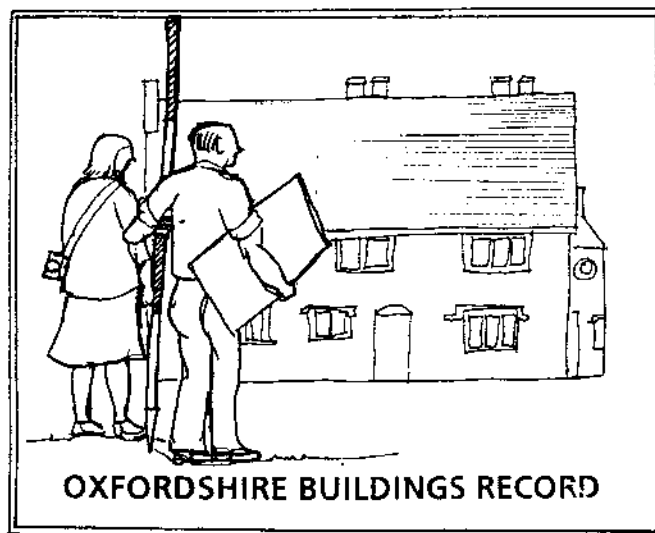


# ***THE OXON RECORDER***

***Issue 3***

***April 2000***



## **LAUNCH**

Enclosed with this newsletter, for those intending to come, is information about our launch meeting on May 6. The afternoon promises to be very worthwhile, with about 40 people attending, and we look forward to getting the OBR off to a good start.

## **WEBSITES**

If you have internet access, you may like to look at the following sites:

Jean Manco's site, Sources for Building History on <http://www.jams.swinternet.co.uk>.

This has links to many other places, including the National Monuments Record.

The Archaeology Data Service

(<http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/ahds/welcome.html>) is a digital archive for data created by archaeologists and includes material on standing buildings.

For details of dendrochronology investigations carried out by Dan Miles and his team, look at [www.dendrochronology.com](http://www.dendrochronology.com)

If anyone knows of other sites of use to the building recorder, please let us know.

## **STOP PRESS**

The newsletter will in future be edited by Patsy and Roger Perrin. Please send material for publication to them at Pickets Cottage, Behoes Lane, Woodcote, Reading RG8 0PP or [pickets@pickets.demon.co.uk](mailto:pickets@pickets.demon.co.uk)

## **CERTIFICATE IN VERNACULAR ARCHITECTURE**

Oxford University's Department for Continuing Education is launching a new undergraduate-level course in vernacular architecture, starting in October, 2000. Aimed at the non-specialist, the course will offer students a range of tools, including theoretical, historical and practical, to assist in understanding vernacular buildings of town and country, from the earliest survivals to more recent times. It will focus on the South Midlands, from the Cotswolds to the Chilterns and beyond. The course will be taught in partnership with the Chiltern Open Air Museum, through evening sessions, day and weekend study trips. It will extend over two years, and successful completion will attract 120 CATS points.

This course will be of particular interest to those interested in Oxfordshire buildings, or who have already studied the subject through one of the Department's shorter courses, and who wish to deepen their knowledge.

To receive full details, please contact the Manager, Public Programmes, OUDCE, 1 Wellington Square, Oxford OX1 2JA, tel: 01865 270360, e-mail: [pp@conted.ox.ac.uk](mailto:pp@conted.ox.ac.uk)

## My Search for the Owners and Occupiers of Church Farm House, Dry Sandford

By Bridget Rudge

I first saw Church Farm House nearly forty years ago when my parents came to live here after my father's retirement from his New College fellowship. Ten years later in December 1970 my husband and myself moved in with our three children. Since then the history of the house has fascinated me. I wanted to know who had lived here in the past, how they were involved with the history of Dry Sandford and when the various parts of the house were built.



Fig.1 Church Farm House

The old village of Dry Sandford appears to be a medieval planned linear settlement. The tenements lie along the west side of the road through the village with closes behind the houses running down to Sandford Brook, an essential water source before wells were dug into the very free draining corallian limestone. The Manor of Sandford belonged to Abingdon Abbey until the Dissolution of 1538. After this it was acquired by the Fettiplace family of Besselsleigh who sold off many of the tenements on long leases during the reign of Elizabeth. Enclosure of the common fields was by agreement in 1714. The lordship of the Manor, together with Manor Farm, passed through various hands until Benjamin Morland of Sheepstead in Marcham bought it in 1801. It remained with his descendants until the first half of the Twentieth Century.

