

THE TOM HASSALL LECTURE FOR 2001

Post-Medieval Oxfordshire, 1540-2000

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Historical archaeology, at least in Britain, divides into 'medieval' and 'post-medieval', which is not entirely clear to all.¹ Perhaps 'ancient' and 'modern' would be better, though even 'early modern' would be difficult in Oxford where 'Modern History' begins in the 6th century (and raises another spectre, the post-modern). If we place all that on one side, the end of the medieval period is easy enough, for the middle of the 16th century saw the end of monasticism and the consequent entry into the 'Age of Plunder' as a huge proportion of land changed hands, with all the consequences associated with that and religious changes. Archaeologically it was an era that saw the disappearance of the medieval hall-house, and the beginning of the transport revolution, and numerous innovations in material culture.² Indeed the archaeology of the next half millennium could, without the slightest hint of special pleading, be divided into periods based on the changing technology of transport: the Age of the Coach (1550-1830) marking the start of the new era, the Age of the Railway (1830-1914) coinciding with the huge rise of population and industry, and the Age of the Motor Car (1914-2000) – closely identified in the case of Oxford with the era of the bicycle – reflecting the rapid changes of the modern world. But tempting as it is to divide the period into phases related to technological, industrial or social changes, there is also an extent to which the 17th and 18th centuries can be seen as the end of a *longue durée* of rural life. The English landscape of village and field, familiar by the time of Domesday Book, and notable in Oxfordshire for its open field farming, had a degree of continuity that was swept away with enclosure and destroyed by the railway age, but whose last echoes disappeared only with the first war, or after 1925 with the final end of the manorial system and the demise of so much of the country house culture in the following decades.³ Even fifty years ago an Oxfordshire country house could lack both hot water and telephone, with a butler who put the new electric lights away in the lamp cupboard at night (as he always had done), and a chauffeur who whistled when he cleaned the car (because that was what he had always done with horses).⁴

And what can the archaeology of this era offer that cannot be achieved by study of written sources (increasingly descriptive and personal), drawings, maps, photographs, newspapers and then film? Is it not the province of the historical geographer, the social and architectural historian? Archaeology can indeed bring insights that can inform the interrogation of the physical aspects of material culture, and that may escape those looking at words (or indeed pictures). While historical archaeology is necessarily linked to the written word, the

¹ For a valuable discussion see introduction to S. Tarlow and S. West, *The Familiar Past? Archaeologies of Later Historical Britain* (1999).

² W.G. Hoskins, *The Age of Plunder: The England of Henry VIII 1500-1547* (1976); D. Gaimster and P. Stamper, *The Age of Transition: The Archaeology of English Culture 1400-1600* (Oxbow Monograph 98, Soc. for Medieval Archaeology Monograph 15, 1997).

³ R. Strong, M. Binney and J. Harris, *Destruction of the Country House 1875-1975* (1974), 16 and appendix.

⁴ Kiddington Hall, home of H.M. Gaskell, as recalled by his son Robin Bagot.

archaeologist's awareness of this must be tempered by a scepticism of written records, and an ability to interpret the physical, spatial and visual evidence that some historians can find so difficult to read.⁵ I do not know that beyond this plain statement any particular theoretical basis is called for, or indeed that any set of research aims is necessary provided that we cast the net wide enough and continue to ask new questions of the material evidence of the past. As should by now be apparent from this series of lectures, the rich vein of discoveries that has been tapped in Oxfordshire over the last decades has come about largely through chance discovery rather than targeted research. This has not in the slightest degree diminished the value to research of what has been found, and does at least place in the public domain the evidence that others can use.

This overview of post-medieval Oxfordshire can only touch on some themes and draw attention to some of the work that has been done, while suggesting further areas of study and remarking on the variety of archaeologies of the modern era that can be evoked.

The land

The modern county of Oxfordshire (since 1974 including a sizeable part of the now-vanished county of Berkshire) is a self-contained *pays* of the middle Thames (comprising much of the watershed of that river), but uncomfortable when placed in either the Midlands or the South-East regions in which for various purposes it finds itself. Central to the region is a river that was linked by barge traffic to the Cotswold stone quarries and downstream to London, with Henley acting as an entrepot for delivering (for example) Chiltern firewood to London, while the material culture of the metropolis could be brought upstream for local markets.⁶ The region was effectively a large river basin between Cotswold, Chiltern and Berkshire hills, and Charles Phythian-Adams's suggested series of major regional divisions across England identifies a Thames Valley area in which Oxfordshire and Berkshire form a firm western edge, and together with Buckinghamshire are recognised as being a sub-region.⁷

The central plain was open field country, with large arable open fields generally undivided by hedges (and thus suitable for battles – e.g. Chalgrove Field), and common pastures often contiguous between parishes. The Thames and its tributaries provided for abundant hay meadows, always valuable, and especially prevalent in the turns of the great river (as around Oxford). The Oxfordshire open fields have long been studied, and the process of enclosure is well known. At the time of Davis's map of Oxfordshire in 1794 much of the county was unenclosed, but by the time of the tithe map surveys fifty years later only a few parishes retained their strip farming (St. Giles in north Oxford was only enclosed in 1832). Enclosure left a countryside littered with the ridge-and-furrow remnants of the previous regime, and gave the county a new landscape of regular hedged fields, and no doubt initiated the widespread use of elm that was such a prominent feature until decimated by Dutch Elm Disease in the 1970s. The greater change was perhaps in the enclosure of commons and waste, while the enclosure of forests such as Wychwood and Shotover were another aspect of the regularisation of the landscape into an ordered and improved whole with the appearance of new farms and new access roads.⁸ The marginal spaces of commons

⁵ R. Newman, *The Historical Archaeology of Britain, c.1540-1900* (2001).

⁶ M. Prior, 'The Accounts of Thomas West of Wallingford, a Sixteenth-Century Trader on the Thames', *Oxoniana*, xlv (1981), 73-93.

⁷ C. Phythian-Adams (ed.), *Societies, Cultures and Kinship, 1580-1850: Cultural Provinces and English Local History* (1993), Fig. 1.

