle as if they remained as an intact liberty, they had been reduced in reality to five[77]. Presumably the two hundreds of Naverslund had already been absorbed into Huxloe hundred by this date; certainly they were included within that hundred by 1316[78]. By contrast, Willybrook hundred retained its identity, but was alienated from the abbey's jurisdiction. This too had probably occurred by 1125-6, but it is not until 1224 that suspicion is changed to certainty by an entry in the Close Rolls commanding the sheriff to allow Ranulf, earl of Chester, to take the hundred into his hands during the royal pleasure, just as he had held it before an enquiry was made[79].

Half a century later, the whole system of *haute justice* administered by private franchises had come to be regarded as a threat to the royal prerogative. *Quo Warranto* proceedings were instituted by the king in 1278, and his justices began to enquire into the title of the great lords to enjoy the profits of their franchises[80]. A preliminary examination of Peterborough's title to the Oundle jurisdiction appears to have been made at this time, when the abbot found it prudent to claim only five hundreds. It was not until 1329 however that the ancient liberty of the Eight Hundreds came under real scrutiny, at a great Eyre held at Northampton. By then (as was the trend nationally with the larger groups of hundreds, whether in royal or in private lordship) the abbot was employing economically only two bailiffs to administer his hundred courts, one at Peterborough and the other at Finedon at the far end of his liberty. As will be recalled, Finedon at the time of Domesday, though lying within the Eight Hundreds, was itself, uniquely, already the centre of a soke in the possession of the queen; earlier still, it had been the assembly-place of the local wapentake(s). This seems to have led in course of time to the abbot's selection of Finedon for the seat of his southern bailiff. But as Professor Cam has so ably explained[81]:

> 'To (the justices in Eyre) a hundred was primarily a unit responsible for providing a presenting jury; a unit which was therefore fair game for penalization if it made any mistake in the half forgotten, obsolescent technique of the general eyre. For each hundred represented by a jury, the justices laid down, there must be a distinct bailiff . . . In the case of the eight hundreds of Peterborough, . . . the justice enquired for which two hundreds the bailiffs were acting, and said the king would provide bailiffs for the other six. To avert the confiscation of his liberty the abbot changed his ground, and with the leave of the court presented a bailiff for each hundred, and the new men were sworn in to do the work of the Eyre'.

It may be that this re-establishment of separate bailiffs for each of the constituent hundreds led to the final disintegration of the Eight Hundreds as a nominal unit of jurisdiction; certainly I have been unable to find any reference to them as a group later than these *Quo Warranto* proceedings of 1329-30. The remaining five hundreds continued in the possession of the abbots until the Dissolution of the Monasteries,

77. T. Stapleton (ed.), *Chronicon Petroburgense*, Camden Soc., Old Series, vol. 47, 1849, p. 167.
78. *VHC Northants*, i, p. 297.
79. Close Roll, 8 Hen III, membrane 4, 5; edited for the Record Commission by T. D. Hardy in *Rotuli litterarum clausarum*, 2 vols. folio, 1833-4.
80. F. W. Maitland, *The Constitutional History of England*, Cambridge, 1908, p. 45.
81. Cam, *Liberties*, p. 91.

but each would appear to have been administered by its own separate court[82].

A survey of the lands, privileges and revenues of the abbey held in 1535 in preparation for the dissolution shows Peterborough still in possession of the jurisdiction and profits of the hundred courts of Polebrook, Navisford, Huxloe, and the (double) hundred of Nassaburgh[83]. In 1540 the abbey was surrendered into the king's hands. He made a threefold division of its revenues, reserving for himself the third part, including, it appears, the profits of all the hundreds except the double hundred of Nassaburgh[84]. This last was given to the bishop of the newly-founded diocese of Peterborough, and with hindsight we may now regard this gift by Henry VIII as the fundamental step towards the creation of the Soke of Peterborough. It is well known that the Soke formed a tiny but very powerful unit of autonomous jurisdiction. The precise nature of its extensive privileges, which had descended uninterruptedly (though no doubt diluted) from those of the *provincia* of Oundle mentioned by Bede, may now be examined conveniently in Donald Sutherland's superb edition of the proceedings of the Northamptonshire Eyre of 1329-30[85]. Nothing quite like them survived elsewhere in the land. Such a degree of automony became increasingly anachronistic, and could no longer be sustained or defended within the fast-developing structure of local government during the present century. In spite of a long rearguard action, its final destruction by our legislators became inevitable.

Acknowledgement. *I am indebted to Dr A. Rumble for helpful comments on the interpretation of the Oundle boundary. The solution put forward in the Appendix (below) is however my own responsibility.*

82. For instance, in 1462 the king confirmed to the abbey franchises which had been granted by charter in 1447 for its hundreds of Huxloe, Polebrook, Navisford, and Nassaburgh; *Calendar of Charter Rolls,* vol. vi, 1427-1516,1927, p. 88; *Calendar of Patent Rolls,* 1461-1467, 1897, p. 191.

83. W. Dugdale, *Monasticon Anglicanum,* 1846 edn., i, p. 364.

84. *Ibid.,* p. 367.

85. Donald Sutherland, *The Eyre of Northamptonshire, 3-4 Edward III,* edited for the Selden Society, London, 1983, 2 vols; esp. vol. i, pp. 40-3, 87-9. Besides a Saturday market in Oundle, the abbot claimed a 15 days fair there each Ascension-tide, and a toll on all river traffic there thoughout the year. The extensive legal franchises which he claimed throughout the Eight Hundreds were hotly contested by the crown, but on the whole unsuccessfully. The abbot based his claim largely on the (forged) charter of King Edgar, which he produced in court. Its authenticity was not questioned by the crown inquisitors, who confined their attack to its interpretation, and to the argument that a charter of a pre-Conquest monarch could not be held to have retained its validity after the Norman Conquest. Since the Conqueror claimed that his right to rule rested upon the continuity of the law, this argument was a weak one.

APPENDIX. **THE BOUNDARY OF OUNDLE IN c. 971 A.D.**

The Black Book of Peterborough contains a copy of an Old English boundary of Oundle, which was presumably drawn up for inclusion in a royal diploma (MS Soc. Antiq. London, no. LX, fol. 50; S 1566; CS 1129). The bounds are very detailed, and the language is consistent with a late 10th century date. Possibly the boundary was intended for inclusion in the lost foundation charter of the abbey, which may have been dated 971 A.D. The bounds, which have not previously been worked out, follow for the most part the early 19th century parish boundary of Oundle, before its substantial modifications in more recent times. They are best followed using maps of the first edition of the 6″ Ordnance Survey of Northamptonshire, sheets XVIII SE and NE; XIX SW and NW. The survey was made in 1885 and the sheets published

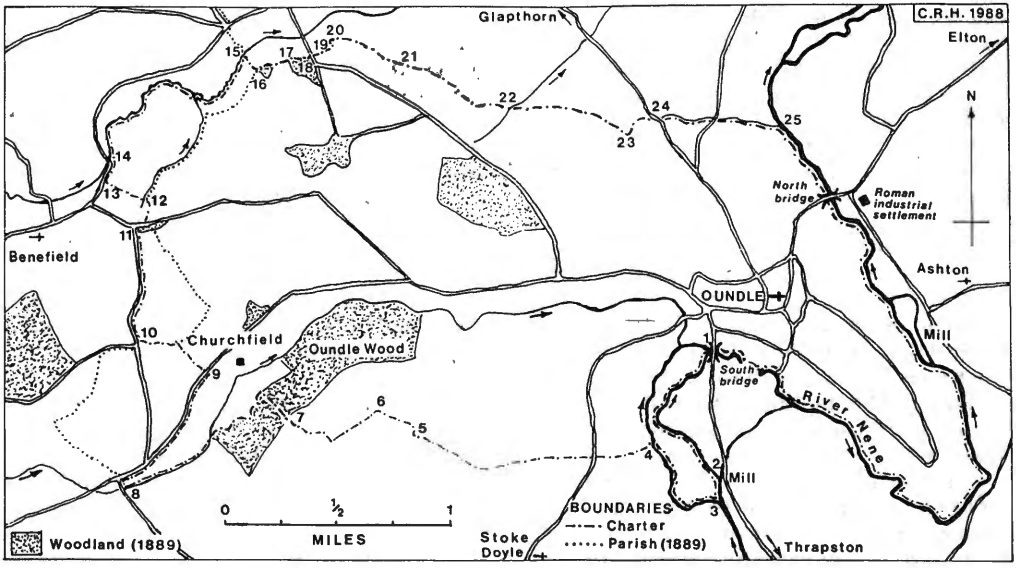

FIG 4. THE BOUNDARY OF OUNDLE C. 971 A.D.

in 1887-91. National grid references are best taken from the modern 1:25000 OS series, which supplies also useful contours. In the following edition of the bounds, superscript numbers refer to boundary points on Fig 4. The bounds are given in the Black Book as follows:

ÞIS SINT ÞA LAND GE MÆRO TO UNDELAN.

Ærest æt cylles ege[1] suðeweardan scytanlacu of nyn æt cweorn welle[2]. þonne lit it andlang þere lace þat it cymð eft on nyn[3]. þonne gæd it þer up[4] on ge rihte ofer þet yredland[5] foran on gean þa ealdan dic[6]. and siððan up andlang dic oð hit cymð to wuda[7]. þonne a be wyrt walan oþ hit cymð to þere ealdan rode[8]. þonne andlang rode þat it cymð ut on ciricfeld[9]. and swa be wyrtwalan þat it cymð eft to þere rode[10] and þonne eft andlang rode þæt it cymð ut on beringa feld[11]. þonne be wyrtwalan oð hit cymð nyðer on þæt slæd to þam lytlan broce. and swa norð ofer þon broc[12]. and syððan norð be wyrtwalan to þere bradan rode[13]. and þonne æst andlang þere bradan rode oð hit cymð to fildena forda[14] and of fildena forda andlang broches oð hit cymð eft to anum oþeran forda mon hæt eac filden ford[15] þonne of þem fildena forda þat it cymð on lytlan sandlege easte wearde[16] and of þere leage on ærnulfes wylle[17] þat it cymð on bradan leage middewearde[18]. þonne þonan on þet ealde fyllet þonne andlang þes fylletes þat it cymð est ut of wuda[19]. þonne fehþ it þer on feld[20]. and swa andlang anre hycgan[21] oð hit cynð ofer ænne fulne broc[22]. and swa on ge rihte on þonne heþenan byrgels[23] of þon heþenan byrgelse on ge rihte on anes wylles heafod[24]. and siððan andlang þes broces oð hit cymð eft on þa éa æt nyn[25]. and þat land on beringa feld swa swa hit is mid land ge maerum. liggæð into Vndelan.

In the following solution, boundary points are numbered as in the text and Fig 4. The bounds proceed in a clockwise direction:

1. first at *Cylles ege* grid ref. TL 037 878

A boundary stone at the South bridge marks the traditional starting-point of the perambulation of Oundle in modern times. The OE name means 'Cylla's island', referring to the land cut off between the River Nene and the millstream

(below), just south of the South bridge. It is preserved in Kilsey or Kelsey meadow, a few yards from the bridge (*PN Northants* p. 213 n.1).

2. southwards (along) the mill stream from the Nene at the millpool grid ref. TL 038 868

The water mill, which is also mentioned in Domesday, was at the site of the present Barnwell Mill. The course of the mill leat has not changed appreciably, but the lakes now in Barnwell Country Park and Oundle Marina result from gravel diggings at the end of the last century.

3. then it (the boundary) lies along the leat until it arrives back on the Nene grid ref. TL 038 867

Returning to the River Nene at the weir south of Barnwell Mill. Dr Rumble notes that *lit* in the bounds is presumably standing for *lið*, from *licgan*, 'to lie'.

4. then straight up grid ref. TL 033 871

After following the western arm of the Nene downstream for about ½ mile from the weir, the modern parish boundary leaves the river at right angles.

5. over the arable grid ref. TL 022 869

Proceeding westwards along field boundaries, crossing the Oundle-Stoke Doyle road, to the top of a small hillock north of Stoke Doyle, on the 50m contour.

6. until one reaches the old dyke grid ref. TL 014 874

Crossing the valley of a small stream, the modern bounds turn leftwards at right angles on reaching the ridge beneath Oundle Wood, and follow a dyke.

7. and subsequently, up along the dyke until it comes to the wood grid ref. TL 006 877

North westwards up the ridge to the edge of Oundle Wood.

8. then keeping to the foot of the wood until it reaches the old *rode* grid ref. SP 996 862

Crossing the woodland by the path between Oundle and Stoke Woods, the boundary then turns leftwards, skirting the lower edge of Stoke Wood in a south easterly direction, until eventually it reaches the green lane from Pilton to Benefield. The modern word 'road' derives from OE *rad* 'a riding', and is said not to occur uncompounded before the late medieval period. OE *rod(e)* is usually translated as 'clearing'; but I think that in charter boundaries (and particularly in the Oundle bounds) it sometimes has the sense 'a green lane'. Many green lanes originated as clearings in woodland. Later, they often became roads in the modern sense. Dr Rumble comments: '*rod* seems usually to be a linear clearing, perhaps a drove road'.

9. along the green lane until it comes out on Churchfield grid ref. TL 001 875

The 1885 parish boundary proceeded north westwards from the junction of the road from Pilton with Harley Way, the road from Lyveden to Oundle. The OE bounds seem instead to have turned north eastwards along Harley Way towards Churchfield Farm. The church is unidentified in later records, and may have been already in ruins by the time the OE bounds were drawn up. It could not have been a village church, and it appears to me that it may have originated as a chapel of St Cett, the early (probably seventh century) Oundle saint who may have lived an eremetical life and whose relics were kept at Oundle in the late tenth century.

10. and so by the hedgerow back to the green lane grid ref. SP 997 878

Returning along the course of the modern footpath from Churchfield to rejoin the lane from Pilton to Benefield. Here and subsequently, I have translated *wyrtwalan* as 'hedgerow'. The 1885 parish bounds took a different course, which cannot be reconciled with the charter bounds.

11. and then still along the green lane until it comes out on *beringafeld* grid ref. SP 997 886

Northwards along the lane until it joins the road from Oundle to Benefield. For the identification, see *PN Northants* p. 211. The original *feld* of the *Beringas* was evidently the open country to the north east of Lower Benefield, some of which later became the Biggin Hall estate. The 1885 bounds are rejoined at this point.

12. then along the hedgerow down the valley to the little brook, and so north over the brook grid ref. SP 997 888

Following the 1885 bounds northwards along the side of the valley in which Lower Benefield lies, then turning north westwards across a small stream.

13. and then north along the hedgerow to the broad lane grid ref. SP 995 889

Departing once more from the 1885 bounds, north westwards to join the lane running north eastwards from Lower Benefield towards Brook Farm.

14. and east along the broad lane until it reaches *fildena ford* grid ref. SP 996 890

fildena means 'dwellers in the *feld* or open country', the *feld* being the same as that from which Benefield took its second element. The ford, now replaced by a footbridge, was where the brook running north eastwards along the

Benefield valley is crossed by the lane from Benefield to Brook Farm.

15. from *fildena ford*, along the brook until it comes to another ford, also called *fildena ford* grid ref. TL 004 898

Running downstream along the brook to the point where it was crossed by the 1885 Benefield-Glapthorn boundary.

16. then from *fildena ford* eastwards until it comes to *lytlan sandlege* grid ref. TL 004 897

This was the point where the 1885 bounds of Benefield, Glapthorn and Oundle met, and from here onwards the Old English bounds are followed (with minor variations) by the modern bounds of Oundle. The 'little sand wood' is now known as Bird's Grave, the second element of which derives no doubt from OE *graf*, 'grove, copse'.

17. from the wood to *aernulfes wylle* grid ref. TL 006 898

Running eastwards to the stream at the north west corner of Well Coppice. Earnwulf was a common OE personal name.

18. till it comes to the middle of the broad clearing grid ref. TL 009 897

Perhaps where the bridleway from Biggin Grange now joins the path running northwards from Biggin Hall. Well Coppice seems originally to have extended further eastwards.

19. and from thence along the old *fyllet* until it comes east out of the wood grid ref. TL 009 898

A *fællet* or *fiellet* was a clump of felled trees. The modern boundary runs along the northern edge of Well Coppice. It seems that we have evidence here of coppicing over a period of more than a millenium. Dr Rumble comments: 'I am pretty sure that *est* (in the bounds) is for *eft* here: "so that it comes *back* out of the woodland" (into which it went at point 7: it now goes into the *feld*).'

20. then it comes out onto the *feld* grid ref. TL 010 900

Leaving the woodland for the open country.

21. and so along a *hycgan* grid ref. TL 015 898

This may represent OE *hecge*, 'hedge', but the boundary runs eastwards for over a mile along the side of a well-marked ridge at this point, and it may be that an *r* has dropped out of the text, cf. OE *hrycg* 'a ridge; a long, narrow hill'.

22. till it crosses a foul brook grid ref. TL 023 895

Still there, running down the ridge in a shallow valley.

23. straight on to the heathen burial-place grid ref. TL 031 894

Cemeteries and individual burials were often located on the boundaries of early settlements, and the term *þon heþenan byrgels* is fairly common in charter boundary clauses. The tenth-century bounds of Oundle must follow the line of the pre-Christian bounds at this point. No tumulus is visible, but we may have here one of the pagan cemeteries of the early Anglian settlement of Oundle, well worth archaeological exploration. A rectangular enclosure nearby, of uncertain date, was detected by aerial photography, reported in a recent issue of *Durobrivae*.

24. right on to the head of the stream grid ref. TL 033 895

The stream commences on the side of the Glapthorn road, facing the school.

25. and then along the brook until it comes back to the River Nene grid ref. TL 042 895

Rejoining the Nene about ½ mile north of the North bridge. The bounds then run midstream up the Nene to the starting-place at the South bridge. The boundary clause ends with the statement: 'And the land at Benefield, insofar as it lies within the boundaries, belongs to Oundle'.

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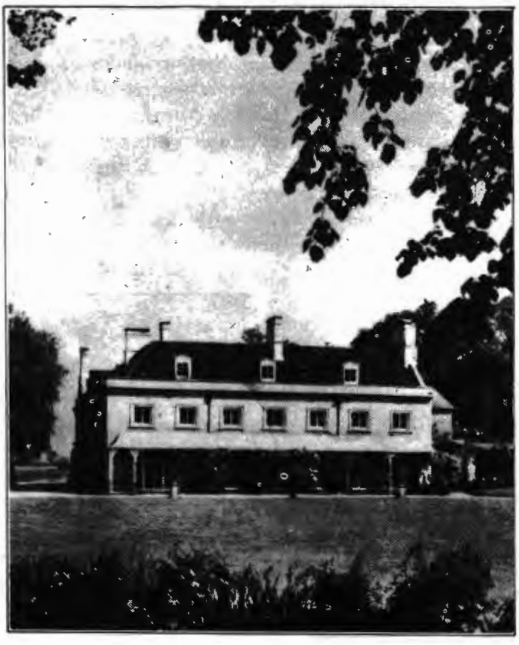

A MID-SEVENTEENTH CENTURY SCHEME FOR NAVIGATION ON THE RIVER NENE

H. J. K. JENKINS

Shortly after the English Civil War, there appeared a slim publication entitled *Some Considerations of the River Nine* [sic],*running from Northampton to Peterborow* [sic], *and so to the Sea; shewing the Fesability and conveniency of making it Navigable*: this anonymous pamphlet[1] provides the heart of the present article. Claiming attention just at the time when ambitious projects for draining the Fens were taking effect, the scheme outlined in the pamphlet's closely printed pages might be viewed as a kind of link between earlier ideas regarding development of the Nene, and those undertakings which eventually became practical realities during the eighteenth century. Authorship of the publication remains uncertain[2] – it was, perhaps, written by several hands – but backing for it may well have involved financial interests associated with Fen drainage.

Although *Considerations* suffered from a number of defects, including a lack of clarity in several sections, it was by no means a poor product when viewed as a piece of promotional literature appropriate to its own period. Alive to current changes at national level, the pamphlet was at pains to forestall any suggestion that the 1650s might be an unsuitable epoch for making substantial investments of the sort advocated: 'who knowes but the worke was reserved for such a time as this . . . many eminent and lasting workes have been done in unsetled times of state.' In developing this theme, play was made with legislation currently in force, and the general benefits said to stem from it.[3]

In another passage, 'the hopefull advantages by the late eminent and admired work of Drayning the Fennes' received the pamphlet's attention, and that same work was represented 'as if t'were deferred to the Honour of these times'.[4] During 1649-52, indeed, large-scale engineering had been undertaken in the Fenlands by William, Earl (later Duke) of Bedford, and a group of associates. This programme included the building of the mighty Denver Sluice, on the Great Ouse, a structure which (in various forms) has been a cardinal feature of Fen drainage arrangements right up to the present day. The efforts of Bedford's group even occasioned a service of public thanksgiving in Ely Cathedral to mark what was perceived as a decisive victory over earlier Fen drainage problems.[5]

The opportunities for increased trade along the Nene were spelt out in clearcut form. In the pamphlet's view, the success of recent drainage operations in the Fenlands would mean, in effect, 'the planting [of] a new Colony there', complete with numerous inhabitants. It was argued that the Nene could serve as an important route for 'sending downe many things they cannot but want', and also for 'bringing up the Commodities' that would be produced in 'that New found Land'. Moreover, it was claimed that the system of locks

1. Further citations are given simply as *Considerations*. It evidently first appeared *c* 1653 : it does not figure in D. Wing's *Short Title Catalogue of English Books, 1641-1700* nor in various other listings where it might be expected to appear. In some instances, it may have been issued in conjuction with other material, but this is by no means certain. A copy of *Considerations* is included in Cambridge University Library, classmark Bb*.11.50"(E).

2. Anent coasting-trade links, a short item was published in 1987 : H. J. K. Jenkins, 'A River Nene Pamphlet *c* 1653', *The Mariner's Mirror*, (Society for Nautical Research), Vol.73, p. 186. An appeal for information as to authorship etc., contained therein, has produced no response up to the time of writing the present article.

3. *Considerations*, p. 6.

4. *Considerations*, p. 5.

5. *Vide* : H. R. de Salis, *A Chronology of Inland Navigation in Great Britain*, (London 1897), p. 9.

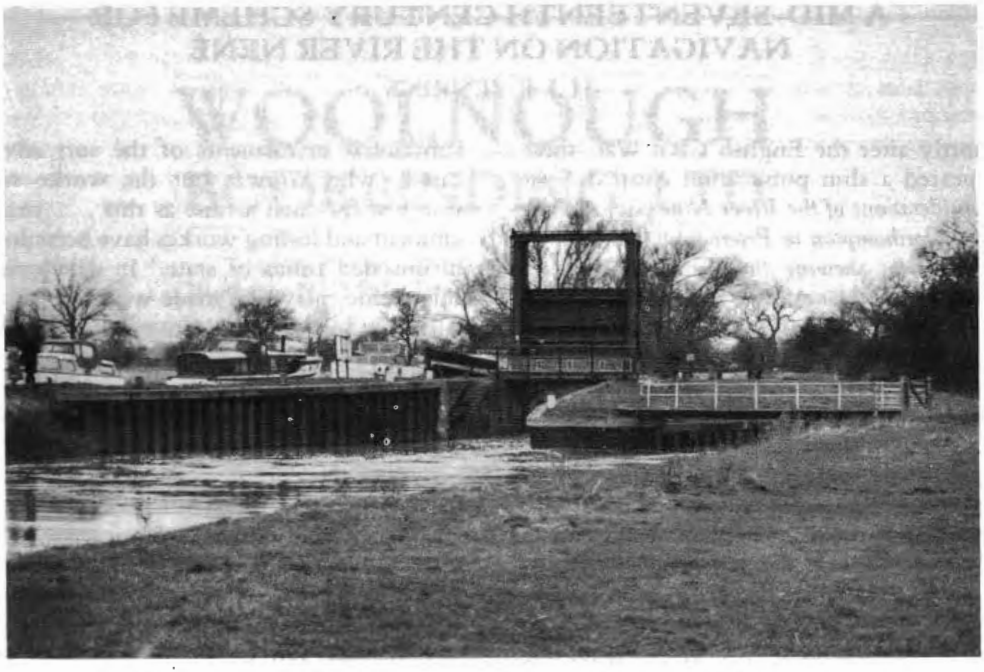

PLATE 1: PRESENT-DAY ARRANGEMENTS – GUILLOTINE TAIL-GATE AND SIDE-CHANNELS FLANKING MAINSTREAM – figure in this 1988 view of Alwalton Lock, on the Nene. Alwalton was the 'point of departure', so to say, for the seventeenth century scheme outlined in the pamphlet, *Considerations*. *(Photograph by Geoffrey Jenkins)*

necessary to make the Nene effective as a highway for this scale of traffic would also bestow benefits in terms of flood-control.[6] The practicability of installing such a system of locks between Peterborough and Northampton, was said to be 'generally accknowleded by persons of any experience', and it was further asserted 'That the Convenience would be universall without prejudice to any'.[7]

In particular, it was pointed out that Northamptonshire was largely 'barren of Fewell' and had to make 'most generall use' of imported coal: it was claimed that this could be imported upstream along the Nene far more cheaply than by current methods involving 'Land carriage'. It was similarly contended, indeed, that Northamptonshire prices for many varied kinds of merchandise would drop sharply as a result of efficient transport on the Nene. The creation of a long-term employment for 'Water men, Porters, and others' was held out as an additional bait, as was the possibility that large-scale navigation on the Nene might help regarding a 'much desired worke', namely the fostering of a soundly-based Northamptonshire textile industry.[8]

So far as the Nene was concerned, the standard route for sea-coal at about this time involved shipment of that commodity from the Newcastle area, via the coasting trade, to some convenient East Anglian port: thence, reloaded onto river-craft, the coal would be carried along various Fenland channels into the Nene, and so on upstream to Alwalton, located a few miles

6. *Considerations*, p. 5.
7. *Considerations*, pp. 1, 3.
8. *Considerations*, pp. 3, 4.

inland from Peterborough. Beyond that point various impediments (including a general change in the terrain) meant that coal-laden boats could get no further up the river. For a long time, indeed, Alwalton figured as the head of the navigation, on the Nene, and enjoyed some importance as a result of this.[9] With particular reference to the transport of coal, the pamphlet *Considerations* made play with discussion of such entities as the 'Chaldren', the 'Cart' and 'Horse charge': it is probable, however, that the impressive-looking detail of the resulting estimates contained little real accuracy. Nevertheless, the *basic* point was doubtless correct enough, namely that the freighting of coal along the Nene equipped with locks (and thus made navigable right up to Northampton) would mean far lower transport costs than those currently associated with a need for road haulage.[10]

To support such a viewpoint, reference was made to encouraging experience with various navigable rivers, both in England and abroad. So far so good, but there remained the question of how the necessary capital for development of the Nene could be 'raised in a time of so much generall expence'. According to *Considerations*, only 'a very small sum of money' would be needed 'for so great a worke', and it might perhaps be gathered in by means of 'voluntary contribution . . . by . . . Benefactors'. More realistically, 'a Generall Assessment on the bordering Counties' was seen as 'the most probable and even way' of producing the necessary finance. Some attention was also given to a third possibility (foreshadowing actual Nene operations of the eighteenth century) whereby 'some few Undertakers' might build the locks, and thereafter charge tolls on the barge-traffic using them.[11]

As an encouragement to funding – from whatever source – the pamphlet pointed out that the Nene upriver of Alwalton could, even in its currently undeveloped state, give good service on occasion for the movement of certain categories of merchandise. This involved the technique known as portaging, *i.e.* manhandling the boat and cargo overland whenever an obstruction was encountered. Having bypassed the problem, for example a mill dam, the boat could be relaunched and reloaded for further progress afloat. As a general rule, of course, only quite small craft could adopt this practice, but it seems to have offered a useful alternative at times when the roads were rendered impassable.[12]

In expounding on the way that the Nene would become many times more valuable as a highway, once it was equipped with locks so as to allow freight-craft to pass along it while constantly afloat, *Considerations* emphasised what might be termed its *minimum* approach to the question of extending true navigability inland from Alwalton to Northampton. The key to the advocated method involved the use of relatively small vessels. These were represented as having several important advantages and, despite some lack of detail in the pamphlet, the main characteristics of the proposed design can be established.

