

Rawlinson's Proposed History of Oxfordshire

By B. J. ENRIGHT

IN the *English Topographer*, published in 1720, Richard Rawlinson described the manuscript and printed sources from which a history of Oxfordshire might be compiled and declared regretfully, 'of this County . . . we have as yet no perfect Description.' He hastened to add in that mysteriously well-informed manner which invariably betokened reference to his own activities:

But of this County there has been, for some Years past, a Description under Consideration, and great Materials have been collected, many Plates engraved, an actual Survey taken, and Quaeries publish'd and dispers'd over the County, to shew the Nature of the Design, as well to procure Informations from the Gentry and others, which have, in some measure, answer'd the Design, and encouraged the Undertaker to pursue it with all convenient Speed. In this Work will be included the Antiquities of the Town and City of *Oxford*, which Mr. *Anthony à Wood*, in Page 28 of his second Volume of *Athenae Oxonienses*, &c. promised, and has since been faithfully transcribed from his Papers, as well as very much enlarg'd and corrected from antient Original Authorities.¹

At a time when antiquarian studies were rapidly losing their appeal after the halcyon days of the 17th-century,² this attempt to compile a large-scale history of a county which had received so little attention calls for investigation.

In proposing to publish a history of Oxfordshire at this time, Rawlinson was being far less unrealistic than might at first appear. For many years he had been in close contact with Edmund Curll, the notorious 18th-century publisher; and though he later denounced him as a 'scoundrell',³ in 1718 he was conscious of the bookseller's usefulness.⁴ No attempt to whitewash one 'who at best was an ugly blot on the history of 18th century publishing'⁵ and whose function in life appeared to be 'nothing more than that of some foul bird acting as a scavenger for the literary battlefield'⁶ need be made, but Curll's contribution to the history of Oxfordshire has gone almost unnoticed⁷ and his interest in the county calls for some explanation. Perhaps critics have

¹ P. 177.

² K. Clark, *The Gothic Revival* (1928); D. C. Douglas, *English Scholars*, 2nd ed. (1951) outlines the decline, and a study of its effects on the career of one antiquary appears in S. Piggott, *William Stukeley* (1950).

³ MS. Rawl. J. 4° 1, f. 343. All manuscripts referred to in this article are in the Bodleian Library collections unless otherwise stated.

⁴ MS. Rawl. letters 114*, ff. 102, 103.

⁵ F. A. Mumby, *Publishing and Bookselling* (1930), p. 192.

⁶ G. Sherburn, *The early career of Alexander Pope* (1934), p. 161.

⁷ R. Strauss, *The Unspeakable Curll* (1927) makes no mention of the tour.

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been a little too eager to concentrate on the more spectacular events in the piratical publisher's life, and overlook the peculiar reputation he had won among the antiquaries of his day. He could write to Ralph Thoresby on equal terms and receive a civil reply and the manuscripts he demanded.⁸ Browne Willis introduced him to Dr. Charlett as 'having been at great Expense in Publishing Books on Antiquities, and having a Genius that way, deserves to be encouraged by us all, who are well-wishers to it, for no Bookseller in Town has been as curious as he, having been at considerable charge in making some Draughts of Monuments &c. . . . Oxon, 1713.'⁹ Nichols summarized opinion succinctly: 'Whatever his demerits in having published works that the present age would very properly consider too licentious, he certainly deserves commendation for his industry in preserving our national resources.'¹⁰ His title to the praise of antiquaries rested on a series of county histories, which later became known as 'Anglia illustrata' and included Ashmole's *History of Berkshire* and Aubrey's *Natural History & Antiquities of Surrey*. It was here that Curll's friendship with Rawlinson bore fruit. Contemporaries had a shrewd suspicion of the identity of the scholar who prepared these histories for the press. Hearne bluntly informed Rawlinson: 'It is reported here yt nothing of Antiquities done by C[urll] the Bookseller comes out but what you have had a hand in as Editor,'¹¹ and he added: 'you had better put your name to what you do to prevent counterfeits.'¹² At a time when the pseudo-archaism of the age tended to obscure the vitality of antiquarian studies,¹³ the co-operation of these two men, the one editing, bringing up-to-date, and even rewriting, the notes of antiquaries like Risdon and Habington, the other revising, printing and almost creating a market for the completed volumes is too important to be neglected. In 1718 many of the counties of southern England had been, or were about to be, dealt with in this way. Oxfordshire was perhaps the most glaring omission from the series, and Rawlinson would need little encouragement from Curll to embark on a history, formidable as he knew that task to be. The plan Rawlinson put forward

⁸ *Correspondence of Ralph Thoresby*, ed. by J. Hunter, 1832, 22 May and 1 June 1716. Curll was well acquainted with many scholars in Oxford, e.g. Robert Pearse (MS. Rawl. letters 114*, f. 249).

⁹ Printed by Curll. A copy is inserted in the Bodleian copy of Aubrey's *Surrey*, vol. 1 (Rawl. 8° 58).

¹⁰ *Literary Anecdotes of the eighteenth century*, 1, 456. See also Strauss, *op. cit.*, p. 123: 'For if his *Lives* were generally the most worthless of Grubbeian compilations, his antiquarian volumes, though hardly of a kind to satisfy modern requirements, contained excellent material often collected by himself.' In a note he adds: 'A MS. volume in the Bodleian Library will show his industry in this branch of research.' This volume is now MS. Rawl. B.400f.

¹¹ MS. Rawl. lett. 111, f. 63.

¹² *Ibid.*, f. 50. Rawlinson later overcame his shyness and in his autobiographical sketch acknowledged his responsibility (MS. Rawl. J. 4° 1, f. 343).

¹³ Cf. C. T. Flower in *Archives*, 2 (1949), p. 3.

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followed the pattern of companion volumes. This time Wood's papers for the city and county, lying exposed and accessible in the easy custody of the Ashmolean Museum, would form the nucleus of the history, and his name would assure a ready sale.

Rawlinson (b. 1690 ; d. 1755), ever since he came up to the university, had been much interested in the city and county of Oxford. Hearne remarked on the activities of the industrious undergraduate. 'Your brother and yourself are examples to others. I wish these studies were more followed in the Universities.'¹⁴ While he was at St. John's College, his accounts reveal him 'riding out' in order to collect 'an old stone taken up under a walnutt tree within the limits of Godstow nunnery being the foundation stone'¹⁵ and paying a shilling 'for some pieces of Antiquity of Littlemore Nunnery near Sandford.'¹⁶ He combined these experiments in living topography with the deepest interest in the written history of the county. He laid out five shillings for a copy of Robert Plot's *Natural History*,¹⁷ and picked up a list of chamberlains of the county for only a shilling.¹⁸ In the amateurish life of Anthony Wood which Rawlinson had privately printed in 1711, much of his attention was devoted to Wood's itineraries and collections for Oxford city and county, and as he completed his studies at the University, he hastened to follow Wood's example. In early May 1713 he was busy transcribing inscriptions in churches at Deddington¹⁹ and Stanton Harcourt, and in copying an epitaph on Sir Edmund Warcup in Northmoor church.²⁰ He seems to have been strongly influenced by the idea of compiling a corpus of inscriptions in England, perhaps at Hearne's suggestion. 'I wish,' the latter wrote,²¹ 'that a Collection of the most Material Inscriptions to be met with in England were printed together ; at least that great Care were taken to gather and print those that are older than the Reformation.' The year 1714 found Rawlinson at work at Mapledurham²² and at Asthall,²³ while he discovered much to interest him the following June at Iffley.²⁴ He exhausted the monumental resources of Bloxham and added a note of more general interest :

¹⁴ MS. Rawl. lett. 111, f. 32, Feb. 20, 1715.

¹⁵ MS. Rawl. J. 4^o 31, f. 8^v. This was on 14 May 1710. A note on the stone (PL. VIII), which is now in the Ashmolean Museum, is given in the Appendix to this article, p. 77. The stone cost Rawlinson 4s. 6d. and there is a print of it in MS. Rawl. C. 867, f. 526.