⁸ A.F. Martin and R.W. Steele, *The Oxford Region* (1954), 121-31; F. Emery, *The Oxfordshire Landscape* (1974); J. Dils (ed.), *An Historical Atlas of Berkshire* (1998).

and heaths that lay in between the village-centred field systems had been extensive. It would have been possible to walk along the Thames-side from Oxford to Wolvercote, Yarnton and Cassington and beyond without leaving common land, as you could have done along the top of the downs and wolds.⁹ The vast area of Eynsham Heath was an open area of waste serving several adjacent parishes, and the forests of Wychwood and Shotover had internal or peripheral commons, with Bullingdon Green forming a continuous belt around Shotover in Horspath, Cowley and Headington.

The county

The county in one sense lacks a county town, distracted as Oxford is by the university, but then in Banbury and Henley it has two towns serving the ends of the county (while Wallingford only came late from Berkshire). The administrative archaeology of the county is curious. It originates in a royal castle (always part of the county rather than city of Oxford) shunned by medieval kings in favour of Beaumont or Woodstock, but in whose hall the sheriff continued to hold courts and the assizes met. Abandoned after an outbreak of gaol fever at the 'Black Assizes' in 1577, the ruins of the shire hall survived for over two hundred years as the place where the election hustings were begun, while the courts met in part of the Oxford Guildhall. This was rebuilt in the mid 18th century as a joint town and shire hall, and it was only in 1841 with the building of the new County Hall that this brief liaison was severed. The change from a local and essentially manorial and ecclesiastical system of social control to a civil and county-based regime is reflected in the gradual rise of county jurisdiction, and the increasing provision of buildings for courts, jails, police and militia buildings. Following the reorganisation of local government in the 1880s the new responsibilities required more administrative space, and the 1914 County Office (now the Register Office) in Tidmarsh Lane included in one building all the offices required for the administration of the county.

The remaining themes will be dealt with, if somewhat unevenly, under the three period headings, of which the first is the longest, mainly reflecting the amount of work done.

AGE OF THE COACH 1550-1830

TRANSPORT

The appearance of the coach in the middle of the 16th century marked a social change as much as anything else; within a generation the world, in Stow's words, 'runs on wheels', and the coach was blamed for effeminacy and the threat of the disappearance of horsemanship. It was not just the coach, for the four-wheeled farm waggon seems to have appeared about the same time (although it is rare in Oxfordshire inventories before the late 17th century), and the great carriers' waggons that gradually came to replace the packhorses.¹⁰ All of these, including the packhorse, the humble pedlar and the carrier, are shown in the college views of David Loggan's *Oxonia Illustrata* (1675), whose foreground staffage provides a vivid panorama of means of transport in Oxford. Whether the availability of carriers affected consumer behaviour is a moot point, but it was certainly the case that the carriers put many villages in direct contact with an effective parcel delivery service from London and provincial towns. The fast stage coach arrived in Oxford in 1669 reducing the journey to London to

⁹ G. Hey et al., *Yarnton; Saxon and Medieval Settlement and Landscape* (forthcoming).

¹⁰ J.T. Munby, 'Queen Elizabeth's Coaches: The Wardrobe on Wheels', *Antiq. Jnl.* 83 (2003).

less than a day. The university objected in 1670 to a rival unlicensed service, but it was of course found to be very useful. The innovation in the social use of coaches was not immediately matched by any technological development in the machines themselves, and the benefit of improved springs was only to follow the development of better paved roads in the 18th century with the creation of numerous turnpike roads in Oxfordshire.

The *longue durée* for bad roads was in some sense matched by the continuation of river transport on the Thames, by barge to London, and by various other means on the upper river. The archaeology of the barge (and the punt) remains to be fully elucidated, but there are precious insights, again from illustrations such as Michael Angelo Rooker's drawing of Folly Bridge showing the barge wharf at the end of St. Aldate's, or the splendid Siberechts view of Henley, reminding us of the continuing importance of that town as an 'inland port' carrying the Chiltern products to London.¹¹

BUILDINGS

Much of the work on post-medieval Oxfordshire has been directed towards its architecture. The county lies across the geological grain of southern England, and thus reaches from the Cotswold limestone belt across the great vale to the chalk downs of the Chilterns. As a result the traditional architecture of the county varies from stone to brick and timber-framing, and with no particular local style. The study of building stones, well established by the studies of Arkell, has been continued in consideration of the Cotswold slate industry, and brick-making.¹² The only distinctive local study was that by Wood-Jones on the buildings of the Banbury region, a pioneering study that was unfortunately not followed by others.¹³ However, there has been no shortage of detailed studies of individual buildings. From the tradition of building investigation in Oxford started by Pantin there have been numerous publications in *Oxoniensia*, and then a long series of investigations by the County Museum service in *South Midlands Archaeology*. The acquisition of Cogges manor house and farm has also allowed a long-term study of the building during its curation, while the home of the county museum in Woodstock has itself been anatomised.¹⁴ Recent studies have also been made of the building trade in Oxford.¹⁵

Studies of villages have included 'Duck End' at Stanton Harcourt by Arnold Pacey, and individual buildings have ranged from squatter houses (e.g. in Dorchester) to model housing (in Nuneham Courtenay) and the development of modern housing.¹⁶ The investigation of numerous barns prior to their conversion has added to our understanding of the regional carpentry techniques, and emphasised the county as a border region. To the south and east of the city in the brick and timber zone are to be found roofs with their purlins supported

¹¹ R.B. Peberdy, 'Navigation on the River Thames between Oxford and London in the Late Middle Ages: A Reconsideration', *Oxoniensia*, lxi (1996), 311-40; J. Dils, 'Henley and the River Trade in the Pre-industrial Period', *Oxfordshire Local History*, ii(6) (1987), 182-92.

¹² W.J. Arkell, *Oxford Stone* (1947); M. Aston, *Stonefield Slate* (1974); J. Bond, S. Gosling and J. Rhodes, *The Clay Industries of Oxfordshire: Oxfordshire Brickmakers* (1980).

