The Changing Scene

by Hubert Lionel Wood
Figure 1 City and University of Oxford
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Foreword by The Registrar General

Hubert Lionel Wood worked for many years in the City of Oxford and this volume shows his intimate knowledge of the subject. Mr Wood conveys his enthusiasm and in doing so gives a unique insight into social history from a registration perspective. Many registrars and some of those who have had contact with the registration service over the years will recognize some of the anecdotes and scenes he describes.

Mr Wood also looks beyond the registrar's role in births, marriages and deaths, exploring the role in the decennial Census of population. Again, the insight and the personal recollection offer a new slant on the subject which is set in historical context.

I am sure that for citizens of Oxford and for anyone with an interest in the registration service more widely this informative book will make interesting reading.

Len Cook

Registrar General for England and Wales
The Author

Hubert Lionel Wood is a Member of the Institute of Population Registration.

He was born in Headington, Oxford, in 1922. He attended the City of Oxford School in George Street, leaving at the age of 15 years to have work experience in the Purchase Department of the Pressed Steel Company.

In 1939 he joined the Public Assistance and Registration Department of the City of Oxford and became Registration Assistant to Cecil W. Clifton, the City Registrar of Births and Deaths. On 5 August 1941 he was appointed an Air Raid Warden in the City.

He was called upon for service in the Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve in December 1941. He later joined 2949 Squadron, R.A.F. Regiment. Training in the Grampian Mountains and other parts of Scotland enabled the Squadron to help in liberating Norway. In May 1945 the Squadron landed at Stavanger and occupied Sola Airport.

In 1946 he was sent to Palestine, joining 2924 Squadron during the bombing in Jerusalem.

Leaving the R.A.F. at the end of October 1946, he was appointed Registrar of Marriages for the City of Oxford in January 1947.

On 1 July 1953 he was transferred to the post of Registrar of Births and Deaths for the sub-district of Oxford.

Mr. Wood became Superintendent Registrar for the Oxford Registration District on 1 April 1967, retiring on 30 September 1982.

In March 1984 he voluntarily began a Postal History Collection compiled from material received at the Bodleian Library and he is still working at the Library on this project.
The Changing Scene

H.L. Wood

MIR

Figure 2 Author on left with his successor, Michael L. Gibson

The manuscript has been read by


He writes "This is a very interesting MS. - it contains many interesting anecdotes and gives the layman another view of the business of 'registration'."

The present is the past and the past is the future of all things - HLW
Figure 3 Letter from A.R. Thatcher, Registrar General, to the Author marking his retirement
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Name and Surname</strong></th>
<th>Hubert Lionel WOOD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sex</strong></td>
<td>Boy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Date of Birth</strong></td>
<td>Ninth September 1922</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Place of Birth</strong></td>
<td>Headington</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sub-district</strong></td>
<td>Saint Clement</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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**Hubert Lionel Wood**
Superintendent Registrar for the Registration District of **Oxford** do hereby certify that the above particulars have been compiled from an entry in a register in my custody.

**Date** 9 March 1982

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**CAUTION:** Any person who (1) falsifies any of the particulars on this certificate or (2) uses a falsified certificate at false, knowing it to be false, is liable to prosecution.

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**Figure 4 The Author's Birth Certificate**
Acknowledgements

The Princess Royal's Wedding
Reproduced by kind permission of H.M. Queen Elizabeth II.

Florence Nightingale's letter
Reproduced by kind permission of Lt. Col. James A. Acland, D.S.O. (Retd).

Digitization of Manuscript
James Dore and Stephen Howard, Bodleian Systems Section.

The Author's Birth Certificate
Reproduced with the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office.
1. Marriages and Divorces

Marriages
I entered the registration service as a principal officer in January 1947 with some trepidation, after nearly five years in the Royal Air Force Regiment.

I wondered whether or not the service had changed from when I was a clerical assistant to the Registrar of Births and Deaths for the City of Oxford.

This was at the time of the 1939 conflict when evacuees descended upon Oxford from London. Women were arriving from Fulham for their babies to be born in Ruskin College, or some other temporary war time maternity home opened to cope with the unexpected rush of births.

My first appointment as a principal officer in the registration service was as Registrar of Marriages for the Oxford Registration District, which covered the City of Oxford. I was also appointed deputy to the Registrar of Births and Deaths. After war service, my medical knowledge was somewhat reduced, but it rapidly improved. Marriages, which had always been outside my scope of writing or typing birth and death certificates, were now suddenly thrust upon me.

The Superintendent Registrar officiated at each register office ceremony and I was required to register the marriage and issue a marriage certificate.

I registered my first marriage on 15 January 1947. Most couples and guests attending marriages at that time were nervous and did not know what to expect. I, too, was nervous, but managed to record the marriage with the aid of some chewing gum!

The ceremony in those days consisted of the parties repeating after the Superintendent Registrar the contracting words necessary by law, in the presence of two witnesses. The marriage register was then signed by the parties and the two witnesses added their signatures. The bride and groom did not usually bring more than about five guests and many weddings consisted of the couple and two witnesses.

The Public Assistance Officer's room was used for marriages. It was quite pleasant, but unfortunately it was situated on the first floor of the office and could be entered only after an exhaustive climb up a steep narrow staircase.

It was sometimes necessary to interrupt the formulating of the Public Assistance Committee's minutes to allow a marriage to take place, or for a birth certificate to be issued for 'family allowances'.

Mr. J.H.B. Wright was the Superintendent Registrar in 1947 and was also the City's one and only Public Assistance Officer. During the war he was appointed as National Registration Officer and people changing their address attended the office and produced their National Registration Card to enable the amendment to be made. A small extra staff was created for this purpose and was situated at the top of the building.
There were some peculiar people who applied for public assistance. One man of doubtful age always stood in front of the office waving his walking stick and threatening to break the window if he did not get help.

An elderly woman, when asked for the time, used to pull up her skirt. Tied around her waist by a piece of cord was an alarm clock, which she produced with unmistakable pleasure.

Another woman, who was widowed and whose husband had been in the Navy, usually wrote regular letters to Mr. Wright. These were often about fifteen pages in length, written in a very large hand with about five words to each page and were very repetitive.

As most register office marriages occurred on Saturdays, public assistance 'clients' were not usually in evidence.

The register office and public assistance office was then at 13 St. Giles', conveniently situated next door to the 'Lamb and Flag', which marriage parties often visited after the completion of the ceremony. Some, however, had obviously had a quick nip before their wedding!

As Registrar of Marriages for the City of Oxford, it was necessary for me to attend all church weddings taking place in churches and chapels which did not hold civil marriage registers. On Saturdays, the most popular day of the week for weddings, my travelling time was therefore stretched to the limit. In those days there was a wait of about five years for the delivery of a new car and second hand cars were very expensive. I therefore travelled by bicycle.

On one occasion at a church ceremony I omitted to take the fee of 7s.6d. Luckily I discovered the home of one of the parties was being used for the reception. It was a large house with a crescent shaped drive. On arriving I quickly discovered I was the only cyclist. I boldly knocked on the door. The fee was found, regrets were expressed, and everything was complete.

When attending church ceremonies and carrying the marriage register in an official case, I was sometimes mistaken for the photographer.

A Minister or Priest would often not inform people about the necessity of having a registrar of marriages present at their church ceremony until the day was fast approaching.

Arrangements concerning the date and time of their wedding were therefore made before coming to the register office to give notice of their intention to marry. When they arrived and found I was booked to attend at another church, there could sometimes be an unpleasant sequel.

After experiencing many arguments due to me being unable to be in two places at once, I decided to have a leaflet printed for distribution to all registered buildings.

A registered building was a building registered by the Registrar General for worship and marriages.

Two lists of churches and chapels within the City of Oxford were given - (a) those which did not require the presence of the Registrar of Marriages for the solemnization of the marriage
and (b) those which required the presence of the Registrar of Marriages for the solemnization of the marriage.

I may add that when I was registrar, list (b) was double the size of list (a)!

When the priest or minister agreed to marry the couple, a leaflet was handed to them. It explained the legal requirements, fees payable, and if applicable, the importance of ensuring that I attend their marriage at the time and date they wished to have the ceremony.

From that time onwards, very little difficulty was experienced and ministers and priests cooperated fully to avoid any misunderstandings.

Over the years many couples would be worried if a registrar was not booked to attend their wedding. They were only concerned with the legality of their own wedding and it was sometimes difficult to persuade them that as the minister or priest was authorised by the Registrar General to register their marriage, a registrar need not be present. Sometimes they knew of some other couple of the same religion who had requested and obtained a registrar for their ceremony.

In a few instances I was surprised to find that two marriages had been arranged at a church at the same time and date! I eventually found the culprits to be different priests at the same church. When the second couple arrived at the register office to give notice of their marriage and were told of the original booking, it was not easy acting as mediator in such situations.

At one church the priest would sometimes decide to play the organ while the parties were repeating the contracting words. In those days these words were not included in the marriage service at most of the churches. A delay would then ensue until he suddenly realised his signature was required in the marriage register. At least his activities somewhat extended the ceremony!

Sometimes I have waited at a church with the priest for an hour before the bride, groom, and guests arrived on foot! At one such ceremony, the best man had forgotten the ring and a further delay was experienced while he was sent to retrieve it.

A register office ceremony was about to take place. The Superintendent Registrar seated the bride and groom and the two witnesses in the marriage room prior to starting the ceremony.

Surely nothing could go wrong. Something did!

The Superintendent Registrar asked the bride and groom to stand and repeat the contracting words. Hesitatingly the groom began to say the words until he was asked to repeat his full name. He then ejaculated "I'm not getting married, they are sitting over there!"

It transpired that the witnesses for the marriage were sitting in the chairs normally occupied by the bride and groom. The couple wishing to marry were sitting in a corner of the room, presumably hoping they were not too conspicuous!

After a sequence closely resembling musical chairs without the music, the couple were eventually married.
Another civil ceremony commenced in the usual way. There seemed to be no cause for alarm until the bride dissolved into a flood of tears and refused to complete the essential formalities!

After one marriage ceremony at which two witnesses had been supplied by the office (the bride and groom are now required to provide witnesses), the ceremony seemed to have ended in the normal manner.

The Bride was handed her marriage certificate with the usual good wishes and the two witnesses silently departed.

But as the office had provided them with two witnesses, they must have realised we could still be of service.

Solemnly they produced their will and signed it in our presence!

Although in those days music was prohibited in register offices, music was often provided outside the Oxford office in the form of a barrel organ, complete with monkey, which used to appear regularly each week.

Also, as the register office was situated in the wide tree lined thoroughfare of St. Giles' for many years, on the first Monday and Tuesday after the first Sunday of each September, except when 1 September falls on a Sunday, St. Giles' Fair, one of the largest and oldest in the country, would materialise.

Before 1939 the steam traction engines would race along Beaumont Street into St. Giles' at about 5 a.m. on the Monday morning. Each traction engine would be drawing about three wagons containing the bits and pieces of the roundabouts.

By the time the register office opened at 9 a.m., many of the roundabouts had been built and the finishing touches were being made for the first rides.

The register office then had a variety of continuous music for two days. The noise was deafening, but people still arrived to give notice of intention to marry and, occasionally, to marry.

**Divorces**

At one time, divorces were very rare in England. Indeed, it did not appear to be necessary to mention the marriage of divorced people in the 1836 Act of Parliament for Registering Births, Deaths and Marriages in England. The terms included in the Act were Bachelor or Widower and Spinster or Widow.

But divorces had been granted in the past and an extract from Jackson's Oxford Journal indicates how difficult it must have been to obtain a divorce:

> London, March 21, 1755. Yesterday his Majesty went to the House of Peers in the State Coach and gave the Royal Assent to 'An Act for dissolving the Marriage of Richard Morgan Esq.; and Anne Hall, to enable him to marry again.'
It made plain that the establishment was clearly not in favour of such rulings and Richard Morgan must have considered himself extremely fortunate in this respect.

Eventually a New Divorce Act came into operation on Monday, 11 January 1858 and it enabled a court to grant decrees.

It was entitled 'An Act to Amend the Law relating to Divorce and Matrimonial Causes in England' (20 and 21 Vic., Cap.85, August 28, 1857).

A new court called 'The Court for Divorce and Matrimonial Causes' was established by the Act, which was considered to be of great public interest.

An extract from the Act read:

The husband is allowed to petition for a dissolution of marriage by reason of the wife's adultery; and the wife may petition on the grounds of incestuous adultery, rape, bigamy, or bestiality, or adultery coupled with cruelty. On any petition on the ground of adultery, the person, male or female, with whom the adultery is alleged to have been committed, is to be made a co-respondent, and either party may require the facts to be tried by a Jury.

It further stated that the parties having had a decree of dissolution of marriage passed, and no appeal lodged within three months, are declared at liberty to marry again; but no clergyman is to be liable to any penalty for refusing to marry a person whose previous marriage has been dissolved by adultery.

After the Act had been in use for more than twelve months, a question was asked in the House of Lords leading to a motion requesting returns giving details of its operation and the information collected was published at the end of April, 1859:

THE DIVORCE ACT.

As an exemplification of the beneficent operation of Lord Palmerston's Divorce Act of 1857, or, as it might be aptly styled, 'the Married Persons' Relief Act', a return has just been made to the House of Lords, on the notion of Lord Brougham, showing that since January 1858, no less than 288 petitions have been filed by persons labouring under the yoke of an ill-starred union, for an absolute dissolution of the marriage; 184 of these were from husbands and 104 from wives. 37 dissolutions of marriage were decreed and six petitions were refused. 143 cases were undefended, 134 were set down for trial at the date of the returns, 165 were appointed to be tried by the full court without juries, 24 by the full court with Juries, and 13 by a single judge and jury. The petitions for merely Judicial separation (in which case the bonds of matrimony remain undissolved and indissoluble) have only numbered 105 - eight from husbands and 97 from wives. Of these 28 were decreed and three refused; 15 cases were undefended. Six of these separation cases are now down for trial.

During the time I was registrar of marriages from 1947 until 1953 there were numerous divorces. Most of these were attributable to the war. It was then normally necessary to prove that adultery had been committed. A divorce could not be obtained by consent of the parties
concerned and this restricted divorce becoming possible when the marriage had obviously broken down.

Prior to 1947 many couples were living together but were unable to marry. The only advantage for women was obtained by going to the Food Office, where it was possible to make a declaration to change their surname for the issue of ration documents. This was done on a large scale, because even where a divorce was pending, there was a considerable delay due to the large number of couples wishing to obtain a divorce.

In the 1950s the private investigator emerged. Proof of adultery was not always easy. If, by production of a birth certificate, it could be proved that a married woman's baby was not her husband's child, a divorce became much easier.

The 1950s and 1960s became the years of investigation into matrimonial affairs for the purpose of divorce and many marriages were ended by a private investigator's activities.

One such case had apparently been unable to be proved because the place of a child's birth was unknown. Eventually about 100 - 150 birth certificates were obtained from the General Register Office. The elusive document was traced and a divorce obtained. Fees were payable for the birth certificates and, due to the time taken for the enquiry, the total amount payable to the investigator must have been greater than the fee for the divorce. Many other divorces must have been obtained by this method and it continued until a Divorce Act allowed divorce by the consent of the parties concerned, when much of the private investigator's work became unnecessary. It also enabled a decree absolute to be granted in cases where the marriage had clearly ended unofficially many years previously.

So the position in the late 1940s and early 1950s continued until the early 1970s, when there was a divorce explosion.

The 1950s undoubtedly saw the end of quite a number of war-time marriages. Some survived on religious grounds. Others because children were involved. But many were to become eventual casualties in the divorce courts at a later date.

At the time of the collapse of these marriages immediately after the war, many divorces were obtained and one of the parties re-married. There was a sudden increase in the number of divorced persons wishing to re-marry. Register offices became the only places in which these marriages could take place. At that time very few churches would marry divorced persons and those that did would never marry the 'guilty' party.

Because of the large number of divorced people being married at register offices all over the country, a civil ceremony became more popular.

**Parental Consent**

Many couples in their teens decided to marry in a register office.

The age of consent was then 21 years. Most parents did not object to their son or daughter marrying below this age and very little difficulty was experienced. The parents may well have insisted upon an engagement of at least twelve months before allowing the marriage to take place. This type of action must have prevented many teenage marriages when there would not have been the slightest likelihood of success.
Occasionally one parent would not agree to a marriage and the reasons would often be presented to me. These were usually essentially connected with the family.

In some cases fathers would not give their consent simply because there were family feuds. In such cases the parties, once in a while, were able to obtain the consent of the court to enable the marriage to take place. The number of such hearings was small and the successful ones still smaller. It involved quite a wait before the court considered the matter and it was not a good way to start a marriage.

**Occupations**

In 1947 the occupations followed by people were, on the whole, still the same as pre-war. Men were in both clerical and manual work. The computer age had not arrived.

Very few girls contemplating marriage appeared to be working and it was customary for the occupation space in a marriage registration to be left blank.

Some were engaged in occupations which were being retrieved by men returning from the Services and these war-time occupations now began to disappear at an ever increasing rate.

Most evacuees, voluntary and otherwise, had returned to their home areas in London.

There was also a big reduction in American Air Force personnel marrying British girls. During the war a large American Air Base had been established in Oxfordshire and many men stationed there had married Oxford girls. There were also American Army personnel on the base who helped to contribute in this way!

**Marriage Licences**

In the 1940s many marriages took place by licence as couples wished to be married expeditiously.

A man could be suddenly posted abroad while serving in H.M. Forces. A woman could be anxious to re-marry as soon as a decree of divorce became final.

A couple under the age of 21 years may have wanted to marry when their parents gave the necessary consent before a father or mother withdrew it! Yes, this did happen, and after the time and date for the wedding had been arranged, it was not easy to explain to the couple that the ceremony would have to be cancelled.

Very few marriages were cancelled in this way and the number of cancellations for other reasons was extremely small. Some people obviously decided at the last minute not to commit bigamy!

A Superintendent Registrar's licence for marriage was not available for the solemnization of marriage in any church or chapel belonging to the Church of England, or elsewhere according to the rights of that Church.

