

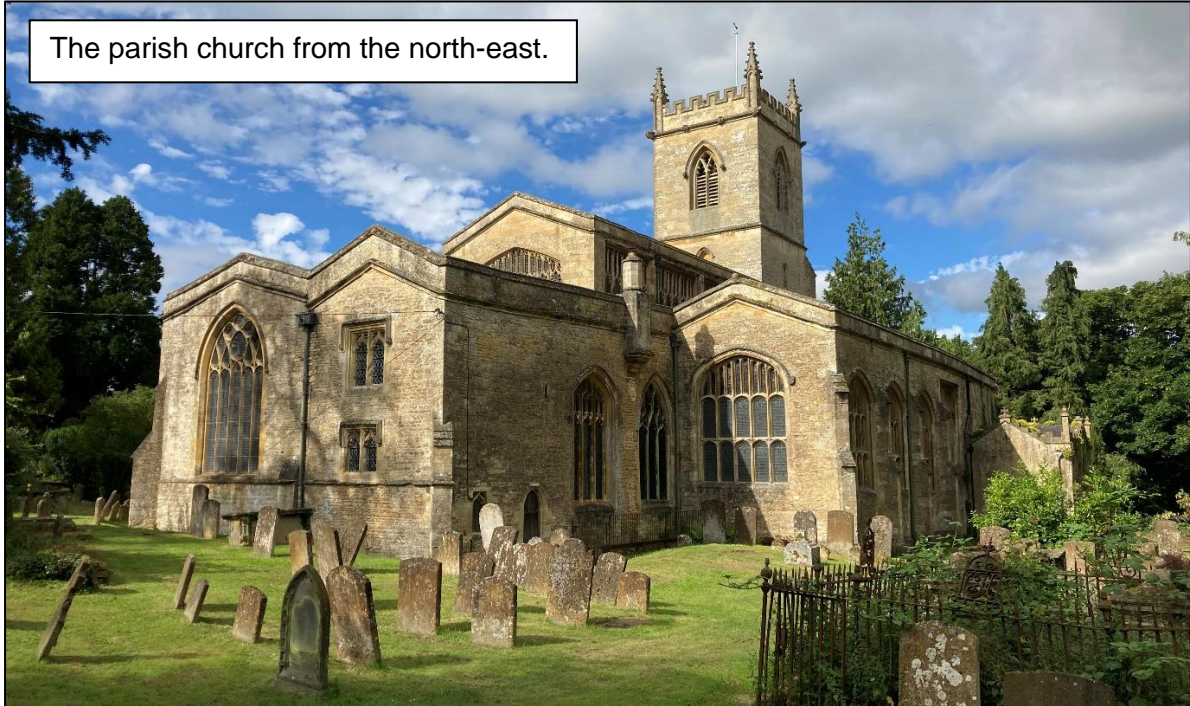


VCH Oxfordshire Texts in Progress

Chipping Norton

Social History I: Social and Political History

The parish church from the north-east.



The Middle Ages to the Reformation

Townspeople and Social Life

To 1350 The 11th-century rural settlement which preceded the town, focused probably in the stream valley near the present-day church, had a standard social character for the area, comprising a mix of *villani*, bordars, and demesne-orientated slaves or *servi*. The two (possibly resident) English thegns who held the estate in 1066 were replaced at the Conquest by the prominent Norman lord and tenant-in-chief Ernulf de Hesdin, who despite holding lands in 13 counties built a motte-and-bailey castle there, and in the 1090s was resident at least once with members of his family and household, including his chaplain and several household knights. Possibly he also built or rebuilt the adjacent parish church, which he gave to Gloucester abbey. His daughter Avelina may have occupied the castle in her widowhood c.1150, when (as 'lady of Norton') she founded Cold Norton priory, and perhaps had a hand (with her son William) in establishing the town. The castle itself was rebuilt and

expanded in the 12th or early 13th century, with an associated fishpond, vineyard, and (later) park, and some later lords may have visited occasionally, Chipping Norton being conveniently situated on a route between the Fitz Alans' Shropshire estates and London, and within easy reach of the royal palace at Woodstock. None, however, are known to have resided permanently.¹

In the absence of resident lords, by the 13th century the town itself was dominated by its leading townsmen or burgesses, who held by burgage tenure presumably from the town's foundation.² Members of the Breton, Hurne (*in Angulo*), Makeblithe, Merry (or *Medicus*), Merryweather, and Wale families appear frequently in 13th-century deeds, some using their own seals,³ and six of them made up half of the jury which, together with a bailiff, represented the borough before the justices in eyre in 1241.⁴ The Bretons (perhaps originally from Brittany) were prominent wool merchants,⁵ Laurence Breton accompanying the abbot of Dore (Herefs.) to Aquitaine in 1329–30 on the king's business.⁶ The Merrys acquired half of nearby Lyneham manor before 1235,⁷ and Robert Hurne (who occupied a prominent house overlooking the market place) was MP for the town in 1300 and 1302.⁸ Robert Wale sold cloth in 1241,⁹ and before 1290 Richard Wale endowed a chantry in the parish church.¹⁰

Locative bynames recorded before the Black Death suggest that most incomers to the town came from surrounding villages in north and west Oxfordshire,¹¹ though a few apparently migrated from Gloucestershire,¹² Warwickshire,¹³ and as far as London and Kent.¹⁴ Taxation records from 1316 imply that wealth was more unevenly distributed than in neighbouring Burford and Witney, where nobody paid more than 17s. in tax. Of the 68 Chipping Norton taxpayers listed, William Smith paid the most (44s. 4d.), followed by John

¹ Above, devpt of town; landownership; agric. (medieval); below, relig. hist.; Rosen and Cliffe, *Making*, 12, 15–17. For Ernulf's estates, *Domesday Bk: Index of Persons* (Phillimore 1992), 37; for 'lady of Norton' (*domina de Norton*), BNC, Cold Norton 1.

² TNA, C 133/104/21; above, local govt. (town govt to 1607). The byname 'burgess' was recorded in 1241: BNC, Over Norton 4, 9; *Oxon. Eyre, 1241*, pp. 99, 119.

³ e.g. BNC, Chipping Norton 2, 2x, 3, 11; Magd. Coll., Chipping Norton 2–4, 6–10. For Merry and *Medicus*, S. Draper, 'The Merrys of Merriscourt: An Oxfordshire Surname Explored', *Oxoniensia* 87 (2022), 467–8.

⁴ *Oxon. Eyre, 1241*, pp. 119, 148; above, local govt (town govt to 1607).

⁵ *Oxf. Dict. of Family Names in Britain and Ireland*, s.v. Breton; above, urban econ. (Middle Ages).

⁶ *Cal. Pat.* 1327–30, 464, 484.

⁷ *VCH Oxon.* XIX, 170; Draper, 'Merrys', 467–8.

⁸ W.R. Williams, *Parl. Hist. Oxon.* (1899), 173; above, devpt of town (planned layout).

⁹ *Oxon. Eyre, 1241*, p. 148.

¹⁰ Below, relig. hist. (Middle Ages).

¹¹ e.g. BNC, Chipping Norton 3 (Broad Enstone); TNA, E 179/161/10 (Shutford); E 179/161/8 (Chalford, Cornwell, Taynton); *ibid.* CP 25/1/189/16, no. 19 (Radcot); *Cal. Chanc. Warrants*, p. 320 (Swalcliffe).

¹² TNA, E 179/161/10 (Campden); *ibid.* C 133/104/21 (Evenlode).

¹³ *Oxon. Eyre, 1241*, pp. 50, 170 (Wolford).

¹⁴ *Ibid.* p. 119 (Kent); Magd. Coll., Chipping Norton 3 (London); BNC, Chipping Norton 1 (Sandwich in Kent).

Merry (41s. 9d.), the earl of Arundel as lord (22s. 10d.), and Adam Breton (18s.). A middling group of 16 (24 per cent), probably merchants and tradesmen, each paid between 5s. and 13s. 4d., whilst 48 (or 71 per cent, on a par with Burford) each paid less than 5s.¹⁵ Little had changed by 1327, when seven individuals (13 per cent) paid 10s. or more, headed by Richard Allen and Adam Breton. Six (12 per cent) paid 5s.–7s., and 39 (75 per cent) less than 5s.¹⁶ An unknown number of the poorest inhabitants fell below the tax threshold in both years.



Medieval brasses in the parish church to 15th-century guild members: John Young (d. 1451), 'woolman', and his wife Isabel (left) and John Stokes, 'mercier', and his wife Alice (below).



1350–1540 The Black Death had few discernible lasting impacts on the town, which prospered in the late 14th and 15th centuries mainly on account of its prominent role in the Cotswold wool trade. Manorial lords remained absent until the very late 15th century, and despite the presence of manorial bailiffs the town continued to be dominated by leading mercers and wool merchants or woolmen, several of whom were guild members in other Midland towns, and came from families not recorded in Chipping Norton before 1350.¹⁷ Some, such as the innholder Robert Stratford in 1430, were distinguished as 'gentleman' in documents,¹⁸ whilst others (including Robert Reynold in 1440 and 1442 and John Stokes in 1446) held office in the shire as tax collectors.¹⁹ Both Reynold and Stokes were founder-

¹⁵ TNA, E 179/161/8; cf. A. Catchpole et al., *Burford: Buildings and People in a Cotswold Town* (2008), 34.

¹⁶ TNA, E 179/161/9.

¹⁷ Above, urban econ. (Middle Ages).

¹⁸ TNA, CP 40/677; *Cal. Close* 1422–9, 453; cf. TNA, CP 40/647; CP 40/705.

¹⁹ *Cal. Fine* 1437–45, 143, 217; 1445–52, 35.

members in 1450 of the town's Holy Trinity guild, together with the woolmen John Young (d. 1451) and John Hutchins,²⁰ while Young himself (with his wife Isabel) was one of several prominent late 15th- and early 16th-century townspeople commemorated by brasses in the church, many of which were perhaps originally housed in the guild chapel.²¹ The guild itself provided a new religious and civic focus for the town's élite (including women), its charitable activities supporting both a grammar school and an almshouse, and its social functions finding a focus in the new guildhall built or rebuilt c.1514–20 in Middle Row, which had a large first-floor hall for meetings, entertainments, and feasts.²² Little else is known of the town's late medieval communal life, however, which presumably revolved around markets and fairs, inns and alehouses, and religious festivities such as the Rogationtide processions mentioned in 1530, along with more secular seasonal games.²³ A brothel was reported in 1520.²⁴

Resident gentry became more significant by the early 16th century. Richard Croft (d. 1502), lord of one third of the manor, moved to the town by 1495, establishing a new manor house on New Street, and was buried with his wife Anne (d. 1509) in an elaborate tomb-chest in the parish church, complete with recumbent effigies.²⁵ A former royal officeholder at Woodstock and MP for Oxfordshire (in 1472–5),²⁶ in the 1490s he wrote to the president of Magdalen College, Oxford, recommending that his godson (the son of one of his Chipping Norton tenants) be admitted to the college.²⁷ His son Hugh ('of Chipping Norton') briefly acquired an additional share in the manor, and in 1515 gained royal protection in the retinue of Sir Richard Wingfield, Lord Deputy of Calais,²⁸ while Hugh's sisters Elizabeth and Anne married respectively Richard Fiennes (d. 1501), Lord Saye and Sele, and Sir John Rodney (d. 1527),²⁹ who bought a house in the town in 1498.³⁰ Rodney's son Sir Walter (also of Chipping Norton) may have succeeded Hugh Croft as lord of two thirds of the manor, and

²⁰ *Cal. Pat.* 1446–52, 402. For Young and Hutchins as woolmen, P. Manning, 'Notes on the Monumental Brasses in Chipping Norton Church, Oxon.', *Jnl of Oxf. Univ. Brass-Rubbing Soc.* 1 (1897), 6; *Cal. Pat.* 1452–61, 580.

²¹ Manning, 'Brasses', 3–9; below, relig. hist. (Middle Ages; relig. bldgs).

²² Above, town bldgs. (public bldgs.); below (educ.; welfare); Rosen and Cliffe, *Making*, 34–6; Eddershaw, *Story*, 29–33.

²³ *Visit. Dioc. Linc.* II, 45; above, urban econ. (mkts and fairs); below, relig. hist. (Middle Ages). For late medieval games in Henley, *VCH Oxon.* XVI, 123.

²⁴ *Visit. Dioc. Linc.* I, 134.

²⁵ *Oxon. Wills*, 53; above, landownership (manor; manor hos); below, relig. hist. (Middle Ages).

²⁶ C.S.L. Davies, 'The Crofts: creation and defence of a family enterprise under the Yorkists and Henry VII', *Historical Research* 68 (1995), 241–65; for his offices at Woodstock, *VCH Oxon.* XII, 432, 434, 440. Not to be confused with his elder brother Sir Ric. Croft (d. 1509).

²⁷ *Magd. Coll.*, Letters 24.

²⁸ *L&P Hen. VIII*, II, p. 318; above, landownership.

²⁹ O.G.S. Croft, *The House of Croft of Croft Castle* (1949), 38–9; *Complete Peerage*, XI, 483; above, landownership (manor).

³⁰ *Cal. Close* 1492–8, 314–15.

was knighted after serving as high sheriff in 1513–14,³¹ while Fiennes' granddaughter Elizabeth was buried in a surviving tomb-chest in the church in 1604/5, next to her second husband Thomas Rickardes (d. 1579).³² The Ashfields, lords of neighbouring Heythrop, also established strong ties with the town, John (d. 1506) being buried in the parish church under 'a fair tomb of marble', and his son John (d. 1521) leaving 13s. 4d. to the guild.³³

Tomb-chest in the parish church with effigies of Thomas Rickardes (d. 1579) and his wife Elizabeth (d. 1604/5), great granddaughter of Richard Croft (d. 1502), whose own tomb-chest is adjacent.



Alongside such gentry, the town retained some wealthy mercantile families. Margaret Gerveys and Margaret Pynner (both widows of woolmen) established chantries in the church in 1481 and 1497,³⁴ while Richard Smith (d. 1503) owned a shop in Woodstock and lands at Stow-on-the-Wold (Glos.),³⁵ and the woolman Griffith Mitton (d. 1519) had property (including a mill) in Coventry.³⁶ Richard Paxford moved to London, where he died in 1525 with estates in Lincolnshire and ships in the port of Boston (Lincs.); so too did Sir Thomas Pargeter (d. 1532), a salter who was knighted while lord mayor of London in 1530–1, and whose will made provision for distributions of herring in Chipping Norton for seven years

³¹ *L&P Hen. VIII*, II, p. 428; Brunner and Lunt, *Sheriffs*, 75; above, landownership.

³² *Par. Colln*, I, 93; Brooks, *Pevsner N&W*, 256; A. Collins (ed. E. Brydges), *Collins's Peerage of England* (1812), VII, 21; OHC, monumental inscriptions transcript, X15.

³³ TNA, PROB 11/15/130; PROB 11/20/92; Rosen and Cliffe, *Making*, 32–4; *VCH Oxon*, XI, 134; *Oxon. Visit.* 12; Manning, 'Brasses', 8 (the last two sources mistakenly giving the elder Jn's year of death as 1507).

³⁴ *Cal. Pat.* 1476–85, 277; 1494–1509, 109; Rosen and Cliffe, *Making*, 28, 32; above, urban econ. (Middle Ages); below, relig. hist. (Middle Ages).

³⁵ TNA, PROB 11/13/458.

³⁶ Coventry Archives, PA 60/1; TNA, REQ 2/7/53; above, urban econ. (1500–1800).

during Lent to encourage poor parishioners to pray for his soul. Both Paxford and Pargeter were members of Chipping Norton's guild,³⁷ the mastership of which was held by John Tanner and John Hutchins in 1514, Richard King in 1525, and Richard Carrick in 1535.³⁸ Those making bequests to the guild included the rectory estate lessee Richard Tanty (d. 1531), who also left money for the town's high cross,³⁹ and the widow Joan Mitton (d. 1530), whose household goods included featherbeds, gold jewellery, silver tableware, and furred gowns;⁴⁰ in 1524 she nevertheless paid only 5s. in tax, placing her fourteenth out of the town's 65 taxpayers. The wealthiest were the woolmen Robert Busby and John Hutchins (paying £2 each), while four people paid £1, and seven others between 6s. 6d. and 8s. Nineteen paid 2s.–5s. and the same number 12d.–18d., while 14 'servants' (probably including wage labourers) paid the lowest 4d. rate. The town overall had similar taxable wealth to Banbury (which had some 30 more taxpayers), but only half that of Burford and not even a third of Witney's.⁴¹ In the latter two places, however, a sizable proportion of recorded wealth was concentrated in the hands of one or two exceptionally wealthy merchants.⁴²

Town Government, Politics, and Conflict

Until a borough charter was obtained in 1607, Chipping Norton was a seignorial borough under lordly control, governed largely by manorial officers operating through the manor courts. Nonetheless there are occasional hints that leading townspeople acted collectively and enjoyed some circumscribed independence: leading townsmen presented a cloth dealer to the justices in eyre in 1241, and between 1300 and 1305 the borough sent representatives to parliament, while a portmoot may have existed in the later Middle Ages. The Holy Trinity guild provided an additional forum after 1450, although unlike in some towns its functions seem to have been primarily religious, social, and charitable. Manorial bailiffs included resident townsmen, who exercised authority within the town and over its prison.⁴³

³⁷ TNA, PROB 11/21/557 (Paxford); PROB 11/24/251 (Pargeter); A.P. Beaven, *Aldermen of the City of London temp. Henry III–1908* (1908), I, 36; II, 27; cf. *Valor Eccl.* II, 181.

