

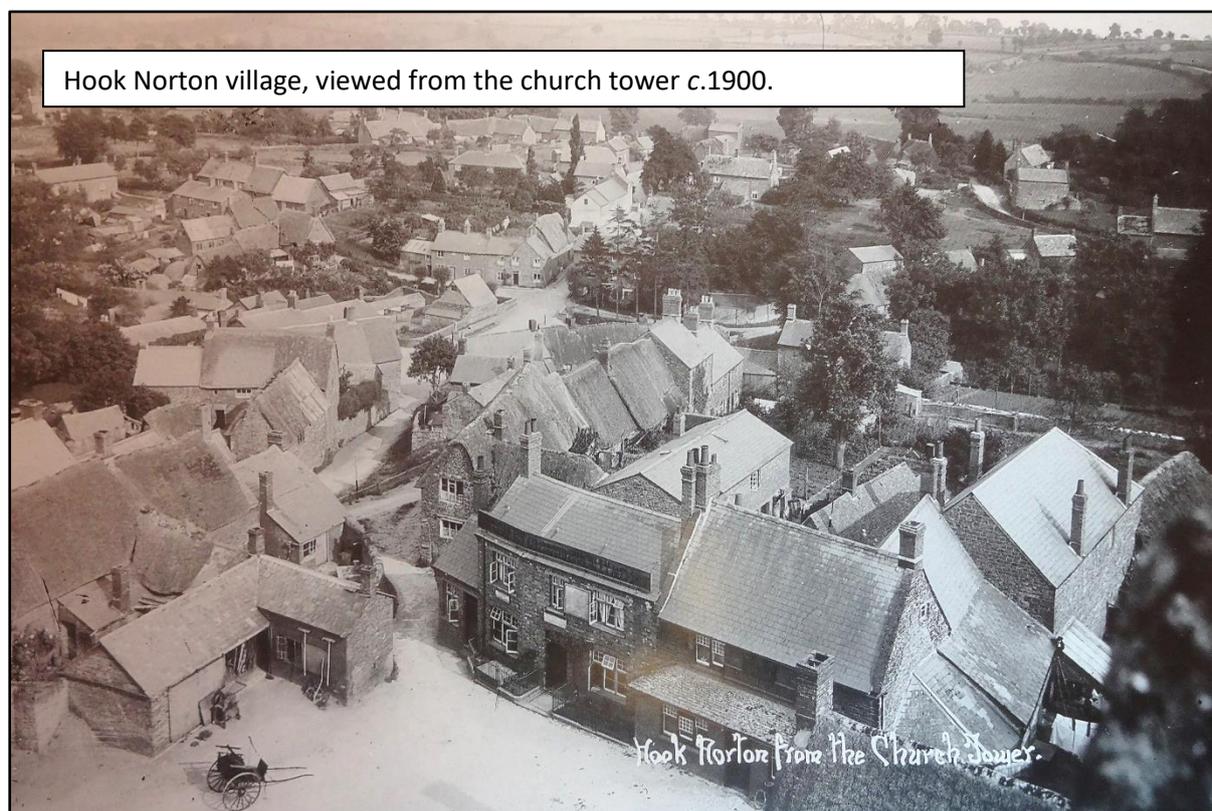
VCH Oxfordshire Texts in Progress

HOOK NORTON

Social History

Social Character and Communal Life

Until the 19th century the parish supported a predominantly agricultural community, concentrated in the village and the adjacent hamlet of Southrop. Divided landownership, the lack of a resident major landowner, and weak Anglican leadership all contributed to the emergence in the 17th and 18th centuries of a largely independent body of farmers and to the growth of Nonconformity, and by the early 19th century Hook Norton was a classic 'open' village with a lively craft sector and a high level of pauper immigration. The building of the railway in the late 19th century brought a temporary influx of navvies, and quarrying and the brewery introduced a small-scale industrial element, but even so the 20th century saw the usual reduction in local employment. After c.1950 (and the ironworks' closure) many local people worked outside the parish, and by the early 21st century the population was dominated by commuters and retirees.



The Middle Ages

Hook Norton was one of the hundred's largest rural settlements if not one of its richest,¹ while Southrop was long regarded as a separate hamlet and was taxed with Swerford, with which it had tenurial links.² Social stratification was reflected in size of holdings and types of tenure.³ In 1086 there were numerous *villani* and a few lower-status bordars and slaves,⁴ and free tenants were present by the late 12th century if not earlier.⁵ By then Hook Norton was attracting incomers from surrounding rural settlements⁶ and possibly from as far as Ireland, Wales, and Scotland.⁷ A Jew called Isaac was resident in 1210, and a Burford Jew owned property in the parish later in the century.⁸

By the 13th century some leading free tenants occupied substantial holdings for low rents, amongst them members of the Charlton and Heronville families,⁹ of whom the former featured amongst the parish's highest taxpayers in the early 14th century.¹⁰ On the two main manors some 37 villeins held full yardlands for fairly heavy services,¹¹ though their prosperity evidently varied, since of 63 Hook Norton taxpayers in 1316, six paid over 4s., 15 paid 3s.–3s. 10d., and 19 paid 2s.–2s. 10d., with the rest paying 8d.–1s. 10d.¹² The parish's 20-odd cottagers were probably too poor to pay tax, although unlike the villeins they were not burdened by labour services.¹³ Social zoning is suggested by the presence of a cottager's quarter with poor-quality housing,¹⁴ and by the fact that at least one free tenant lived 'above the town' outside the village's core.¹⁵

The d'Oilly family, despite their wide interests, were closely involved in local affairs, Hook Norton being the *caput* of their honor.¹⁶ By the 13th century their political influence had declined, but continuing grass-roots power was demonstrated c.1230 when Henry d'Oilly

¹ *Oxon. Atlas*, pp. 52–5.