¹³ R.B. Wood-Jones, *Traditional Domestic Architecture in the Banbury Region* (1963).

¹⁴ R.T. Rowley and M. Steiner (eds.), *Cogges Manor Farm, Witney, Oxfordshire: the excavations from 1986-1994 and the historic building analysis* (1996); I. Grundon, 'Fletcher's House, Park Street, Woodstock: An Architectural and Historical Analysis', *Oxoniensia*, lxx (2000), 27-77.

¹⁵ D. Sturdy, *A History of Knowles and Son, Oxford Builders for 200 Years, 1797-1997* (Brit. Archaeol. Reports 254, 1997); B.R. Law, *Building Oxford's Heritage, Symm and Company from 1815* (1998).

¹⁶ A. Pacey, in Vernacular Architecture Group, Spring Conference 1987, Oxfordshire Programme of Visits (1987); OAU client report by Kate Newell, reported in *S. Midlands Archaeology*, 30 (2000), 60.

by 'curved inner principals', whereas to the north and west in the Cotswold stone zone are to be found roofs with purlins attached to principal rafters with free tenons onto which they are slotted. (There is little significance in this apart from the identification of regional characteristics.) Another topic of related interest is the increasing recognition of importer's marks on Baltic softwood that are to be found in 18th- and 19th-century roof and floor timbers. Often hard to interpret, a pair of matching marks were recognised on two timbers in a barn at Tadmarton: two halves of a name were found, proving when linked not to be an exotic Baltic port but the more prosaic 'Manchester'.¹⁷

Domestic interiors

The study of domestic interiors has a long history. Oxfordshire had an early study of inventories with the publication of selected early texts, and studies of Bicester households, and now Thame.¹⁸ The inventories can place the lost furniture into rooms, and help with the study of room names (including problems such as the identification of the 'hovel'), showing how little furniture there often was, as might be suspected from looking at Dutch paintings of domestic interiors. Rooms could be decorated, even if relatively bare, and an entire painted room from Thame has been preserved in the county museum, representing a fine example of a not uncommon feature.¹⁹ Archaeology has of course revealed so much of domestic interiors, at least at floor level, and the contents of rooms in rubbish and cess-pits. If pots are under-represented in probate inventories, being indestructible they are hardly under-represented in archaeology. Post-medieval pottery has a long tradition of study in Oxford, and the increasing bulk of excavation, including the areas of modern development in St. Ebbe's, has uncovered some splendid examples of groups of pottery reflecting the changing fashions in the 17th to 19th centuries – these changes in taste are at the heart of early modern and modern archaeology.²⁰

Oxford houses

The study of Oxford houses has an equally long history, from this Society's formation of the Old Houses Committee in 1914. An important example was the investigation of the Clarendon Hotel before and during demolition, while subsequent study of the Golden Cross demonstrated the possibilities of study of fabric, decoration and records.²¹ The adjacent Crown tavern at no. 3 Cornmarket had earlier been studied by E.T. Leeds, and was famous through its association with William Shakespeare; when it was under the tenancy of John Davenant, a former London vintner, Shakespeare stayed there on his way from Stratford to London, as both Davenant's sons were to tell John Aubrey in later years. Perhaps the most remarkable aspect of the tavern's history is revealed by Davenant's will, in which he left his business in the care of his servant William Hallom, with strict instructions for the exclusion

¹⁷ OAU client report by Ric Tyler, reported in *S. Midlands Archaeology*, 29 (1999), 70.

¹⁸ M.A. Havinden, *Household and Farm Inventories in Oxfordshire, 1550-1590* (1965); G.H. Dannatt, 'Bicester in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries', *Oxoniensia*, xxvi-xxvii (1961/2), 244-311; A. Buxton, 'Domestic Culture in Early Seventeenth-century Thame', *Oxoniensia*, lxxvii (2002), 79-115.

¹⁹ M.R. Airs and J.G. Rhodes, 'Wall-Paintings from a House in Upper High Street, Thame', *Oxoniensia*, xlv (1980), 235-59.

²⁰ T.G. Hassall et al., 'Excavations in St Ebbe's, Oxford, 1967-76: Part II Post-medieval', *Oxoniensia*, xlix (1984), 153-75; M. Mellor, 'A Synthesis of Middle and Late Saxon, Medieval and Early Post-Medieval Pottery in the Oxford Region', *Oxoniensia*, lix (1994), 17-217.

²¹ W.A. Pantin, 'The Clarendon Hotel', *Oxoniensia*, xxiii (1958), 84-129; idem, 'The Golden Cross', *Oxoniensia*, xx (1955), 46-89.

of his two sons so that the enterprise could be run for the benefit of his two daughters, one of whom could always marry William 'if he and shee can fancy one another' (which they did). From the language of the will one can well see why he might have been a friend of Shakespeare.²²

The story of housing in Oxford (described by the RCHM in 1939) was outlined in a pioneering and typically wide-ranging paper by W.A. Pantin in 1947.²³ Larger houses like the 'Bishop's Palace' in St. Aldate's, with elaborate pargetted exterior, is a rare survivor of a wider class, such as the Three Tuns tavern, and the Crown Inn in Cornmarket (opposite the Crown tavern, and still surviving today). The Crown had a wall-painting in imitation of painted panelling, just like the one found at Zacharias's further up Cornmarket, and wall-paintings of the 16th and 17th centuries have now been found in many Oxford houses.²⁴ They were also found at 126 High Street, which investigations in 1972 showed to be a classic reworking of a medieval house into a double-pile urban house with its gable onto the street.²⁵ In St. Aldate's the demolition of a listed building by Christ Church allowed the investigation of another interesting type, a stone-fronted house with a timber-framed rear, which had developed some structural problems by being refronted and refenestrated in the 18th century.²⁶ Building in the suburbs of Oxford was of progressively lower status, and the investigation of a house in St. Thomas's in 1962 was to be followed thirty-five years later by the excavation of its site.²⁷ Pantin had recorded a row of houses in Fisher Row, which contained both timber-framing of a very low order, and a knuckle-bone floor.²⁸ This curiosity, particularly associated with 17th-century suburban building in Oxford, has a long history in Oxford antiquarian circles. An example in Antiquity Hall, the alehouse frequented by Thomas Hearne and his friends, was imagined (in jest) to be a Roman pavement. Other specimens were found in the 19th century by Herbert Hurst, and another one found in St. Thomas's in 1990 has been preserved in the Museum of Oxford.²⁹ There remains much to be done, and especially to identify examples of 'squab housing' in back yards (particularly identified with St. Thomas's parish) which was such a concern of the university and city authorities in the 17th century, but which at the present is better recorded in photographs taken prior to 'slum clearance' than in the archaeological record.

