



Contents:

- OBR News
- Stone musicians of Adderbury
- Modern timber framing
- The making of a field archaeologist: Part 3
- Forthcoming events

The Oxon Recorder is the newsletter of Oxfordshire Buildings Record and is published four times a year. OBR aims to advance education and promote research on the buildings of Oxfordshire by encouraging the recording of buildings and to create and manage a publicly accessible repository of records relating to such buildings. The Oxon Recorder is also available in the members' section of our website: www.obr.org.uk

Next copy date for contributions is 1 December. Please send any contributions or comments to Richard Farrant at newsletter@obr.org.uk Contributions need to be Word or Pages documents with accompanying photographs sent separately in high resolution jpg format.

OBR News

OBR LECTURE.

David Clark is this year's lecturer, titled "Standards, Spikes and Swedish ironstamps: an exploration of the invisible world of Oxford's historic railings". As a taster, David comments: *"Designed to protect private spaces yet be transparent, iron railings are an important element of the city's streetscape. However, they have been variously ignored, mistreated, wilfully removed, replaced with replicas, and misinterpreted. This talk will show that despite these issues, Oxford has a rich ironwork heritage that deserves greater recognition."*

The lecture will be on Zoom on Tuesday 13 October at 5.30pm. To participate you must pre-register at www.oahs.org.uk/lectures, and you will then receive an email with the Zoom link. Bookings close on 12 October. A flyer is appended to this issue of OR.

UPDATE ON TRANSCRIBING DISTRICT VALUATION SURVEYS.

The short piece in Oxon Recorder 82 inviting members to transcribe some of the District Valuation surveys of c.1910 held in Oxfordshire History Centre has generated some interest, with 6 volunteers already hard at work, and a few more enquiries in recent days. Places covered or in progress include Wendlebury, Long Hanborough, Wheatley, Cuddesdon, Denton, Holton, Horspath, Chipping Norton, Cogges, Crawley, Charlbury, Finstock, Fawler, Chilson, and (soon we hope) Hook Norton. It's the committee's intention to make all of these available on our shiny new revamped website before too long, creating a useful resource for the building history of those places.

This still leaves several hundred Oxfordshire parishes up for grabs for anyone who is still interested. Apart from transcribing the actual surveys (which are all available online), we are asking people where possible to identify the buildings on the ground (giving the modern address), and to link the entries with the 1911 census – which can be tricky, but which adds value, and which some volunteers have found the most fun and interesting part. At least one volunteer has trudged all around the village in an attempt to pin down the less obvious buildings!

If you are interested, email simon.townley@history.ox.ac.uk for more details and for an Excel proforma – or have a look at some of the survey books and associated maps on the Oxfordshire History Centre website at https://www.oxfordshirehistory.org.uk/public/maps/dv_maps.htm.

VIDEOS BY PROFESSOR MALCOLM AIRS.

OBR member Professor Malcolm Airs has produced two highly informative YouTube videos, one on windows (<https://youtu.be/sJHYPoH7kLQ>), the other on why dates on old buildings can be misleading (<https://youtu.be/7tzPADmRlls>), illustrated by examples in Dorchester-on-Thames. Well worth watching. It is rumoured he may produce more.

OBT NEEDS A TREASURER

The Oxfordshire Buildings Trust are looking for a volunteer to be its Treasurer. David Bretherton, its vice chair, reports that the duties are not onerous and the Trust will give training to anyone who has an interest. If you would like to know more, contact David at davidwbretherton@btinternet.com

CRUCK BARN AT WOODCOTE.

OBR Member Ken Hume writes that OBR members (individually or possibly very small groups) are welcome to visit the cruck barn which a small group of enthusiasts have been reconstructing near Woodcote. They have identified an old saw pit and hewing pits on the site from a LIDAR survey, which are now being excavated and recorded by a joint venture between the Oxfordshire Woodland Group and South Oxfordshire Archaeology Group. The site is largely outdoors. Contact Ken at kfhume@gmail.com if interested.

OBR BURSARIES.

