

# Thomas James Carter's Role in the Collection of Oxfordshire Antiquities, Fossils and Folklore

MICHAEL HEANEY

## SUMMARY

*Thomas James Carter (1833–1909) was an extraordinary person. Born illegitimate into rural poverty, by dint of his native intelligence, perspicacity and perseverance, and undoubtedly genial nature, he was able to contribute significantly to the study of Oxfordshire palaeontology, archaeology, social history, and especially to our knowledge of its custom and folklore. He is virtually invisible in the published literature, but contributed to the collections of James Parker, Henry Balfour, Percy Manning and others. The material he collected is now to be found in the Oxford University Museum of Natural History, the Ashmolean and Pitt Rivers Museums, and the Bodleian Libraries.*

## CARTER IN PUBLISHED REFERENCES

On 11 December 1987 Martin Biddle wrote to Andrew Sherratt at the Ashmolean Museum who had sent him some information in relation to the Hook Norton hoard. Biddle wrote 'Very many thanks for your note and the crucial photocopy. This was quite unknown heretofore.' He speculates on the author of the note, one T.J.C., asking whether Sherratt can identify him as a Museum worker. When Biddle and John Blair published on the hoard in *Oxoniensia* T.J.C. remained unidentified.<sup>1</sup>

T.J.C. was in fact Thomas James Carter, and this vignette highlights both the potential importance of Carter in Oxfordshire studies and his obscurity. Until 2016 virtually the only published description of Carter and his role appeared in 1902, when the Oxford antiquary Percy Manning published the first of a series of articles on Oxfordshire folklore.<sup>2</sup> He began by explaining that:

The following notes, which were in part read at the meeting of March 26, 1902... are largely based on the collections of my old friend Thomas James Carter, who was born at Baldon-on-the-Green, Oxon., on June 11, 1832. His parents moved in 1836 to St Clement's, Oxford, where he has lived ever since. In early life he worked for some years in the old St Clement's brickfields, now long since built over. Here he began in his spare moments to hunt for fossils, and by degrees he acquired a considerable practical knowledge of the subject. At length he was disabled by rheumatism from hard work, and took to the collection of fossils for his living. For many years he ranged the country round Oxford, going from quarry to brickyard, until he attained a very intimate acquaintance with the geology of the district; and many geologists, not to mention candidates for "the schools," owe much to Carter's knowledge. Some of the finest specimens of local fossils in the University Museum were

<sup>1</sup> M. Biddle and J. Blair, 'The Hook Norton Hoard of 1848: A Viking Burial from Oxfordshire?', *Oxoniensia*, 52 (1987), pp. 188–90; letter from M. Biddle, Ashmolean Museum Archives, Topographical Files, Box 33/Hook Norton.

<sup>2</sup> P. Manning, 'Stray Notes on Oxfordshire Folklore', *Folk-lore*, 13.3 (Sept. 1902), pp. 288–95. The series was continued in *Folk-lore*, 14.1 (March 1903), pp. 65–74; 14.2 (June 1903), pp. 167–77, and 14.4 (Dec. 1903), pp. 410–14.

collected by him, notably the series of *Trigonia clavellata*, and of *Ammonites catenata*, from the calcareous grit of Marcham, *Cidaris Smithii* from the grit of Headington, *Glyphea Stricklandi* and *Ramphorhynch[us]*, from the Oxford clay of St Clement's

In 2016 Alice Little published an account of Carter's hunt for musical instruments on behalf of Manning and others,<sup>3</sup> and the book published on the centenary in 2017 of Manning's death contains numerous references to Carter throughout,<sup>4</sup> but without focusing on him to any great degree. He has been virtually invisible in the history of Oxfordshire palaeontology, archaeology and custom, although for almost fifty years in the second half of the nineteenth century and beginning of the twentieth he was the true source of many significant items in the collections of Oxford's museums and libraries.

## EARLY LIFE

Manning indicates that Carter was born at Baldon-on-the-Green, just south-east of Oxford. The Baldons are a group of small villages celebrated in a *blason populaire* later recorded by Carter for Manning (but from an informant, not his own report):<sup>5</sup> 'Marsh Baldon, Toot Baldon, Baldon on the Green, Little Baldon, Big Baldon, Baldon-in-between.' Though Manning tells us that Carter had moved to St Clement's in Oxford as early as 1836, in the course of his gathering material for Manning on folklore, custom and aspects of village life Carter often reported on life in the Baldons in the 1840s, from his childhood memories and tales from his grandmother. It is clear that he spent considerable amount of time in childhood in the grandparental home. In fact Carter appears to have been illegitimate: his baptismal record from Marsh Baldon gives his mother as Frances Carter but no father is named. The date is 23 August 1833, and this accords with his age as given at death seventy-six years later, so it seems that Manning was mistaken and that Carter's actual birth year is 1833.<sup>6</sup> By 1851 his mother had married one James Harris and the family with four children of the marriage and Frances Carter's three sons before marriage (described as Harris's 'sons-in-law' in the sense of stepsons) were all living in New Street, St Clement's.<sup>7</sup> As the son of a single parent and then a stepson it may not be surprising that Carter spent a lot of time at the grandparental home in the Baldons. In that census his birthplace is reported as Holywell (in Oxford), but his two Carter siblings were born in the Baldons.

The village life that Carter experienced was characterised by deprivation. He recalled that cottagers were paid about 9s. a week on the farm, but 1s. 6d. of that went on rent. The sale of fruit from the trees in the cottage gardens produced enough to pay that, and Carter reminisced that:<sup>8</sup> 'I myself I Can Just Recolect got in one of the Gardens to steal some Pears and the First Pear I Picked up was full of Wasps so I Dropt it an Ran away.' Carter recalled how the cottagers were allowed to glean from the fields after harvest, and could often gather three or four sacks of corn, which was taken to the miller, who ground it in return for the bran. In a bad year with a poor harvest they were reduced to making bread from rye or barley meal. The bread was 'never white but "good tackle"' and would last from baking to baking – the oven was usually lit only about once every two weeks. When the oven was not in use baking was done by covering pots on the hearth in hot ashes from the fire.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>3</sup> A. Little, 'Percy Manning, Henry Balfour, Thomas Carter and the Collecting of Traditional English Musical Instruments', *Folk Music Journal*, 11.1 (2016), pp. 27–43.

<sup>4</sup> M. Heaney (ed.), *Percy Manning: The Man Who Collected Oxfordshire* (2017).

<sup>5</sup> Bodl. MS Top. Oxon d. 190, f. 100.

<sup>6</sup> England Births and Baptisms 1538–1975, Findmypast.co.uk, s.v. Thomas James Carter, accessed May 2017.

<sup>7</sup> 1851 census: TNA, HO 107/1727 p. 40; death certificate, General Register Office, 1909 Q4 Headington 03A.542.

<sup>8</sup> Bodl. MS Top. Oxon d. 192, f. 165.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid. f. 206; d. 193, ff. 12–14.

We can gather a little of Carter's daily life as a child from Manning's notes, much of the content of which originated with Carter. For example, Percy Manning had an interest in lighting, reflected in the collection of artefacts he donated to the Pitt Rivers Museum in 1911,<sup>10</sup> in relation to which Carter supplied first-hand information about practices in the Baldons in the 1840s. He described the portable iron lamps used in cottages, burning sperm oil; and how to make tinder from 'linen rags, or best, [from] an old cotton stocking, held in the tongs over the fire and allowed to smoulder until it charred'.<sup>11</sup>

Carter had clear memories of the cooking and baking regime:<sup>12</sup>

The oven was floored with 9 inch square bricks and the sides and back were lined with them. In the back was put a large round pebble called "Dick". The oven was heated with bushes or furze, and when "Dick's" face was white the housewife knew the oven was of the right heat to put in the dough. The "morgin" was then brought – a piece of sacking on the end of a pole, made wet – to clean out the oven. When the oven was set, the cleaning up took place; By that time the youngsters were home from school, when the question generally was "any fatty cake today, mother?" For there were generally a few baked on baking day, along with the half-peck loaves, and the bread was sweet and moist at that age.

Fresh meat was hardly ever eaten: the staple was 'pig-sty beef' (bacon). Often everything was cooked together in a half-bushel pot: dumplings, potatoes, greens, bacon, pea soup and carrots.<sup>13</sup>

Carter's grandmother was well versed in traditional medical treatments. Around 1894 Carter described to Manning how to get rid of warts by taking a black snail, rubbing it on the warts then impaling it on a thorn – the warts disappear as it dies and rots. Manning notes 'tried and proved by the informant Thomas Carter whose grandmother gave him the recipe'.<sup>14</sup> In July 1898 Carter sold a specimen of a slug on a thorn to the Pitt Rivers Museum (Fig. 1), together with an example of a coil of bramble prepared as a cure for whooping cough: the cure was accomplished by passing the sick child through the coils on each of nine mornings.<sup>15</sup> Carter had reported this as a cure to Manning in February 1897, having noted down the method described by a Mrs Buswell of Wootton.<sup>16</sup>

Another cure from Carter's grandmother was for a generic 'bad leg', as recorded by Manning:<sup>17</sup> "Take a mass o' clites [goose grass, *Gallium aparine*] mash un up wi' some lard, and put un between two bits of muslin" and apply to the sore. Sure enough it cured the leg as T.J.C. can testify. Carter recalled his childhood games including how to make a 'snurl' ball from tree fungus for use in a game of the same name like rounders, which he said he played at the Baldons '65 years ago' (undated, but the 1840s by implication);<sup>18</sup> and a tag game from the same period.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>10</sup> F. Belsey and M. Ding, 'Percy Manning Contextualized: How Manning's 1911 Donation to the Pitt Rivers Museum Tells Us More about the Man, His Collection and its Context', in Heaney (ed.), *Percy Manning*, pp. 257–88.

<sup>11</sup> Bodl. MS Top. Oxon d. 193, f. 54.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid. f. 14.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid. ff. 12–13.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid. d. 191a, f. 50.

<sup>15</sup> Pitt Rivers Museum Object Catalogue (hereafter PRMOC), 1898.71.1–2. Carter sold three objects on that occasion, the third being a spinning wheel from Great Tew (1898.71.3) which accounted for the bulk of the price paid for the set (27s.). For more on the first, see Heather Richardson, 'Slug on a Thorn', *England: The Other Within*, Pitt Rivers Museum, <http://england.prm.ox.ac.uk/englishness-slug-on-a-thorn.html>, accessed September 2017.

<sup>16</sup> Bodl. MS Top. Oxon d. 191a, f. 55.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid. f. 33.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid. d. 191, f. 63; d. 191a, f. 76a.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid. d. 191a, f. 76b.



*Fig. 1. Slug on a thorn, acquired from Carter. Pitt Rivers Museum, University of Oxford, 1898.71.1.*

pick up ball and throw at other players running away – say  
 Hignam, pignam, penny, wignam  
 Popalorum gig  
 Eggs, butter, cheese, bred  
 Stick, stock, stone dead  
 – last in the row of children is the “dead”, who picks it up.

The childhood game of ‘merry peg’ (a local name for nine men’s morris) was one which Carter described more than once. In August 1894 Manning made notes of Carter’s description of the game and in May 1898 Carter made for Manning his sketch of the game board, saying that the board was scratched into the turf (Fig. 2).<sup>20</sup>

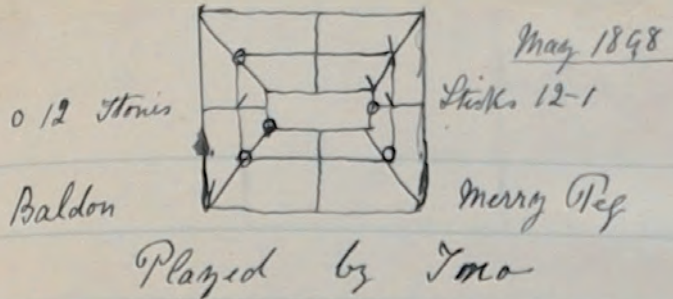
Six years later Carter also made a wooden merry peg board for Manning; Manning gave it to the Pitt Rivers Museum in 1911, when it was described as ‘as used at Baldon-on-the-Green, 60 years ago: made by T.J. Carter, 1904’ (Fig. 3).<sup>21</sup>

Carter also recalled the adult entertainments of his youth. At the club feast on Whit Tuesday (the annual festive gathering of the local friendly society) Carter recalls a procession, club dinner, dancing on the green, and a fight or two ‘for the Garsington Roughts made it a Point to be there, of course the Baldon folks Returned the Compliment at Garsington.’ There was a cricket match on the green, ‘I Can Just Remember a Man Standing with a Stick for Scoring the Runs: the Stick had Notches Cut into it for the First Eleven and then they were Cut off it as Fast as the Second Side made Runs.’<sup>22</sup>

<sup>20</sup> Ibid. ff. 77, 78.

<sup>21</sup> PRMOC, 1911.29.67.

<sup>22</sup> Bodl. MS Top. Oxon d. 192, f. 165.