Oxford colleges

College building is well understood, from the 1939 inventory of the Royal Commission on Historical Monuments and the 1954 volume of the Victoria County History, and more recently the information on building history obtained from Colvin's detailed consideration of 'unbuilt Oxford'.³⁰ As always, however, it is wrong to consider that well-known buildings

²² E.T. Leeds, 'A Second Elizabethan Mural Painting in No. 3, Cornmarket Street, Oxford', *Oxoniensia*, i (1936), 144-50; Davenant's will is in PRO, PROB 11/140.

²³ W.A. Pantin, 'The Development of Domestic Architecture in Oxford', *Antiq. Jnl.* xxvii (1947), 120-50.

²⁴ E.C. Rouse, 'Some 16th and 17th century Domestic Paintings in Oxford', *Oxoniensia*, xxxvii (1972), 198-207; J.T. Munby, 'Zacharias's: a 14th-century Oxford New Inn and the origins of the medieval urban inn', *Oxoniensia*, lvii (1992), 245-309.

²⁵ J.T. Munby, '126 High Street: The Archaeology and History of an Oxford House', *Oxoniensia*, xl (1975), 254-308.

²⁶ A. Dodd (ed.), *Oxford Before the University* (2003), 101-2.

²⁷ S. Cook, 'Archaeological Excavations at 64-66 St Thomas's Street, Oxford', *Oxoniensia*, lxiv (1999), 285-96.

²⁸ W.A. Pantin, 'Houses of the Oxford Region, i: Fisher Row, Oxford', *Oxoniensia*, xxv (1960), 121-30.

²⁹ M.R. Roberts et al., 'A Tenement of Roger of Cumnor', *Oxoniensia*, lxi (1996), 181-224.

³⁰ RCHM, *Inventory of the City of Oxford* (1939); *V.C.H. Oxon.* iii (1954); H.M. Colvin, *Unbuilt Oxford* (1983).

are fully understood. Colvin's own research on the Canterbury Quadrangle revealed how much more information can be obtained from examination of archival sources and consideration of design sources and parallels. A building in the same quadrangle revealed under alterations a veritable archaeology of university life preserved below the floor boards – tobacco pipes, gloves, socks, hats and pens, glasses and bottles. Behind the panelling of the same set of rooms, apparently put in position in 1730, judging from a painted inscription, was a series of wallpapers dating from c. 1600, and other early 18th-century examples, used until a painted surface had replaced a paper covering.³¹

Post-medieval building was a mixture of adaptation and new build. Old buildings were readily plundered for their materials, though rarely in such a wholesale manner as the roof of St. Mary's College rebuilt over Brasenose College chapel; the cloister windows of Rewley Abbey had a more ignominious fate, being carried off to Henry VIII's bowling alley at Hampton Court.³² The archaeology of plunder is perhaps under-represented in Oxford, where medieval colleges escaped dissolution, and monastic buildings like Canterbury College and the muniments of St. Frideswide and Oseney passed wholesale to the new college of Christ Church. Wolsey had received the lands of sixteen dissolved houses to found his Cardinal College, and would have swept away the church and cloister of St. Frideswide's Priory had not death stopped his foundation in its tracks. In the end, when the college was refounded as Christ Church and linked to the new cathedral (that had started life at Oseney), the monastic church was retained for use as the cathedral church rather than Wolsey's great unbuilt chapel. The short-lived cathedral at Oseney was plundered and fell into decay, and the new foundation brought only the great tenor bell of Great Tom from Oseney to Christ Church. The monastic buildings were in need of adaptation for the college, and the dormitory of St. Frideswide was converted to a canon's lodging, with the new painted wall decoration covering up the medieval walls and dormitory stair.³³

The medieval buildings of Durham College were re-used in Trinity College (founded during the reign of Queen Mary as a Catholic college), where a fine painted room was revealed in the bursary following a ceiling collapse. The painted ceiling and wall, decorated with large red and grey stripes and the name of Jesus (IHS) in a circle, was thought at first to be a survival from the medieval college, but was then realised to be from the private oratory of the first President.

Building in the post-Reformation university included a very large amount of new accommodation for a greatly expanded university, with building in attics (Trinity) and over kitchens (Magdalen), as well as completely new buildings. How college rooms were furnished is hard to know, except where there is specific description from inventories. A college inventory of All Souls demonstrates how the spare medieval furnishing of the college was amplified by furnishings such as cupboards and carpets during the course of the 16th century.³⁴ The St. John's rooms mentioned above were papered in c. 1600 with woodblock prints of floral decoration, while at Lincoln College a few decades later a rural landscape was painted on a chamber wall.³⁵ The increasing comfort of the individual's life in college was

³¹ H.M. Colvin, *The Canterbury Quadrangle, St. John's College, Oxford* (1988); unpublished observations by writer, 1975.

³² W.J. Blair, 'Frewin Hall, Oxford: A Norman Mansion and a Monastic College', *Oxoniensia*, xliii (1978), 48-99, fig. 7; H.M. Colvin et al., *History of the King's Works iv: 1485-1660 (pt. ii)* (1982), 132.

³³ J.T. Munby, 'Christ Church, Priory House: Discoveries in St. Frideswide's Dormitory', *Oxoniensia*, liii (1988), 185-93.