¹⁶ MS. Rawl. J. 4^o 31, f. 8^v.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, f. 5.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, f. 7^v.

¹⁹ MS. Rawl. D. 1054, f. 10. The notes are not confined to epitaphs, but contain remarks on the inns and the lace-making industry of the town.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, ff. 4, 22.

²¹ Hearne's *Collections* (O.H.S.), iv, 51.

²² MS. Rawl. D. 1054, f. 26.

²³ *Ibid.*, f. 30.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, f. 31.

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Bloxham. The Impropriation in the hands of Eton College who are Patrons. Let to Mr. Cartwright of Aynho, whose lease has been lately purchased by Dr. Freeman of Steeple Aston in Oxfordshire. The present Incumbent Mr. Fletcher, a very sensible and civil Man, was presented by Eton College in opposition to a puritanical popular preacher, one Mordecai Pointer, who, the day of the Burial of the last Incumbent, made interest about the Town to procure Testimonials to petition the College; but for his Principles and for those unworthy Practices, Dr. Turner, and some of the rest of the Company present at the Funeral, recommended the present Incumbent, a Schoolmaster of Banbury, to the College, who accepted him.²⁵

Already in this note, taken while he was travelling to the North in August 1715, we can discern the technique he was to adopt three years later in attempting a description of the whole county. On his return from Derbyshire he collected inscriptions as he passed through Banbury, Broughton, Tadmorton and Hooknorton, not forgetting to inspect the Rollright stones. Rawlinson completed his itinerary by visiting Chipping Norton, Heythrop, Enstone, 'Walcot', Charlbury (where, he noted pedantically, he enjoyed a 'prandium' at the 'Ros. et Coron.'), Cornbury House, Blenheim and Woodstock. Next month he 'went to Weedon cum Weston alias Weedon Pinkney, where is a handsome Church, but no Monuments or Gravestones,'²⁶ and at Cottisford he noted that the living was 'in the gift of Eton College, by whom the Impropriation is leased out to Mr. Lord. NB. This Church is very much out of Repair and very nastily kept by reason of holes and a pigeon house at the west End of it.'²⁷ This note foreshadowed the later descriptions he was to make, and the epitaphs he copied from the Church were endorsed in red ink 'Entered in my other Book',²⁸ i.e. the one he compiled in touring the county in 1718. Nothing reveals the interdependence of the later and earlier itineraries more clearly than this gloss. A journey to Buckinghamshire gave Rawlinson the opportunity of visiting 'Gosworth', Middleton Stoney, Bletchington and Ardley, and he noted as many epitaphs as he could at Souldern, Fritwell, Kirtlington, Hampton Poyle and Kidlington on his return.²⁹ In the following year Rawlinson succumbed to the repeated entreaties of Browne Willis to visit Whaddon Hall, but he carefully chose his route so as to cover new ground in Oxfordshire. He lingered at Headington and Stanton St. John as he went and returned via Wendlebury, Weston on the Green, and Islip where he carefully copied the inscription on Robert South from 'over the door of the school house.'³⁰

²⁵ MS. Rawl. D. 1054, f. 32.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, f. 54.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, f. 53.

²⁸ *Ibid.*; cf. MS. Rawl. B.400G, f. 111.

²⁹ MS. Rawl. D. 1054, f. 55.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, f. 67, 5 May 1716.

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By 1718 Rawlinson was no stranger to the history and topography of Oxfordshire. In that year the plan for a history of Oxfordshire, based on Wood, seems to have been made. Rawlinson realized that the task was much too big for one scholar to tackle, and he enlisted the services of Curll, not only to publish the history when complete, but to assist him in compiling it. Curll, instead of indulging in a restful summer holiday, promised to accompany Rawlinson on an extensive tour of Oxfordshire in search of original material. Curll probably had his own ideas of how a history that would sell should be compiled, and he may have acquiesced in order to enforce them on Rawlinson. The projected itinerary would not surprise him. Rawlinson had spent the greater part of 1717 touring Surrey in order to complete his edition of Aubrey's *Natural History*, and although Oxford county had received the attentions of professional heralds like Lee and natural historians like Plot, much ground still remained uncovered. How original Wood's collections for the county were, and how dependent on the work of Sheldon, Matthew Hutton,³¹ and Nathaniel Greenwood,³² is extremely difficult to discover, but whatever their origin, they were neither systematic nor up-to-date.

The itinerary was planned for August and September 1718. If it was to bear fruit an enormous amount of preparation would have to be made. Rawlinson was well acquainted with Wood's manuscripts³³ and his first task was to copy out the descriptions of Oxfordshire villages, and arrange them alphabetically under their respective hundreds.³⁴ Rawlinson probably found Wood's handwriting difficult to decipher and he was often forced to leave gaps and sometimes omitted entire descriptions,³⁵ but he insisted on transcribing the collections personally, and so intent was he on securing as close a reproduction as possible that he copied Wood's sketches of Launton Cross and Eynsham Church.³⁶ At the same time he was eagerly searching for references to the county in books and manuscripts. In April 1718 he borrowed a visitation book for Oxfordshire written in 1669, and made copious extracts about the local gentry.³⁷ He consulted White Kennet's *Antiquities of Ambrosden*,³⁸ searched through Dugdale's *Baronage* and Wood's *Athenae Oxonienses*,³⁹ and

³¹ 1659-60; MS. Rawl. B. 397.

³² 1658-1660; MS. Top. Oxon. e. 286.

³³ He had consulted nearly all of them to compile his life of Wood. His transcripts for Oxfordshire reveal that he was not content to copy from the main collection alone (MS. Wood E.1) but investigated the minor collections (MSS. Wood C.10, D.4) for additional information.

³⁴ Rawlinson kept the collections arranged by hundreds quite separately. The covers for one can be found in the bound volume MS. Rawl. B. 400c.

³⁵ He left out Wood's account of Woodstock, Horspath, Lewknor, and Shipton.

³⁶ MS. Rawl. B.400c, f. 237. He copied Wood's accounts on one side only of folios, the distinctive red lines of which enable us to distinguish between the transcripts and Rawlinson's own additions.

³⁷ MS. Rawl. D.931, lent by his brother Thomas.

³⁸ MS. Rawl. J.8^v 1, f. 42.

³⁹ MS. Rawl. B.400f, f. 79.

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compiled detailed lists of the recusants⁴⁰ and the high sheriffs of the county.⁴¹ Rawlinson realized from his experiences in Surrey that the proposed perambulation had its weaknesses. It was impossible in the short space of time allowed to collect as much information as was required, even if such details were available when the visit was made. It was to overcome this defect that Rawlinson prepared a query to be printed by Curll and distributed to the incumbents and schoolmasters of the villages they visited.⁴² Hearne declared to Rawlinson, 'I had not seen the quaeries about Oxfordshire till very lately. I wish the name of the Bookseller may be no prejudice,' and he added maliciously, 'But I suppose you have wisely considered this.'⁴³ Rawlinson was far from being the inventor of this device. Plot had applied a less detailed query to Oxfordshire⁴⁴ and Browne Willis compiled a more comprehensive questionnaire for Buckingham in 1712.⁴⁵ Once Rawlinson had realized the value of the system he transformed it by applying it to every project he set his hand to—the history of the non-jurors,⁴⁶ the continuation of Wood's *Athenae Oxonienses*⁴⁷ and the history of Middlesex⁴⁸—and he was proud of his foresight and ingenuity in compiling the questionnaire for Oxfordshire. Hearne hastily apologized for his tactlessness. 'I said something to you in my last about the Bookseller who is named in the Oxfordshire Queries. It was out of Kindness and Respect to you. For I find People prejudic'd on that account. But for my own part I do not think it a sufficient reason to run down any Book purely upon account of the Undertaker.'⁴⁹

Rawlinson's preparations did not end with the printing of the 'Quaery'. He saw that two months would be all too short a time in which to travel through Oxfordshire. He could not afford to be held up by suspicious churchwardens or conscientious porters. He probably dispatched a large number of letters announcing the planned tour, perhaps enclosing a query with them. His plan was not unsuccessful for when he reached Newnham Murren no obstacles were put in his way and he was furnished with a paper addressed to

⁴⁰ MS. Rawl. B.400f, f. 218.