The hull was to be 'but eight foot wide', and was evidently to be capable of operating, when loaded normally, in water 'not above two foot deepe'. No precise state-

9. Interesting comment on Alwalton *c* the seventeenth century is contained in: Victor A. Hatley, 'Locks, Lords and Coal : A Study in Eighteenth Century Northampton History', *Northamptonshire Past and Present*, V1 (1980-81), pp. 207-218 *-vide* p. 211.

10. Cf. comment by Professor Willan regarding general estimates, involving water transport, submitted to the Royal Society in 1675; and related matters – *vide* T. S. Willan, *The Inland Trade*, (Manchester University Press, 1976), pp. 1, 21.

11. *Considerations*, pp. 1, 6.

12. *Considerations*, p. 2, mentioned a substantial cargo of cheese which had been brought far up the Nene, by means of portaging, during bad weather in 1648. For further discussion of such portaged traffic, *vide* H. J. K. Jenkins, 'Early Fen River Trade', *Journal of the Norfolk Wherry Trust*, Autumn 1987 Number, pp. 26, 27.

PLATE 2: ALWALTON LOCK'S HEAD-GATES (1988): these are of the same basic type (although considerably wider) as the ones envisaged in *Considerations (Photograph by Geoffrey Jenkins)*

ment of length was included, but there are clear indications that this would have been about thirty-six feet. With that length, and the stated beam of eight feet, such a vessel would have displaced something like eleven tons when drawing two feet or so of water (assuming, as seems very likely, a block coefficient of around 0.7). The weight of the hull itself would have been around the three-ton mark, granted fairly robust oak construction on ordinary barge-style lines: thus the surplus capacity would have closely matched the pamphlet's intention 'to have the Boat but eight Tunne' - a description seemingly indicative of the weight of cargo which could be carried under ordinary circumstances. With an ordinary laden draught of two feet, a total hull-depth of say three-and-a-half feet would have been appropriate for calm river waters, i.e. leaving a freeboard of one-and-a-half feet. Moreover, this depth of hull would have allowed of rather deeper loading under special circumstances, making it possible to achieve the pamphlet's design-goal stated as 'ten [tons] at the most'.[13]

Two men were to form the crew of a vessel of the proposed kind. For the most part, propulsion was to involve quanting, i.e. the craft would be 'forced up and downe the stramę' by means of 'Poles' used to punt it through the water. It was asserted that there would be 'little occasion for haleing' (towing from the bank), and it would appear that this method was envisaged for just a few stretches where difficult

13. For data specified in pamphlet, *vide Considerations*, p. 2. In modern terms, the hull would have had measurements close to the following: length, 11.00 metres; beam, 2.44 metres; depth, 1.07 metres. Normal laden draught would have been approximately 0.60 metres. This hull would thus have floated approximately 11 tonnes, of which 8 would have been cargo (N.B. the relatively minor difference between English 'tons' and metric 'tonnes' is ignored in these calculations).

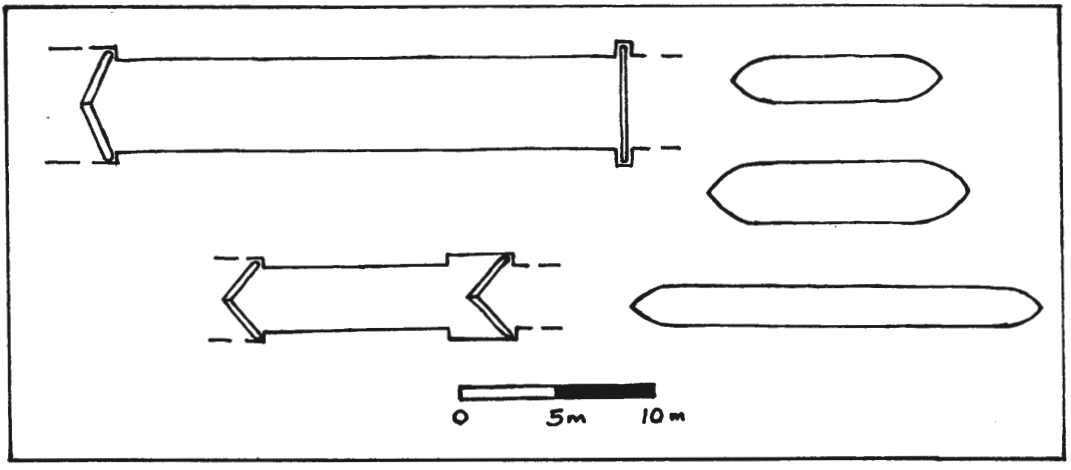

FIG 1: OUTLINE DRAWINGS TO ILLUSTRATE THE RELATIVE SIZES OF: (*top left*) ALWALTON LOCK IN THE 1980s; (bottom left) the type of lock favoured in the scheme of the 1650s; (*top right*) the type of freighter proposed in the 1650s; (*middle right*) a typical Fenland lighter; (*bottom right*) a freighter of the canal narrow boat type. *Scale in metres.*

currents might affect progress. It was indicated that on some stretches the 'Willowes' would have to be 'cut downe on one side [of] the River' so as to allow some sort of tow-path.[14] Although the point was not made clear, it seems highly probable that horses were intended to provide the towing-power.

The advantages claimed for the small freighter of 'eight Tunne' can be summarised under various headings. It was asserted, for instance, that the small vessel (being 'more nimble') would be far easier to handle than one 'of twenty or thirty Tunnes'. It was further argued that small freighters could more easily find regular and profitable employment. Another point involved 'the great Bridges' at such places as Oundle and Thrapston: it was emphasised that these, in their current form, could accommodate the passage of the eight-tonners without need for costly modification to the 'Arches'. Similarly, the rather shallow draught of such craft would rule out the need for extensive dredging along the channel. Further, the use of eight-tonners would allow of the installation of relatively small, easily maintained locks.[15]

Considerations made much of the merits of small locks, a principal feature of the whole scheme. Just over thirty were to be installed between Alwalton and Northampton, the openings being about ten feet wide in each case. The standard length for the locks was not made clear, but it seems very likely to have been a little over forty feet (i.e. enough to accommodate the eight-tonner hulls with ease): there is no reason to believe that *Considerations* favoured locks which would have allowed two such vessels to enter together, one behind the other. As to cost, it was said that 'able Work-men' were available, who could build locks of the sort needed for £120 apiece.[16]

To counter any misgivings, it was suggested that 'triall be made of one Lock in any convenient place' on the Nene's

14. *Considerations*, p. 3.

15. *Considerations*, pp.2, 3.

16. *Considerations*, p. 2. In modern terms, the length of such a lock would have been approximately 13 metres. The internal width would have been a little over 3 metres.

course. This phrasing might well be taken as a reflection of existing portage-style trade along certain stretches, for such trade would clearly have benefited, to some extent, from the establishment of even a single, isolated lock which would diminish the need for heavy labour ashore. It was estimated that around half-an-acre of land would be needed for the plot to contain a lock of the sort described, and there was to be a 'Horse-bridge' as part of the installation in each instance.[17] All was represented as having been worked out with great care and, in a closing comment, opponents of the scheme were dismissed as being of 'an ill temper . . . like the Dogge in manger'.[18]

In actual fact, though, several matters had not been worked out at all well: on a number of points, the reader was left with inadequate, confused or even contradictory statements, and some of the pamphlet's calculations contained defective arithmetic. Some of these faults may have stemmed from misprints, but that explanation would scarcely account for them all.

The ability of the proposed locks to have discharged the functions required of them is open to great doubt. In particular, one must question whether the system advocated could have achieved effective flood-control. Moreover, a distinct weakness of the scheme lay in the pole-driven eight-tonner vessels, each of which was to require a crew of two men – and they would have had to be strong ones to accomplish the miles of weary quanting that were envisaged. The ratio involved (in terms of men to cargo) was obviously far less satisfactory than the one for the Fenland lighter type which, during the second half of the seventeenth century, emerged on the Great Ouse and soon spread its area of operation onto the Nene. With lighters, two men could have managed a 'gang' of several hulls, each carrying twenty tons or so of cargo.[19] True, horses were needed along with men, for lighter operation – but *some* use of horses would presumably have been necessary for the eight-tonners also, on stretches where *Considerations* viewed towing from the bank as essential.

For all its faults, however, the scheme outlined in *Considerations* involved a prompt and interesting response to Fen drainage operations *circa* the early 1650s, and the opportunities which resulted. Problems as to authorship and publication, not to mention questionable costing and the fact that the scheme never took effect, should not obscure the points of merit that were included. Notably, the use of proper pound locks (i.e. with head-gates and tail-gates) was proposed throughout, and there was evidently no question of those 'staunches' (or so-called 'flash locks') that were to play such a troublesome role in later navigational developments. Intermingled with ordinary locks, the staunches were, in essence, merely weirs with adjustable openings which could allow freighters through under certain circumstances. A leading authority was to describe such staunches as 'rude and primitive contrivances' that were often 'a great hindrance to navigation' on the Nene.[20]

If it did nothing else, *Considerations* helped keep the possibility of Nene development before the region's eyes, throwing a favourable light upon such undertakings in general. As the pamphlet's final paragraph put it, 'many Rivers [had] been made Navigable', but there was scant evidence that anyone had 'endeavoured to stop them up againe'.

17. *Considerations*, pp.2, 3.
18. *Considerations*, p. 7.

'19. For recent discussion of the lighter type in this journal, *vide* H. J. K. Jenkins, 'Fenland Lighters : Research and Preservation involving a Traditional Type', *Northamptonshire Past and Present*, VII (1987-88), pp. 349-351.

20. *Bradshaw's Canals and Navigable Rivers . . . A Handbook of Inland Navigation*, 1928 edition, pp. 9, 279. For the passage of substantial vessels, pound locks replaced staunches in the Nene Catchment Board's programme of the 1930s.

LESSER-KNOWN POETS OF NORTHAMPTONSHIRE: SELECTIONS by TREVOR HOLD

(iii) HESTER CHAPONE (1727–1801)

In her article, *Literary Associations: Canons Ashby and Samuel Richardson, (NP&P,* VII, 343-5), Sylvia Kasey Marks reproduces Susanna Highmore's drawing of Samuel Richardson reading his novel *Sir Charles Grandison* to friends in the grotto of his North End home outside London. Four of his listeners have Northamptonshire connections. Thomas (immediately to Richardson's left in the drawing) was the eldest son of Thomas Mulso, Esq., of Twywell. He was bred to the law but gave up legal practice on coming into his paternal inheritance, though he was later made Registrar of Peterborough and a Commissioner of Bankrupts. In 1768 he published *Calistus, or the Man of Fashion* and *Sophronius, or the Country Gentleman.* He married Miss Prescott (second from the right) in December 1760. Thomas' youngest brother, Edward, sits next to him. He was a skilled musician and for many years was President of the Anacreontic Society, a fortnightly gathering of aristocratic and wealthy amateur musicians to sing catches and glees. He was by profession an Excise Officer. The most interesting listener, however, is the slightly dumpy lady in the flowery bonnet in the middle of the drawing: Thomas' sister, Hester Mulso, better known by her married name, Mrs Chapone.

Hester Chapone was born at Twywell on 27th October 1727. Her maternal uncle, Rev. Dr. John Thomas, held successively the bishoprics of Peterborough, Salisbury and Winchester, and was Preceptor to George III. She was a precocious child; though given little encouragement in her education by her parents, she taught herself French, Italian, Latin, music and drawing to a high standard. She "could sing exquisitely, and was skilful enough to sketch Miss Carter for Richardson" *(DNB).* She began writing at an early age, and in 1750, at the age of 23, embarked on a correspondence with the celebrated Samuel Richardson, whose friend and confidante she quickly became. Richardson called her his 'little spit-fire' and some of his friends considered that he might have used her as a model for female characters in *Grandison.* In the same year that she formed her friendship with Richardson, Dr Johnson published four contributions of hers in *The Rambler* (21 April 1750). During the next few years she became a prominent figure in London literary society and with Elizabeth Carter, Mary Delany and Elizabeth Montagu was a leading member of the celebrated Blue Stocking Circle. In 1754 she met and fell in love with a London attorney named Chapone. For several years her father witheld his consent to their marriage and also that of his eldest son and heir, Thomas. Eventually he relented and the two couples were married on the same day, 30 December 1760. Hester's marriage, however, was short-lived (and some said, "not very happy") for Mr Chapone died from a fever in the following September.

After her father's death in 1762, she continued to reside in lodgings in London but spent much of her time visiting friends and staying with relatives, particularly her second brother, John (not present at the *Grandison* reading). It was to her niece, John's eldest daughter, that she addressed the work which brought her fame: *Letters on the Improvement of the Mind.* Encouraged by her friend Mrs Montagu, she published this in 1773, at first anonymously. Within a year it had run into its third edition and was to remain a popular book for several decades. Her later years were overshadowed by illness, and the deaths in quick succession of her brother Thomas (1799) and youngest niece affected her deeply. In the last year of her life she moved with friends to Hadley where she died on Christmas Day 1801, aged 74.

As well as *Letters on the Improvement of the Mind,* she also published *Miscellanies in Prose and Verse* (1775). Her collected *Works,* including a Life and Correspondence, were published in four volumes in 1807. Though poetry was the least of her literary accomplishments, *Miscellanies* contains several fine poems, including the following charming sonnet.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

TO A ROBIN-REDBREAST

Dear social bird! that giv'st with fearless love
  Thy tender form to man's protecting care,
  Pleas'd, when rude tempests vex the ruffled air,
For the warm roof to leave the naked grove;

Kindest and last of Summer's tuneful train!
  Ah! do not yet give o'er thy Plaintive lay;
  But charm soft Zephyr to a longer stay,
And oft renew thy sweetly parting strain.

So when rough Winter frowns with brow severe,
  And chilling blasts shall strip the shelt'ring trees,
  When meagre Want thy shiv'ring frame shall seize,
And Death, with dart uplifted, hover near,
My grateful hand the lib'ral crumbs shall give,
My bosom warm thee, and my kiss revive.

Miscellanies in Prose and Verse, 1775

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BUTTER TO LONDON FROM NORTHAMPTONSHIRE, 1782

VICTOR A. HATLEY

To be Lett, a Dairy-Farm, in the Parish of Cold-Ashby, in the County of Northampton, next Naseby Field [not enclosed until 1820], and next the Turnpike-Road from Welford through Northampton to London; Consisting of a good new-built Brick Farm-House, with a Dairy, Brew-house, Barn, and Stable, and every other Conveniency, very lately completely fitted up. Also 78 Acres of Old Inclosed Land, Tythe-free, contiguous to the said House, in eight Divisions, whereof three are on the South-West Side next to the said Road. Also may be bought, 14 Ton of good Hay, in two Meadows, being last Year's Produce, thereof, and is to be spent on the said Farm. The Farm is situated 12 measured Miles from Northampton, and late in the Occupation of John Perkins. The Whole to be Entered upon immediately. The Welford weekly Waggon, to London, goes next the said Closes [enclosed land]; also a Northampton Flying Waggon, from thence to West-Haddon, every Monday, with Butter, to London.

For further Particulars, enquire of Mr. Adams, of Towcester, in the said County, after Thursday next.

Northampton Mercury, 7 January 1782.

The chief interest of this advertisement is the information it gives on the transportation of butter, a perishable commodity especially in summer, from Northamptonshire to London in the 1780s. It seems that a 'flying waggon' set out weekly from Northampton to West Haddon, a village which would be a convenient pick-up point for a wide area of countryside well-suited for dairy farming. It then travelled to London although there is no indication by what route. Perhaps it doubled back to Northampton, or it may have proceeded to Kilsby where it could have joined a turnpike road (the modern A361) leading to the London turnpike at Daventry. Watling Street between Kilsby and Weedon Bec was not turnpiked, and thus unlikely to be suitable for a laden vehicle moving expeditiously.

How fast was 'flying' in 1782 when applied to the speed of a wagon on what would now be regarded as express service? We can get some idea from the schedules of two of Mr. William Wilby's 'flying waggons', which were advertised in the *Northampton Mercury* on 22 July 1782 (earlier Wilby advertisements on 22 February and 19 April 1779). These vehicles set out from Northampton at 2 a.m. on Wednesday and Friday respectively, arriving in London at 4 a.m. on Thursday and Saturday, a total of 26 hours for a journey of about 66 miles. Without allowing for necessary stops *en route*, this implies an average speed of 2.5 miles per hour. Unfortunately we do not know how many stops were made, and how many times the team of horses drawing the wagon had to be changed. If the stops accounted for five hours in all, an average of just over 3 miles per hour would have been maintained. Given the road surfaces of c. 1780, even on turnpikes, this seems a creditable performance, especially in winter months and when there was no moon to illuminate the roads at night.

William Pitt, the agricultural writer, estimated in 1806 that Northamptonshire was able to supply dairy produce for 'about 200,000 persons, or upwards of 60,000 more than its own population [131,757 in 1801]; this extra produce is principally veal, pork, and butter, for the supply of the London market.' (William Pitt, *General View of the Agriculture of the County of Northampton . . .*, 1809, p.200.) It would be interesting to know when Northamptonshire butter began to be marketed regularly in London, and the means by which it was transported there.

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CAVEAT EMPTOR

SUSAN RANSON

Directories have been widely used by local historians especially for information about the development of trade and industry in the 18th and 19th centuries, though always with reservations as to their reliability. This caution is certainly justified with regard to one relating to this county.

The earliest directory was published in 1677, for London, and a century later their numbers were growing rapidly. Provincial towns such as Liverpool, Manchester and Bristol had directories, the first known county to have one was Hampshire in 1784, followed by Bedfordshire in 1785. Five years later came the Universal British Directory, published in parts, and with entries for all major and market towns in the country. It is this which is the first such source for historians of Northamptonshire. The Kelly brothers began publishing their *Post Office Directories*, which were much improved in accuracy, in 1839, and the first work to cover Northamptonshire as a whole was produced by them in 1847. Two years later a rival appeared on the scene.

In 1849 William Whellan and Co. published a *History, Gazetteer, and Directory of Northamptonshire; comprising a General Survey of the County, and a History of the Diocese of Peterborough: with Separate Historical, Statistical, and Topographical Descriptions of all the Towns, Parishes, Townships, Hundreds, and Manors, to which is subjoined a List of the Seats of the Nobility, Clergy, & Gentry.* The price, including a coloured map of the county, was one pound, and subscriptions were collected by agents before publication. A number of people agreed to buy the work, but when it was delivered, some refused to accept it. The publishers therefore took them to the County Court, and the case came up before J. W. Wing at the County Hall on 17th April 1850. The account which follows is taken from the editions of the *Northampton Mercury* and the *Northampton Herald* of 20th April 1850. That in the *Herald* is slightly more detailed, that in the *Mercury* is sometimes in a less serious vein.

There were several cases brought by William Whellan, for payment of 15s 6d for a directory of the county. John Fitzgibbon appeared for the plaintiff, as his agent, and Mr. Becke for the defence. The first case to be heard was Whellan *versus* Edward Dunkley of Old. The defence was that the work was so incorrect as to be utterly worthless, and that there was no delivery. Mr. Fitzgibbon said that whilst he was collecting information for the work he received an order for one from the defendant, and he produced an order book signed by him. When he took the work to the defendant he said he would not have it, he could get one for 5s. Fitzgibbon put it inside the door and Dunkley kicked it out. On being cross-examined Fitzgibbon said that inaccuracies in the work had been complained of to him, and he had found that there were some. Mr. Becke for the defence then alleged that the book was entirely different to the prospectus which had been circulated. There were not only one or two inaccuracies in it but so many and of such a gross description as to render it worthless. If parties referred to it they were unable to rely on the information contained in it.

At this point the *Herald* has the judge intervening to say that the plaintiff was entitled to a *non-suit* on the grounds that there had been no delivery, nor was there anyone in the partnership as stated in the prospectus. Mr. Becke said there were more than thirty cases of the same kind, and he wished to proceed, and have this one decided on its merits. The first witness to be called was Benjamin Plumb, a farmer, of Old. He said he had served all the parish offices over and over, and had

HISTORY,

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MDCCCXLIX.

FIG. 1: TITLE PAGE OF WHELLAN'S FIRST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE DIRECTORY
(Northamptonshire Libraries)

made the new parish rate. The acreage of Old was 1,952 acres 1 rood and 20 poles, but the directory represents it as 1,650 acres. The property assessment was £2,801 14s 10d, which the directory gives as £3,288. Broughton was wrongly listed as in Brixworth Union, but was in Kettering Union. Other errors cited by this witness relate to the boundaries of Old, and the list of residents. There is no W. W. Andrews esq., proprietor – there is a Rev. W. W. Andrew; there is no John Arrington, there is a Mr. Errington; nor is there a Thomas Palmer, though there is a Boyce Palmer. In fact Whellan lists both a Thomas Palmer and a Bounce Palmer. The electoral register for 1849 shows R. C. Andrew of Brixworth as a proprietor, John Errington as the occupier of a house owned by Frederick Errington of London, and Boyce Palmer of Old. The *Mercury* spells Errington as Herrington; *Kelly's Directory* of 1847 gets both Errington and Palmer right.

The next witness was Samuel Smeeton, churchwarden of Sibbertoft. He told how he had given his order to Andrew Whellan, with whom he had had a conversation about the work. Whellan was alleged to have said that he knew it was a very incomplete one, and was glad that in a few days he should have done with it. According to the *Mercury* Whellan said he had had to use Parliamentary returns, and this was the cause of the inaccuracies. However at Sibbertoft he had had access to the parish books. The judge intervened once again. He is quoted in the *Mercury* as saying "I have not found a parish correct. As soon as I had examined it I rode off to declare what a fabulous thing it was. I paid for my copy." But the *Herald* records him as saying that he knew Northamptonshire, had examined the work thoroughly and his opinion was that it was not worth one farthing. He had not found one parish given a corect account of. Then a series of witnesses was produced to list the errors relating to Sulby, Hazelbeech, Welford, Naseby, Clipstone and several other parishes. Finally Fitzgibbon returned to say on his employer's behalf that he had never promised that the work should be correct, as it was impossible a work of that description could be. He admitted that there were errors but did not consider the work worthless. There might be errors in Mr. Baker's work; he had found errors in Kelly's and in Pigott's directories.

The judge now gave his verdict. He found the action failed, for the reasons he had stated before; the goods were not such as the plaintiff was to supply. The contract was that for 15s 6d the plaintiffs should furnish a history, gazetteer and directory of the county. The question was whether the book was such a work or not, and he thought not. It was impossible for anyone to look into the work for information, and the chances were that it would mislead him, the errors being universal. The *Mercury* records the judge as also saying that he had frequent occasion to refer to Kelly's Directory and he had never found it inaccurate. Judgement was given for the defendant with £5 costs. It was agreed to adjourn all the other cases to the next court. Mr. Andrew Whellan then started up in court, and objected. He said he was the brother of William Whellan, and one of his agents, and the majority of the remaining cases were his and not Mr. Fitzgibbons. The court went on to hear the case of Whellan *versus* John Burdett of Naseby. The previous evidence was read into court, and the case continued. Whellan said that he did not propose that it should be a correct work, and if the parties were sorry for ordering it, it would make them sharper for the future. He lost this case, and the three following cases, and then refused to appear in the fourteen remaining cases which were struck off the list. Those cases still outstanding came before the county court again in May, when they were once more adjourned. They do not appear again in reports of later sittings of the court.

The matter was not completely ended however. On 6th July the *Herald* printed

this letter from the Rev. William Barry, rector of Blisworth – "My attention has been directed to a book entitled History, Gazetteer and Directory of Northamptonshire published 1849, in which, in describing the parish of Blisworth, the following passage occurs:-

> "The charities of this parish (Blisworth) amount to £240 a year, including the school endowment and Church land, and is distributed to the poor in various ways.' I wrote to the publisher and printer to enquire from what source this money arose, as I had never heard of any such sum. I received from Mr. Whellan, the author of the book, the following reply:- 'As regards the £240 alluded to in your letter, I regret not being able to vouch for its accuracy owing to my not having the authorities from which I quoted by me, but I fear it is a typographic error.' I shall be obliged if you will insert this note in the *Herald*, for the information of the public, and particularly for the information of the inhabitants of Blisworth."

One presumes questions were being asked in the parish as to this large sum of charity money.