³⁴ All Souls College Archives, inventory of 1585: MS D.D. All Souls c.369.

³⁵ Rouse, *op. cit.* note 24, p. 203, pl. xxi.

matched in the 17th century by the comforts of a common room (as Anthony Wood remarked, first introduced at Merton in 1661).³⁶ The archaeology of conviviality is well represented by the numerous wine bottles sealed with common room seals, first worked on by E.T. Leeds and later by Jeremy Haslam and Fay Banks.³⁷ At the other end, the archaeologists' concern with cess-pits continues to provide the most precise details of consumption, and the Provost of Oriel's cess-pit produced grapes, fleas and the like.³⁸

University building

The institutional archaeology of the university is to be seen in the provision of libraries and schools. The Bodleian Library was reconstructed by Sir Thomas Bodley with a mixture of old and new materials that has confused us all until recently resolved by dendrochronology.³⁹ The Bodleian was the first of a series of university buildings, and indeed the library of 1610 was soon to be expanded into a multi-purpose Schools Building, with a grand gallery for university portraits and curiosities over a suite of school rooms for all subjects from anatomy to Hebrew, crowned by an image of the monarch (James I) on a triumphal tower, guarding the university archives in the top of the tower. The Schools have lost much of their internal character in the subsequent conversion to library use, but the archives have remained, safe above their fire-proof stone vault, although the remarkable geometric floor (illustrated by Plot and paralleled at Kelmscott Manor) was removed in the 1960s. Another innovatory new building was the Ashmolean Museum, with a museum and scientific lecture room built above a vaulted basement chemistry laboratory. The recent extension of the old Ashmolean has brought to light the remains both of the working laboratory (in the dumping of chemical vessels), and of the museum itself (mouse-nibbled labels from below the floorboards), in a fascinating archaeology of learning.⁴⁰ The abiding theme of new building in the 18th century was the selection of designs that met with common approval, well illustrated in the making of the Radcliffe Camera, where the archaeology of indecision is manifest in the recent rediscovery of the base of the abandoned stone dome that is mostly obscured by its timber and plaster successor, having been left in place by the masons when the committee changed its mind on the cost or safety of the structure.⁴¹

The university population required food and drink, and on occasion medicine. The apothecaries of Oxford performed a special function in addition to the sale of physic, in the provision of nursing establishments for sick students. The High Street had a row of such establishments, of which the most prestigious was that at 90 High Street, long known for its fine domestic interiors with joinery and plasterwork of c. 1618, and whose timber-framed front was recently exposed.

³⁶ J. Newman, 'The Architectural Setting', in N. Tyacke (ed.), *The History of the University of Oxford*, iv: *Seventeenth-Century Oxford* (1997), 172.

³⁷ E.T. Leeds, '17th and 18th Century Wine-Bottles of Oxford Taverns', *Oxoniensia*, vi (1941), 44-55; J. Haslam, 'Oxford Taverns and the Cellars of All Souls', *Oxoniensia*, xxxiv (1969), 45-77, and xxxv (1970), 27-33; M. Biddle, 'Oxoniensia and the Study of Early Wine Bottles', *Oxoniensia*, liii (1988), 342-46; F. Banks, *Wine Drinking in Oxford 1640-1850* (Brit. Archaeol. Reports 257, 1997).

³⁸ B. Durham in *CBA Group 9 Newsletter*, 12 (1982), 160.

³⁹ See Miles et al., 'Tree Ring Dates List 100', *Vernacular Architecture*, 30 (1999).

⁴⁰ J.A. Bennett et al., *Solomon's House in Oxford, New Finds from the First Museum* (2000).

⁴¹ S. Gillam, *The Radcliffe Camera* (1992); note in *S. Midlands Archaeology*, 25 (1995), 67.

Country houses

Oxfordshire is *par excellence* the county of parks and country houses, ranging from the most modest gentry homes to the finest palaces. The transformation of medieval houses (or monasteries) into new homes has been followed at Thame Park, and nearby at Rycote, where recent excavations by the Time Team uncovered some traces of the vast double-courtyard house of which so little remains above ground, and successfully defined the overall plan. At Chastleton House acquisition by the National Trust led to a careful consideration of the fabric, an elucidation of some of the problems associated with the curious courtyard design, and a realisation that there had been rather more rebuilding than had been imagined previously; studies of the stables and service buildings were also undertaken.⁴² The increasing number of investigations in connection with planning applications has had interesting results from what are often only minor opportunities for finding significant information. At Cornbury Park the conversion of the stables prompted a re-examination of a truncated structure that was shown to be the remains of a very significant building that had actually been visited and noted by John Evelyn.⁴³ By contrast, almost no trace of the remarkable stair reported by Plot was found to remain at Bletchington Park.⁴⁴ A controversial attempt to assign the design of Newington House to the early 17th century (and accordingly remove the later top floor) was ultimately unsuccessful, but the discovery of a very early sash window was not the only result of a close investigation of the fabric.⁴⁵ The earliest sash window in the county was otherwise thought to be the curious glazed cupboard in the Trinity College chapel, in which the tomb of the founder was placed in the 1690s.⁴⁶

With country houses come gardens, and in Oxfordshire the work of Mavis Batey and others has brought the detailed study of garden history to the fore. The fascinating complexity of the park and garden at Nuneham Courtenay have been studied by Mavis Batey through plans and documents, including the site of the deserted village.⁴⁷ For well-known gardens like Blenheim, which suffered the fate of having their magnificent Baroque gardens destroyed by Brown, features such as the vast military garden ringed by bastions survive only in paper images, though a chance occasion of an aerial photograph taken in ideal weather conditions led to the rediscovery of the canal basin of London and Wise at the bottom of the lake.⁴⁸ In the study of the parkland landscape at Stonor the observation of parch-marks revealed a lost garden.⁴⁹ A much less well-known garden, at Tackley, was surveyed by the Royal Commission when it was realised that it had surviving earthworks of an extraordinary 17th-century garden design for fishing, illustrated in a contemporary textbook.⁵⁰ Oxford colleges, each with an elaborate suite of intimate gardens, and detailed representations on Loggan's views of 1675, are a fruitful subject of study, and John Steane's recent examination of the physical evidence at Magdalen and Merton has shown how much more can be done.⁵¹

⁴² G. Marshall, 'The Problems of Draining Chastleton House', *S. Midlands Archaeology*, 26 (1996), 45-51; J.M. Steane, 'Chastleton, the View from Below Stairs', *Folk Life*, 34 (1984).