⁴¹ MS. Rawl. B.400c, f. 383.

⁴² The text of the query was published in the appendix to Part 3 of the *Parochial collections made by Anthony a Wood and Richard Rawlinson*, transcribed by F. N. Davis (Oxfordshire Rec. Soc., 1929). Copies of the query were eagerly sought after by later antiquaries. Richard Gough wrote to John Price asking him to procure a copy for him. See Nichols, *Literary Illustrations*, v, 518.

⁴³ *Collections*, vi, 248, 7 November 1718.

⁴⁴ There is a completed copy in MS. Ashmole 1820a.

⁴⁵ Browne Willis had given Rawlinson some of the replies to his Buckinghamshire query in 1714 (MS. Rawl. D.1480, f.29) and Rawlinson appears to have based his query on that of Willis.

⁴⁶ MS. Eng. theol. c.34, f. 192.

⁴⁷ MS. Rawl. J. fol. 2, f. 3. Printed by S. Gibson in *Proceedings and Papers of the Oxford Bibliographical Society*, 1 (1922-26), 67 seq.

⁴⁸ MS. Rawl. B.389b, f. 1.

⁴⁹ *Collections*, vi, 249.

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William Douglas : ' I desire to let these gentlemen see ye Church of Newnham Murren and so you will oblige, yr hmbles serv^t, Rob^t Burges.⁵⁰

Rawlinson had progressed so well with his preparation that even before the itinerary he began to look for illustrations which he could use in the projected history. He approached Hearne, and received a sharp refusal from one who depended so much on limited large paper editions.

' I have that great love, honour and respect for you, that I am not willing to deny you anything that I can grant in Honour. But then whereas you desire to reprint some of my Plates, at least if I will not part with them, that you may have leave to copy them, I must beg your excuse, the printing, or even copying of them being what I deny myself. There are matters enough in Oxfordshire, besides what I have already published to employ your thoughts upon, and it will be your best way to insist only upon what is yet unpublished. and leave what is done already to the Readers, signifying this in your Preface, This will make your design less bulky and will, as I take it, please better . . . I never yet view'd Shireburne Castle in Oxfordshire, tho' I believe it would afford Matters of good note, at least there are such in the places near it.'⁵¹

Rawlinson may have seen the wisdom of Hearne's advice, for Hearne was enthusiastic in announcing that his ' friend Richard Rawlinson is going to survey the County of Oxford and give an account of his observations in print.'⁵² He wrote to Rawlinson of his delight at the prospect of seeing him, on what he termed ' his progress ', and he faithfully promised ' to keep what you write to me about Oxfordshire a secret.'⁵³

Rawlinson set out from London, accompanied by Thomas, his brother, and Curll at the end of July 1718. The party entered Oxfordshire by Reading bridge, dined at Caversham and progressed to Mapledurham. Here Rawlinson would be glad to renew his acquaintance with Dr. Weston,⁵⁴ whom he must have known at Eton. He would also get in touch with his amanuensis John Shallet who copied out Wood's *History of the City and University of Oxford*. Curll no doubt visited the Blount family ; a year later Mr. Blount ' of great worth and integrity '⁵⁵ went to infinite pains to send Rawlinson a manuscript about the county.⁵⁶ Their progress over the county was thorough and did not pass without comment. Hearne, who had been told that Rawlinson wanted to keep his part in the history a secret,⁵⁷ wrote to his friend that

⁵⁰ MS. Rawl. B.400F, 91v, 31 July 1718.

⁵¹ MS. Rawl. lett. 111, f. 82, 6 June 1718. Partly unprinted in the O.H.S. edition of Hearne's *Collections*.

⁵² *Collections*, vi, 205, 15 July 1718.

⁵³ *Collections*, vi, 208.

⁵⁴ *Collections*, iii, 277.

⁵⁵ *Collections*, vi, 233.

⁵⁶ MS. Rawl. lett. 5, f. 40.

⁵⁷ *Collections*, vi, 205.

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‘One Nich. Cox, who sells old Books . . . tells him [Anthony Hall] that you are about Oxfordshire, & that you skulk’d up and down (not caring to be seen) at Iffley on Sundays and other days, when you travell’d lately. This is sent about, & you may be sure A.H[all] does you what disservice he can, thinking, it may be, that you usurp his Province, he having undertaken a new Britannia.’⁵⁸

Rawlinson’s itinerary, printed in an appendix by F. N. Davis, is only a fragment and has given a distorted impression of the tour. It will be immediately noticed that while the southern part of the county was covered systematically, and parts of the north-east were touched on, the greater part of the north was neglected. The 1718 perambulation appears to have been only a partial survey; and yet, if this was so, how did Rawlinson secure material for the remaining part of the county? One would suspect, from the similarity of the construction of the two sets of reports, that they were compiled at the same time. Such appears to have been the case. The itinerary of 1718 covered far more ground than the appendix to the *Parochial Collections* suggests. Unlike Rawlinson, who arranged his collections by hundreds, Curll set down his notes of Oxfordshire villages in the order in which he visited them. Rawlinson’s uncompleted itinerary corresponds with Curll’s order, but it ends with the visit to Kirtlington on 28 August. Although Curll did not include the dates of his itinerary over north Oxfordshire, the course of the journey after Rawlinson’s list ends can be traced from the order of Curll’s later reports. According to this list, the antiquaries left Kirtlington and explored the district around Bicester as far north as Hardwick and Stoke Lyne. They returned to the Cherwell at Heyford, crossed the river to investigate the antiquities of the villages of Duns Tew, Barford St. Michael and the Wortons, and reached Banbury via Deddington and Adderbury. From Banbury they were able to explore thoroughly the northern tip of the county, searching Cropredy, Claydon and Wardington. They retraced their steps and turned to the west into the district around Wroxton, Bloxham and Tadmarton. Thence they proceeded to Hook Norton and the Rollright villages, passing on to Chipping Norton, Sarsden and Bruern. From Charlbury, they surveyed the Wychwood area, reaching as far as Minster Lovell, and revisited Woodstock and Eynsham. Perhaps they may have had some time to spare, as they appear to have turned north to look for antiquities in Great Tew and the Barton villages, before returning to Oxford by the Banbury road. This was the end of the tour and his last entry Curll noted with relief ‘Iamque opus exegi.’⁵⁹ This reconstruction of the later part of the itinerary is borne out by a letter Hearne sent to

⁵⁸ MS. Rawl. lett. 111 f. 95, 18 November 1718.

⁵⁹ MS. Rawl. B.400f, f. 78.

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Rawlinson on 19 September 1718, hoping that both he and his brother had reached London safely,⁶⁰ and the fragmentary list of accounts entered on the '21st' including fourteen shillings for a 'Journey to London' and inserted by Rawlinson at the end of the Oxfordshire collections, may well refer to September. Twenty days would be all too short a time to complete the extensive perambulation of North Oxfordshire, even had the party travelled at the same speed as they had over the southern part of the county.

The reception the antiquaries received during their perambulation is a subject of the greatest interest, perhaps even more important for the historian of the county than the materials collected.⁶¹ Unfortunately Rawlinson was far too intent on copying epitaphs to note the reactions of the squires and vicars to his requests for information, but Curll, who probably found Rawlinson's methodical enquiries rather tiresome after the hectic life of the London book-trade, jotted down a few comments on the reactions of the village patricians for his own amusement. He had no far sighted design, but his blunt satire on Tim Huxley of Rotherfield Peppard is as invaluable as his sincere praise of Mr. Hobbes of Chalgrove. The account deserves printing in its entirety.⁶²

Curll began the account in two sections, the first to consist of a diary of the tour and the second his comments on the places visited, but soon he concentrated on the comments.

Set out from London
July 28th 1718.
Monday lay at Colebrook, Tuesday 29th dined at Caversham 36 post miles from London visited the Church.