The Nineteenth Century Census Returns show that the population of little more than a hundred were almost all engaged in agriculture. This changed in the 1930s as land was taken over for the development of Abingdon Airfield and for the building of new housing. The much increased population now travel into Abingdon, Oxford or further afield to their employment.

Church Farm House lies to the south of the Victorian church which was built on the site of a medieval chapel. The house has an early Georgian east front with chimney dates of 1718, which joins two older wings to the rear. It is built mainly of limestone rubble, probably quarried from the field behind, except for the rear wall of the south wing which is timber-framed with brick infill (see Fig.2). The roofs are of Stonesfield slate and red clay tile. Over the years alterations have been made as the functions of the buildings have changed and new owners have updated the premises, but many original features have

been retained. Some old doors and windows have been blocked up and new ones inserted; a corridor built across the back links the three wings which once had separate entrances and staircases. An undated plan of c1930 shows that the south wing contained a "dairy" and "old kitchen", now combined to make a sitting room; the north wing was also used as a "kitchen", with a "scullery" to the rear in an outhouse built against the massive external chimney breast. Each wing has bedrooms on the first floor with attics above. Beneath the symmetrical Georgian front are two cellars of which the north one appears to be older than the south one with the walls differently aligned, possibly remaining from an earlier building.



Fig.2 Church Farm House from the rear

Outside, across the cobbled yard to the rear, is "the barn", a former cowshed and stable block, whose roof timbers suggest an early sixteenth century origin, and beyond is an ancient thatched animal or implement shelter. The c1930 plans also show where once were pig-sties and a drinking trough. In the yard is a stone-lined well, the water level about six metres below the surface. Beyond the garden is a field which runs down to Sandford Brook.

As with much local history research it has been easier to work backwards than to "begin at the beginning", in order to uncover the history of the property.

My parents bought the house from the executors of Mrs. Laretta Nissen who lived here from 1934 until her death in 1954. Mrs Nissen was the widow of the Canadian Colonel Nissen who gave his name during World War I to the 'Nissen Hut'. She played an active part in village life as chairman of the Parish Meeting and founded the Dry Sandford Cubs and Scouts who met in the "barn".

Our Title Deeds tell us that from 1930 to 1934 the house was owned by a retired silk merchant, Henry Arthur Gisborne from Loughborough. He bought it from John Henry Baughan who the previous year had purchased it from the Morland Family Trustees. Mr Baughan may earlier have rented the farm, much of whose land was taken over for the new airfield. He also bought Manor Farm from the Morlands, where he continued to live and to farm most of the remaining fields which had once belonged to both farms. Church Farm retained the fields to the rear and opposite, but the "barn and small stockyard" to the south were not included in the Morlands' sale. These were demolished and a house was erected on the site in the 1950s.

My search for past owners and their tenants took me to the Oxfordshire Local Studies Library for Census Returns, local Directories and Parish Register Transcripts; to the St Helens Parish Records in Abingdon, in whose parish Dry Sandford used to lie, for the 1842 Tithe Map, its Schedule, and the Church and Poor Rate Books; and to the Berkshire Record Office, where a Morland Estate Map and numerous Indentures relating to village property eventually yielded the information I required. By combining data from all these sources I was able to build up a picture of who had owned, occupied and built the property in previous centuries.

During the Nineteenth Century Church Farm was added to the Morland family estates when it was acquired by Thomas Thornhill Morland from the estate of Francis Bunce of Shippon who died in 1825. Whether he acquired it by purchase or inheritance I have not discovered, but it seems possible that his grandmother, Susanna Bunce, was related to Robert and Francis Bunce. A document in the Berks Record Office records that Thomas Thornhill Morland borrowed £5000 from his brother Benjamin, on the occasion of his marriage in 1840, against "the Messuage or Farmhouse Cottage pieces or parcels of Ground and Hereditaments situate in Dry Sandford, Berks, and containing altogether 145 acres of land". He died in 1848 and Benjamin, heir to the rest of the Morland property, came into possession. It remained with the Morlands until 1929.