² e.g. *Oxon. Eyre, 1241*, pp. 151, 167; TNA, E 179/161/8, rot. 3 m. 2; E 179/161/9, rot. 1; E 179/161/170, rot. 4d.

³ Above, econ. hist.

⁴ DB, f. 158.

⁵ e.g. D.M. Stenton (ed.), *Pleas before the King or his Justices*, I (Selden Soc. 67, 1948), 225, 338; *Oseney Cart.* IV, p. 60; VI, pp. 141–3.

⁶ e.g. Tackley, Sibford, Dunthrop, Swalcliffe: *Oseney Cart.* IV, pp. 282–3; *Rot. Hund.* II, 726.

⁷ *Oseney Cart.* IV, pp. 257, 274–6. The byname 'Scot' may have given rise to the name Scotland End (above, landscape etc. (settlement)), but could reflect Irish as much as Scottish origin.

⁸ *Oseney Cart.* IV, pp. 274, 286, 287–8.

⁹ Above, landownership; econ. hist.; *Oseney Cart.* IV, pp. 259–61, 264–6; *Cur. Reg.* XV, 40–1; M. Dickins, *A History of Hook Norton* (1928), 39.

¹⁰ TNA, E 179/161/10, rot. 10d.; E 179/161/8, rot. 3 m. 2; E 179/161/9, rot. 1.

¹¹ *Rot. Hund.* II, 726; TNA, C 133/101/7, m. 2.

¹² TNA, E 179/161/8, rot. 3 m. 2.

¹³ None of the cottagers on the Plescy manor in 1301 were taxpayers in 1306: TNA, C 133/101/7, m. 2; E 179/161/10, rot. 10d.

¹⁴ Above, landscape etc. (settlement). Cf. *Oseney Cart.* IV, p. 281 ('Cotmannesforlong').

¹⁵ *Rot. Hund.* II, 726 (Thos Bovetun).

¹⁶ Above, landownership.

persuaded Osney abbey to remit the services due from one of its widowed tenants.¹⁷ The lordship of their successors the Plescy family was diluted by the creation of substantial dower portions, although one of Sir Hugh de Plescy's wives, Isabel (d. before 1279), was commemorated by a memorial in the church.¹⁸ In 1299 the abbot of Osney alleged that Hugh de Plescy and a 'multitude' of followers had plundered several of his Oxfordshire properties, taking his corn at Hook Norton,¹⁹ and lordly rivalry was again evident in 1353, when Richard de Stonelegh accused members of the Dimmock family, Henry Charlton, and others of assaulting his servants, firing his houses, and hunting in his warren, so that he and his household fled 'for fear of death' leaving his lands untilled 'for a great time'.²⁰

The late 14th and 15th century were characterised, as elsewhere, by a rapid turnover of tenants, although up to half a dozen families were present in both 1327 and 1524, including the Turbots, Newmans, Richards, and Charltons.²¹ The number of free tenants apparently increased before 1361,²² and by the 15th century the parish's more substantial tenants included Richard Fulwell, a husbandman impleaded for an 8-mark debt in 1435,²³ and John Bishop (d. 1497), commemorated by a now-lost brass in the church.²⁴ Some leading inhabitants had wide connections perhaps partly through the wool trade, both Alice Hunt (fl. 1426–7) and John Hall (fl. 1493) being admitted to Stratford-upon-Avon's holy cross guild. Hall probably died in 1520 owning a house in Banbury, and made a bequest to the Oxford friars.²⁵ John Croker, whose family became large-scale farmers, lessees, and landowners, was taxed in 1524 on goods worth £43, and John Holloway and Thomas Parr (lessee of part of Swerford park) on £20. Three others were taxed on goods worth £10–£14, but the rest on either goods worth under £10 (mainly £2–3), or on wages of £1–£2.²⁶ Social life is poorly recorded, although a church house (used presumably for church ales) was established c.1520.²⁷

c. 1535–1800

¹⁷ *Oseney Cart.* p. 262.

¹⁸ Above, landownership; *Complete Peerage*, X, 548, 549 n.; *Par. Colln*, 180; H. Haines, *A Manual of Monumental Brasses...* (1861), 176; Brooks, *Pevsner N&W*, 360.

¹⁹ *Cal. Pat.* 1292–1301, 475.

²⁰ *Ibid.* 1350–4, 517–18.

²¹ TNA, E 179/161/9, rot. 1; E 179/161/170, rot. 2d.

²² Above, econ. hist.

²³ *Cal. Pat.* 1429–46, 435.

²⁴ Haines, *Monumental Brasses*, 248.

²⁵ M. Macdonald, *The Register of the Guild of the Holy Cross, St Mary and St John the Baptist, Stratford-upon-Avon* (Dugdale Soc. 42, 2007), 359; TNA, PROB 11/19/356; above, econ. hist.

²⁶ TNA, E 179/161/170, rot. 2d.; E 179/161/177, rot. 4 (valuing Croker's goods at £64); OHC, M110/E/1 (for Parr); below.

²⁷ Below, relig. hist. (Middle Ages).