³⁸ TNA, CP 40/1005B; CP 40/1046; *Valor Eccl.* II, 181. For the Carricks, above, landownership (other estates).

³⁹ OHC, MS Wills Oxon. 178.46; Manning, 'Brasses', 9; above, landownership (other estates).

⁴⁰ OHC, MS Wills Oxon. 178.26. She was married three times, lastly to Griffith Mitton (d. 1519): Manning, 'Brasses', 8–9; Rosen and Cliffe, *Making*, 172.

⁴¹ TNA, E 179/161/198; K. Rodwell (ed.), *Historic Towns in Oxon.* (1975), 201. For Busby, above, urban econ. (1500–1800); below.

⁴² Jn Busby (almost a third) in Burford and Ric. Wenman (four fifths) in Witney: Catchpole et al., *Burford*, 86; *VCH Oxon.* XIV, 77.

⁴³ Above, local govt (town govt to 1607; parl. rep.); below, relig. hist. (Middle Ages: chantries). Cf. Catchpole et al., *Burford*, 50.

Overall, relations between lords and townspeople seem to have been amicable, no doubt helped by the lords' non-residence and their lack of direct involvement in day-to-day affairs. The Fitz Alans had more important castles and estates in the Welsh Marches and Sussex, whilst the Marneys had their chief manors in Essex and Buckinghamshire.⁴⁴ Richard Fitz Alan, earl of Arundel, pursued prosecutions for trespass and poaching on the manor in 1381,⁴⁵ but may have also given the town extensive commons by charter, possibly in 1377.⁴⁶ Many of the town's high-status rectors and vicars were also frequently absent, although some resided occasionally (one of the accused in the trespass case being John 'the parson's servant'), and even in their absence there was a sizable clerical establishment.⁴⁷ Violence erupted in 1293 when a gang associated with a disappointed rectory candidate (the royal clerk William of Cherington) attacked the rectory house, allegedly evicting the rector and stealing valuables worth £200.⁴⁸

Other occasional instances of crime and disorder included a highway murder in 1379,⁴⁹ and the theft in church of four silver tassels from a belt in 1391.⁵⁰ Some incidents involved town officials: four bailiffs were indicted in the late 13th century for beating and imprisoning a woman who had complained about the size of a loaf bought in the town, causing the loss of her unborn child,⁵¹ and in 1302 the keeper of the manor Walter of Gloucester sought justice for the beating of one official and the murder of another during an attempted distraint for rent arrears.⁵² In the late 15th century the bailiff Robert Stokes and others allegedly wrongfully arrested and imprisoned a group of men from London and Leicestershire, who were in pursuit of a debtor.⁵³ Even so, there is little evidence for widespread violence or political or social unrest, most recorded incidents stemming from petty personal grievances and disputes. In the 1520s a Fellow of Brasenose College confronted the town's constables on the Banbury road over allegations that he was keeping the wife of a Chipping Norton tradesman at Cold Norton (where the college was in residence due to plague in Oxford),⁵⁴ while a few years later the wealthy woolman and demesne farmer Robert Busby brought lawsuits against Lady Marney (who had ejected him from a lease of

⁴⁴ *Complete Peerage*, I, 239–45; III, 335–6; VIII, 523–4; *VCH Bucks.* IV, 64–5.

⁴⁵ TNA, CP 40/483.

⁴⁶ Above, agric. (agric. landscape); local govt (town govt to 1607).

⁴⁷ TNA, CP 40/483.

⁴⁸ Below, relig. hist. (Middle Ages) .

⁴⁹ C. Gross (ed.), *Select Cases from Coroners' Rolls, 1265–1413* (Selden Soc. 9, 1896), 92.

⁵⁰ E.G. Kimball (ed.), *Oxon. Sessions of the Peace* (ORS 53, 1983), 128.

⁵¹ TNA, SC 8/79/3904.

⁵² *Ibid.* SC 8/50/2463; cf. *Cal. Pat.* 1301–7, 85.

⁵³ TNA, C 1/31/502.

⁵⁴ *VCH Oxon.* III, 208–9; below, Over Norton, social hist. For another College Fellow suspiciously frequenting a house in the town at night, *Visit. Dioc. Linc.* III, 55.

her share of the manor on a charge of default and waste),⁵⁵ and against Ralph Vaux, a rival claimant to the office of manorial bailiff. Busby alleged that in 1536 Vaux had assembled a mob who expelled Busby both from the bailiwick and the demesne, on one occasion entering his house and assaulting his servant, and on another accosting Busby in the church during prayers, where Vaux threatened to kill him and drew his dagger in the chancel.⁵⁶ Separately, Busby was one of three defendants named in a lawsuit brought by a townsman for wrongful arrest.⁵⁷

Chipping Norton played little part in national events or politics before 1540, although letters patent dated at the town in 1290 and the presence of the royal signet for a few days in 1405⁵⁸ point to occasional royal visits. A meeting of the future Edward IV with the earl of Warwick after the former's victory at Mortimer's Cross and the latter's defeat at St Albans in 1461 took place at either Chipping Norton or Burford.⁵⁹

Town and Society 1540–1700

Townspeople and Social Life

1540–1607 The town's domination by prosperous woolmen ended with the decline of the Cotswold wool trade in the first half of the 16th century,⁶⁰ leaving wealth more evenly distributed than in previous centuries. By 1544, 85 per cent of taxpayers were assessed on goods worth £10 or less, and only 6 per cent on goods worth £20 or more, compared with 13 per cent in both Burford and Witney. Chipping Norton's wealthiest inhabitant (with goods worth £60) was Richard Man (d. 1544), about whom little is known, although the wealth of people such as the rectory lessee Margaret Tanty (£15), whose assets were mainly in lands or property rather than goods, may have been considerably underestimated.⁶¹ In 1568 the town's principal taxpayer was the demesne farmer Edward Walford,⁶² who by 1577 had been

⁵⁵ TNA, C 1/956/51–54; above, landownership (manor); agric. (1500–1770). Cf. TNA, C 1/948/82–83.

⁵⁶ TNA, STAC 2/7, ff. 166–7; STAC 2/19/379; STAC 2/24/173. Vaux, a yeoman of the guard, received a royal grant of the bailiwick in 1529 during Peter Compton's minority: *L&P Hen. VIII*, IV, p. 2708.

⁵⁷ TNA, C 1/799/4–5.

⁵⁸ *Cal. Pat.* 1281–92, 399; J.L. Kirby (ed.), *Calendar of Signet Letters of Henry IV and Henry V (1399–1422)* (1978), 79.

⁵⁹ Cf. Wm Gregory's *Chronicle*, in J. Gairdner (ed.), *The Historical Collections of a Citizen of London in the Fifteenth Century* (Camden n.s. 17, 1876), 215 (Burford); Wm Worcester's *Annales*, in J. Stevenson (ed.), *Letters and Papers Illustrative of the Wars of the English in France* (RS, 1864), II pt 2, 777 (Chipping Norton).

⁶⁰ Above, urban econ. (1500–1800).

⁶¹ TNA, E 179/162/227. Cf. *ibid.* E 179/162/223 (Witney); Catchpole et al., *Burford*, 86. For Man, OHC, MS Wills Oxon. 179.26; for Tanty, above, landownership (rectory estate).

⁶² TNA, E 179/162/331; above, agric. (1500–1770).

overtaken by the ‘gentleman’ Edmund Hutchins (d. 1602), assessed on lands worth £10.⁶³ he was descended from a line of Chipping Norton woolmen, and owned several town properties including a house in High Street,⁶⁴ along with various Gloucestershire and Oxfordshire manors settled on him by his uncle Sir Thomas Pope (d. 1559), treasurer of the Court of Augmentations and founder of Trinity College, Oxford.⁶⁵ Thomas Cowper (d. by 1578), assessed on goods worth £4, was grandfather of the Latin poetess Elizabeth Jane Weston, who was baptized in the town in 1581 or 1582 before moving to Prague.⁶⁶ The highest taxpayer by 1581 was the newcomer Michael Chadwell, then the rectory estate lessee and later Lord Compton’s manorial bailiff,⁶⁷ who in 1596 (when he styled himself ‘gentleman’) purchased the manor,⁶⁸ becoming the first resident lord for several decades. His subsequent bitter disputes with the townsmen (discussed below) led ultimately to their acquisition of a borough charter in 1607 and his sale of the manor the following year, although he retained the New Street manor house, where his family remained for some years.⁶⁹

Communal action by leading townsmen was again evident in the aftermath of the Reformation, which brought secular as well as religious change through confiscation of the guildhall and threats to the grammar school.⁷⁰ The latter was saved (perhaps with the help of some high-level interventions) after ‘the inhabitants’ expressed their desire that it ‘may still be kept for teaching young children’,⁷¹ while the guildhall, having been sold to London agents in 1549, was eventually recovered for the town in 1562, when it was sold to a group of feoffees by Anthony Ashfield (d. 1562) of Barford St Michael, who had formerly lived in Chipping Norton and had purchased other ex-chantry properties, perhaps with the intention of returning them to the town.⁷² The building was subsequently used as a church house, the upper-floor hall accommodating parish events including Whitsuntide feasts, and other rooms

⁶³ TNA, E 179/162/341.

⁶⁴ Rosen and Cliffe, *Making*, 56; TNA, PROB 11/104/622.

⁶⁵ Sir Thos’s sister Eliz. had married Edm.’s father Ric. Hutchins of Chipping Norton: R. Bigland (ed. B. Frith), *Historical, Monumental and Genealogical Collections Relative to the County of Gloucester: Part 2* (Glos. Rec. Ser. 3, 1990), 518. For his manors, *ibid.*; *VCH Oxon.* VI, 10; IX, 152, 162.

⁶⁶ TNA, E 179/162/341; OHC, MS Wills Oxon 185.568; *ODNB*, s.v. Eliz. Weston; OHC, par. reg. transcript, baptism c.1581; info. (2022) from Adrienne Rosen.

⁶⁷ TNA, E 179/162/345 (goods worth £10); *ibid.* STAC 8/162/7; above, landownership (rectory estate).

⁶⁸ OHC, BOR1/2/1D/1.

⁶⁹ Above, landownership (manor; manor hos); below (1607–1700; govt and politics).

⁷⁰ Above, local govt (borough property); below, relig. hist. (Reformn to Restoration).

⁷¹ *Chant. Cert.* 45; *VCH Oxon.* I, 457; below (educ.). As Burford and Banbury submitted similar petitions without success, Chipping Norton perhaps had an influential patron (e.g. Lady Hoby): Rosen and Cliffe, *Making*, 45.

⁷² Above, local govt (borough property); Rosen and Cliffe, *Making*, 48; *VCH Oxon.* XI, 47; Bodl. MSS dd Dawkins C9/IB5/2–4. Ant. was a younger son of John (d. 1521): above (Middle Ages: 1350–1540); info. (2022) from Adrienne Rosen.

being used as pauper accommodation.⁷³ Organized communal effort was evident also in the building of a new market house around the 1540s (funded by sale of church bells), and the continuation of the almshouse previously managed by the guild, while former chantry houses were vested in trustees in 1572 and 1590 to support the school and the schoolmaster.⁷⁴

1607–1700 Acquisition of a borough charter in 1607 and the formation of a 14-strong corporation comprising two bailiffs and twelve burgesses created a new élite drawn from the town's leading craftsmen, tradesmen, and emerging class of professionals,⁷⁵ who were sometimes styled 'gentleman' or 'Mr', often intermarried, and witnessed each other's wills.⁷⁶ Meetings were in the upper room of the guildhall or town hall,⁷⁷ where under bylaws passed in 1628 they assembled every Sunday morning and evening and on Christmas Day ('before the little bell there called the saints' bell shall have done ringing') to process to and from the church, dressed in 'decent apparel' with their gowns of office, and preceded by the two serjeants bearing maces.⁷⁸ Among the first burgesses was the mercer Henry Cornish, Chipping Norton's wealthiest 17th-century tradesman, who paid the second highest tax in 1641 after the lessee of the rectory estate. At his death in 1650 he was estimated to have £1,200 in money and goods and £700 in farm stock, while his substantial property in the town and at Stow-on-the-Wold included the White Hart inn, where he provided for an annual dinner for his successors in the corporation. Though best remembered for his row of almshouses in Church Street (built in 1640), he left other town cottages for the benefit of the poor and endowed further town charities,⁷⁹ his philanthropy being mirrored in the bequests of other wealthy townspeople such as the grocer Edmund Nicholson (d. 1607) and the pewterer Thomas Letch (d. 1693), both of whom ended their careers in London.⁸⁰

The Chadwells, meanwhile, took little interest in (or were actively excluded from) town government, Michael's grandson Michael (a firm Royalist) complaining in 1649 of his 'ill neighbours and false friends' in Oxfordshire, and stating his intention to move elsewhere.⁸¹ Soon after he was living in Durham,⁸² and by 1654 at Daylesford (Glos.), where he died in

⁷³ TNA, C 93/4/1.

⁷⁴ Above, local govt (borough property); below (educ.).

⁷⁵ Above, urban econ. (1500–1800); local govt (town govt 1607–1835).

⁷⁶ *Prot. Retns*, 82–4; Chipping Norton wills in OHC and TNA; OHC, par. reg. transcript.

⁷⁷ TNA, STAC 8/112/1; CNM, copy of 1612 decree re guildhall.

⁷⁸ OHC, BOR1/14/MS/1; above, local govt (town govt 1607–1835; seals and insignia).

⁷⁹ OHC, BOR1/1/D/1; TNA, E 179/164/485; *ibid.* C 3/441/17; *ibid.* PROB 11/214/314; Rosen and Cliffe, *Making*, 54; above, urban econ. (1500–1800); below (welfare).

⁸⁰ TNA, PROB 11/110/17; PROB 11/414/345; below (welfare). For Letch's church monument, *Par. Colln*, I, 93; OHC, monumental inscriptions transcript, I1.

⁸¹ Longleat Ho. (Wilts.), Whitelocke papers, vol. X, f. 72v.

⁸² *Cal. Cttee for Compounding*, III, 2006; TNA, PROB 11/258/86.

1656.⁸³ By then he had sold the former New Street manor house to the resident lawyer John Crispe, who was one of only two ‘gentlemen’ assessed for hearth tax in the 1660s, the other being the future fair proprietor Thomas Lodge.⁸⁴ Other resident gentry in the 1680s included Simon Harcourt (d. 1727), a future MP created Viscount Harcourt in 1721, and William Talbot (d. 1730), successively bishop of Oxford, Salisbury, and Durham, whose son Charles (d. 1737), the future MP and lord chancellor, was baptized in Chipping Norton church in 1685, and created Baron Talbot of Hensol in 1733.⁸⁵

Alongside such gentry there was still much commercial wealth in the town. Corporation members named in 1607 and 1634 were prominent among the 31 per cent of 17th-century testators with probate inventories worth £51 or more, while 16 per cent left £100 or more, and 7 per cent over £300.⁸⁶ The town clerk William Thomas (d. 1674), son of the first town clerk Walter Thomas (d. 1642), had £385-worth, including featherbeds, carpets, cushions, leather-covered chairs, silverware, pictures, books, and maps adorning his prominent townhouse in Market Place.⁸⁷ Such luxuries were not untypical,⁸⁸ suggesting a pursuit of fashionable living by the upper echelons of Chipping Norton society which was also evident in the remodelling of some of the town’s houses.⁸⁹ The butcher Thomas Brayne (d. 1694), exceptionally, made cash bequests totalling almost £2,000,⁹⁰ while the ‘gentleman’ Nicholas Massinger (d. 1667), who owned property in Gloucester, and the tanner Nehemiah Norgrove (d. 1693) each left assets worth over £1,300, although just over £1,000-worth of Massinger’s was in bonds and mortgages, and £700-worth of Norgrove’s was in a lease of lands in Blockley (Glos., formerly Worcs.).⁹¹ Other notably wealthy testators included the tanners John Letch (d. 1628) and his son Thomas (d. 1634) (both over £600),⁹² along with the innholders Richard Coleman (d. 1633) and Nicholas Jaquest (d. 1687) (both over

⁸³ OHC, Acc. 6779, bdl 1, no. 1; Chipping Norton Guildhall, deed of 1659/60 in town clerk’s safe.