During the Morlands' tenure the farm was leased to tenants whose names appear in the Census Returns, in local Directories and on the Tithe Map Schedule. The longest tenancy was held by the family of Matthew Shepherd who started paying Rates in 1820, five years before the death of Francis Bunce, and his family were still here in 1877. Matthew died in 1834, but his widow, Mary, who belonged to a local family and was expecting their sixth child, continued to run the farm while bringing up her family. In 1861 aged 61, she employed four men and four boys, with two of her sons, Matthew and Mark, and one servant in the house with her. Ten years later Matthew was living here with his wife and two children, but he died aged 52 in 1877 and was buried in Dry Sandford churchyard where he had seen the new church built twenty years earlier. The Tithe Map of 1842 showed which fields, scattered throughout the Parish, were farmed by the Shepherds. Later tenants are shown in the Census Returns and Directories but stayed for much shorter periods.

The first Matthew Shepherd was paying Church and Poor Rates for land known as "Swifts" and "Spindlers". The Rate Books for the Eighteenth Century give the names of earlier rate-payers, Robert and Francis Bunce or their tenants, occupying the same lands.

While I have found references to "Mr Swift" I have not discovered who he was or which was his land. It may have been his daughter, Hana, who married Thomas Tuckwell in 1683 and was the mother of Joseph Tuckwell, a mercer of London, who was one of the signatories of the Enclosure Agreements of 1714. The land must then have passed to the owners of Church Farm and be included in the fields shown on the Tithe Map.

The Spindlers have been easier to trace. Richard and Robert Spindler both signed the Enclosure Agreements. They were two of the sons of Richard Spindler 1627-1711, a yeoman of Marsh Baldon, who was married to Anne Bond, sister of William Bond of Sandford. Richard was baptised in 1666 and Robert in 1667. An Indenture of 1708 in the Berks Record Office refers to William Bond's Will of 1705 leaving his lands and tenements in Sandford to his nephews after making provision for his wife. At first they owned the land jointly but Richard, who also bought the house in the village now called "Lenthalls", or his son, another Richard, sold his portion to John Lenthall of Burford and Besselsleigh in 1727. Their fields across the middle of today's airfield and elsewhere in the Parish were divided alternately which accounts for the chequer-board effect shown on the 1842 Tithe Map. Robert was described as a Mercer in the City of Oxford and was a Member of the City Council until he resigned in 1715. It seems possible that he then came to live in Dry Sandford and that it was he who built the new front of Church Farm House and altered the south wing to provide more living accommodation. He continued to pay Rates until he was aged 80 in 1747 and was known as "Mr Spindler".

The Indenture of 1708, referred to above, enabled me to trace the Bond family. They lived here for several generations probably going back to the Middle Ages. In addition to William's Will of 1705 quoted in the Indenture, I also found copies of other wills which gave me an insight into the property before it was altered by Robert Spindler. William stipulated that his wife, Amy, was to continue to have the use of "the hall and the parlour and the cellar under the same and the two chambers over the parlour