In the 16th and 17th centuries Hook Norton flourished,²⁸ its substantial population, social mix, and lack of resident lords making it a lively place which probably, as later, developed a strong sense of independent identity. Such characteristics, and its rather isolated setting away from the main road network, may have contributed to its reputation amongst outsiders as a place of boorish rusticity,²⁹ a reputation which played on local pronunciation of the settlement's name as 'Hogesnorton'.³⁰ In reality inhabitants maintained strong connections with local towns and other rural settlements.³¹ Hook Norton itself had several drinking houses and inns, which acted as social foci alongside the church and (from c.1650) several Nonconformist meetings.³² Southrop, although increasingly dwarfed by its neighbour, continued to be identified as a separate hamlet, at least partly reflecting manorial and agricultural arrangements including a separate manor court.³³

Until the 1660s the parish's chief resident gentry were the Crokers, long-term lessees of the former Osney abbey manor and rectory estate, and owners of Dimmocks.³⁴ John Croker (d. 1569), high sheriff in 1564–5, secured confirmation of his family arms and was commemorated in the church, where he and other family members were buried.³⁵ His son Gerard (d. 1578) was knighted.³⁶ Living usually in the rectory house (which was assessed on 13 hearths in 1662),³⁷ the family owned property elsewhere in north Oxfordshire, Gloucestershire, and Warwickshire.³⁸ However, they struggled with heavy debts,³⁹ and their financial problems were exacerbated by disputes over their leasehold interests and by their support for the king in the Civil War.⁴⁰ Other leading families of long standing included the Calcotts,⁴¹ Pittams, and (from c.1670) the Lampetts.⁴² Walter Calcott (the son of a Banbury burgess) was a Staple merchant who established a local charity and bought Williamscot

²⁸ Above, econ. hist.

²⁹ T. Nash, *The Apologie of Pierce Pennilesse* (1593), K4; W. Camden, *Britain, or a Chorographical Description ...* (1610 edn), 375; Tiller, 'Hook Norton', 280.

³⁰ *PN Oxon.* II, 353–4; M. Dickins, *A History of Hook Norton* (1928), 193–4.

³¹ Above, econ. hist.

³² *Ibid.*; below, relig. hist.

³³ OHC, MS Oxf. Dioc. d 574, f. 153; *ibid.* M1/5/CR; Dickins, *Hook Norton*, 2; below, local govt.

³⁴ Above, landownership; econ. hist.; P.C. Beauchamp (ed.), *Oxon. Muster Rolls 1539, 1542, 1569* (ORS 60, 1996), 44; Dickins, *Hook Norton*, 162–9.

³⁵ Peters, *Sheriffs*, 94; *Misc. Gen. et Her.* I, 140–1; *Par. Colln* II, 179–80.

³⁶ TNA, PROB 11/60/91.

³⁷ *Ibid.* PROB 11/51/109; PROB 11/60/91; PROB 11/116/477; PROB 11/137/19; *ibid.* E 179/255/3, m. 37; OHC, Clayton 1/14; above, landownership (Osney abbey estate: manor ho.).

³⁸ *VCH Oxon.* IX, 61; XI, 172–3; TNA, PROB 11/51/109.

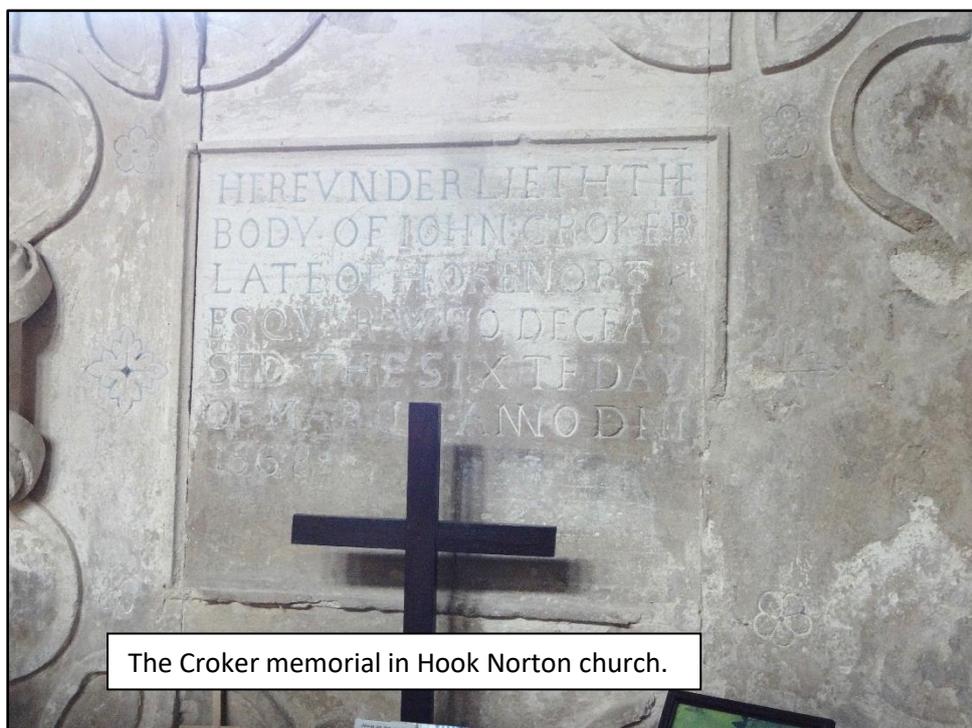
³⁹ e.g. TNA, PROB 11/51/109 (John Croker d. 1569, owing a London mercer £1,000); PROB 11/137/19 (Gerrard Croker d. 1621, urgent debts); PROB 11/ 202/426 (Gerrard Croker d. 1647, owing £3,500).