Caversham-Lodge is the Seat of the Ld Cadogan lately purchas'd by him of the Earl of Kildare. Steeple of the Church lately taken down. The Parish Clerk favour'd us in ye sale of a Bottle of Wine, but gave us to understand what he kept was only for his own Drinking.

⁶⁰ MS. Rawl. lett. 111, f. 88.

⁶¹ It was a standing joke among the Staffordshire squires how readily they had 'humbled old Plot' when he toured the county. The memory of Rawlinson's itinerary of Oxfordshire lingered for long in the minds of the gentry of that county, but was more respected than his predecessor's. In 1746—nearly thirty years after the itinerary took place—Lenthall of Burford remarked, 'I had once many years since ye pleasure of seeing you here with my very good and old friend yr Brother' (MS. Rawl. lett. 114*, f. 304). Dr. Rye, whom Curll describes as being very helpful, spoke for the Oxfordshire clergy when in 1737 he offered his help for the continuation of Wood's *Athenae Oxonienses*: 'Some years ago you call'd upon me at Islip to desire the assistance of me and the neighbouring clergy in carrying on such a sort of work (to the best of my remembrance) for Oxfordshire in particular as you seem now to be engaged in for England in General, and I then promised to forward your Work and I am still in the same disposition with regard to your present Design' (MS. Rawl. lett. 114*, f. 299).

⁶² Part of the opening of the account was printed by F. N. Davis in an appendix to part 3 of the *Parochial Collections*, and extracts, often incomplete, were printed under the villages to which they relate with the rest of the collections. No hint was given that they were not by Rawlinson, and often the reference was omitted. Much, however, of the account has never been printed.

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Thence to Maple-Durham, met old Dr. Weston, left our queries at his parsonage 3.⁶³ Thence to Whitechurch, lay at Pangbourne 2. Berks, at the George. Wednesday, 30th. To Woodcot Chapel 2. found nothing; thence to Goring 2. visited the Church. Dined there at the King's Head. Thence to Stokes Ipsden cross'd the river to Wallingford, Berks, lay there at the George.

Thursday 31st. To Crowmarsh, Newnham, Mungwell, Nettlebed, lay at ye Wh. Hart.

Friday Aug. 1.

Mr. Tudor of Checkendon, Rich Large, Lame, Lecherous and Impertinent has a pretty wife who has already brought him a Brace of Children and is big with another. 200*£* *p* annum.

Two remarkables at Maple-Durham, a Whig Parson and a Maypole. Two honest Gentlemen, Mr. Wallis and Mr. Waither.

At this place, Tories who are building a New Steeple to their Church.

Mr. Stopes, Vicar of South Stoke and Woodcot, A very Intelligent hospitable old Gentleman, who entertain'd us with all the frankness imaginable. These valuable Qualifications, as is usually the case are depress'd by a poor Income of 30*£* a year only, his children for'd to do Harvest Work for their maintenance. Ye Improprators of Xt. Ch. Oxon. consider of these things !

Mr. Headlam, a Rich, Stupid, Asthmatick Priest possess'd of a Living worth 200*£* *p* ann., but with it the Plague of having the Gray Mare, the letter horse,⁶⁴ and no children.

Bells in this County never rung on this Day.

Mr. Gifford of Nuffield, a Genteel Spirited communicative old Gentleman who entertained us handsomely and has what he [calls] a living as worth himself.

Tim Huxley of Rotherfield Pippard [MS torn 'the living' ?] as he was at Coll. is Empty, Proud, Peevish, Pragmatical, Spleenetick and Mistrustful, who took it in great dudgeon that we came to catechize him, as he was pleas'd to call it. He said he had never wrote anything, which we readily believed upon his own Single Testimony. He would not tell us the Value of his Living, but we found upon enquiring of his Clerk that it was 200*£* *p* annum which ought to have been bestowed where there was more Desert. As to Tim's public character, he is generally drunk at the Visitation and exercises his Sobriety at Home where nobody is sensible of it.

Mr. Price of Grayes & Mr. Cave of Sheplake treated us very Genteely, and the latter carried us hence with him, and repeated his Civilities. He is very curious in Painting, an excellent Florist, and seemingly as sure a Friend.

Mr. Gifford of Nuffield us'd us very handsomely, gave us good Beer, Ham and fine Mead of his own Produce, having a large Apiary.

Old Mr. Day of Aston was very communicative, would have us take a bed with him and behav'd himself with the true Spirit of an orthodox Ecclesiastick.

⁶³ The numbers refer to miles.

⁶⁴ To have the letter horse, i.e. to be hen-pecked.

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Mr. Wainwright of Crowell readily gave us what small assistance he could (but is almost super annuated) as did likewise Mr. Langford of Stoke.

Mr. Blanndy of Wheatfield brought us himself the Register out [of] the Church and left it with us and gave us a kind Invitation down to the Parsonage which he has rebuilt but our haste prevented us accepting this civility.

Mr. Toovey of Wattlington and Mr. Fairfax the schoolmaster there ought particularly to be remembered for their their [sic] great assiduity in helping us to several⁶⁵ original writings and promising to send us similar further accompts.

Mr. Skeeler of Lewknor order'd his Register to be brought to the Parsonage and was sorry he could not attend us being invited out to a Meeting at Kingsey, Mr. Herbert's Membr of Parl. His old maid Alice very narrowly watch'd the Antiquary⁶⁶ and had a strict Care over her Master's Plate and Poultry, we being [MS. torn ; 'for'] aging.

Mr. Clarke at Thame was very Courteous as to Intelligence, gave us a good account of the Place, but no Victuals or Drink.

Mr. Hobbes of Chalgrove having heard of our Design, upon our coming into the Town, met us, attended us to the Church, and seem'd to have an inclination to those Kind of Studies, was very communicative, carry'd us Home with him, treated us handsomely and behav'd himself with the open Sincerity of a true English Gentleman.

Mr. Justice Wickam at Garsington, when we went to him, receiv'd us with the reserv'd coolness of a magistrate, but after we had fully made our Remonstrances to him with very good Caution, he shew'd us his Register⁶⁷ and treated us with very good Beer.

Dr. Tilly of Albury, Mr. Hind of Waterstock, Mr. Frank of Woodeaton and Dr. Rye of Islip were are [sic] all of them very respectfully Civil.

Dr. Yeats of Charlton por'd over our papers, said he knew Mr. Curll ; he never ask'd us so much as to [a]light and as well as he did know Mr. Curll talk'd with him in the Chaise for half an hour without ever discovering him. We took some few Extracts out of his Register as we sat in the Chaise, and as we were drawing away, he called after us to know if we would not drink, but we were glad to get rid of an Ecclesiastical Loutus who has more Money than Manners and is much better provided for than he deserves.

MS. Rawl. B.400F, ff.84, 85.

Apart from identifying some of the contributors of the notes, Curll's account emphasized the twin obstacles which militated against the success of the itinerary ; first, the suspicious reception by magistrate, vicar and old maid,⁶⁸

⁶⁵ 'general' in Davis.

⁶⁶ Richard Rawlinson.

⁶⁷ Extracts appear in MS. Rawl. B.400B, f. 214, unprinted by Davis.

⁶⁸ The suspicion may well have been increased when it was reported that the Rawlinson brothers were prominent non-jurors and staunch Jacobites. No doubt the brothers would welcome the opportunity of discovering political opinions while they were about their fact-finding history, and although this was probably not their chief concern, Oxfordshire villagers would not be slow in jumping to the wrong conclusions and consequently be uncooperative. Richard Rawlinson, who had spent the greater part of his time after going down from Oxford in travelling over the country and made a suspicious journey into Derbyshire in 1715, may well have realized the interpretation that could be put on his activities. A long stay abroad—he was on the Continent from 1719 to 1726—in his opinion would be the best antidote. Even Curll in 1718 had not been allowed to delve into the 'bottomless pocket of Robin' and paraded as a strong Tory (Strauss, p. 82). Hence the references to the political leanings of the incumbents.

