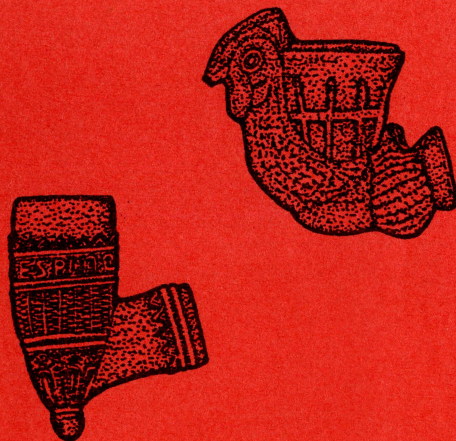


SOCIETY *for* CLAY PIPE RESEARCH



NEWSLETTER

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Spring/Summer 1998

SOME NEW OXFORDSHIRE PIPEMAKERS

David Higgins

The most recent list of Oxfordshire pipemakers appears to be that published by Adrian Oswald in 1984. Since that time the author has come across a number of other references to Oxfordshire pipemakers which either add to or extend the known list. These do not represent any organized effort to locate and document pipemakers from the county but rather stray references which have come to light. They are offered here in the hope that someone will take up the challenge of systematically documenting the pipemakers of the county [see p.45: Ed.].

Wherever possible the full reference for the source of the information has been given. Unfortunately some of the material comes from photocopied pages from a local history book or books that I was sent. I am not certain of the proper title and publication details for these references, they were simply said to come from 'local histories' written in the late 1920s by John Kibble, who died in 1951. There is even (to my shame) an undated and unreferenced handwritten note in my files relating to the Ely's of Leaffield.

In addition to the information on pipemakers provided by Kibble it is interesting to note that he also records a visit by the official tobacco destroyer, one John Cuttleford or Cutteford, to Oxfordshire. Charles II had passed an act prohibiting the growing of tobacco in 1660 and Cuttleford visited Witney, Stanlake, Burford, Chipping Norton, Enstone, Ascott, Minster Lovell, Whitford, Bourn, Dickley and Wilcot in 1668 to implement this. He still found that small amounts of tobacco were being grown.

The new information on pipemakers is interesting in that it documents early 18th-century production in Charlbury and Finstock and 19th/20th-century production in Leaffield. These are all small, rural villages, the latter two of which were previously not known to have been pipemaking centres. It appears that Oxfordshire may well have been one of the counties with a tradition of dispersed rural pipemaking. A systematic study of the county's archives is clearly needed to assess the distribution and evolution of pipemakers in this area.

The new information on Oxfordshire pipemakers is given below, arranged in alphabetical order by maker:

George CARTER, 35 North Bar, Banbury, 1876-1906

Collection notes in the Banbury Museum record directory references for George Carter from 1876 to 1906. This considerably extends the single date given by Oswald.

Samuel CARTER, 35 North Bar, Banbury, 1856-75

Collection notes in the Banbury Museum record directory references for Samuel Carter from 1856-75, which extends the dates given by Oswald by one year.

Joseph COX, Finstock, 1714

A page from John Kibble's history headed 'Charlbury Manor and Hamlets' (page 86) records:

Another document (June 7th, 1714) relates to the settlement at Finstock of Joseph Cox, Tobacco Pipe maker. His kiln and dwelling was, I think, where the late Mr. John Kite used to live.

ELYs, Leaffield, 1930s/1940s

An unsourced handwritten note in my files records that Leaffield was a potting centre where redwares were made. About the time of World War II, the Ely's kept a pub in the village with outbuildings to the rear, where they are thought to have made pipes.

John HAMES, Banbury, d.1684

William Hams (*sic*) senior of Banbury, tobacco pipe maker, made his will on 20 February 1683/4. In the will he left his house to Margaret his wife and a further two houses which he owned to be divided amongst his three daughters, Ann, Mary and Hannah. The overseers of his will were to be his brother-in-law Amos Sunshine, mercer, and his brother, William Leaver of Banbury, pinmaker. The inventory of John Hames, late of Banbury, tobacco pipemaker, survives in the Banbury Peculiar Court Records at the Bodleian. The inventory was drawn up on 22 May 1684 and signed by Nathaniel Wheatley, William Leaver and William Gulliver. The inventory lists his possessions in a garret room, a chamber over the kitchen, a chamber over the parlour, a room over the cellar, a lower room

over the cellar, the cellar, the hall, the parlour, the kitchen, his shop and 'in ye backside', presumably a yard area, possibly with a lean-to. The number of rooms listed, together with the fact he owned two other houses, suggests that Hames was quite a wealthy man although the total value of his inventory was only £46 17s 1d. The only items likely to have been relevant to his trade were in the shop and in the backside. The shop contained 'workinge tooles & other things' valued at £1 12s and '1 horse pannell hey Sadle & bridle' valued at £3 10s. The backside contained '1 trofe and fuell' valued at £1.

'Old Gooseberry', Leafield, late 19th century

A page from John Kibble's history headed 'Wychwood Forest and its Border Places' (page 81) refers to the last pipemaker at Leafield. The reference must relate to the later 19th century and reads as follows:

Not long ago I saw the remains of one of the furnaces where tobacco pipes used to be burnt at Leafield, and I remember as a lad a man who was a tobacco pipe maker. He was, I should say, the last to do anything at this craft in our district. I asked an old friend of mine from Finstock at the market here a time ago, what was the pipemaker's name. He at once replied, "Old Gooseberry." Yes, I said, but what was his name? Again he gave the same reply, and soon it dawned on him what I wished to know was not his nick name. With a smile he said he never knew him by any other name than "Old Gooseberry."

John WILLIS, Charlbury/Finstock, 1711

A page from John Kibble's history headed 'Charlbury Manor and Hamlets' (page 86) refers to John Willis, pipemaker:

A document (1711) with signatures of Ro. Jenkinson, Rog. ffranklin, Edward Copeland and others, to the parish officials at ffinstock: "We do hereby desire you to permit and suffer John Willis, pipemaker of Charlbury to inhabit and abide in ffinstock and to follow his lawful calling there without any molestation."

Acknowledgements

I am grateful to Judi Caton of the Oxfordshire Museum Service for copies of museum notes on the Carters of Banbury, to Mr Ron Glithero for extracts relating to pipemaking from John Kibble's histories and to Dr B. Trinder for drawing my attention to and providing me with a transcript of John Hames' inventory and details of his will.

Reference

Oswald, A., 1984. 'Clay pipes' in T.G. Hassall, C.E. Halpin, M. Mellor *et al.*, 'Excavations in St Ebbe's, Oxford, 1967-76: Part 2: Post-medieval domestic tenements and the post-dissolution site of the Greyfriars', *Oxoniensia* 49, 251-62 and fiche

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OXFORDSHIRE PIPEMAKERS: COUNTY LIST

Paul Cannon

Paul Cannon (6 Norton Road, Woodley, Reading, Berkshire RG5 4 AH) has listed a total of 166 pipemakers for the county - Oswald listed 24 in 1975. He also has record sheets for individual makers. Locations in Oxfordshire include Abingdon, Banbury, Burford, Charlbury, Crowmarsh Gifford, Dunstew, Henley, Neithrop, Oxford, Ramsden, Shipton-under-Whichwood, Sutton Courtney, Wallingford, and Wheatly. Researchers interested in this county list should contact Paul.

The Editor is very grateful to David and Paul for sending this information - all of it will be included in the new lists of pipemakers, which are in preparation.

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