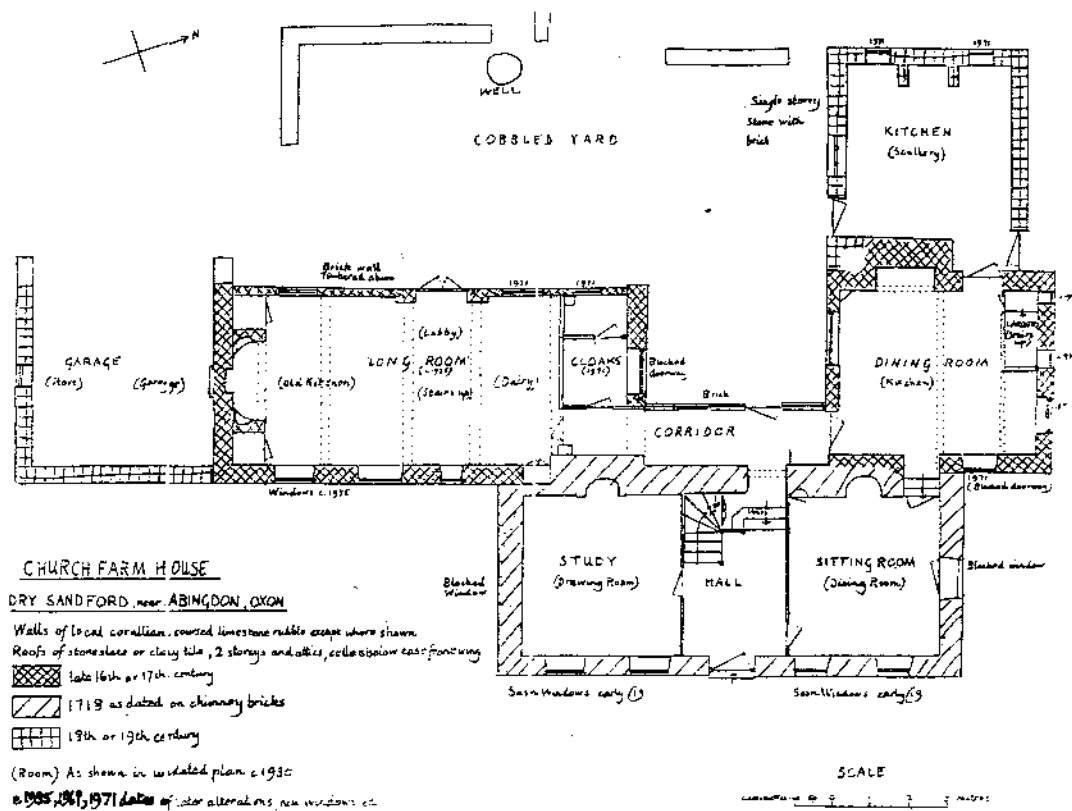


Fig.3 Church Farm House: ground floor plan

and the little chamber there adjoining... and those two gardens or garden plots lying before the hall window and parlour window... during her life and that the said wife should have the liberty of using his Oven and Brewhouse... and the liberty of taking herbs and fruit in his orchard... and the liberty of using in the well and house of office and to walk and go in the Orchard Close and Backside as she should think fitting... and... so much wood and furze as she should have occasion to use... to be cut and brought into the yard and backside of the said messuage by his executors... ". This suggests that an earlier house over the front cellar was demolished by Robert Spindler when he built his new front, but also shows there were other buildings including a kitchen and brewhouse, perhaps now the back wings of the house. William also owned four closes and eight yardlands in Sandford, a substantial holding similar to that held by the Lords of the Manor.

The 1708 Indenture also stated that William's title to the property came from a deed of 1587 whereby Bessels Fettiplace of Besselsleigh, Lord of the Manor of Sandford, and his son, Richard, "did promise graunt and to farne lott unto Ralph Bond of Sandford yeoman deceased greate grandfather of William Bond" the tenement described above for the "Terme of Two Thousand Years". In 1630 Ralph was succeeded by his son William and by his grandson, Richard, William's father.

Richard's Will of 1640 is held in the Berks Record Office and includes an Inventory listing Richard's possessions room by room. It describes a messuage with a house and buildings similar to those of William above. There was a hall and a parlour with chambers over them, a kitchen with a chamber above, a cellar, a kitchen and malthouse, a loft over the malthouse, a milkhouse and a stable. Together with livestock, crops and land, the whole was valued at £509 15s 8d. Richard's widow, Jane, died more than thirty years later in 1673. The Inventory with her Will lists her possessions "in the Parlor... and the Stocks of Bees in the Garden".

All this detail helped to build up a picture of the great range of domestic and farming activities occupying a prosperous yeoman family of the Seventeenth Century.

The Bond family is also recorded in Sandford during the Sixteenth Century. An earlier William Bond was included in the list of tenants when the Manor was sold by King Henry VIII in 1546 following the Dissolution of Abingdon Abbey. William and Ralph represented Sandford at the View of Frankpledge during the reign of Elizabeth. Other Bonds held property in neighbouring Wootton and Cumnor. They were clearly an influential and successful family who felt secure in their tenure and were interested in acquiring additional land and building a substantial property at the time of the "Great Rebuilding".

# News from the Villages

We hope in future issues of *The Oxon Recorder* to bring you news items like these of work going on in local village recording groups. Please send in your reports!