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and second, the extreme haste which prevented the travellers accepting what hospitality was offered. Even before the full extent of the 1718 itinerary was known, these difficulties, it has been maintained, were sufficient to render the resulting collections unreliable and incomplete.⁶⁹ The extensive preparation which Rawlinson undertook reduced this danger; and it must be emphasized that the collections were the handiwork, not of one, or even two, men, but resulted from the combined labours of at least three and perhaps five investigators.⁷⁰ Curll, as the description given above shows, was far from being a sleeping partner in the expedition. Richard Gough mentioned that 'Curll the Bookseller visited the County in a cursory manner chiefly applying himself to the lords of the manors for the owners of them. His works are in a small 12mo volume in the Bodleian Library.'⁷¹ Curll's notes⁷² naturally seem superficial when they are artificially separated from the main body of the collections of which they are an integral part. Apart from compiling a list of errata to Plot,⁷³ Curll's self-imposed task was to act as a reporter. As soon as he arrived in a village, while the antiquaries were busily correcting and copying epitaphs, he noted the position of the hamlet,⁷⁴ the important figures living in the locality, details about the Church and its incumbent, and any recent event that might strike him as sufficiently curious or noteworthy to merit inclusion. These are the notes which Davis normally prints at the beginning of the accounts of Oxfordshire villages. Richard Rawlinson must have appreciated the time which Curll saved in performing this task for which he was so well equipped. When Rawlinson was obliged by accident to give a description of 18th century Ipsden he did not attempt to deviate from Curll's model.⁷⁵ His annotations and additions to the descriptions of Goring and Lillingstone Lovel⁷⁶ indicate how satisfied he was with Curll's co-operation.

Hearne noted in his journal for 22 September 1718: 'Mr. Thomas Rawlinson tells me that he hath met with many very considerable old

⁶⁹ It was a pity that the Wood and Rawlinson collections were combined by F. N. Davis, as justice was done to neither author. The charge of inaccuracy and incompleteness sustained against the latter writer (vol. 3 cover) was not improved by failure to print large passages on Watlington, Nuffield, Stoke Talmage, Rotherfield Greys and Peppard and hopelessly confusing the accounts of the two Rollrights.

⁷⁰ It is uncertain though possible that Rawlinson's brother John, who had just completed his studies at Corpus Christi College, Oxford, accompanied the party as well as Tempest Rawlinson who showed a deep interest in antiquities. Hearne remarks in his *Collections* (vi, 219, 28 August 1718), 'On Tuesday last 26th August came to Oxford Mr. Thomas Rawlinson, my excellent Friend, and went out of Town yesterday morning. He came on purpose to see me. His Brother Richd. was with him, as also two other Brothers.'

⁷¹ *British Topography*, II, 80, 81.

⁷² MS. Rawl. B.400F.

⁷³ MS. Rawl. B.400B, f. 83.

⁷⁴ An important item for eighteenth century readers omitted by Davis.

⁷⁵ MS. Rawl. B.400F, f. 9.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, ff. 3, 35.

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Inscriptions in Oxfordshire.⁷⁷ Thomas had always co-operated with his younger brother in collecting material for the *Anglia Illustrata* and his interest in Oxfordshire had ever been keen.⁷⁸ Apart from Lenthall's and Hearne's testimony,⁷⁹ Thomas' unmistakable scrawl testified his part in compiling the account of Banbury⁸⁰ and copying out extracts from Somerton registers.⁸¹ His most important function lay in copying inscriptions. He was far less methodical than his brother, but the inscriptions he took supplement Richard's transcripts and the order in which they appear proves conclusively that he accompanied his brother on his perambulation of Oxfordshire.⁸²

Richard Rawlinson himself had by far the heaviest work to perform. His first task on arriving in a village was to take out the relevant transcripts of Wood, correct the inscriptions, space them out in the form in which they actually appeared (for Wood neglected to indicate line-endings), and make an arrangement with his brother to copy epitaphs which Wood omitted or which had been erected after his death. Richard was far from willing to copy Wood slavishly⁸³ and noted arms in Kirtlington church which Wood omitted, competently describing two shields which his predecessor tricked.⁸⁴ Invariably he concluded his account, when permitted, with long extracts from the church registers and lists of the benefactors. The importance he placed on this form of material stands out most clearly in Curll's account printed above.

Rawlinson was not to be contented even with the two months' concentrated collecting of three travellers. The query he circulated either personally or by post was intended to fill the gaps and deficiencies of the perambulation. It was a cheap method of obtaining vital information, committed to paper without ceremony and in a workable form by individuals who were in a position to supply it. It might be expected that many would haughtily refuse to co-operate, and we do not know how many queries were dispatched or how many answers were received. Some, at least, of the clergymen whom Rawlinson approached for assistance did not disappoint him. The incumbent of Bloxham was most conscientious in seeking information and his completed query was printed by F. N. Davis.⁸⁵ Two more returns have been found, indicating Rawlinson's success at Swyncombe, Nettlebed and Pishill. From

⁷⁷ *Collections*, vi, 231.

⁷⁸ Thomas had sent notes of the Fettiplace family to Hearne in 1716, adding, 'this you may impart to brother Richard.' (*Collections*, v, 295).

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, vi, 227.

⁸⁰ MS. Rawl. B.400B, f. 75.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, c, f. 160.

⁸² The second half of MS. Rawl. B.400F consists of Thomas's collections of epitaphs and should be considered with the main collections. They are unprinted by Davis.

⁸³ So efficient was Rawlinson that Davis often prefers his transcripts to those of Wood.

⁸⁴ MS. Rawl. B.400C, f. 137.

⁸⁵ *Parochial Collections*, p. 370.

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the first, Daniel Ayshford, who returned a completed query to 'Mr. Curll at ye Dial & Bible, near St. Dunstan's Church in Fleet St.', in reply to the question about the village, wrote :

I. Swinecomb-parish is about Nine miles Circumference bounded E. by Pishall & Bix, West by Ewelme, N. by Britwell & Watlington, South by Nettlebed & Northfield alias Nuffield.

Houses about forty. Inhabitants about two hundred. Adjoyning to ye Church-ye are ye Ruins of an old Building sd to be called St. Butolph's Chapple. The wake-day is ye Sunday Seven-night after St. Peter's day.

A Market is sd to have been in ages past in ye [botto]m of Church-field.

II. [To the question concerning the church and incumbents &c.] Daniel Ayshford M.A. 10 years at Wadh[am] Coll. & 5 years vice. prin. of Hart Hall Oxon. Instituted june 12 1696 by A presentaton from ye Right Honble Joh. Ld Sumare Ld Chancellr.

Ten pounds given to be put to Interest by Francis Flower Esqr., for ye poor. Howard Earl of Berks. had before ye Civil wars agst Charles I A Seat in A park call'd Ewelme Park in ye pish of Swinecomb now dispart'd and in ye property of Sr Will : Prinpart of . . . in Wilts. The park was taken out of Swinecomb, Northfield alias Nuffield, & Ewelme pishes, ye House now quite demolish'd. A part of ye parish call'd Russels-Water is in ye Liberty of Bix. All ye Rest of ye pish are subd to Ewelme Park as ye Mannr under ye Crown. The Lrd Chancellor is patron under ye King. The first fruits being . . . The Register reaches back to 1560. Ten pounds Interest for ye Poor now let on Bond to Tho : Turker of Swinecombe given by Charles Storries Esq^e.

No Steeple. Ch[urch] 47 foot $\frac{1}{2}$ long, wide 21 in ye inside Chan ; Chancel 33 foot Long, wide 21 in ye Chan.

III. [On the families living in the district]. The Family of ye Fettyplaces was seated there. It is now in ye possession of Charles Lrd Dormer who marry'd Esq^e Fettyplace's [sic] Daughter.

IV. [On the agriculture, social conditions and curiosities of the locality]. The Soil inclining to a Clay ; much woodland, most Cornland, much Common inclosed, and taken from ye poor with cottages y^t they had built thereon. The well at ye place Hough 120 Fathom. We pay yearly for Smoke-Farthing (alias Peterpence).

Postmark Oct. 6 [1718]. MS. Rawl. D.1481, f.30.