Games

This is Cut in the Turf  
the Boy Choses Stones and  
the Girl Sticks if the Boy  
wins - he Keeps to his Stones  
if he Loses the Girl Claims  
What he has been Playing With  
and Starting First if she is  
a good Player she Wins

I Remember Playing at this  
Game when I was quite a  
Child - J. J. C.

Fig. 2. Merry peg described by Carter. Bodl. MS Top. Oxon d. 191a, f. 77.



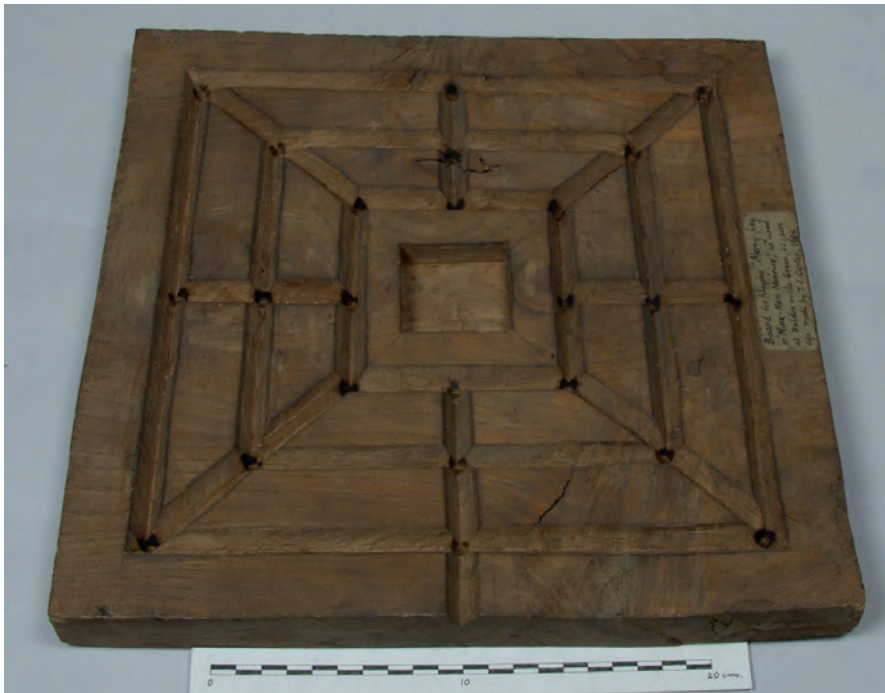


Fig. 3. Merry peg board from Manning's collection. Pitt Rivers Museum, University of Oxford, 1911.29.67.

The violence was an accepted part of village life and did not reflect real enmity – Shaun Morley records that when a fire broke out at Marsh Baldon on Whit Monday in 1866, those attending the club feasts at Garsington and Nuneham Courtenay rushed to assist in dousing the fire.<sup>23</sup>

'Sunday dress' was worn at the feasts: the men wore white smocks and top hats, contrasting with the workaday drab jean smocks and billycock hats. Men normally wore breeches and worsted stockings, and sometimes gaiters. Carter could just remember leather breeches being worn, but they were going out of use in his childhood.<sup>24</sup>

Carter also recalled the tricks played on new hirelings after the 'Statty' (the Statute Fair at Abingdon), including 'Catching the Owl', sending the new recruit – supposedly in pursuit of an owl that had taken a chicken – into the loft, the door of which had been booby-trapped.<sup>25</sup>

Our next record of Carter comes in the 1851 census when he is described as a porter, aged 17.<sup>26</sup> In 1857 he married Eliza Tolley, the daughter of George Tolley, a labourer, of Kirtlington. She was a few years Carter's senior, having been born c.1828. In 1851 she was a house servant in the household of Hannah Eagleton, an ironmonger of St Clement's High Street, close to Carter's home in New Street (Fig. 4).<sup>27</sup> In future years a significant number of Carter's contributions to collectors' activities would be based on Kirtlington sources.

In 1861 Carter was living in Cherwell Street, St Clement's (just 100 yards away from his former New Street home) with Eliza and their nine-month-old first child, Fanny Eliza. His

<sup>23</sup> S. Morley (ed.), *Oxfordshire Friendly Societies, 1750–1918*, ORS, 68 (2011), pp. 147, 205. Morley does not record any friendly societies in the Baldons themselves in Carter's time.

<sup>24</sup> Bodl. MS Top. Oxon d. 192, f. 165; d. 193, f. 10.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid. d. 192, f. 85.

<sup>26</sup> 1851 census: TNA, HO 107/1727, p. 40.

<sup>27</sup> Marriage registers 1857 Q3 Headington 3A.760; HO 107/1727/221/308, p. 3.



Fig. 4. New Street, St Clement's, shortly before demolition in the 1930s. In his later years Carter lived at number 11, at the far end on the right hand side; the number of his earlier New Street home is unknown. Oxfordshire County Council – Oxfordshire History Centre, OCL 74/139.

birthplace is given as Marsh Baldon in this census (and variously as Oxford and Marsh Baldon in future censuses), and he is listed as a railway labourer. His life was still that of the typical rural poor, remaining poor as they moved to working-class dwellings in towns. But by this stage he may already have begun to find and supply Oxford's gentleman scholars with fossils.

#### JAMES PARKER and THE OXFORD UNIVERSITY MUSEUM

James Parker (1833–1912) was a member of a family of Oxford booksellers. Most members of the family were prominent antiquaries, and Parker joined the Oxford Architectural Society at the age of nineteen in 1852, and soon after joined his father (the Society's librarian) on the Society's committee. He was particularly interested in medieval architecture and archaeology, and not just in Oxford: he also collected flint implements from the valley of the Somme, and became a leading authority on the early history of Oxford and the surrounding area. In 1884 he published *The Early History of Oxford, 727–1100*. He was a major figure in the Oxford Architectural and Historical Society (OAHS) and was its president 1891–98.<sup>28</sup>

Parker was also no mean geologist and palaeontologist. He collected over 10,000 specimens which came to Oxford University Museum (now the Oxford University Museum of Natural History, OUMNH) in 1913 from W.H. Balston, who bought them after Parker's death; the

<sup>28</sup> P. Manning, 'The Late Mr. James Parker, Hon. M.A., F.G.S.', *Berks, Bucks & Oxon Archaeological Journal*, 18 (1913), pp. 109–13.

majority are from the Jurassic.<sup>29</sup> This is not surprising, given the geology of Oxfordshire, although he did also collect from other localities in southern England and bought from the sales of other geologists.

Parker recorded many of his acquisitions over a thirty-year period 1847–77 in a series of ‘day books’ which are preserved at the OUMNH.<sup>30</sup> He acquired many specimens directly, by visiting local sites as well as other prominent fossil sites such as Weymouth; but he also bought widely. The first entries in his day books are a list of fossils ‘bought/found &c at Cromer 1847’; but his serious collecting did not begin until 1857, and his most prolific source at first was one George Best. Best, of St Ebbe’s in Oxford, is described as a ‘General dealer’ in the 1851 and 1871 censuses but as an ‘Antiquarian’ in 1861.<sup>31</sup> He was one of a number of middleman dealers in antiquities who supplied the Victorian gentry with archaeological and geological specimens. He continued to supply Parker throughout the period recorded in the day books. One Oliver, from the quarry in Stonesfield from which the first named dinosaur was excavated, was another regular supplier; and Parker sometimes bought direct from local workers, as on 2 February 1863 when he recorded an acquisition ‘B[ough]t. Man from Headington Clay Pits ... - 5 -’.<sup>32</sup>

It may have been in this kind of circumstance that he first met Carter. The first acquisition from Carter recorded in the day books may be the items ‘Found within Summertown O. Clay with Mr Carter’ on 17 April 1858, but the fact that no money changed hands and that Carter is referred to as ‘Mr’ may indicate that this was another person sharing the surname.<sup>33</sup>

The other source providing us with information about transactions between Parker and Carter are the records of the Oxford University Museum of Natural History. A few entries in the Museum’s database<sup>34</sup> do identify Carter as the source, but many more can be identified by the direct inspection of the original and transcribed labels attached to the specimens themselves in the Museum (Fig. 5).<sup>35</sup> A survey of the collections has revealed over eighty items in Parker’s collections which explicitly came to him via Carter. Parker’s annotations themselves are minimal, and in most cases it is not possible to match with certainty the day book entries with the specimens identified, as the day book entries are too general in nature (for example, ‘Ammonites’).

After the uncertain 1858 entry in the day books, the first dated item in the collections with Carter’s name is a pair of 1861 probable *Nucula* bivalves from St Clement’s (OUMNH, J.42963–J.42964), followed by an 1862 *Terebratula* brachiopod from the same place (OUMNH, J.42990). The vast majority of Carter’s specimens in Parker’s collections come from the Cowley Fields pits in St Clement’s. A few come from the Corallian at Bullingdon and Headington or the Kimmeridge Clay at Headington, and one *Steneosaurus* tooth is from the Great Oolite at Kirtlington (OUMNH, J.10597). All the dated items fall between 1861 and 1869, with about ten items a year from 1865 on. Frustratingly, there is an almost complete absence of records in Parker’s day books for the period 1867–9, when Carter appears to have been at his most active.<sup>36</sup>

The last dated entry discovered in the collections is a set of specimens of the snail *Viviparus* (now *Paludina*) *elongata* (OUMNH, K.10251–K.10253) dated October 1869 from the Shotover Ironsands at Boulder Pit, Shotover, the sole identified example of a Cretaceous fossil supplied by Carter.

<sup>29</sup> Data from Oxford University Museum of Natural History ‘Earth Collections: Searchable Databases’, <http://www.oum.ox.ac.uk/collect/earthcoll2.htm>, accessed May 2017, and further information from Eliza Howlett.

<sup>30</sup> OUMNH, James Parker, day books 1854–77.

<sup>31</sup> TNA, HO 107/1728.195, p. 2; RG 09/894/117, p. 10; RG 10/1438/103, p. 38.

<sup>32</sup> OUMNH, James Parker, day book of fossils collected & purchased Sept. 1861 to Dec. 1863, p. 55.

<sup>33</sup> OUMNH, James Parker, ‘Fossils Purchased &c 1847–58’, p. 17.

<sup>34</sup> OUMNH, ‘Earth Collections: Searchable Databases’, <http://www.oum.ox.ac.uk/collect/earthcoll2.htm>, accessed June 2017.

<sup>35</sup> I am extremely grateful to Eliza Howlett at OUMNH for her assistance in granting me access to the collections and guiding me to relevant content.

<sup>36</sup> OUMNH, James Parker, day book 1864–77.





Fig. 5. Claw of *Astacus*, found 1869 at Cowley Fields (St Clement's pits), OUMNH, J.42855, with Parker's original annotation and Museum transcription.

Although Parker seems to have been the primary purchaser of Carter's finds, Manning identifies Carter as the source of the '*Ramphorhync[h]us*, from the Oxford clay of St Clement's'.<sup>37</sup> The only such fossil in the Museum's collections is that presented by the eminent geologist John Phillips and described by him (OUMNH, J.28533–J.28434).<sup>38</sup> Manning also singles out 'the series of *Trigonia clavellata*, and of *Ammonites catenata*, from the calcareous grit of Marcham',<sup>39</sup> but it has not been possible to identify Carter as the direct source of any of the specimens in the Museum (many of which do lack attribution). It may be that he sold direct to the Museum, who would not consider him a 'collector' to be recorded (hundreds of the Museum's acquisitions from St Clement's have no attribution to a collector).

Most of the specimens supplied by Carter are invertebrates. It may be that he simply collected what he saw, having a good eye for them while not having much detailed knowledge; but Manning attests to his 'very intimate acquaintance with the geology of the district'; and says that 'many geologists, not to mention candidates for "the schools," owe much to Carter's knowledge'.<sup>40</sup> It does seem that Carter acquired expertise of his own; some thirty years later, around 1895, while describing to Manning the game of dabs (fives) played by girls at Kirtlington, he adds 'I saw them playing with rhync[h]onellas' (a fossil brachiopod).<sup>41</sup> There are indeed several specimens of the genus in the Museum which come from Kirtlington (for example, OUMNH, J.42393–J.42394), so Carter's expert identification is very probably correct. In one of the specimen drawers at the Museum devoted to finds from Cowley Fields is a note from Maud Healey:<sup>42</sup> 'All the fossils labelled St Clement's or Cowley Fields came from Castle's Brickyard on the site of which the New School in St Clement's now stands. Fide Carter.'

Healey was a pioneering woman geologist who worked as Assistant to W.J. Sollas, Keeper of the University Museum, between 1902 and 1906.<sup>43</sup> Clearly, Carter was still visiting the Museum then, over forty years after his first contributions to Parker's collections, and was a trusted source of information for the Museum staff.

In addition to his fossil collecting Parker was a prominent Oxford archaeologist, and given the developments in 1892 (described below) it may well be that Carter supplied him with archaeological finds as well as geological specimens; but if Parker followed his geological practice and kept notebooks of his archaeological acquisitions, they have not been traced.