⁸⁴ Above, landownership (manor hos); urban econ. (mkts and fairs); TNA, E 179/255/3; *Hearth Tax Oxon.* 169–71.

⁸⁵ *Complete Peerage*, VI, 298–300; XIA, 621–2; *ODNB*, s.v. Simon Harcourt, Chas Talbot, Wm Talbot; *Hist. Parl.* s.v. Simon Harcourt, Chas Talbot; OHC, par. reg. transcript, baptisms 1681–6, burials 1683, 1687; *ibid.* monumental inscriptions transcript, A29.

⁸⁶ OHC, BOR1/1/D/1–2; *Oxon. Visit.* 261; probate calculated from 210 wills and inventories proved 1600–1700, in OHC and TNA.

⁸⁷ OHC, MS Wills Oxon. 66/4/10; TNA, PROB 11/189/404; Rosen and Cliffe, *Making*, 144–5.

⁸⁸ e.g. TNA, PROB 11/150/76; PROB 11/151/508; OHC, MSS Wills Oxon. 55/3/4; 171/5/28; 298/1/43a–b.

⁸⁹ Above, town bldgs; Rosen and Cliffe, *Making*, *passim*.

⁹⁰ TNA, PROB 11/426/226; OHC, par. reg. transcript, burial 1694.

⁹¹ TNA, PROB 11/324/118; PROB 4/10768; OHC, MS Wills Oxon. 143/1/21; *ibid.* MS Oxf. Dioc. c 145, f. 64; *ibid.* par. reg. transcript, burials 1667, 1693. For Massinger’s Gloucester property, GA, D3117/3857.

⁹² OHC, MSS Wills Oxon. 139/1/32; 41/3/38; above, urban econ. (1500–1800).

£300).⁹³ Inns also accounted for four of the six highest hearth tax assessments in 1662 (14, 12, 11, and eight hearths), while 30 householders in total (19 per cent) paid on five hearths or more, amongst them John Crispe (with nine hearths) and William Thomas (with eight).⁹⁴ Many prominent townspeople also occupied private pews in the parish church, prompting frequent disputes, while corporation members presumably had their own, as in the 18th century.⁹⁵

Nonetheless, while another 47 householders (30 per cent) were taxed on three or four hearths in 1662, 38 (24 per cent) paid on only two hearths, and 43 (27 per cent) on one,⁹⁶ suggesting a significantly higher proportion of very modest houses than in either Burford or Witney, where only 15 and 14 per cent respectively paid on a single hearth.⁹⁷ In 1665 some 20 householders (almost a fifth) were excused payment altogether on grounds of poverty.⁹⁸ Probate records present a similar picture of Chipping Norton's middling and poorer inhabitants, with 69 per cent of 17th-century testators leaving goods worth £50 or less and 23 per cent under £10,⁹⁹ while the labourer Robert Shirley (d. 1668), with goods worth £5, inhabited only two rooms, his most valuable possession being his bed.¹⁰⁰ Otherwise poverty is rarely documented, although a few vagrants, beggars, and paupers appear in the parish registers,¹⁰¹ and in 1630 there was reportedly 'great scarcity and many poor people that want bread'.¹⁰² Riots in several Oxfordshire towns in 1693 followed a bad harvest, the poor reportedly eating turnips instead of bread, although an unnamed official warned that in Chipping Norton 'care will be taken to prevent these riots and punish the offenders there, who do it more out of lazy, pilfering habits than from real want'.¹⁰³

Social activity in the town remained modest, the most obvious sources of recreation and entertainment being inns and alehouses, the various fairs, church ales (recorded from 1547),¹⁰⁴ and parish gatherings held at the guildhall. Occasionally communal drinking got out of hand, as when a group of young men were made to do public penance for their irreverent behaviour at an alehouse in 1630.¹⁰⁵ Musical instruments owned by townspeople included a

⁹³ OHC, MS Wills Oxon. 12/4/8; TNA, PROB 11/390/287; PROB 4/19659; OHC, par. reg. transcript, burials 1633, 1687; Rosen and Cliffe, *Making*, 99, 201.

⁹⁴ TNA, E 179/255/3; Rosen and Cliffe, *Making*, 57.

⁹⁵ Below (18th-cent.); relig. hist. (1660–1800).

⁹⁶ TNA, E 179/255/3.

⁹⁷ Ibid. E 179/255/4. Cf. *VCH Oxon.* XVI, 125 (13 per cent in Henley).

⁹⁸ *Hearth Tax Oxon.* 171.

⁹⁹ Calculated from 210 wills and inventories proved 1600–1700, in OHC and TNA.

¹⁰⁰ OHC, MS Wills Oxon. 174/1/17; *ibid.* par. reg. transcript, burial 1668.

¹⁰¹ Ibid. par. reg. transcript, burials 1564–1700.

¹⁰² *Acts of PC* 1630–1, 162.

¹⁰³ *Wood's Life*, III, 434; *VCH Oxon.* II, 199; *Cal. SP Dom.* 1693, 397.

¹⁰⁴ OHC, MS Wills Oxon. 179.227.

¹⁰⁵ Below, relig. hist. (Reformn to Restoration).

bass viol in 1624 and a pair of virginals in 1627,¹⁰⁶ but references to public music-making are limited to the church choir (for whom a singing gallery was constructed probably in 1697),¹⁰⁷ and to a man reported for playing his pipe and tabor at the cross on a summer Sunday afternoon in 1634, thereby encouraging ‘the young people to dance before prayer’.¹⁰⁸ Evidence for sports and games is similarly scarce, the constables reporting no unlawful gaming in the town’s alehouses in 1687,¹⁰⁹ although a bowling alley was mentioned in 1694,¹¹⁰ and a bowling green in Horsefair in 1720.¹¹¹ Horse races were run on Over Norton heath by 1686, when the prize was a gold plate worth 40 guineas.¹¹² Anonymous observations of lightning over the town were published in a pamphlet in 1680.¹¹³



The Blue Boar pub on Goddard's Lane, opened perhaps in 1683 and certainly by 1708.

Town Government, Politics, and Conflict

Local and national politics in the period had a marked impact on Chipping Norton, which, although religiously conservative at first, with little or no evidence of Lollardy, emerged after the Civil War as one of the county’s three main focuses of Protestant Dissent. Within the town itself relations between townsmen and their manorial lord soured from 1596, the granting of a borough charter in 1607 raising further tensions which did not entirely subside until 1667, when the corporation purchased the manor.¹¹⁴

Few in the town seem to have actively welcomed suppression of the town’s guild and chantries in 1548, while one parishioner (Edward Phillips) seemingly acquired church goods

¹⁰⁶ OHC, MSS Wills Oxon. 298/5/34; 12/2/46.

¹⁰⁷ Eddershaw, *Story*, 61; below, relig. hist. (1660–1800; church archit.).

¹⁰⁸ C. Haigh, *The Plain Man’s Pathways to Heaven* (2007), 93.

¹⁰⁹ M. Sturge Gretton (ed.), *Oxon. Justices of the Peace in the 17th Cent.* (ORS 16, 1934), 22.

¹¹⁰ OHC, O12/29D/1.

¹¹¹ Ibid. MS Wills Oxon. 73/5/21.

¹¹² *London Gaz.* 27 Jan. 1686. Cf. S.W. Singer (ed.), *The Correspondence of Henry Hyde, Earl of Clarendon* (1828), II, 271.

¹¹³ *Strange and Wonderful News from Chipping Norton ...* (1680: copy in BL).

¹¹⁴ Cf. above, local govt; below, relig. hist.

in order to guard against their confiscation. The rapid pace of religious change sparked rebellions in several parts of the country, the Oxfordshire rising of July 1549 starting near Thame before sweeping through Oxford and Woodstock towards Chipping Norton, where the rebels sought shelter from advancing troops. The rising was swiftly put down, and of 14 alleged ringleaders sentenced to be executed four were local clergy, including the vicar of Chipping Norton Henry Joyes. The scale of his involvement, however, remains unclear.¹¹⁵

Religious tensions did not surface again for several decades, the main source of conflict from 1596 being Michael Chadwell's increasingly unpopular attempts as the new lord of the manor, aided by his son Edward, to resurrect manorial rights which had been significantly weakened during lengthy periods of absentee lordship.¹¹⁶ Chadwell had already made enemies in 1592 when he brought a lawsuit against six men for tearing down stone walls around his land at night, allowing cattle to escape, throwing stones at his servants, and smashing glass windows, driven (he claimed) by 'secret hatred and malice'.¹¹⁷ Matters came to a head in 1603 when an angry mob armed with the town armour and led by Henry Cornish, William Hunt, and others destroyed fences, hedges, and gates and trampled crops on Chadwell's land at Primdown, claiming (probably wrongly) that he intended to plough up their commons.¹¹⁸ In 1606 Edward Chadwell dismissed the manorial steward Walter Thomas, citing his 'insolency and turbulent spirit',¹¹⁹ and soon afterwards a group of leading townsmen presumably including Cornish, Hunt, and Thomas (who all became members of the first corporation) petitioned the king for a charter of incorporation, intended to give the town borough status and a degree of independence from the manor.

The charter was duly granted in February 1607, ostensibly for the town's 'better order and government',¹²⁰ although far from ending the disputes it sparked further confrontations later that year. On 13 April the Chadwells' steward Edmund Fryers held a court leet in the manor house despite the charter having unequivocally transferred the right to the corporation, and later burst into the guildhall (where the corporation was holding its weekly court of record) with a mob of supporters, demanding that the jury be allowed to continue its deliberations there. He was subsequently removed by the constables and bound over to appear at the Oxford Assizes, or (according to the Chadwells' version) was dragged from the manor house to the town prison by a crowd of corporation supporters trying to disrupt the

¹¹⁵ Below, relig. hist. (Reformn to Restoration); *VCH Oxon.* II, 36; K. Halliday, 'New light on "the commotion time" of 1549: the Oxfordshire rising', *Hist. Research* 82 (2009), 655–76; *ODNB*, s.v. Wm Grey (d. 1562), Lord Grey.

¹¹⁶ Above, landownership (manor); local govt (town govt to 1607). The following account draws on a draft article by Adrienne Rosen; cf. Eddershaw, *Story*, 48–52.

¹¹⁷ TNA, STAC 5/C65/17; STAC 5/C47/25.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.* STAC 8/98/2.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.* C 3/292/11.

¹²⁰ OHC, BOR1/1/D/1; above, local govt (town govt 1607–1835).

court leet. The following fair day (7 July) rival officers for the corporation and the Chadwells each attempted to collect tolls and made conflicting proclamations about the locations of the cattle and horse fairs, causing considerable confusion and heated altercations. Then, in October, the Chadwells turned to the law, bringing a Star Chamber case against the corporation with the intent of overturning the charter, as was effectively achieved in nearby Stow-on-the-Wold in 1608. Corporation members, who had each contributed £20 to a legal fund, brought their own counter-suit against the Chadwells, the witnesses for each side making exaggerated claims of insults and physical assaults made during the events of April and July.¹²¹

The judges decided in favour of the corporation in 1609, ordering Michael and Edward Chadwell to pay fines of 500 marks (£333 6s. 8d.) and £50 respectively, and committing them to the Fleet prison in London, although Michael was spared imprisonment owing to his old age and infirmity.¹²² He had meanwhile sold the manor in 1608, retaining only the former New Street manor house and part of the former manorial estate.¹²³ Soon after Michael's death in 1610 Edward Chadwell's father-in-law Sir Thomas Beaufeu, lord of Salford manor, tried unsuccessfully to revive the lawsuit against the corporation,¹²⁴ and in 1622 Edward himself made a desperate attempt to prosecute various corporation members for alleged misconduct in office, amongst them the town clerk (and former manorial steward) Walter Thomas.¹²⁵ After Chadwell's servants arrested Thomas in 1624, he successfully invoked the parliamentary privilege of his employer Lord Stafford.¹²⁶ Hostilities between townsmen and the Chadwells evidently persisted into the 1630s, when one tenant of Edward's son Michael allegedly pulled him by the collar, tore his coat, and called him a liar.¹²⁷

The fledgling corporation faced occasional lesser challenges, its attempts in 1630–1 to prosecute Simon Hathaway and James Henshaw for engrossing corn being overturned after the Privy Council found both men innocent, raising suspicions that the burgess Henry Cornish had brought the charge against Hathaway 'out of mere malice' because of an existing lawsuit between them.¹²⁸ Another enemy of the Hathaways was the vicar John

¹²¹ TNA, C 21/C34/12; C 22/332/42; STAC 8/112/1; STAC 8/162/7. For Stow (which had received its charter in 1604), *VCH Glos.* VI, 157–8.

¹²² TNA, STAC 8/18/11.

¹²³ Above, landownership (manor; other estates).

¹²⁴ TNA, STAC 8/16/8; STAC 8/67/9. Edward had married Sir Thos's daughter Josian in 1598: *ibid.* C 8/85/118. For Beaufeu, below, Salford, landownership.

¹²⁵ TNA, STAC 8/106/17.

¹²⁶ *LJ*, III, p. 302.

¹²⁷ F.W. Steer (ed.), *Catalogue of the Earl Marshal's Papers at Arundel Castle* (Harl. Soc. 115–16, 1964), p. 28; info. (2022) from Adrienne Rosen.

¹²⁸ *Acts of PC* 1630–1, 142, 155, 162, 220–2; *Cal. SP Dom.* 1629–31, 402, 416, 491, 495, 499.

Norgrove, who presented Simon's wife Mary for sexual incontinence at a visitation in 1634, despite his churchwardens and sidesmen believing her 'a person of honest life and conversation'.¹²⁹ More serious was the king's demand for £30 ship money from Chipping Norton in 1635, which was still in arrears in 1639, by which time the corporations of Burford and Chipping Norton had reportedly begun 'to dispute the extent of their liberties'.¹³⁰ Some in the corporation may have also harboured Puritan and Parliamentary sympathies, since the burgess William Averill or Avery emigrated with his family to Ipswich, Massachusetts, perhaps in 1635.¹³¹

For much of the Civil War Chipping Norton lay in Royalist-controlled territory (the king's headquarters being in Oxford), and the town was subject to repeated demands for money and supplies.¹³² In 1643 brass kettles weighing more than a hundredweight were plundered from a brazier for Royalist ordnance,¹³³ and in January 1645 Royalist troops departing Chipping Norton reportedly looted every house, taking 200 sheep and more than £40 from one man, 'though there was but one Roundhead in the town'.¹³⁴ The Chipping Norton tailor William Coleman (d. 1646) left clothing comprising only a hat, coat, and boots, 'his wearing garments being plundered by soldiers',¹³⁵ and troops probably also spread disease, the plague being 'much in Over Norton' in 1645.¹³⁶

Skirmishes in or around Chipping Norton took place in September 1642 (when Royalist volunteers leaving Oxford were intercepted by a Parliamentary troop of horse commanded by John Fiennes),¹³⁷ and a year later on 4 September 1643, when the Parliamentary army of Robert Devereux, earl of Essex, marching west towards Gloucester, met Royalists on a hill outside the town. On that occasion Essex himself (having mustered his troops on Chipping Norton common the previous day) stayed overnight in the town, some of his soldiers reportedly going out of their way to strip, whip, and drag behind a cart a townswoman who had rashly shouted 'God bless the Cavaliers', whilst another part of the army spent the same cold night standing out in the fields without any bread, water, or

¹²⁹ *Oxf. Ch. Ct Deposns* 1634–9, pp. 12–13, 16–17.

¹³⁰ *Cal. SP Dom.* 1635, 475; 1636–7, 494; 1639, 229.

¹³¹ Eddershaw, *Story*, 54; OHC, BOR1/1/D/2; www.averillproject.com (accessed Sept. 2022); below, *relig. hist.* (Anglicanism from 1800).

¹³² For useful summaries: P. Tennant, *Edgehill and Beyond: The People's War in the South Midlands 1642–1645* (1992); D. Eddershaw, *The Civil War in Oxfordshire* (1995); Eddershaw, *Story*, 54–6.