Ayshford's neighbour, Robert Horn⁸⁶ of Nettlebed, was, if anything, more conscientious in attempting to satisfy Rawlinson. He did not return the printed query, but the numbered paragraphs of his letter corresponded with the four sections of the questionnaire.

Nettebed vulgary [sic] called Nettlebed.

1. Nettebed was ye antient Name of this parish being ye Name of 2 virgins who left to ye poor abt an 100 acres of woodland for ever. Bix east, Benison West, Watlington North and Reading South. Houses abt 60, Inhabitants 200. I suppose ye Church dedicated to St. Bartholomew, the Wake being kept ye Sunday following.

⁸⁶ Hearne notices his death (*Collections*, VIII, 380).

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2. Soundess was y^e Antient Seat of the Taverners now in the possession of John Wallis Esq. Called by y^e Name of Soundess frō a prior family wt the Taverners bought it of ; Jo. [hn] Aforesd is Ld of y^t Mannor.

Tho : Stonor of Stonor is Ld of y^e Mannor of Nettlebed & Patron of the Benefit wch is a donative of 20 1 *℥* p. Ann. The Incumbent Robt. Horn, M.A. & sometime Fellow of Pemb. Coll. in Oxford. The Register beareth date 1588. [There follows an extract from the Register mainly concerning the members of the Taverner family, and an epitaph on John Wallis who died 14th of February 1717 and whose monument had just been erected.]

3. [The]re is a Spring under our Windmill Hill call'd [H]ibblemeer wch in dry Summers is very beneficiall to y^e parish Having no Well within o^e parish. This Spring Dr. Plot has formerly taken notice of.⁸⁷

4. The soyle of this parish is brick and tyle, clay, sandy, chalky, Gravelly. Abounding wth Beech Oake & some Ash. Prizil or Pishill.

I have been Inform'd that there was an Abbot & 6 Monks belonging formerly to this parish & the Ruins of y^e Abbey is yett remaining.

The Ld of y^e Mannor is Tho : Stonor Esq. of Stonor. The benefit is A Donative at 15 *℥* p Ann. Annexed to Nettlebed in order to provide bread for the Aforesd Curate. And both Churches within the peculiar of Dorchester.

Farms & cottages 18. Inhabitants 60. The soyle, brick, clay, chalky, sandy & gravelly, thick sett with Beach wood. The common Game hereabts Crickett.

MS. Rawl. D.1481, f. 42.

This letter was postmarked 'Oct. 13', but Horn did not forget about the projected history. On 14 December 1718, he wrote to Curll :

Sr, There was something Mistaken or rather forgot at Pishil, wch was a legacy at Pishil. Ye v[al]ue was ten pounds given by y^e family of the Stonors for ever to y^e poor of Pishil for ever [*sic*] & five pounds given by Henry Kibble of Southend in ye parish of Turvill, Bucks, ye Interest of wch legacy ye poor now annually enjoys. There ys also a Common called Minegrove belonging to y^e parish containing about 500 Acres of Beachshrubs. Ye Lds are Tho : Stonor & Sr Edward Simmons, wch Common is now in dispute between Watlington and ye Lds, wch shrubs tho' short will warm y^e Counsellors' hands.

MS. Rawl. D.1481, f. 44.

It may be remembered that Thomas Toovey of Watlington had promised Rawlinson to send 'further accomts'.⁸⁸ He was true to his word and his description of Watlington (only partly printed by Davis and without reference to the author) is most comprehensive and competent. It reveals the high standard which local history in the 18th century could reach. Toovey, like Horn, sent additional information when he encountered it,⁸⁹ and it was he, and

⁸⁷ It is interesting to find a country parson acquainted with Plot's *Natural History of Oxfordshire*. The reference occurs on p. 31 of the 1677 edition.

⁸⁸ MS. Rawl. B.400f, f. 84.

⁸⁹ MS. Rawl D.1481, f. 56.

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not Rawlinson who compiled detailed entries for the Shirburn to Henley districts.⁹⁰ The letter he sent with them is the best explanation of the success of Rawlinson's project, and the reference to the fixing of land ownership shows the practical uses of county histories in the 18th century enclosure struggle.⁹¹

I believe I might have saved myself the trouble of inserting those places because it's probable you may have a more perfect acc^t of 'em already. What I have here related you may depend upon, as also in my acc^t of Watlington and if by those yr work is made more perfect I obtain the end I proposed by the trouble I have here taken; perhaps I have not rang'd my facts in exact order; I leave you to add form to matter. If I can be farther serviceable in this affair without too great expense to myself, I shall readily afford you my best assistance. In my acc^t of Watlington I have been very particular in our church lands and poors' lands, which I hope you will insert in yr work to prevent further frauds . . . I desire you would keep these papers by you when done with; and I will either call or send for 'em.

Since I finish'd Watlington, the Manor of Watcombe is upon sale and half the Manor of Britwell Salome. Ld Chanr. Parker is likeliest to be purchaser. If sold before yr Book comes out I will send you word. What I have said of the Manor of Swincombe . . . is an extract from some deeds in my possession, therefore may be depended upon.

MS. Rawl. B.400C, f. 382.

In addition to this invaluable assistance given by country parsons, Rawlinson's fellow antiquaries showed that they were most eager to help him. Browne Willis promised to lend his copy of Dr. Hutton's collections for the city and county,⁹² and he hoped that Hearne would help Rawlinson in his 'Essay on Oxfordshire Antiquities'.⁹³ Hearne repeatedly answered Rawlinson's queries and offered his advice. In April 1719 he wrote that he thought 'there was little or nothing proper in Sir Edmund Warcupp's Manuscripts to be inserted in a history of Oxfordshire,' and added, 'I suppose that nothing will be taken into that work that is mean and little, and below the dignity of an Antiquary and Historian. A Book may be filled in the same manner as Kennet's *Parochial Antiquities*. But 'tis my opinion that you will take great care to insert nothing but what shall be altogether proper.'⁹⁴ We find him promising Charles Eyston to peruse Mr. Blount's manuscript on Oxfordshire to see if it would be of value to Rawlinson's design.⁹⁵

Rawlinson's collections for the county from the sources outlined above were now complete. It may be remembered that in the *English Topographer*

⁹⁰ MS. Rawl. B.400C, f. 374. Some of these accounts were printed by Davis though without indicating their authorship, e.g. Swyncombe, p. 300.

⁹¹ White Kennet's *History of Ambrosden* was written to settle a tithe dispute, while suits were filed in Westminster Hall on the publication of Dugdale's *Monasticon* (Wood, *Life and Times*, II, 76).

⁹² MS. Rawl. lett. 114*, f. 370, 5 April 1720.

⁹³ *Collections*, VI, 294.

⁹⁴ MS. Rawl. lett. 114*, f. 131C.

⁹⁵ *Collections*, VII, 49.

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and in the introduction to the printed query Rawlinson had declared his intention of publishing a history of the county in conjunction with an up-to-date English edition of Wood's *History and Antiquities of the City and University of Oxford*. As early as 1710 Browne Willis had written to Hearne of the need for an English and genuine edition of the work, 'the book being grown excessive scarce.'⁹⁶ Nicolson spoke of Wood's dissatisfaction with the Latin version and of his 'hope that his own English copy . . . would some time or other hereafter be published.'⁹⁷ Hearne warned Rawlinson, 'You must take care that you say as little as you can about Colleges when you come to this County. It may be innocent enough to write about the County, but to touch upon affairs here may disturb the hornets. For my own part I have had experience; so had poor Mr. Wood.'⁹⁸ The task proved less difficult than Hearne anticipated. Five years study at Oxford had given Rawlinson sufficient opportunity to obtain large collections,⁹⁹ as well as a wide knowledge of the city and university. He had employed John Shallet, who had been at St. John's with him,¹⁰⁰ for part of the laborious transcription of Wood's manuscript.¹⁰¹ Some he copied himself; he annotated and made copious additions from other manuscript and printed sources,¹⁰² paged the book, underlined in red ink words to be printed in italics, inserted the necessary catchwords and compiled an index.¹⁰³ When the historical introduction had been written, when Oxford 'stiled by the great and learned Camden Our most noble Athens and by Mathew Paris The second School of Christendom'¹⁰⁴ had been studied from the time of Alfred to the heavy gales of 1703, the manuscript was ready for the press.