Between 1869 and 1892 we have no trace of Carter apart from the census records. In 1871 he is listed as a carpenter's labourer living in Nag's Head Yard, St Clement's, and in addition to Fanny Eliza has three more children: Henry, born c.1852; Elizabeth, born c.1866; and three-month-old Susanna. By 1881 he has moved to No. 11 New Street (his home for the rest of his life); Fanny Eliza had died, Henry is no longer in the family home, and he has a boarder, twenty-four-year-old Charles Holliday, a carman. In 1891 his occupation is given as 'general labourer' and of his children only Susannah [sic], now twenty years old, remains at home, working as a dressmaker. His wife Eliza, now sixty-three, who had previously been listed only as his wife, is described in 1891 as a 'retired laundress'.

## THE ALCHESTER DIG

In the spring of 1892 two Oxford New College undergraduates, John Linton Myres (later Wykeham Professor of Ancient History) and Percy Manning, organized and supervised a dig

<sup>37</sup> Manning, 'Stray Notes', p. 289.

<sup>38</sup> J. Phillips, *Geology of Oxford and the Valley of the Thames* (1871), p. 302.

<sup>39</sup> Manning, 'Stray Notes', p. 289.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.* p. 289.

<sup>41</sup> Bodl. MS Top. Oxon d. 191a, f. 75.

<sup>42</sup> OUMNH, Jurassic Room, cupboard 27.

<sup>43</sup> S. Joomun, 'Temporarily Misplaced', Past to Present: Digitizing Charles Lyell's Fossil Collection, <https://charleslyell.com/2015/12/24/temporarily-misplaced/>, accessed June 2017.



Fig. 6. The Alchester dig, 1892. Carter foreground right; Manning visible behind another figure. The figure in the white shirt may be Myres. Ashmolean Museum Archives, 1648/MANN/1/MS/102/28. Image © Ashmolean Museum, University of Oxford.

at the Alchester Roman camp near Bicester. Both were keen archaeologists, and had joined the Oxford Architectural and Historical Society upon their arrival in Oxford in 1887 and 1888 respectively. By the time of the dig Manning was already one of the two Secretaries of the Society, and Myres was about to become the other – roles they fulfilled for much of the rest of the decade.<sup>44</sup> Myres relates how Manning was more interested in the dig than in meeting college examination requirements. After further examination failures Manning was removed from the college books, but eventually took his degree in 1896.<sup>45</sup>

The president of the OAHS during Manning's and Myres's secretaryship was James Parker, and as Manning says that he first knew of Carter as a fossil-hunter, it may well be that it was Parker who introduced the two. However it came about, Manning (and Myres) employed Carter on the dig, and this is the first known contact between them in a relationship that was to last until Carter's death. The evidence for their work together is provided by two photographs of the dig in the Ashmolean Museum archives. The first identifies some of the participants, including Manning and Carter. (Myres may also be in the picture: Fig. 6). Carter, on the right, is apparently holding a long probe, presumably used to locate the stone walls under the soil.<sup>46</sup>

The second was taken on the same occasion and shows a similar scene, except that Carter is facing the camera. Figure 7 is a detail from that photograph, giving a good impression of Carter at fifty-nine. These two pictures of Carter are the only ones known.

<sup>44</sup> M. Heaney, 'Percy Manning – A Life', in Heaney (ed.), *Percy Manning*, pp. 1–47.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 5–6.

<sup>46</sup> A. Roberts, 'Percy Manning's Archaeological Survey of Oxfordshire', in Heaney (ed.), *Percy Manning*, p. 55.



Fig. 7. Thomas Carter at the Alchester dig, 1892. Ashmolean Museum Archives, 1648/MANN/1/MS/102/29 (detail). Image © Ashmolean Museum, University of Oxford.

Manning and Myres as the gentleman overseers of the dig had travelled up from Oxford, as recounted by Myres. One may have expected them to employ local labour for the actual digging, so the fact that Carter was employed and also brought across from Oxford is indicative both of his abilities and the trust they put in him. His presence must have been seen as a positive asset to the dig.

Only summary results of the Alchester dig were ever published, by Myres.<sup>47</sup> Some of the objects found were given to the Ashmolean Museum later that year, while a few more were kept by Manning and were acquired by the Museum after his death.<sup>48</sup>

#### PERCY MANNING

Percy Manning (1870–1917) was the son of a Victorian railway engineer who died when Percy was a child, but whose bequests to his son enabled him to live the life of a gentleman scholar in Oxford.<sup>49</sup> As described above, he had matriculated at New College in 1888 with an already well developed interest in archaeology and antiquities, but had not thrived in the University and

<sup>47</sup> 'Recent Discoveries', *Archaeologia Oxoniensis*, 1 (1892), p. 34.

<sup>48</sup> Ashmolean Museum Accessions Register, AN1892.2640–2654; AN1921.174, 175, 349; AN1960.1194–1198.

<sup>49</sup> The biographical details in this section are from Heaney, 'Percy Manning – A Life'.



was removed from the college books at the end of 1893. He remained in Oxford for the rest of his life. He eventually graduated and took BA and MA degrees in 1896, also becoming a fellow of the Society of Antiquaries that year. He was a stalwart of the Oxford Architectural and Historical Society throughout his life, and in 1893 also founded (and later became president of) the Oxford University Brass-Rubbing Society, renamed the Oxford University Antiquarian Society in 1901.

His interest in antiquities extended beyond archaeology proper into material culture in general; he collected material relating to the city and county of Oxford from all periods down to those items on the point of disappearance in his own day.

From 1893 Manning also developed an interest in the intangible aspects of culture, and began to use Carter as an assistant and field worker on his behalf. This relationship – which continued to embrace archaeology as well as custom and folklore – is the basis of most of our knowledge of Carter for the rest of his life. Manning preserved Carter's notes to him as well as making transcriptions of them: besides the items of information *per se*, they include many letters and personal observations by Carter, together with insights into his personal circumstances. Many of Carter's notes and letters are undated; some have dates added subsequently, but internal evidence suggests that these added dates can be unreliable. In the remainder of this article reliance is placed first and foremost on the dated material, and undated material is adduced where an approximate date can be inferred, or, failing that, where it best fits the narrative.

## ARCHAEOLOGY

After the evidence of the Alchester dig, the next reliably dated evidence of interaction between Carter and Manning is a note by Manning of 29 January 1894 relating to Drayton St Leonard from where Carter reports that 'flower pots' and human bones had been dug up around 1885, and more bones in 1893.<sup>50</sup> Manning published the details in his 'Notes on the Archaeology of Oxford and its Neighbourhood' in 1898.<sup>51</sup>

In a gravel pit in the north-east corner of the parish, just west of the bridge over the River Thame, which carries the field road from Drayton to Brookhampton, about seven years ago, the workmen found two 'flower-pots' and several human bones. One of the 'flower-pots' was broken and the other one, which was whole, was taken away by a farmer. He is since dead, and nothing can be heard of the urn. No more urns have been found since, but last year [1893] some bones were dug up.

[Information from T. Carter, 29/I/94.]

The find spot is marked on Manning's map of the area, prepared for his Archaeological Survey of Oxfordshire, as a blue circle, indicating a pre-Roman burial (Fig. 8).<sup>52</sup>

Carter continued to feed Manning with information about current and past finds of a similar nature. In June 1894 he sketched an axe-head that had been found in cutting a new channel at Radcot Bridge, and in 1895 he reported on skeletons that had been found at Clifton Hampden and a coffin at South Leigh, both thirty years previously.<sup>53</sup> Although Manning's coin collection is not well described, we can identify coins of Domitian and Marcus Aurelius

<sup>50</sup> Ashmolean Museum Archives, 1648/MANN/1/MS/160/4. (The note is misclassified as relating to Drayton, near Banbury.)

<sup>51</sup> P. Manning, 'Notes on the Archaeology of Oxford and its Neighbourhood', *Berks, Bucks & Oxon Archaeological Journal*, 4.1 (April 1898), p. 16.

<sup>52</sup> Roberts, 'Percy Manning's Archaeological Survey of Oxfordshire.'

<sup>53</sup> Ashmolean Museum Archives, 1648/MANN/1/MS/250/1; 1648/MANN/1/MS/145/9; 1648/MANN/1/MS/269/3.





Fig. 8. Drayton burial site (detail from Mapping Manning website, Map094, <http://pm.ashmus.ox.ac.uk/lmap/Map094>). Image © Ashmolean Museum, University of Oxford.

found at the allotments in Kirtlington and provided to Manning by Carter in August 1895.<sup>54</sup> Carter evidently put out general feelers on Manning's behalf: in a solitary surviving example of a letter written to Carter, a Fred Smith of Bicester wrote to him in March of that year that 'Mr Charles Hatfield of this town has informed me that you are desirous of purchasing old Roman coins. I have a large quantity of them as well as other bric-a-brac which I am willing to sell'.<sup>55</sup>

No doubt in many cases Carter came to Manning with news of things found, but in some cases Manning sent Carter on an explicit errand. In December 1895 Manning asked Carter to

<sup>54</sup> Ashmolean Museum Archives, Arch. Ash. Fol. 9, 'Original wrappings from local finds in the Manning collection 1921', AH.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid. redacted from Topographic Files, Box 8/Bicester in February 2018 to be added to the Percy Manning archive.

go to Hayfield Road in Oxford to ascertain the answers to specific questions: we have the note of the questions in Manning's hand and the answers in Carter's:<sup>56</sup>

Skeleton found in making culvert in Heyfield Road, about 12 months ago. Dec. 1895.  
 Depth below top? *about 12"*  
 East & west? *East*  
 Position – Full length *yes*  
 Crouched up *no*  
 On back *yes*  
 On side *no*  
 Any pottery with it, or charcoal? *No*  
 Was it in any sort of grave, for instance, a hole with black earth? *no*

Carter was not working solely on Manning's behalf. In 1895 or earlier he sold some Neolithic flints to Henry Balfour (first Curator of the Pitt Rivers Museum), who donated them to the Museum in October 1895. Accompanying notes in the Pitt Rivers Museum records suggest that these are 'scrapers and flakes etc found on Shotover Hill, Oxford (S. Side) by Mr Carter 1895 (Oct). Presd. H. Balfour esq. 1895' (Fig. 9).<sup>57</sup>

Carter was certainly a frequent visitor to Shotover, where brickworking gave rise to frequent finds. On one occasion (undated) he writes to Manning:<sup>58</sup>

from Shotover I Have Some Good Parts of Roman Pottery but to [sic] Large to Send Per Postal so Some More Flints From another of those Holes and Near the others but it is Impossible to Preserve the Hole as it is as the Top is so Sandy it all Falls in.

In another undated letter Carter writes:<sup>59</sup>

yester I Journied to Shotover & Got some Parts of two Pots Nearly on the Top of the Hill I was also Told of Something Found on the Top of one of the Pits the one on the Right the men Said it was Round Like the Top of a Small Stove they did not Know if it was Bronze or Iron they Could not Find it as it is Burried in the Snow but im to Have it as soon as it Thaws. I Have a Few Good Things from the Kim[meridge clay].

In the same letter Carter reports on his searches for archaeological finds in West Oxfordshire:

I have been to Pry-Norton [Brize Norton] and Shelton I Saw the Staff at the Latter Place but Could not Get it – it was a Great Ugley thing I then went on the Burford Road to Find the Particulars about the Skeletons found near the Cross Roads not far from Lawless House and I Find they were Mostly Skulls and Number 12 or 13 – the Teeth Were Broken out by the men and were Given away Some to one & Some to another they Were all together and about a Foot under ground the Particulars of the Skeleton & Knife Found nr Rock Farm I Shall Get by Post as the man was out ...

The reference to Kimmeridge clay suggests that Carter is also still looking out for fossils. There is no direct evidence for Manning collecting fossils except as folkloric objects, but in another undated letter Carter writes again on fossils and other items from Shotover:<sup>60</sup>

You Will see by the Inclosed I have been Written to about some Roman Coins & I Borrowed a Little Cash and Whent over there to Day & Saw the Coins the Person that has them States they are from Shotover Way I Could Not Buy them for the Reason I had not the Money .... I have Staff from Kirtlington and Bicester also some Tiles from the Old

<sup>56</sup> Ibid. 1648/MANN/1/MS/246/56.

<sup>57</sup> PRMOC, 1895.21.5,7–11.

<sup>58</sup> Ashmolean Museum Archives, 1648/MANN/1/MS/346/2.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid. 1648/MANN/1/MS/346/3.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid. 1648/MANN/1/MS/346/11.



Fig. 9. Flint from Shotover collected by Carter. Pitt Rivers Museum, University of Oxford, PRM 1895.21.7.

Priory and other Things Which you Will be Pleased With – also Som Fine Teeth & Dorsal Rays from the Kim Clay.