¹³³ *Royalist Ordnance Papers* (ORS 43, 49, 1963–75), I, 102; cf. *Oxf. Ch. Ct Deposns* 1634–9, p. 12.

¹³⁴ N. Wallington (ed. R.A. Webb), *Historical Notices of Events Occurring Chiefly in the Reign of Charles I* (1870), II, 246.

¹³⁵ OHC, MS Wills Oxon. 296/3/34.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.* 149/1/7. Cf. J.A. Dils, 'Epidemics, Mortality and the Civil War in Berkshire 1642–6', *Southern History* 11 (1989), 40–52.

¹³⁷ *Wood's Life*, I, 59; *ODNB*, s.v. Thos Reade [Read].

fires.¹³⁸ In June 1644 Essex was again in Chipping Norton, where he held a council of war with Sir William Waller.¹³⁹

The town itself had divided loyalties. In 1655 the council of state awarded £250 in compensation to the burgess William Diston (d. 1676) for his support of Parliament during the war, when he was ‘several times taken prisoner and forced to pay large sums for his redemption’, not including £600 he had reportedly spent on securing the freedom of his uncle and fellow burgess Henry Cornish (d. 1650), who had been imprisoned in Oxford.¹⁴⁰ By contrast, the town clerk William Thomas (d. 1674) was a Royalist,¹⁴¹ as were Michael Chadwell (d. 1656) and his brother-in-law Robert Wharton (d. 1685), whose lands and goods were sequestered for their Royalist support. Chadwell, who had fought for the king, was forced to mortgage or sell much of his estate in order to pay the £632 fine imposed by Parliament.¹⁴² Another Royalist was the self-styled ‘Captain’ James Hind, the son of a Chipping Norton saddler, whose exploits as a highwayman earned him notoriety. As a soldier, he fought for the king at the battle of Worcester, where he was captured and hanged for treason in 1652.¹⁴³

Religious differences resurfaced by the 1660s, when Chipping Norton was home to a significant number of Protestant Dissenters including Quakers, Baptists, and Independents (Congregationalists or Presbyterians), several of whom were crafts- or tradesmen. Several prominent Nonconformists faced persecution, the vicar turned Independent minister Stephen Ford being dragged from the pulpit and later hounded out of town, while the Baptist mercer and preacher Joseph Davis (d. 1707) was arrested, imprisoned, and stripped of his goods, and the Congregationalist maltster Josiah Diston (d. 1721) suffered frequent hostility,¹⁴⁴ being ‘often committed to prison and bound over ... for having private meetings in his house’. Those carrying out the persecution, according to Diston, included the baker’s wife Anne Clemens, noted ‘for her rage and malice against the Dissenters’, the constable Robert Werg, ‘a very forward and busy man at informing against Dissenters’, and the future fair owner Thomas Lodge, who ‘set himself violently to persecute the Dissenters and resolved to

¹³⁸ J. Washbourn (ed.), *Bibliotheca Gloucestrensis* (1825), 238, 255–7; *Mercurius Rusticus, or the countries complaint* ... (1685: copy in Bodl.), 167.

¹³⁹ *Cal. SP Dom.* 1644, 211, 212, 214.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.* 1655–6, 78.

¹⁴¹ *Cal. Cttee for Compounding*, IV, 3055.

¹⁴² *Ibid.* III, 1999, 2006; above, landownership (other estates). For Wharton, cf. OHC, MS Wills Oxon. 73/1/9; *Oxon. Visit.* 1669–75, 105.

¹⁴³ ODNB, s.v. Jas Hind; *Wood’s Life*, I, 155–6; O.M. Meades, *The Adventures of Captain James Hind of Chipping Norton: The Oxfordshire Highwayman* (1985).

¹⁴⁴ Above, urban econ. (1500–1800); below, relig. hist. (Reformn to Restoration; 1660–1800); ODNB, s.v. Stephen Ford; Eddershaw, *Story*, 56–7.

suppress them entirely'.¹⁴⁵ Religious loyalties were evidently becoming deep-seated and highly divisive amongst at least some townspeople, although Dissent continued to grow.

An application to use the guildhall for Congregationalist meetings was refused in 1672,¹⁴⁶ but otherwise the corporation's role (if any) in religious persecution is unclear, and few records of routine town government or politics survive for the period, save for the bailiffs' and burgesses' attempt in 1669 to recover a debt owed them by a deceased town chamberlain.¹⁴⁷ In 1667 they acquired the manorial rights, resolving any lingering doubts over their jurisdiction in the town, although their use of charitable funds to make the purchase prompted a charity commission enquiry and decree in 1686.¹⁴⁸ In 1687 they restored corn tolls to the parish sexton, thus ending 'suits and differences' which had arisen over the matter.¹⁴⁹

The 18th-Century Town

Townspeople and Social Life

Eighteenth-century town society continued to be dominated by its leading tradesmen, craftsmen, and professionals, some of whom enjoyed additional status as corporation members. Children were excluded from the private corporation pews in the church under an order of 1720, presumably to maintain their civic dignity.¹⁵⁰ Social aspirations more generally were expressed in remodelling of houses particularly around the market place, where several acquired fashionable neo-classical façades, prompting the town's description as 'well-built' c.1790.¹⁵¹ Typical luxuries and home comforts included the Delft teapot, coffee pot, chocolate pot, tobacco box, and nutmeg graters belonging to the 'senior burgess' Henry Fairfax (d. 1757),¹⁵² and the venetian blinds, 'turkey' carpets, and walnut and mahogany furniture owned by the grocer Margaret Bradley (d. 1775), much of whose exceptional wealth (c.£16,000 at death) derived from mortgages, stocks, and bonds.¹⁵³ Such people habitually employed domestic servants, the mercer and future banker Thomas Wapshott (d. 1825)

¹⁴⁵ T. Crosby, *Hist. of the English Baptists*, II (1739), 258–61.

¹⁴⁶ G. Lyon Turner (ed.), *Original Records of Early Nonconformity* (1911–14), II, 828.

¹⁴⁷ TNA, C 5/54/27. For the corp'n's role more generally, above, local govt.

¹⁴⁸ *12th Rep. Com. Char.* pp. 262–4; above, local govt (borough property).

¹⁴⁹ OHC, BOR1/13/2D/3; above, urban econ. (mkts and fairs).

¹⁵⁰ OHC, BOR1/5/A1/1, f. 6; above, urban econ. hist. (1500–1800); local govt (town govt 1607–1835).

¹⁵¹ Above, devt of town; town bldgs; *Univ. Brit. Dir.* II [c.1790], 556.

¹⁵² TNA, PROB 3/56/24; PROB 11/831/85; OHC, monumental inscriptions transcript, I20.

¹⁵³ TNA, PROB 31/629/66; PROB 11/1016/331; OHC, monumental inscriptions transcript, I4; above, urban econ. (1500–1800: food and drink).

advertising in 1784 for 'an honest, sober, elderly manservant who can shave, wait at table, and knows something of gardening'.¹⁵⁴

Of those prominent inhabitants with property and business interests elsewhere, John Crispe (d. 1701) and his son John (d. 1708) owned estates in Gloucestershire and Wiltshire,¹⁵⁵ while the surgeon George Tilsley (d. 1789) was proprietor of Burford's Swan inn.¹⁵⁶ Richard Wheeler (d. 1767) retained properties in and around London where he had formerly been a distiller with his brother Groves (d. 1784), who became master of the Worshipful Company of Distillers in 1773 before he too returned to Chipping Norton.¹⁵⁷ The woolstapler and linen draper Broome Witts (son of a Witney fustian-maker) divided his time between houses and businesses in Chipping Norton and London, briefly also serving as receiver-general of land tax in Oxfordshire until his death in 1768.¹⁵⁸ His son Edward (d. 1816), a Chipping Norton woolstapler, acquired nearby Swerford Park in 1776 and was high sheriff in 1779–80.¹⁵⁹

Clergy living in the town during the 18th century included not only successive vicars and curates, some of whom resided at least occasionally, but also schoolmasters and Dissenters such as the Baptist minister John Thorley (d. 1759), author of a book on beekeeping.¹⁶⁰ The Anglican clergyman and Oxford academic Edward Stone (d. 1768), rector of Drayton and Horsenden (Bucks.), moved to Chipping Norton c.1754 to be closer to Bruern Abbey, where he was chaplain to Sir Jonathan Cope, Bt, and occupied a house in West Street. Stone is best remembered as the discoverer of salicylic acid (the active ingredient in aspirin), whose beneficial effects he described in a letter to the Royal Society in 1765.¹⁶¹

Poorer townspeople benefited from the town's numerous charities, which were extended in the 18th century notably by the wealthy vicar Edward Redrobe (d. 1721), who was buried in a tomb-chest inside the parish church.¹⁶² In 1769 the poor were nonetheless

¹⁵⁴ *Oxf. Jnl*, 9 Oct. 1784; TNA, PROB 11/1696/21.

¹⁵⁵ TNA, PROB 11/462/298; PROB 11/500/387; OHC, monumental inscriptions transcript, A6–7.

¹⁵⁶ TNA, PROB 11/1177/41; OHC, monumental inscriptions transcript, X25.

¹⁵⁷ TNA, PROB 11/783/138; PROB 11/931/25; PROB 11/1123/63; OHC, monumental inscriptions transcript, K17; <https://www.distillers.org.uk/about/whos-who/masters-through-the-ages/> (accessed June 2022).

¹⁵⁸ TNA, PROB 11/696/185; PROB 11/941/226; *Oxf. Jnl Syn.* 26 Sept. 1767; A. Sutton (ed.), *The Complete Diary of a Cotswold Parson: The Diaries of the Revd. Francis Edward Witts, 1783–1854*, I (2008), 100–102; III (2008), 283. For his politics, below.

¹⁵⁹ Sutton (ed.), *Complete Diary*, I (2008), 39–40; III (2008), 283; Brunner and Lunt, *Sheriffs*, 154; above, urban econ. (1500–1800); below, Swerford, landownership.

¹⁶⁰ Below (educ.); relig. hist.; H.E. Salter, 'Rev. John Thorley, of Chipping Norton', *OAS Rep.* 82 (1936), 131–2.

¹⁶¹ *ODNB*, s.v. Edw. Stone; R. Mann, *Edward Stone and the Discovery of Aspirin* (2003).

¹⁶² Below (welfare); Brooks, *Pevsner N&W*, 256.

‘very numerous’,¹⁶³ and the rising cost of poor relief became a chief concern in the latter part of the century.¹⁶⁴ In 1771 the churchwardens sought information concerning two paupers who had absconded leaving families chargeable to the parish,¹⁶⁵ and in 1784 two townsmen were found guilty of bribing a Little Rollright man to marry a Chipping Norton pauper in order to save the parish the cost of her upkeep.¹⁶⁶ Some of the town’s poorer new housing was also cramped and insanitary, as the population rose.¹⁶⁷

Social life continued to revolve around the numerous inns and alehouses, the Swan inn (which in 1713 possessed a club room containing a punch bowl and 13 cane chairs)¹⁶⁸ hosting the inaugural meeting of an association for prosecuting felons in 1772.¹⁶⁹ A friendly society started at the White Hart inn in 1765 was probably Chipping Norton’s first, and by 1794 its annual feast was held on the first Tuesday of July.¹⁷⁰ The White Hart was also the preferred venue for the corporation’s annual feast and, increasingly, for its official meetings, many of which were held there or in other public houses rather than at the guildhall.¹⁷¹ An unnamed Freemasons’ lodge (no. 172) was established at the Ram inn in 1771, but relocated to Banbury in 1794,¹⁷² while a cock fight was held at the Unicorn inn in 1790.¹⁷³

Other public entertainments included one hosted by the corporation by 1720 in connection with the quarter sessions,¹⁷⁴ as well as the balls, assemblies, and ‘ordinaries’ or dinners held at various inns to accompany the Chipping Norton horse races,¹⁷⁵ which entered their heyday in the 1750s when there were two meetings a year, each lasting two or three days.¹⁷⁶ Public celebrations were held in 1779 for Admiral Keppel’s acquittal,¹⁷⁷ and in 1795 for the acquittal of Warren Hastings, whose country seat was at nearby Daylesford.¹⁷⁸ In 1771 a man purporting to be a Venetian dancing-master absconded with fees paid in advance for children’s dancing lessons,¹⁷⁹ and though puppet shows were banned from the

¹⁶³ ‘Case of the Bailiffs and Burgesses of Chipping Norton ... relating to the intended enclosure ...’ (1769): copy in Bodl. GA Oxon. 4^o 115.

¹⁶⁴ Below (welfare).

¹⁶⁵ Oxf. Jnl Syn. 7 Dec. 1771.

¹⁶⁶ OHC, Cal. QS, II, 6.

¹⁶⁷ Above, devpt of town; town bldgs.

¹⁶⁸ OHC, MS Wills Oxon. 168/4/14.

¹⁶⁹ Oxf. Jnl, 18 July 1772; cf. *ibid.* 18 July 1778, 13 Dec. 1783 for the same or similar associations.

¹⁷⁰ Oxf. FS, pp. 102–3; OHC, QSD/R/11; below (welfare).

¹⁷¹ OHC, BOR1/5/A1/1; Eddershaw, *Story*, 74; above, local govt (1607–1835).

¹⁷² Museum of Freemasonry (London), AR/810; Oxf. Jnl Syn. 27 Mar. 1772; A.J. Kerry, *Hist. of Freemasonry in Oxon.* (1965), 6; VCH Oxon. X, 16.

¹⁷³ Oxf. Jnl Syn. 23 July 1790. For an earlier cockfight, Oxf. Jnl, 10 May 1766.

¹⁷⁴ OHC, BOR1/5/A1/1, f. 7.

¹⁷⁵ e.g. Oxf. Jnl, 13 July, 27 Aug. 1757, 6 Sept. 1760. For the races’ origin, above (1540–1700).

¹⁷⁶ VCH Oxon. II, 367.

¹⁷⁷ Oxf. Jnl, 20 Feb. 1779; ODNB, s.v. Augustus Keppel.

¹⁷⁸ M.S. Gretton, *Three Centuries in North Oxfordshire* (1902), 113; M.K. Pearson, *Chipping Norton in Bygone Days* (1909), 49–50; ODNB, s.v. Warren Hastings.

¹⁷⁹ Oxf. Jnl Syn. 24 Aug. 1771.

guildhall in 1731,¹⁸⁰ a theatre opened before 1780 perhaps in New Street, with productions by 'Mr Richardson and company' from Burford.¹⁸¹

Town Government, Politics, and Conflict

Town government and law and order continued to be administered chiefly by the self-perpetuating corporation, which in 1707 headed a list of 48 townspeople testifying that two Chipping Norton women then in Worcester gaol were notorious whores and pickpockets who had been 'several times whipped and imprisoned' in the borough.¹⁸² Probably they had been previously brought before the borough quarter sessions, which heard minor criminal offences including swearing, riot, assault, theft, perjury, wife-beating, cursing the king, fathering an illegitimate child, selling ale in short measures, keeping a bawdy house, and pound-breaking.¹⁸³ In 1721 the bailiff Thomas Taylor ordered the town clerk to prosecute three townsmen for verbally insulting him, claiming the abuse as 'an indignity and an affront to the corporation',¹⁸⁴ while in 1766, following the discovery of an anonymous threatening letter in the cellar of the bailiff William Myers, the bailiffs offered a £50 reward for information leading to a conviction.¹⁸⁵

More serious disorder occurred in the months leading up to the controversial Oxfordshire election of 1754. Tensions ran high by 1752, when a pamphleteer declared that the prominent townsman Broome Witts and his family should starve for having switched allegiance to the Whigs.¹⁸⁶ The Chipping Norton races of September 1753 were used for canvassing by both sides, with rival race dinners held in the town and ill-tempered letters published in the *Oxford Journal*, one dismissing the Whig gathering as small and composed almost entirely of alehouse keepers and a hired mob.¹⁸⁷ Matters came to a head on 1 February 1754, when rival dinners were again held with both Whig candidates present in the town. Led by its landlord Thomas Crutch, a group of Whig or New Interest supporters meeting at the Talbot inn stormed the Tory or Old Interest dinner at the White Hart, assaulting its landlord William Heynes whom they accused of being a papist and a Jacobite.

¹⁸⁰ OHC, BOR1/3/A1/1.

¹⁸¹ *Oxf. Jnl*, 22 July 1780; cf. Ballard, *Notes*, 40.

¹⁸² Worcs. Archive, 1/1/195/92.