A reminder that OBR offers bursaries of up to £500 to pay part or all of the fee for courses or conferences which will improve the applicant's ability to record and interpret a vernacular building. Further details are available from the Secretary at secretary@obr.org.uk, and applications should use the form available on the website.

Stone musicians of Adderbury

During a period of twelve months from March 2019, a friend and I set out on a series of outings to seek out Saxon, Romanesque and other treasures in churches across central England. Unfortunately our visits were curtailed in March 2020 due to the Coronavirus pandemic. However, since lockdown restrictions have gradually eased, we have ventured a little further from home and combined our walks with the occasional wander around the outside of some nearby Oxfordshire churches.

This article was inspired by an earlier visit to St. Mary the Virgin's church at Adderbury where we were most intrigued by the stone images of medieval musicians around the exterior of the nave walls. So I revisited to refresh my memory and to take some more photographs.



**Adderbury church;
East end**



North frieze

Adderbury, thought to have been named after St. Eadburga, and possibly part of a Saxon royal estate, probably had a church here before the Norman conquest. The parish is the largest in north Oxfordshire, and was part of the hundred of Bloxham, although not recorded as such in Domesday as it came under the composite royal manor of Bloxham and Adderbury¹.

There was much rebuilding of local churches in the 14C and Adderbury, Bloxham, Hanwell and Alkerton are a group of four renowned for the similarity of their stone carvings which have been attributed to the North Oxfordshire School. The earliest work on Adderbury dates from the early 13C when the church with its transepts and a 5-bay nave were built. Only the capitals remain from the original nave arcade with the piers and arches being rebuilt in the 14C. The addition of the south aisle and the porch date from c.1320 and the north porch was added c.1340. At that time the new rector was Thomas de Trilleck, nephew of the Bishop of Winchester, who had 'spent 300 marks in restoring the buildings'² with his own money (probably the north aisle). This being so, he may well have had a direct influence on the choice of masons and their designs, not only for the building extension but also for the carved embellishments.

The continuous frieze around the exterior of the aisles is likely to be of this mid 14C date and contains a remarkable set of birds, beasts and other motifs but it is the collection of twelve musicians which are quite unique in Oxfordshire. Ten of them are on the north aisle wall and two are on the slightly earlier south aisle wall. Generally they are in a reasonable state of preservation; only one or two showing the ravages of time with some broken or missing sections.



Detail of North frieze

¹ Victoria County History – Volume 9, Bloxham Hundred, 1969

² from Calendar of Papal Registers- as cited by John Goodall in Oxoniensia Vol. LX, 1995

Of course it is possible that the masons involved in this work may have been journeymen travelling around the county with stock designs which they used time and again. However, due to the similarity of carving between this and the three other near-by churches, it could be argued that the chief mason might have been a man local to the area and responsible for the designs used in all four churches.

Secular music during the medieval period was generally supplied by itinerant groups of musicians who travelled around the country. The early troubadours, who originated in Europe, no doubt came over to England after the Norman conquest. Minstrels earned their living by singing ballads accompanied by a musical instrument and these groups often included jesters and acrobats. The Waits were originally watchmen who alerted people to danger by playing loud instruments, and later became official musicians of towns, employed to play music at important occasions.

Seeing these sculptures inspired me to find out more about the medieval instruments depicted here and to speculate on whether the carvings may illustrate local figures. As the will extracts at the end of this article show, instruments were owned and used by men from all walks of life who obviously played music as a pastime in their local community, apart from the members of travelling groups. Music was probably a large part of Adderbury's village life in past centuries as it certainly has been in more recent times. For quite a few years there has been an active local team of Morris Dancers, just the kind of musical group that might have been seen in the village in the 14C.

Music definitely played an important part in local festivities as is often portrayed in paintings of the period. Feast days, fair days, bringing in the harvest, all gave opportunities for celebrations with music, singing and dancing. This would have brightened up what must have been quite a hard life for the ordinary peasant folk. With beer being brewed in most households and the womenfolk cooking and baking special treats, these events would have been something for them to look forward to. Illuminated manuscripts and medieval psalters such as the Luttrell and others, also contain some exquisite illustrations of various aspects of rural life including musicians with their instruments.



These drawings are my interpretation of a group of musicians and some dancing villagers.



