



NEWSLETTER SUMMER 2023

CHIPPING NORTON VOLUME READY TO GO



Effigies in Chipping Norton church to Robert Croft (d.1502) and his wife Anne (d.1509), lord and lady of the manor.

Our [Chipping Norton area volume](#) (Volume XXI) is in complete draft and will go to the publisher around the end of the year, following completion of mapping and illustrations. **Publication is planned for autumn 2024.**

The volume covers half a dozen rural parishes as well as the town itself, amongst them Little Rollright (famous for the prehistoric Rollright Stones), and Hook Norton (an important Anglo-Saxon royal estate centre, now most famous for its brewery and for the 19th- and 20th-century ironstone workings which followed the railway's arrival in 1887). All of the parishes occupy a typically hilly Cotswold landscape close to the Gloucestershire and Warwickshire border, and for most of their history were dominated by the mixed sheep-corn farming characteristic of the area.

Chipping Norton was laid out as a planned market town around the mid twelfth century, its early development also underpinned by sheep and the international wool trade. The town's economy and its social and religious life, from the Middle Ages to the present day, are fully explored, along with its government, buildings, and physical evolution. We have been fortunate to work with leading historians of the town and with members of the Chipping Norton Buildings Record, which has greatly enriched the account, while in Hook Norton the Oxfordshire Buildings Record and the local museum and history society undertook a major survey of the village's vernacular buildings in connection with the VCH work.

Places covered: Chipping Norton; Hook Norton; Over Norton; Great and Little Rollright; Salford; Swerford

VOLUME XXII PROGRESS: NEW DRAFTS AVAILABLE



Sarsden's former rectory house, designed by George Repton in 1818. The VCH's work on the area was formally launched here in June 2023 by kind permission of the owners.

Our next big project (to appear as Volume XXII in a few years' time) covers a swathe of West Oxfordshire parishes from **Chastleton** on the Gloucestershire border through to **Enstone** and **Kiddington** on the east, taking in **Chadlington**, **Chilson** (with Shorthampton), **Churchill**, **Cornwell**, **Kingham**, **Sarsden**, and **Spelsbury** (including Ditchley Park). Publication of this volume will leave just one more needed (on the Burford area) to complete our coverage of the ancient (pre-1974) county.

Two of those places ([Cornwell](#) and [Sarsden](#)) are now available in draft on the VCH Oxfordshire website (address overleaf), with Enstone to follow soon. Both Cornwell and Sarsden were estate villages dominated by a major country house set in parkland, which had a profound effect on their social and economic life and on their buildings and physical growth. Sarsden's parkland was landscaped by the well-known landscape gardener Humphry Repton (both he and his son George also remodelling the house), while in 1938-9 Cornwell village was 'reconditioned' 'virtually as a stage set' by the architect Clough Williams-Ellis (of Port Meirion fame). More parish drafts will follow over the next year.

HOLD THE DATE

Our **annual Christmas lecture and reception** for donors and other supporters will be held on **Monday 4 December** at **St John's College, Oxford** (5-7pm). **Invitations** will go out in the autumn, and we look forward to seeing you at what is always a special event. If you would like to be added to our mailing list, please contact the Hon. Treasurer (details overleaf), who is always happy to receive donations great or small!

RECENT EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES

Recent events (besides our usual Christmas lecture and reception for supporters) have included talks to local groups, occasional guided walks, and Trust fundraising and publicity events including one in Sarsden. Last autumn we were particularly delighted to welcome the historian and broadcaster Michael Wood, who gave a sold-out lecture on our behalf.



Historian and broadcaster Michael Wood (right) with Trust Chairman Professor William Whyte, following Michael's sold-out lecture on behalf of VCH Oxfordshire in September 2022.