¹⁸³ OHC, BOR1/3/A1/1; *ibid.* Cal. QS I, 176, 180, 249, 293, 362; II, 50, 176, 181, 239, 262, 328; above, local govt (town govt 1607--1835).

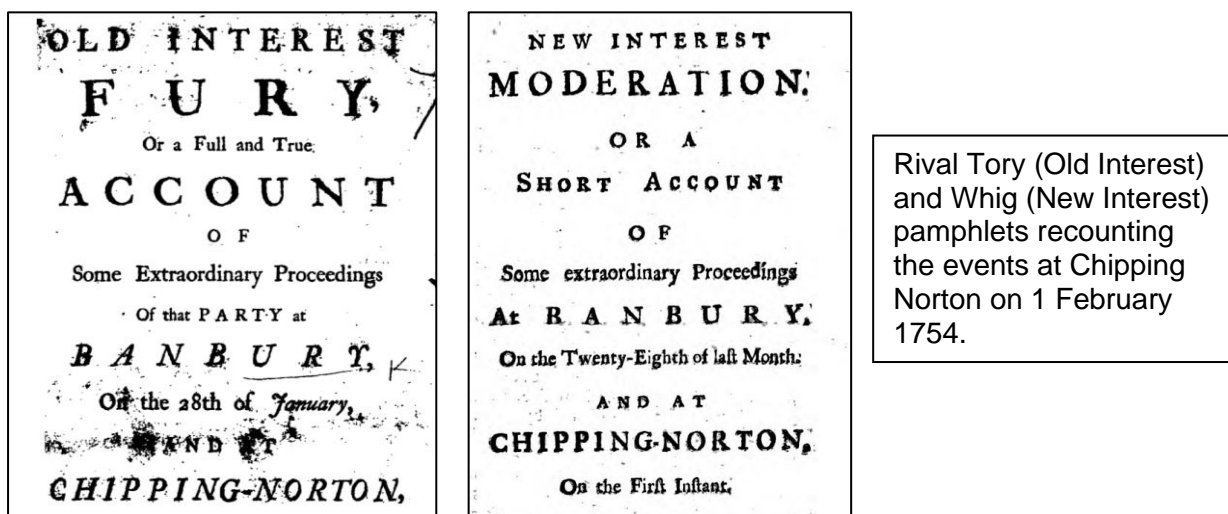
¹⁸⁴ OHC, BOR1/5/A1/1, f. 10.

¹⁸⁵ *Oxf. Jnl*, 15 Nov. 1766. The letter concerned the right to sell butter in the market: above, urban econ. (mkt reguln).

¹⁸⁶ R.J. Robson, *The Oxfordshire Election of 1754* (1949), 62.

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid.* 60–1; *Oxf. Jnl*, 22 Sept., 29 Sept., 6 Oct., 13 Oct., 20 Oct. 1753.

Exaggerated and conflicting accounts appeared in the *Oxford Journal* soon afterwards,¹⁸⁸ and rival pamphlets were issued,¹⁸⁹ while on 6 March a grand jury composed of Whigs but chaired by a Tory indicted 14 men for riot and assault, 13 of whom were eventually convicted.¹⁹⁰ At the election itself in April just over half the borough's freeholders voted for the Tory candidates,¹⁹¹ but the election was declared for the Whigs, and in a final act of Tory defiance the vicar Thomas Dockwray denied the town's Whigs a victory peal of church bells by cutting the bell ropes.¹⁹² The Whig campaign in Chipping Norton was largely orchestrated by the resident clergyman Edward Stone, described by Lady Susan Keck as 'a very celebrated canvasser'.¹⁹³



Disputes over enclosure erupted in 1769, when a consortium of 16 freeholders headed by the earl of Shrewsbury (as lord of Heythrop) petitioned for a private Act to enclose the fields and commons of Chipping and Over Norton and Salford.¹⁹⁴ The corporation objected in an attempt to protect the commons granted to the town in the Middle Ages and still enjoyed by the occupants of c.300 houses, several of whom were poor and depended on the commons for fuel. At a public meeting the bailiffs and burgesses were joined by 'almost 200 parishioners and principal inhabitants' in signing a petition to parliament calling for the town's commons to be excluded,¹⁹⁵ the initiative met with only

¹⁸⁸ Robson, *Oxon. Election*, 97–8; *Oxf. Jnl*, 16 Feb., 23 Feb., 16 Mar. 1754.

¹⁸⁹ *Old Interest Fury* ... (1754: copy in Bodl.); *New Interest Moderation* ... (1754: copy in Bodl.).

¹⁹⁰ *Oxf. Jnl*, 6 Mar. 1754, 20 Mar. 1756.

¹⁹¹ *Oxon. Poll*, 1754, 26–9.

¹⁹² Robson, *Oxon. Election*, 82. Dockwray voted Tory: *Oxon. Poll*, 1754, 27.

¹⁹³ Robson, *Oxon. Election*, 50; ODNB, s.v. Edw. Stone.

¹⁹⁴ Chipping Norton & Salford Enclo. Act, 9 Geo. III, c. 75 (private).

¹⁹⁵ 'Case of the Bailiffs'.

partial success, however, enclosure in 1770 reducing the town's commons by more than half.¹⁹⁶

Conditions for Chipping Norton's poor worsened more generally by the 1790s, in the face of exceptional national corn prices and war with France.¹⁹⁷ Whilst no significant unrest was reported in the town itself, in 1795 two townsmen had their grain carts attacked by mobs at Bloxham and Long Hanborough,¹⁹⁸ and the same year a Chipping Norton militiaman was executed by firing squad for his part in looting flour from bakers' shops and mills in and around Brighton (Sussex).¹⁹⁹ In 1800 a troop of dragoons was stationed in Chipping Norton in case bread riots should spread from neighbouring Banbury and Witney.²⁰⁰

Town and Society 1800–1914

Industrialization and Society

At the start of the 19th century Chipping Norton was viewed as an unremarkable market town wearing 'the face of quiet business and moderate prosperity',²⁰¹ while in 1833 it was considered that nothing in its 'situation or capabilities' made it 'probable that any rapid increase in its trade or population should take place'.²⁰² That assessment was proved wrong within a few decades, the rapid industrialization and growth of the town (which more than doubled its population between 1801 and 1891) owing much to the arrival of the railway in 1855, and to the railway's two chief promoters: William S. Hitchman (d. 1881), a wine merchant, maltster, and founder of the town's brewery, and more especially William Bliss (d. 1883), who by the 1860s employed several hundred wage-earning factory workers at his two large textile mills, and displayed an increasingly paternalistic concern for their recreation, welfare, and education.²⁰³

Bliss's benevolence and philanthropy should not be overstated, his employees toiling 'long hours for low pay',²⁰⁴ but his concern for their moral and social welfare was genuine, the firm being one of only two in Britain awarded a gold medal for promoting good industrial

¹⁹⁶ Above, agric.

¹⁹⁷ R. Wells, *Wretched Faces: Famine in Wartime England 1763–1803* (1988).

¹⁹⁸ *Northampton Mercury*, 15 Aug. 1795; L.W. Thwaites, 'Marketing of Agric. Produce in 18th-Cent. Oxon.' (Birmingham Univ. PhD thesis, 1981), 488–90.

¹⁹⁹ *Reading Mercury*, 22 June 1795; Eddershaw, *Story*, 80–1.

²⁰⁰ TNA, HO 42/51, no. 374; VCH Oxon. X, 12; XIV, 58.

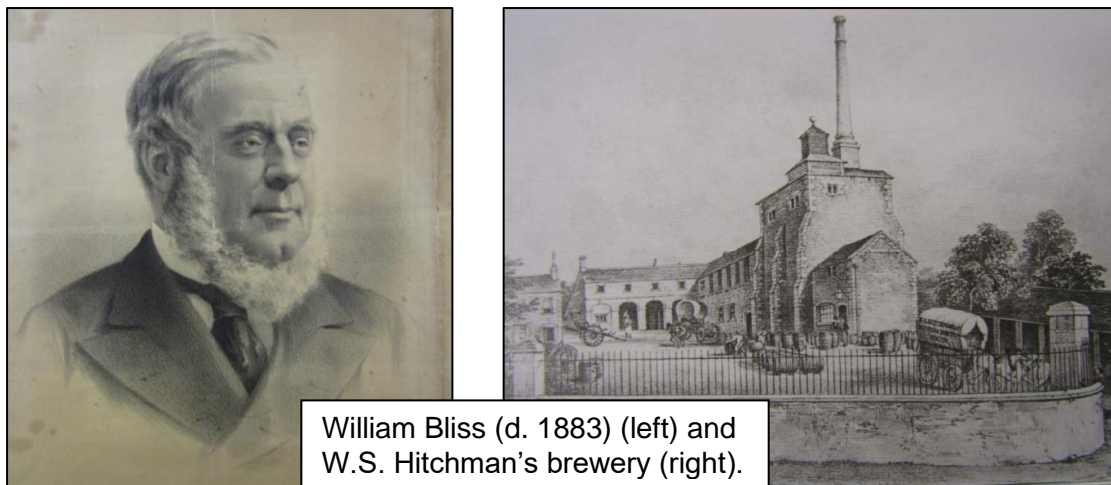
²⁰¹ Brewer, *Oxon*. 494.

²⁰² *1st Rep. of Commissioners ... into Munic. Corpn: App. Pt 1* (Parl. Papers 1835 [116], xxiii), p. 172.

²⁰³ Above, popn; communics; urban econ. (19th cent.); below (educ.).

²⁰⁴ M. Richardson, *The Bliss Tweed Mill Strike 1913–14: Causes, Conduct and Consequences* (2013), 10.

relations at the 1867 Paris Exhibition.²⁰⁵ For recreation he established factory-based cricket, football, and quoits clubs, along with reading, lecture, and games rooms for men and boys, and a circulating library for female workers. Welfare provision included at least 75 purpose-built company cottages and gardens let at affordable rents, sick and clothing clubs, a savings bank, and dedicated lodgings (supervised by matrons) for single women, married women being not required to start work before breakfast on winter mornings so that they could first attend to their domestic duties. No children under 13 were employed to allow for their 'proper instruction at the National and British schools', and he established a factory evening school for young women supervised by his daughter Esther, who as Esther Burrows became first principal of St Hilda's College, Oxford.²⁰⁶ Bliss also promoted religious education, his employees being 'persuaded and encouraged to attend a place of worship on Sunday', and he was a strong advocate of Temperance, alcohol being banned from his premises and workers being given 'every discouragement' from frequenting public houses. Around 1877 he was 'proud to be able to say that he never saw a drunken person in his factory all the 40 years he conducted it'.



William Bliss (d. 1883) (left) and W.S. Hitchman's brewery (right).

Within the town more widely, Bliss promoted Temperance meetings and concerts in the town hall and supported the town's literary institute and horticultural society. As a Baptist he gave generously towards the rebuilding of the Baptist chapel in 1862–3, but supported all of the town's Sunday schools and donated to the Wesleyan and Primitive Methodist chapels,

²⁰⁵ Unless indicated, this and following paragraph based on: S. Coleman, 'William Bliss of Chipping Norton', *Baptist Quarterly* 45.1 (2013), 30–48; *Reports on Paris Universal Exhibition, 1867 Volume VI* (Parl. Papers 1867–8 (3969), xxx), pp. 33–100; W. Bliss, 'History of William Bliss & Son's Woollen Manufactory, 1757–1877' (copy of MS, c.1877, in OHC, Acc. 2585); *Oxf. Chron.* 21 July 1877; *Witney Gaz.* 10 Mar. 1883.

²⁰⁶ *ODNB*, s.v. Esther Burrows. She was succeeded in the post by her daughter Christine: *ibid.* s.v. Christine Burrows; *VCH Oxon.* III, 348–50.

as well as towards restoration of the parish church. He was instrumental in funding and running the town's British schools, and in 1881 gave land on the town's western edge for a new parish cemetery with a non-denominational chapel. On several occasions he hosted large celebratory dinners, notably for 900 when his rebuilt lower mill was opened in 1873, and he was a significant benefactor to the town's poor, supporting the almshouses and workhouse, and briefly serving as a poor-law guardian. As a major figure in Chipping Norton's civic life, he was a member of the reformed town council (established in 1835) for 36 years, serving four terms as mayor in 1848, 1854, 1862, and 1869, while his funeral procession was reportedly a quarter of a mile long. The years following his death nevertheless saw a marked deterioration in working conditions and industrial relations at his mills as the parlous state of the company's finances became clearer, and in 1896 the family left the town, the more hard-line attitude of their successors at the company (still called William Bliss & Son) leading ultimately to the bitter and divisive strike of 1913–14.²⁰⁷

Whilst none of Chipping Norton's other employers exerted such a strong influence on the town and its society, W.S. Hitchman hosted his own celebratory dinners in 1831 and 1850 (the latter marking completion of his brewery),²⁰⁸ and apparently also erected workers' housing.²⁰⁹ He himself lived either in West Street (where he employed six servants in 1851), or at his country house in Chastleton.²¹⁰ In 1835 he was elected Chipping Norton's first mayor, other industrialists to hold that position (apart from Bliss) including Bliss's son William (in 1880), and the glove manufacturers James Bowen (in 1883 and 1896) and John Stayt (in 1888).²¹¹ Otherwise the mayoralty was dominated by professionals including the solicitor Henry F. Wilkins (d. 1891) of The Mount, who was eight times mayor between 1836 and 1888, when his portrait was unveiled in the town hall.²¹² Other segments of town society included shopkeepers (a few of whom became mayor),²¹³ innkeepers and publicans, crafts- and tradespeople, and servants, whilst labourers (who in 1851 made up more than a tenth of the working population) worked predominantly on farms, reflecting the continued agricultural basis of the town's market economy. Domestic service still accounted for much female employment, although women increasingly found work in the Bliss mills or making gloves or shoes at home. Paupers were maintained both in and outside the workhouse, with others accommodated in the town's almshouses, and overcrowded and insanitary conditions

²⁰⁷ Below (govt, politics, and conflict).

²⁰⁸ *Oxf. Jnl*, 29 Oct. 1831; *Oxf. Chron.* 6 Apr. 1850.

²⁰⁹ Above, town bldgs.

²¹⁰ TNA, HO 107/1732/162; Eddershaw, *Story*, 94; Brooks, *Pevsner N&W*, 251–2.

²¹¹ Mayors board in CNM; above, urban econ. (19th cent.).

²¹² *Oxf. Jnl*, 8 Sept. 1888; J. Grantham, *Chipping Norton Town Hall Past & Present* (2007), 58–9; above, urban econ. (19th cent.). For The Mount, above, town bldgs.

²¹³ e.g. A.A. Webb (in 1885 and 1897) and W.C. Shrimpton (in 1891): mayors board in CNM; above, urban econ. (19th cent.).

continued particularly in backyard developments,²¹⁴ where in 1865 a resident surgeon found 'open cess pools' with 'fever and diarrhoea very prevalent'.²¹⁵

Town Government, Politics, and Conflict

Public order concerns in the early 19th century (reported by the court leet jury) included overcrowding of the town's commons, antisocial behaviour involving 'bad girls' and 'disorderly persons' loitering on street corners, and observance of the sabbath, especially in relation to drinking and the playing of games such as football.²¹⁶ In 1818 a freeman of the borough sued the corporation for distraining his goods after he refused to serve as a burgess,²¹⁷ and in 1823 another burgess was removed from office for non-attendance at common council meetings and for using insulting language against the corporation.²¹⁸ The corporation itself elicited mixed feelings, a government enquiry in 1833 reporting criticism of its closed constitution and of the 'obnoxious fines' charged on strangers trading within the borough,²¹⁹ whilst a report two years later found the corporation 'viewed disfavoured by the inhabitants generally'.²²⁰ Under the Municipal Corporations Act it was replaced in 1835 by an elected mayor and town council,²²¹ which in 1842 erected a new town hall. The felling of an old elm tree occupying part of its site (and renowned locally for its rookery) was condemned by one townsman as 'the most unforgivable action ever committed in Chipping Norton'.²²²

Party politics rarely drove events in Chipping Norton, although the town displayed a consistent Whig and Liberal bias which probably partly reflected the strength of Nonconformity. Freeholders voted overwhelmingly for the Whigs and parliamentary reform in 1831, despite a sizeable Tory minority which included Hitchman,²²³ and in 1842 the newly-elected Whig MP for Oxford, James Langston of Sarsden House, provided the capital for the new town hall, engaging the architect G.S. Repton who had previously worked for him in Sarsden.²²⁴ The 1862 election saw another Liberal majority in the town, including (in William

²¹⁴ Above, devt of town; town bldgs; urban econ. (19th cent.; mkts and fairs); agric.; below (welfare).