Marriage licences were then obtained from General Post Offices by registration staff. On one occasion, due to an excessive number of marriages, the post office suddenly found their stock was exhausted. A further supply was obtained by express delivery!
The fee for the licence was 10s and this was paid by the person giving notice of their marriage. Sometimes a person would not wish to decide upon the date of the marriage and the licence could then be issued when this information was forthcoming.

The total fees payable for a register office marriage by licence in the 1940s amounted to £2.4s.6d and this included the fee of 2s.6d for a marriage certificate.

It was necessary for one clear working day to elapse between the day on which the notice of marriage was given and the first available day on which the ceremony could take place.

The marriage licence was printed in black on a blue coloured paper. The document had an ornate embossed orange stamp at the top left hand corner. The words 'TEN SHILLINGS' were surmounted by a crown and beneath the value was the date on which the embossment of the licence had taken place. Below the embossed stamp was a black lined rectangle containing the words 'Stamp Duty Ten Shillings'.

The title appeared to the right of the embossed stamp and consisted of the name of the document, followed by the Acts of Parliament: SUPERINTENDENT REGISTRAR'S LICENCE FOR MARRIAGE (Pursuant to Statute 19 & 20 Vict., cap.119, and 61 & 62 Vict., Cap.58). The names and addresses of the parties then appeared. The wording then indicated that the Superintendent Registrar was sending Greetings to the parties and further Statutes still in force relating to the contracting and solemnizing of marriages in England were then noted: an Act passed in the Seventh Year of His late Majesty King William the Fourth, chapter Eighty Five; an Act passed in the First Year of her late Majesty Queen Victoria, Chapter Twenty-two; an Act passed in the Fourth Year of Her said Majesty, chapter Seventy-two; and an Act passed in the Twentieth Year of Her said Majesty, chapter One hundred and nineteen.

The parties were then reminded that they wished that the marriage be speedily performed and that they had complied with the Statutes.

The Superintendent Registrar was then empowered to grant full licence and permission to proceed in due form of law to contract and solemnize such marriage.

Registration Assistant

While in the post of Registrar of Marriages, I became registration assistant to the Superintendent Registrar. I therefore became accustomed to all aspects of registration and this proved to be extremely valuable to my registration career.

Most birth certificates issued by the Superintendent Registrar were for claiming family allowances.

Initially, when family allowances first became available, the register office staff was kept extremely busy. There seemed to be dozens of large families, all anxious to obtain the new benefit the state was providing. The larger the family, the more unlikely it was that birth certificates would have been requested at the time the births of the children were registered. The short birth certificate had not yet appeared and all the information contained in the original birth registration had to be laboriously copied onto each cheap certificate. The fee payable for each birth certificate was 1s when issued for certain Acts of Parliament and 6d in most family allowance cases,
When what was then called the Old Age Pension became available, a rather ingenious form of application was printed. The applicant filled in the particulars necessary for tracing the birth registration and this information was inserted into columns closely resembling those contained in the birth register. The completed application was then taken or sent to the Superintendent Registrar for the district in which the birth occurred. Having traced the birth registration, the application was then turned over. On the reverse side was a printed birth certificate format which was then completed and was then signed by the Superintendent Registrar.

Cheap birth and death certificates have been available to the public for some time. In the late 1940s death certificates were issued on a large scale for the purpose of the Friendly Societies Acts. The fee for one certificate issued was 1s and if subsequent copies were required where benefit was payable from more than one society, the fee was reduced to 6d.

The purposes for which cheap birth, death and marriage certificates are issued are governed by Act of Parliament. The purposes are usually associated with claims connected with state benefit.

Standard or full copy birth, death and marriage certificates were priced at 2s.6d. This type of copy was for many years subject to 1d stamp duty which necessitated frequent visits to post offices by registration officers.

If a person applied for a certificate after the date of the registration of the event, a search fee was payable. This was 1s. if personal application was made for the copy or 2s.6d. if postal application was involved. A fee of 5s. was charged for a general search of the indexes without stating the reason for the search. Certificates could then be obtained, if required.

The short birth certificate was introduced towards the end of the 1940s. Although the fee was only 6d, initially there were only a few applications for the new type of copy.

While working as the Superintendent Registrar's assistant, I was asked by two people to check details in a birth registration.

Apparently a person's death had been registered a few days previously and it was now thought that an error had been made in the age of the deceased.

I eventually discovered the correct birth record and it was established that the age was incorrectly noted in the death registration.

The people were very anxious to have the age amended and I therefore decided to take the birth register containing the birth registration to the registrar who had registered the death.

On opening the door of the registrar's room, I found Miss Stephens, the registrar, was engaged. Sitting before her was a gentleman I thought to be from the Radcliffe Infirmary and he listened intently while I explained the matter to her.

Normally, Miss Stephens would have commented about the error but on this occasion she said "I shall have to report the error to the Registrar General."

I thought this rather odd and returned to the people telling them about Miss Stephens' comment.
Later that day Miss Stephens saw me and said "Do you know who that gentleman was in my room?"

I indicated to her that I did not.

"He was the Registrar General, Dr. North!" exclaimed Miss Stephens. Being in Oxford he had decided upon a surprise visit to the register office. He certainly surprised me!

Registration
The Registration of Marriages is an essential part of the registration system.

Since civil registration commenced on 1 July 1837, it has proved to be a valuable item to the parties concerned, the State, and others requiring proof of any particular ceremony.

This process ensures the identification of the parties and the acceptance of the event.

2. Not all Births and Deaths
On 1 July 1953 I was appointed Registrar of Births and Deaths for Oxford sub-district in the Oxford Registration District.

Business was brisk, but births outnumbered deaths. This was mainly due to people moving from the city on reaching retirement age.

Names given to children were mostly names in common use. Most children were given two names. About one in ten children were given one or three names. This practice may well have varied throughout the country.

After several years, different spellings of names began to emerge. This was partly due to parents naming their children after film stars. Jane became 'Jayne' and there were numerous other variations such as Linda becoming 'Lynda'.

Occasionally parents would have difficulty in deciding on a choice of name. Forty-two days is still allowed for registering a birth and this period of time is normally quite sufficient for giving a child a name.

If the first names were changed by baptism or otherwise within twelve months of the date of the registration of the birth, the parents could make application for the revised name or names to be added in the birth registration. Throughout the years some children have been registered without a forename and, at one time, unless the name was added within the time allowed, a person could go through life officially nameless!

Thirty years ago it was still considered unwise for a woman to have a child before marriage and in the 1950s the majority of births were legitimate.

Many mothers were brought to Oxford Hospitals for the births of their babies from as far away as Wiltshire and Northamptonshire.

Because of the excellent medical facilities available at Oxford hospitals, some mothers would travel great distances for their other children to be born in the same hospital.
It was usual for a registrar to attend at a maternity home to enable babies to be registered in the birth register before the mothers returned to their home area. Mothers not registering the births of their babies while still in the maternity home could, if they were living outside Oxford, register the births by declaration before their local registrar for the fee of ls.6d. Subsequently, this fee was abolished.

During my activities as Registrar of Births and Deaths for the Oxford sub-district, I registered about 25,000 births and about half that number of deaths.

I remember the sisters of the maternity wards at the Churchill Hospital at Headington. They were dedicated to their work and remained at the hospital over the years. A small room in each ward was placed at my disposal for registering births and this helped to create the private atmosphere necessary for registration purposes. The mothers found the conditions happy and congenial. Some were admitted a considerable time before the birth of their baby when complications were evident and the birth was usually successful.

My attendance at the hospital was limited to Thursday afternoons of each week. In those days most of the mothers had decided on a name and my arrival was eagerly awaited.

One ward had single bedded rooms and slightly larger rooms. These were ideal for registration purposes and this allowed the mothers to register their babies without moving from their rooms. I used to meet most of the babies in the smaller rooms and they were all very contented!

Before I attended a maternity home I thought the babies would be crying and it was pleasant to discover that as everything was so well organised, the opposite was the case.

When a mother decided to take her baby to the register office to be registered, it was usually screaming loudly. It seemed to sense that it was now becoming a citizen and being recorded for posterity. The unremitting yells of protest would resound throughout the register office, much to the dislike of any person waiting to register a death.

At times, when registering a birth, I was asked which spelling of a name I could suggest and usually I recommended the normal spelling to avoid any mistakes being made in the future.

On one occasion, after registering five births in sequence, I was surprised to see that the name 'Margaret' was included in each of the mother's names. Three of the mothers were also named 'Mary'.

When registering births at the register office, it was interesting to see how often births which had occurred on a certain date were eventually registered by the father or mother of the different babies on the same day. Equally bewildering was when I checked to see whether or not there were any births outstanding and which had not been registered. At first I would normally send a reminder letter to the mother. This would be completed by me in the morning for sending by post later in the day. Invariably that particular birth would be registered in the afternoon by the child's mother or father.

After registering one birth, the father told me that the registration of this, their fifth child, had fulfilled a wish made by his wife before they were married. It was nice to hear such a comment.
When registering a Death

Death registration is not necessarily an unpleasant task. The informant for a death registration is normally a relative of the deceased and can therefore give all the necessary information. If the deceased has been ill for a long period their death is welcomed, particularly when they have been suffering from an incurable disease.

When I was first appointed as registrar of births and deaths, several war-time regulations were still applicable. It was still necessary for people to have identity cards and ration books. On the death of a person it was necessary to cancel these documents. Sometimes the wrong ration book was accidentally brought to me. When checking one identity card, I found a £1 note inside which I handed to the astonished informant for the death registration. A £1 note was valuable in those days and the identity card must have been considered to be a convenient wallet.

Occasionally it was necessary for me to report a death to the Coroner. This procedure, when required, delayed the registration and further distressed the relations of the deceased. I always found the duty of explaining the situation to them to be unpleasant.

Many years ago a very elderly clergyman consulted with me when he realised his wife was not expected to live. He was most anxious to know how to register her death and arrange for the funeral. He seemed very relieved after I had spoken with him and, within a few days, returned to me to register her death.

When registering a death, the spelling of the surname could sometimes create a problem.

To illustrate this I now use the surname 'Howes'. To start with it seems perfectly straightforward and I am informed that at the time of the person's death, they were known as 'Howes'. However, documents are now produced which give the spelling of the surname as 'Howse'. A medical card is then produced which gives the spelling of the surname as 'House'. When this situation emerges it can come as a complete surprise to the informant, who is often further confused because the different spellings of the surname have not been apparent during the deceased's lifetime. In my illustration all the different spellings are phonetically the same, but the method of recording the surname must depend on the informant.

If the deceased has changed their name at some point during their life by deed poll or other change of name deed and the applicable document is produced when their death is registered, the position then becomes self explanatory. Where no such document is available, I have found it to be helpful, both to the informant and to myself, to explain the various options before registering the death, thus avoiding legal difficulties arising.

Death Certificates

Over the years, the only document issued free of charge at the time the death was registered has been the certificate of burial. Eventually, towards the end of the 1930s, cremation began to be an alternative and the certificate was issued for burial or cremation.

When a Death Grant was introduced, a new form of certificate became necessary. No fee was payable and a claim form was printed on the back of the certificate to enable any outstanding pension payments to be made. A death grant was, in the first instance, dependent on the deceased's age and there was much misunderstanding about it. It is now not payable.
Standard death certificates were much in demand for insurance purposes and most insurance agents were required to obtain them before any payment was made on a particular policy. The certificates would then be retained by the insurance company. In the 1950s four or five of this type of death certificate would often be issued after the registration of a death. Cheaper certificates for Friendly Society payments were also very commonly required.

Signatures
It will be seen that a registrar issues many different types of documents and all have to be signed.

I estimate that I have signed over 200,000 certificates, statistical forms, and birth and death registrations. My signature has been conveyed by certificate to all the continents of the world.

Income Tax
There was a time when it was possible for a husband to claim allowances from the Inland Revenue for the whole year provided the couple were married by 5 April. This concession also applied if the wife added a son or daughter to the family.

This meant a huge increase in the number of marriages towards the end of March every year. Births soared and the husband's blood pressure increased when the baby did not arrive on the appointed day. I am sure some parents were not on speaking terms when the baby was late in arriving and possibly this income tax ruling eventually resulted in divorce.

The maternity homes were overflowing and registrars and inland revenue officials overworked. This state of affairs was allowed to escalate before a change was made in the regulations.

People no longer came rushing into the register office to be married by licence to claim the bonus! Midwives were not being overworked and the National Insurance Office (now the Department of Social Security) could once again deal with allowances on a more even scale.

Accommodation
In the mid 1950s the Oxford Register Office moved to the opposite side of the street to premises more suitable for registration purposes. There were still stairs to be climbed, but they were not so steep.

By this time it was necessary to accommodate about six large safes containing birth, death and marriage registers in the enquiry office on the ground floor. There was a cellar below this office and it was necessary to take precautions to prevent the floor from giving way. In other registration districts safes had been known to disappear through the floor with disastrous results!

The safes were eventually placed against the walls of the enquiry office and a few chairs were provided.

The Superintendent Registrar's room was used for marriages and was situated on the first floor in the front of the building. It was separated from a waiting room and small office by a
reasonably spacious landing, which helped to facilitate the arrival and departure of marriage parties.

By that time the marriage room seated about twelve people. To the right of the entrance was a large chest of drawers on which were placed decorative plants supplied by the city parks department.

The top floor was used for birth and death registration. Each registrar was allocated a separate waiting room which lead to an inner room occupied by a registrar. The registrar for each sub-district was therefore in constant contact with people arriving to register births and deaths.

Elderly people who were unable to climb the stairs were seen by registrars on the ground floor.

Both this and the previous register office were located in St. Giles', a wide tree lined thoroughfare, which was very pleasant for marriages.

No double yellow lines were then in existence and at that time car parking was reasonably easy. There was a car park on each side of the street and this happy state of affairs continued for some years. The increasing volume of traffic, coupled with a reduction in the space allowed for car parking, then began to present difficulties. As more and more people were arriving by car, the problem continued to grow, and a person was very lucky to find a space in the car park during the middle of the morning or the afternoon.

The Census
Since registration began, many registrars have been associated with the census.

At the time of the 1961 census, on which this is based, it was assumed that a registrar of births and deaths would be appointed as a Census Officer.

I was therefore not surprised to receive from the General Register Office a large map of the City of Oxford giving details of enumeration districts.

This arrived in the autumn of 1960 with a request that it should be brought up to date. Since the 1951 census many new estates had been built in Oxford. Part of the St. Ebbes area of the city had been demolished, considerably reducing the population. Blackbird Leys, a large estate on the eastern fringe of the city, was in the process of being built.

I therefore needed to estimate the size of many enumeration districts to ensure that an enumerator could cover the number of households involved. Some were abolished and others added. Some were reduced in area and others enlarged. The map was then returned to the General Register Office where the total number of enumeration districts required was recorded.

For the purpose of the census the City of Oxford was divided into two districts. I was appointed Census Officer for the central, northern, southern and western areas of the city. The Registrar of Births and Deaths for the Radcliffe sub-district was appointed Census Officer for the eastern part of Oxford.
Within each census district there were just under seventy enumeration districts and census officers were responsible for recruiting people to act as enumerators in each district.

The enumerator was required to deliver schedules to every household in their district and to record details of addresses. This then provided an indication of the number of schedules to be collected from each address after the night of the census.

Prior to the census all enumerators attended a meeting to discuss their duties.

For the first time several types of schedules were used. These were classified as Private, Institutions (including hotels, colleges and schools), H.M. Naval, Military and Air Forces, Shipping, and a Private Sample Schedule.

The Sample Schedule was experimentally introduced for the 1961 census. It involved 10% of the population, the remaining 90% completing standard questionnaire schedules.

As larger houses, often occupied by doctors, were at that time considered to be situated on street intersections, elaborate precautions were taken to ensure that the larger schedule would not always be issued to these dwellings. This was intended to ensure a fair representation of the population.

It was therefore decided that a random number should be allocated to each enumeration district and this would be from 1 - 10. The issue of the larger schedule would then depend on the random number received by any particular enumerator.

For instance, if the random number of an enumeration district was three, then the sample schedule would have been the third, thirteenth, twenty third, etc. to be issued from the enumerator's pack of schedules. The forms were supplied in order of issue and the method needed to be fully understood by the enumerators.

The census was held on Sunday night, 23rd April 1961, which was the commencement of the university term in Oxford. Colleges were my responsibility and larger schedules were supplied to enumerate the students, but they were of the standard type.

On the day of the census I found the register office enquiry room full of people anxious to ensure that they would be included in the census. Some had been travelling through the night from far away places, while others had, for some reason, not received a schedule. Tact and patience was required to explain to each individual what course of action they should take.

Some people born overseas were suspicious of the census. They thought that by completing the schedule they would then become liable to be returned to their country of origin. One enumerator employed by me was himself in this category and was therefore able to allay their fears. Other enumerators dealt with most of these queries, although one man was very worried and came to see me personally. I managed to convince him that the census was not intended for this purpose and he has continued to reside in Oxford.

In some areas of the city it was necessary for enumerators to assist householders in the completion of their schedules. Others found their districts strenuous because of the number of steps at the entrances to houses. Blocks of flats also presented problems, one of which was the difficulty of finding people at home, thus increasing the number of visits involved.
In the science area of the city there were fewer residents, but these proved to be more troublesome to locate. A great deal of time was spent by the enumerator covering this district attempting to trace people living in single flats in large buildings used for research.

The normal schedule for private households contained information concerning:

(i) The names and surnames of all persons living in the household on the night of Sunday, 23rd April 1961. This also included any persons arriving at a dwelling or joining a household on Monday, 24th April, who had not been enumerated at any previous address.

(ii) The head of the household was required to state a person's family connection or the reason for being included in the household (e.g. lodger, etc.)

(iii) The address of the household was inserted by the enumerator, but if any member of the household was a casual Visitor, their usual abode was included.

(iv) A person's age, sex, marital status and country of birth.

(v) Various questions relating to the accommodation occupied by the household.

Over the years the census has become increasingly necessary for estimating educational, housing and other economic requirements.

With this in mind more questions were included in the sample schedule issued to every tenth household. The questions included any qualifications held by a person in the household, particulars about their employer, and whether or not in full or part-time employment. Additional particulars were required to be given about persons absent from the household at the time of the census.