## Long Wittenham Historic Buildings Record sub-group: Report on Activities

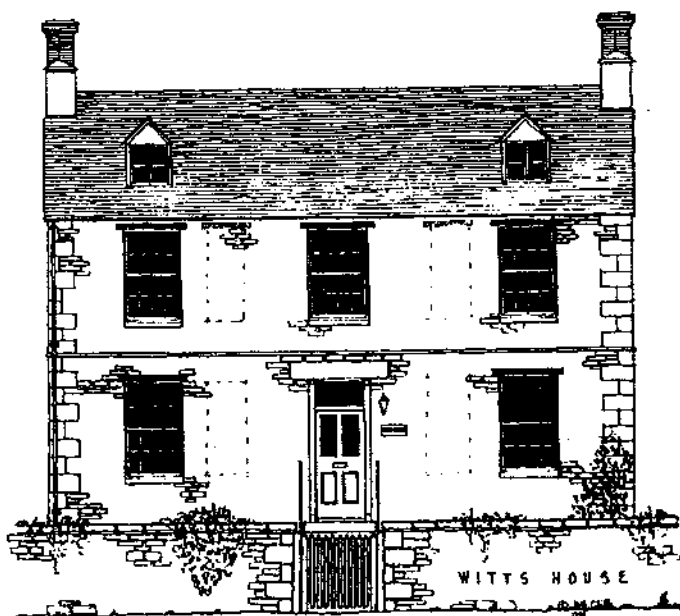
by Michael Drew

We have set up our sub-group under the umbrella organisation of the Long Wittenham History Society, and have been busy setting up a vertical filing system for all the drawings. These include building surveys and all kinds of items such as historical maps.

We have acquired copies of a large map of the parish recorded and allotted by Act of Parliament in 1809, which belonged to the Revd. J C Clutterbuck, who was the vicar. It shows all the enclosures in the parish to a scale of 6 chains to one inch (!) and is an extremely valuable record. The survey of buildings is progressing slowly. The large building which belonged to John French has all been physically surveyed; plans and sections have been drawn up to 1:50 scale. We also have in our possession a 1:50 scale drawing of how the farmhouse looked in 1903, and it is interesting to see how the building has changed. We also have a fairly full documentation of the history of John French and the reference to him in Fox's *Book of Martyrs* (1530)

We now also have a 1:50 scale drawing of the oldest cruck cottage in the village, dated to the 12th century. 1:20 scale section drawings are being prepared.

We find the physical survey of buildings takes a long time, as does the drawing up, so progress is quite slow! *[but clearly worthwhile - ed]*



## OVER NORTON HISTORY GROUP- MILLENNIUM PROJECT

The hamlet of Over Norton lies on the north-eastern edge of Chipping Norton, and has a flourishing local history group. In the spring of 1997, one of their members, Janice Cliffe, suggested a project to produce a record of all the buildings in the parish which existed at the end of the second millennium. Mrs Cliffe offered to undertake this work on behalf of the Group, and to produce a booklet which would be a source of reference and could also be sold.

The Group received a small grant from West Oxfordshire District Council and extra funds were raised by selling mounted copies of some of the pen-and-ink drawings produced by Janice Cliffe. These drawings, together with relevant information, were incorporated into the final booklet which has now been published.

"The Parish of Over Norton - 2000AD" is available for £4.95+p&p from Mrs Cliffe on 01608 641057, and copies will be available at the Launch on 6 May.

Left: One of Janice's delightful drawings, of Witts House, Main Street, Over Norton, reproduced with her permission.

Thank You

We are extremely grateful to the Oxford Preservation Trust for their generosity in supporting the printing of our newsletter.

# News from Members

## NOVICES' PROGRESS

by Jessica Brod

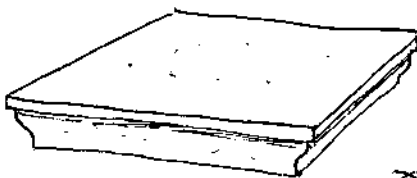
In January of this year, after hearing about the OBR, five members of the Marcham Society formed themselves into a building recording group. The Marcham Society itself covers all aspects of the history and natural history of the village.

Our combined previous experience was slight: one of us had already worked on the structure and history of her old and interesting house; another had attended Dr Malcolm Airs' Architectural History Course at Rewley House. Apart from this we shared an interest in the village and its buildings and discovered we all had the ability to hold one end of a measuring tape. We decided to try to gain experience by working on houses where we would find some tolerance both of our fumbling initial efforts and of the intrusion; that is we started with some of our own houses.

A Marcham Society exhibition in March gave us the opportunity to show what we had managed to do so far on three buildings. It certainly raised much interest and, most encouragingly, resulted in one or two invitations to survey other buildings.

We recently enjoyed a useful and instructive afternoon with John Steane discussing the buildings in the village and ways we could continue our recording work. We are planning to concentrate on farms - there were probably six farmsteads in the village with one just outside it and a number of the old buildings remain. This will be quite a big project involving not just the recording of the buildings that are left but also collecting the documentary evidence that survives about the history of the farms and the people who lived in them. We look forward to being able to call on expert guidance through the OBR as we continue our apprenticeship in building recording.