The mentions of staffs in both letters is an allusion to Manning's quest for truncheons and tipstuffs as relics of a disappearing material culture. Over eighty such objects were deposited in the Ashmolean Museum by Manning in 1911, and fully acquired from his estate in 1921.<sup>61</sup> They include the Bicester and Kirtlington truncheons, and the latter helps to date this letter to 1895, when the truncheon was acquired.<sup>62</sup>

It is a reminder that Carter was by now acting for Manning on multiple fronts. A similar instance occurs on Carter's folklore-collecting trip to Bampton in May 1894 (of which more anon). Manning acquired some pot sherds dug out from gravel pits at Calais Farm in Bampton, now in the Ashmolean, and reported that bone pins had been found with them.<sup>63</sup> It is very likely that Carter found out about these on an earlier trip to the village. In an undated note which also illustrates Carter's perseverance in following up finds, he described a visit to Bampton:<sup>64</sup>

I Journeyed to Bampton on Thursday to See the Gravel Pit and also to Try for the Bone Needles I Saw the Farmer Mr Bullin and Tried My Best to get Holt of them but it was No Use. I then found the Pit and I enquired of Some of the Men who was Loading Gravel if they Found any old Pottery and they Told Me Last Year they Found a Bottom of a Pot about the Size of a 6d.-Bucket – it Was Burried agan in the hole – there Where Lots of Broken Pieces Lying about – I got the Promise of any that May be Found.

<sup>61</sup> Ashmolean Museum Accessions Register, AN1921.371–452.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid. AN1921.388, 422.

<sup>63</sup> Manning, 'Notes on the Archaeology of Oxford and its Neighbourhood', p. 11; Ashmolean Museum Accessions Register, AN1921.100.

<sup>64</sup> Ashmolean Museum Archives, redacted from Topographic Files, Box 6/Bampton in February 2018 to be added to the Percy Manning archive.

In May 1894 Carter had obtained ghost stories from Hannah Wells in Bampton; he returned to her in July with a list of folklore-related questions, but written along the edge of Carter's page of jottings is an additional note:<sup>65</sup> 'What is the Name of the Farm where the burial Pins where [sic] found – Calis Farm on the Aston Rd'. This is a clearly follow-up question for this later visit.

At other times Carter reported to Manning about current or previous finds of skeletons at Horspath, Clifton Hampden and Minchery Farm (the last in 1897);<sup>66</sup> and about coffins at South Leigh and Studley Priory.<sup>67</sup>

In the last few years of the nineteenth century and early years of the twentieth, Carter began to sell archaeological finds – primarily prehistoric – to the Pitt Rivers Museum. In June 1897 he sold eighteen mainly Palaeolithic flint implements (arrow heads, scrapers etc.) from Blenheim Farm near Crowmarsh Gifford.<sup>68</sup> In January 1898 he sold to the Museum for 7s. fourteen Neolithic tools and weapons (hammer stone, cores, three 'fabricators', borer, scrapers, hollow scraper, and an arrow-head) from Nuffield Hill, all of which he had found himself.<sup>69</sup> Included in the sale were four further Neolithic implements he had found at North Stoke.<sup>70</sup> Over three years later in August 1901 he sold Neolithic tools and scrapers from Grim's Ditch at Wallingford, North Stoke, Cowley Moors and Cowley Heights, for 2/6, and a year after that sold flints from Mongewell and again from Grim's Ditch, for 3s.<sup>71</sup> More Neolithic tools from Mongewell followed in 1905, for which he received 8s.<sup>72</sup>

Carter was not supplying only prehistoric artefacts to the Pitt Rivers. We shall come on to the folkloric objects later (beyond the items noted above relating to his childhood); but in addition to them he sold the Museum lacemaking equipment in 1895; a buckle from Wallingford for 5s. in 1897, and some pottery rings found in Milton stream for 7/6.<sup>73</sup> A spinning wheel from Great Tew brought him 27s. in 1894.<sup>74</sup>

## FOLKLORE

On 1 May 1893 Percy Manning was staying with his mother in Watford (although it was university term at the time) and came across local children perambulating the borough carrying garlands and singing a May song. He transcribed the seven verses of the song and two variant verses, and proceeded to publish a brief note of them, with a description of the custom, in the September issue of *Folklore*.<sup>75</sup> This was in fact his first published work. It is also the first evidence we have of his interest in folklore and custom, and it may have been this event that sparked his interest. Manning's later account of how he encountered Carter illustrates how their relationship developed:<sup>76</sup>

It was as a collector of fossils that I first met Carter, but subsequently on turning my attention to folklore, it struck me that I might avail myself of his rambles over the country. He applied to his search for "old superstitions, stories, proverbs, words, &c." – such was his commission – the same keenness and shrewdness with which he had hunted

<sup>65</sup> Bodl. MS Top. Oxon d. 192, f. 93.

<sup>66</sup> Ashmolean Museum Archives, 1648/MANN/1/MS/196/3; 1648/MANN/1/MS/145/9; Bodl. MS Top. Oxon d. 192, ff. 137–8.

<sup>67</sup> Ashmolean Museum Archives, 1648/MANN/1/MS/269/3; Bodl. MS Top. Oxon d. 192, ff. 161–2.

<sup>68</sup> PRMOC, 1897.76.1–18.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid. 1898.54.1–14.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid. 1898.54.15–18.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid. 1901.67.10–38; 1902.74.1–14; 1902.74.15.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid. 1905.75.1.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid. 1895.46.8; 1897.76.19–20; 1897.76.21–23.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid. 1898.71.3.

<sup>75</sup> P. Manning, 'May-Day at Watford, Herts', *Folk-lore*, 4.3 (September 1893), pp. 403–4.

<sup>76</sup> Manning, 'Stray Notes', p. 289.

fossils. In every case he wrote his information down before bringing it to me, and it is a selection from his MSS., copied practically verbatim, that forms the main body of these papers.

The first dated items from Carter in Manning's collections relating to folklore are from the first half of 1894, and relate mainly to ghost stories, and from June 1894 to May songs and garlands. The first ghost story, recorded by Carter in February 1894 from Dorchester-on-Thames and transcribed by Manning, is typical:<sup>77</sup>

Colwell Spring is in Dorchester Parish, but there is another called Shadwell Spring in Drayton Parish. The waters of both were formerly used for sore or weak eyes. Between these springs there are some fields, that many years ago were farmed by a man named Faulkner, who used to ride to both, and use the waters. In course of time he died, but after his death he was frequently seen riding the same black horse. A man named Hicks of Drayton, aged 76, told me that he was with his uncle many years back – and he was over 80 – and he told him he saw the man and horse coming towards the gate, and he hurried to open it; but before he could get to it, they both passed through it without it being opened. Hicks said he was afraid to go that way for a long time after.

This tale also presages one of Manning's other interests – folk medicine – and is typical of many of the ghost stories in that it relates to the limits of memory – in this case about seventy years previously. In the same month Carter also reported a tale from Kirtlington – the 'laying in the pond' of the ghost of Sir James Dashwood, who died in 1779.<sup>78</sup> In July 1894 Carter reported another ghost-laying from Hannah Wells of Bampton (of whom more later), who related that the manor house was haunted by the ghost of Mrs Whittaker, the lady of the house, who had died of a broken heart following her husband's unfaithfulness; the ghost had been laid in Calves Close Pond but the pond had dried out so her ghost returned, and was laid again in a barrel of beer still walled up – so Wells said – in the cellar.<sup>79</sup>

In 1894 Carter also collected ghost stories from Beckley, Headington, Little Tew and Stanton Harcourt.<sup>80</sup> Several more from him in Manning's collection are undated. Hannah Wells of Bampton told Carter of the medicinal Lady Well in the village in May 1894, and in June Carter collected information about the well at Well Wick Farm in Headington in a seventeenth-century well-house, used within living memory.<sup>81</sup> Carter's later sale of medicinal items to the Pitt Rivers Museum has already been noted above.

## FIRST INVESTIGATIONS INTO CUSTOM

The stimulus for Manning's interest had been the Watford encounter with May songs, and in this early period Carter was also collecting his first information about them. Alice Little has recently written in detail about the May songs, many of which were extremely similar to one another.<sup>82</sup> The majority of the songs in Manning's papers were collected by Carter on his behalf. Carter collected the lyrics of songs from Charlbury, Drayton, Warborough and Blackthorn in June 1894, Clifton (near Deddington) and Charlton-on-Otmoor in August

<sup>77</sup> Bodl. MS Top. Oxon d. 191a, f. 107, and published by Manning in his 'Stray Notes on Oxfordshire Folklore (Continued) [2]', *Folk-lore* 14.1 (March 1903), p. 70.

<sup>78</sup> Bodl. MS Top. Oxon d. 191a, f. 113.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.* f. 92.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.* ff. 81–82, 99–100, 108, 110, 111–112.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.* d. 191, ff. 226, 253.

<sup>82</sup> A. Little, "Good Morning Ladies and Gentlemen": Songs, Music and Musical Instruments in the Percy Manning Collection, in Heaney (ed.), *Percy Manning*, pp. 191–224.



and Thame and Spelsbury in September.<sup>83</sup> Several other May songs collected by Carter are, unfortunately, undated.

The most significant of Carter's encounters in 1894 was undoubtedly that with Hannah Wells of Bampton. As noted above, he had met her in May 1894 and again in July 1894. On the latter occasion Carter's notes are very revealing (Fig. 10):<sup>84</sup>

Bampton May Day – I find this to be the Club Feast day namely Whit Monday – not May Day.

Question

- 1 Is it Still Kept up – yes
- 2 How are the Children Dressed – Mostly in White with the Ribbons the Colours of the Club Red White & Blue
- 3 Can you get a Mace – yes
- 4 What is the Garland Like – two hoops Crossed and Covered with Moss Flowers &c Ribbons & Carried With a Stick Passed through them by the Lady and her Maid I here explain Some of the School Children Like Other Places Go Round sometimes on May Day) Formerly Jack in the Green as Well but now it is Mostly Confined to Whit Monday.

So Carter has gone to Bampton primed with a list of questions about May Day customs but in the course of the conversation is alerted to events on Whit Monday, which was when the morris dancers appeared. Manning was keen to pursue the acquisition of objects – the mace (a decorated pole, which Carter subsequently obtains), and more. This was also the occasion on which Carter provided the additional information about the Calais Farm burial pins. He was simultaneously pursuing a variety of agendas relevant to Manning's interests, and opening up new lines of enquiry.

Manning's initial list of questions for Carter to ask had included an instruction to seek a mace and garlands, but the switch of the May ceremony to Whit Monday, when the Bampton morris dancers appeared, led to a quest for material relics of that custom too. Manning wanted a pipe-and-tabor ('whittle-and-dub' to Carter), but in his report about the quest Carter noted, on the back of the sheet of paper, the names of the Bampton dancers.<sup>85</sup> Shortly afterwards, the hunt was extended to morris costume as well.<sup>86</sup> In July Carter made notes on 'Bampton morris 90 years ago'. These notes reveal his uncertainty about both his relationship with Manning – he is still very diffident – and the salient characteristics of this new field of research, which he feels he has to explain to Manning:<sup>87</sup>

Thomas Radbone Bred & Born in this Town was the Father of Hannah Wells Who is Now 80 years old he Played the Whittle & Dub i.e. (Pipe & Tabor) for many years and also Carried the Box the Morris here Differs From Most others as they only used Handkerchiefs & Not Sticks as others did – their Side Consisted of 6 Dancers a Whittle & Dubber A Clown With Staff Calfs Tail & Bladder – it was and His [sic] Still the Custom to Carry a rich Cake Provided by Some Lady of the Town Who Gave it to a Person Called a Sword Bearer so that there are 9 in all – the Cake was Carried on the Sword a very Old one always Used for the Purpose. The Sword & Cake Was Decorated With Ribbons When Dancing Commenced Anyone Who Wished Could Taste the Cake by Applying to the Sword Bearer When al was over at night What was Left of the Cake was Devided among the 9 Morris Who Generally Sent it to there Friends the Lady Told Me her Sons Share this Time was Sent to there Relations in London.

<sup>83</sup> Bodl. MS Top. Oxon d. 199, ff. 151–159, 162, 167, 179, 185, 186.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid. d. 192, f. 93.

<sup>85</sup> Bodl. MS Top. Oxon d. 200, f. 72.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid. f. 75.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid. f. 146.

93

Bampton May Day - I find this ~~to be the~~  
 the Club Feast day namely <sup>Whit-Monday</sup> ~~not May Day~~

Question

1 - Is it still kept up — Yes

2 - How are the Children Dressed — Mostly in White  
 With the Ribbons the Colour of the  
 Club Red, White, & Blue

3 Can you get a Mace — Yes

4 What is the Garland Like — Two hoops  
 Crossed and Covered With Moss Flowers &  
 Ribbons & Carried With a Stick Passed through  
 them by the Lady & her Maid

I here explain some of the School Children  
 (like other places. For Wound sometimes on May  
 Day) Formerly Jack in the Green as well  
 but now it is mostly confined to Whit-Monday

Fig. 10. Carter's notes from Bampton. Bodl. MS Top. Oxon. d. 192, f. 93.

I Have her Old Father's Collecting Box but I had a Job to get it.

Your Obedient Servant

T.J. Carter July 2nd 1894.