In Oxford about 140 enumerators were employed and recruitment started from the middle of January 1961.

In England and Wales there were about 70,000 enumerators and in Scotland about 10,000. They were paid a basic £12 for their work with an additional 9d for every schedule collected. Each enumerator was allocated a district containing approximately 300 households. In country districts, where travelling time was essential, this number was proportionally smaller.

After the census it was necessary to examine every schedule to ensure that all the necessary facts were noted. Often the date of a marriage was omitted. This information was essential to enable important classified statistical knowledge to be compiled by the Registrar General.

A census, which normally covers all economic measures needed during the next ten years, can be the easiest way to achieve improvements in the standard of living. As nothing remains static, it is essential that any underlying trend in population can be estimated.

With this in mind, enumerators were required to ensure the correctness of every schedule collected and the standard of their work in the City of Oxford was high. Registrars in other parts of the country ensured that a similar standard was maintained.
When all the schedules were finally received from the enumerators, the forms were packed into substantial binders and sent to the General Register Office for counting and processing into statistical information. Census Officers were not expected to provide these details.

Both before and after the 1961 census all duties were required to be performed by a certain date and I have never known time pass so rapidly!

After the census was finally completed, registration officers were once again able to work an eight hour day.

The Registrar General published a Preliminary Report some six weeks after census day and this was favourably received.

Enumerators also conducted a Census of Distribution and the Board of Trade later indicated to Mr. E.M.T. Firth, C.A., M.A., the Registrar General, their satisfaction about the material received.

3. Something of Everything

I officiated at my first marriage as Deputy Superintendent Registrar for the City of Oxford on 19 March 1951.

At the beginning of 1967 the post of Superintendent Registrar was advertised and I, together with about forty other hopeful candidates, decided to apply.

A short list was eventually compiled. My name was included and a date was fixed for the interviews, each of which lasted for about thirty minutes. Was I to be selected from some who were already Superintendent Registrars in other districts? After a wait of about twenty minutes my name was called and I was told that I was to become the next Superintendent Registrar for the Oxford Registration District.

I was then to officiate at between ten and twenty thousand marriages. On my first day I welcomed ten couples, their witnesses and guests. After the ceremonies they departed in the best of spirits to their respective receptions.

In those days most brides wore their 'going away' dress or costume, while the groom usually wore a suit.

How times have changed! For many people in 1982, their wedding appeared to be a non-event. Little attempt was made to dress for the occasion.

Sometimes the witnesses were much smarter than the bride and groom. Sometimes the bride was nicely dressed and the groom appeared in a bewildered state, wearing what appeared to be leisure clothing! But a bride at a register office ceremony often wore a beautiful white wedding dress and this was the exception, rather than the rule, in 1967.

In the 1970s, long dresses of all colours were worn, some with accessories which included 'Ascot type' hats. I always thought the wide brimmed hats to be kiss-proof! The new husband's first attempt seldom succeeded. But the pill-box type of hat - that was a different matter!
Sometimes a register office ceremony could be upset because some of the guests present thought that the wedding should have been in a church. At other times, several marriage parties would arrive late and if the day was a Saturday this could cause considerable dislocation. Traffic congestion was often blamed and one best man arrived on his bicycle!

**Alterations in Registration**

In 1953 the post of Superintendent Registrar for the Oxford Registration District became full-time. Registration and Welfare still continued to be connected in many areas, but by the 1970s this link, which had survived for over one hundred years, was broken.

Previously most of the routine work of Superintendent Registrars was delegated to clerks and other members of staff in Solicitors, Public Assistance and Welfare Offices. In the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth century this proved to be successful. The main part of registration was the registration of births and deaths and registrars engaged in this work were responsible for their duties direct to the Registrar General.

Due to the influence of the church there were few marriages in register offices in the nineteenth century in comparison with present day numbers. In Oxford, civil ceremonies gradually increased over the years. The total number of these marriages from 1837 - 1937 was again equalled between 1938 - 1982. Indeed, such was the popularity of a register office marriage in the 1970s that this type of ceremony became, for the first time, as numerous as church weddings.

Therefore, the duties of a Superintendent Registrar continued to grow. The registration of births and deaths was also beginning to expand in the most unlikely places. New towns were being built and existing towns and cities enlarged.

By the early 1960s birth and death registration sub-districts were becoming unsuitable for local requirements in some parts of the country. By increasing the size of a sub-district to, in many cases, the same size as the district, a larger number of registrars would become available within the sub-district. In many districts clerical assistance was replaced by more registrars, thus giving a better service to the public.

The districts became officially known as Unified Districts and some of the first were introduced at Aylesbury, Halifax, High Wycombe, Sheffield, Southampton and Stepney. The public appeared to react favourably to the alterations in both the large and small register offices. Registrars were able to cope with registrations more easily and people were therefore not having to wait so long to register births and deaths.

Most of the larger registration districts were unified. On the 1 October 1966 the Oxford Registration District became a unified district with a Superintendent Registrar, four Registrars of Births, Deaths and Marriages and two deputy registrars.

**Part-time Officers**

A large number of registration posts were part-time until the 1960s. They shared various trades and professions and their diversity was most noticeable in rural areas.
This can be called the registration connection with the local community. Births and deaths needed to be registered and Register Offices provided for civil marriages. The rural registration officer was sometimes the local

Auctioneer
Bookseller
Chartered Accountant
Chief Financial Officer
Clerk to the Rural or Urban District Council
Company Director
Electoral Registration Clerk
Estate Agent
Farmer
Garage Proprietor
Grocer
Health Visitor
Insurance Broker
Magistrates Clerk
Master Builder
Master Printer
Master Stonemason
Master Tailor
Medical Officer's Chief Clerk
Newsagent and Stationer
Rate Collector
Solicitor
Solicitor's Managing Clerk
Sub Postmaster
Town Clerk
Watchmaker

Address and Title
A Superintendent Registrar, or Chief Superintendent Registrar if the registration district is large, can be referred to as 'the registrar' or 'the registrar of marriages'.

To the public, I was a registrar when I was first appointed in 1947 and was still a registrar when I retired as a Superintendent Registrar in September 1982.

The Superintendent Registrar, or Chief Superintendent Registrar, is responsible for the day to day running of a register office.

Having explained the usual misconceptions about the title of registration officers, it will come as no surprise that in the past a Superintendent Registrar was seldom referred to as such! You will see from the following illustrations that this was not intended to be derogatory.

My first true example was included in the address on a letter received from the U.S.A. and was obviously written by a person to ensure attention: The Hon. Hubert Lionel Wood, c/o Registrar for district of Oxford.
'The Chief Executive, Registrar of Births, Deaths and Marriages' was equally impressive.

'The Head, Registrar of Births, Deaths and Marriages' and 'The Manager Oxford Registration District' were definitely decided upon from an office concept.

'The Ministry of Marriages' related to a person hoping to obtain their certificate from a bureaucratic official of unknown origin!

'The Super Registrar' was, I believe, a sign of the times! Whether or not I came into this category was not for me to say.

'The Supreme Registrar of Births and Marriages' seemed to indicate the existence of some unknown being.

'The S.U.P.T. Registrary' must have been written by a Physical Training enthusiast'

'The Managing Director' although adding Registrar of Births, Deaths and Marriages, tended to confuse registration with a commercial undertaking.

'The Registrar General' was a regular visitor, but should have been reserved for the General Register Office.

'The Married Registrars Office' would usually not be completely true.

The Post Office have always been extremely helpful in delivering incorrectly addressed letters which, as we have seen from the above examples, can be very perplexing.

When the Post Office is confronted with letters addressed to 'The Registrar, Oxford, London' and 'The Registrar, Oxford, Bucks' things begin to become complicated.

Notices of Marriage
During my fifteen years as Superintendent Registrar for the City of Oxford, I must have accepted between fifteen and twenty thousand notices of intention to marry.

Of course, many of these did not materialize into the married state. One woman gave five notices of marriage to marry five different men before she finally contrived to arrange for the ceremony and become a married woman!

I have accepted notices of marriage from persons born in many countries. The majority of the marriages have taken place at the Oxford Register Office. Admittedly Oxford, being a university city, attracts students and visitors from all over the world.

A postcard sent to me from Leoben, Austria, on 19 December 1972 read: Merry Christmas and good luck for the New Year from two of your grateful "newly-weds". With best regards, yours, Marian (USA) and Erwin (Austria) Pink.
Figure 5 Postcard received from newly weds (front)
My claim to have covered most of the world is substantiated by the following list:

A: Algeria, Argentine, Assam, Australia and Austria
B: Bahamas, Bahrain, Barbados, Belgium, Bermuda, Brazil, British Honduras (now Belize), Brunie, Bulgaria and Burma.
C: Canada, Canary Islands, Ceylon (now Sri Lanka), Chile, China, Colombia, Cyprus and Czechoslovakia.
D: Denmark and Dominica.
E: Egypt, El Salvador and Ethiopia.
F: Finland and France.
G: Germany (West Germany), Ghana (formerly Gold Coast), Gibraltar, Greece and Guyana (formerly British Guiana)
H: Hong Kong and Hungary.
I: Iceland, India, Iran, Iraq, Israel and Italy.
J: Jamaica, Japan, Jordan.
K: Kenya and Kuwait.
L: Latvia, Lebanon and Luxembourg.
M: Malawi (formerly Nyasaland), Malaysia, Malta, Mauritius, Mexico and Morocco.
N: Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Nigeria and Norway.
P: Pakistan, Penang (Malaysia), Peru, Philippines, Poland and Portugal
R: Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe)
S: St. Christopher, St. Kitts, St. Vincent, Sarawak, Sierra Leone, Singapore, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and Syria.
T: Tanzania (formerly Tanganyika), Tasmania, Thailand, Trinidad and Tobago and Turkey.
V: Venezuela and Vietnam
Y: Yugoslavia
Z: Zambia (formerly Northern Rhodesia)

The dialogue
Amusing answers can be given by people when giving notice of intention to marry.

I recall a conversation between myself and a couple attending the register office to give notice of marriage which illustrates what can be encountered.

I ask "Are you both living in the City of Oxford?"

The man answers "Yes, sorry about that, I've got the flu!"

After a few questions which help to clarify their length of stay in Oxford, I discover they wish to be married tomorrow.

I point out that at least one clear working day must elapse between the giving of the notice and the first available day on which the marriage can take place.

After contemplating this unexpected set-back to their plans, the couple decide to wait for more than three weeks and thus save the expense of the licence fee.

I resume my questioning based on previous answers received, "Are you both living at the same address?"

The man replies "Yes, sorry about that, I've got the flu!"

To a further question "What address is that?" comes the unexpected answer "It's on this card."

I inspect 'the card' and say to him "This address is not within the city boundary and I am therefore unable to accept a notice of marriage from you."

The man now exclaims "Oh, but we are not living there!" He then proceeds to give two other addresses, both within the city.

I finally unravel the mystery of the addresses and accept more of the notice of marriage.
To ensure no further difficulty arises at the time of the ceremony, I then request the man to give his father's name.

I note the name and say to him "Is he still living?"

I receive a quick answer "No, sorry about that!"

Being satisfied that such is the case, I add the word 'deceased' to the father's name.

After the woman has given me several different dates for her date of birth, none of which appear to agree with her age last birthday, she eventually decides on a certain age!

The parties then check the notice of marriage and agree that the information is correct. The necessary signatures are duly appended and I have a silent sigh of relief which turns out to be a little premature.

Quite a considerable amount of time elapses before a date can be fixed for the ceremony, both parties having different ideas on the subject.

I hand to the man the usual written confirmation of the time and date for the ceremony and the man then asks "Can I have another?"

I reply "No, we only issue one."

The man now appears to be somewhat muddled and decides to ask another question "Where is the paper?"

I am now rather puzzled and say weakly "what paper?"

The man elaborates "The paper - the newspaper office."

I direct him to the 'Oxford Mail' office and hope that his flu will have vanished by the agreed date of the wedding.

The telephone

When I was first appointed as registrar of marriages in 1947, the telephone was largely ignored by the public. People wishing to give a notice of marriage came to the register office without preamble.

How times have changed! In the 1970s this instrument was extensively used by people wishing to obtain information about various registration matters.

Some rather unusual remarks could be made. A rather aggressive voice enquires "Is that the birth certificate place?" On being told that it is, there follows an ominous silence indicating that the person telephoning is not entirely at ease.

"Can I have a divorce from you?" The short answer is "No!" But the caller is not to be discouraged and cannot appear to understand why it is possible to marry at the register office and yet be unable to obtain a divorce from it.
"Can I have an age paper?" The term 'birth certificate' has eluded the caller and in this age of forms the person may well be referring to some other document completely unconnected with registration.

One registrar, on asking whether or not either party had been married before, received the rather abusive reply "It's none of your business!" It does happen to be the business of a registrar to try to prevent bigamy.

Most complaints are made by telephone, but luckily these are few and far between and can be due to misunderstandings arising from our complex society.

Some people ring up to make an appointment to be married later in the day. Perhaps they are afraid of a change of mind by the following day. A little more notice is required by law and these requests have to be regretfully refused!

Marriage information is sometimes requested on behalf of another person. When a question is asked about the couple who wish to marry, it can seldom be answered satisfactorily.

The telephone can be a friend or an enemy, an advantage or a nuisance.

It has become available in cars and trains and has helped to make the world a smaller place. Mobile telephones are now extensively used.

Names
When a person does not like the name which appears on their birth certificate, the poor unfortunate registrar usually gets the blame! Often the registrar concerned has departed from this life and cannot therefore defend the accusation.

"This can't be my birth certificate, I'm sure this is not my second name," says one person, while another is equally adamant about the spelling of their name.

The foreign student who has recently registered his son's birth is busily engaged in explaining to a registration officer that his son has been given the wrong surname or family name.

How do these apparently incorrect details come to be recorded in the birth register? Strangely enough all the information is given by the informant who is normally one of the parents of the child.

Sometimes a mother attends at a register office to obtain her daughter's birth certificate after some years have elapsed. When the registration is discovered her daughter is found to have a different middle name. After some discussion she concedes that her husband must have had too much to drink when he registered the birth!

By 1982 a large number of people were known by a surname different to the one originally recorded in their birth registration. Sometimes it was from choice, but in many cases it was not.

A Superintendent Registrar, after a considerable amount of searching, can eventually unravel an all too frequent mystery.
A person's surname has been changed, possibly because their mother has remarried. The result is invariably an unpleasant shock for the person concerned. Yes! They should be told about any change of name, if only to avoid misunderstandings in later life.

In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries some first names have remained in constant use, while others have gradually disappeared.

To illustrate this, I am now including two lists of names.

**A selection of names in use in the middle of the 19th century**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aaron</td>
<td>Agnes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Albert</td>
<td>Alice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alexander</td>
<td>Ann</td>
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<tr>
<td>Alfred</td>
<td>Caroline</td>
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<td>Andrew</td>
<td>Catherine</td>
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<td>Anthony</td>
<td>Charlotte</td>
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<td>Arthur</td>
<td>Eliza</td>
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<td>Balltazar</td>
<td>Elizabeth</td>
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<td>Benjamin</td>
<td>Ellen</td>
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<td>Caleb</td>
<td>Emma</td>
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<td>Charles</td>
<td>Esther</td>
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<td>Christopher</td>
<td>Eves</td>
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<td>Clement</td>
<td>Fanny</td>
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<td>Daniel</td>
<td>Frances</td>
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<td>David</td>
<td>Georgina</td>
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<td>Ebenezer</td>
<td>Hannah</td>
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<td>Edmund</td>
<td>Harriet</td>
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<td>Edward</td>
<td>Helen</td>
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<td>Edwin</td>
<td>Isabella</td>
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<td>Francis</td>
<td>Jane</td>
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<td>Frederick</td>
<td>Joanne</td>
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<td>George</td>
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<td>Job</td>
<td>Mildred</td>
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<td>John</td>
<td>Millicent</td>
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<tr>
<td>Joseph</td>
<td>Patience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Josiah</td>
<td>Phoebe</td>
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<tr>
<td>Michael</td>
<td>Priscilla</td>
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<tr>
<td>Moses</td>
<td>Rebecca</td>
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<tr>
<td>Richard</td>
<td>Rhoda</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robert</td>
<td>Sarah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Samuel</td>
<td>Sophia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solomon</td>
<td>Susan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thomas</td>
<td>Susannah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>William</td>
<td>Tabitha</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**A selection of names still in use in the middle of the 20th century**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Albert</td>
<td>Catherine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alfred</td>
<td>Elizabeth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arthur</td>
<td>Ellen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christopher</td>
<td>Frances</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edward</td>
<td>Margaret</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Francis</td>
<td>Mary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frederick</td>
<td>Priscilla</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>George</td>
<td>Mildred</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Horatio</td>
<td>Rebecca</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isaac</td>
<td>Joseph</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>James</td>
<td>Michael</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jason</td>
<td>Richard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jesse</td>
<td>Robert</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job</td>
<td>Thomas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John</td>
<td>William</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Many boys and girls were given one name in the 1820s, but in the 1920s a middle name became the custom. As the emphasis in the two lists is about everyday usage, middle names have not been used for the comparison. Boys names appeared to remain more constant in both centuries.

But what became of David, Ann, Emma, Joanne and Susan? Many names disappeared temporarily from usage only to emerge again later in the twentieth century.

**Handwriting, Searches and Certificates**

Registration Officers are daily in contact with registrations which may have been written in the nineteenth century.

Since the inception of registration all records of births, deaths and marriages have been handwritten and handwriting can vary considerably. Most registrars wrote in a clear hand and this, when carefully scrutinized, enables the copier to distinguish between the spellings of many names.

Is the name recorded as Laurence or 'Lawrence'? Can this be the spelling used at that time for a village or locality? These are some of the questions which need to be answered.

Information contained in a birth, death or marriage certificate is the same as that entered in the original registration. Street names have altered throughout the years and many older certificates include non-existent addresses.

Was the person killed by a fall from a house or a fall from a horse? What poison was used when the verdict was 'suicide'? The handwriting of the 1850s or 1900s will provide the answer.

Now to searches! An event is to be found in a birth, death or marriage register for the district in which it took place.