In fairness to the Whellans one must say that they tried to include much more information, especially on the historical and scientific sides, than others, and perhaps the problem lay in their distance from Northamptonshire, as their other works were all on Northern counties. They ventured south again in 1874, assuring their readers that "every town, parish, village, and almost every house has been visited by the agents, and the information either corrected or verified on the spot." There was a long list of publications consulted and thanks were given to the "various literary, scientific and official gentlemen of the county as well as to the resident clergy, for the uniform courtesy with which they have been received and instructed their agents, and furnished them with valuable contributions . . . and revising the articles submitted to them for correction."

But the proof of the pudding – obviously many things will have changed between 1849 and 1874, but on comparing the entries for Old the acreage has gone up by 300 acres, and the village has shifted a mile further from Wellingborough. The boundaries are unchanged, and do not quite tally with the map. The Rev. W. W. Andrew is listed as a proprietor in 1874. Elsewhere we find that Broughton is now given as being in Kettering Union. Farmer Plumb's day in court has had its effect.

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MID-VICTORIAN FINEDON AND WELLINGBOROUGH: THE MEMOIRS OF EDMUND LAMB WALLIS (1849–1940)

In 1925–6 Edmund Lamb Wallis composed some memoirs, 'Early Days. Written for my Children', a copy of which was sent to me by Miss Barbara Wallis of Cambridge, his granddaughter, a member of the Northamptonshire Record Society. These memoirs are so vivid, almost Dickensian, and so revealing of the writer's personality that it is pleasing to publish those parts relating to his early life in Finedon, Hemel Hempstead and Wellingborough, which, long after he left Northamptonshire to seek his future elsewhere, remained 'the country of his heart'. Other parts of 'Early Days' referring to Edmund Lamb Wallis's life in Knighton, Radnorshire, have appeared in *Transactions of the Radnorshire Society*, Vol LVII, 1987.

Born in Finedon in 1849, Edmund Wallis came of a family with deep local roots, His grandfather, Owen Wallis, built the *Gate* Inn on his farm in Finedon, a property which, to the great sorrow of his family, was sold after his death. His beloved grandmother was a Vincent, a family once of some fortune, which had come down in the world, but one the Dolbens of Finedon Hall were not too proud to acknowledge as kinsfolk and neighbours. Edmund's father, Edmund Vincent Wallis, a respected but unlucky man, who died early, was a churchman. His mother was a strict Baptist and in Edmund Lamb Wallis's character there was a tension he was always conscious of, between the conservatism of the Church and the Law side of him and the liberalism of his mother's family's Dissent. As he recognized, it was experience and circumstance as much as conscious will that led to the latter religious inheritance playing the dominant role in his life and career.

In 1867, at the age of 18 he took a post of clerk in a law office at Farringdon, Berkshire, where he played a part in church life. Two years later he moved to another post in Knighton, Radnorshire, where he spent most of his twenties. It was a formative period. There being no place for him in the church, he worshipped with the Wesleyans, became a Temperance worker, founded a Young Man's Christian Association and generally made a name for himself. When the time came for them to leave, he was given a public testimonial, a gold watch and a purse of 40 guines from his Radnorshire Dissenting friends. In 1878 he moved to Hereford to open a law office with £300 his Wellingborough aunts loaned him and in 1879 married Mary Lloyd. daughter of the Free Church Minister in St Ives, Huntingdonshire where his brother Owen worked. He later had a branch office at Knighton.

In Hereford he joined the Baptists, though it was made plain to him that a Nonconformist with Liberal politics had little chance of prospering. He tells us all too little about these Hereford experiences, though he did say the 'City Bench was very political' then, and local politics were rather bitter. Nonetheless, he prospered in both the law and local politics, eventually becoming an Alderman and serving twice as Mayor of the City of Hereford.

Written in his old age, his memoirs have an aura of romanticism which seems to have overlaid the Nonconformity of his young manhood. In them he concentrates on his early life in Northamptonshire, the leaving of which was something he regretted, and his account has the vividness old people frequently retain for the lost world of their childhood and youth.

(R.L.G.)

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I often recall with pride that if I am a self-made man, I come of Northampton-

shire yeoman stock and for generations in my family there has not been wanting an Edmund de Waleys, or in modern spelling, an Edmund Wallis, variously described as husbandman, yeoman or grazier. The first Edmund Wallis of whom I find any record was Edmund de Waleys of Lilford in the parish of Warmington and by his will he gave legacies to Peterborough Cathedral and to the parish and to three daughters. The date is 1538. An Edmund Wallis was churchwarden of Finedon and signed every page of the Vestry Book from 30 Henry VIII 1562 to 1599.

My searches shew my ancestors at Finedon, Burton Latimer, Isham, and Pytchley (of hunting fame) for a thousand years. One of my treasures is a watercolour of the house at Pytchley, whose owner in my boyhood was Lord Overstone, and the last Wallis tenant my great-uncle William Wallis.

FINEDON

I was born at the end of the hungry forties at Finedon, otherwise Thingdon, which may account for my stormy temperament. At that time the Gate Farm in that village was the property of my Grandfather Owen Wallis's Trustees, one of whom was my great uncle William. An early recollection is the grief of his sale of the property caused my good Grandmother, Owen Wallis's widow, who seems to have thought the sale a blunder.

My Grandmother, or Grandmamma as we always called her, was Ann Vincent of Finedon. Her sampler hangs in this room, signed Ann Vincent aged 14, 1805. She was a wonderful woman and my affection for her kept me from running away, or from worse. My Father was her firstborn and her favourite son. My Mother's family used to say he attended more to his mother's farm than to his own affairs. She was a most level-headed good-looking old lady who was early left a widow, and she had brought up her family, managed her farm and the inn, and was now adopting another young family. The portrait in the dining-room proves her good looks and her capability. I took great delight in her new dresses and caps and ribbons and her pretty curls. I hear her praise me to some customer; she would say "he is like his father" and "he is a great reader".

My Grandfather was Owen Wallis a Farmer. They were said to have been the handsomest couple in the parish and they went to Northampton, a journey of less than 15 miles for their honeymoon. My Grandfather was married in a blue coat with brass buttons and knee breeches. My children, admiring the buttons on my modern clothes think I inherited the taste from my Grandfather who was married in 1812.

My Grandfather Owen Wallis farmed his land and built the *Gate* Inn as appears by the stone under the end gable near the roof "O. W. 1826" and he planted the noble cedar on the lawn in front of the inn. This tree grew to a great size and a great height and was still an ornament to the village street on my last visit. On the inn sign was the verse:-

"This gate hangs high and hinders none
Refresh and pay and travel on."

I was born on St. Valentine's Day . . . From my birth I seem to have been a controversial subject for my father, who was a tradesman in the village and, as I like to remember, an educated man, wished to have me christened Valentine. The innocent intention reached the ears of my other Grandmother. Mrs. James Lamb of Milton Ernest, Beds, a strict Baptist, and she drove over to Finedon post haste in the conveyance then known as a "Sociable" which every Sunday took her and her family to Carlton Meeting. She "would not have the child marked for life in that way." So I was given my Father's name Edmund and my Mother's maiden name of Lamb. I have resented this interference as much as I am sure my Father did. Edmund Valentine Wallis would have sounded finely and have looked well in deeds and as a signature. On

PLATE 1. MRS ANN WALLIS (née VINCENT), Edmund Wallis's beloved grandmother, widow of Owen Wallis (d. 1834). She carried on the *Gate* Inn, Finedon until c.1854, and then moved to the *Three Tuns*, (later the *Exchange*), Wellingborough.

the contrary the name Lamb has always been an obvious mistake. There is little of the Lamb and far more of St. Valentine in my composition, but I must wear my Grandmother Lamb's choice as long as names endure.

The Vincents were once a wealthy family, but in the matter of heirs became reduced to Joan Vincent, only child and heiress of Francis Vincent and Frances Cotton his wife. She married Robert Mulsho Esquire of Thingdon (1588 or 1590) and so ended the elder branch of the Vincents. Thenceforward the reduced family seems to have been described as yeomen, farmers, graziers, gentlemen and one was known as "Ready Money Dick."

In a New Testament given to my great-great-Grandfather is this inscription:-

> "Sir English Dolben requests that his worthy kinsman and neighbour in Finedon, Mr. Richard Vincent Senr., will accept this large copy of the New Testament of our Lord and Savior Christ-Jesus, thro' whose Blood willingly shed on the Cross at Mount Calvary, thro' whose Resurrection from his Tomb. thro' whose Ascension into Heaven from Mount Olivet, and thro' whose Intercession at the Throne of GOD his Father, all of Human Kind who believe in his Word, who pray for his Spirit, who, so far as able, practice his Words of Truth and his Works of Kindness may die in the joyful Hope of everlasting Happiness. Glory to GOD, peace on Earth, Good Will to All. X 1823"

Sir English Dolben of Finedon Hall always owned the relationship and a favourite jest of his when he met my uncle Owen was: "You will never be out of debt as long as you are Owen."

My mother was a Baptist (and the best buttermaker around Milton Ernest), my Father a Churchman. They met at Mr. George White's, then a prosperous tradesman in Silver Street, Wellingborough. On her marriage she attended Burton Latimer Baptist Meeting 2 miles away and her first children were not christened. Two died, and young Mr. Paul, who was a Puseyite lately come from Oxford, refused to read the burial service over them. I often saw the Reverend G. W. Paul as a youth and I never forgave him. Apparently my Father's views afterwards prevailed and the children were christened, but on Sunday afternoons the family attended the little Baptist meeting when a bassviol and cello and violin led the psalmody. My father's favourite hymn was "Guide me O thou great Jehovah" and my mother's was "Begone unbelief", both always affect me. My Church aunts used to say my mother was never so happy as when she was entertaining a Baptist preacher. The religious persuasions of my parents are strangely mixed in my own composition.

When I was five my Father left his native village and moved to Hemel Hempstead, Hertfordshire, yet I have lively recollections of Finedon Feast and the marquees, and wheel of fortune, gingerbread and rock stalls; of a big fire next to our orchard and rickyard on a Sunday, and seeing my Father as Captain of the Fire Brigade. What a blaze it was! I was not concerned about the origin of the fire so much as the questionableness of men working to put it out on a Sunday. My Grandmother's rickyard and the endless delights of making tunnels in the strawricks, the apples, plums and damsons and not least my first school, Kitty Blane's Dame's School will never be forgotten. There my schooling began and in a few short years it ended. I believe it never cost more than 6d a week, which was at Hemel Hempstead, and the most important part of it was 2/0 a quarter, or two pence a week, at the Lower Grammar School at Wellingborough.

At Hemel Hempstead I attended the National School for a short time and then a private school in Marlowes kept by a Mr. Coke. We used to take our frugal dinner and eat it at school, it was generally an apple pasty supplemented by custard pudding or some other dainty bought at Mrs. Fountains' the tuck shop opposite. My brother George was a pupil at Mr. Butler's and afterwards at Mr. Jagger's in the Marlowes, the principal private school of the place. Up to the division of the family after my Father's death my brother James and I always went together. After that Owen and I paired and till today Edmund and Owen in family parlance are considered together. Thus we were both sent to the Lower Grammar School at Wellingborough of which the estimable Mr. Fisher was master – how well I remember his black hair and grizzly beard and moustache. He was a good teacher. At this school I got as far as practice in Arithmetic; with much difficulty I learnt to write decently, I struggled long at my copy book and was doing pothooks years. I got my first views of politics by hearing the master's praises of Lord John Russell, and my Geography was learnt as one of a large class in a circle of boys following our teacher's pointer and lessons on a large wall map. Mr. Fisher spoilt himself as a hero in my estimation by his diet of bread and milk sandwiches while we in a long queue produced our sums and copy books for his inspection. The large school room was warmed by one stove and a long stove pipe which we liked to see get red hot, and the nearer we were to the end of the queue the better the boys were pleased. There was no assistant, there were about 100 boys, the best of whom might go for a year to the floor above, called the Upper School, many years ago reorganized, and now the famous Wellingborough Grammar School with its new buildings and hundreds of successes in the public examinations.

The first Headmaster I recollect was the Revd. Thomas Sanderson D.D., Vicar of Doddington, in whose reign the school reached its lowest depths. Returning to the Lower School it only remains to be said that Mr. Fisher used the cane freely, it was his only assistant and periodically I got more than my share of it. The fees were 2d a week or 2/- a quarter and those tho brought the money punctually received a packet of humbugs as discount. At the age of 12½ my schooling ended.

My mother's sister Mrs. Maria Laker kept the *King's Arms* Hotel, a leading Market and Commercial house at Hemel Hempstead and on Thursday mornings there were hundreds of women and dealers buying their straw plaits. She was a widow of a Huntsman and had five daughters who were for many years instead of sisters to me. I fancy my father was in low water when he left Northamptonshire and yet methinks it was a mistake for there he was much respected and on his leaving his friends gave him a dinner at the *Bell* Inn, one of the oldest licensed house in England. The Landlord was Thomas Moore a former Butler at Finedon Hall. The dinner

was not all, they gave my father a silver snuffbox. The following is a report of the dinner in the *Northampton Herald*:

> "On Monday 11th December 1854 the inhabitants of Finedon met at the Bell Inn to present to Mr. E. V. Wallis a handsome silver snuffbox on his leaving the neighbourhood bearing the following inscription:
>
> 'Presented to Mr. E. V. Wallis as a testimonial of respect and esteem by the inhabitants of Finedon after a residence of more than 20 years December 1 1854.'
>
> Upwards of 50 tradesmen and farmers sat down to a sumptuous dinner provided by Mr. Moore. After which the health of Her Majesty, Prince Albert etc. were drunk. The company was addressed by Mr. George Archer setting forth Mr. Wallis's past services as a useful and efficient parish man, he having filled most of the parish offices, as a neighbour friend, or father of a family his character did him great credit and would ever be an honour to himself his family and country. The ceremony of presentation took place amid cheers and acclamations followed by the appropriate melody of "Speak of a man as you find him" by Mr. Buckby and the company. The health of Mr. Wallis being drunk he addressed the company expressing his heartfelt gratitude at their sense of his past services. Mr. Wright and others addressed the company. The health of the Committee and others being drunk the evening's entertainment past merrily."

According to the *Northampton Herald* report they also sang the refrain "For he's a jolly good fellow." Justice to my Father's memory calls for the reproduction here of the presentation.

If this were all true why did he leave? We children were sent here and there till the new home was ready, my youngest brother Owen to my Grandmother and her daughters at the *Three Tuns* Inn, a good house in the Square at Wellingborough three miles away, where the little fellow was put to bed in a drawer in his Aunt Betsy's room. When over 80 he asked if our tallboy had come from his Grandmother's, which it had, as he remembered being put to sleep in a drawer from it. My brother James went to the *Bell*. I was left with my Uncle Owen, an ironmonger in the High Street, who had a gentle little quakeress wife, before her marriage Mary Harlock of Finedon. They had no children. They kept ringdoves in large wire cages whose cooing from light to dark in a gloomy old house I can never escape, and the cooing of a quist will at once bring back the depression of that unhappy stay, during which I made an attempt to run away by getting up at dawn, but as I tumbled down the dark old stairs I was heard and fetched back as a bad ungrateful child aged 5! At last my father fetched us three boys to Hertfordshire.

HEMEL HEMPSTEAD

My good Aunt Laker's house was a most hospitable place and a perfect paradise to the Wallis children. It was a house of plenty and she must have loved her sister's children. She and her daughters were great upholders of the Baptist Church. The house was a hostel for the Minister, a kitchen for the sick and much used for working parties. My dear cousins Lizzie, afterwards Mrs. Millhouse; Polly, afterwards Mrs. Chennells and Mayoress; Sarah of less happy memory who became Mrs. John Wood; Amelia, Mrs. William Holloway; Maria is and has been for 60 years past Mrs. George Palmer. For over 50 years mother and daughters and one or other of their husbands were great supporters and office bearers of the Baptist community.

Five years passed, five years of bad health and failure and my sweet sister Annie died aged 16 in 1858, my dear Mother died in March 1859 and on Easter Monday, six weeks after, my Father died too. I remember my small brothers and myself going to my Mother's bedside to say goodnight and the next morning her suffering and cares were over. My Uncle James Lamb came to her funeral and left a £5 note. Good Friday 1859 was a lovely day

PLATE 2. EDMUND LAMB WALLIS (standing) and his brother Owen, photographed in Huntingdon, about 1877.

and and we went violeting in Gadebridge Lane; on Easter Monday my Father lay very ill and I was left for a short while by his bedside. I have since been told of his anxiety for his unprovided family and that evening we children learnt that we were motherless and fatherless. In a few days a simple funeral procession walked behind his coffin up Hemel Hempstead High Street to the churchyard where we laid him by the side of my mother and sister, a saintly girl whose death was a great sorrow on the top of great trials.

Once again the family was divided, my sister Maria was 19 and she went as a governess into Oxfordshire, to Mrs. Hensman's at Huntercombe Manor Farm, Henley-on-Thames. In 1862 she married Stephen Howard, and stayed her wedding night at my Grandmother's and left for Queensland the next day; they sailed in the *Queen of the Colonies* for Brisbane. He was most devoted for well nigh 50 years and now they both sleep together honoured in death as in life in Parkes Cemetery, New South Wales. They lived to found the Town of Parkes, to have a large business and a prosperous family. My brother James went to them and I was to follow, but my sister's letter came three weeks too late. I had then left my aunts and my desire to go died out in my more cheerful outlook. At least, this is my recollection of my altered plans. I never saw my sister again, but she wrote regularly till she died, 60 years afterwards.

WELLINGBOROUGH

My brothers George and James were apprenticed and little Owen and I were taken by our Aunt Betsy to our Grandmother's at Wellingborough and my ironmonger uncle agreeing to clothe and teach Owen his trade when he was old enough. He was then 8 years old. As for me I became the sole care of my Grandmother and her daughters Frances and Betsy. I loved my good Grandmother and she was proud of me, I feel her dear hand now stroking my curls, but my Aunts prophesied I would come to a bad end. In after years we became good friends and they started me in business and it is right I should not dwell on the six dark years I lived with them.

As a child, or shall I say as a growing boy I was very shy. To go into the room to speak to a visitor was a great ordeal. Perhaps it was nerves, perhaps it was timidity, whichever it was neither would be suspected in my later years. It was for an inspection I was required. My father had only left the district 5 or 6 years, and his early death at 46, a few weeks after my Mother's who belonged to the Bedfordshire border and had lived nearly all her married life at Finedon, made a considerable impression, and their orphan children created a good deal of interest. "This", my aunt would say, "is my brother Edmund's boy, the other is Owen, 18 months younger." I might have been a foundling or a curiosity and I left the room as soon as the interest lulled.

I went to the Grammar School in the churchyard, I cleaned boots and shoes, and knives and forks and deputised for the houseman, cleaned the windows ran errands and learnt a column of spelling every day and the collect on Sunday. I fear I was more at home in the kitchen. Our one maid was hired from one old Michaelmas Day to the next. How I envied her escape.

My daughter Janet says this story should not be colourless, by which I understand it should not be too genteel. The last word is now little used: it was once part of every middle class vocabulary. What was life in an inn like? Three Inns are mentioned here; the *Gate* at Finedon, the *King's Arms* at Hemel Hempstead and the *Three Tuns* at Wellingborough. From 10 to 16 my life was part of the *Three Tuns*. My Aunt Betsy was my godmother and she presided in the bar. In those days a stand-up drinking counter was little known, at least it was not part of the *Three Tuns*. The house was my Grandmother's freehold property and again in those days tied houses scarcely existed. The Act of 9 George IV supposed that every Licensee was the *bona fide* tenant and he only held one license. The *Three Tuns* had some of the leading farmers and townsmen as customers. On Market days there were two chairmen in the Market room. Mr. Thomas Hardwick, an old spare gentleman with a voluminous white neckerchief who was the parish Churchwarden occupied one armchair and smoked his clay pipe. The opposite chair was filled by Mr. John Smith a contrast to his *vis-a-vis*. Mr. Smith was a stout farmer with a rubicund countenance and an old neighbour of my Grandmother. Other market day customers were Mr. Parsons of Irchester, Mr. Hayes of Wilby, Mr. Thomas Kilburn the miller and Mr. Thomas Gillitt our tenant and next door neighbour and many others I don't recall. In the week Townsmen like Mr. Sibley the grocer, now Wilde; Mr. Holmes the head counterman at Mr. Capel's now James; Mr. Turner the maltster; Mr. William Williamson the Postmaster; Mr. Bartholomew Bellamy managing clerk to Mr. Hodson; Mr. John Whitton, Mr. John Hale a great churchman, and Mr. Thomas Birchall the saddler who once reproved my scolding aunt saying "You can't put an old head on young shoulders"; and dear old Mr. Joseph Brown, one of the Feoffees. The *Three Tuns* was indeed an ideal inn where gentlemen met in the evenings and heard and told the news. If Aunt Betsy supplied the liquor my dear Grandmother always occupied her own chair.

There was a taproom and a Bagatelle room. Ironstone workers and shoemakers were supplied there and my favourite room was the taproom. In the daytime Ton Liggins and the other shoemakers, old customers at *The Gate* (Finedon), made the *Three Tuns* their house of call when they fetched the 'uppers' from the Wellingborough factories to make up and returned the shoes they had made up. The universal question of passersby was "How's trade?" "O very bad, there is no Army work", which was the staple trade. Tom Liggins also acted as waiter on Fairdays and special occasions. At Fairs the Inn provided a round of beef, hams and tongues, and I have some of the table silver used. Another occasion stands out and that was a Tripe and Onion supper to the customers when Tom was waiter and I was underwaiter. O the steaming tripe and onions and mashed potatoes! Then songs and one was "Thus by studying economy I live like a Lord." What good songs they had in those days.

I often acted as potboy and I believe I could today carry a brimful quart or pint of beer without spilling a drop. On hot market days my brother and I were well employed in fetching dozens of mineral waters from Hope's in Silver Street, at other times fetching clay pipes from the Makers on Broad Green. This was always interesting, the factory was very warm and the pipe making done under your eyes. As evening drew on, the *Hind* bus brought one or two Commercials for the night and their

savoury meat teas followed. Other travellers were catered for in the taproom, and brought their own steak or chop which was cooked and served up and enjoyed, and good humour was the rule.

On Sunday evenings my Aunts were usually at Church and left my Grandmother in charge of the bar with my brother Owen and myself (before I became a chorister) and it was our pleasure to draw the beer the few customers required, always careful to make no slops and to see that the mugs were crowned with froth, which needed some little skill in the use of the beer engine. In the intervals or between interruptions we read the big Bible aloud, always asking to be excused reading the notes and begging her to tell us about "Boney" and the press-gang of her girlhood.

My family's love for their old village of Finedon and of the villagers for them was remarkable. My Aunt Frances took Owen and me over for our first visit and well do I recollect our having lunch under a group of Scotch firs near the grove. Our first introduction was to the Toll-keeper, Mrs. Dunkley at the Turnpike who was made more interesting because her husband was in the Lunatic Asylum. The next call was at Mrs. Moore's at the *Bell*, then, I think, on Kitty Bland, my first schoolmistress. Tome Leete was the big burly butcher, a handsome curly-headed noisy man much given to drink, but as often happens his children were good teetotal Wesleyans. Mrs. Leete, formerly Miss Clapham was a meek woman. Owen and I often finished our round of visits by taking tea at her house, and the piles of salt buttered toast cut from the quartern loaf eaten before a big fire with her boys and girls made a capital preparation for the long walk home. Or perhaps we had tea at Aunt Chapman's whose son Berry Chapman was the chief baker of the village. His dried apples and watercress spring in the garden were great attractions. A visit to Mrs. Downing whose husband the plumber had bought my father's business, and a look in at Mrs. Everett's at the *Gate* Inn, with all these and more we never lacked a welcome and a visit to Finedon was a red-letter-day.

Six miles there and back. At the Midland railway bridge we were a third of the way, at the pike we were half way, at the Side gate to Irthlingborough three quarters, and so we measured the distances. The Church came in for a visit, and a beautiful church it is. The Vicarage was outside our list of friends, but my Aunts and the numerous maiden ladies of the Dolben and Paul families were always intimate as old parishioners. Our chief and never tiring friends were the Vincents, my Father's cousin Fred Vincent and his kind wife and children, Willy and Louisa. There was always tea here and the run of the garden, and old Betty Vincent. Fred's mother lived next door. Louie died in the "Maids House" at the Church gate. Fred was a muddler and Willy, who should have made a fortune, died young and poor. I see his merry twinkling eyes as I write. I made some attempt to encourage him but with no success.

No notes of my boyhood at Wellingborough would be complete without reference to St. Luke's, the parish church, and the Reverend H. V. Broughton M.A., of blessed memory, and his curates. My Grandmother's pew was a large square enclosure under the west gallery, all long since removed. Twice a Sunday for several years we small orphans, whose history was well known, in our quaint cloaks followed our Grandmother and Aunts to this pew; my cloak was a black one with a fur collar and chain and Owen's was a grey one. The Charity bread of 24 or 48 penny loaves was on the shelves at the back of the seat and a mouse's visit was a small joy to me. In due course I became a chorister at the afternoon service and this took me from my Aunts' immediate surveillance, though one of them always attended this service, yet being at the other end of the church I escaped them for the time being. My

brother Owen was also a member of choir but his delight was to assist the organ blower, a mentally deficient old shoemaker called Harry. The afternoon organist was Miss Harrington, a maiden lady, her brother Mr. William playing in the afternoons the fine organ in Finedon church. Their father was organist before them. The family of Harrington were the professors of music at Wellingborough for 2 or 3 generations.

FIRST STEPS IN THE LEGAL PROFESSION

When I was 12½ a boy was wanted in the office of Mr. H. M. Hodson, solicitors, who was Clerk to the Magistrates, Registrar of the County Court, Clerk to the Guardians, Clerk to the Commissioners of Taxes, to the Turnpike Trustees, to the Association for the Prosecution of Felons, etc. These appointments did not leave much room for private practice. My family influence got the preferment and I started on my legal career at 6/- a week, which I thought a fortune.

The first winter's liberty found me a bright growing youth in demand for amateur theatricals and I appeared in the Corn Exchange in the "Charcoal Burner."

At every part of my career from childhood up I have always had at least one good friend. Mr. and Mrs. Hodson were my first friends outside my relations who, excepting the Laker family generally had their hands full of their own concerns. Our offices opened into a lovely garden full of flowers and fruit trees. I fear I was often missing, but what feasts of mulberries and plums and strawberries I had, and I was ever a great favourite with good Mrs. and Mrs. Hodson, but all these garden delights came to an end when we moved.