I have also a Pair of Latin [latten-M.H.] Bells that Came from Ham Court, they are in good Condition

As he notes, Carter obtained the treasury (money-collecting box) which had belonged to Hannah Wells' father. From 'Henry Wells' (possibly an error for Hannah's son George Wells, given the reported age and the assertion that he led the dancers; more probably her first son Henry Radband, though his age does not match), Carter obtained for Manning costumes, cake-tin, fool's bladder and other items.<sup>88</sup>

Carter itemized his expenditure on Manning's behalf and his notes bring to life what his quest entailed:<sup>89</sup>

|  |    |     |
|--|----|-----|
| What I have Paid away Ex<illegible> the three Days   |    |     |
| 3 Days Work one hard Walking   | 15 |     |
| <i>Train &amp; Bus – Bampton</i>   | 3  | 7   |
| <i>Train ... – St Harcourt [nearest station Eynsham 2.5 miles away – M.H.]</i>                   | 1  | 2   |
| <i>Bells – from Ham Court [a property in Bampton – M.H.]</i>                                     | 4  |     |
| <i>Old Radbones Collecting Box</i>   | 4  |     |
| <i>the Cake Tin – I had to get a new one or I could not have this</i>                            | 4  | 6   |
| <i>Set of bells – These Bells Where [sic] Henry Wells and His Fathers &amp; his Grandfathers</i> | 7  | 6   |
| <i>Mace</i>  | 1  | 6   |
| <i>Trams [within Oxford – Carter lived about 1.5 miles from the railway station – M.H.]</i>      | 1  |     |
| <i>Money paid away</i>   | 1  | 7 3 |

The Mace was Made by old Hannah Wells age 81 this year the old one Being mislaid. I am in Hopes of Getting the old one.

The Cake Tin have been in Use for Many Years the Head Morris Keeps it – the Present Head morris being Henry Wells aged 50 – before him his Father – and his Grandfather.

Could not Get the Sword as they have not one of there own they Borrow one) [sic] I had to Get another New tin Made Like this or I Should not have Got this the Cake is Made in another tin Just this Size and then Put in This.

Manning wasted no time and exhibited his recently acquired trophies at the Loan Exhibition of Oxfordshire antiquities held at the Randolph Hotel in Oxford on 7–8 November, of which he was the chief organizer. He put on display the dancer's costume from Bampton, the cake tin and maces, together with the pipe from Bampton and tabor from Deddington. He also exhibited a number of other morris items: a pair of bell pads from Headington, maces and a money box from Kirtlington, and a pipe-and-tabor from Leaffield,<sup>90</sup> but we do not have documentary evidence of their acquisition.

It is possible that Carter obtained the Leaffield items when visiting the village in August 1894. Kirtlington is rather a special case: Manning had a copy of G.A. Rowell's 1886 article

<sup>88</sup> P. Manning, 'Some Oxfordshire Seasonal Festivals: With Notes on Morris-Dancing in Oxfordshire', *Folklore*, 8.4 (December 1897), p. 310.

<sup>89</sup> Bodl. MS Top. Oxon d. 200, f. 76v.

<sup>90</sup> *A Catalogue of Objects Illustrating the History and Antiquities of Oxford, and of the Neighbourhood: Loan Exhibition held in the Assembly Rooms of the Randolph Hotel, on Wednesday, Nov. 7, and Thursday, Nov. 8 1894* (1894), p. 10.

'Notes on Some Old-Fashioned English Customs' which described the morris and the Lamb Ale at Kirtlington<sup>91</sup> (the Lamb Ale is a variant on the Whitsun ale which provided the social context for the dancing); and he had even bought a spearhead at the sale of Rowell's effects in 1891, so he was certainly familiar with Rowell and his work. Carter's notes on the Kirtlington Lamb Ale for Manning are unfortunately undated,<sup>92</sup> but given his family connections with the village it may well have been among the first destinations for Carter in 1894, and these items may have come to Manning through Carter's initiative.

The list of exhibited items is indicative of the energy with which Carter pursued morris regalia and information during the summer of 1894. Manning clearly sent Carter on a hunt for information and further objects relating to morris dancing. As in other spheres, he gave Carter a set of instructions and questions to pursue. We do not have the explicit list of questions asked, but it is possible to deduce them from the typical sets of reports which Carter made back to him.

For example, Carter began to explore in the Wychwood area, and one of the first records is that from Ascot-under-Wychwood in August 1894. The report he gave to Manning consists, as do most of his reports, of a single sheet of paper, postcard-sized (Fig. 11). We can set Carter's notes<sup>93</sup> against Manning's putative questions:

|   |   |
|---|---|
| Which morris team?                                    | Ascot morris  |
| When did this team last dance?                        | 1864  |
| What time of year?                                    | The Wake, Whit Monday   |
| Who were the dancers and where are they now?          | Dancers –<br>1. Daniel Smith – Forman – U.S.A.<br>2. John Moss<br>3. William Smith<br>4. William Moss<br>5. Benjamin Moss – danced 20 years<br>6. Joseph Moss   |
| Who were the office-holders?                          | Squire William Cook from Lineham<br>Sword Bearer William Moss Senr U.S.A.<br>Spare Man i.e. Ragman Thos Smith<br>Pipe & Tabour Thos Langford Finstock   |
| Who was the musician and what instrument did he play? |   |
| What were the costume and other appurtenances?        | Costumes High hats Pleated Shirts & White Trousers/<br>Red & Blue Ribbons, Sticks & Handkerchiefs   |
| Are there any interesting events you remember?        | 35 years ago these Danced at Pudlicot House on Whit Monday Morning and the Gentleman then Living there after Seeing there Dancing Set them Boxing for Money the First to Draw Blood to Receive 2/6 the Second 1/0 – they Reseved 14/- that Morning for the Entertainment and as Much Beer as they Liked to Drink. |
| Who did you speak to?                                 | Ben Moss 70 years old   |

[Side note: All labourers]

Manning transcribed these notes for his immediate use, more or less *literatim*. He adds an explanatory note for 'Ragman', 'to carry clothes etc.'<sup>94</sup> Conversely, Manning does not transcribe

<sup>91</sup> G.A. Rowell, 'Notes on Some Old-Fashioned English Customs: The Mummers; the Morris-dancers; Whitsun-Ales; Lamb-Ales', *Folk-lore Journal*, 4.2 (1886), pp. 97–109.

<sup>92</sup> Bodl. MS Top. Oxon d. 200, ff. 222–4.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid. f. 133.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid. f. 132.



Ascot Morris 1864 the Wake 133  
Whit Monday

Dancers - 1 Daniel Smith Forman U.S.A.  
2 John - Moss  
3 William Smith  
4 William Moss  
5 Benjamin Moss Danced 20 years  
6 Joseph - Moss

Squire William Cook from Lincum

Sword Bearer William Moss Sen U.S.A.

Harman i.e. Ragman Mr. Smith

Pipe & Tabour - Thos Langford Finslock

35 years ago these Danced at Pudloot House  
on Whit Monday Morning and the Gentleman  
then Living there after seeing them Dancing  
set them Boxing for Money the First  
to Draw Blood to Receive 2/6 - the Second  
2/6 - they Received 14/- that Morning for  
the Entertainment - and as Much Beer  
as they Liked to Drink - Costumes  
High Hats Pleated Shirts & White Trousers (Red & Blue Ribbons)  
Sticks & Handkerchiefs Ben Moss 70 years old

Fig. 11. Carter's notes on Ascot-under-Wychwood morris. Bodl. MS Top. Oxon d. 200, f. 133.



the anecdote, although when he came to write about the custom three years later he did include some anecdotal reports.<sup>95</sup>

The only other collecting of information on morris dance sides during August 1894 came from Spelsbury, where Carter unearthed the story of the team of women that had danced on the church tower in the 1820s, and again recovered a list of the dancers' names.<sup>96</sup> He continued to be active on other fronts on Manning's behalf, collecting in the same month details of the May Day customs at Charlton-on-Otmoor and Chinnor, and the May song from Clifton near Deddington.<sup>97</sup> At Deddington he also successfully pursued and acquired for Manning the tabor used by the noted morris pipe-and-taborer Joseph Woods, whom he described as:<sup>98</sup>

...an old very Deaf & Feeble old Man he Played for the Morris from 16 years of age a Native of Deddington Began Learning at 10 and has Played to all the Villages for 25 Miles Round.

He also played Whittle & Dub in London 60 years ago When he and His Wife Whent up for Hay Making.

He Was Born 1812.

He is to Feeble to Travel and is very Deff.

Alice Little has explored Carter's hunts for musical relics in some detail, how he followed clues and leads only to end in frustration in most cases.<sup>99</sup>

The following month Carter concentrated on morris dancing to the exclusion of almost everything else – the only non-morris collecting datable to September 1894 are May songs from Spelsbury and Thame.<sup>100</sup> He collected information about the morris sides from Asthall Leigh, Brize Norton, Field Assarts, Finstock, Leafield and Shipton-under-Wychwood.<sup>101</sup> These are all close to Wychwood Forest, and Carter's lists of names and further details have enabled the reconstruction not only of the social context but also of family relationships: for example, that the Richard Eeles who danced at Field Assarts was father to Richard Eeles who was the morris dancers' Fool at Leafield and to George Eeles the Fool at Asthall Leigh.<sup>102</sup> This kind of information is invaluable in contextualizing and understanding the dance tradition.

In the same month Carter also visited and retrieved information from Wheatley and, over the Northamptonshire border, Chipping Warden (where the dancers again were said to have danced on the church tower).<sup>103</sup>

Carter's approach to finding informants is illuminated in another of his errands for Manning in July 1894, for information about Marston Cross. He reports to Manning:<sup>104</sup>

Sir I Made a Special Journey to Marston to Enquire about the above and as Usual I found out the Oldest Person in the Village one William Hewlett Who Told Me it was always thought one of the Crosses Stood at Big Cross Ground Corner near the Lane opposite the Stone Stile Leading across the Fields to Elsfield the other He Remembers being at Church Corner he States When a Boy he with others Ust to Make Mud Puddings in the hole in the

<sup>95</sup> P. Manning, 'Some Oxfordshire Seasonal Festivals: With Notes on Morris-Dancing in Oxfordshire', *Folklore*, 8.4 (Dec. 1897), pp. 307–24.

<sup>96</sup> Bodl. MS Top. Oxon d. 200, f. 236.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid. d. 192, f. 128; d. 199, ff. 153–8, 162.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid. d. 200, f. 173.

<sup>99</sup> Little, 'Percy Manning, Henry Balfour, Thomas Carter'.

<sup>100</sup> Bodl. MS Top. Oxon d. 199, ff. 179, 185; d. 192, f. 108.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid. d. 200, ff. 134–5, 159–61, 182–3, 184–5, 225–30, 233–4.

<sup>102</sup> K. Chandler, *Morris Dancing in the English South Midlands, 1660–1900: A Chronological Gazetteer* (1993), cited example from p. 163; revised edition incorporated into his *Morris Dancing in the English South Midlands 1660–1900* (Musical traditions CD MTCD250, 2003).

<sup>103</sup> Bodl. MS Top. Oxon d. 200, ff. 170–1, 244–5.

<sup>104</sup> Bodl. G.A. Oxon c. 317(11).

Top Stone in after years some 50 or 60 year ago it was Pulled Down and the Stones Formes [sic] the Steps Leading up to Mrs James Sim's Loft the Large Stone With the hole is Said to be Put in the Foundation of Sims's house – Which Was Inlarged years ago

August was also the month in which he made the merry peg board (above) for Manning, and also first described to him the game of dabs at Kirtlington<sup>105</sup> (the occasion, noted above, on which he mentioned the fossils in connection with the game was a year later).

## CUSTOM and THE PITT RIVERS MUSEUM

We have already looked at Carter's sale of archaeological and ethnographic artifacts to the Pitt Rivers in the decade 1894–1904. On 19 March 1895 Carter obtained information about the Wychwood Forest Whit Hunt when he interviewed John Fisher and John Bennett of Ducklington.<sup>106</sup> This was part of his ongoing researches for Manning. Carter also obtained for Manning three examples of whit-horns, newly made (of coiled willow bark) 'by an old man who had made and used them 60 years before'.<sup>107</sup> At the same time, however, Carter was also having whit-horns made for Henry Balfour (curator of the Pitt Rivers Museum); Balfour presented them to the Museum later the same year.<sup>108</sup> Carter also sold items direct to the Museum: on 8 April 1895 he sold a complete set of morris costume and regalia to it (Fig. 12).<sup>109</sup> There is no evidence in the Manning collections that Manning was offered the costume or was involved in any way, either then or later. Just the following month Carter was supplying him with information about the history of houses in the Cowley Road,<sup>110</sup> so the two were certainly still in contact, and it seems extraordinary that Carter should not have offered them to Manning.

The accessions files in the Pitt Rivers do not throw much contemporary light on the source of the morris items, but subsequent research has indicated that they had dual origins.<sup>111</sup> The only contemporary indication is that for many years (until 1952) the costume lay neglected in a box with 'Headington Quarry' written on the outside. Despite that, there are strong indications that the main part of the costume, including top hat, shirt, baldricks (cross-ribbons) and handkerchief came from Kirtlington, and given Carter's familial connections with the village this is not at all unlikely. The colours of the baldricks and hat ribbons (pink and pale blue) are those of the Dashwood family at Kirtlington, and Manning recorded that the Kirtlington team – uniquely – used those colours.<sup>112</sup> The Kirtlington team wore top hats such as this, while the Headington Quarry team wore cricket caps.