²¹⁵ OHC, BOR1/5/A1/3, 11 Aug. 1865; above, local govt (1835–94).

²¹⁶ OHC, BOR1/3/A1/3; Ballard, *Notes*, 26, 28, 31; above, agric. (1770–1900).

²¹⁷ OHC, BOR1/4/A1/1.

²¹⁸ Ballard, *Notes*, 21.

²¹⁹ *1st Rep. of Commissioners ... into Munic. Corpns*, p. 171.

²²⁰ A.J.E. Cockburn, *Corporations of England and Wales*, I (1835), 202.

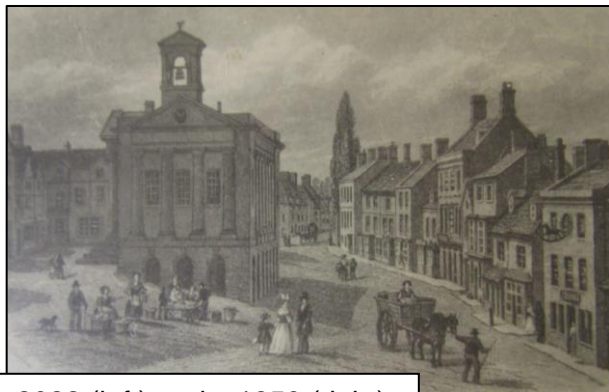
²²¹ OHC, BOR1/5/A1/3; above, local govt (1835–94).

²²² Above, devt of town; town bldgs; Pearson, *Bygone Days*, 52–3. The tree's memory was preserved in the name of the town's Loyal Old Elm Tree Lodge of Oddfellows: below (societies, sports, and entertainment; welfare).

²²³ *Copy of the Poll of the Freeholders for Knights of the Shire for the Co. of Oxford 1831*: copy in OHC, SZ896.

²²⁴ Brunner and Lunt, *Sheriffs*, 164; *Hist. Parl.* s.v. Jas Langston; Brooks, *Pevsner N&W*, 31, 257, 453–4; above, town bldgs.

Bliss and Benjamin Bowen) two of its largest employers, although Hitchman again voted Conservative,²²⁵ and both Liberal and Conservative associations were formed in the town in 1881,²²⁶ respectively opening Liberal and Constitutional clubs in 1886.²²⁷ The new Conservative MP for North Oxfordshire, Albert Brassey of Heythrop Hall, ensured the survival of the town's British and National schools through donations in 1895–6,²²⁸ and in 1897 Brassey presented a gold chain and ceremonial robes to be worn by future mayors of Chipping Norton. Partly in gratitude he was himself invited to serve as mayor from 1898 to 1902, becoming the only mayor not to have sat on the town council, and during his time in office he presented the guildhall to the borough for use as a Technical Institute in 1901.²²⁹ Portraits of both Langston and Brassey hang in Chipping Norton town hall.²³⁰



Chipping Norton town hall: in 2022 (left) and c.1850 (right).

Municipal reform allowed the town council to put borough policing on a more modern footing,²³¹ although in 1845 the sergeant Charles Knott provoked a riot when he intervened in a drunken altercation over stolen chaff, his beating of a man with his truncheon causing his subsequent death in custody. The next morning an angry mob gathered in the market place, and for three days the town was reportedly 'in a state of riot and insubordination', a town council meeting having to be abandoned due to the uproar. On the third day the Oxfordshire Yeomanry arrived to keep the peace, and the town was eventually pacified by Knott's arrest and committal to Oxford gaol on a charge of manslaughter, of which he was acquitted some months later on the rather dubious grounds that the victim had an unusually

²²⁵ *Poll of the Electors ... of a Kt of the Co. of Oxon.* 1862: copy in OHC, SZ896; cf. above, urban econ. (19th cent.).

²²⁶ *Banbury Guardian*, 11 Aug. 1881; *Oxon. Weekly News*, 20 July 1881.

²²⁷ *Oxon. Weekly News*, 12 May, 7 July 1886; *Kelly's Dir. Oxon.* (1887).

²²⁸ Brunner and Lunt, *Sheriffs*, 179; below (educ.).

²²⁹ Above, local govt; below (educ.).

²³⁰ Grantham, *Town Hall*, 60–1, 64–5.

²³¹ Above, local govt (town govt 1835–94; policing).

thin skull.²³² Further rioting occurred in May 1873, when county magistrates sitting at Chipping Norton police station sentenced the 16 women known later as the ‘Ascott Martyrs’ to imprisonment with hard labour, for alleged assault during a strike of agricultural workers in Ascott-under-Wychwood. Rioting broke out hours after their sentences became known, during which the police station (where the women were still being held) was attacked and damaged,²³³ although William Bliss (in a letter to *The Times*) was at pains to make clear that his own employees were uninvolved, despite many being ‘present out of curiosity’.²³⁴ When the last seven of the women were released from Oxford gaol in early June a largely peaceful demonstration was held in Chipping Norton market place on the evening of their return, attended by some 2–3,000 people and addressed by the Agricultural Workers’ Union leader Joseph Arch.²³⁵

Late 19th-century religious tensions were focused mainly on disputes between the town’s High and Low-Church Anglican factions, the ecumenical influence of William Bliss and others helping to smooth over earlier tensions with the various Nonconformist denominations.²³⁶ A notable exception occurred in the 1880s, when open-air meetings by the Salvation Army were repeatedly disrupted by a body calling itself the ‘Skeleton Army’, whose members were accused of physically and verbally abusing Salvationists (both male and female) ‘in the very presence of the police’.²³⁷ In March 1888 questions were asked in parliament by the Liberal MP and Temperance advocate William Caine, although the chief constable of Oxfordshire claimed that events in Chipping Norton had been ‘greatly exaggerated’, and that no more than four officers could be spared to police the town ‘without great inconvenience to the rest of the county’.²³⁸ The trouble eventually subsided, though not before an ‘anti-Salvationist’ meeting in the town hall in May 1889 had attracted several prominent townspeople, including the brewer A.W.S. Hitchman and at least two town councillors.²³⁹ Whilst some opposed the Salvation Army on religious grounds (the curate

²³² *Banbury Guardian*, 20 Nov. 1845, 12 Mar. 1846; OHC, BOR1/16/A3/4; D.G. Eddershaw, ‘Chipping Norton: the riot of 1845 and the policing of the town 1836–56’, *Top. Oxon.* 19 (1973–4), 4–6; Eddershaw, *Story*, 106–7; L. Woodley, *A History of the Chipping Norton Borough Police 1836–57* (Police history monograph 6, 2007), 8–12.

²³³ M. Curthoys, ‘Oxfordshire’s Tolpuddle? The Case of the Ascott Martyrs’, *Oxoniensia* 86 (2021), 159–78; *Oxon. Weekly News*, 28 May 1873. Cf. *VCH Oxon.* XIX, 102, 110; P. Horn (ed.), *Agric. Trade Unionism in Oxon. 1872–81* (ORS 48, 1974), 13–15.

²³⁴ *The Times*, 27 May 1873.

²³⁵ *Oxon. Weekly News*, 4 June 1873 (correcting *VCH Oxon.* XIX, 110 and *Oxf. Jnl.*, 8 June 1873, both placing the rally in Ascott. For a smaller meeting in Ascott on 20 June, also addressed by Arch, *Oxon. Weekly News*, 25 June 1873).

²³⁶ Below, relig. hist. (19th to 21st cents); though cf. *Wilb. Visit.* 36.

²³⁷ *Oxon. Weekly News*, 12 Oct., 26 Oct. 1887; *War Cry* [Salvation Army newspaper], 31 Mar., 7 Apr., 14 Apr. 1888.

²³⁸ 324 *Parl. Deb.* 3rd ser. 258–9.

²³⁹ *Oxon. Weekly News*, 29 May 1889.

having reportedly preached an inflammatory sermon against the Army in the parish church,²⁴⁰ and one townsman accusing it of making ‘a complete mockery of religion’),²⁴¹ others (presumably including Hitchman) objected to its vigorous promotion of Temperance, dance halls having reputedly been ‘compelled to shut up shop’ and pubs ‘emptied’ due to the popularity of its meetings.²⁴² Temperance remained a divisive issue into the early 20th century, when the ‘great desirability’ of closing some of the town’s numerous public houses (as proposed by some town councillors) was met with hostility both within and outside the corporation.²⁴³

From mid century the town’s major infrastructure projects (and particularly their costs to ratepayers) prompted further conflict, a newspaper commentator in 1902 lampooning the ‘volubility of certain [council] members’ discussing the ‘never-ending sewage scheme’.²⁴⁴ In 1865 the town council’s petitioning of W.G. Dawkins of Over Norton to withdraw his opposition to extending the railway line to Banbury was met with the characteristically brusque reply that ‘the corporation had enough to do to mind their own business’,²⁴⁵ whilst the corporation’s rejection (and alleged misrepresentation) of William Bliss’s proposals for a town water supply led to his resignation from the council in 1875, citing ‘the new and offensive way in which our municipal elections have been of late ... conducted’. A petition by 280 ratepayers urging him to reconsider was graciously received but rejected.²⁴⁶ The corporation’s ill-fated efforts to purchase the town’s gasworks in 1910–11 also provoked orchestrated opposition, with ‘half a dozen people canvassing from door to door’ to persuade ratepayers (who had had no opportunity to vote on the issue) to oppose the application.²⁴⁷ In other incidents, the council complained in 1880 of police interference at the mop fair, when stall-roundabouts (claimed to be ‘illegal ... instruments of gaming’) were closed and live ammunition was seized from shooting galleries.²⁴⁸ Hostile exchanges over public access to the Regulated Pasture for recreation and exercise followed in 1904, one town councillor insisting on the public’s ‘legal right’, whilst another (who was also clerk to the Field Reeves)

²⁴⁰ *War Cry*, 14 Apr. 1888.

²⁴¹ *Ibid.* 2 Nov. 1887.

²⁴² *Ibid.* 26 Oct. 1887; *War Cry*, 14 Apr. 1888.

²⁴³ OHC, BOR1/27/A1/3, p. 2; *Oxon. Weekly News*, 21 Feb. 1906, 29 Apr. 1908.

²⁴⁴ *Oxon. Weekly News*, 3 Sept. 1903.

²⁴⁵ OHC, BOR1/5/A1/3, 10 Mar. 1865; *Northampton Mercury*, 29 Apr. 1865. For Dawkins, below, relig. hist. (Anglicanism from 1800); Over Norton, social hist.; Salford, social hist.

²⁴⁶ *Oxon. Weekly News*, 27 Oct., 1 Dec. 1875; OHC, BOR1/7/C/1. Cf. Coleman, ‘William Bliss’, 41–2.

²⁴⁷ *Oxon. Weekly News*, 29 Mar. 1911; above, urban econ. (since 1900).

²⁴⁸ OHC, BOR1/13/C1/1; *Oxf. Jnl.*, 22 Jan. 1881. Cf. R. Mann, *Chipping Norton Fair* (2007), 57–60.

denounced the council's application for membership of the Commons and Footpaths Preservation Society as 'a waste of the rates'.²⁴⁹

By far the most divisive conflict, however, was the six-month strike at the Bliss tweed mill in 1913–14, reflecting a long-term deterioration in conditions and labour relations since the death of William Bliss in 1883 and the family's departure in 1896.²⁵⁰ Boys and girls aged 11 and 12 began to be employed, and wages failed to rise significantly, so that by 1913 (when there were only c.380 employees at the single remaining mill) pay was perceived by some to be 30 percent lower than elsewhere in the woollen industry. The general manager Arthur Dunstan, employed by the Metropolitan Bank, displayed (according to one historian) 'no signs of concern for his workforce', becoming 'a figure of hate' for the majority of employees,²⁵¹ and in December 1913 he opposed the membership of a new Chipping Norton branch of the Workers' Union by at least 230 of his workers, threatening anyone who joined with redundancy and sacking three prominent union members.



The Bliss mill strike (1913–14): strikers (left) and non-strikers (right).

The resulting strike, which began on 18 December, involved some 237 strikers, with c.150 non-strikers running the daily gauntlet of crossing the picket line escorted by more than 50 policemen. A strike committee was formed with headquarters at the Fox hotel, and an appeal for funds to support strikers' families attracted high-profile donations from the bishop of Oxford, several Oxford University academics, and leading members of Oxford's Ruskin College. Early in 1914 noisy demonstrations were held in the town, and tensions ran high between supporters of strikers and non-strikers, both sides being sometimes

²⁴⁹ OHC, BOR1/23/C/4; *Oxon. Weekly News*, 8 and 15 June, 20 July, 10 Aug. 1904; J. Grantham, *The Regulated Pasture: a history of common land in Chipping Norton* (1997), 44–55. For the Regulated Pasture, above, agric.

²⁵⁰ Unless indicated, following based on: M. Richardson, *The Bliss Tweed Mill Strike 1913–14: Causes, Conduct and Consequences* (2013); J. Hodgkins, *Over the Hills to Glory: Radicalism in Banburyshire, 1832–1945* (1978), 126–35; Eddershaw, *Story*, 111–15; OHC, BOR1/4/A1/7; Bodl. MS Top. Oxon. c 523. Cf. above, econ. hist. (19th cent.; since 1900).

²⁵¹ Richardson, *Bliss Tweed Mill Strike*, 12.

represented within a single family. Low-level violence and disorder often ensued, a petition to the borough magistrates (signed by 140 inhabitants) complaining of ‘organized and unruly mobs ... being allowed to parade the town and district’. In response the magistrates felt it ‘necessary’ to ‘act with firmness’,²⁵² those tried and convicted (both for assault) including Frederick Shepherd and Annie Cooper. Their cases attracted national attention and questions in parliament (raised by the Liberal MP for Banbury Eustace Fiennes), and Shepherd was pardoned and Cooper released from prison. She was greeted triumphantly in the town by crowds of supporters and a brass band, and treated to a packed reception at the town hall, at which rousing speeches were given by union leaders and she was presented with a silver teapot.

As the strike wore on further into 1914, however, the poverty of strikers and their families drove some to return reluctantly to work and others to seek employment elsewhere, particularly in the Lancashire textile mills. Only c.160 remained on strike in early June, when the strike committee sent a letter to Dunstan conceding defeat. Dunstan took back only 100 of the strikers, of whom another 50 remained unemployed in August, when they were still supported by the Workers’ Distress Committee. Ironically the onset of the First World War brought higher wages, as the mill took on large orders for khaki cloth. Nonetheless the strike left deep divisions in Chipping Norton, some individuals and families on opposing sides reportedly not speaking to each other for years or even decades afterwards.

Societies, Sports, and Entertainment

In addition to the amenities provided by William Bliss for his factory workers,²⁵³ Chipping Norton gained a wealth of other clubs and societies during the 19th century. Friendly societies continued to exercise a powerful influence after 1800,²⁵⁴ their club day (still in early July) being celebrated in the 1840s with a church service followed by a procession with brass bands and banners.²⁵⁵ The 1852 event marked ‘a visible decline on former occasions’, but by the 1860s there were stalls, amusements, and entertainers, which in 1874 reportedly attracted 2,000 visitors. By the 1880s the pre-eminent club-day event was the Oddfellows’ fête, the Loyal Old Elm Tree Lodge of Oddfellows having been established in the town in 1871, and quickly becoming the largest friendly society branch in Oxfordshire.²⁵⁶ Latterly

²⁵² OHC, BOR1/4/A1/7, petition 20 Feb. 1914, letter 11 Mar. 1914.

²⁵³ Above (industrialization).

²⁵⁴ Below (welfare).

²⁵⁵ *Oxf. Jnl*, 8 July 1843, 10 July 1847.

²⁵⁶ *Oxon. FS*, 21, 102; *Oxf. Jnl*, 10 June 1852, 5 July 1864, 11 July 1874.

most of its social activities took place at the Oddfellows' hall on London Road, which was purpose-built for the society in 1909–10 with a kitchen, stage, and dance-floor.²⁵⁷



The former Oddfellows' hall (left) and the masonic hall (right).