The instruments depicted in the carvings are all typical of the 14C and illustrate the variety available to these medieval musicians: string, woodwind and percussion are all shown at Adderbury. They are all types of instruments easily carried while travelling from place to place and, quite often, a prized possession handed down from father to son, as suggested in the will extracts shown at the end of this article.

The male costume of the 14C included a tunic with belt which was worn with hose. The headgear of the men is also typical of the same period with a pointed hood incorporating a shoulder-cape, or a hat with rolled brim. Some also have curly hairstyles also popular at that time, as shown in the illustration above.

String instruments:

The triangular harp had a narrow sound box with a number of strings between 7 and 25, popular with the travelling groups of musicians. The harp player might also be a singer of ballads sometimes recounting epic poems from former times such as 'Chanson de Roland' and suchlike.

The rebec was an early type of violin, with a pear-shaped body and 3 strings, played with a bow. It derived from a Moorish instrument and arrived in England from Spain c.1100-1200. This gave rise to the later fiddle which had a different shaped body and became the most popular instrument for many groups of travelling musicians up to the present day.

The portative organ dates back to Roman times, but was very popular during the medieval period for secular music. It was small, portable and consisted of one rank of pipes with bellows at the bottom or back of the instrument and a set of keys to play. The larger organs, later used in churches, were based on the same principle as this early version.

The psaltery, another portable instrument, was a cross between the harp and lyre, similar to a zither and probably of Middle Eastern origin. The shape varied as did the number of strings, which were stretched over a flat wooden soundbox. For ease of playing it was usually hung from a strap around the waist or neck. Psalteries are still played in some northern and eastern European countries.

The hurdy-gurdy evolved from a larger instrument called an organistrum which came to England in the 12C. The smaller more portable versions became increasingly popular with travelling musicians. The drone strings, producing a constant note, were attached to a wheel which was cranked by a handle at one side, with the other hand playing a keyboard to change pitch. This was a fairly heavy box-shaped instrument and was also hung from a neckstrap. It became an ideal instrument to accompany dancing for folk music of the time.



Triangular harp



Rebec



Portative organ

**Psaltery****Hurdy-gurdy*****Woodwind instruments:***

The bagpipe, again an ancient instrument, was very popular among the poorer classes; the bag was made from a goat or sheep skin with an attached reed pipe. It had one drone initially which consisted of a long cylindrically-bored tube with a single reed which produced a constant harmonising note whilst blowing the other shorter fingering pipe. Later versions had two or three drones as in modern bagpipes.

The medieval trumpet consisted of a long pipe with a flared bell end, typically used on festive occasions or as a signal at the beginning of a special event such as a jousting match or battle. The hanging banner shown on the carving would have depicted the emblem or arms of a certain person. It would appear that this carving has lost the upper section of the pipe, which was usually between one and two metres long.

The next carving has a blank space to its righthand side which suggests that the lower part of the instrument is missing. It is possible that this could be depicting a shawm or perhaps just a basic pipe. The shawm was a reed instrument but with vent holes to give varying sounds, thought to have originated in the Islamic world. The basic pipe was one of the earliest medieval woodwind instruments consisting of a simple tube with three holes. It was this type of pipe that was used with the tabor (small drum), both played at the same time by one man.

**Bagpipe****Trumpet with hanging banner****Shawm or pipe**

Percussion instruments:

Hand bells have been used from ancient times as a means of drawing attention or advertising wares etc. They were also used at funerals and were thought to ward off evil spirits. The earliest bells were made of iron in a quadrangular shape, later changing to a cylindrical shape in the middle ages. This carving depicts a bald-headed musician without a hat; one of his bells is broken but the other clearly shows its clanger.

The naker, whose name derives from the Arab 'naqqarah' was a small kettledrum that came from the Middle East in the 13C, during the Crusades. These bowl-shaped instruments were usually played in pairs hanging at waist level by means of a belt or harness and struck with sticks. They were used in military situations as well as an accompaniment to dancing either at court or village festivals.