The collecting box and the sticks seem to be entirely consistent with a Headington Quarry provenance. The sticks are blue and red (the Headington team's colours) and the box bears the initials 'J.T.' on it, very probably Joe Trafford, foreman (lead dancer) of the Headington Quarry team in the mid nineteenth century. This is consistent with Carter having considerable knowledge of the Headington Quarry dancers by then, as evidenced by the 1894 bell pads, although that knowledge is not reflected in any datable Manning manuscripts. Carter received £2 11s. 3d. for the costume (equivalent to about £307 in 2017),<sup>113</sup> but we have no details of what he paid.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid. d. 191a, f. 74.

<sup>106</sup> Ibid. d. 200, ff. 174, 176–7.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid. f. 3; Manning, 'Some Oxfordshire Seasonal Festivals', p. 312.

<sup>108</sup> Little, 'Percy Manning, Henry Balfour, Thomas Carter'; A. Little, 'The Whit-Horn, England: The Other Within, Pitt Rivers Museum, 2007, <http://web.prm.ox.ac.uk/england/englishness-whit-horn.html>, accessed June 2018.

<sup>109</sup> PRMOC, 1895.46.1.

<sup>110</sup> Bodl. MS Top. Oxon d. 192, f. 204.

<sup>111</sup> M. Heaney, 'Morris Dancer's Costume, England: The Other Within, Pitt Rivers Museum, 2008, <http://web.prm.ox.ac.uk/england/englishness-morris-dancers-costume.html>, accessed June 2018.

<sup>112</sup> Bodl. MS Top. Oxon d. 200, f. 214.

<sup>113</sup> Data on prices from <http://inflation.iamkate.com>, accessed Jan. 2018.



*Fig. 12. Morris dancer's costume acquired by Carter probably from Kirtlington. Pitt Rivers Museum, University of Oxford, 1895.46.1.*

The other evidence for Carter's work on behalf of Manning suggests that this was at a much reduced level during 1895, which may explain his sale of the morris costume to the Museum. For Manning, he collected some more seasonal rhymes – this time relating to Shrove Tuesday and 5th November – from the Baldons and Bampton, also details of the Oakley morris over the border in Buckinghamshire.<sup>114</sup> He described to Manning the development of the housing in the Cowley Road in Oxford, and the tales of the 'Lawless House' said to be a refuge for criminals as it lay outside all parish jurisdictions, on the Brize Norton to Burford road.<sup>115</sup> He also reported a few archaeological finds: of a skeleton at Clifton Hampden and a coffin at South Leigh, both found some thirty years before; and of coins and an iron spearhead found during the construction of the new lock on the Thames at Northmoor. Carter sketched the spearhead for Manning.<sup>116</sup>

We have a record of only a single exchange between Carter and Manning during 1896: on 11 August Carter informed Manning of a former open-field system at a field called the Tithe Piece, Long Crendon – discontinued by then but remaining open within living memory of 1896.<sup>117</sup>

### SONG and DANCE 1897–1899

On 16 March 1897 Manning read a paper on 'Some Oxfordshire seasonal festivals' to the Folklore Society. Until then his only datable contact with Carter that year was Carter's report of cures for cramp, headache, warts, whooping cough collected from Mrs Buswell of Wootton in February.<sup>118</sup> But Manning was asked to provide an article based on his talk to the Society's journal *Folklore*, and this was the spur to a further round of intense activity by him and by Carter on his behalf, leading to the publication of an article in December 1897.<sup>119</sup>

One of the foci of Carter's collecting for Manning in the second half of 1897 was May songs. The first was at Blackthorn on 16 June 1897. This was followed by Wootton (by Woodstock) and nearby Sansom in July 1897, with a return visit to Blackthorn. On 12 September and 14 October he collected May songs from Tetsworth, on 18 October from Poundon and on 27 October from Oakley.<sup>120</sup> On the same occasions he collected information on the gibbet at Milton (from Tetsworth), and an anecdote about a boastful Oakley farmer's fate. There were witch and ghost stories from Tetsworth, Salford, Marsh Gibbon, Crowell Wood (near Oakley), and Iffley, the last (on 11 November) leading also to an anecdote about a crossroads burial there and a week later to similar anecdotes from Fowler and north Oxfordshire.<sup>121</sup>

Manning meanwhile was arranging for photographs of the Bampton morris dancers to be taken at Whitsuntide that year, and they were subsequently published in his article.<sup>122</sup> Carter picked up information about the Marsh Gibbon and Twyford morris dancers, along the lines of his activities in 1894.<sup>123</sup>

In November 1897 Carter made his first reports to Manning which contain solfa notation for songs and tunes, in addition to lyrics. The earliest datable item of Carter's which has solfa notation is the Bladon Shroving song which he had already supplied to Manning in 1895, but

<sup>114</sup> Bodl. MS Top. Oxon d. 199, f. 43; d. 192, f. 115; d. 200, f. 232.

<sup>115</sup> Ibid. d. 192, f. 204; d. 193, f. 52.

<sup>116</sup> Ashmolean Museum Archives, 1648/MANN/1/MS/239/3,4; Manning, 'Notes on the Archaeology of Oxford and its Neighbourhood', p. 23.

<sup>117</sup> Bodl. MS Top. Oxon d. 192, f. 133.

<sup>118</sup> Ibid. f. 80.

<sup>119</sup> Manning, 'Some Oxfordshire Seasonal Festivals'.

<sup>120</sup> Bodl. MS Top. Oxon d. 199, ff. 147–9, 191; d. 192, ff. 77, 91, 100, 101, 102.

<sup>121</sup> Ibid. d. 192, ff. 51, 55, 73, 75, 77–78, 141–3.

<sup>122</sup> Manning, 'Some Oxfordshire Seasonal Festivals', plates II, III.

<sup>123</sup> Bodl. MS Top. Oxon d. 200, ff. 231, 241.

for which he supplied notation on 5 November 1897.<sup>124</sup> It may be that this was a dry run for a more ambitious exercise in collecting tunes, for on 19–20 November and on 3 December Carter met members of the dormant Headington Quarry morris dancers and noted several tunes down from them.<sup>125</sup> Alice Little has conducted a thorough musical analysis of the musical elements in Manning's collections, including the contributions by Carter.<sup>126</sup>

The items of morris regalia from Headington that Carter sold to the Pitt Rivers Museum in 1895 show that he was already acquainted with the former morris dancers there. As noted above, the Museum's treasury box is very probably that which had belonged to the dancer Joe Trafford, and on 19–20 November Carter conducted in-depth interviews with Joe's brother Robert. The dated musical items from those meetings are 'Johnny's So Long At The Fair' (f. 91) and 'Brighton Camp' (f. 93) on 19 November and 'Getting Upstairs' (f. 90) on 20 November. Undated items but undoubtedly from the same two days are 'Mother Oxford Dance', 'Rigs of Marlow' (both f. 88), and 'Saturday Night' (f. 97). Also undated, and credited to 'R Trafford' are 'Bright Sunny Days' (f. 92), 'The Bonny Green Garters' (f. 94), and 'Country Gardens' (f. 96). One tune, 'Balance the Straw' (f. 95) is credited to 'Rd Trafford'. No Richard Trafford is known from Headington Quarry in this period so this too may be Robert.

On 3 December Carter made another visit and collected a list of dancers together with an anecdote relating to yet another song, 'Roasted Woman', and the solfa notation associated with it (ff. 189–90). The occasion is typical of the multifaceted nature of Carter's engagement with his informants: biographical information, social history and musical transcription all in one encounter:

Take an Old Woman and Roast Her  
And Baste Her Well with Chese  
Taken out on a Cold Winters night  
I am Sure the Lady Would Freeze  
Take her out the next Morning  
Put her in a Bundle of Straw  
Then Set Fire to the Bottom  
I am Sure the Old Lady Would Thaw  
m m m m r d f f  
m m m m f s r  
m m m m r d f f f f  
f m m m r d t<sub>1</sub> d

Whitsuntide 1847 at Old Headington Hill House the Headington Morris Was Engaged to Dance the House at that Time Being Full of Visitors When th Squire – i.e. Fool Made His Appearance There Was a Rush to See the Sight – He Having on New Dress for the Occasion – Ladies asked Him Who made him that Dress – He told them his Grandmother – They then asked Him how Long I Took Her to make it – He Said near 100 years for She was at it all her Days and She Was Near 100 When She Died he Was then asked if he Could Sing and he Told the Company he Could but he Would only Sing one Short Song because his men Was Waiting to Dance - Song the other Side [i.e. Roasted Woman]. When he Had Finished he had to Run.

The Side that Danced  
J. Trafford L[iving]  
W Kimber L  
J Jones D[ead]  
R Parsons L

<sup>124</sup> Ibid. d. 199, f. 43.

<sup>125</sup> Ibid. d. 200, ff. 87–97, 189–90.

<sup>126</sup> Little, "“Good Morning Ladies and Gentlemen””.



J Hedges L  
 W Smith D  
 E Morris – odd man L  
 Squire J Haynes i.e. Black Jack D  
 Dance most admired Brighton Camp

All of Carter's transcriptions except for 'Roasted Woman' were converted into stave notation for Manning, very probably by Charles Taphouse, of the Oxford family of musicians and music-sellers. The fact that the last was missing suggests that the earlier set of tunes was sent to Taphouse very soon after collection, although they were apparently not returned to Manning until 1898.<sup>127</sup> All this is indicative of an intense burst of activity, and this may well be related to Manning's acquisition of a photograph of the Headington Quarry morris dancers.<sup>128</sup> Manning's own account of events is given in lecture notes in his collection:<sup>129</sup>

I was able to publish early in 1897 a short account of morris dancing in this county ... It then struck me that it might be possible to revive the Headington morris-dancers, who had kept up their performances till about 20 years previously. Fortunately I had picked up a photograph taken in 1864 ... of these dancers, and I discovered that two of the men, James Hedges and Jack Horwood, who were represented in that photo, were still living in Headington.

In fact the publication was in December, though he had given the source lecture in March; and the photograph was most probably taken around 1875. It would be tempting to think that it was Carter's research in Headington and perhaps even the November meetings which had uncovered the photograph, but this seems unlikely. Besides Hedges and Horwood, others present in the photograph were alive: William Kimber Senior (father of the morris dancer and musician central to the later revival of morris dancing, which was itself a consequence of the events Manning was now setting in train); Robert Cooper; and Joe and Robert Trafford. If Carter had obtained the photograph from either of the Traffords, they would surely have been identified by Manning as still living. Much more likely is that Manning acquired the photograph first and that this inspired him to send Carter on a hunt for further information, for which he went to the Traffords. Manning's plans were now moving beyond the collecting of survivals to the re-creation of morris dancing itself. The next paragraphs of Manning's own account of events (given at a lecture over a decade later) succinctly explain what happened:

With Carter's aid, I persuaded them [the dancers he had identified, Hedges and Horwood – M.H.] to get a side together in the Autumn of 1898, which practised under the tuition of Hedges & Horwood during the winter. By the spring they were ready to dance and were provided with the necessary dress and equipment, on the exact lines of my old photo. The whole training was carried on by themselves, without any interference from me or from any outside source, so that there was no possibility of contaminating the pure tradition. (This is the great danger of today.)

With the aid of my old friend the late Councillor T.W. Taphouse, who was responsible for a selection of old English songs & melodies which were sandwiched between the dances, a public performance of the morris was given on March 15, 1899 [in fact, 13 March – M.H.], in the Corn Exchange, Oxford ... Morris dancing at once jumped back into public favour at Headington, and the dancers used to go about and give performances on their own account. On one of these occasions they were seen by Mr Cecil Sharp, who happened to be staying at Headington, as he tells me, and his interest was so aroused by what was then, to him, a novel sight, that he determined to follow the subject up.

<sup>127</sup> Little, "Good Morning Ladies and Gentlemen", pp. 242–3.

<sup>128</sup> B. Grant et al., 'Copy Gp Morice Dancers Mr Manning', *English Dance and Song*, 43.2 (1981), pp. 14–16.

<sup>129</sup> Bodl. MS Top. Oxon d. 200, ff. 63–4.



Fig. 13. Constable's truncheon sold to the Pitt Rivers Museum by Carter. Pitt Rivers Museum, University of Oxford, 1898.54.19.

The timelines here are rather uncertain. Manning is clearly a little hazy on dates, and it may well be that the side began to come together again in the autumn of 1897, when Manning probably had the photograph and Carter was certainly collecting tunes and other anecdotes. What is certain is that the concert took place on 13 March 1899 and was a great success. As Manning notes, it led to the meeting with Cecil Sharp nine months later, which is usually taken to mark the trigger for the folk dance revival.