Mr. and Mrs. Hodson were pillars of the Church of England and needless to say one of the chief families. I always had to be in church ten minutes before the service began, which I used not in meditation but in watching the great folks come in, amongst them Mr. and Mrs. Hodson, followed by their footman with his powdered wig, carrying their books. Then came the tall Miss Sherwood and her short sister. The great John Wood Sherwood and his daughters, whose benefactions have done so much for the Church of Wellingborough. Tommy Hardwick the Churchwarden with his long wand, Mr. and Mrs. Holroyd from Hatton Hall and their visitors, what a stir their entrance made! Mr. and Mrs. Murphy so choleric, with his nephew; Mr. and Mrs. Burnham and their two little boys; the Bank managers so big in my eyes and any well-to-do children of dissenters like the Woolstons and Dulleys; and the pretty shoe girls in their grand clothes whom my old aunts despised. The Thomas Williamsons and the Kilburns; Mr. T. B. Turnell the miller and his sister and pupil. The parting of Mr. Partridge's hair from the crown to the nape of his neck was a work of art.

I began to write of Mr. Hodson and have digressed. To return to my first employer, he was always in my time more or less an invalid and as he walked over the garden paths to the offices his paralysed foot scraped the gravel and told us if he were better or worse. Mrs. Hodson used to drive him out most fine days in the four wheel chaise and the black cob in his shiny coat and silver plated harness and his dear mistress and mine were everywhere received with respect. Mrs. Bazley and her brother Mr. Edward Hodson when at Wellingborough completed the household. They were a family who loved good style and good living and good wine and hospitality and good works were part of themselves.

Mr. Burnham, known as old George Burnham or 'the Old Man', the father of Mr. George Hodson Burnham, began life in the Hodson family as a page, if tradition does not deceive me, and then got into the office and in due time married his master's daughter, made a great practice and became

head of the firm, feared by his family, his staff and everybody else. In these days he would not have been so feared. He lived at Wollaston and drove in for an hour or two in his carriage and pair.

On the 19th November 1862 Mr. Hodson had his third stroke at the Board of Guardians and died the following day. How well I remember the cab bringing him home and my alarm, and how I wondered what would become of me. I wondered in vain and needlessly. His nephew Mr. G. M. Burnham took over most of his appointments and me with them.

The name of Hodson is venerated by me. Mr. H. M. Hodson was the last of a long line of Wellingborough lawyers of that name. I always understood our office was one of the three oldest practices in the county. In my time it was Hodson only. It has been Hodson, Hodson and Burnham, and Hodson at last merged in Burnham and Son. The Hodsons were an ancient Wellingborough family descended on the maternal side from the Harveys and Sparkes of two or three centuries before; I think I recollect that one old lady ancestress lived to be 103.

A page must be added of my clerkship with Messrs. Burnham and Henry on the death of Mr. Hodson. They held many appointments and had a large conveyancing business and were Stewards of the Crown Manors. I was in the County Court and Magistrates' Clerk side till removed to the Conveyancing office. I now came under Mr. W. I. Henry who sat with three of the clerks who included Mr. I. L. Hamshaw afterwards a solicitor at Hanley, a very great young man, and William Lewin. Mr. Henry had worked his way up from the desk and had always been held up as a paragon. He was nearly bald and had whiskers and beard. He wore a coat of the colour of the new Air Force, and the rest does not matter.

We often went to the office at 7 o'clock and then to breakfast. We sat for hours working in silence when Mr. Henry was in, but directly he went out we relaxed.

Our office closed at 4 on Saturdays, the forerunner of the half-holiday and then Gibson's pony or pony and trap were at my service, and many a journey to the villages round other junior clerks and I made together.

My education out of school hours was not wholly neglected for my aunts or my aunt Owen subscribed to the Parochial Lecture Society and if they didn't use the ticket I had to attend the lecture. In this way I believe I heard Charles Dickens, George Dawson, and Henry Vincent in the Corn Exchange. On these occasions I always sat near the door so that if I did not like the performance I could go out without being missed. This was not always possible as sometimes I had to accompany my Godmother and then I was on my good behaviour.

At some entertainments I got in free as probably the Artistes stopped at the *Three Tuns* which was close by. I was by turn ticket collector, prompter and dresser, and not seldom I sold programmes. All this came to an end when I left my relations and started my new life at Mrs. Lewin's.

The Literary Institute at Wellingborough, previously called the Mechanics Institute, was housed in the long front room of the Corn Exchange and I was a member for three or four years. I think with gratitude of the good men of the town who fathered it. The Sharmans, the Dulleys, the Woolstons, Mr. William Bearn and Mr. T. S. Curtis. The Penny Readings were in fashion. I generally sat by the fire at the end furthest from the platform.

I was a keen critic especially of the glee singing and a break-down was my delight; and of the readers the great favourite was John Askham, the shoemaker poet who used to read his own sketches in prose and verse. I often read them now. Many a treasure, we used to be told by most speakers, was buried in the soles he made. The town was justly proud of him.

The first book I asked for out of the Lending Library was *The Pilgrim's Progress.*

This was my Aunt Betsy's recommendation. The Librarians' daughter was in charge and did not restrain her amusement. I often look back to the Literary Institute as my university. Otherwise 2d a week was the cost of my Wellingborough schooling.

By this time a stranger should remark, "Such a training and you such a teetotaller! Who would believe it?" So I will relate the explanation. There was one winter a man named Scott with a gloriously painted and paraffin-lighted caravan filled with cutlery which he sold as he gave teetotal lectures in the Square. He was a handsome man with curly hair and as a Temperance Advocate I have never heard him surpassed. One night he spoke in the Corn Exchange and partly under conviction and partly to pique my aunts I signed the pledge. I returned home, fetched a half pint mug which was generally filled for me with small beer, poured it away, went to the pump and filled the mug with water, and that was the beginning of over 50 years of total abstinence. My relations made no objection and showed no resentment and probably secretly approved.

The days at the *Three Tuns* were coming to an end. I was growing a wilful self-assertive and self-conscious youth and nothing was more natural than the rupture which presently resulted in my finding a fresh home.

One Saturday night in April 1865 I wheeled the big box bearing my name E. L. Wallis away from my Grandmother's and went to lodge with a Mrs. Lewin whose son William was my senior at the office and there I entered a new atmosphere. I found her a second mother. A week or two after I told Mr. George Burnham I had left my aunts, and he said, apparently surprised "Have you?" "Yes, sir", I replied – "Well then" said Mr. George as we all called him "I shall give you 17/- a week!" and I have never wanted since. I recall my economies even then and often did I make a visit to the old clothes shop in Herriott's Lane to sell my old clothes and many a plaintiff to whom I paid money out of the County Court left a shilling behind, and I did quite a trade as a middle-man in the sale of rabbits to the boarders at the Grammar School. So altogether I was in affluence and in due course bought a watch for two guineas from Robinson's in Silver Street. There was, fortunately for me, no paying by instalments in those days, a modern system which has ruined many. The next day was Sunday. Oh the pride of owning a watch! Steel chains were the vogue – I smile to recall the number of times I found occasion to take it out to see the time during that morning service.

The other lodgers were assistant schoolmasters and clerks, most of whom made their mark, and their influence on my plastic mind was wholly of the right sort. William Lewin became a solicitor and was taken into the firm of Burnham, Son and Lewin. Little John Cain with a big Roman nose was ordained and became a missionary, and in later life I saw his name as Professor of Tamil at Oxford or Cambridge. W. F. B. Tarse became a solicitor, he was a Plymouth Brother from Exmouth. Mr. Robert Scott an assistant at the Upper Grammar School, who was followed by Mr. Sanders a Mathematics master, and Percival. The latter bought a Latin dictionary with several pages missing, which he copied and so supplied the wanted leaves. Such zeal demanded success, but he died young. He had been a National School teacher and was the son of a barber at Dunstable. The one non-studious member of the house was Sep Lewin of my own age. He was in a wine-merchant's office and died in the trade and a member of the Church of England. The house is opposite the Broad Green and was next door to Mr. Tomlin's the Town Crier. Mr. John Cain was an assistant master at the Lower Grammar School which was no longer run by one man like Mr. Fisher. My brother lodgers were all my seniors. Mr. Cain was the doyen and a very studious man whom we all greatly respected. He occupied the adjoining attic bedroom to mine which William Lewin shared with me. I was a sleepy boy in the mornings. Mr. Cain rose between 4 and 5

and one morning he spoke to me of wasting my time in bed. Coming from him I listened and from then I began to read, to study, beginning with Sullivan's *English Grammar*. In this I was drilled by Mr. Robert Scott and I passed on to Smith's Latin *Principia*, now before me dated 6th July 1867.

My lessons were begun with a view to the Civil Service but Mrs. Hodson urged me to stick to the law. I have always blessed her for this advice.

The night my brother Owen and I wheeled my box at nightfall from the Market Square to the Broad Green was a turning point in my life. The influences in my new home were only good. I believe I shall bless God for ever and ever for leading me into that healthy and intellectual home of persevering young men.

It was under this roof I became a Communicant, in 1866, as appears in Mr. Roxby's handwriting in *Bishop Wilson on the Lord's Supper*. Good Mrs. Lewin had been an honoured member of Cheese Lane Independent Chapel for over 40 years, and her interest in me was second only to that in her own sons.

It is worthy of mention that the Reverend Charles Drawbridge, nicknamed "the Man with the Bag", referring to the barrister's bag he carried, a tall commanding figure, held his open air services on summer evenings on the Green and attracted all sorts and conditions of men.

Another local celebrity was Mr. Joseph Pendered the auctioneer, and grandfather of Miss Pendered the Authoress who walked about abstractedly, moving his lips and apparently engaged in calculation. A good auctioneer should combine suavity and sense and humour. Mr. Pendered had all. I enjoyed turning in at a furniture sale when old Charles Baron, a local furniture dealer acted the part of Man Friday to Joey Pendered and smart and quick were the wit and humour.

A friend I should not forget was John Gibson the County Court Bailiff who succeeded the Kingstones, father and son, in that office.

Famous trials I recollect were the Bank robbery of £1500 by Escott and Turner, but the part I enjoyed was to hear the Advocates, Mr. William Murphy, Mr. Robert White of Northampton Mr. Tom Cook and other solicitors, all of whom I classed in my mind, Mr. Murphy being an easy first. I scarcely remember a barrister appearing.

The Police Superintendent and Inspector and their men and I were great pals and I had the run of the Police Station. The police wore tall shiny hats and were called "Peelers" and "Bobbies" after their founder Sir Robert Peel.

I had a great terror of Auditors and Surveyors of Taxes though my duties did not bring me into very close relations with those great men. My impression of Mr. Sharp, an octogenarian County Court Auditor, was very awesome and consisted not so much in the accuracy of the books as in the Auditors temper. Mr. Sharp began life as a barber and was called Barber Sharp. I have since understood he was an old Reform or Anti-Corn Law agitator who got his appointment for his services. If it were a Union Audit my job was to hunt for the vouchers and what a hunt we often had and how many walks or runs I had from our office to the workhouse on the quest. As for the Surveyors of Taxes I regarded them as monsters, particularly one bully from Northampton, and have changed my opinion very little. An Income Tax return in those days was child's play compared with present day requirements.

In the sixties all the Post Office business was done through a trap door like the railway ticket windows. The Savings Bank, that great discovery of Mr. Gladstone, came in 1861. At that time telegrams were sent from the Railway stations and telephones were not invented for 40 years. Candles were giving way to gas. Electricity only existed in the minds of philosophers like Faraday. The letter press was a novelty and I remember Mr. Hodson showing ours and the copy letter book to a visitor. Before that every letter was hand copied in a large folio. Deeds

were of great length until 1881 when Lord Cairns's Conveyancing Act was passed and with it and the Acts of 1869 and 1871 bulky *Abstracts of Title* gradually disappeared. Engrossing clerks were an ancient race who have since gradually declined. They were beautiful penmen and ill paid. Book-keeping was a poor feature. Long bills went the way of long deeds with the Solicitors' Remuneration Acts 1881.

Stationery has greatly improved, it was generally blue and is now white or grey. An exception was straw letter paper used for economy.

With shorter deeds the big skins made way for demy book ways parchment which during the war (1914–1918) largely gave way to parchment paper owing to the famine price of parchment.

The long box rule, the runners, the seal callers, the worn edged sixpence or threepenny bit are now seldom seen, and engrossing is nearly a lost art. Perhaps the greatest change was made by the introduction of shorthand. There was no shorthand writer in any office in Wellingborough in my day, now it is a sine-qua-non everywhere and every junior should learn it. Isaac Pitman's picture or bust should be every lawyer's office. Before this art a solicitor spent three fourths of his day industriously writing letters which he is now able to dictate. The letters are now transcribed and written out in long hand or typed and signed later in the day, leaving the solicitor free for other duties, including some public work. Step by step was progress made, and shorthand was followed by the typewriter. Truly the type writing machine has revolutionized the work. Engrossing and copying are done in a few minutes which formerly took an hour. Carbon and buff copies of documents are further time savers.

I must have been a precocious junior clerk. My duty at Petty Sessions was to see that each magistrate had a clean sheet of red blotting paper, a sheet of blue foolscap and a quill pen, and to arrange the Law Books. Having done this I sat at the side table and helped to take the fines and fees. I was not a little proud of the seat this gave me on the exciting hearings which often took place. In those days my interest at the Licensing meetings was not how few licenses could be granted but how many seven shillings and sixpenny fees could be collected! The Clerk to the Justices was then paid by fees and a bonus of 10/- was paid the Superintendent of Police, 10/- to my senior and 2/6 to me.

In time, however, I became restless and answered an advertisement in the *Law Times* for a vacant clerkship in the office of Mr. G. F. Crowdy at Faringdon, Berks, and when I got the place I was horrified at what I had done, but it was too late to go back. A small group of friends saw me off from the old station at Wellingborough one Saturday morning in September 1867 and among them were I think William Lewin, Henry Archer, afterwards of the firm of Sharman Jackson and Archer, and George Perrin, a fellow clerk who afterwards threw up the law. It took from 8 in the morning to 6 in the evening to reach Faringdon through Bletchley and Oxford. I seldom pass through Oxford but I remember that sad day and look over to the N.W. station opposite.

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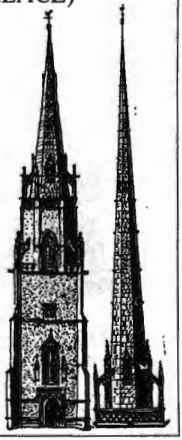

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NORTHAMPTONSHIRE WORKING MEN'S CLUBS, 1880-1914

T. G. ASHPLANT

In this article, I shall consider the growth and development of the working men's club movement in Northamptonshire towards the end of the nineteeth century, focussing in particular on those clubs affiliated to the Working Men's Club & Institute Union (CIU). I shall examine the social and political character of these clubs, and the role they sought to play both locally in their communities, and nationally through the CIU itself.

1. *The CIU and its Clubs*

The working men's club movement was a hybrid; it derived both from the efforts of middle- and upper-class patrons in the mid-Victorian period to provide the means of rational recreation for working men, and from the efforts of working men themselves to provide a forum for sociability, and political and social action, free from the interference and control of patrons and publicans alike. The most successful organising and propagandist body for such clubs was the CIU, founded by the Rev Henry Solly and others in 1862. The CIU as a national body mirrored and co-ordinated the efforts of large numbers of local patrons throughout England and Wales. However, this massive attempt at patronage proved successful only in the short term. From the mid-1870s, working men in London and elsewhere began increasingly to challenge and if necessary dispense with the patrons of existing clubs, or to found clubs independently without the help of patrons. By 1884, this challenge had led to a struggle to wrest control of the CIU itself from the patrons, and place it in the hands of the member clubs. This effort proved successful, and by the late 1880s the CIU and the great majority of its affiliated clubs were democratic working class organisations.[1]

Because of its role as a national campaigning voluntary organisation, equipped with a full panoply of records including annual reports and a newspaper, the CIU provides the best single means of studying the working men's club movement before 1914. But there was also a wide range of such clubs not affiliated to the CIU. These included some Liberal and most Conservative clubs, who preferred to affiliate to their party organisation; and a considerable number of social clubs who could see no advantage in affiliation. This wider population of "respectable" working men's clubs from which the CIU drew its members can in part be traced through other sources, though these reveal little beyond the bare facts of location, date and size.[2] However, they do serve to situate the picture which can be drawn of CIU clubs in a broader context.

1. For the history of the CIU, see R. Price, "The Working Men's Club Movement and Victorian Social Reform Ideology", *Victorian Studies* 15 (1971), 117-47; his *An Imperial War and British Working Class* (London: Routledge, 1972), ch. 2; and my "The Working Men's Club & Institute Union and the Independent Labour Party; working class organisation, politics and culture c. 1880-1914" (D. Phil. thesis, University of Sussex, 1983; henceforth cited as Ashplant, "The CIU and ILP").

2. CIU clubs can be traced through the lists of clubs affiliating and leaving in the Union's *Annual Reports;* for details see Ashplant, "The CIU and the ILP", 680. Other respectable clubs can be traced through: (1) the yearly *Reports* of the Chief Registrar of Friendly Societies (for those clubs choosing a register under the Friendly Societies Act or the Industrial & Provident Societies Act), which give date of foundation, and membership; (2) *Kelly's Directories* and similar works (for particular localities). For discussion, see Ashplant, "The CIU and the ILP", 104-9; for the notion of "respectable" clubs, which the CIU sought to distinguish from what it called "mere drinking dens", see 106-7.

That picture is itself fairly circumscribed. London, which was the most concentrated centre of working men's clubs, supported throughout this period one or more unofficial papers, from which it is possible to build up a rich picture of club activities. No comparable source seems to exist for any of the provincial strongholds of the club movement; and a rounded picture of any of these areas would depend on a painstaking local study drawing above all on local newspapers. I have not been able to attempt such a study for Northamptonshire, although some at least of the materials for it exist.[3]

What this article offers is an account of the CIU clubs in Northamptonshire, drawn predominantly from national sources, which tries to place them in the wider context of the national club movement. Elsewhere, I have argued that working men's clubs, as they had been developed by 1900, can be understood in terms of an abstract model which includes: size, mode of financing, and elements of club culture (drink-sociability, politics, education, welfare, entertainment, response to sabbatarianism, and role in the wider club movement). In practice, these different elements were articulated together in a limited range of ways. A small number of club types can be identified, each associated with the socio-economic character of a particular region. These types I defined as: radical-political, market-town clubs, clubs in well-established working-class areas, clubs in isolated or declining working-class areas, and clubs in newly-developed working-class areas.[4] By considering the Northamptonshire clubs in the context of economic and political developments in the county, and by comparing the scattered data with the typology sketched above, it is possible to draw a coherent sketch of club life.

3. For the London commercial papers, see Ashplant, "The CIU and the ILP", 99-103. For Northamptonshire, sources include: local papers, several of which gave intermittent or regular coverage to club affairs (notably the *Wellingborough Post*, a Conservative paper which as well as news items ran a regular "Clubman's Column" in its weekly supplement); a history of the Northampton St Giles club by Ernest J. Wright, a club trustee, which was published in 1913, but which I have not been able to trace (I would be grateful to hear if anyone knows of a copy); and the records of individual clubs if any survive (again, an effort to trace such records failed to locate any).

4. For this typology, see Ashplant, "The CIU and the ILP", 463-88.

2. Demographic and Industrial Change in Northamptonshire, 1850-1900

The pace and pattern of development of the club movement in Northamptonshire can best be understood in the context of contemporary demographic and industrial developments, especially the speed and location of urban population growth, and the transformation of the footwear industry.

Some areas of the county experienced very rapid population growth in the later decades of the century. The fastest-growing area until the 1861 Census was the county town itself. Thereafter, following the building of the Midland Railway line in 1857, the most rapid growth was to be found in the small towns and industrial villages of the Ise Valley, especially in the 1870s and above all in the 1890s.[5] Such growth was particularly marked in some individual towns; growth rates for fifteen selected towns were markedly higher than that of the county as a whole, with those for Rushden and Kettering especially striking (*see Table 1*).[6]

5. C. D. Morley, "Population of Northampton and the Ise Valley, 1801-1951", *East Midlands Geographer* 11 (1959), 20-9; P. R. Mounfield, "The Footwear Industry of the East Midlands: (III) Northamptonshire 1700-1911", *East Midlands Geographer* 3.8 (1965), 437-8.

6. The county population grew (comparison with the figure for England & Wales in brackets): 1871-81 – 11.9% (14.4%); 1881-91 – 10.6% (11.7%); 1891-1901 – 12.0% (12.2%); 1901-11 – 3.9% (10.9%). Thus the growth rate for the county as a whole was 10-12% per decade between 1871 and 1901, slowing to only 4% for 1901-1911. Growth rates in the fifteen selected towns were markedly higher, reaching 20% or more in nine towns in the decade 1871-81, and in twelve towns in the decade 1891-1901 *(see Table 3)*. Rushden grew by 67% or more per decade, Kettering by 47% or more per decade, between 1871 and 1901

TABLE 1: POPULATION GROWTH RATES OF FIFTEEN NORTHAMPTONSHIRE TOWNS, 1871-1911

Population Growth Rate	1871-1881	1881-1891	1891-1901	1901-1911
	Number of towns			
−10.1−20%	–	–	–	1
− 0.1−10%	–	–	–	2
+ 0.1−10%	2	4	–	11
+10.1−20%	4	5	3	–
+20.1−30%	5	3	7	1
+30.1% +	4	3	5	–

Source: Calculated from the Census, 1871-1911

Note: The fifteen towns included are: Burton Latimer, Earls Barton, Finedon, Higham Ferrers, Irchester, Irthlingborough, Kettering, Northampton, Peterborough, Raunds, Rothwell, Rushden, Thrapston, Wellingborough, Wollaston.

This growth was based to a considerable extent on the expansion and transformation of the boot-and-shoe industry. The expansion of the industry was reflected in the proportion of occuped males in the county which it employed; this grew from 18% in 1871 to a peak of 27% in 1901, with the most rapid growth in the 1880s. In the main centres of the trade this concentration of employment was considerably higher. In Northampton itself, the proportion of boot-and-shoe workers reached a peak of half the occupied men in 1891. In 1901 Wellingborough had a quarter of its occupied men employed in the industry, Kettering a half, Rushden two-thirds.[7]

As important as the expansion of the industry was its changing character. Mechanisation had begun in the late 1850s, with the introduction of the sewing machine; but initially this made little difference to the putting-out system. The lasters and finishers continued to work at home, often helped out by other family members.[8] Their numbers grew as the industry expanded, with employers transferring work from London first to Northampton, and then to outlying towns and villages, in search of cheaper labour.[9] From the early 1870s onwards, the county became a major centre both of cheaper ready-made shoes, and of military boots. During these decades of expansion, trade unionism was gradually established despite the difficulties of organising a scattered workforce faced by the constant threat of cheaper labour. Union organisation in Northampton, which had been almost dead in the later 1870s, picked up from 1882. In 1883 a Conciliation Board was established; and major disputes in 1887 and 1892 were settled on terms broadly favour-

7. Figures taken from the Population and Occupation Tables in the Census: Northamptonshire: 1871 – 18.0%, 1881 – 19.1%, 1891 – 26.1%, 1901 – 27.4%, 1911 – 24.5%; these are proportions of occupied males aged 10+ (except 1881 = aged 5+). Northampton: 1871 – 42.5%, 1881 44.6%, 1891 – 48.8%, 1901 – 41.2%, 1911 – 37.0%. For the other towns, no figures are available before 1901; thereafter, Wellingborough: 1901 – 27.6%, 1911 – 25.9%; Kettering: 1901 – 46.9%, 1911 – 40.4%; Rushden: 1901 – 66.9%, 1911 – 64.1%.

8. A. Fox, *A History of the National Union of Boot and Shoe Operatives* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1958), 12-4.

9. Fox, *History*, 99-100 (1880s), 202-3 (1890s); R. L. Greenall, "The Rise of Industrial Kettering", *Northamptonshire Past and Present* vol. 5 no. 3 (1975), 262.

PLATE 2: FINE FACILITIES: KETTERING WORKING MEN'S CLUB, WELLINGTON STREET *(Northamptonshire Libraries)*

able to the workers.[10] Union organisation developed similarly in Kettering from 1885 onwards; and began to extend into the smaller towns and villages in the early 1890s, though it still remained weak in many areas.[11] In line with national developments, it was also extended from the rivetters and finishers to the clickers and rough-stuff cutters from 1890 onwards.[12]

From the late 1880s, however, the industry began to change more rapidly. Faced with a growing threat of foreign competition, especially from America, employers speeded up both the transfer of hand-workers into factories, where operations could be co-ordinated under their own control, and the introduction of heavier machinery.[13] The national policy of NUBSO was to encourage this transfer, with the aim of increasing wages and reducing exploitation of women and children. Accordingly, in the early 1890s it campaigned strongly and largely successfully in the county to win over those of its own members who were reluctant. The transfer in Northampton took place by agreement at the start of 1894, and in other centres later in the year.[14] The employers,

10. Fox, *History*, 78-81, 101-4 (1887), 144-7, 151-2 (1892); J. H. Porter, "The Northampton Arbitration Board and the Shoe Industry Dispute of 1887", *Northamptonshire Past and Present* vol. 4 no. 3 (1968-9), 149-54; *id.*, "The Northampton Boot and Shoe Arbitration Board before 1914", *Northamptonshire Past and Present* vol. 6 no. 2 (1979), 93-4.

11. Greenall, "Kettering", 265; Fox, *History*, 138-9 (extension to country areas), 285-9, 314 (weakness); K. Brooker, "James Gribble and the Raunds Strike of 1905", *Northamptonshire Past and Present* vol. 6 no. 5 (1981-2), 276.

12. Fox, *History*, 136-8. At this point it changed its name from Rivetters and Finishers to Boot & Shoe Operatives.

13. Fox, *History*, 15-7; K. Brooker, "The Northampton Shoemakers' Reaction to Industrialisation: some thoughts", *Northamptonshire Past and Present* vol. 6 no. 3 (1980), 151-2; R. A. Church, "The Effect of the American Export Invasion on the British Boot and Shoe Industry 1885-1914", *Jnl. Economic Hist.* 28 (1968), 223-54.

14. Fox, *History*, 17-8 (deskilling among outworkers), 137 (exploitation), 203-4 (local campaign); Brooker, "Northampton shoemakers", 155-6; Porter, "The Northampton Boot and Shoe Arbitration Board before 1914", 95-6.