Tambourines were lightweight instruments and therefore traditionally used by women among a group of players. They were circular single-headed frame drums consisting of a wooden ring covered with parchment, with bells or rattles hanging loosely around the sides. This instrument derived from the timbrel as described below and was common all over Europe and a favourite of itinerant musicians.

The timbrel, thought to have come to Europe during the Crusades, is another ancient instrument. It was a small hand drum and, as mentioned in the bible, used by the Israelites. In medieval Britain, it was first known as the tymbre, sometimes played at funerals, but then became more popular and was used for festive occasions.

**Hand bells****Tambourine****Timbrel****Nakers**

The following extracts have been taken from probate documents transcribed by the Oxfordshire Probate Group and the Chipping Norton Historical Research Group, of which the author is a member. These show the existence of musical instruments in the local area, of a type similar to the stone carvings.

Unfortunately, as there are so few surviving wills for the 14C, there is no direct evidence of musical instruments for the period of these carvings. However, I have included these later extracts to illustrate various items possessed by ordinary people with varying occupations, in Oxfordshire in the 16C and 17C.

Henry WILLIS, of Milton under Wychwood - Will 1594 - MS Wills Oxon reference 69/2/25

I geve to Jho[n] Aly one tabor and a pipe and a stick

Thomas WALBURGE, barber surgeon of Burford - Will 1599 - MSS Wills Oxon 69/3/24,

I give unto my said children.... twoe sett of singing bookes, both sett have sixe bookes,

I give & bequeath unto Joanne my wieff..... all my Instrumentes of musick,

Henry INGRAM, labourer, of Hook Norton - Will 1583 - MS Wills Oxon 136/3/4; 187.122

I do bequeth unto my sonne..... a sith (cittern?) and all that doth belonge therto

Jasper OWEN, barber-surgeon of Burford - Inventory 1636 - MS Wills Oxon 299/3/22

i Cytern praised at 6s. 8d.

John GROVE, labourer, of Chastleton - Inventory 1639 - MS Wills Oxon 297/3/50

It[e]m a taber (small drum) & pypes & other musicall instrum[en]tes 5s.

John LITTLEFORD, of Chipping Norton - Inventory 1624 - MS Wills Oxon 298/5/34

An Innvytorye of the goods fownd at the death of John Lytleford late of Chipping Norton deceased

<i>I[tem] on Coate 2 Jerkins</i>			<i>viii^s</i>	
<i>on dublett</i>			<i>ii^s</i>	
<i>2 payre of hose</i>	<i>vii^s</i>			
<i>4 payre of stockings</i>		<i>iii^s</i>	<i>iiii^d</i>	
<i>on payre of Garters</i>			<i>iiii^d</i>	
<i>on Trunke</i>		<i>xii^d</i>		
<i>on payre of sheewes</i>			<i>vi^d</i>	
<i>2 shirts</i>	<i>iiii^s</i>			
<i>4 handkertchers</i>			<i>xii^d</i>	
<i>on hatt</i>	<i>ii^s</i>			
<i>on smaule goold ringe</i>	<i>ii^s</i>			
<i>on peece of owld silver</i>		<i>ii^d</i>		
<i>on base viall and case</i>	<i>x^s</i>			
<i>2 playne bands</i>		<i>vi^d</i>		
<i>In his purse</i>	<i>vii^s</i>	<i>iiii^d</i>		
	<i>Some is 2^{li}</i>	<i>6^s</i>	<i>2^d</i>	
<i>praysers</i>				
<i>Thomas Hackeer, Henry Tinson</i>				
<i>Richard Colman }</i>				
<i>Edward Mager }</i>				
				<i>constables</i>
<i>The Crowners fees</i>		<i>xiii^s</i>	<i>iiii^d</i>	
<i>for washinge his clothes</i>			<i>viii^d</i>	
<i>for his buriall</i>			<i>xviii^d</i>	
<i>for watchinge</i>			<i>viii^d</i>	
<i>The Charge of prayzers</i>			<i>xii^d</i>	
<i>A shrowde</i>		<i>iiii^s</i>		

Some is 1^{li} 1^s 2^d

Exhibited at Oxon 24 July 1624 by Elizabeth Littleford, administrator

This last example seems to imply that John was a musician travelling around with his wife Elizabeth, playing music for a living. He only had his clothes, a gold ring, a piece of silver and his bass viol (a type of violin). He died in Chipping Norton but probably came from elsewhere, with only 7s 4d in his purse, not enough to pay for his burial. This consequently had to be paid for by the parish and the expenses would have been taken off the value of his possessions when sold and the remainder given to his wife. A sad ending for this musician!