Rawlinson's eagerness to complete the history stands out even more clearly in the negotiations he entered into to secure copperplates. During his itinerary, as Hearne had already refused to lend him the plates he sought, Rawlinson had

⁹⁶ MS. Rawl. lett. 12, f. 15.

⁹⁷ *The English Historical Library*, 1796.

⁹⁸ MS. Rawl. lett. 111, f. 84, 8 July 1718.

⁹⁹ In Rawlinson's undergraduate accounts appears the entry 'Charges in full for searching for monumental inscriptions in the Churches of Oxford, 19s. 6d. 23 April, 1710 (MS. Rawl. J. 4° 31, f. 7v). So eager was he to collect epitaphs in Oxford that he visited stonemasons' shops to secure the inscriptions before they were erected. 'In Mr. Townshend's shop I saw the following inscription on a grave stone to be placed in St. Peter's East Church' (MS. Rawl. D.1054, f. 56v).

¹⁰⁰ MS. Rawl. J. fol. 19, f. 124.

¹⁰¹ Letter at the beginning of MS. Rawl. B.407A. The postmark 'Nov. 1st' probably refers to 1715, for most of the work for the city had been completed before the itinerary of the county took place. Rawlinson wrote to John Hare on 2 March 1716: 'I find Mr. Le Neve in his preface designs a collection of monuments in all the College Chapells in Oxford and elsewhere, but I suppose he will remember that A. Wood well perform'd that part to his own time. I hope I shall not be anticipated in my additions to that part of his work which with a large account of this town I may hereafter publish (Brit. Mus. Add. MS. 34727, f. 266).'

¹⁰² A. Clark in his edition of Wood's *History of the City* mentioned the importance of Rawlinson's emendations, but failed to give his promised appraisal of their value.

¹⁰³ MS. Rawl. D.912, f. 24.

¹⁰⁴ MS. Rawl. B.407A, f. 1.

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been careful to note suitable objects for illustrations. A list he made, entitled 'Draughts to be made of places in Oxfordshire',¹⁰⁵ included Ewelme Church, Rollright Stones, Thame Abbey, and Bruern Abbey and Grange.¹⁰⁶ In December, 1718, Hearne discussed delivering Rawlinson's demands to Michael Burghers,¹⁰⁷ the well-known engraver whom Hearne watched so closely.¹⁰⁸ The following March Hearne reported that Mr. Burghers had sent Rawlinson the plates he desired and the draught of Bampton,¹⁰⁹ and added that 'he is willing to go whither you would have him, provided you will allow him the Charges of his Journey, besides the Allowance for the Draughts and Plates.'¹¹⁰ Hearne, who was one of the first to notice the slightest slackening of interest, still felt uneasy about the safety of his prints even after Rawlinson returned from his journey to France in 1720.

'There is another report which I have reason to think is very true . . . that you are about reprinting some things that I have publish'd . . . You know . . . that you have not my consent in the least. I thought it proper to write to you upon this Affair that you may not put yourself to any further unnecessary Expenses about things that I have already published, when there is such a great number of Things (every way proper for the Work you have in view) that were never yet made publick, which, if you will take care to print as they should be, may redound to your Credit.'¹¹¹

In February 1720 Browne Willis wrote to Rawlinson 'I heartily wish you good success with Oxfordshire',¹¹² while the announcement in the *English Topographer* in 1720 appeared almost as an advertisement to a forthcoming book.

Why after so much difficult and arduous labour did Rawlinson relinquish his attempt to publish the history of Oxfordshire? Shortage of time and the size of the project were the greatest drawbacks. Whereas Rawlinson had started collecting for the other county histories early in his career, the Oxfordshire history, which required so much more original research, was unfinished when Rawlinson set out on his travels abroad. Hearne wrote wishing Rawlinson success on the Continent, but was surprised that he set off so soon. 'Some time since,' he added reprovingly, 'you told me you intended to spend

¹⁰⁵ MS. Rawl. B.400f, f. 78v.

¹⁰⁶ The plate is now in the Bodleian Library shelf-marked Rawl. Copperplate f. 7, and there is a print in Rawl. Prints a.3, f. 127.

¹⁰⁷ MS. Rawl. lett. 111, f. 99.

¹⁰⁸ For Hearne's relations with Burghers see I. G. Philip, *Thomas Hearne as a Publisher in Bodleian Library Record*, III, 146.

¹⁰⁹ Probably the copy of Wood's sketch. Now Rawl. Copperplate d.19. There is a print in MS. Wood E.1, f. 12.

¹¹⁰ *Collections*, VI, 305.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, VII, 108.

¹¹² MS. Rawl. J. fol. 7, f. 248.

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a pretty deal of time here in Oxford.¹¹³ After a short tour of France and the Low Countries, Rawlinson succumbed to the attraction of Italy and remained there for six years. He probably justified his decision by convincing himself that the history could easily be completed and published when he returned. Although he had not originally intended to remain away for so long, he returned at last in 1726 to discover that complicated family and financial problems caused by his brother's death awaited settlement. As he complained so often to his friend, Thomas Rawlins, they left him no time to attend to his 'beloved studies';¹¹⁴ and when eventually he succeeded in resuming them he plunged into the enormous task of attempting to bring Wood's *Athenae Oxonienses* up to date. This left him no time to pursue so large a project as the completion of the history of Oxfordshire, and it remained unfinished. It was not that Rawlinson had lost interest in the project. After his return in 1726 he made gallant efforts to keep his collections up to date¹¹⁵ and as late as 1754 James West was urging him to publish them, declaring that 'a hint to one so indefatigable as yourself is sufficient.'¹¹⁶ The difficulty was more deep-rooted. It is surprising to find how the year 1730 marked, as it were, the end of a period when the study of Antiquity flourished in England.¹¹⁷ Stukeley, about this time, gave up his progressive archaeological studies, to absorb himself in some recondite form of Druidomania.¹¹⁸ Hearne died in 1735, but even before his death the master, who made antiquarian publications pay, regretfully admitted 'There is a continual decay . . . for which reason I must lessen the number of Copies I print.'¹¹⁹ Not even Curll succeeded in maintaining a market for antiquarian studies; Rawlinson found it impossible, as he remarked to Rawlins, to get anything published. The large collections he compiled for the continuation of Norden's *History of Middlesex* and for a history of Eton College remained in manuscript, solely because, as Rawlinson maintained ruefully, 'this is not an age of encouraging any valuables.' It is to be feared

¹¹³ MS. Rawl. lett. 111, f. 17, 17 March 1719.

¹¹⁴ MSS. Ballard II, XL.

¹¹⁵ In October and November, 1750 he brought his copies of monumental inscriptions at Headington (MS. Rawl. B.400B, f. 222) and Burford (MS. Rawl. B.400D, f. 178) up to date. He begged the vicar of Stanton Harcourt to supply a copy of any inscription erected after his visitation (MS. Rawl. J. fol. 15, f. 10, 9 November 1750) and his Woodstock collections were expanded in the same way (MS. Rawl. J. fol. 3, f. 379, 22 February 1751). He had greater opportunities for revising his collections for the city. In 1736 he stayed in Oxford and noted epitaphs which had appeared since 1720 (MS. Rawl. B.400D, f. 19, etc.) and carried out a second revision in the autumn of 1750 (MSS. Rawl. D.1090; B.400D, f. 102, etc.). He compiled an index to the epitaphs in the city (MS. Rawl. J. 4° f. 34) and he asked his friends like Thomas Hunt to keep him informed of new inscriptions (MS. Rawl. B.400C, f. 60, 9 September 1741). These collections are mentioned in the fourth codicil to Rawlinson's will.

¹¹⁶ MS. Rawl. lett. 114*, ff. 353, 355.