No! Just because Mrs. Jones, wife of Jones the Butcher, was living in Aberystwyth, it does not mean that her death will be registered there. She may have died while visiting her sister in Cardiff or while on holiday in Greece.

So if a registration is to be traced with the minimum delay, it is essential to ensure that the place of the occurrence can be given. A birth may appear to be unregistered when the search is made in the wrong year. A marriage can be more difficult to trace if the name of the building in which it took place is unknown.

Birth, death and marriage certificates are now used for a wide variety of purposes and these could not have been contemplated by people when registration was introduced in the nineteenth century. Documentation had not yet arrived.

Nowadays these documents are carefully preserved by most people. They can be put to use for tracing our ancestors, claiming money, emigrating, obtaining a passport, etc.

**Ages**

The age of a person, together with their name, provides a useful method of identification.
But over the years, ages have not always been accurately given at the time of marriage. Most early church marriage registrations included the words 'full age', merely indicating that no parental consent was required. This was then the normal practice. It was not until the second half of the nineteenth century that the parties ages last birthday began to be inserted in church marriage registers.

In 1858 a 'disgraceful' table was published entitled 'How to tell a lady's age'.

The perpetrator said "Just hand the table to the lady and ask her to tell you in which of its columns her age is contained."

He continued "Then add together the figures of the top of the columns designated and you have the great secret!"

He gave an example: "Suppose an age to be seventeen, you will find the number only in two columns, viz. the first and fifth; and the first figure at the head of these columns makes seventeen."
## Age Table - 1858

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
<th>2&lt;sup&gt;nd&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
<th>3&lt;sup&gt;rd&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
<th>4&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
<th>5&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
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<th>2&lt;sup&gt;nd&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
<th>3&lt;sup&gt;rd&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
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</table>
4. The Census - How it began
The reasons for the first census in Great Britain make fascinating reading. The objective put forward in Parliament in 1800 was the necessity of knowing how many mouths the country needed to feed. This was a far cry from the statistical knowledge which is now obtained from each census.

As soon as a proper census had taken place in 1801, parliament understood the importance of the census for determining the size of the population for things other than food. The returns were sent to the 'Clerk of the Parliaments' to enable members to inspect them. Presumably they were suitably impressed because this proved to be the start of a regular count of the population.

A decision was arrived at when, in the House of Commons on Wednesday, 19 November 1800, Mr. Abbot rose to move leave to bring in a Bill to ascertain the population of Great Britain. He said "If this knowledge was at all times necessary, as well as useful, it was more particularly essential at a time when extraordinary measures were requisite to supply the people with food. Without having an accurate idea of the number of individuals for whom provision was to be made, it was impossible properly to proportion these measures to the actual deficiency and the pressing demand. But an accurate knowledge of the population of the kingdom was farther important for the purpose of ascertaining whether it had been on the increase for a series of years and whether it is this increase that has rendered the country from being an exporting country, inadequate to furnish subsistence for its inhabitants. If it is really the case that the country has made a very astonishing advance in population, if it is really true that its produce is at present far from being correspondent to its consumption, then it will be necessary to adopt some great plan for extending agriculture and for applying a greater portion of land to the immediate purpose of furnishing food to man.

The House would be called upon to form extensive arrangements for these purposes, which have been particularly recommended to their attention by the Speech from the Throne.

The first time that a regular account of inhabitants in the country was taken was in the reign of Edward 3d, when the population was computed to be three millions and a half. The next period was in the reign of Elizabeth, when the number seems to have increased to five millions.

At the time of the Restoration, the violent measures then adopted against the recusants led to another attempt to ascertain the number of inhabitants, when they were understood to be about six millions.

At the time of the Revolution, or towards the conclusion of the last century they were supposed to have increased to seven millions and a half; and in this state public opinion on this subject remained without further examination till about the peace of Paris in 1763. About that time opinions began to be started that the population had materially decreased and some persons had even gone so far as to affirm that it had fallen short of the number at the Revolution by one million and a half.

There were some people who now thought that eight millions was a fair calculation, while others were equally positive that one fourth had been added to the population of the whole
The plan that appeared most expedient was to draw up a series of questions to the clergy, who, from their very intimate connection with the circumstances of the country, were the best qualified to give the most accurate information. In addition to the knowledge which they possessed, merely from their profession and habits of life, it would only be necessary for them to make a few special enquiries on particular topics to render their report adequate to the purpose in view. In order still farther to ensure certainty, it would perhaps be proper to have recourse to the registers of births and marriages which are easily accessible and from these sources of information, examined with care and digested with judgement, a valuable body of knowledge might be prepared, applicable not merely to the present age or to circumstance of temporary embarrassment, but which might serve as a ground of caution and a foundation of opinion to our posterity."

On these grounds the Hon. Gentleman supported his motion and after Mr. Wilberforce had spoken a few words in support of it, leave was unanimously given to bring in the Bill.

The making of arrangements
Details of the arrangements for the 1801 census, the persons to be made responsible for the taking of the census and the penalties for making false returns were released to the press:

The Rector, Vicar, Curate, or other officiating minister, and the Overseers in England and the minister of the gospel and the schoolmaster in every parish in Scotland, are to take an account of every family within the limits of such parish, which they are to insert in a schedule to be delivered to them from the Clerk of the Peace, by Constables, etc.

Householders, etc., are to answer such questions as shall be proposed to them by the Rectors, etc. on pain of forfeiting a sum of money on refusal at the discretion of the Justice before whom complaint shall be made.

Justices are to appoint times for the returns from extra parochial places to be delivered to them and for the Overseers, etc. answering such questions as may be demanded of them by such Justices, who are also to examine them upon oath touching the truth of such answers.

Clerks of the Peace, Town Clerks and Justices, are to transmit such answers and returns as may be made to them, to the Clerk of the Parliaments, that they may be inspected by the Members of both Houses.

Town Clerks and Clerks of the Peace and all other officers are to be allowed a certain sum for their trouble for each return. Rectors and all others making false returns, etc., are to forfeit a sum at the discretion of the Justice of the Peace. The several fines and forfeitures, if not immediately paid, are to be levied by distress and sale of offenders' goods.

The questions, form of schedule, precept for England and Scotland, form of oath, indorsement, etc. are subjoined in the Bill.

A Notice referring to the 1801 Census appeared in Jackson's Oxford Journal in February 1801 and was directed to the Clergy in the Diocese of Oxford:
DIOCESE OF OXFORD
The Lord Bishop of Oxford requests the Clergy of his Diocese to transmit, as soon as convenient, to his Secretary, Mr. Robert Morrell, at Oxford, their Answers or Returns to the fourth and fifth Questions in the Schedule contained in the Act intituled 'An Act for taking an account of the Population of Great Britain, and the Increase or Diminution thereof.

Another Notice also required attention:

POPULATION ACT
NOTICE is hereby given, That the Chief Constables of the County of Oxford, are required to transmit to me at my Office in Oxford, on or before the 8th. Day of May next, the printed Schedules or Returns which have been delivered to them within their respective Jurisdictions, together with a true and perfect List of the Names of the Overseers of every Parish, Township, and Place, or of the Householders therein, to whom such Schedules have been delivered, pursuant to the Directions of an Act passed in the last Sessions of Parliament, intituled an Act for taking an Account of the Population of Great Britain, and of the Increase or Diminution thereof.

W.E. TAUNTON
Clerk of the Peace of the said County Oxford, 30th April 1801

The result
Once the 1801 census had taken place, the population of England and Wales was recorded as just under nine millions.

Comparisons with other population figures then became possible. Scotland had a population of about one and a half million, Ireland between five and six millions and France about twenty seven millions.

Returns published in 1822 showed that in England there were 294,088 more females than males, in Wales 16,464 and in Scotland 126,352. Almost half a million ladies were therefore doomed to remain single. The position was rendered worse by 150,000 inflexible bachelors.

When in 1836 the General Register Office was originated by an Act of Parliament, it then became accountable to the country for taking the population census.

This accountability was first put to the test in 1841 and has been successfully maintained at succeeding ten year intervals with the exception of 1941, when winning the second world war proved to be more essential.
In 1840, when the population of England and Wales was about fifteen millions, a report was received from the United States which indicated that the population of that country was expected to reach about seventeen millions.

**Population of St. Marylebone**

The population of the extensive parish of St. Marylebone in London, under four successive censuses was given as:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Females</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1801</td>
<td>27,012</td>
<td>36,970</td>
<td>63,982</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1811</td>
<td>32,131</td>
<td>43,303</td>
<td>75,434</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1821</td>
<td>41,386</td>
<td>54,654</td>
<td>96,040</td>
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<tr>
<td>1831</td>
<td>53,201</td>
<td>69,005</td>
<td>122,206</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The returns for 1831 showed that there were 11,608 inhabited houses in the parish.

**The 1831 Census**

On Monday, 30 May 1831 an account of the population was taken under the Authority of an Act of Parliament passed in the last Session for that purpose.

Very minute inquiries were made and heavy penalties were likely on people refusing to give correct information.

The persons appointed to take the population of the Kingdom needed to be particular, as they were required to return the same on oath.

The arduous task was finally completed and eventually parochial population figures became available later that year.

An account is given below of the population for the parishes of the City of Oxford with comparative figures for 1821 and 1811.

The columns for 1831 indicate:

1. Inhabited houses
2. Families
3. Males
4. Females
5. Combined total - columns (3) and (4)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parishes</th>
<th>1831</th>
<th>1821</th>
<th>1811</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(1)</td>
<td>(2)</td>
<td>(3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Saints</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>275</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Aldate's</td>
<td>315</td>
<td>340</td>
<td>820</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Ebbe's</td>
<td>593</td>
<td>707</td>
<td>1537</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Gile's *</td>
<td>396</td>
<td>423</td>
<td>1057</td>
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<td>155</td>
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<td>St. Mary's</td>
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<td>66</td>
<td>192</td>
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<tr>
<td>Magdalen</td>
<td>451</td>
<td>461</td>
<td>1132</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Michael's</td>
<td>171</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>449</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Peter in Bailey</td>
<td>245</td>
<td>260</td>
<td>616</td>
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<tr>
<td>St. Peter in the East</td>
<td>181</td>
<td>210</td>
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<td>St. Thomas's</td>
<td>602</td>
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<tr>
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<td>13</td>
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<tr>
<td>Totals:</td>
<td>3353</td>
<td>3776</td>
<td>9031</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Including the Radcliffe Infirmary and the House of Industry.

The total number of persons resident in the colleges and halls in 1821 was stated to be 1457.

News of a rather unusual case of refusal to give information for the 1841 census was received in a report from London: The CENSUS. At the Kensington Police Court, Mrs. Bradbury, the keeper of an extensive lunatic asylum for the reception of females of the upper classes, was summoned before Mr Paynter, the sitting Magistrate, at the instance of the Commissioners for taking the census of population, for refusing to make a
return of the number, ages, sexes, etc. of the inmates of her establishment, by which she was liable to a penalty not exceeding £5

The enumerator proved that he left a paper to be filled up at the defendant's house and she positively refused to make any return. She declined even to give the initials of the names of the inmates of her house, or their ages.

Mrs. Bradbury said she considered she acted most properly towards the friends of the ladies of her establishment in refusing to make any return. She considered such a determination on her part as a right course and she had been advised by all her medical friends to do so. She did so from motives of delicacy alone, as such a return could only distress the minds of the friends of the inmates in her house.

The Magistrate suggested that the defendant might make the return under the letters A. B. C. etc. but she however declined making any return.

The Magistrate then stated that under these circumstances he should inflict the full penalty of £5. He, however, consented to postpone his final decision till the following Thursday.

Registrar General's report for 1857

In the Nineteenth Annual Report of the Registrar General, he said that the names of 1,366,633 persons were enrolled on the national registers during the year. This commemorated the entrance of 657,453 living children into the English community, the removal of 390,506 men, women and children from its ranks by death, and the matrimonial union of 318,674 persons by whom 159,337 new families were founded.

The natural increase of population by the excess of births over deaths was 266,947. Thus, if it is assumed that the population increased at the same rate since 1851 as it did in the previous ten years, the population of England and Wales must have been 19,107,366 in the middle of the year 1856; while by the method I have employed, which takes the excess of births over deaths as its basis, the population at the above date must have been 19,045,187. The latter number, on the account of the excess of emigration during the period, is probably the nearest to the truth.

The natural increase of the people was 731 daily. The marriages exceeded by 7224, the births by 22,410, the marriages and births of the preceding year, and the deaths were less by 35,197 than the deaths of that year. Hence the natural increase in the population was unusually great.

The Growth of the City of Oxford

The increase in population in this country during the nineteenth century was also apparent in the City of Oxford.

In 1801 the population was over 12,000. When the registration of Births, Deaths and Marriages was introduced in 1837, the population of the city must have been about 24,000. By 1861 it had risen to 32,000 and by 1881, the figure was over 39,000. In 1921 over 57,000 people were residing in Oxford.

But from 1921 - 1931 there was a dramatic growth in the city's population. In ten years the number had increased to over 80,000.
The reason for this was due to the high rate of unemployment in South Wales at that time.

Men came to Oxford to work at the Morris Motors car factory at Cowley. Houses were provided for them to bring their families and 'Cowley Village' became a large new suburb of Oxford. Thirty years later much of Cowley Village was demolished to make way for a new Cowley Centre, now Templars Square.

In the 1930s Morris Motors, together with the adjacent Pressed Steel Company's factory, formed the largest employers of labour in Oxford and the surrounding area, which extended into Oxfordshire and other adjoining counties.

By 1961 the population of the City was over 106000. A 'green belt' around the city tended to prevent it expanding. But from a population point of view the city remained the centre of a rapidly developing area. By 1982 this policy had resulted in very little growth in the city's population, while the population of Oxfordshire had increased considerably.

Since 1945 several new colleges have been built and these, together with the Oxford Polytechnic (now Oxford Brookes University) have resulted in a large increase in the number of students living in the city.

At one time all students attending the colleges and halls of Oxford University were either accommodated in the colleges or in 'digs' in the city. By 1982 many hostels and annexes were also in use for this purpose.

With the substantial increase in the number of students attending Oxford University, Oxford Brookes University and English Language Schools, the City's population is increased by well over 10,000. During the summer vacation the city attracts a large number of foreign students hoping to improve their somewhat limited amount of English.

Throughout the summer months tourists from all parts of the world visit Oxford and the colleges cater for conferences of all kinds.

5. Marriage for Royalty and the People

In the 1750s, in an effort to prevent clandestine marriages, Parliament took, what was in those days, extremely unpopular action.

One hundred years previously in 1653 Parliament decided to allow civil marriage, to be celebrated before a Justice of the Peace and to be duly recorded. But this legislation did not survive the period of the Restoration (1660-1685).

After this, secret marriages increased throughout the intervening years. In London, marriage shops thrived. The presence of a clergyman was necessary, but this was frequently violated. Often no record of the ceremony was kept, leading to complex cases in the Consistory Court.

So the marriage shops had to be closed and all marriages were to be in churches and chapels with the exception of ceremonies in Meeting Houses and Synagogues for Quakers and Jews.

To substantiate the new Marriage Act, extreme punishments were incorporated for persons attempting to continue their old habits. Even so, this did not deter many from continuing to
marry secretly, but the clergyman, or person purporting to be a clergyman, required to be paid handsomely for the risk they were taking.

Details of the Act to prevent clandestine marriages were published in the Journals of the day.

It was ordered in the Act:

That the Banns of Matrimony, shall be published in the Parish Church or Chapel in which each of the parties belong, for three Sundays, and signed by the Minister; and the marriage to be afterwards solemnized in one of the said Churches or Chapels. That the names and Place of residence of the parties must be sent to the Minister seven days before the banns are published. That no Licences are to be granted for any Church or Chapel but that belonging to the parish where one of the parties shall have lived for the last four weeks preceding that time. That marriages solemnized by Licence, without Consent of Parents or Guardians, in case either of the parties are under age, shall be declared null and void to all intents and purposes, but that where consent is unreasonably withheld, the parties may apply to the Lord Chancellor, etc.

That all marriages are to be solemnized before two witnesses besides the Minister; and are to be properly registered and signed by the Minister, witnesses and the parties themselves. That any person convicted of solemnizing matrimony without Publication of Banns as above, or Licence first had, or any other places than a Church or public Chapel (except in the Case of a special Licence), shall be deemed guilty of Felony, and be transported, and the marriage declared null and void, providing the prosecution be commenced within three years after the offence is committed.

That any person convicted of making a false Entry in the Parish Register or of forging, or destroying, with ill Intent, any thing relating thereto, and the same with regard to the Licence, shall suffer Death as a Felon. The Act is to be read four times a year in all Churches and Chapels; that nothing in it is to extend to the Royal Family, Quakers, Jews, Scotland, or Parts beyond the Seas; and the special Licences are to be granted as usual.

The Act was originally due to take place on 25 March 1754, but it was subject to bitter argument.

An opponent of the Bill, presumably a Minister, was recommended to take a chapel on the other side of the Tweed - Scotland escaping this dastardly Act!

There were other unexpected reactions.

On the morning of Sunday, 21 October 1753, the Clergyman for the parish church of St. Botolph, Aldersgate, London, was reading the Marriage Act. While doing so he realised a poor woman was confronting him at the reading desk. Sighing several times, the woman waited until he mentioned the marriages to be void and of no effect, then stretching out her hands she cried "Lord have mercy on us, we shall all be whores." After this outburst the congregation laughed, and the beadles were obliged to eject her from the church.
Later that same year in a parish church near Salisbury, the congregation decided to oppose the reading of the Marriage Act by immediately leaving the church as soon as the parson began to read it.

However, at the end of 1753 there was a press announcement indicating the commencement of the Marriage Act, which was to have taken place next Lady Day, be postponed until April 1755.

It was considered that the new law would arouse emotional scenes because it affected every parish and every family of the kingdom.

There was also some disquiet when the new date was found to be coinciding with the General Elections.

When the Act became law, many legal complications seemed to arise in the minds of the people.

The legality of some marriages was questioned in London.

One such ceremony occurred on 1 June 1755 when a woman described as a 'Widow Poulterer near Newgate Market was married to a man she greatly admired, by the Rev. Dr. Wilkinson of the Savoy Church, who published that he married according to Act of Parliament.'