Jan Cliffe

All photographs and drawings © the author

Modern timber framing

Over the years, I've spent quite a lot of time studying and admiring medieval timber frames. However, this is not a dead tradition, frames are still being constructed. I would like to share with you two very different modern builds that have been erected recently only a kilometre apart near Eynsham in West Oxon.

In a traditional style, a new build at Southfields Barn, Stanton Harcourt Road, Eynsham, is part of a complex which started out as barn conversion some ten years ago, but met several hiccups along the way. The early 19thC threshing barn (Figure 1) is now a dwelling with an inserted free-standing 'table' floor. But to replace some 'accidentally' demolished cattle byres and pigsties which were originally included as part of the planning approval, a new stone and slated structure has a three bay trussed roof of green oak. The trusses have raking queen struts supporting a single pair of purlins, braced with straight wind braces (Figure 2). The common rafters (of rather small scantling) are edge-set to a ridge board, and lathed to support slates (in this case Welsh or Indian slate rather than local Stonesfield slates). As yet, the building is unfinished (Figure 3); I do not know the intended use.



Figure 1. Southfields barn in 2010, early 19thC, 5-bay with two sets threshing doors, all trusses different.

Figure 2. The new build trusses; raking queen struts, no collar, straight wind braces from principal rafters to purlins, rather light common rafters. The construction steel scaffolding and its shadow is confusing, but the best photo I could get.



Figure 3. Exterior view after roofing, looking north.
The threshing barn shown in Figure 1 is to the rear left.

In complete contrast, down on the meadows beside the river Thames near the Toll Bridge, another new barn is being built of roundwood, mostly freshly felled local larch. The building has one aisle, and a common-rafter roof with unequal pitch each side of the ridge (Figures 4, 5). Because the ground is waterlogged, it has been necessary to support the frame on concrete piles (Figure 4). The frame joints are bolted together through steel L-plates (Figure 6). This building will be used as a machinery store for the proposed eco-teaching and research centre on the nearby ox-bow island in the Thames, but its main purpose is to support enough solar panels to supply all the power for the centre, as buildings on this site are not connected to the electric grid. The steep-pitched roof slope facing the road is currently being thatched with Norfolk water reed, with a sedge ridge (Figure 7). It's not often that water reed features in Oxfordshire, but it was felt appropriate in this case, as before 18th C drainage much of the surrounding area was seasonally under water. Naturally, the steep slope suitable for thatch is not right for catching the full rays of the sun, so the south slope with the solar panels is much shallower, though with a short length of steep pitch near the ridge. For the part under and around the solar panels, the covering will be tiles.



Figure 4 Longmead barn under construction, note the asymmetrical slopes on the roof, the single aisle, and the concrete piles.



Figure 5 Longmead barn ridge, note kingpost truss and common rafter roof.



Figure 6 Detail of aisle construction and wallplate. The joints are bolted through a steel L-plate.

Figure 7
Thatching in water reed; the ridge will be sedge.



Heather Horner
Photos © the author

The Making of a Field Archaeologist Part 3 1976 – 2020

Editor's note. What follows is the third instalment of the autobiographical memoir by our Honorary President, John Steane.

[From the last instalment: So how did a schoolmaster with his career in midlife become County Archaeologist of Oxfordshire? The answer is that I was scrubbing out down our hall (Victorian tiles) and spied in the sodden copy of the Guardian an advertisement for Field Officer for the Department of Museum Services. I wrote off immediately. A month later I had moved from teaching history to recording Oxfordshire's archaeology.]