⁴³ J. Cormier, 'Stable Block, Cornbury Park', *S. Midlands Archaeology*, 26 (1996), 68-70.

⁴⁴ H.L. Turner, "'Tending to Strength, Beauty and Convenience in Building": the Staircase at Bletchington Park, Oxfordshire', *Oxoniensia*, lxi (1996), 341-54.

⁴⁵ See 'Tree Ring Dates List 22', *Vernacular Architecture*, 18 (1987), 54-5.

⁴⁶ H.J. Louw, 'The Origin of the Sash-window', *Architectural History*, 26 (1983), 49-72, fig. 5.

⁴⁷ M. Batey, *Nuneham Courtenay, Oxfordshire, A Short History and Description* (1970).

⁴⁸ J. Bond and K. Tiller, *Blenheim: Landscape for a Palace* (1987).

⁴⁹ J.M. Steane, 'Stonor - a Lost Park and a Garden Found', *Oxoniensia*, lix (1994), 449-70.

⁵⁰ E. Whittle and C. Taylor, 'The Early Seventeenth-Century Gardens of Tackley, Oxfordshire', *Garden History*, 22 (1994), 37-63.

⁵¹ J.M. Steane, 'The Grounds of Magdalen College 1480-1880', *Oxoniensia*, lxxiii (1998), 91-104.

Leisure and consumption

The archaeology of sport and leisure is a less developed theme, but the existence of several real tennis courts in Oxford has given opportunities for archaeological investigation at Oriel College, while from a rather unexpected source tennis-balls were found in the hall roof at Wadham.⁵²

The rise of consumerism is marked partly by the growing market in luxuries such as sugar, tea, coffee, chocolate, and tobacco. The Codrington Library at All Souls is a monument to sugar (paid for by the Codrington plantations such as Betty's Hope on Antigua, where the fine windmill and rum distillery are preserved as a museum), but the famous Oxford coffee houses are no more,⁵³ and it is in the plate room or rubbish pits that the artefacts of the tea, coffee and chocolate are to be found (while Pembroke College preserves Dr. Johnson's teapot).

Shops and shopping are areas still requiring research, with the important question of who bought what from where (whether rural shops, chapmen, mercers, or fairs). Studies of the inventories of Oxfordshire shopkeepers have begun to throw light on this,⁵⁴ but the results need to be compared with archaeological discoveries; while the archaeology of the shops themselves is not without interest.

Warfare

The English Civil Wars were fought in and around Oxford as much as anywhere, and the listed battlefields include Chalgrove and Edgehill, though little is yet known of their potential for the archaeology of warfare. With the king's capital at Oxford, the rebel sympathies of some townsmen were necessarily submerged, while town and gown expended their energies on fortifying the city. The planned line of defences is well known from the map drawn by Bernard de Gomme (later used in the splendid painting by Jan de Wyck of the siege of Oxford), and the remnants are shown on Loggan's bird's-eye view of 1675. Only slight traces survive today, but the line on the north side has recently been recovered in a series of excavations, with sections being taken across both the inner and earlier line and the later outer line, showing that de Gomme depicted the defences as built, but with a diversion in the north-east corner.⁵⁵ Of the rebel lines on Headington Hill much less is known.

Equally, actual remains of the siege of Oxford are few, although the cathedral contains memorials to members of the garrison who died in Oxford. One curious survival, tucked into the attic of a house in Oxford, was a printed passport issued at the end of the siege allowing a royalist soldier to leave the city.⁵⁶ A similar discovery of a sword buried in thatch in Chadlington must be an abandoned memento of the war, while the survival of armour and a cavalier costume in Stanton Harcourt parsonage is a rather more puzzling occurrence.⁵⁷

⁵² P. Manning, 'Sport and Pastime in Stuart Oxford', in H.E. Salter (ed.), *Surveys and Tokens* (Oxf. Hist. Soc. lxxv, 1920), 83-135; note in *S. Midlands Archaeology*, 25 (1995), 67; J.M. Steane in *S. Midlands Archaeology*, 16 (1986), 129.

⁵³ N. Aubertin-Potter and A. Bennett, *Oxford Coffee Houses 1651-1800* (1987).

⁵⁴ D.G. Vaisey, 'A Charlbury Mercer's Shop', *Oxoniensia*, xxxi (1966); K. Tiller, 'Shopkeeping in Seventeenth-Century Oxfordshire: William Brock of Dorchester', *Oxoniensia*, lxii (1997), 269-86.

⁵⁵ A. Kemp, 'The Fortification of Oxford during the Civil War', *Oxoniensia*, xlii (1977), 237-46.

⁵⁶ J.T. Munby, 'A Note on Building Investigations at 113-19 High Street, Oxford', *Oxoniensia*, lxxv (2000), 441-2.

⁵⁷ L. Gilmour, 'The Chadlington Sword - and the end of the Siege of Oxford?', *Oxoniensia*, lvii (1992), 359-63; eadem, 'A 17th-century Cavalier's Costume from Stanton Harcourt', *Oxoniensia*, lx (1995), 439-51.