⁴⁰ e.g. TNA, C 2/Eliz/L5/45; TNA, C 2/Eliz/C6/7; *LJ IX*, 417–18; above, landownership.

⁴¹ S. Coltman, 'A Hook Norton Family... The Calcotts', *Cake & Cockhorse*, 9:1 (1982), 7–13; Dickins, *Hook Norton*, 160–2.

⁴² J. Lampitt, 'The Lampetts of Hook Norton', *Oxfordshire Family Historian*, 15:1 (2001), 30–4; Dickins, *Hook Norton*, 170; Beauchamp (ed.), *Oxon. Muster Rolls*, 44.

manor (in Wardington) in 1559,⁴³ while Richard Calcott (fl. 1641) married a daughter of the lord of Idbury.⁴⁴ Gerard Pittam (fl. 1604) became a yeoman of the king's chamber.⁴⁵ In 1662, 15 better-off families occupied houses taxed on four or more hearths,⁴⁶ while George Austin (d. 1666), a gentleman occupying a nine-hearth house, left goods worth £245.⁴⁷



Most inhabitants were much less well off. The median value of 80 probate inventories dated 1600–29 was £28, with only 7 inventories worth over £100 and 17 worth under £10.⁴⁸ The least well-off testators included labourers and craftsmen (including several carpenters),⁴⁹ though many others were presumably too poor to make wills, and in 1662 some 67 per cent of houses were taxed on only one or two hearths and 88 per cent on fewer than four.⁵⁰ Migration was common,⁵¹ although long-standing families included the Goughs and Wytons,⁵² who continued despite the deaths of Peter Gough, his wife, and one of his

⁴³ VCH Oxon. X, 216; below (welfare).

⁴⁴ Oxon. Visit. 1669–75, 56.

⁴⁵ OHC, MS Wills Oxon. 50/2/67.

⁴⁶ TNA, E 179/255/3, mm. 37, 44, incl. two in Southrop.

⁴⁷ OHC, MS Wills Oxon. 76/1/16; for his lands, *ibid.* P II/iii/10.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.* MSS Wills Oxon., Hook Norton inventories.

⁴⁹ e.g. *ibid.* 1/2/25; 300/3/37; 65/2/56; 47/2/10; 50/4/8; 12/1/29

⁵⁰ TNA, E 179/255/3, mm. 37, 44; figs. include Hook Norton and Southrop.

⁵¹ e.g. *Oxf. Ch. Ct Deposns 1581–6*, 22; 1589–93, 7, 14, 43; 1609–16, 3, 26–7, 37, 51–2, 54–5; 1634–9, 12–13.

⁵² OHC, MSS Wills Oxon., Hook Norton wills (e.g. 179.176; 202.79); Dickins, *Hook Norton*, 139.

sons in an outbreak of 'plague' in 1625.⁵³ Those remaining for a generation or less included domestic and farm servants, who were sometimes remembered in wills.⁵⁴ John Croker (d. 1561) left 11s. 8d. to each of his manservants lest he be thought 'an unthankful master', though only 3s. 4d. to each maidservant.⁵⁵

Open-field farming (still partly regulated through manor courts) continued until enclosure in 1774, which was unsuccessfully opposed by small proprietors and copyholders.⁵⁶ Thereafter the dominance of leading farmers, who already occupied the chief parish offices, was increased,⁵⁷ the most affluent still including the Lampetts, who were commemorated in the church.⁵⁸ Poorer inhabitants became increasingly reliant on parish relief, with some forced into a recently established parish workhouse,⁵⁹ while a friendly society was established in 1780, based at the Red Lion and holding an annual June feast.⁶⁰

Since 1800

A dozen or so substantial farmers dominated early 19th-century parish society, of whom Anthony Lampett was invited by Lord Spencer in 1812 to a breakfast at Blenheim Palace.⁶¹ Such families dominated both church and chapel, and several Nonconformists (and others) made use of Gillett and Tawney's Quaker bank at Banbury.⁶² The bulk of the population was made up of smallholders, petty craftsmen or retailers, and labourers, of whom there was a marked surplus, those 'only casually employed by farmers and the rest of their time by the overseer' (the majority) reportedly feeling themselves 'degraded'.⁶³ Petty thefts and poaching were fairly common,⁶⁴ but violent disorder was rare,⁶⁵ with apparently no significant involvement in episodes such as the Swing riots of 1830. In 1849 c.30 Hook Norton labourers, harnessed with ropes to a waggon, dragged coals the 8 miles from Banbury wharf, a 'repulsive exhibition' motivated by dire need in the absence of other employment,

⁵³ OHC, MSS Wills Oxon. 166/1/48; 106.138.

⁵⁴ e.g. *ibid.* 183.353; 195.74; 300/3/25; 166/1/36.

⁵⁵ TNA, PROB 11/44/203.

⁵⁶ Bodl. MS Top. Oxon. c 229, f. 72 and v.; W.E. Tate, 'Oxfordshire Parliamentary Enclosures, 1696–1853', Oxford Univ. B.Litt. thesis (1947), 67, 72, 73, 75; Tiller, 'Hook Norton', 288; Dickins, *Hook Norton*, 82. For the numerous small owner-occupiers, *Oxon. Poll*, 1754, 56–8.