¹¹⁷ D. C. Douglas, *English scholars* (1951), p. 27 seq.

¹¹⁸ S. Piggott, *William Stukeley* (1950).

¹¹⁹ *Collections*, XI, 434.

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the Oxford collections were similarly fated, condemned to 'improve posterity'.¹²⁰

Gough was not convinced as to the value of the collections as Rawlinson left them. 'Dr. Rawlinson, who brought many manuscript descriptions of Counties to light,' he wrote,¹²¹

'intended a description of this County some years ago and collected great materials from Wood's papers and had many plates engraved and circulated printed queries; but he received accounts only of Pirton and Watlington which in some degree answered his design; and encouraged him to pursue it. In this work were to be included the Antiquities of the city of Oxford . . . which Wood promised when the English copy of his *Historia et Antiquitates Oxonii* was to be published, and which had been faithfully transcribed from his papers and much enlarged and corrected from ancient original authorities. All Dr. Rawlinson's collections, chiefly culled from Wood or picked up from information and disposed by hundreds in different books, in each of which several parishes were omitted, would make but one octavo volume.'

No one can deny that the collections were incomplete, that they ignored small hamlets like Emington, and that frequently they were sadly inaccurate. But Gough seems to have had a mistaken idea of their size and originality. Browne Willis, who had consulted them, valued them highly. 'I trouble you,' he wrote to Rawlinson,¹²²

'with a letter about the Incumbents of livings in Oxfordshire . . . I know you have many lists and can help me out. I never grudged you any in Buckingham from the bishop's register. Pray let me know what parishes you can furnish and be pleased to put down the names of them and also let me know about your collections whether you can find them or not. I hope you can discover what cost you so many pains about Oxfordshire.'

He begged Rawlinson to take pity on him: 'As I am confined, could you send me your MS. Collections of Oxfordshire? They should goe not out of my Hand and be returned in three weeks and all be kept secret.'¹²³ Unsuccessfully he repeated his request: 'Pray find your MS. collections you made in some 4° books with inscriptions, arms, and accounts from parish registers.'¹²⁴ He suggested to Bishop Secker a history of Oxfordshire with episcopal backing. 'I should think any young person might well spend his time in drawing up for your Lordship some account of every parish in y^e diocese,' and lamented: 'I want sadly to get Dr. Rawlinson's collections and am uneasy. He so shuffles and puts me off.'¹²⁵ Faulty as the collections might be, Willis, like the modern

¹²⁰ MS. Ballard xli, 327.

¹²¹ *British Topography*, II, 80.

¹²² MS. Rawl. lett. 114*, f. 437, 6 October 1743.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, f. 412, 9 July 1731.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, f. 439.

¹²⁵ MS. Oxf. Dioc. papers c. 652, ff. 27, 28. Rawlinson's reluctance to lend his papers may indicate his continued desire to publish them as soon as an opportunity offered.

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historian, found them valuable merely because they stood alone. E. A. Greening Lamborn has remarked how the collections often date the disappearance of armorial glass of the county,¹²⁶ and the same is frequently true of brasses.¹²⁷ It is surprising how numerous are the references made to the collections, unreliable as they sometimes may be, by local historians.¹²⁸ If only Rawlinson can be absolved from the crime of attempting to 'improve' Wood—a heresy which had not been condemned in the early 18th century—and if the extent of his labours to secure accuracy and comprehensiveness is realized, his collections may assist historians of to-day to attain that 'perfect Description' of the county which he so sincerely yearned after two hundred years ago.

APPENDIX

THE GODSTOW 'FOUNDATION STONE'

By D. B. HARDEN

The mention above (p. 59) of Rawlinson's purchase of the 'foundation stone' from Godstow in 1710, makes it appropriate to give a short account of the stone itself, and to publish a modern photographic illustration of it (PL. VIII) to supplement the 18th century engravings, which are the only illustrations that have hitherto appeared in print.

The stone is a fragment (about a quarter) of a flat tomb-slab of limestone, L. 25½ inches, W. 19½ inches, T. 4½ inches, bearing a fragmentary inscription :

[GODESTOWE : VNE : CHAVNTERIE : I]

which runs round the edge and surrounds an incised (not 'raised', as R.C.H.M. *City of Oxford, l.c.* below) cross, of which only the bottom part is extant. Only portions of the first and last letters survive : the first must be the initial G of Godstow ; the last might be any letter which has a vertical beginning, *e.g.* P or R, as well as I, so that Hearne was right to abandon his earlier suggestion that it was the initial letter of the name of Ida or Edith, who founded Godstow in 1133 : it could be, but need not. All we can say is that the stone clearly commemorates the founder of a chantry in the Nunnery, and can be dated, by its lettering, to the 14th century. It is not, therefore, a 'foundation stone' in the accepted sense of the term, still less 'the' foundation stone of the Nunnery.

Hearne mentions the stone several times in his Diaries from 30 April 1708 onwards (*Hearne's Collections* II, ed. C. E. Doble (O.H.S. VII, 1886), 105, 111, 390, 392

¹²⁶ *Armorial Glass of the Oxford Diocese* (1949), p. xxix. This writer in complaining of the 'undressed and indigestible gobbets' (*Notes and Queries*, 1950, p. 195) was referring not to the original MS. collections, but to the edition put forward by Davis. Lamborn's copy of the work, heavily annotated and corrected, has recently come to the Bodleian Library.

¹²⁷ *Eng. Hist. Rev.*, 37 (1922), p. 317.

¹²⁸ *e.g.* R. H. Gretton, *The Burford Records* (1920), p. 222 ; C. C. Brookes, *A History of Steeple Aston etc.* (1929), pp. 19, 120.

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ff.) and in the second volume of his edition of Leland's *Itinerary* (T. Hearne, *Leland Itin.* (1711), ii, 74) he gives an engraving of it by M. B[urghers], made (as Hearne acknowledges) at the expense of Rawlinson's elder brother, Thomas, and adds a full account of its discovery together with his views on its meaning and purpose. Later in the 18th century it was included by G. Chandler in his *Marmora Oxoniensia* (pt. iii, no. 140, pl. v, pp. xx, 143). Thereafter it seems to have lain unnoticed until the compilers of the *City of Oxford* volume of the Royal Commission on Historical Monuments (England) in 1939, p. 156, make brief reference to its existence in the Ashmolean Museum.

Hearne says that he first saw and noted it in April 1708, after it had been laid bare under a walnut tree at Godstow by the great storm of 26 November 1703. It was not, therefore, a new find of Rawlinson's; indeed his purchase of it in 1710 was perhaps a piece of rescue-work instigated by Hearne himself.

The stone's history after Hearne's publication of it in 1711 is not clear. I have so far been able to find no record of when it left Rawlinson's possession, nor can I discover which institution of the University housed it when Chandler published it in 1763. No entry for it appears in the earliest Accession Book of the Ashmolean, though that book runs up to 1766, and includes under the date 1757 two Venetian boats and an Indian palanquin bequeathed by Rawlinson in 1755.¹²⁹ It is not mentioned in W. D. Macray's *Annals of the Bodleian Library*, as one would expect it to be, if it had been given to that institution. The probability is that it joined the Arundel and other classical inscriptions (which included many that had belonged to Rawlinson). These, after being housed in the School of Moral Philosophy and in the Basement of the old Ashmolean, were finally in 1887 transferred to the University Galleries (now the Ashmolean Museum) in Beaumont Street (Sir E. Craster, *History of the Bodleian Library, 1845-1945*, pp. 5, 86, 227), and we may assume, in default of evidence to the contrary, that the stone came with them.

¹²⁹ The compilers of the R.C.H.M. *City of Oxford* volume in 1939, copying a contemporary label in the Ashmolean, which is now seen to be erroneous, state that it was given to the Museum in 1703. That year is (as stated above) the date of its discovery.

PLATE VIII



GODSTOW NUNNERY, BINSEY, OXFORD

Fragment of a tomb-slab with incised inscription commemorating the founder of a chantry in the nunnery (p. 77)

Scale : $\frac{1}{8}$

Ph. : Ashmolean Museum