But suspicions were aroused and she insisted on a re-marriage. The second ceremony was performed on 8 June by the Rev. Mr. Sandiford, Rector of Christ Church, Newgate Street.

The Marriage of the Duke and Duchess of York - 1791.
On the evening of 23 November 1791 the Duke and Duchess of York were obliged, under English Common Law, to re-marry.

Their first marriage had been at the bride's home, the Royal Palace in Berlin, on September 29, 1791.

Double ceremonies, in Germany and England, were also performed for the Dukes of Cumberland, Kent and Clarence.

The second ceremony for the Duke and Duchess of York was in the presence of the Royal Family and the Lord Chancellor. It took place at the Queen's House (which became Buckingham Palace after King George IV's alterations in the 1820s), the former Buckingham House in the Park, and the service was conducted by the Archbishop of Canterbury.

At the time, the Royal Marriage Act was generally believed to be the reason for the re-marriage.

It was passed in 1772 because King George III strongly disapproved of his brother, the Duke of Cumberland, marrying Ann Horton.

The Act, which is still in force, made it unlawful for any descendant of King George II to marry unless the consent of the Crown had previously been obtained.
Princesses marrying into foreign families were exempt from the Act.

There was also provision for any member of the Royal Family above the age of 25 to marry without consent of the Crown subject to certain conditions.

Correspondence concerning King George III's consent (under the Royal Marriage Act) to the Duke of York's marriage in Berlin and the subsequent arranging of the second ceremony in London, is reminiscent of the Royal Family at that time.

Letters written on the subject indicate the King's agreement and show his paternal feelings towards his son.

I acknowledge with gratitude the gracious permission of Her Majesty the Queen for the republication of material from the Royal Archives which is subject to copyright.

The first letter, written by the Duke of York to his father, King George III, must have been favourable to the King's decision to consent to the marriage. But it was also to set in motion complicated situations requiring much correspondence.

(I) The Duke of York to the King Berlin, 5 July 1791

The paternal affection which your Majesty has strewn upon every occasion towards me emboldens me to take up my pen in order to lay open my whole heart to your Majesty and to entreat your approbation and leave to take a step upon which my whole future happiness depends.

It was about three years ago that your Majesty did me the honor to express to me your wish that one of your sons should marry; from that moment this idea has never been out of my thoughts, and I only waited for an opportunity of coming abroad in order to be able to make a choice, which might be worthy of your Majesty's approbation. The only delicacy which I felt upon this subject was from not being informed of the sentiments of my elder brother, the Prince of Wales, but having taken an opportunity of speaking to him very openly, he declared to me repeatedly his disinclination at present to matrimony and his wish that I should marry. I had therefore intended to have asked your Majesty's leave to have come to Germany this autumn, had nothing extraordinary happened. The appearance of an immediate war which hurried me away from England made me for a time lose sight of my objects, but the instant the probability subsided I began to consider again of my first plan.

I think it my duty to confess to your Majesty that from the first time that I saw the King of Prussia's eldest daughter, The Princess Frederique,* she was not wholly indifferent to me, and though I did not think it right at that moment to encourage any hope concerning her, not being acquainted with your Majesty's sentiments, yet the very instant I knew them, she was always my object. Having had an opportunity during my stay here to see her and to enquire very particularly after her, I am perfectly convinced that her person and disposition are such as to make me perfectly happy. Allow me therefore, Sir, to entreat you as my father and my King to grant me your consent to marry her, and to obtain her for me of the King her father. Indeed, Sir, all my
future comfort depends upon it. This resolution of mine is not one taken in a hurry or from passion alone but after thorough and mature consideration.

Having thus laid open my whole heart to your Majesty, I will not trespass longer upon your leisure, but with every wish for your Majesty's welfare and prosperity and a prayer for a propitious and a speedy answer, I shall conclude with signing myself (etc.) (43961-3)

* Princess Frederica (1767 - 1820) was the daughter of Frederick William II and of Queen Elizabeth (1746 - 1840) whose father was Charles, Duke of Brunswick-Wolfenbüttel (1713-80)

(ii) The first part of a letter from Lord Grenville to the King, Whitehall, 23 July 1791, 4 p.m.

Lord Grenville has the honour of submitting to your Majesty a draft which he has prepared in obedience to your Majesty's orders of a letter from your Majesty to the King of Prussia. As Lord Grenville is not sure whether he has executed your Majesty's ideas on this subject in a manner your Majesty wished, he humbly begs to be honoured with your Majesty's commands as to any point in which the draft may appear deficient. (6845)

(iii) The King's reply Windsor, 25 (?)23 July

The draft of a letter to the King (of) Prussia met with my thorough approbation. - I have therefore prepared the original and enclosed (it) in my letter to my son which has been transmitted to M(ajor) Gen(eral) Bude to be sent tomorrow by the servant. I give this notice to Lord Grenville that his packet for Mr. Ewart may be forwarded by the same channel. *(Fortescue MSS.)

(iv) The Duke of York to the King Berlin, 31 July 1791

My heart is so full of joy at the gracious approbation which your majesty has been pleased to send me, through Lord Grenville, to my ardent request to marry the Princess Frederique, that I take the earliest opportunity to return your Majesty my humble thanks, and to assure you, Sir, that it shall ever be my first care to act in such a manner as to deserve the proofs of paternal affection which your Majesty has ever been pleased to give me. It is impossible to find words strong enough to express the joy which I felt on receiving the account, of the very kind and gracious manner with which his Prussian Majesty has expressed the pleasure and satisfaction which your Majesty's approbation gave him - I will not trouble your Majesty at present with a longer letter. I shall therefore only entreat you, Sir, again and again to receive my most humble and most hearty thanks for your goodness towards me, and sign myself (etc.) (43985)  ~ Fortescue MSS. - Mr. George Fortescue's MSS. at Boconnoc.
(V) The Duke of York to the King Berlin, 5 August 1791

I want words to express to your Majesty my feelings at the receipt of your gracious and affectionate letter. The kind and parental manner with which your majesty has been pleased to approve of my request to marry, has if possible enhanced the favor you have been so good as to grant, and it shall ever be my first object to act in such a manner as to shew myself not undeserving of that affection which your Majesty has upon every occasion shewn to me. I must confess that the time that your Majesty has fixed for my wedding appears to me very distant indeed, but after all the favors your Majesty has already conferred upon me, I should have thought it my duty to have submitted without murmuring if the King of Prussia, when I delivered to him your Majesty's letter, had not himself expressed his wish that the wedding should if possible be sooner, and said that he would touch upon it in his answer to your Majesty. I trust therefore, Sir, that you will pardon me if I express my ardent wish that your Majesty may be pleased to allow the wedding to be sooner; should this meet with your Majesty's approbation, as I can easily see for many reasons that I had better not return to England till after every arrangement has been made in Parliament, I can assure you, Sir, that I shall not think of bringing the Princess over till next Spring, and I am perfectly sure that we can amuse ourselves perfectly well in Germany for this winter. With regard to what your Majesty is pleased to mention of my not returning to England before my wedding, your Majesty may be fully assured that I am infinitely too much attached to the Princess to be able to leave this place, or to find any amusement in any country at a distance from her and that therefore that has never entered once into my thoughts.

As the Princess does herself the honor of writing to your Majesty by this opportunity and returned her thanks to you, Sir, for your very gracious message in your letter to me, which I communicated to her, I will not trouble your Majesty any longer at present except to repeat again my most humble thanks for every proof of affection which your Majesty has been pleased to shew towards me upon this and every other occasion, and to sign myself (etc.) (43987-8)

(VI) The Duke of York to the King Berlin, 9 Sept 1791

This moment your Majesty's very gracious letter of the 2d has been delivered to me and I want words to express to you, Sir, the joy I feel at your goodness in consenting to my ardent wish not to postpone my marriage till after the meeting of Parliament. I know your Majesty does not like fine speeches, I shall therefore only assure your Majesty that it shall ever be my first care to act in such a manner as not to shew myself undeserving of the affection and goodness which your Majesty has never failed to shew me upon every occasion. The 29th of this month is the day which the King of Prussia has fixed upon for my wedding, should your Majesty give your consent to its not being delayed, as therefore your Majesty has been so gracious it will of course be celebrated on that day.

I will not trespass longer upon your Majesty's leisure but repeating every wish for your Majesty's health and happiness, an d my most sincere an d
humble thanks for all the patient kindness you have ever strewn towards me, I shall conclude by signing myself (etc.) (43999)

(VII) The Duke of York to the King, Berlin, 16 Sept 1791
I take the opportunity of the messenger returning to England to acquaint your Majesty that I received yesterday a message from his Prussian Majesty to acquaint me that as there were so many foreign Princes who were to be present at the two* weddings and at the fetes which are to be given in consequence, and who must have equipages belonging to the Court, it was impossible for his stables to furnish every one, and that therefore he wished that I should send to Hannover for two of your Majesty's coaches and sets of horses to attend the Princess and me during the fetes here. As it would be impossible to ask your Majesty's orders upon this subject in time, as they must be here before the 29th, I trust your Majesty will not be displeased with my having written directly to the Ministry, at Hannover, as well as to General Walmoden and Monsieur de Busche, to acquaint them with the circumstances, and to desire that they would forthwith dispatch the carriages and horses according to the desire of his Prussian Majesty.

Having done myself the honor of writing last week to your Majesty, I will not trespass longer upon your Majesty's leisure at present... (44006)

* The second ceremony on 1 Oct. 1791 was the King of Prussia's 3rd daughter (1774 - 1837). She married the Hereditary Prince of Orange (1772 - 1843)

(VIII) William Pitt to the King Weymouth, Thursday, 22 Sept 1791, 9.50
Mr. Pitt thinks his duty to lose no time in presuming humbly to acquaint your Majesty that a difficulty had been discovered from the provisions of the Royal Marriage Act relative to the marriage of his Royal Highness the Duke of York, which appears to require immediate attention, and the particulars of which he wishes to be permitted to submit to your Majesty, whenever is least inconvenient. (6865)

(IX) Henry Dundas to the King Whitehall, 23 Sept 1791, 3.30 p.m.
Mr. Dundas, finding that the instrument signifying his Majesty's consent to the marriage of his Royal Highness the Duke of York, must be signed by his majesty before the Great Seal is affixt, humbly presumes to transmit for his Majesty's signature the accompanying instruments.

Mr. Dundas has directed the messenger to go directly from Weymouth to Lord Kenyon's house in Flintshire where (the) Lord Chancellor now is, and therefore for the sake of expedition has presumed to countersign the instruments herewith sent. (6867)

(X) The King's reply Weymouth, 24 Sept., 4 p.m.
It may be satisfactory to Mr. Dundas to know that about a quarter after two the messenger arrived with the warrant and instrument to be passed under the
Great Seal signifying my consent to the marriage of my son the Duke of York, and that five minutes before three the messenger was re-dispatched... *
(Add. MSS. 40100, f.23)

* Add MSS. - British Museum additional Manuscripts.

(XI) William Pitt to the King Downing Street, Sunday, 25 Sept 1791, 3 p.m.
Mr. Pitt has the honor of transmitting to your Majesty a letter which he received this morning from Mr. Ewart enclosing the instrument which he has signed at Berlin sub spe rati.

The informality of the proceeding seems increased by the Act not being now sent thro the official channel of the Secretary of State, and it seems to require some consideration in what manner the business may be best put into a regular shape. As it appears material to learn the sentiments of the Lord Chancellor on this subject, Lord Grenville has dispatched another messenger to him with a copy of this paper, and has also sent to your Majesty's law servants, whose opinions it may be useful to have, previous to preparing any instructions to be submitted to your Majesty. (6868)

(XII) The King's reply Weymouth, 26 Sept, 4 p.m.
My opinion entirely coincides with that of Mr. Pitt that informalities increase by the steps taken of signing and sending an instrument for which Mr. Ewart had no official authority. I can easily conceive therefore that it must require some delicacy to bring this business into any regular shape; and therefore shall patiently wait for the legal opinions before I can suppose any instructions can be prepared. (Chatham Papers) (The public Record Office) All the King's letters (to 1795) are in bundle 103.

The Royal Consent to the Marriage was given at a meeting of the Privy Council on the 28 September 1791

(XIII) Joseph Ewart to George Aust (Under-Secretary of State for Foreign affairs - 1790-96) 1 Oct 1791
I now proceed to give you some account of the ceremony of the Duke of York's marriage. At five in the evening the Court and all those who are entitled to attend it, assembled in the apartment of the Queen Dowager, who placed the Prussian Crown, which is a most magnificent one, on the head of the Princess Royal: after which the procession began in the following order.

1. The Duke and the Princess, preceded by their Chamberlains, and other attendants; Lord Malmesbury and myself walking immediately before their Royal Highnesses.
2. The Queen Dowager, led by the King
3. The reigning Queen, led by Prince Lewis of Prussia, the Prince Royal being indisposed.
5. The Princess of Orange, led by Prince Henry, the King's third son.
6. The Princess Augusta of Prussia, led by her brother, Prince William.
7. Princess Mary, led by the Duke of Weimar.
8. The Hereditary Princess of Brunswick, led by the Duke of Mecklenbourg-Strelitz.

This procession passed through a very large suite of apartments (for there is no Palace in Europe has finer ones) all fitted up and illuminated for the occasion, to a large Hall, where the ceremony was performed. There was afterwards a great supper. The Royal Family and the Princes above mentioned, were seated at a table of 28 covers, attended by the Great Officers, and served on a magnificent old service of gold. After supper the procession returned, in the same order, to the large Ball, where, in conformity to the ancient custom of this Court, the King led the Dutchess of York round a circle, followed by all his Ministers of State, with flambeaux in their hands; and the Queen and the other Princes and Princesses went successively through the same ceremony. Yesterday the Duke and Dutchess of York had a great Court of Felicitation, and the greatest joy prevails here on the occasion.

Such, my dear Sir, was the general order of this ceremony, which had a very fine effect; and nothing could exceed the dignity and propriety of the Duke of York's behaviour during the whole of it. His Royal Highness was dressed in his full uniform of the Guards, and wore a remarkably handsome sabre, enriched with diamonds, a present from the King of Prussia. (6874)

(XIV) The Duke of York to the King Berlin, 14 Oct. 1791

I take the opportunity of the messenger's setting off for England to return your Majesty my humble thanks for your very gracious letter as well as for your goodness in having so immediately rectified those irregularities which might otherwise have occurred on my marriage being celebrated without your Majesty's consent being received under the Great Seal, and which nothing but absolute necessity, owing to the King of Prussia having wished the two marriages to be celebrated at the same time, could have occasioned. I cannot sufficiently express everything I feel. I will therefore only say that it shall ever be my study to convince your Majesty that you have not conferred your favors upon an ungrateful person.

We shall leave this place on Monday next and mean to travel as fast as it will be in our power, stopping however a few days at Brunswick, Hannover and Osnabruck. I am afraid however, as we shall be obliged on account of the badness of the roads in Westphalia to travel through Cassel and Frankfurt and so through Coblenz and Cologne to Brussels and Calais, that it will be
towards the end of next month before I shall be able to pay my duty in person to your Majesty. (44014)

(XV) The Duke of York to the King Dover, 18 Nov. 1791, 11 o'clock
I lose not a moment to acquaint your Majesty that we are this instant arrived, after having been detained five days at Calais by contrary winds. We sailed at three o'clock this morning, but the wind changing, we were not able to disembark sooner. As the Dutchess has suffered most exceedingly from sea sickness, it will be out of our power to leave this place before tomorrow morning, and therefore we cannot arrive in London till late in the evening.

I trust I need not assure your Majesty how anxious I am to pay my duty and introduce the Dutchess to you, Sir, and the Queen. As I hope to have that honor at the latest the day after tomorrow, I will not trespass longer upon your Majesty's leisure at present. (44016)

(XVI) The King to Lord Thurlow Queen's House, 23 Nov. 1791.
This evening at 8 o'clock is the time I have appointed for the re-marriage of my son the Duke of York at this house.

I desire you will be present; and as the Archbishop has insinuated that he wishes many persons may not be present, I do not intend to have any other but my sons and daughters, unless you think the attendance of any other person necessary. (Egerton MSS. 2232 F.82)

(XVII) Lord Thurlow's reply
23 Nov. The Chancellor will not fail to obey your Majesty's commands and attend at York-House at eight o'clock this evening on the remarriage of his Royal Highness. He does not see the necessity of any other persons being present than those whom your Majesty has been pleased to name. (6892)

(XVIII) The Archbishop of Canterbury to the King Lambeth House, 23 Nov. 1791
The Archbishop of Canterbury humbly & with all thankfulness acknowledges the receipt of his Majesty's commands respecting the remarriage of his Royal Highness the Duke of York this evening at the Queen's House, where, with the blessing of God, he will attend at the hour appointed for the duty assigned to him. He presumes to add that, with permission, he will order the proper officer of St. James's Chapel, who makes the arrangement of the Prayer Books & other things necessary when their Majesties have Divine Service at the Queen's House, to attend there with his directions at an early hour. And the Archbishop will himself attend some time before the time appointed for the ceremony in order to see that everything is properly arranged. (6893)
After the marriage Thomas Pelham described Princess Frederica in the following way:

'The Duchess is not handsome but would be pretty if she had good teeth. She has good eyes and pleasing countenance. Her curtsey is very awkward and vulgarly low, which is very disadvantageous to her, as she does not come into the room until dinner is ready, and consequently comes into a sort of circle which lasts for five or ten minutes before dinner. She has a good deal of conversation ... Her foot, alas' I did not see.' (Add. MSS. 33129, f.74)

Later in 1791 the question of Court precedence for her Highness of York was settled - the wives of the King's sons ranked after the King's daughters.

As will have been seen from the Marriage Act which eventually became law in 1755, the Punishment for any person guilty of Felony was 'to be transported', and if found guilty of a false entry in the parish register, to suffer death as a Felon.

The public must have been greatly confused by the Act as the information would, in most cases, have been spread by word of mouth, an ideal way of distorting the facts.

At the beginning of the nineteenth century there still appeared to be considerable misunderstanding amongst the clergy regarding the correct procedure when calling the banns.