Improvement

The age of improvement saw wholesale change in town and county, with the reorganisation of social space in a new and increasingly complex world. While landowners created an ordered vision of rural bliss around their mansions, they orchestrated a profound change in the remaining rural landscape through enclosure of common land and open fields. This was no doubt to the benefit of all the more substantial landowners with the sweeping away of the inefficiencies of the open fields, but to the loss of all those whose livelihood depended on the use of common grazing. At Nuneham, the 'lost village' of Goldsmith's poem, the young Harcourt might sympathise with the peasants and toy with Republican notions in his garden dedicated to Rousseau, but one may wonder how many villagers objected to their smart new brick and timber houses in Nuneham Courtenay. In towns, urban improvement came in the form of paving and lighting, and the Mileways Act in Oxford led to the removal of medieval town gates and bridges, the widening of streets and the removal of the market into purpose-built accommodation.⁵⁸

Social improvement and control had perhaps its most obvious demonstration in the rebuilding of prisons for both city and county, though we should distinguish the essentially humanitarian concerns of the reformers (as exemplified in the building of Blackburn's new county jail) from the later manipulation of machines of oppression and revenge, such as the treadmill building recently investigated at Oxford Prison, while the archaeology of punishment has gone to the extreme with the macabre evidence for anatomised bodies of executed felons dug from the castle ditch.⁵⁹ Architectural improvement was to be seen in the regularity of the new buildings at the end of the 18th century, replacing older styles and materials. The Old Bank in Oxford's High Street was built of smooth ashlar masonry in the 1760s (though its later westward extension was actually of timber-framing clad in Bath stone).⁶⁰ The hierarchy of materials is neatly shown in the development on the Beaumonts in Oxford, with the grander houses in Beaumont and St. John Street being of brick with stone fronts, and the lesser houses in Beaumont Buildings made entirely of brick. The growing county drove the need for housing, which at last pushed the towns out from their historic plan area into new suburbs such as St. Ebbe's in Oxford, and whether brought by canal, road or railway, brick becomes the predominant building material. The use of Welsh slate was ubiquitous after the opening of the canal system, at the same time as coal became cheaper. Much remains to be done on marking the changes in the navigation systems on the rivers and the growth of canals, but the excavation of a lock in the Swift Ditch at Abingdon, and at Iffley, has shown the potential of such remains, as also the recording of Salter's Boatyard in Oxford.⁶¹ One result of the improved transport of coal must have been the introduction of gas lighting, which in Oxford followed the Gas Act of 1818.

AGE OF THE RAILWAY 1830-1914

The age of the railway opened splendidly with the opposition of Eton and Oxford to the building of the Great Western Railway, and a short-lived university ban on travel by railway. Rather more effective than the picturesque scene of university proctors on the platform

⁵⁸ M. Graham, 'The Building of Oxford Covered Market', *Oxoniensia*, xlv (1979), 81-91.

⁵⁹ Continuing work by Oxford Archaeology.

⁶⁰ OAU client report by Kate Newell, reported in *S. Midlands Archaeology*, 30 (2000), 68.

⁶¹ 'Abingdon Swift Ditch Lock' (OAU client report, 2000); 'Iffley Lock Oxford' (Wessex Archaeology client report, March 1999); OAU client report on Salter's Boatyard by Kate Newell, reported in *S. Midlands Archaeology*, 30 (2000), 69.

demanding of passengers whether they were members of the university was the opposition of Alderman Towle, who built a paper house next to the Abingdon Road crossing to prevent the Oxford line opening. Named after the frustrated railway inspector, Paisley House was forgotten until tree damage led to its demolition and revealed its true nature. Rob Kinchin-Smith's careful anatomising of the 'paper house' showed how the timber-framed structure, covered with tarred cardboard and filled with sawdust, had grown in numerous stages from its initial one-cell origins, ending as a neat Victorian villa in the 1870s, its progress reflecting Towle's rise from radical nonconformist to respectable middle-class citizen.⁶²

One other unusual railway building that has been subjected to close archaeological examination is the former LMS Station in Oxford, a building of international importance whose loss to Oxford will remain a standing blemish on the conservation record of city and university as well as most local and national bodies charged with the preservation of heritage. The new station of the Buckinghamshire Railway was due to open at the same time as the Great Exhibition in May 1851, and the company decided at the last minute to commission a station just like the Crystal Palace as a publicity stunt for their opening. It was indeed built with the same pre-fabricated factory-produced parts brought down the line from Birmingham, and with the similar combination of cast-iron, glass and timber that were used in Hyde Park, if with a few minor modifications. By the time of its removal (to create Oxford's most congested road junction), it had become the last authentic survivor of what can be seen as the world's first modern building, and at least its dismantling gave an opportunity for a full examination of the structure and its unique drainage system prior to its rebuilding elsewhere in replica.⁶³

It is impossible to deal with the full range of archaeology of the industrial age, though the county was not short of industries such as milling, paper-making, and weaving of blankets and plush.⁶⁴ Studies of brewing and clay industries have been published,⁶⁵ but Oxfordshire has recently lost its major breweries almost without record or full investigation, and much remains to be done. Once again, housing and urban growth has been a constant theme, and the transformation of rural housing.⁶⁶ An unusual instance is the Chartist small-holding settlement created at Charterville in Minster Lovell, whose history and houses have been studied, along with other working-class homes.⁶⁷

AGE OF THE MOTOR CAR 1914-2000

The archaeology of the modern world must inevitably centre on the motor car (the archaeology of warfare is again of interest, though manifested as yet only in the study of the Oxford War Memorial).⁶⁸ University opposition to two-wheeled transport is not evident

⁶² OAU client report by Rob Kinchin-Smith, reported in *S. Midlands Archaeology*, 29 (1999), 70.

⁶³ 'Oxford LMS Station', OA client report by Rob Kinchin-Smith, March 1998, and subsequent Gifford Archaeology report.

⁶⁴ R.P. Beckinsale, 'The Plush Industry of Oxfordshire', *Oxoniensia*, xxviii (1963), 53-67.

⁶⁵ I.C. Dodsworth, 'The Chawley Brick and Tile Works, Cumnor', *Oxoniensia*, xli (1976), 348-53, and see note 12 above; J. Bond and J. Rhodes, *The Oxfordshire Brewer* (1985); N. Stebbing, J. Rhodes and M. Mellor, *The Clay Industries of Oxfordshire: Oxfordshire Potters* (1980).