HOW TO DONATE TO THE TRUST

The VCH Oxfordshire Trust's purpose is to help fund the completion of VCH Oxfordshire's unique and systematic histories of every town and parish in the historic county, as part of a [national project](#). Working in close partnership with **Oxfordshire County Council** and with the **Universities of London and Oxford**, it provides three quarters of the Oxfordshire project's annual research costs through donations great and small. **You can help through:**

- **Regular donations by bankers' standing orders.** Forms are obtainable from the **Hon. Treasurer** (treasurer@oxonvchtrust.org.uk), or from the VCH Oxfordshire website (see opposite) under 'Support VCH Oxfordshire'.
- **Cheques** (including CAF charity cheques) made payable to 'The Oxfordshire VCH Trust', sent to the **Hon. Treasurer Dr Michael Heaton** at: 48 High St, Wheatley, Oxon. OX33 1XX.
- **Bank transfer** into the account of the Oxfordshire Victoria County History Trust, sort code 30-99-03, account no. 01228711.
- If you are able to **gift-aid** your donation we can increase the value of the donation by reclaiming the tax paid. Gift aid forms are available from the Treasurer or VCH website as above.

Donors are acknowledged in the published volumes unless they choose otherwise.

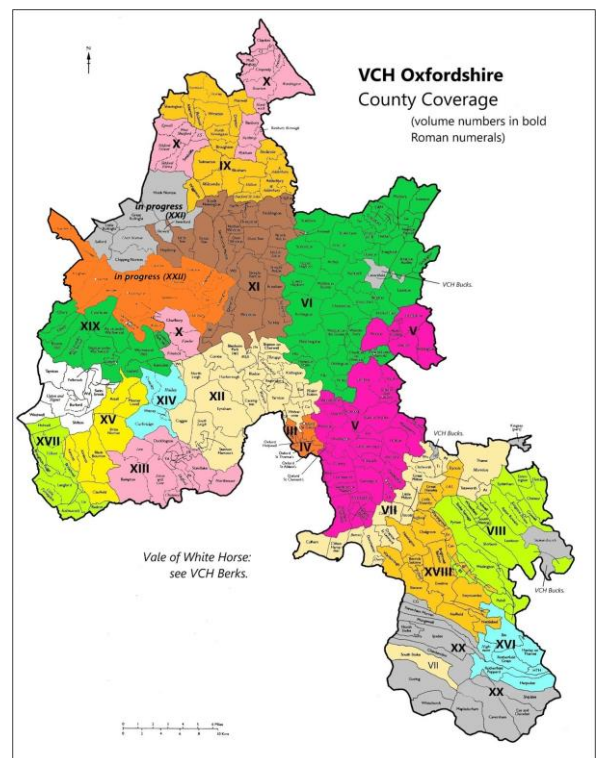
NEW DRAFTS AND NEW FACES

The latest additions to the VCH Oxfordshire website are draft histories of [Cornwell](#) and [Sarsden](#) in west Oxfordshire, with **Enstone** to follow. Those join existing drafts on the [Chipping Norton area](#), which will remain until the volume goes into production later this year.

Meanwhile we are delighted to welcome Amanda Ponsonby as a new trustee, whose deep knowledge of her patch of west Oxfordshire will be invaluable in our new Volume XXII work.

ACCESSING THE VCH

Draft work-in-progress is available as downloadable PDFs on the VCH Oxfordshire website at www.history.ac.uk/research/victoria-county-history/county-histories-progress/oxfordshire while **published volumes** up to Volume XVIII (with more to follow) are available at British History Online: www.british-history.ac.uk/search/series/vch-oxon. The **physical books** are [available to buy](#) (see VCH website), or through public libraries and [Oxfordshire History Centre](#). For more on current research, contact the County Editor (simon.townley@history.ox.ac.uk).



VCH Coverage 2023, showing (a) volumes published, and (b) west Oxfordshire areas in progress - Vol. XXI (publication 2024) in grey, and Vol. XXII parishes in orange.

THE OXFORDSHIRE VICTORIA COUNTY HISTORY TRUST

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