TABLE 2: NUMBER OF NORTHAMPTONSHIRE CLUBS IN EXISTENCE, 1880-1913

	1880	1885	1890	1895	1900	1905	1910	1913
No. of clubs	4	10	13	34	66	72	83	85

Source: see note 2.

however, wanted more complete control, particularly in the face of growing socialist influence within the union (both locally and nationally). Accordingly, when the union called a strike in Northampton in 1895, the employers responded by locking-out the county workforce until they were compelled to capitulate. Thereafter, the employers enjoyed a much freer hand to enforce new working practices; and the union was able to achieve few advances for its members in the twenty years up to the war.[15] In the six years from 1889 to 1895 there had been a 70% increase in the factory labour force in the industry; over the next ten years to 1905, there was a further 20% increase, the number of extra factory workers almost exactly matching the decline in the number employed in workshops.[16]

It is clear from the work of Fox and Greenall that the effects of the outwork system were not uniform for all workers. For some, their major experience was one of considerable economic insecurity, by the week, season and year, leading to a pattern of life both exploited and exploiting of family members and apprentices.[17] For others, however, their employment allowed them considerable control over the conditions and rhythm of their work, and sufficient economic security to sustain the characteristic pattern of life of the self-improving artisan.[18] Brooker has argued that there was considerable dissatisfaction among the workforce in the 1890s over the transfer to the factory demanded by the employers and encouraged by their union, and over its impact on their traditional way of life.[19]

3. *The Growth of the Northamptonshire Clubs*

The combination of these two conditions – fairly rapid population growth in the new

15. Porter, "The Northampton Boot and Shoe Arbitration Board before 1914", 96-9; Fox, *History*, 226-30, 241, 285-9 (later years); Brooker, "Northampton Shoemakers", 157.

16. In 1889 there has been c.49,000 men and women working in factories, and an unknown number in workshops; by 1895, the figures were 84,000 and 38,000, and by 1905 102,000 and 22,000; Mounfield, "Northamptonshire 1700-1911", 448.

17. Fox, *History*, 20-3 stresses the very different conditions and traditions of the various occupational groups within the industry; Brooker, "Northampton Shoemakers", 156.

18. Fox, *History*, 24-6; cf. the account of the way of life of hand-sewn workers in R. L. Greenall, "The History of Boot and Shoemaking at Long Buckby", *Northamptonshire Past and Present* vol. 5 no. 5 (177), 440-1; Brooker, "Northampton Shoemakers", 152-5. Cf. Donald Willis's *Eggshells and Te-Leaves: memories of an ordinary man* (Oxford: Robert Dugdale, 1981), 12, 19, in which he recalls his father, a shoemaker working from home in Oxford c.1900, who was an ardent Radical.

19. Brooker, "Northampton Shoemakers", *passim*; cf. Fox, *History*, 268-9 on the Social Democratic Federation's policy in Northampton for limiting the intensity of work. The result of these changes was not the total mechanisation of the industry. There remained groups of outworkers, especially in the smaller centres; and hand-workers within factories employed on the team-system. In addition, the costs of the new machines were not high, and in 1899 a leasing system was introduced by the major manufacturer. This meant that on occasion small groups of workmen were able to establish factories on co-operative lines. Consequently, the industry retained some of the characteristics of artisan production despite this major transformation. Mounfield, "Northamptonshire 1700-1911", 441; Church, "American Export Invasion", 243-7 (leasing). Cf. Greenall, "Long Buckby", 438 (Long Buckby still a hand-sewn town), 439 (character of team-work).

centres of the industry, and the steady undermining of artisanal forms of production – together provided a ready basis for the establishment of working men's clubs.

It is impossible to establish exactly the number of working men's clubs in existence at any time, or to be certain when they were founded and when they closed. But by combining the available sources of information, it is possible to get a fairly accurate picture of the number of respectable working men's clubs in any year, and of the broad pattern of their formation and turnover. In Northamptonshire, the earliest club seems to have been the Northampton Working Men's Club, founded in 1865; three more clubs followed in the 1870s, and a further seven in the 1880s. But the great majority of clubs in the county were established during the 1890s, and especially in the second half of that decade when the number of clubs in existence almost doubled in five years. During the 1900s, the number of clubs continued to grow, although more slowly *(see Table 2)*. These clubs were fairly stable institutions; of 108 clubs known to have been formed during the period, 85 were still in existence in 1913. Some two-thirds of the known clubs (68) were affiliated to the CIU.[20]

The main centres of the club movement were Northampton itself (with 21 clubs known during the period 1885-1913), and the towns of the Nene valley (with 34 clubs known, including 8 in Rushden and 6 in Higham Ferrers), and of the Ise valley (with 40 clubs known, including 13 in Kettering, 8 in Wellingborough, 6 in Burton Latimer, and 6 in Finedon). In addition, 8 clubs were to be found in the south and west of the county (especially in the Daventry area), and 5 in the north-east (chiefly Peterborough).

In these main centres, the patterns of growth were very similar; the peak years for the foundation of new clubs were 1892-6 in the Ise valley, 1895-1900 in the Nene valley, and 1896-9 in Northampton. The same was true of the individual towns, with the sole exception of Wellingborough, where all but one of the known clubs were founded in the 1900s. In certain expanding towns and villages, the clubs took on something of the character of a mass movement. In Northampton around 1900 some 14% of the male population were club members, falling to 10% around 1911; in the towns of both the Nene and the Ise valleys, club members formed c.19% of the male population around 1900, rising to c.21% around 1910.[21]

These conditions of growth were recognised by contemporaries. At the opening of the new premises of the Kettering Town Band Club in 1900, the *Wellingborough Post* commented:[22]

> . . . the clubs of Kettering have experienced a remarkable growth from the first, and so popular have they become among the working classes that in almost every case the committee have had to provide fresh building and increased accommodation.

Later in the year, surveying "Club Life at Kettering", the paper described this as a very important factor in the town's future development, given the many clubs in their midst, and the continually increasing membership.[23]

It seems likely, given the geographical distribution of the clubs, that boot and shoe workers formed the core of the membership. What little direct evidence there is supports this. Northampton had a Boot & Shoe Operatives Club, founded in 1891; and officials of the National Union of Boot & Shoe Operatives (NUBSO) played a prominent role at the opening of the

20. 86 of the known were registered, 90 listed in *Kelly's*; half (54) were affiliated, registered and listed in *Kelly's*.

21. These estimates are based on comparing 1899 club memberships with 1901 Census figures for population, and 1910 club memberships with 1911 Census figures.

22. *Wellingborough Post* 13.4.1900, 6 col 5.

23. *Wellingborough Post* 7.12.1900, 6 col 6.

TABLE 3: NUMBER OF CLUB MEMBERS, & SIZE OF CLUB MEMBERSHIPS 1891-1910

	1891	1899	1905	1910
Total no. of club members	1263	14136	14658	15781
Median club membership	194	210	178	180
Average club membership	211	288	248	236

Source: Chief Registrar of Friendly Societies, annual *Returns*. Membership figures are available only for registered clubs, and for all of these for the above years. Hence clubs included comprise: 1891, 6 registered/16 known clubs; 1899, 49/63; 1905, 59/72; 1910, 67/83.

Rushden Trades Union Club premises in 1900. The Irthlingborough Working Men's Club was described as being in a predominantly boot-making area, and the Finedon Gladstone as a club of not-highly-paid artisans. The CIU published a few biographical sketches of individual clubmen, active in local clubs or in the Northamptonshire Branch (as the CIU's regional organisation was known). These lend a little further support to the picture. Two were boot-and-shoe workers. John Hill was a long-standing member of the Northampton no. 1 branch of NUBSO, and a referee on the local Arbitration Board. A co-operator, secretary of the county WEA, and for six years a member of the local Board of Guardians, he became CIU Branch secretary in 1901, and a member of the national Executive in 1902, offices he held till the war. Frank Sturgess (b. 1857), a shoemaker holding an important position in a large boot factory, and an active Forester, helped found the Kettering Working Men's Club in 1886 and later became its secretary. A third, Fred Bosworth (b. 1860), was a carpenter and joiner, and staunch co-operator; he helped found the Rothwell Working Men's Club in 1891, became secretary of the club and its ambulance class, and Branch vice-president in 1897.[24]

At the same time as these towns were growing, their workforces were experiencing that shift from artisan to factory labour which most industries had undergone earlier in the century. In the case of London, Stedman Jones has argued that the development of working men's clubs represented the most ambitious response of artisans to the destruction of their traditional pattern of life, in which the workplace could be a site of discussion and sociability as well as of labour.[25] It seems that a similar impulse was at work in Northamptonshire. Certainly, the timing is suggestive. The major period for the founding of clubs in the county was between 1892 and 1900, *i.e.* precisely the period of the most rapid transformation of the work process, and also the period which saw the advance of trade unionism checked and forced into retreat. While the proselytising efforts of the CIU itself (discussed below) probably played a role in

24. *Wellingborough Post* 19.10.1900, 7 cols 3-4; *Club & Institute Journal* (henceforth *CIJ*) Oct. 1896, 7, Mar. 1903, 11. Biographies: *Annual Report of the CIU, 1910* (henceforth cited in the form *CIU Report . . .*), 155 (Hill), *Club World* 18.7.1896, 5 (Sturgess), *Club Life* 5.8.1899, 1-2 (Bosworth); cf. *CIU Report 1910*, 155 (J. G. Mobbs, vice-president of the Kettering Rifle Band Club, Branch president from 1900, and Executive member from 1911). The best-known clubman from the county was J. J. Dent (1856-1936), secretary of the CIU from 1883-93, but he moved to London early in life and was active in the club movement there; see *Dictionary of Labour Biography* (henceforth *DLB*) I, 103-4.

25. G. Stedman Jones, *Languages of Class: studies in English working class history 1832-1982* (Cambridge: CUP, 1983), 220.

spurring along this development, the major determinant of its timing seems to have been the rapid growth of the footwear towns and villages as the workforce was increasingly drawn into factories.

4. Political Change in Northamptonshire, 1867-1900

The other important area of change which needs to be considered is the political life of the county. Royle has shown how, from the late 1860s, a nucleus of working-class Radicals in Northampton were able to forge links with the mainstream of the Liberal Party, and develop an alliance strong enough both to compel acceptance of Charles Bradlaugh as one of the party's parliamentary candidates, and to secure his election from 1880 onwards. His support was centred on the working-class stronghold of the West Ward, and included many shoemakers and others who had bought their own houses in order to secure a vote.[26] Soon after this triumph, the Radicals in turn were challenged by the newly-founded marxist Social Democratic Federation (SDF), whose first branch in the town was established in 1886. The SDF secured a considerable foothold in the local NUBSO branch, and by the late 1890s was beginning to enjoy success in local elections. In turn, the Liberals made a determined effort to sponsor direct labour representation under their own auspices.[27] Kettering too was a solidly Radical town. Its industrial structure, one of fairly small firms in which several of the major local employers had indeed risen from the ranks, was such as to draw working men into a Liberal-Radical alliance. At the same time, the continuing exclusion of local industrialists and businessmen, many of them nonconformists, from positions of power in local politics gave them too an incentive to take part in such an alliance.[28]

As Howarth has shown, until the early 1880s politics in the rest of the county was heavily dominated by the aristocracy.[29] But over the next decade, above all through the extension of the vote in 1884, the shape of Northamptonshire politics was transformed. Kettering, which had previously been a Radical island in the Conservative countryside, now became part of the solidly-Liberal Northamptonshire East; while Mid-Northamptonshire became a marginal, and only Northamptonshire North and South remained securely Conservative seats.[30] Middle-class businessmen were able to play a more active part, as Liberal candidates, on the County Council or the Bench. At the same time, popular involvement in politics spread into the smaller towns, partly encouraged by the party organisations; and by the mid-1890s, demands for independent labour representation were being made.[31] This was then a period of considerable political transformation, in which Liberal-Radicalism achieved a late triumph just as it began to come under challenge from the new forces of socialism and independent labour. That wide range of political activity helped both to provide the inspiration, and in some cases the precise focus, for the formation of working men's

26. E. Royle, "Charles Bradlaugh, Freethought and Northampton", *Northamptonshire Past and Present* vol. 6 no. 3 (1980), 142 (electorate), 145 (political traditions), 147-8 (Liberal-Radical alliance). For one such Radical and Bradlaugh supporter, see J. Hawker, *James Hawker's Journal: a Victorian Poacher*, ed. & introduced G. Christian (Oxford: OUP, 1979), 23-4, 93.

27. M. Dickie, "Liberals, Radicals and Socialists in Northampton before the Great War", *Northamptonshire Past and Present* vol. 7 no. 1 (1983-4), 51-4; Brooker, "James Gribble", 285-9.

28. Greenall, "Kettering", *passim* (employers), 265 (Radicalism).

29. Though Wellingborough and Kettering Liberal Associations had been formed in 1877, and the Liberals did win Northamptonshire North in 1880 with the help of the Whig Lord Spencer: J. Howarth, "Politics and Society in Late Victorian Northamptonshire", *Northamptonshire Past and Present* vol. 4 no. 5 (1970-1), 270.

30. Howarth, "Politics and Society", 271; H. Pelling, *Social Geography of British Elections 1885-1910* (London: Macmillan, 1967), 109, 114, 120-2.

clubs; and to give a generation of activists the ideals and training to found and sustain such clubs, and to aspire to a role in the wider club movement.

5. The Character of the Northamptonshire Clubs

The available evidence about the Northamptonshire clubs suggests that, in terms of the typology of clubs outlined above, they were primarily of the radical-political type, while also sharing some of the characteristics of the type of club to be found in a newly-developed working-class areas. This is in keeping with the account just given of the changing socio-economic and political character of the county. The social basis of the radical-political type of club seems generally to have been the culture of the independent artisan. These clubs were characterised by a desire to play an independent political role within the Liberal Party; by an active tension between providing education and entertainment for their members; by resistance to sabbatarianism; by an effort to improve club buildings; and by larger ambitions within both the CIU and the wider working-class movement. The largest and best-documented group of such clubs was to be found in inner East London, where artisans and skilled craftsmen played an important role in their management. I have examined the culture of these London clubs more fully elsewhere.[32] All of these characteristic features were prominent in the club life of Northamptonshire. In the type of club to be found in newly-established working-class districts (which could range from a new suburb to a mining village or an entire coalfield), hardly any of the panoply of organisations both of and for the working class which characterised, say, the long-established cotton towns of Lancashire were to be found. Clubs helped to fill this cultural and social vacuum; they were often larger than clubs elsewhere, and were major providers of education and welfare. Such clubs were typically found in the expanding coal mining areas of South Yorkshire, the North East, and the Rhondda valleys.[33] Some of their characteristics, especially extensive educational and welfare provision, were also to be found in parts of Northamptonshire.

In one case, at least, we have a fairly detailed account of the founding of a Northamptonshire club, by one of those involved, which helps to place it within this wider context. Looking back in 1896, Frank Sturgess recalled the origins of the Kettering Working Men's Club. A small group of eight men, wondering why they couldn't have a working men's club in Kettering, had decided that they could. About twenty supporters were brought together for meetings, first in a pub and later in a coffee house; from these, a provisional committee was chosen, and a room hired.

> The members had to rent a place, but bigoted teetotalism was rampant, and landlords when approached declined to let their premises. However, one of the members had an old warehouse offered which afforded a chance of meeting, and then came climbing a long step ladder, and seats made of boxes and planks; but a little labour soon made the place look smart.
>
> The rules were gone over and registered, and some happy evenings were spent in the old warehouse, which are spoken of with pride even to the present time.

They decided to buy some land and build, and some liberal members came along with the necessary deposit. They raised share

31. Howarth, "Politics and Society", 269 (Bench), 271 (middle class in politics), 273 (independent labour representation).

32. For radical-political clubs, see Ashplant, "The CIU and the ILP", 474-6; for London club culture, *ibid.* 288-309, and T. G. Ashplant, "London Working Men's Clubs, 1875-1914", in E. & S. Yeo (eds.), *Popular Culture and Class Conflict 1590-1914: explorations in the history of labour and leisure* (Brighton: Harvester, 1981), 241-70.

33. For clubs in newly-developing working-class areas, see Ashplant, "The CIU and the ILP", 482-5.

capital and started on the new building, which was opened in May 1888, two years after the founding of the club. It had nothing in it to begin with, but many workers gave their help for free. The result by 1896 was a well-equipped club, with splendid library and reading-room, and a vigorous membership. Exhibitions had been held in the club, the whole of the amusements were provided by the members, and the band had taken many prizes. Nor were the members resting content with that; more ground had been bought, and the hall was soon to be enlarged. Many aspects of this account – the initial impulse to start a club, the social and practical obstacles encountered, the makeshift beginnings, the role of the members' personal money and labour in securing and decorating their own premises, and their active involvement in a wide range of club activities in the early years – mirror closely the pattern of the pioneer radical-political clubs in London.[34]

Clubs in the county conformed to the dominant national preference for size of membership, rather than growing to the considerably larger size typical of newly-developed working-class areas. From national data it seems that in most regions of England and Wales the preferred maximum club size was about 600 members. Once this level had been reached, then if the number of club members in an area continued to grow, this further demand was eventually met by forming new clubs. Only in the short term did a significant number of clubs grow beyond the preferred ceiling. This preference was in part enforced by the size of buildings available to rent, or affordable to build, and by size of institution which could be run largely on voluntary effort. But it also embodied what was felt to be the size of club which still made possible a face-to-face experience of membership. The Northamptonshire clubs fitted into this national pattern; both median and average club memberships in the county were at the lower end of the national range (*see Table 3*).[35] So did the rhythm of growth and expansion. The number of club members in the county grew rapidly in the 1890s, with the result that by 1899 there were some 6 clubs with more than 600 members. By 1905, however, there had been a redistribution of (an almost identical) membership, so that there were only 4 such clubs. Total membership in Northamptonshire remained fairly static after 1900, at around 15,000; since the number of clubs continued to increase after that date, median club size fell *(see Table 3)*[36]

Something of the character of the county's club movement can be learned by considering what club names reveal about the nuclei around which individual clubs were founded. More than half of the 108 clubs traced simply called themselves "Working Men's Club" or "Social Club". The remainder said something more precise about the identity or aims of the club's founders. Perhaps surprisingly, in view of the strength of Radicalism in the area, only three clubs included reference to Liberalism in their names. This is in marked contrast

34. *Club World* 18.7.1896, 5 cols 2-3. For the founding of London clubs, see Ashplant, "London Working Men's Clubs", 241-6.

35. For discussion of club sizes, see Ashplant, "The CIU and the ILP", 298-301, 310-1, 464-5. From the late 1890s onward, in all but one of the seven industrial regions in England and Wales, average club size fluctuated within a fairly narrow range, while at the same time total membership rose steadily. By 1913, five regions had an average membership within the range 220-330 (while Yorkshire and the North East had markedly higher sizes). Median club membership is a better indicator of the size of the majority of clubs; in half the major club counties in 1910, this median fell in the range 178-218. See Ashplant, "The CIU and the ILP", 310 & note 44, 730.

36. Of the Northamptonshire clubs with over 600 members in 1899, 3 were in Kettering, 2 in Northampton and 1 in Rushden; their aggregate membership of 5304 represented some 38% of county membership. All had lost members by 1905, and 2 had fallen below 600 members; they now contained 3060 members, only 21% of county membership.

with both London, and neighbouring Leicestershire, where clubs named Liberal-Radical were common. There were eight Conservative Working Men's Clubs, and even four socialist clubs.[37] Five clubs were based on occupational or trade union groupings, while three consisted of friendly society members. But the single most common focus was recreational: three athletic clubs, and no fewer than fifteen band clubs.[38]

There is some evidence of the surviving influence of patronage in the Northamptonshire clubs. Some was of the genteel kind still to be found in Manchester too at this period, though most urban clubs throughout the country had thrown it off in the 1870s and 80s. Thus at the annual meeting of the Northampton Working Men's Club (founded 1865) in 1900, the chair was taken by their new president, James Manfield, son of the late Sir Philip Manfield who had been president for twenty-five years. The surviving role of patronage was indicated by the thanks given to those ladies and gentlemen who had assisted at harmonic meetings, and to the honorary subscribers. However, in his presidential address, James Manfield was careful to identify himself with the independent, self-governing spirit now more characteristic of the clubs. Claiming that the fact that he had been a working man himself made him identify with the club, he referred to the clear shift which had occured since its origins. It was thirty-three years, he said, since his father had been first associated with the club. In those days, the ideas of the middle class towards the working class were different. "They thought that their amusement ought to be restricted, and under the first conditions there was no doubt the club was anything but a success."[39] Such genteel patronage was linked with the more common, straightforwardly political, patronage from Liberal politicians cultivating a constituency. Sir Philip Manfield himself, the long-time patron of the Northampton Working Men's Club, was Liberal MP for the town from 1891-95. The opening of the Rushden Trades Union Club in 1900 was attended by F. A. Channing, Liberal MP for Northamptonshire East 1885-1910, who made a speech.[40]

As already noted, the clubs drew much of their support from boot-and-shoe workers, who had experience of some independence in relation to the work process, and also of co-operative production. Hence it is not surprising that Liberal politics of a more

37. Liberal clubs: Finedon Gladstone (founded 1888), Kingsthorpe Liberal & Radical (founded 1896), and Burton Latimer Liberal (in existence 1906-10). At their peak in 1889, Liberal-Radical clubs formed half of all CIU clubs in London, and remained over 40% of the total for the next twenty years. In Leicestershire, of 49 clubs affiliating between 1887 and 1913, 15 (31%) were Liberal-Radical. See Ashplant, "The CIU and the ILP", 302, 325, 327. Conservative Working Men's Clubs in: Burton Latimer, Byfield, Desborough, Finedon, Irthlingborough, Northampton, Rothwell, Towcester. For the character of the Conservative Clubs, see PP 1897 (XXXV) [C. 8523 - I] *Royal Commission on the Liquor Licensing Laws: Minutes of Evidence vol. II*, QQ. 16,123, 16,127 (S. Bourne, Church of England Temperance Society), 18,249-94 (A. J. Darnell, president, Northampton Conservative Working Men's Club). Socialist clubs in: Kettering (founded 1907), Northampton (Social Democractic, 1895), Peterborough (known in 1914) & Wellingborough (1904).

38. Trades Union clubs in: Earls Barton (founded 1902), Kettering (1895), Rushden (1896); a Boot & Shoe Operatives and a Manager's & Foreman's Club in Northampton. Friendly Societies clubs: 2 in Northampton, 1 in Kettering. Band clubs included: 3 in Kettering and 2 in Northampton. For a Silver Prize band attached to a works, see Greenall, "Long Buckby", 440. Such band clubs were also to be found in large numbers in northern textile counties, and in coal mining areas; see Ashplant, "The CIU and the ILP", 313.

39. *Northampton Mercury* 26.1.1900, 5 cols 4-5. For the somewhat anomalous character of the Manchester clubs in this period, see Ashplant, "The CIU and the ILP", 319-21.

40. For Sir Philip Manfield (1819-99), a leading local manufacturer, president of the Arbitration Board, member of the Town Council 1866-88 and Mayor in 1884, see Frederic Boase (ed.), *Modern English Biography* vol. 6 (1921; reprint London: Frank Cass, 1965), cols. 149-50. For Francis Allston Channing (1841-1926), see *Who was Who, 1916-28*, and his *Memories of Midland Politics* (1917).

independent kind seem also to have played an important role in the county's club movement. Thus the club in the village of Moulton was set up by working men because all nine pubs there were centres of opposition to the re-election of the local Radical MP – a motive similar to that which founded many London clubs. When the publicans retaliated by trying to persuade all the brewers in the county not to sell beer to the club, it even contemplated setting up a co-operative brewery.[41] In 1898-9, the Northamptonshire Branch considered attempting to start its own brewery, before settling for a less ambitious scheme to form a mineral water company.[42] Since the brewers were very closely identified with the Tory Party, such independent breweries were attempted on several occasions by groups of Liberal-Radical clubs, notably those in the Southampton area in the late 1890s, and around Leeds in 1911.[43]

The Northamptonshire clubs also put a big effort into educational work. The Branch itself had an Education Committee, formed in 1901, which organised large numbers of debates and lectures. But the greatest initiative came from individual clubs, and especially those in Kettering. The Kettering United Trades Club organised conferences on such subjects as "The Ethics of War". Its educational effort proved so successful that in 1903 Sunday concerts were discontinued in its favour; this was quite against the general trend whereby entertainment increasingly took over this important space in the club week.[44]

Different forms of welfare work were also undertaken. Characteristically, these involved impromptu efforts to help fellow members who faced hardship through illness or other causes. Thus in the space of a few months, the Higham Ferrers Athletic Club held a concert to assist a member who had been ill for three years, and the Rushden Trades Union Club members provided the programme for a benefit concert with collection. But longer-term provision was also established. At the 1900 annual meeting of the Finedon Gladstone Working Men's Club, the chairman moved that a benefit fund be started, and in doing so articulated clearly the motives of such work.

> They were in a position to assist any member who was deserving of help, and it was their duty to do so. They had opened subscription lists, but if they set aside a certain amount that could be distributed at the discretion of the committee, in that way they would do a lot of good; and render help to members without hurting their feelings.

It was agreed that £10 be set aside as the nucleus of such a fund, to be used at the discretion of the committee. Through this means, they were able to provide collective

41. *CIJ* Nov. 1895, 4 Jan. 1896, 5. For political motivations in the funding of London clubs, see Ashplant, "London Working Men's Clubs", 247.
42. *CIU Report 1898*, 68 (active consideration); *CIJ* Jan. 1900, 12 (plan dropped); Sept. 1900, 10 (mineral water company planned); *Wellingborough Post* 3.8.1900, 6 col 6, 7.9.1900, 7 col 6 (efforts to involve clubs); *CIU Report 1901*, 35 (scheme developing); *CIJ* Jun. 1902, 15 (premises secured).
43. *CIJ* Jun. 1898, 4, *Club World* 17.12.1898, 13 (Southampton Gladstone Club founding a brewery, whose shares were confined to Liberals); *CIJ* Mar. 1906, 9 (general survey of such breweries); *Club News* 14.1.1911, 30 (planned Liberal brewery at Leeds, successful ones noted at Burnley and Sowerby Bridge).