In November 1809, The Lord Chancellor decided to clarify the law on publication of banns of marriage:

'His Lordship said he understood that clergymen frequently published banns upon their being handed to them, after the first and second lesson. The law, however, allowed no such power. By the Act of Parliament for the regulation of marriages, the banns should be made known to the clergyman at least seven days before the publication, together with the christian and surname of the parties, the parish in which they reside, together with their respective residences, and how long they had occupied them. It was the duty of the clergyman, after the first notice, to go to the house where he was directed, and make inquiries there as to the facts. If on such inquiry he was deceived, then he was certainly not to blame for the first publication; but if he neglected to make such inquiry, he was subject not only to heavy ecclesiastical censure, but to punishments of another description.'

By the early 1820s a new Marriage Act was considered necessary, but the wording of the Act and the method of introduction caused a public outcry. Much duplication was adopted and the clergy were placed in an almost impossible situation in order to comply with the law.

The number of marriages dropped dramatically because of the uncertainty of the new Act.

In a report from London at the beginning of July 1822, it was stated that the 'Marriage Act Amendment Bill' was passed in the House of Lords after considerable discussion.

The Journals referred to it as the 'New Marriage Act'.

The Bill, as amended by the Lords and agreed to by the Commons on Friday, 12 July 1822 was entitled 'An Act to amend certain provisions of the 26th of George II for the better preventing Clandestine Marriages.'

It repealed a marriage by licence being void if one or both of the parties married without parental or other necessary consent.

It stated that no licence for any marriage should be granted until oath had been made by the parties applying for the licence.

Where it was alleged that both or either were of the age of twenty-one, the licence was not to be granted until the register of baptism of such parties was produced, and proved under oath by other witness to be correct.

If the register was not in England, an oath was required to the satisfaction of the person authorised to grant the licence.

In all cases, except by special licence, oath was also required confirming the residence of the parties for four weeks before granting such a licence.

The consent of parents or guardians needed to be signified in writing, and the signature attested by three or more witnesses.

The oaths were to be taken before a surrogate, and if perjury was committed, 'to be visited with transportation'.

If one of the parties was convicted of such an offence, that person forfeited to the King all estate, right, title, interest, benefit, profit, and advantage received by the marriage.

All oaths were to be preserved by the proper officer, the licence and other relevant documents to be entered in a calendar, open to the inspection of all persons.

A marriage by licence was not to be impeached on the ground of informality in obtaining such licence.

The Act included marriages by banns as follows:

'With respect to marriages by banns, before publication of such banns in any church or chapel, there shall be delivered to the minister of the said church or chapel an affidavit as to the residence, names and ages of both parties. The banns shall not be published until the names and residence shall be affixed on the principal door of the church or chapel, and some conspicuous place within the said church or chapel, so to remain until the expiration of three Sundays on which such banns shall be published. Such affidavit to be then delivered to the churchwarden or chapelwarden, and by him deposited in a chest. Whenever a marriage shall not be had within three months after the publication of banns, the banns must be republished, or a licence obtained. This Act not to be in force until after Sept 1, 1822. Whenever a marriage shall not be had within three months after licence is obtained, a new licence must be procured, or banns published.'
The Act did not include the Royal Family, nor to any marriages amongst Quakers or Jews, or marriages abroad.

It was required to be read at certain stated times in the churches and chapels, and to extend only to England.

It must have been very trying for a church congregation to sit through a sermon which was comprised entirely of the Marriage Act! Congregations did not take kindly to this procedure being adopted in 1753.

In 1822 the issue of marriage licences necessitated a lengthy notice in newspapers instructing the clergy on this subject.

Just before the Act became law, there was public consternation about the legality of marriages which had already been arranged to take place after the 1st of September 1822. At the end of August, it was again considered important to acquaint the clergy with the legal consequences of the new Act.

The most difficult clause to observe was 'that all and every the clauses and provisions of this Act touching the marriages solemnized by such banns, shall commence and have effect on or after the 1st day of September 1822, and not before.'

Upon the latter clause a question arose whether, on or after 1 September 1822, any minister would be justified in proceeding to solemnize a marriage, by virtue of banns previously published according to the present law.

A case was submitted to Dr. Lushington, whose opinion was as follows:

'I am of opinion that the minister cannot require the requisites of the new Act, with regard to the publication of banns, to be complied with prior to the 1st day of September; and I think the construction of this Act so doubtful, that it would be highly imprudent of him to solemnize any marriage whatever, on or after the 1st of September, by virtue of banns, howsoever before published.

It is with reluctance that I give this advice knowing that it may be productive of inconvenience to many persons; but I am satisfied that it is the only safe course, and I know I am sanctioned in it by the concurrence of others of high professional eminence.

Doctors' Commons, August 9, 1822

Stephen Lushington.

The consequence was that a republication of the banns for three Sundays under the forms prescribed by the new Act would, in all cases, by requisite before a marriage could take effect. The Act also restricted the granting of licences to Archbishops and Bishops.

At the end of September 1822, there was a rush to marry in Scotland. Annan and Gretna Green were inundated by the arrival of couples from the northern part of England, all on the
same errand. In many cases, the cost of the journey involved and expenses incurred amounted to less than the fees involved for a marriage by licence in England.

In October 1822 the Durham Advertiser said of the new Marriage Act:

This farrago of absurdity, which is doing more injury to society than perhaps any Act that the legislature ever enacted, was on Sunday read in church. Its effects in this parish have been striking, and instead of the banns of a dozen couples being read every Sunday, which was the case before the new Act commenced, there are seldom more than two or three couples announced.

Notice has been given in different churches in this neighbourhood, that the new Marriage Act will be read in lieu of a sermon on Sunday morning next.

Such notice was given at St. Nicholas' in this city, and in a church at Hartlepool on Sunday last.

Early in 1823 Parliament decided upon a Marriage Act Repeal Bill and this received the Royal Assent in March 1823.

Until November 1823 marriages were then to be solemnized according to the old law on Marriages. But much confusion still existed in the minds of the clergy and it was obvious that many were still observing the 1822 Marriage Act. The granting of Marriage Licences was also restored to the original Marriage Act of 1753, this to take effect from the 26 March 1823.

After what turned out to be almost a year of uncertainty, a new Marriage Act, which took effect from 1 November 1823, repealed the old Marriage Act of 1753 and the late one of 1822.

For the most part it revived the provisions of the old Act, but gave greater facilities to marrying by licence.

Fifteen days residence for one of the parties was sufficient instead of twenty-eight. No bond was required, which greatly reduced the expense of a licence. If there was no person having authority to give consent to the marriage of a minor, an oath being made to that effect rendered it lawful to grant the licence.

The provisions of the old Marriage Act were virtually re-enacted for marriage by banns.

The public voice had been heard and Parliament had been forced to retreat.

In just over a decade the Birth, Death and Marriage Act passed in 1836 eventually brought relative calm to the marriage situation in this country. Many of the regulations have remained substantially the same.

Initially the clergy were not happy with the Act as it brought civil marriage into the arena. Other religions benefited too, providing their buildings were registered for worship.
The reading of the notice of marriage by the superintendent registrar at three weekly meetings of the guardians has been superseded by the notice of marriage being exhibited in the register office for three weeks (this excludes the day on which the notice of marriage is given and the first available day on which the ceremony can take place).

The hours between which a marriage could be solemnized according to the Act, were later amended from 8 a.m. - 12 noon to from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. Later, this was extended to 6 p.m.

The period of notice for marriage by licence, given as seven days, was finally reduced to one clear 'working' day.

Originally, Quakers and Jews were not allowed to marry according to the usages of their society or religion unless both parties were of that society or religion.

Punishments for wilfully giving false information were still retained from previous Acts before being repealed.

The 'contracting words' mentioned in Part 2 of the Registrar General's notice still apply.

The new registration was delayed until 1 July 1837. The notice was distributed by the Registrar General to the journals of the day to acquaint the public with the new marriage procedure:

Acts required to be done by persons who may be desirous of solemnizing marriage after the 1st day of March 1837, under the provisions of the Acts of the 6th and 7th of William IV. cap.85 and 86.

1. Persons desirous of solemnizing marriage according to the rites and ceremonies of the Church of England, may be married after publication of banns, or by licence, or by special licence, as heretofore; or they may be married (without publication of banns, or by licence, or special licence) according to the rites and ceremonies of the Church of England, on production of a certificate from the superintendent registrar of the district, to be obtained in the following manner, namely: -

One of the parties intending marriage must give notice, under his or her hand, to the superintendent registrar of the district within which the parties shall have dwelt for not less than seven days then next preceding; or, if they dwell in different districts, they must give the like notice to the superintendent registrar of each district. The notice must be in the form of a schedule which the superintendent registrar will furnish on being applied to, and must be filled up with the following particulars:-

The name and surname of each of the parties; whether bachelor or widower, spinster or widow; their respective rank, profession, or calling; whether minors or of full age; their respective dwelling places, whether they have resided within the district more than one calendar month, or if not, how long; in what church or building the marriage is to be solemnized; the district and county in which the other party resides, when they dwell in different districts. A copy of such notice will be entered by the superintendent registrar in a
book called "The Marriage Notice Book" which will be open at all reasonable times, without fee, to all persons desirous of inspecting it.

The notice must be read by the superintendent registrar, or by the clerk of the guardians, at three weekly meetings of the guardians, or if such meetings are not held weekly, at any meeting of the guardians within twenty-one days after the day of the notice being entered in the marriage notice book. After the expiration of twenty-one days after the entry of the notice, if no impediment has been shown, the superintendent registrar may be required to issue a certificate.

Persons (except Quakers and Jews) desirous of solemnizing marriage not according to the rites and ceremonies of the Church of England may be married according to the other rites and ceremonies, on production of a certificate obtained as above mentioned, in a registered place of worship provided that every such marriage shall be solemnized with open doors, between the hours of eight and twelve in the forenoon, in the presence of some registrar of the district in which such registered building is situate, and of two or more credible witnesses; provided also that in some part of the ceremony, and in the presence of such registrar and witnesses, each of the parties shall declare as follows-

"I do solemnly declare that I know not of any lawful impediment why I, A.B., may not be joined in matrimony to C.D."

And each of the parties shall say to the other,

"I call upon these persons here present to witness that I, A.B., do take thee, C.D., to be my lawful wedded (wife or husband)"

Provided also that there is no lawful impediment to the marriage of such parties. Persons may be married seven days from the entry of the notice if by licence and twenty-one days if without licence. A licence may be granted by the superintendent registrar, but only for a marriage in a registered building within his district or in his office; but before any licence can be granted by him, one of the parties intending marriage must appear personally before him, and in case he shall not be the superintendent registrar to whom notice of such intended marriage was given, shall deliver to him the certificate of the superintendent registrar, or superintendent registrars, to whom such notice shall have been given; and such party shall make oath, or shall make his or her solemn affirmation or declaration, instead of taking an oath, that he or she believeth that there is not any impediment of kindred or alliance, or other lawful hindrance to the said marriage, and that one of the said parties hath for the space of fifteen days immediately before the day of the grant of such licence, had his or her place of abode within the district within which such marriage is to be solemnized, and where either of the parties (not being a widower or widow) shall be under the age of twenty-one years, that the consent of the person or persons whose consent to such marriage is required by law, has been obtained thereto, or that there is no person having authority to give such consent, as the case may be.

3. Persons objecting to be married either according to the rites and ceremonies of the Church of England, or in any such registered building,
may, after notice and certificate as aforesaid, solemnize marriage at the office of
the superintendent registrar, with open doors, between the hours of eight and
twelve in the forenoon, in the presence of the superintendent registrar and
some registrar of the district, and in the presence of two witnesses, making
the declaration and using the form of words required in the case of marriage
in a registered building.

Quakers may contract and solemnize marriage according to the usages of
their society, providing both parties are of that society, and that such notice
shall have been given to the superintendent registrar, and a certificate shall
have been issued as before mentioned.

Jews may likewise contract and solemnize marriage according to the usages
of the Jewish religion, under similar provisions.

Every marriage of which notice has been entered as aforesaid must be
solemnized within three calendar months after such entry, or the notice must
be renewed.

Every marriage solemnized after March 1, 1837, under the provisions of this
Act for marriages in England, in any other manner than as hereinbefore
directed, will be null and void.

Be it also particularly observed, that if any valid marriage shall be had under
the provisions of the Act for marriages in England by means of any wilfully
false notice, certificate, or declaration, made by either party, to such
marriage, as to any matter to which a notice, certificate or declaration is
therein required, His Majesty's Attorney-General or Solicitor-General may
sue for a forfeiture of all estates and interest in any property accruing to the
offending party of such marriage, and the proceedings and the consequences
will be the same as are provided in the like case with regard to marriages by
licence before the passing of these Acts.

*The Times* published the following description of the marriage of the Princess Royal:

The marriage of the Princess Royal with Prince Frederick William of Prussia
was celebrated on Monday, January 25 1858, in the Chapel of St. James's
Palace with all the splendour of Modern State ceremonial.

An elegant table, covered with crimson velvet cloth festooned with cords and
tassels, had been placed in the Throne Room for the signing of the marriage
register.

Shortly before noon the bridal procession left Buckingham Palace. It
consisted of upwards of twenty carriages. First came the Princess of Prussia,
the Duke of Saxe Coburg, the Princes Frederick Charles, Frederick Albert
and Adalbert of Prussia, the Prince of Hohenzollern Sigmaringen, the Duke
of Brabant, the Count of Flanders, and their respective suites in carriages
each drawn by two horses.
After a short interval followed the bridegroom in a State carriage drawn by black horses. His Royal Highness was escorted by a detachment of Life Guards, and attended by the gentlemen of his suite. His reception by the multitude was most enthusiastic.

The remaining carriages were occupied by Her Majesty, the Prince Consort, the Bride, the Prince of Wales, and other members of the Royal Family.

Her Majesty and the Princess Royal rode together in a carriage drawn by cream coloured horses, and the cheers which greeted their appearance were vehement and prolonged. A strong detachment of the Life Guards closed the procession.

Victoria, Princess Royal, was born to Queen Victoria on 21 November 1840 and was her first child. She died in 1901. Frederick III, German Emperor, was born in 1831 and died in 1888.

Queen Victoria was not at first in agreement with the marriage, but eventually she allowed the Princess Royal, then only seventeen, to marry.

The Princess Royal's birth was not registered until she was a month old. It had been necessary for the Registrar General to draw the attention of Lord Normanby, the Home Secretary, to the requirement of registration of Royal births under the Registration Act of 1836.

When the Prince of Wales was born in November 1841, his birth was duly registered five days after the event.

Many Court cases concerning marriage were reported in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

The case of Haviland v Mortiboy, which took place in 1859 was unusual in many respects. It was very complicated due to the number of people involved, but was also very interesting.

In 1819 there lived in London a lady known as Mrs. Jones. Her mother's name was supposed to be Taylor, although the lady's correct name was stated to be Wall. As she was, however, known as Jones, by referring to her as Mrs. Jones, the initial description of the case becomes clearer.

In that year she was living with a nobleman as his mistress and her personal beauty was so remarkable that witnesses could easily identify her. Mrs. Jones's nobleman then contemplated marriage.

He proceeded accordingly to 'disembarrass himself of a connection by the approved and very honourable method of settlement and allowance.'

As a result of these arrangements, Mrs. Jones found herself with the lease of a house in Mornington Place, where she appeared to have received lodgers and also to have admitted occasional visits of a more intimate nature. Before many years had elapsed, she took an important step in her life.
On 8 March 1824 she was married at Marylebone Church to Mr. John Sheppard. As this man's wife she lived until 1843. They were then separated by a formal deed and in 1845 Mr. Sheppard died.

She then lived as a widow and her position, throughout these years, was not queried. In 1857 she died and left considerable property, acquired through Mr. Sheppard, to her friends. Her late husband's friends received nothing.

This created ill feeling between the families and resulted in an accidental discovery.

Mrs. Sheppard's executors sent some articles of her clothing to Mr. Sheppard's friends and among these old things a certificate of Mrs. Sheppard's marriage was found. When, however, this certificate was more closely examined it was found to attest the marriage of Mary Jones, but not to Mr. Sheppard, her late reputed husband.

The marriage certificate proved that on the 26 February 1824, just eleven days before she became 'Mrs. Sheppard', Mary Jones was united at St. Pancras Church to a James Masters.

The validity of the second marriage was therefore questioned and the High Court of Chancery was engaged on the enquiry for almost a week.

As Mary Jones was not Mr. Sheppard's lawful widow, there was no title to the share of the estate, as he had died intestate.

The plaintiff's case before the Court supported this argument. The defendants were Mrs. Sheppard's executors, who maintained the validity of her marriage and widowhood, notwithstanding evidence to the contrary.

They succeeded in the following way. They agreed with the fact of the two marriages and the authenticity of the certificate which had been discovered. But they asserted that the two ceremonies made only one!

They proved that James Masters was really John Sheppard, even though the two events had taken place nearly forty years previously.

The property at stake amounted to some £3,000. By diligent searching, a large number of witnesses were produced who had knowledge of the scenes in 1824.

The question requiring an answer was the connection between Mr. Masters and Mr. Sheppard - were they one and the same? It was proved that Mr. Masters was an intimate acquaintance of Mrs. Jones. He had not been heard of since March 1824. What had become of him?

Plaintiffs said that he was a man of similar height and build as John Sheppard himself. He had married Mrs. Jones exactly as Mr. Sheppard had done and that his marriage, being the first, extinguished the second.

The defendants gave a very different version of the story. They said that Masters was a gentleman successor in the lady's favours to the nobleman previously mentioned. The nobleman then, wishing to have her settled independently, promoted the marriage with Sheppard under the assumed name of Masters. But doubts having been thrown on the validity of the act, a second ceremony was performed eleven days later to make everything secure.
The Lord Chancellor and the Lords Justices after carefully balancing the scales in which these competing probabilities and improbabilities had been accumulated through a four day trial, pronounced the balance in favour of the defendants, a decision which was favourably received.

However, the case appeared to be complicated by the collateral evidence that Masters was a gentleman and not a mechanic, as described in the first marriage registration. A scrutiny of his signature in the marriage registers showed that not only was the handwriting that of an uneducated man, but it was thought by professional judges to be very similar to that of Sheppard himself. They considered it just the type of writing as a mechanic would attempt in signing some other name instead of his own. It was by these and other preponderance of argument the Court was induced, upon the whole to declare that Mrs. Sheppard had been the lawful wife, lawful widow and lawful testatrix.