Temperance societies existed by 1842, when a branch of the Independent Order of Rechabites (Salford Unity) erected a tent on club day.²⁵⁸ Later in the century there were branches of the Church of England Temperance Society and the British Women's Temperance Association, whilst the Nonconformist Chipping Norton Total Abstinence Society had its own brass band in 1872 and a choir in 1897,²⁵⁹ its three-day Blue Ribbon mission in 1883 (held at the town hall) securing 316 new pledges.²⁶⁰ In 1881 leading townsmen including the younger William Bliss (then mayor) formed the Chipping Norton Temperance Hotel and Restaurant Co. Ltd, which ran a Temperance hotel and coffee tavern at 9 High Street.²⁶¹ Other religious societies included branches of the Young Men's Christian Association (by 1876), the Church Lads' Brigade (started in 1901), and the St John Ambulance (active by 1911),²⁶² whilst the Chipping Norton Volunteer Rifle Corps (instituted in 1876) had a drill hall on Albion Street and a rifle range at Chalford in Enstone.²⁶³ The Bowyer Lodge of Freemasons was started in the town in 1864, meeting at the White Hart inn

²⁵⁷ CNM, architect's plan and drawing of Oddfellows' Hall, 1909; *Oxon. Weekly News*, 5 Jan. 1910.

²⁵⁸ *Oxf. Jnl*, 9 July 1842.

²⁵⁹ *Oxon. Weekly News*, 21 Feb. 1872; *Chipping Norton Illustrated Almanack and Diary* (1897): copy in OHC.

²⁶⁰ *Oxf. Jnl*, 20 Jan. 1883.

²⁶¹ *Oxon. Weekly News*, 10 Aug., 17 Aug. 1881.

²⁶² *Ibid.* 16 Feb. 1876, 19 June 1901; *Banbury Guardian*, 29 June 1911.

²⁶³ *Oxon. Weekly News*, 3 May, 31 May 1876; CNM, WI Scrapbook (1955); OS Map 6", Oxon. XIV.SE (1885 edn).

until 1867 when it moved to leasehold premises on Albion Street. A purpose-built masonic hall on Over Norton Road opened in 1898.²⁶⁴

An agricultural society for Stow-on-the-Wold and Chipping Norton was formed in 1841, its annual show the following year being used to mark the opening of the new town hall.²⁶⁵ Its 1876 show was combined with that of the town's horticultural society (founded in 1856),²⁶⁶ and a separate rose society held its inaugural show in 1873.²⁶⁷ A reading room opened at the guildhall in 1860 moved to the town hall in 1867, when it was managed by the town's literary institute;²⁶⁸ that was established in 1865 and had 120 members by 1870, when its library contained 800 volumes and its president was the earl of Ducie.²⁶⁹ An earlier, privately-owned circulating library in West Street gained new stock in 1838, when 600 of its old books were sold.²⁷⁰ Adult evening classes were held at various locations around the town from 1891, including at the Technical Institute opened in the guildhall in 1901.²⁷¹ A branch of the Workers' Educational Association met there from its formation in 1913.²⁷²

The town hall hosted regular public meetings, balls, concerts, and other entertainments,²⁷³ including (in 1877–8) a weekly quadrille or dancing class,²⁷⁴ whilst the Co-operative hall above the Co-operative Society's High Street shop provided an additional venue from 1891.²⁷⁵ Town hall concerts included performances by the town's choral society (mentioned from 1844 and re-established in 1872),²⁷⁶ and by the Chipping Norton Philharmonic Society (started by William Bliss in 1890),²⁷⁷ whilst the annual Stour Choral Union festival (begun in 1904) relocated from Shipston-on-Stour (Warws.) to Chipping Norton in 1912.²⁷⁸ Several brass bands existed before the First World War, including those belonging to Temperance societies, the Primitive Methodists, the Rifle Corps, and the Salvation Army.²⁷⁹ A town band mentioned in 1844 continued after 1914.²⁸⁰

²⁶⁴ A.J. Kerry, *Hist. of Freemasonry in Oxon.* (1965), 25; R.A. Stevens, *The Bowyer Lodge 1864–2014* (2015): copy in CNM, Masonic Lodge; Brooks, *Pevsner N&W*, 258.

²⁶⁵ *Oxf. Chron.* 13 Mar. 1841; *Oxf. Jnl*, 1 Oct. 1842.

²⁶⁶ *Oxf. Jnl*, 7 Sept. 1861, 16 Sept. 1876.

²⁶⁷ *Ibid.* 14 June 1873; *Oxf. Times*, 12 July 1873.

²⁶⁸ *Oxf. Jnl*, 4 Feb. 1860; OHC, BOR1/26/C/1; Grantham, *Town Hall*, 16–20.

²⁶⁹ *Oxf. Chron.* 18 Nov. 1865; *Oxf. Times*, 30 Dec. 1865; *Oxon. Weekly News*, 19 Jan. 1870.

²⁷⁰ *Oxf. Chron.* 21 July 1838; *Robson's Dir. Oxon.* (1839).

²⁷¹ Below (educ.).

²⁷² *Oxon. Weekly News*, 26 Mar., 13 June 1913.

²⁷³ CNM, Entertainments.

²⁷⁴ OHC, BOR1/26/N/1.

²⁷⁵ *Oxon. Weekly News*, 1 Apr. 1891. Cf. *Oxf. Times*, 19 Nov. 1892 (concert), 11 May 1896 (meeting); *Oxon. Weekly News*, 2 Nov. 1898 (feast and variety show in aid of church restoration).

²⁷⁶ *Banbury Guardian*, 26 Sept. 1844; *Oxon. Weekly News*, 15 May 1872.

²⁷⁷ *Oxon. Weekly News*, 21 Jan., 25 Feb. 1891.

²⁷⁸ CNM, Choir; *Oxon. Weekly News*, 10 Apr., 24 Apr. 1912; below (since 1914).

²⁷⁹ *Oxon. FS*, 406; *Oxon. Weekly News*, 3 Oct. 1894, 17 Sept. 1902; above.

²⁸⁰ *Banbury Guardian*, 26 Sept. 1844; *Oxon. Weekly News*, 14 July 1869, 4 May 1898, 28 July 1914; below (since 1914).

Major town celebrations marked the opening of the railway in 1855²⁸¹ and royal events such as the jubilees of 1887 and 1897 or the coronations of 1902 and 1911, when grand public dinners were held in the market place.²⁸² An oak tree was planted in the 'Victoria and Albert gardens' for the queen's marriage in 1840,²⁸³ and the relief of Mafeking during the Boer War in 1900 was celebrated with bunting, fireworks, a bonfire, and a peal of bells.²⁸⁴ Hospital Sunday processions (inaugurated in 1893) evolved into the town's annual Hospital Saturday carnival, which drew large crowds from its inception in 1902 until the Second World War.²⁸⁵ Other popular festivities included the town's autumn mop fairs,²⁸⁶ and by 1904 travelling circuses and funfairs pitched regularly on the Regulated Pasture, a part of which (closest to New Street) had been informally used 'from time immemorial' for 'cricket, football, and other games'.²⁸⁷ Though the town lacked a dedicated theatre, the corporation licensed the town hall and occasionally other temporary structures for theatrical performances,²⁸⁸ and mummers were mentioned in 1884, when they 'all wore masks and dressed up very grotesquely'.²⁸⁹ The town's first cinema (known initially as the Picture Palace) opened at the Oddfellows' hall in 1911.²⁹⁰

Organized sports included the Chipping Norton horse races, which were revived in 1877 by Albert Brassey and other members of the Heythrop Hunt, and continued sporadically until 1880.²⁹¹ Kennels and stables for the Hunt itself were built on land off Worcester Road in 1858.²⁹² A cricket club mentioned in 1834 was reformed in 1863, when the brewer W.S. Hitchman offered it free use of the 'old cricket ground' near Chapel House (in Over Norton).²⁹³ The town's football club (started in 1867) was renamed the Swifts in 1893,²⁹⁴ playing at a ground off London Road by 1902,²⁹⁵ though a public swimming bath constructed beside the stream north of the town in 1867 closed in 1882, as a result of falling

²⁸¹ *Oxf. Jnl*, 18 Aug. 1855; above, communics.

²⁸² CNM, Celebrations, Royal Occasions, Town Events. For 1897, cf. Eddershaw, *Story*, 97.

²⁸³ *Oxf. Jnl*, 15 Feb. 1840.

²⁸⁴ *Oxon. Weekly News*, 23 May 1900.

²⁸⁵ *Ibid.* 27 June 1894, 17 Sept. 1902, 4 Aug. 1926; CNM, Town Events.

²⁸⁶ Mann, *Fair*, 53–63; above, urban econ. (mkts and fairs).

²⁸⁷ *Oxon. Weekly News*, 8 June 1904. Cf. *Oxf Chron. and Reading Gaz.* 19 Apr. 1912; Grantham, *Regulated Pasture*, 44, 46.

²⁸⁸ OHC, BOR1/31/A/4; BOR1/27/A1/2, pp. 118, 138. Cf. CNM, Entertainments (play posters).

²⁸⁹ *Birmingham Weekly Post*, 4 Oct. 1884; C. Bloxham, *May Day to Mummers: Folklore and Customs in Oxfordshire* (2002), 274, 278.

²⁹⁰ *Oxon. Weekly News*, 6 Dec. 1911; *Banbury Advertiser*, 7 Dec. 1911; CNM, Cinemas.

²⁹¹ *Oxf. Chron.* 5 Apr. 1845; *Oxon. Weekly News*, 11 Apr. 1877, 5 June 1878, 12 May 1880.

²⁹² G.T. Hutchinson, *The Heythrop Hunt* (1935); *Banbury Guardian*, 29 Apr., 30 Sept., 4 Nov. 1858.

²⁹³ *Coventry Herald*, 18 July, 22 Aug. 1834; *Oxf. Jnl*, 20 June 1857; *Oxf. Jnl*, 11 Apr. 1863; *Oxf. Chron.* 7 Nov. 1863.

²⁹⁴ *Oxf. Chron.* 16 Nov. 1867; CNM, Football.

²⁹⁵ *Oxon. Weekly News*, 7 Nov. 1894, 9 Apr. 1902.

subscriptions and vandalism.²⁹⁶ Tennis and cycling clubs were formed in 1886 and 1889 respectively,²⁹⁷ Albert Brassey serving as the latter's president in 1897,²⁹⁸ while a golf club started by the brewer A.W.S. Hitchman in 1890 was revived in 1900 under the presidency of Dr G.W. Hutchison, its nine-hole course moving from the Regulated Pasture to Southcombe in 1907.²⁹⁹ A gymnastics club was begun in 1902 by the builder and mayor Sidney Lewis,³⁰⁰ whose son Fred is credited with introducing the American style of baseball to the town in 1912, when the game was played by his troop of Boy Scouts.³⁰¹ Even so one resident claimed in 1902 that the town's youth was 'badly catered for', encouraging them to 'roam aimlessly' and become 'a nuisance to everybody'.³⁰²

Cycling club (left) and Salvation Army band (right), both c.1890s. From originals in Chipping Norton Museum.



Town and Society Since 1914

Town and Society 1914–39

The outbreak of the First World War, coming just months after the end of the Bliss mill strike, brought significant wage increases for mill workers as a result of new military orders.³⁰³

Otherwise the war affected the town little differently from most other small towns, with

²⁹⁶ *Oxf. Times*, 3 Aug. 1867; *Oxf. Chron.* 9 May 1868; *Oxon. Weekly News*, 24 May, 7 June 1882; OS Map 1:2500, Oxon. XIV.11 (1881 edn). For later attempts to provide swimming facilities, OHC, BOR1/5/A2/2, s.v. water supply ctee; *Oxf Chron.* 19 Apr. 1912; below (since 1914).

²⁹⁷ *Oxon. Weekly News*, 28 Apr. 1886; *Banbury Guardian*, 28 Mar. 1889; CNM, Sports.

²⁹⁸ CNM, Cyclists.

²⁹⁹ *Oxon. Weekly News*, 19 Mar. 1890, 9 Oct. 1901, 9 Oct. 1907; *VCH Oxon.* II, 371; *Borough of Chipping Norton: Official Guide* (c.1906 edn): copy in OHC, BOR1/39/PR/1.

³⁰⁰ *Oxon. Weekly News*, 24 Dec. 1902, 9 Oct. 1907.

³⁰¹ *Ibid.* 25 July 1923; *Oxf. Times*, 25 Nov. 1960; below (since 1914).

³⁰² *Oxon. Weekly News*, 3 Sept. 1902 (11 boys charged with playing cards on a public path on a Sunday evening).

³⁰³ Above (1800–1914); Hodgkins, *Over the Hills*, 135.

numerous townsmen enlisting and 102 of them killed.³⁰⁴ The town hall was used extensively for benefit concerts, particularly in aid of Belgian refugees (some of whom were accommodated in the town), and in support of a Red Cross hospital for wounded soldiers which opened in 1915 in a house called Hill Lodge.³⁰⁵ The social impacts of the war were noted by the vicar Henry Herbert Arkell in 1918, including the 'unruliness of boys' through the absence of their fathers, and the 'real soberness and prayerfulness' of women caused by anxiety and bereavement.³⁰⁶ Peace celebrations in 1919 included a town hall reception and 'old English sports',³⁰⁷ and a war memorial tablet was unveiled in the parish church in 1920.³⁰⁸ A further war memorial project was the conversion of Hill Lodge into a cottage hospital, for which more than £9,000 was raised locally following its donation to the town by Wilmot Walford (d. 1919) of Over Norton.³⁰⁹ A Chipping Norton branch of the Royal British Legion was formed in 1924.³¹⁰

The interwar years saw a revival of the town's social life, with many clubs and societies resuming their activities. The town's Liberal and Conservative associations were joined in 1920 by a Labour party branch established by former Bliss mill strikers, whose membership peaked at 187 in 1925.³¹¹ A silver band was formed in 1936,³¹² and a squadron of the Air Training Corps in 1938.³¹³ Sports were largely co-ordinated by the Chipping Norton Sports Club, which had athletics, baseball, cricket, football, and hockey sections:³¹⁴ that for baseball was established by Fred Lewis (known as 'the father of British baseball') in 1920, his coaching bringing the Chipping Norton side to victory as champions of England in 1926.³¹⁵ Tennis and golf continued, the tennis club acquiring courts off Albion Street,³¹⁶ and the golf club opening a new nine-hole course at Southcombe in 1934.³¹⁷ A town motorcycle club held its first grass-track race in a field off London Road in 1928,³¹⁸ and in 1929 a lake formed by the dammed stream in the valley was used for swimming in summer and ice

³⁰⁴ www.iwm.org.uk/memorials/item/memorial/31517; www.chippingnortonbritishlegion.com (accessed July 2022).

³⁰⁵ Grantham, *Town Hall*, 24–5; *Oxon. Weekly News*, 21 Oct., 28 Oct. 1914, 24 Nov. 1915.

³⁰⁶ *Gore's Visit*. 389–90.

³⁰⁷ CNM, WW1; *Oxon. Weekly News*, 23 July, 6 Aug. 1919.

³⁰⁸ Below, relig. hist. (19th to 21st cents); *Oxon. Weekly News*, 14 July 1920.

³⁰⁹ Below (welfare); *Oxon. Weekly News*, 12 Feb., 24 Dec. 1919, 22 Sept. 1920.

³¹⁰ *Oxon. Weekly News*, 22 Oct. 1924; www.chippingnortonbritishlegion.com.

³¹¹ *Oxon. Weekly News*, 26 May 1920; Richardson, *Bliss Tweed Mill Strike*, 28; OHC, O141/2/F/1.

³¹² CNM, Bands; *ibid.* WI Scrapbook (1955).

³¹³ *Chipping Norton News* (Jan. 1977).

³¹⁴ *Oxon. Weekly News*, 14 Apr., 1 Dec. 1920, 2 Feb., 8 June 1921, 13 Sept. 1922.

³¹⁵ *Ibid.* 14 Apr. 1920, 25 July 1923, 8 Sept. 1926; *Borough of Chipping Norton: Official Guide* (c.1930 edn), 16; copy in OHC, CHIPb/945.

³¹⁶ *Borough of Chipping Norton: Official Guide* (c.1930 edn), 16.

³¹⁷ CNM, Sports; B. Byrom, *Bygone Chipping Norton* (2017), 40.

³¹⁸ *Banbury Advertiser*, 30 Aug. 1928. Cf. CNM, Sports.

hockey and skating in winter.³¹⁹ The mop fair's revival in 1930 was marked with an ox roast.³²⁰ A Valentine's Day custom involved schoolchildren roaming the town centre chanting 'Please to give us a valentine: I'll be yours if you'll be mine', to be rewarded with coins, sweets, fruit, nuts, biscuits, or buns thrown into the street by shopkeepers; that remained popular through the 1920s–30s, but died out in the 1950s.³²¹



Fred Lewis, 'father of British baseball' (left), and an early Stour Choral Union festival (below). From originals in Chipping Norton Museum.