44. *CIU Report 1901*, 33, *CIJ* Mar. 1901, 12 (Branch Education Committee); *CIU Report 1902*, 28-9, *CIU Report 1903*, 50 (Kettering United Trades Club). In the CIU's East Midlands region (of which Northamptonshire clubs comprised about half at this period) the proportion of clubs holding lectures on Sundays rose from 29% to 41% between 1903 and 1913, while the proportion in all other regions but one was static or falling; see Ashplant, "The CIU and the ILP", 734. For further references to the continuing Branch educational effort, see *CIU Report 1904*, 66; *CIU Report 1905*, 57 (conference on working-class education); *CIU Report 1906*, 58-9; *CIU Report 1909*, 134; *CIU Report 1912*, 179. Both Kettering and Rushden clubs undertook joint action to provide lecture programmes; *CIU Report 1908*, 103. Such an extensive educational effort was more typical of clubs in newly-developed working-class areas: see Ashplant, "The CIU and the ILP", 484-5.

help on a more secure basis, and confidentially. Help was also provided for groups, whether the children of members (the Rushden Working Men's Club put on a children's tea in 1900), or the unemployed (during 1905, a year of very bad trade, the Northamptonshire clubs organised concerts for the unemployed). The clubs also contributed to the support of the Union's own Convalescent Home, and to national and international causes, such as the Indian Famine Fund in 1899.[45] Another practical form of welfare provision, popular in Northamptonshire clubs as elsewhere, was ambulance work. Once again, Kettering clubs seem to have taken the lead, with classes held in several clubs, and certificates given.[46]

The pattern of entertainments in Northamptonshire in the 1900s seems to have been similar to that in London in the 1880s. The predominant form was self-provision, with free-and-easies, smokers, members' concerts, and even, in later years, a sub-club formed by a dramatic society. These members' events, though, were on occasion helped out by paid entertainers ("special contributors") as well. The latter (mostly semi-professional) came chiefly from the surrounding counties (including Leicestershire and Buckinghamshire), but in one or two cases from as far away as London.[47] Gradually, as had happened in London, this burgeoning entertainment provision came into tension with educational endeavours. Despite the earlier success of the Kettering clubs in replacing Sunday concerts by lectures, by 1911 the Branch annual report was writing in defensive tones, familiar from London in the mid-1890s, about the pressures for more frequent and professional entertainment. There was a popular fallacy, it claimed, that a club could not be successful, in finance or numbers,[48]

> . . . unless the committee make arrangements for very frequent concerts and similar entertainments. It is generally understood that no other form of entertainment is acceptable, and therefore quite large sums are paid out every week for artists who will sing on Saturday and Sunday nights, quite ignoring the fact that there are many forms of entertainment that would be acceptable and appreciated by large numbers of members who do not always want to hear the latest . . . of those [comic] songs . . .

Even in the last two decades of the nineteenth century, working men were still subject to widespread, though increasingly informal, sabbatarian pressure as to how they should spend their Sundays. The various responses to this pressure help to indicate the character of the club movement in different areas. In London, the issue featured as one of the irksome restrictions which fuelled the struggle against patronage. Many individual club activists were members of the National Sunday League, which campaigned for the opening of museums, parks and other leisure facilities. The primary pressure was against clubs opening at all on a Sunday; but it is also possible to detect two subsidiary strands of sabbatarianism – that if a club did open, it should not put on any organised activity; or, if it did, then this should be a lecture (which was improving) rather than a concert or other form of entertainment (which was not). Responses to sabbatarian pressure varied in different parts of the country; among CIU affiliated clubs, three major regional groups can be detected. First, a group of predominantly

45. *Wellingborough Post* 16.3.1900 Suppl.; 28.12.1900 Suppl.; 20.4.1900 Suppl.; *Club Life* 23.12.1905, 15; *Wellingborough Post* 27.7.1900, 8 col 4; 13.4.1900 Suppl., 27.7.1900 Suppl.; *CIU Report 1900*, 37, *Wellingborough Post* 3.8.1900, 6 col 6.

46. *Wellingborough Post* 2.3.1900, 6 col 2.

47. *Wellingborough Post* 12.1.1900 Suppl., 16.2.1900 Suppl., 28.12.1900 Suppl.; *CIJ* Jul. 1907, 7; and *Wellingborough Post*, "Clubman's Column" *passim*. For the pattern of London club entertainments in the 1880s, see Ashplant, "London Working Men's Clubs", 242-4.

48. *CIU Report 1911*, 115. For similar complaints about the growth of professional entertainment in London, see Ashplant, "London Working Men's Clubs", 249-51.

industrial regions (London, the North West, Yorkshire, and the East Midlands including Northamptonshire) where the great majority of clubs opened on Sundays, at least one in three put on some form of organised activity, and this was more likely to be a concert than a lecture. Secondly, the rural and surburban areas of southern and eastern England together with the West Midlands, where less than half of the clubs opened on Sundays, fewer than one in five put on any form of organised activity, and this was more likely to be a lecture than a concert. Thirdly, the coal mining regions of the North East and South Wales, strongholds of Methodism, where improvement seems to have been the dominent ethos; as many clubs as in the major industrial regions put on lectures, as few as in the largely rural regions put on concerts.[49]

The response of the Northamptonshire clubs to the sabbatarian pressures was a complex one. CIU clubs in the county formed about half of its East Midlands region, which was characterised by Sunday opening and the provision of more entertainments than lectures.[50] This is not altogether surprising; Radicals here as in London were likely to support the free Sunday. And, although Royle has argued that Bradlaugh's support in Northampton was won by his Radicalism, not his secularism (which he played down in the local context), the later strength of the SDF in the town suggests a continuing strain of secularism as well as nonconformity among its Radicals.[51] But there is also considerable evidence of a desire to be on good terms with local clergy, both Anglican and Nonconformist. Rev W. D. Sargeaunt of Bozeat had particularly close connections with the clubs, chairing the committee which investigated the brewery and mineral water schemes. Rev W. L. Lee, Congregtional minister at Kettering, was regularly invited to speak in the clubs on such themes as "The Wealth of Nations, and the Weal of Men". When, in 1911, the Bishop of Peterborough launched an attack on the influence of working men's clubs, the Branch was able to draw in local clergy to a committee it formed to investigate local clubs and refute the criticisms.[52]

Another feature which marked out the Northamptonshire clubs as active in the radical-political mould was their standard of clubhouse building and provision. Here, as in educational activities, Kettering was prominent. Thus, the Kettering Town Band Club had started in 1894 in a private residence, with a corrugated iron and wood building at the back for concerts and shows. But as the membership increased, the committee decided to go for a new building, to cost £5000, which was under construction in 1900. It featured a lofty harmonic hall, with large stage, two

49. Ashplant, "The CIU and the ILP", 303-4, 313-5, 733-4.

50. Of Northamptonshire CIU clubs, 3 of 5 opened on Sundays in 1889, and 4 of 5 in 1893; these are the only years for which information about Sunday *opening* is available. Figures for CIU clubs holding Sunday lectures and concerts are available thereafter, but only for regions, not counties. In the East Midlands region (of which Northamptonshire clubs comprised about half), the proportion of clubs holding Sunday concerts remained constant at about 40% from 1893-1913 (the highest level in the country apart from London). The proportion holding lectures, which had been lower at under 30% till 1903 (typical of the industrial regions) rose to over 40% by 1913, equal to the proportion holding concerts. Ashplant, "The CIU and the ILP", 680, 682, 733-4.

51. Royle, "Charles Bradlaugh", 145-6, 149; he stresses the strength of nonconformity in the town, 143-4. H. McLeod notes the high level of religious attendance, both in 1851 and in the 1880s, in Northampton and other towns in the county; "Class, Community and Region: the religious geography of nineteeth century England", in M. Hill (ed.), *A Sociological Yearbook of Religion in Britain* 6 (London: SCM Press, 1973), 39-40, 46, 48.

52. *Wellingborough Post* 7.9.1900, 7 col 6 (Sargeaunt and the brewery); *CIU Report 1900*, 38 (his leaving the area regretted); for Sargeaunt, see W. T. Sargeaunt, "Sargeaunts and Shoemakers", *Northamptonshire Past and Present* vol. 3 no. 6 (1965/6), 281. *CIU Report 1900*, 38, *Club Life* 1.12.1900, 13, *Wellingborough Post* 30.11.1900, 5 col 3 (Lee); *CIU Report 1901* 6, 34-5 (clergy lecturing in clubs). *CIJ* Mar. 1911, 11; Apr. 1911, 11 (Bishop of Peterborough).

dressing rooms, and scenic fittings. The front drop being painted by two local artists, members of the club, showed a view of Kettering Parish Church from the Market Place during the Friday market. When completed, it would be the largest room of any club in town, holding 5-600. The *Wellingborough Post*, reporting this, noted the comment that Kettering club premises compared with those in any other town in the country.[53] Similarly, the Rushden Trade Union Club's new premises, opened in 1900 within four years of the club's foundation, were built to a London standard, including a large concert hall with stage and dressing room, skittle alley and reading room.[54] This high standard was recognised within the CIU at the time. B. T. Hall, the secretary of the CIU, on visiting the Northamptonshire clubs in the late 1890s, declared them cleaner and more comfortable than those in London. In 1905, a deputation from Lancashire visited Kettering and Northampton to see if anything could be learned from the clubs there.[55]

6. Northamptonshire Clubs and the CIU

A further characteristic of the Northamptonshire clubmen was their ambition to play a role within the Union as a whole. Following the democratisation of the CIU in the later 1880s, a process dominated by the London clubs, the new secretary Hall, who was appointed in 1893, regarded relations with the provincial clubs as one of its most pressing problems. He took two initiatives to help resolve this issue. Firstly, he aimed to increase recruitment to the Union of clubs in the provinces, by himself undertaking propaganda trips, and encouraging members of the Council to do likewise. This had its effect in Northamptonshire. The CIU had begun recruiting clubs in the county in the 1880s, but affiliations increased sharply from 1895 onwards. This was partly due to the absolute growth in the number of clubs in those years, but also represented a higher degree of penetration by the Union (helped perhaps by Hall's own recruiting visits).[56] Hall's second step was to encourage the formation of regional groupings of clubs, which were termed Branches. In 1898 the Northamptonshire clubs formed the second of these (following Swindon in 1894).[57]

The result of these developments was a growing pressure from the provincial clubs for a further democratisation of the Union, which they felt was unduly dominated by the London pioneers. Northamptonshire clubs were to play an important part in this process. Already in 1897 they had begun to press for provincial representation in the government of the Union, with C. Underwood (first Branch secretary) arguing that the Executive did not do enough for provincial propaganda, and pressing for the appointment of a paid organiser. In 1899, the newly-formed Northamptonshire Branch introduced a resolution at the monthly Council meeting that clubs should be represented only financial members living in the area. This was a challenge to the prevailing system which allowed provincial clubs to be indirectly represented by members of London clubs acting on their behalf. The resolution was defeated by a large majority of the (predominantly Lon-

53. *Wellingborough Post* 13.4.1900, 6 col 5. The club had 864 members in 1899.

54. *Wellingborough Post* 19.10.1900, 7 cols 3-4; the club had 142 members in 1900. Cf 26.1.1900 Suppl. (Higham Ferrers Band Club's proposed new premises to include concert hall to seat 300, with dressing room & stage); 1.6.1900 Suppl. (under construction).

55. *CIJ* Jan. 1896, 3, Jul. 1905, 9; photographs of Irchester and Kettering Clubs in B. T. Hall, *Our Fifty Years* (London: CIU, 1912), facing 135, 140.

56. Of the Northamptonshire clubs in existence in 1895, 16 (47%) were or had been affiliated to the CIU. By 1900, this number had reached 46 out of 66 (70%). For Hall's propaganda trips to the county, see *CIJ* Jan. 1896, 3, Oct. 1896, 7; *CIU Report 1896/7*, 129.

57. For the formation of provincial branches, see Ashplant, "The CIU and the ILP", 70-1.

don) Council delegates.[58] This defeat seems to have strengthened the resolve of the Northamptonshire delegates, and they pressed on despite further setbacks. In April 1900, the Council agreed to hold a plebiscite of all clubs on the issue of the status of delegates representing provincial clubs; but the result was a narrow majority against changing the existing rule. A further grievance arose when, later in the same month, the annual meeting agreed to postpone the main business until Hodgson Pratt, the CIU's figurehead president and survivor from the days of patronage, was able to attend and deliver his traditional speech. The lone protesting voice was Underwood's, pointing out that it was expensive for delegates to travel from the provinces, only for the business meeting to be postponed.[59]

The Northamptonshire clubmen were moved at least in part by the feeling that they were patronised by the London clubs who regarded themselves as the pioneers of the movement, whereas in fact the Northamptonshire clubs were by now setting a higher standard. The issue was raised at the next Branch meeting, where Underwood remarked that they should not leave matters entirely in the hands of the "cockneys", and that if they could get someone on the Executive, the Londoners would soon find the provincial members a "weighty portion". Speaking at the opening of the Rushden Trade Union Club in October, he said:

> Northamptonshire took a lead in club life, and London people knew it, although they thought they knew everything and the provincials knew nothing. The Northamptonshire Branch was determined to let the Executive know they must do something to admit country representation on their committee, and they meant to fight it out.

The following meeting carried a resolution that the Branch Executive should have representation on the national Executive, and pressed for a conference to be held on the whole issue. They reacted angrily to the national Executive's subsequent stalling in the matter, and soon secured the election of their secretary to that Executive. Later in the decade, the struggle to extend the rights of provincial clubs, which Northamptonshire had pioneered, was to be carried on by the clubs of another newly-developing working-class area, Yorkshire.[60]

Conclusion

The Northamptonshire clubs, then, can be seen as a response by local working men to two connected developments of the 1880s and 90s – the expansion of the boot-and-shoe industry, with the accompanying rapid population growth in the main centres of the trade; and the transfer of a large proportion of the workforce to factories, with the accompanying disruption of old patterns of life centred on the workshop. In the first place, the clubs provided – for working *men* – a new focus of sociability and recreation outside the home. But in addition to that, they also provided – at least for some activists – bases for considerable efforts to extend education and welfare in the community, under their own control; to intervene in the political and religious life of the county; and to take part in the national government of a movement with half a million members by 1914.

58. *CIU Report 1896/7*, 129, *Club World* 13.8.1898, 11, *CIJ* Sept. 1898, 1 (Underwood's complaints); *Club Life* 19.8.1899, 8 (challenge to indirect representation – a move criticised by this London paper), *CIJ* Sept. 1899, 6. At least one of those London clubmen, Richard Gaston (1840-1901), one-time editor of both the *CIJ* and *Club World*, took his role as Kettering representative very seriously: *Club Life* 2.11.1901, 8.

59. *CIJ* Apr. 1900, 4, Aug. 1900, 4 (by 115-105); *Wellingborough Post* 4.5.1900, 6 col 7.

60. *Wellingborough Post* 4.5.1900, 6 col 7; 3.8.1900, 6 col 6, *CIJ* Sept. 1900, 10; *Wellingborough Post* 19.10.1900, 7 cols 3-4; 2.11.1900, 7 col 2; *CIU Report 1900*, 39, cf. *CIJ* Jan. 1901, 18. Underwood was succeeded by Hill in the following year. For the role of the Yorkshire clubs in bringing about the new CIU constitution of 1910, with its proportional representation of regions, see Ashplant, "The CIU and the ILP", 72-3, 484-5. For Pratt (1824-1907), see *DLB* I, 273-5.

NORTHAMPTON'S WORKING CLASS HOMEOWNERS: MYTH OR REALITY?

MARIE DICKIE

In the last quarter of the nineteenth century Northampton acquired a reputation for having a very large number of working class home-owners. One well-known shoe manufacturer proclaimed that there were more working men in Northampton who owned their own home than "in any other town in England".[1] That assertion, backed by the Northampton Town and County Building Society, has gone largely unchallenged. Indeed, it featured in the introduction to a very recent official history of the Northampton Development Corporation.[2] But what evidence is there for the claim?

Most Northamptonians will be aware of anecdotal, oral testimony of individuals whose parents or grandparents struggled, on a manual worker's wage, to purchase their little terraced house. But the only substantial, statistical work has been that of Damaris Rose. Her survey of the Northampton Ratebooks for 1884 revealed only 449 owner occupiers in property with rateable value under £30. Rose concluded that under 5% of all housing in the town was owner occupied at that time.[3] Rose was able to establish the occupational status of her home-owners using a local commercial Directory. They consisted mainly of tradesmen, white collar workers and skilled workers in the shoe and building trades. It could be argued that this evidence indicates a growing *lower middle class* interest in owner occupation, especially as skilled shoeworkers in this period were often self-employed or even small-scale employers of labour. As Rose notes a number of the properties included a retail shop or workshop.

If the Northampton Town and County Building Society claim is to be believed, in less than ten years the percentage of owner occupiers not only rose to 25%, it changed substantially in terms of the occupation of the purchaser. In fact, as A. L. Bowley and A. R. Burnett-Hurst discovered in 1915 the Society had only minimal information on which to base its claim.[4] It could not provide any statistics about its borrowers and could only inform them that many of the borrowers registered with it were working men and that some of them owned more than one house. The evidence the Society supplied to the Parliamentary Select Committee on Building Societies in 1893 and 1894 was based on the simple device of calculating the number of houses the Society had helped to build in Northampton and proposing that this represented the number of working-class owner occupiers. No attempt had been made to determine how many manual workers were really involved or to recognise that some of the purchases had not been for occupation.

It is understandable that the Building Societies should seek to maximise their claims to providing opportunities for working home ownership, especially since most of them had been founded with that express purpose. Northampton Societies were not alone in doing so. The problem for historians has been that pre-Great War levels of owner occupation have been very difficult to establish. The collection of national statistics on the subject did not begin until after the second World War. We know that in 1947 27% of all houses in England and Wales were either wholly

1. *Northampton Mercury* 26th February 1897
2. H.Barty King. *Expanding Northampton* (1985)
3. *Home Ownership, Uneven Development and Industrial Change in later 19th century Britain*, unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Sussex, 1984.
4. A. L. Bowley and A. R. Burnett-Hurst. *Livelihood and Poverty: A study of the economic conditions of working class households in Northampton, Warrington, Stanley and Reading*. (1915)

owned or in the process of being purchased by the occupier.[5] It has been assumed that the bulk of the expansion of home-ownership had taken place in the 1930's. Principally from the evidence of purchase price, but also from more reliable evidence provided by building societies it would seem that the main body of purchasers in the 1930's were middle class. However, there is some evidence to suggest that manual workers were beginning to venture into the field. Ministry of Labour surveys in 1937/8, for example, showed that 17.8% of insured workers (mostly manual or lower paid white collar workers) in urban areas were buying or had bought their own home. But this compared with a 63.3% average amongst a higher paid white collar and professional sample.[6] Working backwards from such information, historians have tended to estimate pre-Great War owner occupation at under 10% of all types of tenure. It has been acknowledged, however, that there may have been wide variations from one area of the country to another. Damaris Rose's work sought to explain the reasons for different levels of working class home ownership nationwide. But the method she used in her Northampton case study limited her opportunity to demonstrate that there was a real expansion of home ownership taking place. Other historians have found it possible to show changes over time to establish the dimensions of manual worker owner occupation. In general this has involved relating the rateable value of property to a social class of inhabitants, rather than attempting to determine the occupational status of each individual homeowner. In his Cardiff survey M. J. Daunton divided his sample on the following basis:

1884 and 1914
under £12 Rateable Value = a working class dwelling
£12—£19 Rateable Value = upper working class/lower middle class
£20-£34 Rateable Value = middle class dwelling
over £35 Rateable Value = professional or merchant class

1934
under £15 = a working class dwelling
£15-£24 = upper working class/lower middle class
£25-£49 = middle class dwelling
over £50 = professional or merchant class

In view of the continuing ambiguity about Northampton's claims to high levels of working class homeownership I decided in 1982 to embark on a similar survey of the town's ratebooks. Initially I hoped to examine the books for 1911, 1925 and 1934. Time, and the discovery that the 1934 Ratebooks recorded only the ratepayer (either owner or occupier), eventually limited the research to the 1925 books alone. I used a rather simplified version of the method adopted by Daunton and amended the rateable value to conform with Prof. Bowley's[8] estimations of their relationship to social class. Houses with rateable values of £13 and below were assumed to be occupied by manual workers, those of £14-£26 by small tradesmen and white collar workers and above £27 by the professional and manufacturing middle class.

Whereas in 1884 under 5% of all housing in Northampton was owner occupied, in 1925 it had risen to 21.75%.[9] While this tends to confirm the view that the Northampton Town and County Building Society claim in 1893/1894 was a gross exaggeration, it also offers some support to the idea that home ownership was growing rapidly in the 1890's and 1900's It seems unlikely that the major expansion took place during or immediately after the Great

5. J. Burnett. *A Social History of Housing 1815-1970* (1978)
6. M. Bowley. *Housing and the State 1919-1944* (1945)
7. M. J. Daunton. House Ownership from Ratebooks, *Urban History Year Book 1976*
8. M. Bowley. *op.cit*
9. M. Dickie. Town Patriotism and the Rise of Labour in Northampton 1918-1939 (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Warwick, 1987)

PLATE 1: NORTHAMPTON HOUSING. STIMPSON AVENUE (SOUTH END)
(Northamptonshire Libraries)

War when house building was at a low level, although it should be noted that wartime rent control may have encouraged a transfer of property from landlords to sitting tenants. Comparing the percentage for owner occupation in Northampton with the national average in 1947 of 27% it does seem that the town had experienced a greater and earlier movement toward home ownership than many others.

Amongst those houses with a rateable value of £13 or below, 14.44% proved to be owner occupied. This compared with 46.88% and 51.24% of the properties with rateable values of £14–£26 and over £27. Like the overall rate of homeownership this evidence indicates that Northampton was rather in advance of national trends at the time. But it does not substantiate Northampton's claim to having more working class homeowners than any other town in England. A study of Leeds and Bradford, conducted by researchers with the enviable advantage of access to a registry of deeds containing the occupation of all purchasers, revealed that over 63% of Bradford's purchasers in the year 1900–1909 were working class.[10] In Northampton in 1925 manual workers can have accounted for only 52% of all homeowners.

The Ratebook evidence allowed me to calculate the rate of owner occupation in different parts of Northampton. By far the highest percentage of properties in owner occupation were in the Kingsley, Abington and St Michael Wards where over a third of houses were in this category. Over one quarter of the houses in Kingsthorpe Ward were also owned by the resident family. All these localities had been developed, at least in part, by one or other of Northampton's Building Societies. The contribution of the Societies to homeownership in general seems to be confirmed by this evidence. These four Wards also show the highest

10. C. A. Archer and R. K. Wilkinson. The Yorkshire Registry of Deeds as Sources of Historical Data on Housing Markets, *Urban History Year Book 1977*

rates of working-class owner occupation. Between 21% and 28% of the properties with rateable values of £13 or below in these areas came into this group. But it should be noted that in the same Wards lower middle class homeownership was at a rate of between 48% and 60% indicating that, proportionately, they had received greater benefit from the Building Societies activities.

Northampton's working class homeowners were not simply a myth. But their numbers and significance were exaggerated. Even in 1925 it remained the case that 85% of all manual worker families lived in privately rented accomodation. The rapid growth of lower middle class homeownership and the existence of large clusters of working class home owners in some areas of the town confirms that there was a real expansion of owner occupation from the 1880's onwards. Nonetheless Northampton's place in the league table of working class owner occupation nationally remains obscure. In the circumstances we may have to amend our claim – it may not be that more working men owned their own homes than in any other town in England – only that we had an above average number.

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NORTHAMPTON'S LOCAL LEGISLATION: 1430 TO 1988

R. J. B. MORRIS

Northampton is celebrating eight centuries of formal borough history in 1989: King Richard I gave the town its first charter on 18th November 1189. Many others followed.

Charters are sources of law, of course. In those distant days they were arguably the equivalent of what today we would call "local legislation" in that they granted rights or privileges (and perhaps imposed duties and taxes) on an individual or group of individuals which placed the recipient on a somewhat different footing from that which would otherwise have applied under the general law.

The concept broadly defines private legislation today, although of course we now mean primarily a statute (or Act of Parliament) when we talk of "legislation". Local legislation is that body of statutes of a local character, many peculiar to one or more local authorities or their areas, and many more including companies, institutions and situations (not necessarily just of a local government character) which can be considered individual or special in some way.[1]

Every local authority, and every part of the country, is covered by at least some pieces of local legislation. In the larger conurbations in particular the total of items may well run into hundreds, all of it grist to the mill of the maxim that "ignorance of the law is no excuse".

So just how much local legislation has there been? Quite recently the Law Commission published the fact that since 1797 (when what you might call the modern series of local Acts began) over 26,000 Acts had been passed, as against some 11,000 public general Acts. Many more local Acts were published before 1797 – the earlier you go, the more difficult are exact totals and categories, but it is certain that the count of personal Acts of Parliament (mainly about private estates, naturalisation and divorce) since the time of Henry VIII in 1539 is over 11,000.

Those totals look small when you consider the totals of local statutory instruments over the past century (known before 1948 as Statutory Rules and Orders). No exact count has been made, although the Statutory Publications Office is preparing for publication a list of local instruments from 1922, referred to later.[2] The total of local instruments since 1890 is certainly around 75,000, and possibly may be as high as 100,000, and that only includes measures which officially featured in the formal "S.R. & O" or "S.I." series. For two or three generations down to 1948 a separate (but in some degree overlapping) series of cumulatively or sequently numbered instruments was running, and there were more than 100,000 of those alone.

Ignorance of the law is not quite so dangerous a state as it might appear amidst all these legislative bottomless pits. Much of the material involved was only ever of potential concern to the relevant local authority itself rather than to members of the public at large, and a large part of that proportion in turn is or was spent soon after being originally drafted. Local statutory instruments, for instance, have often been used to validate what have been essentially minor governmental administrative acts, approving this or declaring that, which once pronounced had no

1. The phrase, however, is also used rather more widely when it includes subordinate legislation, i.e. statutory instruments (from 1890 to 1947 known as statutory rules and orders) validated by Parliamentary procedure, having been made usually by an Secretary of State or Minister, under the authority of a public or local Act.

2. Again, in this contect "local" means those statutory instruments officially classified as local, and is not a term or definition confined to local government or geography as such.

continuing impact. An example of this is the Northampton Rural District (Expenses of Public Seats) Order 1954, S.I. No. 1435. With repetitive provisions of this sort (the Council had two similar ones in 1955, which are mentioned later) it is easy to see how high the pile could grow in a hundred years.