⁵⁷ OHC, PAR137/4/F1/1; Dickins, *Hook Norton*, 141.

⁵⁸ Bodl. MS Top. Oxon. c 229, f. 57; Lampitt, 'The Lampetts of Hook Norton'.

⁵⁹ Below (welfare).

⁶⁰ *Oxon. FS*, 168–9; presumably the society with 54 members in 1804 (*Poor Abstract*, 1804, 403).

⁶¹ OHC, P439/3/C/1.

⁶² A.M. Taylor, *Gillets: Bankers at Banbury and Oxford* (1964), 52, 53, 55.

⁶³ *Oxon. Atlas*, p. 117; *Report from His Majesty's Commissioners for Inquiring into the Administration and Practical Operation of the Poor Laws* (Parl. Papers 1834 (44), v), Appendix B, p. 378c.

⁶⁴ e.g. OHC, QS1839/1/L3/6, 26–7; QS1842/1/L3/6, 16; QS1854/1/L3/31; QS1854/4/L3/38.

⁶⁵ For small-scale rioting in Dec. 1832, OHC, QS1833/1/L2/76; QS1833/1/L3/3–5.

and perhaps by a desire to show the ‘free traders of Banbury the ruinous consequences of the removal of protection’.⁶⁶

Despite such problems, in 1852 the village was thought ‘both respectable and extensive’,⁶⁷ although its farmers had ‘small capital’,⁶⁸ and private residents were few for such a large village, with only 22 listed in 1877 and 28 in 1903.⁶⁹ For poorer families self-help was epitomised in three friendly societies formed in 1859, 1889, and 1899, meeting at the Bell Inn, the Sun Inn, and the National school,⁷⁰ while in May 1872 c.70 labourers joined a newly established local branch of the National Agricultural Labourers’ Union.⁷¹ An influx of railway navvies c.1876–87 caused some tensions, although a tea was held for 250 of them in 1884, and in 1886 they joined with villagers to form a brass band.⁷² From 1889 ironstone extraction provided near-full employment (albeit much of it poorly paid),⁷³ and the railway facilitated leisure trips to Banbury, Chipping Norton, and further afield.⁷⁴ Within the village there were successful agricultural and horticultural societies, and cricket and football were played.⁷⁵



Coronation celebrations in 1911.

⁶⁶ *Banbury Guardian*, 2 Aug. 1849.

⁶⁷ *Gardner’s Dir. Oxon.* (1852).

⁶⁸ ChCh, MS Estates 73, ff. 205–6.

⁶⁹ *PO Dir. Oxon.* (1877 edn); *Kelly’s Dir. Oxon.* (1903 edn).

⁷⁰ *Oxon. FS*, 168–9.

⁷¹ F. Beale, ‘From our Own Correspondent’, *Cake & Cockhorse*, 9:1 (1982), 23; P. Horn (ed.), *Agric. Trade Unionism in Oxon. 1872–81* (ORS 48, 1974), 40, 133.

⁷² TNA, RG 11/1522; Beale, ‘From our Own Correspondent’, 25; Dickins, *Hook Norton*, 157; S. Callery, *The Story of Hook Norton* (2017), 27–8.

⁷³ E. Tonks, *The Ironstone Quarries of the Midlands... Part II* (1988), 88; R. Gorton, ‘The Hook Norton Ironstone Companies’, *Cake & Cockhorse*, 9:1 (1982), 22 (for wages).

⁷⁴ Beale, ‘From our Own Correspondent’, 26 (June 1887 trip to Portsmouth); *Banbury Guardian*, 1 Aug. 1889 (annual Hook Norton district excursion); Callery, *Story of Hook Norton*, 28–9.

⁷⁵ e.g. *Banbury Guardian*, 10 June 1886; 22 Sept. 1921; 3 Sept. 1925; OHC, S137/1/A2/2, p. 38; D. Eddershaw, *A Country Brewery: Hook Norton, 1849–1999* (1999), 25.

The First World War brought more women into the workforce both in the fields, temporarily at the brewery,⁷⁶ and at Bliss Mill in Chipping Norton.⁷⁷ A short-lived camp for 32 German prisoners of war was established in 1919 in a club house in the yard between The Sun and The Red Lion pubs (opposite the church), an unsuitable location which allowed pub goers contact with the inmates.⁷⁸ A stone-built Memorial Hall on Chapel Street, constructed in 1922 partly as a Masonic initiative, became a popular venue for dances, whist drives, and other events,⁷⁹ and as in the 19th century a 'town crier' called public meetings and protests.⁸⁰ Local employment fell between the wars when the ironstone business was slack, and in 1922 the village was 'large and impoverished', the quarries finally closing in 1946.⁸¹ By the 1960s, however, employment opportunities in Banbury especially were attracting incomers, 60 per cent of them from outside the county, while almost three quarters of those in employment worked outside the parish, some as far away as the Cowley car works.⁸² Even so a strong sense of village community continued, reflected in the establishment of numerous local groups and clubs.⁸³ A playing field was acquired c.1952, and sports facilities were improved in the early 1970s and again in 2008 (when a large new sports clubhouse was built),⁸⁴ while a county council library was opened in the former school c.1973.⁸⁵ By the 1990s the population was dominated by professional and managerial workers and retirees, with c.80 per cent of homes owner occupied;⁸⁶ 52 per cent of houses in 2013 had four or more bedrooms, and the district council indicated a need for more moderately sized affordable homes.⁸⁷ In 2019 the library was assisted by volunteers, and varied social activities were held in the school, church, Baptist chapel, Memorial Hall and pubs.⁸⁸

⁷⁶ Eddershaw, *A Country Brewery*, 67–70.