⁶⁶ M. Graham, 'Housing Development and the Urban Fringe of Oxford, 1850-1914', *Oxoniensia*, lv (1990), 147-66; J. Nash, 'The New People of East Oxford: The Suburbanisation of Cowley, 1851-91', *Oxoniensia*, lxiii (1998), 125-45; J.A. Dils, 'From Village to Suburb: Caversham 1840-1911', *Oxoniensia*, lxiv (1999), 87-115.

⁶⁷ C. Paine et al., 'Working-class Housing in Oxfordshire', *Oxoniensia*, xliii (1978), 188-215; K. Tiller, 'Charterville and the Chartist Land Company', *Oxoniensia*, l (1985), 251-66.

⁶⁸ A. Bruce, 'The Oxford War Memorial: Thomas Rayson and the Chester Connexion', *Oxoniensia*, lvi (1991), 155-68.

(except that the prevailing and ferocious prohibition of cycling in the Parks and Christ Church Meadows has a certain 19th-century flavour to it), and it sufficed to ban the practice of aviation for undergraduates, and the owning of motors. Despite this, William Morris started from the assembly of bicycles to go on to make automobiles, first in his Holywell garage, and then moving to the former military college in Cowley where (like earlier coach production in London) the car bodies moved through the building. Although these buildings remain in part, and the last of the first generation of buildings at Cowley was recently recorded prior to demolition,⁶⁹ the complete loss of the later Morris Works, almost without record, may puzzle our successors. There are photographs, of course, but no detailed investigation or record prior to demolition of the vast complex that housed a business which famously has also not preserved any archives relating to its activities. Beyond the lifetime of the workers and their memories, only their houses will remain from this major phase of industrial activity.

The case is somewhat different with the Spencer corsetry factory in Banbury, where a study of the Art Deco buildings and their social context are an important contribution to the archaeology of underwear.⁷⁰ Other manifestations of mass culture may prove to be as transient as motor factories, and a record of the Regal Cinema in Henley was made as part of the archaeology of a redevelopment site.⁷¹ The appearance of the city and county in film and television will itself become an object of archaeological interest in due course. But the enduring image of 20th-century Oxfordshire may be the view of Didcot power station from the M40 motorway, with the internal combustion engine speeding past the old road that brought cart-loads of firewood down from the Chiltern woods to fuel the city. So much has changed, and so much remains the same.

Archaeology

It may be of use briefly to consider the rise of archaeology within the period under consideration, since the development of antiquarianism into archaeological science took place within this period, and its history has an Oxford element at certain significant points. An early development was the use of illustration,⁷² when Anthony Wood decided to model his *History of the University* on Dugdale's *Warwickshire*, and persuaded David Loggan to illustrate it. While Loggan's *Oxonia Illustrata* was published, another offshoot, John Aubrey's study of Gothic architecture, an illustrated account with several Oxford examples supplied by Wood, was not. Aubrey's commissioned drawing of the ruins of Osney Abbey was published in Dugdale's *Monasticon*, and he made important visual records of Oxford Castle and Rosamund's Well at Woodstock Park.⁷³ Anthony Wood drew the ruins of old University College in the style of Loggan, while Loggan's pupil Michael Burghers continued the tradition of his exact style in a series of antiquarian illustrations in the following decades, such as White Kennet's study of Roman pots from Alchester in his *Parochial Antiquities*, and the plates for Plot's *Oxfordshire*. Most remarkable were the series of drawings commissioned by Thomas Hearne of Oxford antiquities, which, while recording vital information about

⁶⁹ J. Muir et al., 'Excavation and Building Survey at the former Nuffield Press', *Oxoniensia*, lxiv (1999), 297-300.

⁷⁰ S. Stradling, 'Spencer Corsets Limited, Britannia Road, Banbury', *Oxoniensia*, lxi (1996), 379-96.

⁷¹ C. Moloney et al., 'Excavations and Building Survey at Bell Street, Henley', *Oxoniensia*, lxii (1997), 131-3.

⁷² It is a curiosity of Oxford's intellectual history that a vital and visually aware 'school' of antiquarian and artistic endeavour has long existed beside a tradition of historiography (and indeed a history school) whose products have been essentially verbal and non-visual.

⁷³ K. Bennett, 'John Aubrey's Oxfordshire Collections', *Oxoniensia*, lxiv (1999), 59-85.

Oxford Castle and Rewley Abbey, also depicts a scholar, in full academic attire, engaged in fieldwork at Osenev. The later 18th century was to see less formal work, but a vast number of informal records by artists and antiquaries of the appearance of Oxford's antiquities, often on the point of demolition, and followed in the 19th century by the use of the camera. With the foundation of the OAHS in 1839, local endeavour to investigate and record Gothic architecture became a national movement, of which the Society's cast collection is an important reminder.⁷⁴

The excavation conducted by the OAHS in the Clarendon Quadrangle in 1899 was notable for attention to post-medieval pottery. As we have seen, glass bottles, and especially wine bottles sealed by taverns, were studied by E.T. Leeds in the 1930s. The building of the New Bodleian Library in Broad Street was a boost to post-medieval archaeology as much as it laid the foundations for medieval studies, with W.A. Pantin's investigations of 16th- to 18th-century houses prior to demolition, and his famous plea that they deserved to be studied 'as systematically and as seriously, as if they were something excavated at Ostia or Knossos or Ur'.⁷⁵ By the time that the Oxford Excavations Committee began excavating in St. Ebbe's in the late 1960s the post-medieval material was a significant part of the enterprise,⁷⁶ and its successor bodies (alongside many individual endeavours) have contributed to the ever-widening archaeological activities that have allowed so many new discoveries to be made in the last generation.⁷⁷

⁷⁴ D. Prout, 'The OSPSGA and the OAS, 1839-60', *Oxoniensia*, liv (1989), 379-91.

⁷⁵ W.A. Pantin, 'The Recently Demolished Houses in Broad Street, Oxford', *Oxoniensia*, ii (1937), 171-200.

⁷⁶ See above, note 20.

⁷⁷ D. Miles, 'Oxford Archaeological Unit: The First Twenty-Five Years', *Oxoniensia*, lxiii (1998), 1-9.