Except in the Greater London reorganisation of 1965, and other occasional special cases or initiatives, very little was done to index properly, let alone review, local legislation before local government reorganisation in 1974 forced attention onto the slumbering local statute books. Under section 262 of the Local Government Act 1972, local legislation not in some specially preserved category (generally protective provisions or those relating to undertakings of various kinds) was to cease to have effect after a certain number of transitional years. For places like Northampton, that period expired at the end of the calendar year 1986.

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At the time, there was little awareness of the passing of this deadline. A county-wide working party of officers had been established in May 1975 under the chairmanship of the Assistant County Secretary Mr. Derek Jones to consider the need to promote a Northamptonshire Bill. That working party eventually reported (again at officer level) to the meeting of chief executives in the county on 12 October 1984 that there was no evidence of significant provisions needing to be retained or new powers to be sought, and that accordingly a Bill should not be promoted. The chief executives endorsed that view, as subsequently did the County Council's Policy and Resources Committee on 29 January 1985, though the Borough's Policy Committee apparently never formally considered it. This considered opinion, also held in the Borough Solicitor's Department, was shared by many authorities elsewhere – that the existing provisions could be safely left to expire on 31st December 1986 (a date extended from the originally enacted 31st December 1984) via the statutory process known as *cesser*, without any particular problems arising.

What suddenly changed the situation was the coincidental expiry of burial rights at Billing Road Cemetery. Once operated by a private company, (the Northampton General Cemetery Company Ltd.), which went into liquidation in the late 1950s, powers were included in the Northampton Corporation Act 1962 for the county borough to take over the Cemetery and continue to run it. Those with existing rights of burial could apply to have them re-granted, and the Cemetery would finally close for burials in 25 years' time. This period expired on 31st July, 1987, coincidentally seven months after the cesser date.

At a meeting on 7th July 1987,[3] the Borough's Leisure and Recreation Committee had decided not to do anything other than let the Cemetery close as expected, even though some burial rights were still outstanding and about a dozen funerals a year were taking place. At the Council meeting on 27th July,[4] however, Mr. R. F. J. Finch, a local undertaker, and Mrs. E. Hortin, whose rights were affected, exercised their local right to address the Council on the subject. The outcome,[5] though not unanimously endorsed, was an official change of heart, and shortly afterwards at a special meeting on 30th July 1987 the Council's Leisure and Recreation Committee, knowing that another Act of Parliament was needed, authorised the Chief Executive and Town Clerk, present writer, with the Borough Solicitor, Hedley Almond, to arrange for the necessary Bill to be introduced. No

3. Northampton Borough Council minutes 1987-88, p175.
4. *Op. cit*, p193-5.
5. *Op. cit*, minutes 14 and 20.
6. *Op. cit*, p234-6.

PLATE 1: NORTHAMPTON CEMETERY, BILLING ROAD, 1915 *(Northamptonshire Libraries)*

burials could be allowed in the meantime as the Cemetery had legally closed after 31st July 1987 and could merely be maintained. The Council's Parliamentary agents, London Solicitors Sharpe Pritchard, were instructed accordingly. The Policy Committee approved the promotion of a Bill when it met on 14th September: the necessary Council resolutions required by Parliamentary Standing Orders were passed at Council meetings on 26th October and 4th January 1988.

A clause was drafted reviving the burial rights of those who had previously held them, and allowing burials (or interments and scattering of ashes following cremations) for a further 21 years from the passing of the Act *i.e.* Royal Assent (which was eventually given on 15th November 1988). Unlike previously, the rights could not be assigned, with the consequent likelihood of very long periods elapsing before the relevant burial: only existing named holders identified as at 31st July 1987 could benefit. Advertisements and enquiries suggested sixty or so holders around locally, holding about ninety grave spaces between them. By 10th August 1989 the number of actual recorded re-registrations of rights was 50, in respect of 64 grave spaces in all.

Granted that a Bill was to be introduced at a basic cost expected to exceed £10,000, consideration was given to the rare opportunity of tidying up Northampton's local legislation generally and dealing, at a modest marginal extra cost, with a handful of local matters which would not in themselves have justified promoting a Bill.

Following a meeting with the trustees of the (largely hereditary) Northampton freemen it was determined to rationalise the relevant provisions for them. On the one hand there was a perpetual annuity of £800 per annum granted in 1882, when the freeman's lands or commons (essentially the Racecourse, Low Meadow, Midsummer Meadow, Foot Meadow and Miller's or Gates' Meadow) had been transferred to the Corporation under the Northampton Corporation Act 1882; this was manifestly losing its real value rapidly and was agreed

to be capitalised by a single extinguishing payment of £10,000. On the other hand, the number of freemen, thought to be around 80 locally, was tending to decrease and the administrative provisions for admission, record-keeping and payment of annuities, needed modernising. This was duly done, having some regard to the precedent of section 8 of the Durham City Council Act 1985 (with which the writer had also been concerned as Town Clerk and Chief Executive of the City of Durham 1981–86). Throughout the process of promotion, which involved a number of drafting improvements to their provisions, the freemen were most helpful to the Council, who agreed to pay towards the freemen's legal costs involved.

Apart from minor provisions about local charities and recovering some money paid into court under an Act of 1875 for land whose legal title must have been unproveable, the other relevant clause concerned local markets, hitherto regulated under the Northampton Corporation Markets and Fairs Acts 1870.

After initially reproducing much of the text of that Act (partly in order to avoid having to leave the 1870 Act, which was for technical reasons unaffected by the cesser provisions at the end of 1986 referred to earlier), it became clear both that Parliament would be unwilling to re-enact an 1870 design in a modern setting, and that most of the original Act was of little value anyway, as markets can be perfectly well run by councils under Part III of the consolidating Food Act 1984. The clause was therefore amended at the House of Lords Committee stage – as is generally the case with local authority general powers Bills, this one had started its passage in the Lords – to encapsulate the only two local elements the Council's Policy and Health and Regulation Committees wanted to keep. One concerned the extension of the definition of "markets" to include "fairs", which are not so well controlled in the general law; the other the power to close or move markets in the Borough as well as to establish and maintain them.

The final element of the deposited Bill, and in purely textual terms by far the longest, was the repeal schedule. This was governed by a novel clause, settled eventually by Counsel to the Lord Chairman of Committees in the House of Lords, Mr. Derek Rippengal, Q.C. It was novel because it was the first time that the effect of the cesser provision had been taken into full account in confirming repeals as well as providing for additional ones. The wording chosen seemed catch-all: ". . . have either ceased to have effect by virtue of section 262 of the Local Government Act 1972 or are spent or obsolete or no longer of practical utility . . ."

Because of the short time before the annual desposit date in Parliament of 27th November, the original Bill's printed schedules of repeals were incomplete, but details were eventually filled in, particularly in relation to statutory instruments, from various official sources and indexes. Texts of these intruments are almost impossible to obtain in many cases, but that is another story. On 13th January, 1988 the Examiners (officials of Parliament) heard an objection on behalf of the Anglian Water Authority that some instruments were insufficiently described for their interests to be duly safeguarded, but the Examiners were satisfied, the Water Authority were mollified and the Bill proceeded.

The Bill broke new ground in treating (as comprehensively as research of imperfect records allowed) local statutory intruments and byelaws for repeal as well as local Acts of Parliament proper, the review of which had been urged at the time of local government reorganisation by the Department of the Environment.[7] As finally enacted, the Northampton Act 1988 repealed in whole or in part some 54 Acts

7. Department of the Environment Circular 14/74, dated 28th January 1974.

(the earliest going back to 1430-31) and 321 local statutory instruments; it also revoked some 54 sets of local byelaws (going back over a century to 1887) on subjects as diverse as selling coal, fish frying, sheep dipping, and private hire vehicles. Four other miscellaneous orders and schemes were also revoked, making an overall total of some 433 repeals. For the technically minded, Appendix 1 to this article sets out the procedural stages of the Bill's progress.

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Do the Act's repeals schedules just record a mass of obsolete paperwork, or is there material of interest to the local historian? Indeed there is. With a little experience, the researcher can learn a great deal.

First, it should be remembered that local or private Bills, though having the full status of Acts of Parliament if passed, are basically drafted to cover the ground their promoters require. Clauses may be struck out altogether or amended en route, but are there in the first place because the promoters, and not Parliament, wanted them. They represent the needs, aims and initiatives of the period in the mixed setting of local circumstances and the generally available local government legal powers of the day.

Local statutory intruments vary. Some – like housing compulsory purchase orders – are obviously required because of the basic council initiative of buying the properties involved. Others are as much executive as legislative activities of central government; some decisions may have been applied for, others not; the instruments themselves will probably not have originally been drafted according to the instructions of the Council.

The incidental detail in many of the Acts and instruments is immense – and likely to be very reliable. The recitals at the beginning of an Act – the preamble – will probably have been proved on oath by the Town Clerk of Northampton in person in many cases before the Parliamentary committee, and great care will have been taken over it.

Take for example the Northampton (Extension) Order 1900.[8] The three pages of recitals of that Order (which comprise Appendix 2 to this article) set out a great deal of information about the wards and boundaries of the local authorities affected, the electoral representation and the adoptive Acts in force in 1900. To mention one paragraph alone: how easy would it be, without the recitals, to establish what adoptive Acts were in force in 1900 in the area of the Kingsthorpe Urban District Council?

The extending Borough boundary is of course particularly well documented amongst the now spent and repealed Acts and Orders. Section 11 of the Northampton Corporation Act 1911 defined the portion of Weston Favell parish added to the county borough by that Act. Again, the Northampton Extension Act 1931 took into the county borough parts of the parishes of Weston Favell, Duston, Dallington, Hardingstone, Boughton and Moulton Park. The last pre-1974 extension is set out in article 5 of the Northampton Order 1965 (S.I. No. 250); understanding of the new borough boundary established under the Local Government Act 1972 is not complete without awareness of the New Parishes Order 1973 and the New Parishes (Amendment) Order 1973.[9] In the repeals of 1988, enactments whose territorial application straddled the current Northampton borough boundary were wholly, and not partly, repealed by agreement with the Northamptonshire County Council.

For students of social or housing conditions, it is worth mentioning that the

8. This order was confirmed by the Local Government Board's Provisional Orders Confirmation (No. 14) Act 1900, 63 & 64 Vict. ch. clxxxiii. The population of the enlarged county borough of Northampton in 1901 was 61,164.

9. Statutory Intruments 1973 Nos. 688 and 1466 respectively.

housing compulsory purchase confirmation orders list the owners or reputed owners of the properties to be acquired. Who owned those in Clarke's Yard in 1936? Ellen Causby (two) and Thomas Knight (ten), apparently: see intrument no. 90,070 confirmed on 8th May, 1937. Some properties of this sort were owned by companies (like 1 – 7 Groom's Yard, for instance, by the Northampton Co-operative Society Ltd, (No. 90, 075)), and 3 and 5 Lower Harding Street by P. Phipps & Co. (Northampton and Towcester Breweries) Ltd. (No. 85,122), or the local church – (101 Green Street, owned by St. Peter's Church).

At the other end of the scale, trivial instruments like the Northampton Rural District (Expenses of Public Seats) Order 1955 seem unlikely to arouse anyone's attention much – except that by oversight, two such orders that year, S.I.s Nos. 869 and 1994, were inadvertently allocated identical short titles. More significant for some local historians may be those relating to tramsways and trolley buses (which go back to 1904 and include some extension of time orders after the First World War). If the short title does not tell you much, and a full text is not available, reliable guides about the basic purpose can often be found by consulting the indexes of local instruments (before 1948 called, as we have already seen, statutory rules and orders) in the annual volumes of *Statutory Rules and Orders* and *Statutory Instruments*. Beware, though, that these volumes do not print the texts of *local* but only *public* ones; that their indexes may not be complete; and that many local orders have never been printed or published in the conventional sense at all. The Statutory Publications Office is currently preparing for publication via H.M.S.O. a *Table of Local Instruments 1922 to 1988*.

The world of local legislation is a fascinating one. It is generally poorly researched, indexed, and understood, but it is a rich seam indeed for the local historian or researcher. Northamptonshire at least was fortunate in having Christopher A. Markham's *List of Acts of Parliament Relating to the County and Borough of Northampton and the Soke of Peterborough* (Northampton 1912); for Northampton itself a by-product of the Northampton Act 1988 is a handlist of over 500 years of relevant material. It is not exhaustive, of course, because obviously it excludes material already repealed or still required, but it is of considerable value in this respect nevertheless. As for other local archives, those seeking copies of the 1988 Act itself or earlier references should first try H.M.S.O. and the County Record Office respectively.

Local legislation has, like charters and other sources of law, played an important part in the history of Northampton, as it has in the cases of all old or large towns. It is timely, as the Borough looks back on eight centuries of formal government, to be reminded not only of the background to so much of the town's more recent development in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, but also of the valuable seam of information contained amongst the results of so much Parliamentary labour.

Northampton's local legislation deserves to be much better known!

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APPENDIX 1
PROCEDURAL STAGES OF THE NORTHAMPTON BILL 1987-88

The petition for the private Bill for Northampton Borough Council to be introduced was deposited in Parliament on 27th Northampton 1987. (The Bill was originally printed dated 24th November 1987). Arising from objections on behalf of the Anglian Water Authority that some of its proposed repeals were insufficiently described for them to be able to consider their interests, the Bill was considered by the Private Bill Examiners on 13th January 1988; but the objections were overcome and the Bill was allowed to proceed (having in the meantime been reprinted dated 21st December 1987). It was first introduced, as is usually the case for this kind of Bill, in the House of Lords.

House of Lords

Presented and First Reading H. L. Deb. Vol. 492, col. 72	: 18th January 1988
Second Reading and Referred to the Examiners H.C. Deb. Vol. 493, col. 501	: 16th February 1988
Considered by Examiner of Standing Orders	: 28th April 1988
Unopposed Bill Committee	: 26th May 1988 (reprinted 7th June 1988)
Third Reading and passed H.C. Deb. Vol. 498, col. 1140	: 27th June 1988

House of Commons

Introduced and First Reading (not entered in *Hansard,* but recorded in Commons' *Votes and Proceedings*)	: 27th June 1988
Considered by Examiners of Standing Orders	: 4th July 1988
Second Reading H.C. Deb. Vol. 137, col. 1	: 11th July 1988
Unopposed Bill Committee	: 27th July 1988 (reprinted 3rd August 1988)
Consideration Stage H.C. Deb. Vol. 139, col. 437	: 27th October 1988 (reprinted in advance 24th October 1988)
Third Reading Blocked; Orderd for 3rd November H.C. Deb. Vol. 139, col. 805	: 1st November 1988
Third Reading and Passed H.C. Deb. Vol. 140, cols. 545 – 552	: 10th November 1988

Final Stages

Lords Approval of Commons Amendments (not entered in *Hansard*, but recorded in Lords' *Minutes*)	: 10th November 1988
Royal Assent H.L. Deb. Vol. 501, col. 915 H.C. Deb. Vol. 140, col. 887	: 15th November 1988

The References above are to *Hansard*: these will also be formal records of the Bill's stages in the Houses; *Journals*. Apart from the third reading debate in the Hosue of Commons on 10th November 1988, all the stages were essentially formal on the floors of each House: the two Committees each lasted for about 20 minutes with the Chief Executive and Town Clerk (writer of this article) the only formal witness called by Mr. Michael Pritchard of Sharpe Pritchard on behalf of the Council.

As stated above, following the Bill's deposit it was objected for the Anglian Water Authority that many local statutory intruments proposed for repeal were insufficiently described for them to be able to judge if their interests were affected. The print hastily prepared for deposit had, through no fault of the Parliamentary

agents, listed many only as reference numberes, lacking short titles or descriptions. The Examiners, however, allowed the Bill to proceed (in what was a rather unusual procedural situation) after accepting assurances from the Council as promoters. Clauses 4 and 5 and schedule 1 of the Bill as deposited concerned and affected the rights of the freemen, a separately constituted body. The Examiner on 28th April 1988 had to be duly satisfied that the freemen's trustees had passed what is known as a "Wharncliffe resolution" agreeing to the Bill – as indeed they had unanimously at a meeting in Northampton on 15th March 1988.

The third reading was blocked by Mr. Andrew Bennett, Labour M.P. for Denton and Reddish, on 1st November 1988. He blocked other private Bills as well, hoping apparently to get the Government to agree to a debate before Christmas on the recently published *Report of the Joint Committee on Private Bill Procedure* (one of whose recommendations ironically was for the abolition of the right of blocking by a single M.P.).

Following the block a debate was required when the M.P. for Northampton South, Mr. Michael Morris, moved the third reading on 10th November; and later responding during it to unsupported (and incorrect) allegations about insufficient consultation over supposed jeopardy to the existence of footpaths and the rights of allotment holders in the inclosure Acts to be repealed, he gave an assurance to the House that none of these were affected. On a vote after a 28 minute debate, the third reading was given by 106 votes to 36.

Royal Assent was given on 15th November 1988: its announcement in the Commons as the last of a series of Bills given the Royal Assent that day was the final business before prorogation of the 1987-88 session of Parliament.

The total cost to the Council of promoting the Northampton Bill 1987-88 (excluding the allocation of officer time and VAT) was £43,253.69. Of this total, £10,000 was paid for the extinguishment of the freemen's annuity, while £32,747.36 was paid to Sharpe Pritchard.

No case is known of any Bill deposited on behald of the Northampton Borough not eventually achieving Royal Assent, however modified during its passage.

APPENDIX 2 – RECITALS OF THE NORTHAMPTON (EXTENSION) ORDER 1900

The following passage is part of the Provisional Order styled the Northampton (Extension) Order 1900, which was confirmed by the Local Government Board's Provisional Orders Confirmation (No. 14) Act 1900, 63 & 64 vict., ch. clxxxiii:-

WHEREAS by Section 54 of the Local Government Act 1888 the Local Government Board are empowered to make a Provisional Order for altering the boundary of any Borough and by such Order to divide or alter any electoral division;

And whereas the Borough of Northampton is a County Borough within the meaning of the Local Government Act 1888 and the inhabitants are a body corporate by the name of the Mayor Aldermen and Burgesses of the Borough of Northampton and act by the Council of the said Borough which now consists of the Mayor (who is also a Councillor) six Aldermen and seventeen other Councillors;

And whereas the said Borough is for the purpose of the election of Councillors divided into six wards termed respectively the Castle Ward the North Ward the Saint Crispin's Ward the Saint Edmund's Ward the Saint Michael's Ward and the South Ward;

And whereas the said Borough is an Urban Sanitary District of which the Mayor Aldermen and Burgesses acting by the council are the Urban Sanitary Authority;

And whereas the said Borough has a separate court of quarter sessions commission of the peace police force and coroner;

And whereas the unrepealed provisions of the Local Acts and Confirmation Acts mentioned in the schedule to this Order so far as the last-mentioned Acts relate to the Provisonal Orders mentioned in that schedule are in force in the said Borough;

And whereas the Urban Sanitary Authority have adopted the provisions of –

(*a.*) The Infectious Disease (Prevention) Act 1890;

(*b.*) The Public Health Acts Amendment

Act 1890 (except Part IV.) and

(*c.*) The Museums and Gymnasiums Act 1891;

and those provisions are accordingly in force in the said Borough;

And whereas the Baths and Washhouses Acts 1846 to 1899 and the Public Libraries Acts 1892 and 1893 are in force in the said Borough;

And whereas the Urban Districts of Far Cotton Kingsthorpe and Saint James (Northampton) and the Parishes of Abington and Dallington all in the County of Northampton immediately adjoin the said Borough;

And whereas the Urban District of Far Cotton is co-extensive with the Parish of Far Cotton and is subject to the jurisdiction of the Urban District Council of Far Cotton;

And whereas the Urban District Council of Far Cotton have adopted the provisions of –

(*a.*) Parts I. II. and III. of the Public Health Acts Amendment Act 1890 and

(*b.*) The Private Street Works Act 1892;

and those provisions are accordingly in force in the Urban District of Far Cotton;

And whereas the Urban District of Kingsthorpe is co-extensive with the Parish of Kingsthorpe and is subject to the jurisdiction of the Urban District Council of Kingsthorpe;

And whereas the Urban District Council of Kingsthorpe have adopted the provisions of –

(*a.*) The Infectious Disease (Prevention) Act 1890;

(*b.*) Part III. of the Public Health Acts Amendment Act 1890 and

(*c.*) The Private Street Works Act 1892;

and those provisions and also the Public Libraries Acts 1892 and 1893 are in force in the Urban District of Kingsthorpe;

And whereas the Urban District of Saint James (Northampton) comprises of Parishes of Dallington (Saint James) and Duston (Saint James) and is subject to the jurisdiction of the Urban District Council of Saint James;

And whereas the Urban District Council of Saint James (Northampton) have adopted the provisions of –

(*a.*) Parts I. II. and III. of the Public Health Acts Amendment Acts 1890 and

(*b.*) The Private Street Works Act 1892;

and those provisions and also the Baths and Washhouses Acts 1846 to 1899 are in force in the Urban District of Saint James (Northampton);

And whereas a portion of the Parish of Abington has in pursuance of Section 277 of the Public Health Act 1875 been constituted a Special Drainage District termed "the Abington Special Drainage District";

And whereas the Abington Special Drainage District that portion of the Parish of Abington which is not comprised within the said Special Drainage District and the Parishes of Dallington Duston and Weston Favell are contributory places in the Rural District of Northampton and are subject to the jurisdiction of the Rural District Council of Northampton the Parishes of Boughton and Moulton Park are contributory places in the Rural District of Brixworth and are subject to the jurisdiction of the Rural District Council of Brixworth and the Parish of Hardingstone is a contributory place in the Rural District of Hardingstone and is subject to the jurisdiction of the Rural District Council of Hardingstone;

And whereas the Rural District Council of Northampton have adopted the provisions of

(*a.*) The Infectious Disease (Prevention) Act 1890 and

(*b.*) Part III. of the Public Health Acts Amendment Act 1890 which are applicable to Rural Districts;

and those provisions are accordingly in force in the Rural District of Northampton;

And whereas the Parish of Dallington and a portion of the Urban District of Kingsthorpe are included in the Duston Electoral Division of the County of Northampton the Parish of Abington and the remainder of the Urban District of Kingsthorpe are included in the Kingsthorpe Electoral Division of that County and the Urban Districts of Far Cotton and Saint James (Northampton) together form the Hardingstone Electoral Division of that County;

And whereas the Parishes of Abington Dallington Dallington (Saint James) Duston Duston (Saint James) Kingsthorpe and Weston Favell are included in the Northampton Union the Parishes of Boughton and Moulton Park are included in the Brixworth Union and the Parishes of Far Cotton and Hardingstone are included in the Hardingstone Union;

And whereas one Rural District Councillor is elected for the Parish of Abington;

And whereas each of the said Parishes of

Abington Dallington Duston Hardingstone and Weston Favell is a Rural Parish within the meaning of the Local Government act 1894 for which a Parish Council has been established;

And whereas by virtue of the Elementary Education Acts 1870 to 1899 the said Borough and the Parishes of Far Cotton and Hardingstone are School Districts and the Parishes of Dallington Dallington (Saint James) Duston and Duston (Saint James) together form the Duston United School District and School Boards have been formed for the Borough the Parish of Far Cotton the Parish of Hardingstone and the Duston United School District and the said Parish of Kingsthorpe is subject to the jurisdiction of the School Attendance Committee appointed by the Urban District Council of Kingsthorpe and the said Parish of Abington is subject to the jurisdiction of the School Attendance Committee appointed by the Guardians of the Poor of the Northampton Union;

And whereas by virtue of sub-section (2) of Section 53 of the Local Government Act 1894 the powers and duties of the authority under the Burial Acts 1852 to 1885 for the area now comprised in the Parish of Dallington (Saint James) and the Parish of Dallington were tranferred to the Urban District Council of Saint James (Northampton) and the Parish Council of Dallington and such powers and duties are exercised by a Joint Committee appointed in pursuance of the said sub-section;

And whereas the Lighting and Watching Act 1833 has been adopted for each of the Parishes of Abington and Hardingstone and the Parish Councils of those parishes respectively are the authorities for the execution of that Act:

Now therefore We the Local Government Board in pursuance of the powers given to Us by Sections 54 and 59 of the Local Government Act 1888 and by any other enactments in that behalf do hereby order that from and after the date of the Act of Parliament confirming this Order the following provisions shall take effect.

The substantive provisions of the Order then follow.

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TEACHERS

TONY IRESON

We hear a lot nowadays about the troubles of school teachers, but how many of them, I wonder, realise how much teachers were called upon to endure a hundred years and more ago. Many years since, visiting the village of Ecton, I was shown an old school log book by the headmaster, Mr. G. T. Gardiner. He invited me to look at the early pages, covering 1875 and 1876, and there in writing brown with age I read of the heartbreaking year which Walter Barker spent as a schoolmaster.

He went to Ecton in the late spring, and when he opened the school forty-four pupils attended. They were "clean, reasonably quiet, and attentive during lessons," Mr. Barker wrote in his log book. It seemed an auspicious beginning to a long career as village schoolmaster.

But Barker did not know that poverty was a powerful enemy of education. There were coppers to be picked up by children whose parents were willing to let them work on the land, and so by June the numbers in school had become very low. "The children are employed in the gardens," Barker wrote.

Then sickness – the "blister pox" – attacked the few remaining children and Barker had to close the school altogether on July 16. Just over a month later on August 20 when presumably the danger of infection was past, he reopened the school – but no children attended.

The headmaster asked where the children were, only to be told that they had more important work to do on the land – gleaning for corn for the cottage families. He sat with no children to teach until September 24, when the harvest was over and the children came trickling back.

But even now there were only 28 of them. Attendances still continued to be deplorable, and during October most days saw only half the children at school.

Barker seems to have received no help from the parson or squire, but he was a man of spirit and in November he asked help from the other source open to him – the policeman. He wrote: "I have been obliged to ask the policeman to look up absentees," and later: "Bills have been posted about our streets notifying the intention of the police authorities to take proceedings."

This brought some of the children back to school, but it was probably a mistake, for it began a rupture between Barker and the Ecton parents. First they invaded the school to complain about the headmaster's action, and then began acts of sabotage. They refused to pay threepence for copy books which had to be reduced to three-halfpence, and refused simple information such as the dates of their children's birth, and rigidly opposed corporal punishment. In place of this, the distracted headmaster started keeping the children in after school.