This was a new step in the quest for authenticity in antiquarian research. Manning's was the first attempt to resurrect a community's existing morris team which was on the brink of extinction. He emphasises the participant-led nature of the revival. A contemporary review of the concert tells us that 'The organisation of the dancers was carried out by Mr. T. Carter, the geologist, of St Clement's, to whom much credit is due'.<sup>130</sup> Besides confirming Carter's pivotal role in the process, the description of him as a 'geologist' suggests that this kind of collecting was now his main source of income. Although we have little evidence for his palaeontological activity after the 1860s, this is clearly a self-identification: in the 1901 census he describes himself as a 'geologist – own account', changing from the 'general labourer' in the two previous censuses.<sup>131</sup> In 1905 a ladle is sent to him addressed to 'Mr T.J. Carter, Geologist, 11 New St'.<sup>132</sup>

While the preparation for the morris revival concert was going on during 1898, Carter continued to be busy on a number of fronts. He collected several more ghost stories for Manning, from Headington, Barton, Wheatley, Beckley and Woodperry, all in January-February 1898.<sup>133</sup> He reported on social life and history (pranks played on newly hired labourers; the fate of the turnpike at St Clement's) and provided Manning with the full text of a mummers' play from Headington.<sup>134</sup> We have noted above the sale of Neolithic implements to the Pitt Rivers Museum in January 1898, and the charms and spinning wheel sold to it in July. In May that year Carter had reported to Manning a cure for cramp, and he also gave details of cures for toothache, warts, rheumatism and deafness.<sup>135</sup> He also sold a constable's truncheon 'used in the bread riots, Oxford 1868' (in fact, the riots took place in November 1867) to the Museum in January 1898, for 2s. 6d. (Fig. 13).<sup>136</sup> This is another instance where he supplies something to the Pitt Rivers Museum which we know he was also supplying to Manning at much the same time, and where we do not know why this particular item should not have gone to him instead.

<sup>130</sup> 'Exhibition of Morris Dancing – An Interesting Revival', *Jackson's Oxford Journal*, 18 March 1899.

<sup>131</sup> TNA, RG 13/1380, p. 7 (87).

<sup>132</sup> Bodl. MS Top. Oxon d. 192, f. 179.

<sup>133</sup> Ibid. d. 191a, f. 109; d. 192, ff. 47, 65, 49; d. 191a, f. 104.

<sup>134</sup> Ibid. d. 192, ff. 85, 119, 186.

<sup>135</sup> Ibid. d. 192, ff. 81–3.

<sup>136</sup> PRMOC, 1898.54.19.

Early in 1899 Carter sent Manning Shroving rhymes from Oakley, Ickford and Worminghall, but after the March concert we have no records of anything Carter was doing that year.<sup>137</sup>

## LATER ACTIVITIES

In 1900 Carter was approaching 70 and the record of his activities becomes much less in quantity, and more heterogeneous: there are few signs that he was pursuing a set agenda. He tells Manning about the former bookstall at the fair that used to be held on Christ Church meadow,<sup>138</sup> and describes his hunt for a waterman's badge for Manning.<sup>139</sup>

Sir I Have Traced another Badge it is Now in the Posession of Old Charles Blagrove Who Was a Waterman the Same time as David Talboys it is in good Preservation but he Will not Part With it as Long as He Lives. This is the only one I Have been Able at Present to Trace. This Makes only 4 namely one in the Barge one The Treasurer has one Talboys and one Blagrove.

Around this time also he passed to Manning a money box from Brill, dating from 1823.<sup>140</sup> Two years later, in December 1902, he bought for Manning a horn lantern, and, typically, supplied an anecdote about it:<sup>141</sup>

This old horn lantern was used for many years by old Miss Ann Snow of Headington Quarry, principally for showing her the way to Old Headington Church, as that was many years before the church was built at Quarry. She died 14 years ago, aged 77, and it was her father's before she was born.

The period 1901–1904 also saw more activity relating to customs. In 1901 he was chasing (unsuccessfully) the pipe and tabor formerly belonging to the morris musician Jim the Laddie, of Sherborne in Gloucestershire; and recorded the details of the still active Eynsham morris in November 1902. A month later he acquired the text of the Marston mummers' play.<sup>142</sup> The sale of Stone Age implements to the Pitt Rivers Museum in 1901 and 1902 has been noted above; in 1903 he sold morris bell pads from Headington Quarry to the Museum for 3s. 6d. The team had danced at the coronation festivities for Edward VII in 1902 and these pads had evidently been made for the occasion. Carter seems to have snapped up several sets, and four sets are now in the Museum: in addition to those sold direct to the Museum he sold a pair to Edward Tylor (Professor of Anthropology) and apparently one or two pairs also to Balfour.<sup>143</sup>

Carter supplied Manning with reminiscences of cockfighting and lacemaking during 1902, and on 10 February a tale of a man lost in the snow going over Harry Bear's Pit (in Shrotover) supposedly on that same Shrove Tuesday date in 1844 or 45.<sup>144</sup> (In fact Shrove Tuesday fell on 20 February in 1844 and on 4 February in 1845. It did not fall on 10 February between 1812 and 1880.)

Carter was still keeping his eye out for chance finds. On 2 June 1903 he supplied Manning with a candle holder 'Found 7 ft below the foundations of old houses in St Clements near the Cherwell, in other words very close to his home in New Street'.<sup>145</sup>

<sup>137</sup> Bodl. MS Top. Oxon d. 199, ff. 43, 89.

<sup>138</sup> Ibid. d. 183, f. 30.

<sup>139</sup> Ibid. d. 201, f. 264.

<sup>140</sup> Ashmolean Museum Accessions Register, AN1921.214.

<sup>141</sup> PRMOC, 1911.29.33. For more on Manning's collection of lighting implements: Belsey and Ding, 'Percy Manning Contextualized'.

<sup>142</sup> Bodl. MS Top. Oxon d. 200, ff. 79, 178; d. 199, ff. 311–14.

<sup>143</sup> M. Heaney, 'Percy Manning, Thomas Carter and the Revival of Morris Dancing', in Heaney (ed.), *Percy Manning*, pp. 165–6.

<sup>144</sup> Bodl. MS Top. Oxon d. 201, f. 476, d. 189, f. 133, d. 192, f. 164.

<sup>145</sup> Ashmolean Museum Accessions Register, AN1921.211.



Fig. 14. Bullroarer. Pitt Rivers Museum, University of Oxford, 1904.52.2.

In 1904 (at the same time as he sold the Mongewell flints mentioned above) Carter sold two bullroarers to the Pitt Rivers Museum (Fig. 14), a stick-and-ball game (tip-cat), and some dice with letters for the game of A-all.<sup>146</sup>

He also sold them a whetstone, and in this case the Museum's accessions register provides some details of the source of the item, giving insight into Carter's methods:<sup>147</sup> 'July Mr T.J. Carter Oxford - Small perforated hone-stone, found deeply buried in Ship Str., Oxford, May 1904 when an old drain was being removed to put in new pipes - about 9 ft deep . . . Pd petty cash July 14 10/-.'

This gives a good sense of Carter's opportunistic approach: as with the candle-holder in 1903, he was keeping an eye out for workings, no doubt visiting local quarries and brickworks, looking for chance finds he could snap up and pass on.

Two more items were sold by Carter to Balfour, who then passed them to the Museum: a milk warmer ('Old Oxfordshire "nurse", used for heating and keeping warm milk etc for invalids, now obsolete') from Garsington in 1905, and a smock from Bucknell, donated by Balfour in 1911.<sup>148</sup>

Many of Carter's reminiscences of life in the Baldons in the 1840s were in fact told to Manning in 1905, together with a Headington ghost story told to him in childhood.<sup>149</sup> He also supplied Manning with more information about the development of the St Clement's district then.<sup>150</sup> A little earlier, in March 1903, he was supplying Manning with several examples of homespun cloth. One piece was from the Baldons:<sup>151</sup> 'This piece of Homespun was Woven by Old John Polley of Marsh Baldon Some 100 Years ago one of his Descendants was Interred in Toot Baldon Church Yard 1824.' Carter provides more background in a separate note:<sup>152</sup>

Weaving at Marsh Baldon from 80 or 100 Years ago: A Native Named <Carter> Tells me that the Hemp was Grown in Newnham Fields, and the Steward i.e. Harcourts Gave the Flax to the Cottagers and Thet Spun it and then Gave it to Old Dad <Polly> Grandfather

<sup>146</sup> PRMOC, 1904.52.1-6.

<sup>147</sup> Ibid. 1904.52.7.

<sup>148</sup> Ibid. 2006.7.1, 1911.10.18.

<sup>149</sup> Bodl. MS Top. Oxon d. 192, ff. 206-9; d. 193, ff. 11-14, 102-03; d. 191a, f. 86.

<sup>150</sup> Ibid. d. 183, ff. 53-54.

<sup>151</sup> Ibid. d. 192, f. 155b.

<sup>152</sup> Ibid. f. 156.

to Mrs Bruckland Who Now Lives at Rough Lodge on the Harcourt Estate on the Road from the Golden Ball to Culham. This is Guaranteed Genuine.

[The words in angle brackets are Carter's later insertions into spaces in the text.]

Another came from his own family, having been made for his mother-in-law:<sup>153</sup> 'This table cloth was Woven and presented to Mrs Sarah Tolley (Great Grandmother to Katie Halliday) in the year 1821 on the occasion of her Marriage Woven by her Husbands Father George Tolley.' The examples of the fabric have not survived.

In June 1905 he acquired, in Oxford, a baby-runner from Long Crendon, and sold it to Manning with the additional information, no doubt gleaned from his wife, that in Kirtlington it would be called a 'baby-goer'. Manning gave it to the Pitt Rivers Museum in 1911.<sup>154</sup> The kettle tilter he acquired for Manning in 1906, and likewise given to the Pitt Rivers in 1911, was also bought in Oxford, perhaps indicative of Carter's decreasing mobility.<sup>155</sup>

The most intriguing item sold by Carter to the Museum was a Cree Indian deerskin coat sold to the Museum for 11s. in 1906. The accessions register describes it as:<sup>156</sup> 'Mr. T. J. CARTER, Oxford. N. American deerskin coat with painted and appliqué decoration, [in a different hand] EUROPEAN pattern. EASTERN WOODLANDS AREA, CREE TRIBE. [in original hand] pd. petty cash 11/0.'

Despite the basic description, it is uncertain whether this was made by Europeans in Canada for local use or by indigenous people copying the design, according to specialists who have examined the coat; moreover, it may have undergone alterations at various times in its history. The attribution to Carter as the source is definite, but we have no idea how he may have obtained such an item. Again, it may indicate his ability to seize an opportunity wherever it arose.

Our last evidence of Carter's relations with Manning comes on 22 May 1907. Appropriately enough, it was archaeological in nature, reflecting Manning's first interest and their first recorded encounter in 1892. Manning noted:<sup>157</sup>

About 1903 when the turf was cleared off preparatory to digging stone on the W. side of the Roman road from Dorchester to Alchester where it crosses the road from <deleted: Oxford> Cowley to Garsington, T.J.C. saw some 20 holes about the diameter of a bucket reaching down through the humus to the top of the ragstone, full of burnt earth, ashes & charred bones; no pottery etc.

The last item sold by Carter to the Pitt Rivers Museum, a few months before his death, was a wool-bobbin from Witney, 'obsolete at date of purchase', acquired from him for 2s. 6d. in January 1909.<sup>158</sup> Carter died on 26 November 1909 at the age of seventy-six, from a stroke.<sup>159</sup> His death certificate describes him as 'Formerly a geologist', reflecting the change in his own self-perception first emerging at the revival concert ten years previously.

## OTHER ACTIVITIES

Many of Carter's notes to Manning are undated. In several cases they add to topics already described above: for example, there are over a dozen more May songs and a dozen more ghost stories in the collections. There are more morrises, mummers and other seasonal customs.<sup>160</sup>

<sup>153</sup> Ibid. f. 155d.

<sup>154</sup> Ibid. f. 184; PRMOC, 1911.29.86.

<sup>155</sup> Bodl. MS Top. Oxon d. 192, f. 173; PRMOC, 1911.29.39.

<sup>156</sup> PRMOC, 1906.83.1.

<sup>157</sup> Ashmolean Museum Archives, 1648/MANN/1/MS/216/5.

<sup>158</sup> PRMOC, 1909.57.1.

<sup>159</sup> Death certificate, Headington 1909 Q4 3A.542.

<sup>160</sup> Bodl. MSS Top. Oxon d. 192, d. 199 and d. 200.



The undated material also reveals, however, otherwise neglected aspects of his activities. His memories of village life in the Baldons are just one element of his collecting about a wide range of social history and custom.