The case had attracted much publicity and focused attention on the illicit love affairs of Mary Jones and her friends which had taken place some forty years previously.

An Act to make further provision for the Registration of Deaths, Marriages, and Births occurring out of the United Kingdom among officers and soldiers of Her Majesty's Forces, and their families, was passed on 23 May 1879.

The Act - the Registration of Births, Deaths and Marriages (Army) Act 1879 - was scheduled to come into operation on 1 July 1879.

It provided for all documents and extracts that had previously been transmitted to the Registrar General, and would be in the future, to be in the legal custody of the Registrar General and to be admissible in evidence.

Registers of Births, Deaths and Marriages were held by units serving abroad, thus providing a comprehensive record of these events.

It also provided for the Registrar General to keep a book to be called the Army Register Book, which would contain all registrations recorded under this Act.

The Marriage Act of 1994 which amended the Marriage Act 1949, provides the public with the first major alteration to the marriage regulations since registration was introduced in 1837. The Registrar General has advised that provisional bookings for marriages could be made up to one year in advance, but the legal notice of the intended marriage still cannot be given before three calendar months from the date of marriage.

From 1 January 1995 a couple wishing to have a civil ceremony in a register office in England or Wales, can arrange to have the ceremony at the register office of their choice and not necessarily within the district in which one or both of the persons reside. There will be no alteration to the length of notice required and notice will still be necessary in the district or districts of residence of the couple. It will rest with the couple to make all the arrangements.

From 1 April 1995 local authorities have the power to approve buildings for civil marriage. The new law allows an hotel, stately home, etc. to apply to the local authority for permission to allow civil marriages to take place on its premises. Any building having a religious connection would be considered unsuitable. A temporary structure such as a marquee would also not qualify.
As with register office ceremonies, the couple have to make all the arrangements. A Superintendent Registrar and a Registrar must be present at the ceremony. A civil marriage ceremony on approved premises may be followed by a celebration providing it is not a religious ceremony.

6. Local Registration

1836

Each Registrar must be a householder and resident in the district for which he may be appointed to act. Integrity of character and punctuality in general habits of business, together with a good handwriting are essential qualifications.

Such were the abilities required for the registration of births, deaths and marriages in England and Wales which commenced in 1837.

Hundreds of such appointments were essential in launching the new registration system. These were to be the Registrars of Births and Deaths, the backbone deemed necessary for the eventual success of this civil project.

Registrars of Marriages were also required to register marriages taking place in register offices before Superintendent Registrars and to attend weddings in non-conformist churches and to record such ceremonies.

England and Wales was to be divided into local registration districts. Each registration district required three types of registration officers. A Superintendent Registrar to conduct civil marriages and supervise registration records. One or more registrars of births and deaths to register all births and deaths occurring within that registration district. One or more registrars of marriages.

The official faced with this immense task of organising a registration system was the newly appointed Registrar General.

It had been decided to base many local registration districts upon newly formed poor law unions. Previously the Poor Law had been administered by single parishes. In 1837 the union of parishes within stipulated districts was still continuing and by 25 March 1840, 576 unions had been formed. Each union was to provide a Workhouse or Institution for destitute people.

Clerks were being appointed to administer the unions. These were often local solicitors and so became the obvious choice when appointing Superintendent Registrars.

Where parts of the country had still not been divided into unions, the Registrar General was forced to separate them by an estimate of population for registration purposes.

On 1 July 1837 the newly formed registration system exploded into action, albeit four months later than originally intended. Registrars all had their own ideas on how to interpret the regulations carefully presented to them by the Registrar General.

The Church of England was not in a condescending mood. New duplicate marriage registers had been distributed to every church in the land. Extra work was involved. New regulations requiring every marriage to be recorded in two registers were being assimilated. On
completion, one marriage register was to be retained by the parish, the other to be handed to
the Superintendent Registrar of the local registration district

How did all these new regulations come to be decided upon?

In 1834 a Bill had been making silent progress through the House of Commons for
establishing a General Register of Births, Deaths and Marriages.

In the House of Commons a further Bill was necessary to postpone the beginning of
registration until 1 July 1837. Lord John Russell moved for and obtained leave to bring in this
Bill to suspend for four months the operation of the two Acts passed in the last session of
Parliament for Marriages and Registrations of Births - Mr. Potter, Mr. Baines and Mr. Wilks
stating the dissenters of all classes to be well satisfied with what the Government had done on
this subject.

The postponement was mainly due to the union of parishes in progress at that time
throughout the country.

After the 1835 Act various alterations were made for the registration of births and deaths.

Although birth and death registers remained the same, the column for the rank or profession
to be inserted was in the latter half of this century amended to 'occupation'.

A new format was introduced on 1 April 1969. Allowing extra information to be inserted in
the registers, it provides help in tracing family records.

A central record for all birth, death and marriage registrations was desirable and Somerset
House in the Strand in London was chosen for this purpose.

In 1973 the General Register Office moved to St. Catherine's House, situated on the corner of
Aldwych and Kingsway, but still quite close to its original site.

During 1837 copies of all registrations began to arrive at Somerset House

Birth and death registrations revealed some misinterpretation of the new regulations. Was the
Registrar General's hard work to be of no avail? No! These initial mistakes were soon
rectified and after a rather imperfect start, the standard of registration improved throughout
the nineteenth century.

The value of the registration system for statistical purposes was quickly recognised.

In the last century statistics were compiled at the General Register Office. But in 1939
additional statistical information became available at the time of registering a birth or death,
thus enabling the Registrar General to speed up the process.

The original Act of 1836, forming as it did a basis for registration in this country, needed to
be understood by the public to ensure its success. To help in this respect, the Registrar
General helped by inserting notices in the journals of the day:
Acts required to be done after the 1st day of March, 1837 in all cases of Birth.

The father or mother of any child born after the first day of March 1837, or the occupier* of any house or tenement in which such birth shall happen, may give notice of such birth to the registrar of the district in which the birth happens within forty-two days next after the day of such birth; and the father or mother, or (in the case of their death, illness, absence, or inability), the occupier of the house or tenement must, within the said forty-two days, give information to the registrar on being requested to do so, according to the best of his or her knowledge and belief of the following particulars, namely:-

The day of the birth of the child; the name (if any is given); the sex; the name and surname of the father; the name and maiden surname of the mother; the rank, profession, trade or calling of the father.

The person giving such information must also state and sign in the register his or her name, description, and residence; and unless this be done no register can be given in evidence. No fee or payment can be lawfully required of the person so giving information respecting any birth; and the entry in the register, which the registrar will thereupon be obliged to make, being signed as aforesaid, will be evidence of such birth in any Court of law or equity.

No birth may be registered after forty-two days from the time of such birth, unless the father, or guardian of the child, or some person present at the birth, make a solemn declaration of the foregoing particulars, according to the best of his or her knowledge and belief, and the registrar shall register the birth accordingly, in the presence of the superintendent registrar; and the person requiring the birth to be registered shall pay to the superintendent registrar two shillings and sixpence, and to the registrar (unless the delay shall have been occasioned by his default) five shillings.

No person shall knowingly cause any birth to be registered otherwise than as hereinbefore mentioned after forty-two days, under a penalty of fifty pounds; and no person shall knowingly cause any birth to be registered at all after six calendar months from after the day of the birth (except in the case of children born at sea) under the like penalty.

No register of births made after six months from the day of birth (except in the case of children born at sea) will be received as legal evidence in any Court of law or equity.

Acts required to be done after the 1st day of March, 1837, in all cases of Death.

Some person present at the death, or in attendance during the last illness, or (in case of inability of such person) the occupier*, or (if the occupier be the person that has died) some inmate of the house or tenement in which a death shall have happened, may, within five days after the death, give notice thereof to the registrar of the district and must within eight days give information to the said registrar, on being requested to do so, according to the best of his or her knowledge or belief, the following particulars, namely:
The day of death; the name and surname of the person who has died; the sex; the age; the rank profession, trade or calling; the cause of death.

The person giving information must also state and sign in the register his or her name, description, and residence; and unless this is done no register can be given in evidence. No fee or payment can be lawfully required of the person so giving information respecting any death; and the entry in the register, which the registrar will thereupon be obliged to make, being signed as aforesaid, will be evidence of such death in any Court of law or equity.

Every person who shall bury or perform any funeral or any religious service for the burial of any dead body, for which no certificate shall have been made and delivered either by the registrar or (in cases of inquest) by the Coroner, and who shall not within seven days give notice thereof to the registrar, will forfeit ten pounds. And no certificate can be given (except by the coroner when an inquest has been held) unless the death has been registered by the registrar of the district.

It is therefore of the greatest importance that persons directed as above, shall without delay give information respecting a death to the registrar of the district within which the death has taken place, that he may register the same, and thereupon deliver a certificate to the undertaker or other person having charge of the funeral.

Caution - Every person wilfully making or causing to be made any false statement touching any of the particulars required to be known and registered, for the purpose of such statement being inserted in any register of birth, death or marriage, will be subject to the same pains and penalties as if guilty of perjury.

N.B. Persons failing to do that which is by an Act of Parliament enjoined are indictable for a misdemeanour, although no specific penalty is imposed by the Act which they have so disobeyed.

* For the purposes of this Act the master or keeper of every gaol, prison, or house of correction, or workhouse, hospital, or lunatic asylum, public or charitable institution, shall be deemed the occupier thereof.

The Church of England was not happy with the 1836 Act and resolved to insert notices in newspapers indicating the attitude of the Church towards the new Act and giving guidance to the clergy about the civil requirements:

Register and marriage Acts:
Observations of these Acts as far as they affect the clergy of the Church of England
The old Register Act, 52G.III. and the old Marriage Act, 4G.IV. by which the clergy are now governed, are repealed, as far as they relate to the register of marriages, but no further. But while the clergy continue to register baptisms...
and burials as before, the object of the new Register Act is to procure a record of births and deaths; and this object it will fail to accomplish.

1. BIRTHS. - Every person is directed to give notice of the birth of his child to the registrar within six weeks; and as there is seldom any motive for doing it, it will of course be generally omitted. But if it is done, and the child is baptised within six months, the clergyman must give a certificate of the baptismal name, on the payment of 1s. in order that it may be inserted in the civil register.

2. DEATHS. - The death of every person must be announced to the registrar within eight days, of which the clergyman who buries the corpse should receive a certificate. But if no certificate is produced, he must report the omission to the registrar within seven days, under a penalty of £10, whether by post or otherwise, is not said.

3. MARRIAGES. - Those who are not willing to have their banns published in Church, or to ask for the Bishop's licence, may give a notice to the superintendent registrar, who will cause it to be read on three successive meetings before the guardians; and a certificate of this being produced to the clergyman of the church therein named, he is to marry the parties. But if he performs the ceremony within three weeks after the entry of the notice, or after three months from such entry, he is guilty of felony.

4. REGISTER OF MARRIAGES. - Before the first of March next, when the Act begins to operate, the clergy will be furnished with new registers, in duplicate, one of which when full is to be kept in the parish chest; the other will be delivered to the superintendent registrar, to whom also a quarterly return must be made in April, July, October and January.

NOTE. - By Canon 62, a clergyman is liable to suspension for three years who solemnizes marriage without licence or banns; and by 4G.IV. he is punished for doing so with transportation for fourteen years. By the 7W.IV. the certificate of the registrar is made equivalent to the publication of banns; but those whom perform the ceremony contrary to the provisions of the Act are simply declared to be guilty of felony.

Local arrangements
At the end of 1836 arrangements were beginning to be made for the registration of births, deaths and marriages in Oxford.

Registration Districts were to be based mainly on local Poor Law Unions and these provided a useful foundation for registration.

The Unions, in addition to providing a basis for registration districts, also provided for the Clerk of each Union to become Superintendent Registrar, and an amalgamation then emerged which was to last beyond the end of the century. For a period some registrars of births and deaths in the Oxford area were also Relieving Officers.
In Oxfordshire registration became associated with the following Unions- Banbury, Bicester, Chipping Norton, Headington, Henley, Thame, Witney and Woodstock.

The Oxford Union, Incorporated under a local Act in 1771, and the Headington Union, were both involved in registration in the City area.

A Notice appeared in the local Jackson's Oxford Journal giving registration details concerning the Headington Union:-

**Headington Union**

We, the Guardians of the Headington Union, in the County of Oxford, assembled at a Board held this 3d day of November 1836, do hereby give notice, that the said Union has in pursuance of the provisions of the Act of the 6th and 7th of Wm.IV.c.86, intituled "An Act for Registering Births, Deaths and Marriages in England" been divided by the Guardians, with the approval of the Registrar General, into the following Registrar's Districts, namely:-

1. St. Clement's District, comprising the following parishes, townships, or places, namely:- Beckley, Cowley, Elsfieid, Horton cum Studley, Headington, Iffley, Marston, Stow Wood, St. Giles, St. Clement, Studley (Bucks) and Woodeaton.
2. Wheatley District, comprising the following parishes, townships, or places, namely:- Cuddesden, Chippinghurst, Denton, Forest Hill, Garsington, Horsepath, Holton, Stanton St. John, Shotover and Wheatley.

R. Weyland, T.L. Cooke, R.C. Godfrey

Guardians of the Poor of the Headington Union in the county of Oxford.

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**HEADINGTON UNION**

The Guardians will, on Thursday next the 10th inst. elect a Registrar for each of the above-mentioned Districts.

Oxford, November 3, 1836 Percival Walsh Jun., Clerk

An advertisement was also inserted for two weeks in November 1836 inviting applications for the election of Registrars in the Banbury Union.

On the 1 July 1837 the following letter appeared, written by a Registrar of Births and Deaths:
Sir, As the present number of your Journal is published on the day on which
the Act for General Registration comes into operation, I beg to offer the
following observations, with a view to remove some prejudice and more
misconception, which will, I think, be found to exist against it.

The Act of William IV. cap.86 provides for the General Registration of
Births, Deaths and Marriages in England. Now of Births and Deaths there has
hitherto been no Registration, only of Baptisms and Burials. The children of
these parents who object to infant baptism were, consequently, not registered
till many years after their birth, if at all; and of those who were baptized in
infancy there are numbers who were baptized at places far distant from the
place of their birth, and of the usual residence of their parents, and whose
registry would consequently be, and no doubt often has been, sought for in
vain. In addition to this Registry of Baptisms, there are then, I am persuaded,
few people who would not think it desirable that there should be a General
Registry of Births; that every birth should be registered as soon as may be
after the event, and in the locality in which it happened. The new Act
provides for this by appointing District Registrars who are "authorised and
required to inform themselves carefully of every Birth and of every Death
which should happen within their respective Districts, after the last day of
June, and without claiming fee or reward from the persons requiring the
Registration, if the information of Birth is given within 42 days, and of death
within 5 days after the event, to register same, according to the prescribed
form, under a penalty of £50. But those parents who shall neglect to have the
Births of their children registered within 42 days will subject themselves to
much additional trouble, and to fees of 7s.6d."

It has been erroneously supposed that the Act was not intended for members
of the Established Church; whereas it was the intention of the framers thereof,
as appears from the preamble, "to provide the means of a complete register of
Births, Deaths and Marriages of his Majesty's subjects in England."

I have again heard it objected that the Act was not what it was intended to be;
that it does not provide the means of a complete Registration, inasmuch as it
leaves parents at liberty either to have the Births of their children registered
or not. So far as giving voluntary information is to be understood, this may be
the case; but the 20th section of the Act provides "that the parents, or other
persons qualified to give information of the several particulars required to be
known and registered touching the birth of the child." And as the Registrar's
remuneration arises from the number of registrations made by him, it will be
of his interest as well as duty to employ such lawful means of obtaining
information as to him shall best calculated for that purpose.

I have heard it objected that the mode is liable to erroneous registration - that
any person may come from a distant parish of a Registrar's district, and
require the registration of a Birth or of a Death which never happened. But to
this I cannot perceive the least inducement, there being no remuneration for
the informant, neither is there any secrecy allowed; but every person giving
information will be required to sign his or her names, description, and residence, in the Register. And the objector could not be aware that the 41st sec. provides that "every person who shall wilfully make or cause to have made any false statement touching any of the particulars required to be known and registered, shall be liable to the same veins and penalties as if he were guilty of perjury."

With a view to ensuring the registration of deaths as soon as may be convenient after the event, it is provided "that any person who shall perform any funeral, or any religious service for the burial or any dead body, for which no Registrar's or Coroner's certificate shall have been obtained, and who shall not within seven days give notice thereof to the Registrar, shall be liable to a penalty of £10."

To the Statesman it belongs to point out the national advantages of the measure, when the annual abstract of the Registers shall be laid before Parliament.

To the Physician, to show the benefit which may result from presenting to the eye of science a regular statement of the mortality of the country with the cause of every individual death.

But to the Registrar, the more humble, though not unimportant duty of spreading information with a view to the most agreeable, though strict performance of the duties of his office.

I am, Sir, &c.

A REGISTRAR OF BIRTHS AND DEATHS

Towards the end of 1840 some publicity was given to the appointment of registrars of births and deaths in the Oxford locality.

The Board of Guardians of the Faringdon Union appointed Mr. William Church of Faringdon, Berkshire, Relieving Officer, to be Registrar of Births and Deaths for the Faringdon District.

The same Board of Guardians also appointed Mr. Samuel Ward of Longworth, Berkshire, Schoolmaster, to be Registrar of Births and Deaths for the Buckland District.

In 1974 this part of Berkshire was absorbed by Oxfordshire.

The Headington Union also publicised an appointment.

Inserted in the local journal in December 1840 by the Headington Superintendent Registrar, Thomas Burrows, Junior, it covered the rural area to the east of Oxford. It stated that Mr. John Cox of Wheatley, surgeon, etc., was appointed Registrar of Births and Deaths for the Wheatley District.
Alterations in Registration Districts
In the editorial of the Oxford Times dated 24 June 1876, it was suggested that the parishes of St. Giles, St. John and St. Clement, Oxford, and part of Cowley, all in the Headington Union, should be transferred to the Oxford Incorporation. It would have been an improvement, but the idea was not pursued and for registration purposes Oxford continued to be divided until 31 December 1932.