**Did you know that you could tell the age of a ham sandwich from its moulding?**



## RECORDING FRAMEWORK

In the last issue, an outline framework for approaching building recording was set out. Patsy and Roger Perrin responded to this by stressing the need to decide the scope of the work in relation to the time commitment and the form of the end product.

Thus, if you are working on an individual building, you might decide on the following headings:

- summary description, building materials,
- building structure (descriptive and main drawings, plans of floors, elevations)
- suggested development
- interesting features (and dates)
- owners and occupiers

And you may want to produce a bound A4 booklet of about 25 pages to give to the owner and deposit in the OBR and NMR, and a summary for the Oxon Recorder. (The number of copies is important if you are planning to use original photographs: it is cheaper to get multiple prints when the film is developed than later on.)

Do you have others who can help? A team can do the basic work more quickly, but you will have to schedule team meetings to share information, and this could add to the time needed. You will always have to return to the building or to the documentary sources, as they inter-act, so allow time for this, too. Set the timescale, allocate the tasks, and off you go!

# ARCHITECTURE AND SALVAGE

a conference on the re-use of building materials held in Oxford on 10 December 1999

Report by David Clark

No-one who attended this conference will ever again be comfortable with the word 'original'. Throughout the centuries, building materials have been valued not only for their physical properties, but also for their symbolic ones. House builders would weigh the cost of new materials against that of recycling parts of earlier buildings on the site. Buildings serving one function have been adapted to new uses over time, perhaps never as much as today when people live in redundant churches, lofts, and converted barns, mills and hospitals. Valued parts of buildings, such as panelling, has a long history of removal and re-use. It is a huge subject, but essential material for the 'house detective'.

David Stocker of English Heritage defined three types of re-use for building stone:

- casual, for example the opportunistic use of pre-existing walling in later houses.
- functional, for example reuse of Roman arches in 11th century church towers.
- symbolic, where a stone is re-used because of the ideas associated with its original use, for example Charlemagne's reuse of Roman columns in Aachen as part of his programme to create a new Roman Empire.

He then showed that apparently casual or functional re-use may also have symbolic content, such as the use of Roman bricks in St Albans Abbey to reinforce the message of Christian conquest of the murderers of the saint. In some rebuildings casual or functional explanations cannot on their own adequately account for what can be seen, for example the rebuilding of the conduit house at St Mary le Wigford in Lincoln with stone from a 14th century chapel; the careful re-use of tracery and images was not essential to the function of water supply.

In a talk concentrating on Hertfordshire, Nick Doggett examined the conversion after the Dissolution in 1538 of many former monastic buildings to secular use by their new, private, owners who generally lacked the resources to rebuild them completely.

Looking at documentary evidence in another part of the country, Blake Tyson had found considerable evidence for re-use of materials in Cumbria between 1570 and 1800. On one estate in the 1780s, correspondence between the agent and the (absentee) owner in London showed how in making the decision to rebuild a tenant's sub-standard house the options of new build, re-use of part of the existing house, and using recycled materials had been considered. This evidence could then be checked against the present state of the building itself. Primary sources showed that the cost of recycled stone was one-fifth that of new in the 1770s. He concluded that in Cumbria if a builder could re-use materials, he would.

A number of speakers showed examples of the deliberate re-use of materials to re-create 'heritage myths'. Tim Knox told the story of how Hardwick Hall was re-fitted by the 6th Duke of Devonshire in the 19th century to reinforce the myth that Mary Queen of Scots had been in residence there, and John Harris described how the fashion for 'period rooms' encouraged the sale of panelling and other materials from houses in Britain and Europe to embellish the interiors of other palatial dwellings, many of them in America.

The argument about whether 'architectural salvage' was a legitimate trade rescuing materials from total loss or destruction and by making them available to other users, ensuring their continued use and delight, or by its very existence as a market for such things was encouraging the loss of important interiors was the subject of the round-up discussion between representatives of SPAB and SALVO, the 'acceptable face' of architectural salvage. What was not in dispute was that there was nothing new in this debate, only our present day perspectives and preconceptions about such intangibles as 'original', 'authentic' and 'period'.

## HELP!

Elizabeth Leggatt is beginning work on a study of water towers on Oxfordshire estates, and has found that few are noted on Ordnance Survey maps, or are separately identified in Listed Building descriptions. Does anyone know of any local ones? Please ring her on 01993 811334 or write to her at 'Fletchers', 116 Grove Road, Bladon, OX20 1RA.