⁷⁷ W. Hemmings et al., *The Banbury & Cheltenham Railway, Volume Two* (2004), 286.

⁷⁸ TNA, FO 383/506; *Hook Norton Village Trail*, no. 4a; the club house was later used by naval cadets. For Second World War billeting and evacuees, below (educ.).

⁷⁹ *Banbury Guardian*, 25 May 1922; 19 Oct. 1922; 4 Dec. 1947; 1 Jan. 1948; Dickins, *Hook Norton*, 158–9.

⁸⁰ *Oxford Mail*, 28 June 1956; *PO Dir. Oxon.* (1854 edn); *Kelly's Dir. Oxon.* (1883 and later edns).

⁸¹ CERC, NS/7/1/6526; Tonks, *Ironstone Quarries of the Midlands... Part II*, 91, 98.

⁸² *Hook Norton: Report on the Survey and Plan*; *Oxford Times*, 22 June 1962.

⁸³ *Oxford Times*, 22 June 1962; 'Welcome to Hook Norton' (1975): festival programme in OHC; *Hook Norton Village Appraisal 1995* (1995): pamphlet in OHC.

⁸⁴ OHC, PC137/1/C/1; *ibid.* O41/2/C4/14; *ibid.* PA1830 (*Hook Norton Society newsletter*, 1972–3); *Hook Norton News*, Oct. 2008.

⁸⁵ OHC, PA1830; 'Welcome to Hook Norton'.

⁸⁶ *Census*, 1991 and 2011; *Hook Norton Village Appraisal 1995*.

⁸⁷ *Hook Norton Neighbourhood Plan 2014–2031* (2015), accessed online Dec. 2019; 'Hook Norton Group Plan Ambitious Housing Scheme': article of 20 Feb. 2019 on *Banbury Guardian* website.

⁸⁸ *Hook Norton village website* (accessed Oct. 2019); *Hook Norton 2000 AD: The Millennium Book* (2000). For charity music and beer festivals, below (welfare).



Education

A Hook Norton schoolmaster was mentioned in 1592,⁸⁹ and in 1683 a 'young man' taught children to read.⁹⁰ From c.1739 a charity day school was held in the north transept of the church,⁹¹ and though discontinued c.1799 it was resumed (apparently in a cottage) before 1819, when it had 32 pupils.⁹² By c.1831 it was affiliated to the National Society.⁹³ A new Gothic-style building on High Street (accommodating 228 children) was opened in 1856, paid for chiefly by Miss Anne Davis of Swerford Park and by government grant, with a master's house adjoining. Shortage of funds meant that no master was appointed until 1861, however, the single mistress meanwhile teaching alone.⁹⁴ By 1899 the school was so overcrowded that the education department ordered its temporary closure, prompting the addition (at an estimated cost of £739) of new infant premises for 130 children, partly to avoid imposition of a school board.⁹⁵

⁸⁹ OHC, MS Wills Oxon 1/1/34. For Sir Thos Pope's abortive plan to found a grammar school, *VCH Oxon.* I, 468.

⁹⁰ *Bp Fell and Nonconf.* 39.

⁹¹ OHC, PAR137/4/F1/1, ff. 38, 41v., 44v., 129; TNA, CHAR 2/222; Skelton, *Antiq. Oxon.* 55. For its charitable support, below (welfare).

⁹² *Educ. of Poor Digest*, II, 725 (also mentioning 2 private day schools teaching 32 children); OHC, MS Oxf. Dioc. b 11, f. 144; TNA, CHAR 2/222; ChCh, MS Estates 73, ff. 205–6. A separate Sunday school started in 1786 taught 136 children in 1819: *Educ. of Poor Digest*, II, 725.

⁹³ *Educ. Enq. Abstract* (Parl. Papers 1835 (62), xlii), p. 751; OHC, MS Oxf. Dioc. b 38, f. 117 (calling it a 'new' school in 1831, funded partly by subscription); Dickins, *Hook Norton*, 149–50.

⁹⁴ *Oxf. Jnl.*, 28 June 1856; ChCh, MS Estates 73, ff. 205–6; TNA, ED 21/14467. For bldg (by E.G. Bruton), Brooks, *Pevsner N&W*, 360; OHC, S137/1/Y1/1–6 (plans).

⁹⁵ ChCh, MS Estates 73, f. 223; OHC, S137/1/A2/2 (log bk).