I should have explained that I was able to undertake this work in archaeology and local history because I was appointed headmaster of Kettering Grammar School, Northamptonshire, a post I held for twelve years from 1964-1976. It gave me a unique opportunity to introduce archaeology into the school, enabling dozens of boys to experience field walking, listening to lectures by experts (including Sir Mortimer Wheeler) and taking part in the annual excavations at the deserted medieval settlement of Lyveden. They saw their work published in the journals of the Society of Medieval Archaeology and the journal of the Northampton Museum. I joined the committee of the Northants Record Society and edited the journal Northants Past and Present for three years 1973-1975. Seven boys became professional archaeologists.



'The Lyveden excavation team in 1973. I am near the back with the broad rimmed hat

From 1976 to 1990 I became Oxfordshire County Archaeologist, running the field section of the Oxfordshire County Museum with its Sites and Monuments record, the brainchild of my predecessor, Don Benson. This was the first of its kind and the idea soon caught on. In the next ten years all the other counties followed. As envisaged by its founders Jean Cook and Richard Foster, the museum would provide the five district councils with historical and archaeological information before planning decisions were taken. In addition I was

employed to be in attendance of the Minerals committee which determined the exploitation of sand, gravel and stone found in quantity across the Thames Valley areas, thickly settled by early man. The museum profited from welcoming members of the public to contribute to its store of knowledge: in addition it encouraged small study groups of people across the county to research their own areas. I wrote a book for Random House entitled Oxfordshire (1996) summarising the current store of knowledge and we contributed annually to the Council for British Archaeology newsletter.

In 1984 I published a synthesis entitled 'The Archaeology of Medieval England and Wales'. This was followed in 1993 by The Archaeology of the Medieval English Monarchy and, reflecting my interest in medieval symbolism and government 'The Archaeology of Power' 2001.

I retired from the museum in 1990 and almost immediately began the last phase of my career by working for the National Trust in recording the service wing of Chastleton House. This was followed by a survey of the archaeology of the Stonor Park estate. By 1993 I began to work with James Ayres, forming a two-man consultancy specialising in writing reports on historic buildings that were threatened with destructive or inappropriate development. For the next 20 years we surveyed about a hundred and ten buildings, most of which are published in Traditional Buildings in the Oxford Region (Oxbow, 2013). We were helped by numerous contacts, conservation officers, architects and local historians. We experienced the difficulties of small businesses in getting employers to pay up! I have during this period been able to help repair and save many of Oxfordshire's old buildings through being a trustee of the Oxfordshire Buildings Trust. It should by now be clear why I supported the foundation of the Oxfordshire Buildings Record. Its nigh on two hundred members carry on the good work.

John Steane

Forthcoming Events

OBR lecture

This year's OBR Lecture in the OAHS lecture series will be given on Zoom on Tuesday 13 October at 5.30 pm by David Clark. See flyer below for details and how to attend.

Oxford Architectural & Historical Society Oxfordshire Local History Association

OBR belongs to these bodies and members can participate in their events. If you are not an OAHS member personally, you should check first with OAHS about availability, noting your OBR membership. At present of course, events are affected by the Coronavirus lock-down. See websites (http://www.oahs.org.uk/new_program.php and (<http://www.olha.org.uk/events/talks-and-meetings/>) for listings and details of events and talks.

OBR Contact details

Membership - Paul Clark (membership@obr.org.uk)

General - David Clark (secretary@obr.org.uk)

Newsletter - Richard Farrant (newsletter@obr.org.uk)

Webmaster - admin@obr.org.uk

Website: www.obr.org.uk



The OBR Lecture 2020



This year's OBR Lecture in the OAHS lecture series will be given on Zoom on Tuesday 13 October at 5.30 pm by David Clark. His title is:

Standards, Spikes and Swedish Ironstamps: An Exploration of the Invisible World of Oxford's Historic Railings

Designed to protect private spaces yet be transparent, iron railings are an important element of the city's streetscape. However, they have been variously ignored, mistreated, wilfully removed, replaced with replicas, and misinterpreted. This talk will show that despite these issues, Oxford has a rich ironwork heritage that deserves greater recognition.

Members of OBR should book for the lecture at www.oahs.org.uk/lectures and will receive an email with the Zoom link. Booking will close on 12 October (or sooner if bookings reach the limit of 100). If you are new to Zoom you will find helpful instructions on the OAHS website.