He recounted for Manning the practice of 'ticket work' as told to him by a woman from Weston-on-the-Green.<sup>161</sup>

The Farmers in Different Parishes Found Work for Poor Women & Boys in Turns, i.e. this Week at one Farmer next at another &c they Called it Going the Rounds and they Where [sic] Required to Comence at 8 am and Work till 4 pm for a ticket valued at 4<sup>d</sup> these Tickets Where Kept till the End of the Week and then Taken to the Releaving Officer who Gave them Bread & Grocery to the Value of 2/- for them

He recorded local stories about the ruins of Bruern Abbey, memories of the vault and coffins at Church Hanborough, removed when the new rectory was built, and an aetiological tale of the supposedly Civil War origin of the prehistoric Hoar Stone at Enstone.<sup>162</sup> He recorded anecdotes of bullbaiting at Wheatley and Garsington, and had personal recollections of badger baiting and dogfights at the Plasterer's Arms in Oxford (near his St Clement's home) around 1850, where University students used to meet the locals.<sup>163</sup>

One aspect of Carter's research which is almost entirely undated is his work on dialect. This was evidently a commission from Manning and Carter seems to have been diffident about his skill in this area. On the verso of a list of dialect words from Garsington he writes:<sup>164</sup> 'Dear Sir, I Hope I have Made Myself Plane With these Names I Tried My Best, More to Follow, in Haste, Your Obedient Servant T.J. Carter.'

Naturally, many of the words are to do with agricultural life, such as *frough* 'brittle (of carrots)', noted by Carter in Cowley: the OED gives this word as obsolete outside Northern dialect, and has no example of its being applied to food after the fourteenth century.<sup>165</sup> An example from Woodstock is *baulking*: 'He is Gon a Baulking, that is to Plough a Furrow through throwing the Soil to the Right and Turning at the End Throwing the Next Furrow on to it Making A High Ridge.' The OED also marks this word as obsolete in this usage, with no examples after 1611.<sup>166</sup> Manning compiled a list of about eighty words, possibly as part of an unrealised plan to create a dialect dictionary for the county. He used literary sources for some, but Carter provided most of the words in living usage.<sup>167</sup>

## LIFE CIRCUMSTANCES

Most of Carter's extant communications with Manning are factual, but rarely dry, being enlivened with anecdotes. In some cases we have longer letters from him, which give us more insight into his life. None of them is dated by Carter, though in some cases we can infer the date from the content. In a few cases Manning subsequently assigned an approximate date to them, but where this can be cross-checked it is usually wrong.

Manning's brief description, that Carter 'was disabled by rheumatism from hard work',<sup>168</sup> occasionally finds reflection in the letters. On one occasion Carter responds to Manning's enquiry, 'Thank Sir for Kind Regards for My Health I have not Taken Much Harm from the Wet altho I Have Got Very Wet Several Times. Hoping Sir you are quite well'.<sup>169</sup> In another

<sup>161</sup> Ibid. d. 192, f. 84.

<sup>162</sup> Ibid. ff. 129–30, 159, 168–9.

<sup>163</sup> Ibid. ff. 170–1; d. 202, f. 107.

<sup>164</sup> Ibid. d. 191, f. 73v.

<sup>165</sup> Ibid. f. 76; *OED Online*, June 2017, s.v. 'frough | frow, adj.', accessed Sept. 2017.

<sup>166</sup> Bodl. MS Top. Oxon d. 191, f. 78; *OED Online*, June 2017, s.v. 'balk, v.1', accessed Sept. 2017.

<sup>167</sup> Bodl. MS Top. Oxon d. 191, ff. 2–71.

<sup>168</sup> Manning, 'Stray Notes', p. 288.

<sup>169</sup> Ashmolean Museum Archives, 1648/MANN/1/MS/346/24.

letter Carter writes ‘I Hurt My Bad Leg Monday at Shotover and Have not been able to Get out Much am Glad to Say it is Better to Day’.<sup>170</sup>

Poverty was an almost inevitable consequence of ill health, and Carter’s letters often include requests for money:<sup>171</sup>

Sir I have not been able to get to Beachams Farm yet Simply because I have no money to get there with I should like to get out on Monday as some of my Friends are going out but if I do not get some cash I must stop at home. I further Report My Doings Since I Last Wrote you. I have not been able to get away from home Much as I am out of Funds So have been Obligated to Confine Myself to Short Journeys.

After sending a bill for 19s. Carter apologises:<sup>172</sup> ‘Sir I Should not have Sent but I See Things Going away from us I ought to get and I Have but about 8/- Left also there is an Excursion to London I Should Like to go by but I am as you see Nearly Run out. Hopeing I do not Offend.’ The 19s. included two days’ wages at 5s. a day, the rate Manning paid Carter. This was significantly more than he could have earned as a general labourer (under 15s. a week in 1896) or in the building trade (about £1 6s. a week).<sup>173</sup>

In a letter dated by Manning to 1892 but almost certainly from 1895 (it mentions the peeling-horns Carter was pursuing then), Carter writes ‘Dear Sir, I find I am obliged to send to you before your return for I am almost run out of the means to get about’;<sup>174</sup> a year later, in a letter datable with certainty to August 1896, he writes ‘Sir you will see from the Following I am out of funds I can not Pay my Rent to day so you will not be offended at my Sending to you [expenses of £2 wrongly totalled to £1-15-0 ] ... Sir I should be Pleased With Something to go on With’.<sup>175</sup>

Such indigence may have given Carter a disreputable appearance. One incident reflecting this also gives us a vivid image of his work as an independent fossil- and artifact-hunter:<sup>176</sup>

Dear Sir, I have Been to Some Places Near home as you Will See by the Specimens I have Sent and I was as Near as Possible Run In by the Keeper at Stow Wood for Trespas Which Consisted of My getting of the Foot Path that Leades from the Wood to Barton about 20 yards on the Ploughing in Serch of Flints When he Came from the Wood to Where I was and Wanted to Know What I was doing. I Told him and then he said I was on Trespas & Demanded to See What I had in My Bag and it [was] Well for me I had not one of his Master’s Rabbits Which he thought I had – I did not Think I Looked Like a Poacher.

At the very least it shows that what Carter was doing was unusual and unexpected in those who encountered him. This was the same letter in which he asked for money to get to Beacham’s Farm, and he continues, throwing more light on his investigative methods:

I have had Two days Searching Shotover and have Sent my Findings with which I hope you will be Pleased – I have Marked the where they were Found 1-2-3. I also Journeyed to Cuddesdon hearing there was some Pottery Found there some time Back I got the Coin from a Workman Who Found it at Denton Whilst Making a Drain and more than That I Found out from him that there was Roman Pottery Found there some 8 years ago and also

<sup>170</sup> Ibid. 1648/MANN/1/MS/346/2.

<sup>171</sup> Ibid. 1648/MANN/1/MS/344/7; 1648/MANN/1/MS/346/2.

<sup>172</sup> Ibid. 1648/MANN/1/MS/346/13.

<sup>173</sup> G. Boyer, ‘Living Standards, 1860–1939’, in R. Floud and P. Johnson (eds.), *The Cambridge Economic History of Modern Britain, Volume 2: Economic Maturity, 1860–1939* (2004), pp. 285–6.

<sup>174</sup> Bodl. MS Top. Oxon d. 192, f. 192.

<sup>175</sup> Ibid. f. 197.

<sup>176</sup> Ashmolean Museum Archives, 1648/MANN/1/MS/344/7.

when they were Earthing up i.e. Clamping Swedes they came Across a Large Slab some 4 or 5 Feet long and about a yard wide which Sounded very Hollow but covered it up again – it was about 3 ft Deep in the ground this was a Long distance from the Wheatley excavations – being Close to the Bishops Palace (PS they say they could easily find it again)

What emerges strongly is his doggedness in pursuit of items for Manning. Alice Little has described this in her examination of the hunt for traditional musical instruments,<sup>177</sup> and one of Carter's letters sums it up very well:<sup>178</sup>

I have been out 5 days on the Lookout for the Whittle & Dub i.e. the Whistle & Drum)  
[sic]

I Traced one from Place to Place till at Last I Found its Last Resting Place and that was Close to Home namely Marston [...]

I have a Few things of Interest from Bampton I heard of a Whittle & Dub being at that Place So I started at once and found out the Parties who had the same years ago – but I was much Disappointed in not getting it then – but after walking Hard from Place to Place I found out that the Tabor ie Dub Had been lent to be Repaired years ago to a man in the Town and of Course I found Him out[. H]e Could not find it but was Confident it was in his House Somewhere and when he found it I should have it.

I do not dispare [sic] of having this

In the same letter as his request for money to pay the rent, he recounts a three-week hunt for a badge, as well as another find from excavations in the course of building works:<sup>179</sup>

I Send the Enclosed Badge to Let you See I am ^Still^ Working for you still I got Scent of it some 3 weeks ago but did not get it till Last Week the names in the Paper with a • before them Have Seen it and Recognise it as one of the Medals found at the Time Named – I Have also a Fine old Stone Font Not Large Verry Nicely Worked Found in Excavating for New Bridge at Osney to Replace the old one the [sic] Fell Some Few years ago

Carter's opportunistic habit of frequenting excavations is illustrated together with his astute assessment of potential finds in a note from 1895:<sup>180</sup>

With Much Pleasure I Forward the Celt & ornament Both Found at Same Place the Ornament Was Found on Sunday by the Same Person as Found the Celt I Have not been Verry fortunate away from Home at Present But hope to do Better Later on By the By I had almost Forgotten but Man that Found these told me He Found Something Like a Safety Pin it was Broken and He Threw it into the Sewer I Recon this was a Fibula Sir I Hope to go to Ewelme the Week if I Get the Wherewithall in Time if not next Week. I have been Busy Nights with the Different Dredgers & Excavators they are getting out the Ground for a Public W.C. &c. By the Cab Stand St Giles I Have Some things from there i.e. a Shoe and Spur and an ancient Jug in Shape like the Sack Jug that was Shown at the Randolph and some things from Brewers St

The spur is now in the Ashmolean Museum<sup>181</sup> but the shoe and jug cannot be matched to items in the Museum. Although Carter's phrase 'With Much Pleasure' may be seen as merely a formulaic opening to his letter, there is no doubt that he enjoyed acting as Manning's agent. In one letter dated later by Manning to 1893 but most likely to be 1894 or later, he describes

<sup>177</sup> Little, 'Percy Manning, Henry Balfour, Thomas Carter'.

<sup>178</sup> Bodl. MS Top. Oxon d. 200, ff. 70–1.

<sup>179</sup> Ibid. d. 192, f. 197.

<sup>180</sup> Ashmolean Museum Archives, 1648/MANN/1/MS/346/4.

<sup>181</sup> Ashmolean Museum Accessions Register, AN1921.290.

his adventures in relation to a silver dish, unfortunately not now traceable in Manning's collections in the Ashmolean Museum:<sup>182</sup>

Dear Sir I did as I Told you I would this Afternoon I put it that is the dish in my Bag and took it with me to Wittenham and called at Walford's as I Returned I saw him and asked him to tell me the age and also the Value of it he First Tested it and Found it Fine Silver he then Searched His Book to Find out the Marks but He Could Not Find them he then Said I Cant Make it out the Marks are not in My Book it is Verry Old and I will give you 50/- for it I told him I Promised it to a Friend and Therefor I Could Not Let Him Have it he Replied if your Friend don't have it Bring it to me & theres your Money as you See Sir it is Valuble if he Gave me 50/- for it he Would Want another 50/-. Sir I have Told Just what he Said So I Leave it With You – and I am Realy Pleased I have at Last got you Something Realy Good

Carter was clearly willing to go to some trouble to pursue the valuation of the dish; Manning is his 'friend' and he is pleased to have brought him something out of the ordinary. Later in the letter he also reminisces knowledgeably about the Alchester dig:

I got to Wittenham and Realy they [sic] is nothing to See only a Few holes and the hole or Well Where the Roman Vases were Found I have Enclosed A Flint and Some Pecular [sic] Blue Stuf that is Mixed With the Soil. I Saw the Pottery about the Same as Alchester but the Samian Ware So Called is only Semmy Samian if they Made Such a Noise about this I don't Know What they Would have done had they Found anything Like What We did.

There is no Foundations Neither is there any Coines one Rough Flint Selt [sic] Was found before in Same Field.

There is a clear sense of comradeship in these letters. Carter was not just a contracted worker, he was (for all his social deference) Percy Manning's colleague and friend.

## CONCLUSION

Thomas James Carter was an remarkable person. Born illegitimate into rural poverty, by dint of his intelligence and perseverance, and genial nature, he was able to contribute significantly to the study of Oxfordshire palaeontology, archaeology, social history, custom and folklore. We can identify over eighty fossils (and there are probably many more) in the Oxford University Natural History Museum; over 1,300 items in the Pitt Rivers; a large proportion of the 1,000 plus items from Manning's collections in the Ashmolean; and several hundred pages of documentary material in the Bodleian and Ashmolean, all having Carter as their source. I doubt that there is anyone else – artisan or scholar – whose work is represented in four major Oxford University institutions. And yet he has remained unsung, and virtually unknown, for over a century after his death. This is no doubt due in part to his social class and background: but the one man with whom he worked most closely, and who freely acknowledged his help in print – Percy Manning – was himself a reticent scholar who published little and whose own enormous contributions to Oxfordshire studies were neglected until the centenary of his own death in 2017. Manning is now receiving greater recognition, and it is more than time that we also gave Carter his due.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Society would like to express its gratitude to the Greening Lamborn Trust for a grant towards publication of this article.

<sup>182</sup> Bodl. MS Top. Oxon d. 192, ff. 194–5.