New amenities included a Church Army social centre opened in 1920 in the New Street house formerly occupied by Arthur Dunstan,³²² and a public library established in 1936 in the upper room of the guildhall, whose ground floor was let to the St John Ambulance.³²³ The pre-war Picture Palace or Picture House cinema at the Oddfellows' hall was joined by the purpose-built New Cinema in New Street in 1934,³²⁴ although Sunday screenings at both were prohibited following a borough poll in 1935, in a narrow victory for the vicar H.H. Arkell and the Sunday Defence Committee.³²⁵ A recreation ground with a new children's playground (accessed from New Street) was created in 1939 through the enclosure of c.4 a. of the Regulated Pasture.³²⁶

³¹⁹ Byrom, *Bygone Chipping Norton*, 9–10; Chipping Norton Local Hist. Soc., *Around Chipping Norton in Old Photographs* (1987), 77.

³²⁰ Mann, *Fair*, 64; above, urban econ. (mkts and fairs).

³²¹ *Daily Herald*, 15 Feb. 1923; W. Burson, *Jog-Trot Days: Chipping Norton in the 1920s* (1980), 26; Bloxham, *May Day to Mummers*, 24–5; Byrom, *Bygone Chipping Norton*, 7.

³²² *Oxon. Weekly News*, 12 May 1920; R. Evans, 'Dunstan House, Penhurst and the Upper Bliss Mill', *Top. Oxon.* 20 (1975), 7. For Dunstan, above (1800–1914).

³²³ OHC, BOR1/26/C/7; TNA, ED 37/1023; above, town bldgs.

³²⁴ CNM, Cinemas; *Kelly's Dir. Oxon.* (1939).

³²⁵ *Kinematograph Weekly*, 26 Dec. 1935 (610 votes against 518); OHC, BOR1/26/N/2; CNM, Cinemas (1935 campaign leaflets).

³²⁶ Grantham, *Regulated Pasture*, 64.

Chipping Norton at War, 1939–45

Trains carrying c.1,700 evacuees from London (mainly West Ham) arrived at Chipping Norton station in August and September 1939, several hundreds being billeted in the town itself. By summer 1940 there were also more than a thousand service personnel, while the former workhouse (then a Public Assistance Institution) became an emergency hospital for civilian and military casualties.³²⁷ King George VI reportedly inspected soldiers in the market place, perhaps in April 1942.³²⁸ The town hall was used to prepare and serve food for troops, evacuees, and schoolchildren,³²⁹ and a British Restaurant providing cheap meals opened at the Fox hotel in 1942.³³⁰ Around 450 German and Italian prisoners of war were held at a camp at Greystones off Burford Road,³³¹ and up to 1,400 airmen and airwomen (WAAF) were stationed at RAF Chipping Norton, opened in summer 1940 on farmland south-east of the town, and extending into Chadlington. Used to train pilots, it was upgraded to a satellite training station in 1941, and closed in December 1945.³³² US army troops were housed at the brewery from October 1943,³³³ and the town's first 'Anglo-American' wedding was reported in March 1944.³³⁴

The town's inhabitants and businesses rallied to help the war effort. Chipping Norton's Home Guard was commanded by the distinguished soldier E.T. Chamberlayne (d. 1963) of The Elm,³³⁵ and town fundraising towards the cost of a Spitfire in 1940 was followed by a successful War Weapons Week in September 1941.³³⁶ Combined efforts by Chipping Norton and Woodstock boroughs in 1942 raised the £400,000 needed to sponsor two warships, HMS Heythrop (sunk in 1942) and HMS Magpie.³³⁷ The Bliss mill manufactured cloth for military use, 45 of its employees enlisting into the services,³³⁸ and the Hub

³²⁷ R. Evans, 'The Home Front and Chipping Norton 1939–45' (typescript, 1989, in CNM, WW2), 6; Eddershaw, *Story*, 121–2; M. Graham, *Oxfordshire at War* (1994), 29. For workho., below (welfare).

³²⁸ Eddershaw, *Story*, 120; *Banbury Advertiser*, 1 Apr. 1942 ('the king inspected troops at points in North Oxon. today').

³²⁹ Grantham, *Town Hall*, 27–9.

³³⁰ OHC, BOR1/37; *Banbury Advertiser*, 16 Sept. 1942.

³³¹ Evans, 'Home Front', 24; CNM, Prisoners of War; Grantham, *Town Hall*, 71–2 (Conrad Gries, German artist and PoW).

³³² K. Delve, *The Military Airfields of Britain: Northern Home Counties* (2007), 96–7; M.J.F. Bowyer, *Action Stations: Military Airfields of Oxfordshire* (1988), 75 (mentioning surviving concrete huts and air raid shelters); HER, PRN 28134; CNM, RAF Station.

³³³ Eddershaw, *Story*, 122–3.

³³⁴ *Oxf. Mail*, 29 Mar. 1944; Graham, *Oxon. at War*, 73.

³³⁵ Evans, 'Home Front', 15; *Oxf. Times*, 10 May 1963; www.chippingnortonbritishlegion.com.

³³⁶ *Chipping Norton Advertiser*, 5 Dec. 1940, 25 Sept. 1941; Graham, *Oxon. at War*, 127–8.

³³⁷ *Banbury Advertiser*, 22 Apr. 1942; Grantham, *Town Hall*, 79–81.

³³⁸ Chipping Norton Family History Group, *Memories of the Mill in the Valley* (2009), 58–9.

Ironworks made rocket nose-cones and mine sinking-weights.³³⁹ A Folland Aircraft factory at the junction of Over Norton and Banbury Roads employed c.100 people (mostly women) to make bomb racks for Wellington bombers.³⁴⁰

The Greystones PoW camp, as drawn by Conrad Gries in 1942 (below), and the Rock Hill war memorial dedicated in 1951 (right).



Though the town suffered no bomb damage, a mid-air collision between two aircraft in August 1942 caused one of them (an Oxford) to come down near Over Norton and the other (a Wellington) to crash into houses in Church Street, killing both aircrews but avoiding civilian casualties. Several other aeroplane crashes occurred within the wider parish, some resulting in fatalities.³⁴¹ VJ Day in August 1945 was celebrated with a thanksgiving service, a military display, community singing and dancing, and a torchlit procession to the Regulated Pasture, where a bonfire was lit.³⁴² The names of 20 servicemen killed on active service were added to the parish church war memorial, and 26 names were inscribed on a new open-air war memorial at Rock Hill dedicated in 1951.³⁴³ Pool Meadow, near the castle site, was purchased by the town council as a war memorial park in 1945.³⁴⁴

Town and Society Since 1945

After the Second World War Chipping Norton's rapid expansion and corresponding population growth inevitably affected its social character.³⁴⁵ Fears in 1960 that the town was

³³⁹ H. Hurrell, *The Hub Ironworks, Chipping Norton: a hundred years of iron casting in Chipping Norton* (2001), 15–16.

³⁴⁰ Evans, 'Home Front', 15. Folland Close now occupies the site.

³⁴¹ Evans, 'Home Front', 24; www.chippingnortonbritishlegion.com.

³⁴² *Chipping Norton Advertiser*, 16 Aug. 1945; Graham, *Oxon. at War*, 171–2.

³⁴³ www.iwm.org.uk/memorials/item/memorial/31517; *Banbury Advertiser*, 19 Dec. 1951.

³⁴⁴ Grantham, *Regulated Pasture*, 65.

³⁴⁵ Above, popn; devtpt of town; urban econ. (since 1900).

becoming a dormitory for Oxford and Witney (with commuters unable to contribute to the social and cultural life of the town) proved unfounded,³⁴⁶ and by the early 21st century Chipping Norton had a ‘thriving community spirit’ and ‘active calendar of events’,³⁴⁷ with low unemployment, low crime rates, and high levels of education. Nevertheless, its ethnic diversity remained low, with 96 per cent of the 2011 population identifying as White, and whilst most households were reasonably affluent,³⁴⁸ the town also contained one of West Oxfordshire’s most deprived neighbourhoods, ranked amongst the 40 per cent most deprived nationally.³⁴⁹ Despite such contrasts, the town attracted some prominent incomers, amongst them the soldiers General Sir Montagu Stopford (d. 1971) and Brigadier Michael Harbottle (d. 1997).³⁵⁰ However, most of the so-called ‘Chipping Norton set’ of local celebrities (identified in 2011–12) lived in surrounding parishes, save for the broadcaster and journalist Jeremy Clarkson of Oldner, who later moved to Chadlington.³⁵¹

In 1950 Chipping Norton elected its first female mayor,³⁵² and town politics was largely dominated by traffic, car parking, and planning issues,³⁵³ including the controversial demolition of buildings at the junction of New Street and Market Place for road widening in 1969. The subsequent empty space, eventually filled by a supermarket, was known locally throughout the 1970s as ‘the bomb site’ because of its unsightliness.³⁵⁴ In 1965 town councillors clashed with the Field Reeves over use of the Regulated Pasture for organized sports,³⁵⁵ and in 2009 internal disputes within the council resulted in ‘an extraordinary display of shouting and argument’, leading reporters to ask whether it was ‘capable of achieving anything significant with its current disunity and strife’.³⁵⁶ By then, however, local government reorganization in 1974 had greatly reduced its powers.³⁵⁷ The town was twinned with Magny-en-Vexin (Val-d’Oise) in 1975,³⁵⁸ and in 1976 a new community-based

³⁴⁶ *Birmingham Post*, 31 Oct. 1960; above, urban econ. (since 1900).

³⁴⁷ Chipping Norton Town Council, ‘Chipping Norton Neighbourhood Plan 1 Jan. 2015–31 Mar. 2031’ (2015, accessed online July 2022), i. For an earlier upbeat assessment, *Banbury Guardian*, 29 Nov. 1979, 9–11.

³⁴⁸ Oxford Consultants for Social Inclusion, ‘Local Insight Profile for Chipping Norton Ward, Feb. 2021’ (2021, accessed online Nov. 2021); *Census*, 2011 (online datasets, noting 1.8% Asian/Asian British and 0.6% Black). For a small Muslim community, below, relig. hist.

³⁴⁹ In both 2015 and 2019, according to the government’s Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD): http://dclgapps.communities.gov.uk/imd/iod_index.html# (accessed Sept. 2022).

³⁵⁰ ODNB, s.v. Mic. Neale Harbottle, Sir Montagu Geo. North Stopford.

³⁵¹ *Daily Telegraph*, 7 June 2011, 5 Mar. 2012; *Guardian*, 7 Oct. 2011; *Witney Gaz.* 27 July 2013.

³⁵² Mayors board in CNM; above, local govt (town govt 1894–1974).

³⁵³ e.g. OHC, BOR1/5/A1/10–17; *Chipping Norton News* (Dec. 1989; May 2000; July 2006).

³⁵⁴ Above, devpt of town; urban econ. (since 1900); *Chipping Norton News* (e.g. Dec. 1976; Feb. 1977; June 1979).

³⁵⁵ Grantham, *Regulated Pasture*, 72–3.

³⁵⁶ *Chipping Norton News* (Apr. 2009).

³⁵⁷ Above, local govt (since 1974).

³⁵⁸ CNM, Twinning; Grantham, *Town Hall*, 66–9.

newspaper (the *Chipping Norton News*) replaced the defunct *Chipping Norton Advertiser* (1930–72), which had itself succeeded the Chipping Norton-based *Oxfordshire Weekly News* (1869–1928).³⁵⁹

The town hall remained central to Chipping Norton's social and political life despite a devastating fire in 1950, which closed the building for two years. Queen Elizabeth II visited the restored building in 1959, the Co-operative hall and Oddfellows' hall (known then as the Norton hall) having hosted functions and events in the meantime.³⁶⁰ The former reopened as the local history society's museum in 1996,³⁶¹ while the latter was used as Parker Knoll's social club from 1983 until 1989, when it was adapted for commercial use.³⁶² Other amenities included the public library (which moved into its own premises behind the guildhall in 1956),³⁶³ and initially the two cinemas, although that in the Oddfellows' hall was discontinued in 1950, and the New Street cinema (known successively as the New, Ritz, and Regent) closed in 1973.³⁶⁴ In 1975 the actors John and Tamara Malcolm reopened the former Salvation Army hall on Spring Street as a combined theatre and cinema, which expanded into adjoining premises in 1993 and continued to flourish as a mixed arts venue in 2022.³⁶⁵

Town clubs and societies numbered 79 in 1984 and almost 100 by 2003, including a branch of the Women's Institute (founded in 1948), and several for performing arts.³⁶⁶ Of those the Nortonians amateur dramatic society re-formed in 1964, and an amateur operatic society was started in 1973,³⁶⁷ while the annual Stour Choral Union festival became the Chipping Norton Music Festival in 1968, celebrating its centenary in 2012.³⁶⁸ Sports clubs in 1951 catered for baseball, cricket, football, golf, and tennis, with table tennis added by 1964,³⁶⁹ while Chipping Norton Town Football Club (the Magpies) was founded in 1946,

³⁵⁹ *Chipping Norton News* (Dec. 1976); *Chipping Norton Advertiser*, 9 Aug. 1972; above, urban econ. (19th cent.).

³⁶⁰ Above, town bldgs; Grantham, *Town Hall*, 33–41, 89–91; *Borough of Chipping Norton: Official Guide* (1951 edn): copy in OHC, CHIPb/945; CNM, Royal Occasions.

³⁶¹ *Chipping Norton News* (Apr. 1996); www.chippingnortonmuseum.co.uk (accessed July 2022). From 1986 until 1995 the museum was in the Baptist chapel's old schoolroom.

³⁶² *Chipping Norton News* (Mar. 1983; Dec. 1989); CNM, Oddfellows.

³⁶³ CNM, WI Scrapbook (1955); above, town bldgs.

³⁶⁴ CNM, Cinemas; *ibid.* School, Youth Organisations, and Recreation.

³⁶⁵ *Ibid.* Theatre; www.chippingnortontheatre.com (accessed Aug. 2022); *Banbury Guardian*, 29 Nov. 1979.

³⁶⁶ Chipping Norton and District Guild of Commerce, *Chipping Norton Town Guide* (1984 edn): copy in OHC, CHIPb/945; Chipping Norton Town Council, *The Report of the Chipping Norton Town Appraisal 2003: A Vision for a Cotswold Working Town* (2003): copy in OHC, CHIPb/711. For WI, *Chipping Norton News* (Feb. 1978).

³⁶⁷ *Banbury Guardian*, 29 Nov. 1979.

³⁶⁸ CNM, Choir; www.cnmf.org.uk (accessed Aug. 2022); above (1800–1914).

³⁶⁹ *Borough of Chipping Norton: Official Guide* (1951–64 edns): copies in OHC, CHIPb/945.

followed by other senior and junior football clubs in later decades.³⁷⁰ An eight-year-long fundraising campaign to build a swimming pool resulted in an open-air lido opened in 1970,³⁷¹ and from c.1977 the town council's newly-acquired Greystones sports facilities off Burford Road accommodated existing football and rifle clubs alongside new bowls and rugby clubs.³⁷² A squash club opened in the former New Street cinema in 1978 but closed in the 1990s, when the building was demolished.³⁷³ The golf club's Southcombe course, meanwhile, was extended to 18 holes in the 1980s, becoming part of a luxury hotel resort in 2015.³⁷⁴ A leisure centre opened on Burford Road in 2002, run by a private social enterprise company in partnership with the district council, shared many of its facilities with the town's secondary school, including an indoor swimming pool and all-weather sports pitches.³⁷⁵



Chipping Norton Theatre, opened in 1975 in the former Salvation Army hall (left), and Chipping Norton Town Football Club in 1949 (below), from an original in Chipping Norton Museum.



³⁷⁰ CNM, Football; www.chippingnortonswifts.co.uk (accessed Aug. 2022). Chipping Norton United Football Club was formed in 1964: *Chipping Norton News* (Dec. 1976).

³⁷¹ *Chipping Norton Advertiser*, 10 Sept. 1970; CNM, Swimming Pool; <https://chippylido.co.uk> (accessed Aug. 2022).

³⁷² CNM, Sports; *Chipping Norton News* (Dec. 1976; July 1977; Sept. 1978); *Banbury Guardian*, 29 Nov. 1979.

³⁷³ CNM, Sports; *ibid.* School, Youth Organisations, and Recreation; *Chipping Norton News* (Apr. 1978; Dec. 1997).

³⁷⁴ CNM, Sports; *Chipping Norton News* (May 1985; Oct. 2015); <https://cotswoldsclub.co.uk> (accessed Aug. 2022).

³⁷⁵ CNM, Sports; *Chipping Norton News* (July 2002; Sept. 2002); <https://www.better.org.uk/leisure-centre/west-oxfordshire/chipping-norton-leisure-centre> (accessed Aug. 2022).