His introduction of detention had alarming results. He and his family were abused in the street and subjected to the "grossest indignities" on which he did not enlarge. He applied for protection, but wrote that "I was informed by the magistrates' clerk that there was no law to protect people in country towns and villages from abuse, no matter how filthy the language may be which is used."

He apparently won this particular battle with the parents; by January 1876 they had become "more respectful and submissive." But then another worry began to haunt him. He had taken the post for professional advancement and was anxious for the children to do well in their April examination, but "feared that owing to the great irregularity of attendance

none of the children would have made enough attendances to qualify them to take the exam."

His fears were justified. In February, the school's supply of coal ran out and the pupils were frozen by icy winds blowing in at the broken windows. On March 17th the school was still without fuel, and midway through April Mr. Barker had to close it down completely because of the cold weather. His patience with school managers, parents and children must have been exhausted, and it is no surprise to find that the entries in his handwriting abruptly cease on April 28th.

It was left to Mr. C. T. Davies, secretary of the committee of Ecton schools to finish the sad story. He wrote in the log book: "Walter Barker, uncertificated, suddenly left the school without notice on his part and in contravention of his agreement with the committee of the schools, on 18 May last."

What was the final straw that led the headmaster to leave so suddenly? That too was recorded by the secretary. It seems that Barker, despite his misgivings, requested an examination of the school by one of H.M. Inspectors, hoping to gain his certificate, but the inspector refused it. Such a disappointment after all he had endured was too much, and without even a farewell, Walter Barker shook the dust of Ecton from his feet.

TONY IRESON

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BOOK REVIEWS

LORD ORFORD'S VOYAGE ROUND THE FENS IN 1774

Introduction by H. J. K. Jenkins. Notes by Mary Liquorice.
Cambridgeshire Libraries Publications, 1988, price £2.95 plus p. & p.

In the summer of 1774 the third Earl of Orford, accompanied by his mistress Mrs Martha Turk, several friends and a small company of servants and watermen, set out from High Bridge near Lakenheath, Suffolk, in a gang of vessels of the Fenland lighter type on a pleasure-cruise lasting for just over three weeks. His itinerary covered portions of the Rivers Little and Great Ouse, the old channel of the River Nene up to Peterborough, and Whittlesey and Ramsey Meres, both of which were drained in the nineteenth century. Lord Orford kept a journal of events, and so did two of his guests, Mr Thomas Roberts and Mr George Farrington. Nearly a century later these journals were edited by J. W. Childers of Cantley near Doncaster, and published in 1868. Copies of this book are now scarce, and thus its reproduction in slightly reduced facsimile by Cambridgeshire Libraries is to be welcomed, especially as it is accompanied by an introduction from Dr H. J. K. Jenkins (who contributed an article on Fenland lighters to N.P.&P. in 1987), together with notes by Miss Mary Liquorice, formerly the reference librarian at Peterborough Public Library.

Motive power for towing what Lord Orford called his 'Fleet' was provided by a horse appropriately named Hippopotamus (*i.e.* river horse), although at times it was practicable to hoist a sail on the leading vessel in the gang, and in difficult places the vessels were punted with massive poles known as 'sprits'. The leading vessel appears to have been fitted with a galley for preparing substantial meals, and the two following had cabins which afforded accommodation for Lord Orford and his guests. These three vessels must have ridden higher out of the water than the average Fenland lighter in use at that time, because some of the wooden bridges spanning the waterways were too low for them to pass beneath. This problem was solved by temporarily raising these bridges, which must have been flimsy structures, and lowering them again when the 'Fleet' had proceeded on its way. Near Ramsey, however, one bridge was so stoutly made that carpenters equipped with 'jacks and proper engines' had to be sent for in order to perform the task of raising and replacement. At Salter's Lode, on the return journey, the 'Fleet' was delayed by a gang of what Lord Orford described as 'barges' getting through the sluice first. Very likely this gang had been carrying coal to Northampton and was returning to its home port of King's Lynn in preparation for another journey up the River Nene.

Much of the narrative in all three diaries is devoted to the daily employments, adventures and amusements (fishing, in particular) of the party, but also included are many comments on the Fenland landscape, its wild-life, agriculture and inhabitants, especially the women! Social life was certainly not neglected during the cruise. Races at Peterborough, Spalding and Huntingdon were attended, the latter two towns being reached by post chaise. At Peterborough both the Vicar and the Dean visited the 'Fleet', and Lord Orford, Roberts and Farrington dined with the Bishop. Still in the city, Roberts 'broke his shin in handing a lady over a bench in the play-house'. But the highlight of the cruise was undoubtedly two days on Whittlesey Mere spent in company with the Earl of Sandwich, First Lord of the Admiralty and a friend of Lord Orford. Lord Sandwich, whose seat was at Hinchinbrooke near Huntingdon, was trying out his new yacht, accompanied by no fewer than three captains in the Royal Navy. Each peer invited the other to dinner, and at one of these Lord Sandwich

entertained the company by singing 'a solo, "The Barley Mow", which he went through with great rapidity and that festivity which is indispensable in songs of that nature'.

I have one minor criticism of this otherwise excellent production; the map (p.8) shows only the bare outlines of the route taken by Lord Orford on his cruise. A few more names of places, waterways, etc., would have been welcome.

VICTOR A. HATLEY

WHAT MAD PURSUIT

by Francis Crick.
Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1989, £12.95, 182pp

Northamptonshire is justly proud of its reputation in certain areas. Its squires and spires, poets and priests spring most readily to mind but few, I suggest, would think of scientists in the same context. But to assume that the cupboard is entirely bare would be to ignore Francis Crick, and Francis Crick is not a man to be ignored.

The history of science is long and it would be foolish to anticipate its eventual verdict on a subject that is barely forty years old and the main protagonists are still alive. To the current generation of biologists, however, Watson and Crick's announcement of the structure of DNA in 1953 stands out as the single most significant discovery of the twentieth century. For this contribution, Crick and the American James Watson shared the Nobel Prize for Medicine and Physiology in 1962 and their work has been the bedrock for the new science of molecular history which now is beginning to have profound influences in all fields of biology and medicine.

Francis Crick was born in 1916 "near Northampton" (he isn't more exact) and spent his first fourteen years there. What effect this had in moulding the young Crick is difficult to discern because, necessarily in a book like this, early biographical reminiscences are almost incidental and take second place to the author's later achievements. We are told, however, that before moving to Mill Hill School he was educated at Northampton Grammar School, a fact which, amazingly, was never disclosed to later generations of schoolboys like myself.

Although the DNA story dominates this and all other accounts of Crick's career, his other achievements would still guarantee his reputation and this book is at its best when describing the discovery of the double helix and the deciphering of the genetic code. I suspect, however, that the author will be disappointed in his wish to attract a non-specialist readership when a reasonably advanced understanding of the subject is required. The elementary aspects of molecular biology are adequately explained in two appendices, but in the main text complex concepts are handled inconsistently. At one point the author stops to explain the symbols for the commonest elements, yet elsewhere he launches headlong into X-ray crystallography with its dazzling array of Pattersons, Fourier transforms and autocorrelation functions with barely a pause for breath.

Molecular biology is very much an experimental science where Crick, unusually, is a theoretician. This, I suspect, has not always endeared him to his colleagues. Inevitably experimentalists are apt to be suspicious of a thinker, but in one of the most compelling chapters Crick makes a very convincing case for the role of the theoretician. Many of Crick's theories have proved to be unerringly accurate and never less than useful models for subsequent refinement. Now living in southern California, Crick is turning his attention to a second great challenge, the workings of the human brain itself. He draws a number of parallels between the state of the neurological sciences now and molecular biology in the early fifties. If Crick proves to be right then we can look forward in the next few years to

some very exciting developments in neurobiology, but many would think he is over-optimistic.

It is disappointing in a book from a British author and publisher to find so many concessions to the American reader. American spelling I can tolerate, but I find it extremely irksome that the author, or more likely his editor, feels it necessary to remind me that a vicar is an Anglican clergyman and that Northamptonshire is an English county! But these complaints are trivial and the book is otherwise a splendid and long overdue memoir from one of this country's greatest scientists and one of the county's most closely guarded secrets.

DAVID BATES

THE BOOK OF BRACKLEY

by John Clarke
Barracuda Books, 1987, £15.95

Dr Clarke of the University of Buckingham is a native of Brackley and has, he tells us, a family tradition of local historians. Indeed to unfold a thousand years of history in 148 pages requires all the talents across that tradition. The author's approach is thematic and it is illuminated by astute observation, an eye for detail and the unexpected and a deep affection for the subject of his story. He chronicles the chequered process of the emergence of Brackley which he sees as the product of social forces, external to the town, interacting with the internal interests of the community. He is aware of the wider stage and this provides the reader with a helpful context in which to consider some of the author's assertions.

Seigneurial influence is a recurring aspect of this narrative. Dr Clarke traces them back to the Beaumonts after the Norman Conquest and forward to the Crewes and Egertons of the seventeenth century. It was from the exigencies of the crown and the chuch that Baronial interests made gains in the time of John. The De Quinceys assumed an ascendancy which enabled them to endow the Hospital of St John and provide a borough charter in 1260. The town thrived as well through its connection with "Benedictine" wool centres, such as Biddleston, Dunstable and Leicester. If the thirteenth century marked a high in Brackley's fortunes the succeeding century and a half was one of crisis. To Dr Clarke Brackley had become "a peasant community which had acquired some urban characteristics". It was also a divided town. Old Brackley became a source of cheap labour to the New quarter. Outsiders began to gain controlling interests and in the pursuit of property consolidation they showed themselves an excessively litigious lot. The Lisles, Yorkes, Crewes of Steane, Stanleys and Egertons were frequently involved in acrimonious court cases.

The sixteenth century was a time of religious ferment and Dr Clarke is in no doubt that the emergence of Magdalen College School was a product of the religious changes under Edward VI with the dissolution of Chantries including that at Brackley. He discounts the tradition that William of Waynfleete was the founding figure. Thomas Godwin, its first Master – an ardent Protestant who survived the Marian phase to become Elizabeth I's Bishop of Bath and Wells, is given this credit. The school sent out a generation of pupils to provide, in Dr Clarke's view, a Protestant leaven in the Brackley township. Social clout also came from monastic appropriation and the profits of purchase of advowsons. The author cites the career of the Lisles as an example of gentrification from this process through two generations.

The theme of ferment colours the last phase of the story, 1560–1660. This is conveyed through the career of two Brackley clerics. First the brief and meteoric performance of John Beatniffe appointed by Archbishop Whitgift to blunt the puritan thrust in Brackley.

Secondly Robert Sybthorpe 'a man of low fortune', episcopalian, royalist and pluralist. As Vicar of Brackley and Rector of Burton Latimer he had friends in high places. He saw himself as the instrument of the Crown and Arminianism to purge the Diocese of puritan clergy such as Miles Burkitt of Pattishall, whom he successfully drove into a temporary wilderness. Sybthorpe tilted at larger figures, including his old patron John Williams, Bishop of Lincoln: but his actions alienated the pro-parliamentary stance of seigneurs such as Crewe and Egerton. Yet, as Dr Clarke reminds us, Sybthorpe was to find himself at one with them over the action of the regicides. In 1662, a few months before his death, Sybthorpe was restored to his living in a Brackley that had been chastened but not devastated by the Civil War.

The book is extensively illustrated, though it is a pity that very little reference in the text is made to these illustrations. Unlike the text the provenance of these pictures is provided. The absence of references blunts the enthusiasm of the interested reader stimulated to follow up points. For example on page 111 the author cites Lord Burghley's letter to Knightley and Cope but gives no precise reference to the location of this. At £15.95 one looks for some quality of referencing as well as the correct spellings of Burghley and Brington.

Dr Clarke has provided an interesting addition to the corpus of small town histories. A second volume is projected bringing the narrative into the twentiety century. He has done a service to residents of Brackley though the price might place it beyond the pockets of some.

RICHARD MOSS, Nene College

AN EVER-ROLLING STREAM. THE ON-GOING STORY OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN NORTHAMPTON AND NORTHAMPTONSHIRE.

Compiled by David Walmsley (Pinter Publishers, 1989, Price £12.50).

Local government likes to pride itself on operating in the 'real world', and for the most part it does. However, subjectivity, as well as careful planning and the discipline of cash limits, has a part to play in its decisions, especially where local patriotism is involved, as this history of Nene College and its predecessors makes clear.

The educational era which began to crumble in the late 1970s saw the greatest expansion in the provision of higher education in the history of this country. New universities, polytechnics and colleges sprang up by the score. Any place which felt it counted for something, or was going somewhere (which meant plenty of places) wanted its very own institution, preferably a university. If not a university a poly would do; if not one of those, a new college would set a cultural seal on local aspirations. Sometimes what local authorities got was something brand new, but as often as not new institutions were created from what was there, with some additions or substractions. The expanding town of Northampton got a new, purpose-built College of Education in 1972, created out of existing teacher-training outposts of Scraptoft college, Leicester, and Kirkby College of Education from Liverpool, given a 'move or die' transfer by the Ministry. Three years later it became Nene College with the addition of the old College of Technology and School of Art, becoming a new kind of entity, a College of Higher Education. Almost immediately control passed from the Borough Education authority to that of the County, under the new local government Act implemented in 1974. In 1988 what had been an object of considerable local government pride was, under the Baker Education Act, ordered to float free, as Nene College PLC.

No one was more closely involved with the foundation of the College than the compiler and editor of this volume, an honorary freeman and former mayor of Northampton, and a past chairman of the Borough and County Education Committees. Although Mr Walmsley has had to put his volume together quickly to mark the change in the status of the college, in many respects he has done an excellent job. What he has produced is a collection of essays and journalism, pieces of academic research, original documents, and reminiscences. Although a sort of 'Here comes Everybody', it works, and the attention given to people involved in education in Northampton over the past hundred years and more is most welcome. Mr Walmsley makes the point that one day a more considered history of the subject will be written, but this volume will be of great use to any future author. If now and then the approach tends to repetition, it also makes for an unboring read, no mean achievement in this genre.

It also has the virtue of immediacy, not least because Mr Walmsley was at the centre of things, both as a native Northamptonian who knew local education as a consumer, and as an active local government politician. He reflects, with a certain pride, that it is not often given to an individual as Chairman of an Education Committee and as Chairman of Governors to see a scheme of the size of the Northampton College of Education through from planning to completion. What he does *not* allow himself, as a Northampton patriot and a Conservative, is to express the irony of the story of Nene College. In its relatively short existence this leopard has been called upon to change its spots a remarkable number of times. Life for its staff has certainly not been lived in an Ivory Tower.

Mrs Thatcher herself opened the new College and her spirit has filled the placed ever since. Scarcely had it adapted to its new role than it was transmogrified into Nene College PLC, cut away from the local authority which did so much to create it, and which took so much pride in it, at the behest of a government which believes (on little more evidence than gut-feelings) that such a body will answer the needs of the local community and local industry better than one run by an education authority. Who the governors of Nene college are answerable to except the Minister of State at the DES is anyone's guess. In this day and age Britons are ordered to be free by centralised direction.

Yet the College will survive and maybe do well as a free-floating institution. A central figure in the story of Nene College's first era is Dr Eric Ogilvie, whose portrait is the book's frontispiece. His contribution is entitled 'Glorious Ad-Hocery'. Almost the moment it opened the axe fell and he had to make his College into something else. He presided over a number of Thatcherite innovations and developments – the opening of the National Leathersellers Centre, a Management Centre, a Business and Innovation Centre, a Chiropody centre. The brainchild of his College of Education days, a national centre for 'able and talented children' has never took off. Which company or corporation is going to fund that?

Under 'Glorious Ad-Hocery' what will Nene College become, and where will it go, floating free as a PLC? There have been rumours of it turning into Nene Polytechnic, or entering into partnership with Leicester Polytechnic, or Leicester University. If it goes it alone, is it large enough to survive? If its immediate past is anything to go by it will, and it may even flourish. But it will need good fortune and rich friends.

R. L. GREENALL

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

SHORTER NOTICES

Victorian society was essentially a man's world: few women in any town became public figures. Amongst those in Northampton who did probably the best known was Marianne Farningham, whose real name was Mary Ann Hearn. Born into a Baptist family in Eynsford, Kent in 1834, Miss Hearn came to Northampton in 1859 as headmistress of the infant department of the British School, and spent the remaining fifty years of her life here. Giving up teaching for journalism and lecturing she made a good living and a name for herself through her stories, homilies, poems and hymns in such Nonconformist journals as *The Christian World* and *The Sunday School Times*. Occasionally these pieces were gathered together and republished as a book, and in 1907 she produced an autobiography, *A Working Woman's Life*. Of no great literary or lasting merit, her writings are gentle, pious and now rather dated. However, they did touch the hearts of contemporaries and were much admired in Nonconformist and Evangelical circles. In Northampton there was a fount of affection for her stemming from her teaching days and from the fact that even when successful, she stayed in the town. What helped to keep her was the girl's bible class at College Street Baptist Chapel which she taught for many years. Between her and the succession of girls in this class there was a real bond. She was also well known enough in her own right to be elected to the School Board.

Miss Farningham's life is recollected in *A Farningham Childhood. Chapters from the Life of Marianne Farningham*, edited and introduced by Shirley Burgoyne Black (Darenth Valley Publications, 1988). Rather expensive at £7.50 for 126 pages, it is essentially a Kentish tribute. Half of it is a useful summary of Marianne's life; the other consists of six chapters on her early days in Kent from a *Working Woman's Life*. There are also a selection of her poems, though nothing of her other writings or lectures. Nonetheless, it does give a good picture of a once well-known and admired woman, who carved out an independent career for herself.

A rather different Northampton is revealed in *Northampton Remembers Boot and Shoe*, 1988, the first of a series coming out of the Borough Council Community Programme with the Manpower Services Commission. Edited by David Kirkby, Delia Thomas and Louise Turner it is crafted from a series of interviews with old shoeworkers of the town and district. Here is life from below, which Marianne Farningham knew about, but rarely touched on, and is a living link with the Victorian era, not least the most vivid parts are those which recall the handsewn, outwork era which lived on even after factory-based production took over. Although there is much that is familiar here, the book does emphasize the crucial role of women in the trade, the long hours, the drinking bouts of St Monday and the central role of the pawnshop. It also recalls the necessity of tramping (Mr Tebbitt's "on yer bike") reflected in the fact that children in largish families were frequently born in different towns. Following the section on handsewn shoes and outwork, there are others on the life of shoemaking families in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, Bespoke and Surgical shoes, factory life ('They reckoned you was'nt a machinist until you machined your finger') and Unions and Employers. Packed into its 80 pages is a vivid chunk of Northampton life as lived until almost yesterday, and at £1.95 it is a bargain.

From the county comes *Finedon Revealed*, 1986, a splendid collection of some 245 photographs compiled, captioned and published by John H. Bailey, author of *Finedon Otherwise Thingdon*. At £7.50 it is splendid value, capturing an amazing range of activities and events over the past century and more, from Finedon Hall and its inhabitants, the Church, the school and the charities down to the shoemakers and their sports, pastimes and

pleasures. What an indefatigable chronicler Mr Bailey is. There is nothing about Finedon he is not interested in, and his captions are packed with information.

Another active local historian is Jerome Betts of Raunds, two of whose works have come to hand. The first is *The Raunds Strike and March to London 1905*, (Raunds & District History Society), price 0.50p, a useful summary of the events surrounding that famous incident, together with a brisk account of the history of footwear in the district. He is also the author of historical notes on the (Catholic) Parish of St Paul the Apostle, Thrapston and St Thomas More, Raunds (Duplicated typescript) which is of interest because it is about catholic history and contemporary history, both of which are usually neglected by local historians. Northamptonshire is not great recusant territory, and the story of the Old Faith has been told by Father Anstruther, to whom this booklet is respectfully dedicated. Nor was the Second Spring very impressive, Mr Betts quoting Cardinal Manning's quip on the diocese being the 'Dead See' in the late 19th century. However in the twentieth century, with more catholics living in the county, especially since the Thirties, parishes with mass centres and then churches have been established, and Mr Betts has an interesting story to chronicle to celebrate the 25th anniversary of his own parish church.

Mr Bernard Elliott of Leicester does a similar job for Rutland Catholicism in *Rutland Record*, No 9, (Rutland Record Society), 1989. Again, a high standard of production is maintained in the journal with a good range of articles, including ones on 'Historic Hedgerows', 'Humphrey Repton and the Burley landscape', 'Some early Drawings of Rutland Churches' and, for industrial archaeologists and economic historians, a good piece on 'Ironstone Quarries in 1930: the Notebooks of the late Professor S. H. Beaver'. Volume 2 of the Rutland Record Series is *The Weather Journals of a Rutland Squire. Thomas Barker of Lyndon Hall*, 1988, kept for the period 1748 to 1795. They are a valuable source for the increasing number of people interested in the history of climate, as well as for local and agricultural historians. Finally, for those wishing to find a useful short book to explore that part of the country, Shire Publications have produced *Leicestershire and Rutland* by Jeffery Hopewell (price £2.95) in their useful 'Shire County Guide' series. Into its 68 pages is packed a great deal of information, and a great number of well-chosen photographs.

R. L. GREENALL

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

A LEG-PULL FOR AN EDITOR

Editors develop a sharp eye for traps set by unfriendly readers, but sometimes they are caught. Among the lesser effects of the enormous volcanic eruption at Krakatoa in August 1883 was a successful leg-pull inflicted on J. W. Steff, editor of the *Kettering Guardian*.

Pumice dust rose an estimated 17 miles into the atmosphere when part of the island was blown away and led to spectacular sunsets all over the world. After several were witnessed in England, Steff printed some verse from a reader in his December 7 issue:

SUNSET – A Sonnet

Suggested by a description which appeared in Saturday's papers of the beautiful sunsets on the Saturday and Monday evenings previous.

Joyous the sun goes home at eventide
When he has walked the circuit of the sky.
See how the East looks on with jealous eye,
Then draws her curtains round in sullen pride.
Eager the West her portals opens wide,
Flings out her banners from the turret high,
For as the welcome wanderer draws nigh
In beauty all the western sky is dyed.
Surpassing glory thus around is spread
And golden clouds, each like an angel's home,
Float on majestic o'er heaven's blazing dome,
Or form the hangings of his crimson bed.
Orb upon orb then throngs heaven's spangled floor
Like silent watchers round his chamber door.

L. N. (Constant Reader)
Burton Latimer.

Steff unwittingly made himself a laughing stock, as the sonnet was an acrostic, and the initial letters of the lines read downward made the statement "J. W. Steff is a fool." Who wrote it? History is silent, but Thomas Collings, editor of the rival *Wellingborough and Kettering News*, had Burton Latimer connections and may have been in a mischievous mood.

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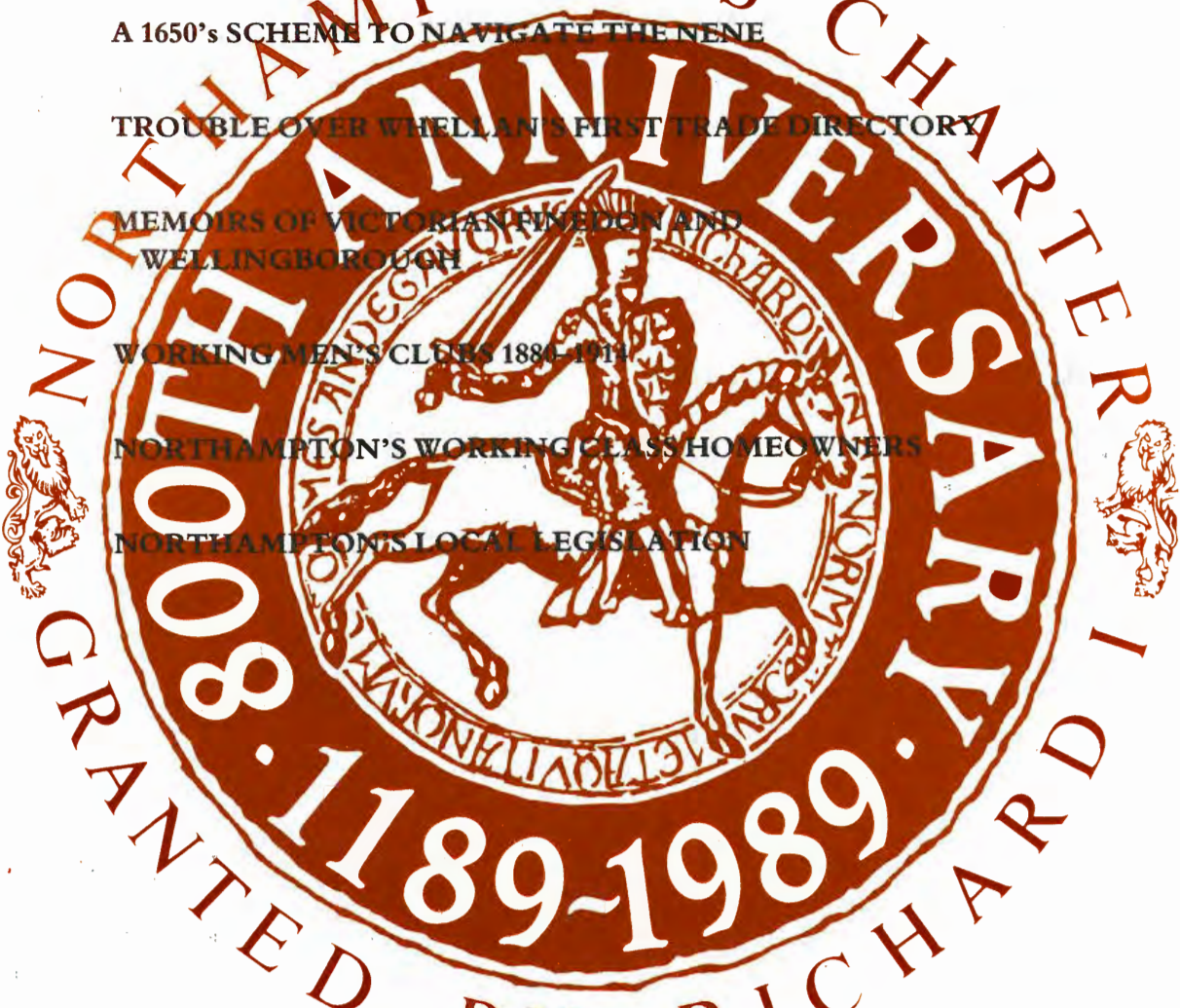

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