Additional provision in 1833 comprised seven small private schools (two of them for boarders and three for infants) catering for c.137 children, while a Baptist Sunday school had 70 pupils.⁹⁶ A small Dissenting British School for 40 children was established c.1842, thanks largely to local Baptists.⁹⁷ By 1858 (when it had 59 pupils) it was poorly funded and overcrowded, however,⁹⁸ and it closed apparently between 1867 and 1881.⁹⁹ A purpose-built Baptist Sunday school was erected in front of the Baptist meeting house in 1873.¹⁰⁰

By 1919 the National school (by then a county council elementary school) was one of Oxfordshire's worst for attendance, and the premises were in urgent need of repair. Minor structural works failed to address the site's cramped character, though in the 1920s–30s inspection reports were generally positive, and successful, long-established evening classes for adolescents continued,¹⁰¹ alongside practical training supplied by the Oxford Education Committee in a hut next to the Memorial Hall.¹⁰² During the Second World War large numbers of evacuee children (mainly girls) were accommodated by holding extra classes in pub club rooms and chapels, the school roll reaching over 300 in September 1940.¹⁰³ The following year soldiers were billeted in the infant school, which came to be used as a rest centre.¹⁰⁴



⁹⁶ *Educ. Enq. Abstract* (Parl. Papers 1835 (62), xlii), p. 751; OHC, MS Oxf. Dioc. b 38, f. 117.

⁹⁷ TNA, ED 103/14; Brunel University Archive, BFSS/1/7/2/1/1/28. For speculation about its location, P. Ashbridge, *Children of Dissent* (2008), 163.

⁹⁸ Brunel University Archive, BFSS/1/7/2/1/1/28.

⁹⁹ *Return of Parishes* (Parl. Papers 1867–8 (114), liii), pp. 348–9; OS Map 1:2500, Oxon. VIII.12 (1881 edn); Ashbridge, *Children of Dissent*, 163 n.

¹⁰⁰ OHC, NB1/1/A3/2; Brooks, *Pevsner N&W*, 360. For small bequests in support of the Anglican Sunday school in 1810 and 1858, *Digest of Schs and Charities* (Parl. Papers 1843 (435), xviii), pp. 84–5; TNA, CHAR 2/222; Dickins, *Hook Norton*, 178.

¹⁰¹ TNA, ED 21/38000; OHC, S137/1/A5/1.

¹⁰² Information from Hook Norton Local History Group.

¹⁰³ OHC, S137/1/A1/4, p. 15; *Hook School Days 1855–1993* (1993), 7: pamphlet in OHC.

¹⁰⁴ OHC, S137/1/A1/4, pp. 20, 55–6. For soldiers billeted at the brewery, R. Woolley, *Brewed in the Traditional Manner: The Story of Hook Norton Brewery* (2015), 52–3.

In the post-war period the primary school continued to struggle for space, and in 1971 it moved to the premises of a former secondary modern school on Watery Lane. Built on a quadrangular plan, that had been opened in 1950 for 120 pupils drawn partly from surrounding villages, and was regarded as ‘socially advantageous’; it nevertheless proved uneconomical, and on its closure half of its then 200 pupils were transferred to Chipping Norton Comprehensive school, and half to Bloxham’s new Warriner School.¹⁰⁵ A new purpose-built primary school was opened on the Sibford Road in 1993, with a similar quadrangular layout, and was extended in 2016, accommodating 265 children two years later.¹⁰⁶ Nursery provision was initiated in 1995 and continued in 2019.¹⁰⁷ Adult education classes thrived in the late 20th century, continuing on a smaller-scale after county council funding was withdrawn.¹⁰⁸

Welfare

One-off bequests to the poor are documented from the 16th century,¹⁰⁹ and the parish acquired several small endowed charities. In 1521 Charles Brandon, duke of Suffolk, gave a house called the Garrett to feoffees for the use of all tenants of Hook Norton manor, for 5s. rent a year. The building stood on the corner of Garrett (now Queen) Street and High Street, and by 1754 comprised seven dwellings, whose tenants paid a total of £8 17s. rent. The income (after repairs) was used to pay £3 a year to the master of the charity school.¹¹⁰ Part of the building collapsed c.1775, and after being repaired it was sold piecemeal, the last dwelling in 1791. The proceeds were invested, and from 1800 c.£5–£7 annual interest was distributed amongst the poor.¹¹¹ A smaller 16th-century charity was established by Walter Calcott (d. 1582), who left money producing 15s. a year to be paid by the lords of Williamscot (in Wardington). Of that, 10s. went to the minister for a charity sermon, and 5s. to the poor.¹¹²

By the 1750s, and probably from the establishment of the church school, the bishop of Oxford customarily gave a small annual sum (later £2 2s.) for teaching poor children, first

¹⁰⁵ S. Callery, *The Story of Hook Norton* (2017), 43; TNA, ED 109/9044/3; ED 162/1610; *Banbury Guardian*, 22 July 1971.

¹⁰⁶ Callery, *Story of Hook Norton*, 44; Hook Norton Primary CE prospectus (2000), on school website.

¹⁰⁷ *Hook Norton Village Appraisal 1995*; local information.

¹⁰⁸ Information from Hook Norton Local History Group.

¹⁰⁹ e.g. TNA, PROB 11/44/203; PROB 11/64/279; OHC, MSS Wills Oxon. 10/3/12; 11/1/18.

¹¹⁰ TNA, CHAR 2/222.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*; OHC, MSS Oxf. Dioc. b 11, f. 144; d 570, f. 168v.; *Char. Don.* 982–3; Dickins, *Hook Norton*, 172–7.

¹¹² TNA, CHAR 2/222; *ibid.* C 93/50/12; OHC, PAR137/9/C1/1 and 3; Dickins, *Hook Norton*, 177.

in the day school and later the Sunday school.¹¹³ From c.1786 the bishop's lessee (Lord Talbot) also customarily gave £8 8s. towards coal and wheat for the poor, and £1 for bell ropes,¹¹⁴ the coal gift continuing in 1831.¹¹⁵ In 1826 it amounted to more than 4 tons, although the churchwardens had to pay over £2 for carriage presumably from Banbury wharf.¹¹⁶ A 32-a. furze allotment on the heath was vested in the poor at enclosure in 1774, leased for £17 4s. a year which was also spent on coal,¹¹⁷ while medical care was sometimes available from the surgeon-cum-apothecary employed at the private asylum which operated in the village c.1725–1854.¹¹⁸

Despite such payments, by the late 18th century the bulk of the parish's mounting poor relief came from compulsory rates. Expenditure rose sharply from £251 in 1776 to £1,208 in 1803, and to a staggering £2,205 in 1821: by far the highest sum in Chadlington hundred, including Chipping Norton.¹¹⁹ A workhouse established at East End in 1770 had 20 inmates in 1803, when another 80 adults and 35 children received permanent out relief.¹²⁰ High levels of pauperism were reflected in an agreement of 1807 to farm care of the parish poor to the workhouse governor for £11 10s. a week,¹²¹ and a population increase of 222 between 1811 and 1821 was due entirely to pauper immigration.¹²² The financial burden was slightly eased by parish-funded emigration, notably in 1826–7 when c.175 people left for North America.¹²³ Expenditure (£2,374 in 1832) remained fairly stable in the early 1830s,¹²⁴ when a select vestry was established,¹²⁵ and in 1834 primary responsibility passed to the newly established Banbury Poor Law Union.¹²⁶ The workhouse inmates were transferred to Banbury, and the Hook Norton buildings converted into nine parish cottages, sold in 1871.¹²⁷

¹¹³ OHC, MSS Oxf. Dioc. d 556, f. 39v.; d 562, f. 59v.; b 11, f. 144v.; TNA, CHAR 2/222; *Char. Don.* 982–3.

¹¹⁴ *Char. Don.* 982–3; TNA, CHAR 2/222.

¹¹⁵ Dickins, *Hook Norton*, 150. For the lessee's apparently separate payment of 1 qr maslin, OHC, Shrew. VII/iii/1.

¹¹⁶ OHC, PAR137/4/F1/2, f. 38v.

¹¹⁷ OHC, QS/D/A/book99 (F15); *ibid.* DV/X/64 (incorrectly stating 40½ a.); *Char. Don.* 982–3; *Poor Abstract, 1804*, 402.

¹¹⁸ Above, econ. hist. (markets, fairs, and trade). A nurse was paid partly from parish rates in 1831: OHC, PAR137/2/A1/1, f. 4.

¹¹⁹ *Poor Abstract, 1804*, 402–3; *Poor Rate Retns, 1822*, p. 694. More generally: P. Ashbridge, *Children of Dissent* (2008), 110–113, 147–50.

¹²⁰ OHC, PAR137/5/F1/1, ff. 45, 63; *Poor Abstract, 1804*, 403; Ashbridge, *Children of Dissent*, 111 and n. The workhouse had 27 inmates in 1812–13: OHC, PAR137/5/MS/1.

¹²¹ OHC, PAR137/5/A9/4; Ashbridge, *Children of Dissent*, 113.

¹²² VCH Oxon. II, 219 n.

¹²³ *Report from His Majesty's Commissioners for Inquiring into the Administration and Practical Operation of the Poor Laws* (Parl. Papers 1834 (44), v), Appendix A, p. 2; Ashbridge, *Children of Dissent*, 150.

¹²⁴ *Poor Rate Retns, 1835*, 155.

¹²⁵ OHC, PAR137/2/A1/1, f. 5.

¹²⁶ *Oxon. Atlas*, pp. 144–5.

¹²⁷ OHC, par. reg. transcript (burials); *ibid.* PAR137/2/A1/1, ff. 60v.–61v., 137v.–138.

A soup fund was established in 1872,¹²⁸ and in the late 19th century the Brandon charity was opened to all poor inhabitants, before being taken over (with the heath allotment charity) by the parish council in 1908.¹²⁹ The council took over the bishop's charity in 1913, and in 1970 amalgamated it with the Brandon charity and heath allotment; the latter continued in 2019 when it paid out £3,569, much of it to the village school,¹³⁰ but the Brandon charity ceased in 2017.¹³¹ Twentieth-century welfare initiatives included an old people's club¹³² and (in 1995) a weekly day centre in the Baptist hall,¹³³ while a full-time GP surgery was established in 1965, housed from 2001 in a purpose-built medical centre in The Bourne.¹³⁴ An annual charity music festival established in 1997 continued in 2019, when it and a charity beer festival raised money for local and wider causes.¹³⁵

¹²⁸ Beale, 'From our Own Correspondent', p. 23.

¹²⁹ Dickins, *Hook Norton*, 177; OHC, PC137/2/A1/1.

¹³⁰ OHC, PC 137/2/A1/2-3; PC137/2/F/1; Char. Comm. website (July 2019), no. 203239; info. from Donald Ratcliffe. A small 1938 bequest was also included but ceased in 1992.

¹³¹ Par. council website (Apr. 2021).

¹³² OHC, Hook Norton cuttings.

¹³³ Char. Comm. website (July 2019), nos. 1069840 and 1117635; *Hook Norton Village Appraisal 1995*.

¹³⁴ Info. from Hook Norton village history website (Oct. 2019). A surgeon was usually resident much earlier: *Kelly's Dir. Oxon.* (1883 and later edns).

¹³⁵ Callery, *Story of Hook Norton*, 44.