When the new Scheme was decided upon in 1932 and after it had been approved and sealed, an Official Notice was inserted in the Oxford Times:–

City of Oxford scheme for registration of births, deaths and marriages under section 24 of the Local Government Act 1929
NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that under the above-mentioned scheme, approved and sealed by the City Council at their meeting on the 5th December 1932, which will operate as and from the 1st January 1933, the present Registration Districts of Oxford and Headington will be combined in one Registration District for all registration purposes, and known as the Registration District of Oxford.

In accordance with the Scheme, the Register Offices will, as from the 1st January 1933, be situate within half-a-mile of the Town Hall, Oxford.

The Scheme may be inspected and any further information desired, obtained on application to J.H.B. WRIGHT, Public assistance Officer, LLOYDS BANK CHAMBERS, OXFORD.

A. HOLT 5th December 1932 Town Clerk

Note: Application has been made to the Registrar General, Somerset House, London, for his approval of No.10, Worcester-street, Oxford, as the new Register Office.

At the time of the amalgamation, birth, death and marriage records covering the Saint Clement sub-district of the Headington Registration District were transferred to the Oxford Register Office.

The Headington Registration District had been in existence for almost 100 years. Most of the area covered by the Saint Clement sub-district had become populous and was part of the City of Oxford.

When the Headington Registration District was abolished a new district was formed. The Ploughley and Bullingdon Register Office covered Bicester and Thame and the rural area to the North and East of the City of Oxford. The Register Office was situated at 10 New Road, Oxford.
Registration officers appointed for the Headington Register Office were as follows:

**Headington Registration District Superintendent Registrars**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1837 - 1850</td>
<td>Thomas Burrows, Jr.</td>
<td>Headington</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1850 - 1859</td>
<td>Henry Dowland Haskins</td>
<td>St. Clements, Oxford</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1859 - 1894</td>
<td>Francis Cripps</td>
<td>19 Market Street, Oxford</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1894 - 1924</td>
<td>Thomas W. Mallam</td>
<td>126, High Street, Oxford</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1924 - 1926</td>
<td>Thomas William Hull</td>
<td>2 &amp; 3 High Street, Oxford</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1926 - 1932</td>
<td>Leonard Victor Murphy</td>
<td>12 King Edward Street, Oxford</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Headington Registration District Saint Clement sub-district Registrars of Births and Deaths**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Address</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1837 - 1853</td>
<td>Richard Wood</td>
<td>29 St. Clement's Street, Oxford</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1853 - 1878</td>
<td>Thomas William Hewlett</td>
<td>13 London Place and 19 London Place, St. Clement's, Oxford</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1878 - 1910</td>
<td>John Draper</td>
<td>49 Cowley Road, Oxford</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1910 - 1913</td>
<td>Charles Frederick Walter Talbot</td>
<td>83 Cowley Road, Oxford</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1913 - 1932</td>
<td>George Quick</td>
<td>83 Cowley Road, Oxford</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>121 Iffley Road, Oxford</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Most of the registrations of births and deaths in this sub-district were recorded at the house of each registrar.

Later, there were outstations in North Oxford where births and deaths could be registered. One was in the Woodstock Road near to the Radcliffe Infirmary and not far from the Maternity Home in Museum Road and an additional attendance was made at Summertown.

**Headington Registration District Registrars of Marriages**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1837 - 1840</td>
<td>Henry Albert Maybury</td>
<td>Headington</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1841</td>
<td>William Sims</td>
<td>Headington</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1841 - 1860</td>
<td>Stephen Goodgame</td>
<td>Headington Quarry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1860 - 1878</td>
<td>Thomas William Hewlett</td>
<td>19 London Place, St. Clements, Oxford</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1878 - 1913</td>
<td>John Draper</td>
<td>101 Cowley Road, Oxford</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1913 - 1932</td>
<td>Ernest Gordon Jackman</td>
<td>5 Bullingdon Road, Oxford</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These registrars of marriages covered the Northern and Eastern areas of the City of Oxford.

There were other registrars of marriages appointed for the Headington district to cover the rural area of the Wheatley sub-district.

William Sims held the post briefly during February, 1841.

All registrars of marriages for this registration district were employed as part-time officers.
Until the end of 1932 the Oxford Registration District had consisted mainly of the central part of the city. There had been part of Berkshire included for a time. This was then discontinued until a small extension was made towards the end of the nineteenth century to enable the then growing suburb of New Hinksey to be included.

But the beginning of 1933 brought a larger registration district which included the suburbs of Summertown, Cowley, Headington and Iffley. At the same time New Marston was included, while the village of Old Marston was excluded.

Wolvercote had previously been transferred to the Saint Clement sub-district in 1929 and with the 1932 amendment, it was included with the other suburbs.

On 1 October 1964 the Ploughley and Bullingdon Registration District was abolished and two separate districts were formed. The names of Ploughley and of Bullingdon were retained for the new districts.

Old Marston and Littlemore are now within the City of Oxford.

The changing of district boundaries to cope with local differences in population can cause difficulties when searching local records. Most large cities were divided into many sub-districts and some were split into several districts. As in the case of Oxford, the records have been transferred from county to city and from county to county.

From this brief encounter with the transfer of local records the reader will realise the numerous alterations which have occurred since 1929 under Sections 24 or 131 of the Local Government Act, 1929 and which have been united in the Registration Service Act of 1953. There have been many changes in registration boundaries throughout the country and in the 1970s this lead to districts being amalgamated. * In this area I am the only registration officer to have held all three registration posts as the following information shows.

**Oxford Registration District Superintendent Registrars**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Address</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1837 - 1862</td>
<td>John Thomas Dobney</td>
<td>14 Walton Place</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>23 Walton Street, Oxford</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1862 - 1876</td>
<td>Ebenezer Tarry</td>
<td>4 St. John Street, Oxford</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1876 - 1887</td>
<td>Walter Thompson</td>
<td>43 Cornmarket Street, Oxford</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1887 - 1899</td>
<td>Henry Frank Galpin</td>
<td>43 Cornmarket Street</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4 George Street, Oxford</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1899 - 1915</td>
<td>Adolphus Ballard</td>
<td>43 Cornmarket Street</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5 Magdalen Street, Oxford</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1915 - 1946</td>
<td>William Howes Linnell</td>
<td>45 Queen Street</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2 &amp; 3 High Street</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>10 Worcester Street</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>13 St. Giles', Oxford</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1953 - 1967</td>
<td>Cecil William Clifton</td>
<td>13 St. Giles'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>42 St. Giles', Oxford</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1967 - 1982</td>
<td>*Hubert Lionel Wood</td>
<td>42 St. Giles'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>43 Westgate, Oxford</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 7 J.H.B. Wright
Figure 8 1948 Poster

Oxford Registration District
Oxford sub-district Registrars of Births and Deaths

1837 - 1852 Richard Green 7 Pembroke Street, Oxford
1852 - 1890 George Brunner 34 Pembroke Street
          116 St. Aldate's
          2 St. Aldate's, Oxford
1890 - 1904 Edmund Butler Gloucester House,
          Gloucester Lane, Oxford
1904 - 1935 Walter Allen Butler 21 Gloucester Green
          10 Worcester Street, Oxford
1935 - 1953 Cecil William Clifton 10 Worcester Street
          13 St. Giles', Oxford
1953 - 1967 *Hubert Lionel Wood 13 St. Giles'
          42 St. Giles', Oxford

Walter Allen Butler was the son of Edmund Butler.
Because of an increase in the number of births in the city, a new sub-district was introduced in 1948. Known as the Radcliffe sub-district, registrations were for births and deaths occurring in the Radcliffe Infirmary and the Radcliffe Maternity Home, subsequently known as the Nuffield Maternity Home. The sub-district was abolished on 1 October 1966.

**Registrars of Births and Deaths**

**Radcliffe sub-district**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years</th>
<th>Registrar</th>
<th>Address</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1966</td>
<td>Wesley Ford</td>
<td>42 St. Giles', Oxford</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Oxford Registration District**

**Registrars of Marriages**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years</th>
<th>Registrar</th>
<th>Address</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1837 - 1841</td>
<td>John Cox</td>
<td>Oxford</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1841 - 1858</td>
<td>Henry Hatch</td>
<td>132 High Street, Oxford</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1852 - 1882</td>
<td>William Blackwell</td>
<td>122 High Street</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Two registrars officiated from 1852 - 1882</td>
<td>1 Princes Street Paradise Square, Oxford</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1858 - 1876</td>
<td>John Arnett</td>
<td>16 St. John Street, Oxford</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1876 - 1890</td>
<td>George Brunner</td>
<td>2 St. Aldate's, Oxford</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1890 - 1920</td>
<td>Richard Henry John Bartlett</td>
<td>43 Cornmarket Street</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4 George Street 2 &amp; 3 High Street, Oxford</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1921 - 1946</td>
<td>John Henry Butler Wright</td>
<td>2 - 3 High Street 10 Worcester Street 13 St. Giles', Oxford</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1947 - 1953</td>
<td>*Hubert Lionel Wood</td>
<td>13 St. Giles', Oxford</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1961 - 1966</td>
<td>Wesley Ford</td>
<td>42 St. Giles', Oxford</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1966</td>
<td>Mrs. F. Barrett</td>
<td>42 St. Giles', Oxford</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Registrars of Births and Deaths for the Radcliffe sub-district also acted as Registrars of Marriages in Oxford.

When the Oxford Registration District was unified on 1 October 1966, four Registrars of Births, Deaths and Marriages were appointed. Eventually two deputy registrars of births and deaths and a receptionist were also employed, one of the deputy registrars acting as a registrar of marriages.
Figure 9 Registrar's Hours of Attendance

Figure 10 13 St. Giles', Oxford
The Unified Registration District of Oxford Registrars of Births, Deaths and Marriages Year Appointed

A 1966 *Hubert L. Wood
    1967 Keith C. Jarrett
    1969 James K. Nuttall
    1979 Mrs. Rosaleen Sherry

B 1966 Wesley Ford
    1974 Mrs. Heather A. Downie

C 1966 Mrs. F. Barrett
    1973 Robert E.G. Smith
    1974 Robert Dawson

D 1966 Arthur M. Sanders
    1967 Philip S. Joyce
    1970 David E.N. Farquhar

After Oxford Register Office had been at 42 St. Giles' for twenty years, it became necessary to move to a larger office.

The move to 43 Westgate necessitated the removal of over 500,000 registrations from eight fire proof safes into a special fire proof room completed the day before! Saturday, 29 November 1975, proved to be a very wet day. The removal van arrived and packing cases filled with birth, death and marriage registers and other office paraphernalia were carried away and delivered to 43 Westgate. The new accommodation was on one floor and thus provided a more cohesive service. On Monday, 1 December 1975, the register office opened for 'business as usual'.

Figure 11 42 St. Giles', Oxford
In 1994 the Oxford Register Office moved from 43 Westgate to a building on the corner of New Road and Tidmarsh Lane. Although there are steps at the main entrance, a disabled entrance is also provided.

The move was made in two stages. The Superintendent Registrar moved on 22 August and the Registrars of Births and Deaths on 5 September.

The office has also been mechanized and registrars can now issue birth and death certificates within a few minutes.

The Marriage Act 1994 allowed civil marriage to take place on approved premises. Local authorities, from 1 April 1995, now have the power to consider applications from owners of different properties for marriages to take place on their premises.

Premises must be of a permanent structure and local planning requirements must have been obtained at the time of making application. Ordinary private houses would not be considered.

Stringent rules relating to fire and safety need to be complied with and access must be provided for people with disabilities. The size and seating capacity of the proposed marriage room can be a decisive factor.

Oxfordshire County Council have leaflets giving full details of their requirements.

All local authorities have similar regulations, but the fees payable for the attendance of the Superintendent Registrar and Registrar of Marriages can vary greatly over England and Wales. One criterion is the distance of the approved premises from the District Register Office. In some districts the fees payable for Saturday ceremonies can be much more than during the week. These fees will be payable to the Superintendent Registrar before the marriage date.

When premises are approved, the couple wishing to marry can make an appointment in the District concerned up to one year in advance. However, the necessary notice of the intended marriage cannot be given to the Superintendent Registrar until within three calendar months of the ceremony.

If, for some reason, the approval for the premises has been revoked, the Regulations indicate that the former holder of the approval should notify this to any couples making arrangements to marry on the premises.
Figure 12 A reproduction of the print on the first Oxford 'Marriage Certificate' envelopes used in the 1970s

Figure 13 1980 Poster
7. Deaths from All Sources

From 1750 to 1850 there were many executions in this country. Transportation was also widely used to combat crime.

While hanging was commonplace, it was therefore not likely that a motion for the entire abolition of the punishment of death was to succeed. The House of Commons divided on this motion in March, 1840, when the numbers were - for the motion 90; against it, 161.

A selection of coroners inquests, held throughout the country, create a picture of a class society which provided limited medical facilities for the majority of people.

Murder and suicide were committed by cutting the throat with a razor, or by poisoning.

Body snatchers were prevalent and were feared by the public. The thieves had a lucrative business with hospitals and dissecting rooms.

So the following narratives will, I hope, show how society has changed from a cruel, to a more enlightened state in the twentieth century, which I do not propose to dwell upon.

Executions

Sheep Stealing. - On Monday, April 28, 1755, Robert Randall was executed in the Castle Green, Oxford, pursuant to his sentence at the last assizes for sheep stealing.

At the place of execution he behaved with great intrepidy and seemed very little shocked.

When he was on the ladder he called out very loudly for silence and declared himself to have been guilty of many other crimes in the course of a dissolute and ill spent life, but that he was entirely innocent of the crime for which he now suffered.

A dispute which arose about the body after the execution later caused a pitched battle between James Carter, a celebrated champion and William Briscoe, a Bargeman.

Transportations.

In 1790 Sir Theodore Janssen's Table covering twenty three years from 1749 - 1771 stated that a total of 678 convicts had been executed and 5190 transported.

An approximate comparison with average figures available for the ten years 1780 - 1790 indicated about 600 executions to have taken place and over 15,000 convicts having been transported.

From these figures it will be seen that crime was very much on the increase and the punishment of death did not appear to deter people.

Military Sentences.

In June 1795 thirteen Oxford Militia Men, who were tried by a General Court Martial at Brighton, were taken from the House of Correction at Lewes and conducted to Brighton in two artillery waggons under a strong guard of the Lancashire Fencibles. Two were shot,
three were condemned and one was pardoned on condition of being transported to Botany Bay. The remainder were liberated.

**Botany Bay:**
Reports about conditions in the vicinity of Botany Bay, New South Wales, Australia, indicated that convicts transported there had not found the punishment as severe as they might have expected.

Information concerning the situation prevailing was contained in a letter received from an officer in that locality and dated December 15, 1794. He was happy to say that the more the country was cleared, the better it was. Apart from a few trifling articles, cattle was their main requirement.

Excellent cedar was growing in great abundance along the banks of the Hawkesbury. He had a farm of one hundred and thirty acres, sixty of which were in cultivation. Good crops of wheat and Indian corn were grown and all kinds of fruit thrived remarkably well. Grapes, in particular, grew well and he estimated he could with ease make forty to fifty gallons of wine.

From another source, it was discovered that the inhabitants of Botany Bay had organised theatrical amusements and there were some very able performers amongst them.

Not having many authors, they suggested a change in English law to enable literary theft to be punished by transportation. A plentiful supply of dramatic writers would then become available to them! Unfortunately for them, this was not to be.

**Horse Stealing.**
On Monday, 29 July, 1793, at 8 a.m. Robert Jenkinson was executed on the platform over the entrance to Oxford Castle. He had stolen a chestnut gelding from Mr. William Phillips of Tetsworth, Oxon.

Previously he had been fervently praying, but was silent at the place of execution.

Jack Ketch fixed the halter and at the time of the hanging there was no sound from the large crowd. The spectators seemed to think the culprit dead before the actual sentence was put into effect as there was not the smallest contortion of his body on being suspended. He had apparently been a consistent offender and had once been transported.

**Military Execution.**
On a Thursday morning in July 1797 at 10 o'clock, according to arrangements made the previous evening, preparation was made at Plymouth for the execution of Lee, Coffy and Brahan. McGinnis was sentenced to 1000 lashes.

In consequence, the following regiments quartered in the neighbourhood were drawn out and marched to the Hoe to be eye witnesses of the executions. They were also there to prevent any disturbance. The men from the East Devon, Lancashire, and East Sussex regiments of Militia, Sussex Cavalry, several companies of Artillery, the Marines from the Barracks and all the ships in the harbour, Royal Invalids and the Plymouth Volunteers, duly assembled.
McGuinnis was conducted to the Hoe by a party of marines and was immediately tied to the halberts, where he received 500 lashes, being half of the number he was sentenced to receive. He was then put into a sedan, taken off the Hoe, and escorted back to barracks.

About half after one o'clock Lee, Coffy and Brahan were brought from the cells and conducted through the Sally-port Gate which leads to the Hoe. Lee was supported by the Rev. Dr. Hawker, Vicar of Charles's Church, Plymouth, and the Rev. Mr. Williams of the Royal Hospital. Coffy and Brahan were each supported by a Romish priest.

The three unfortunate men were dressed in white jackets edged with black, with white caps, and before each of them was carried a black coffin.

The procession moved off very slowly, accompanied by the Marine Band, who played in a solemn and impressive manner a dead march.

As soon as they reached the place of execution, each joined in prayers with the Ministers who attended them, and continued supplicating mercy until half past two o'clock, when each of them had a cap drawn over his eyes, and knelt down on his coffin. The Ministers shook hands with them and retired and the Commanding Officer instantly, on all being ready, directed the execution of the fatal sentence.

Coffy and Brahan fell at the first fire, but it did not appear that one shot of the sixteen that were fired struck Lee as he remained on the coffin, until a Marine discharged his musket through the front of his head. He then fell and another musket being fired through the side of his head, he expired.

The bodies were then put one on each coffin and all the troops that were assembled marched in a circle round them.

Lee and Brahan's firmness did not forsake them, but Coffy was very much agitated from the time the sentence was read until he was launched into eternity, which took place precisely at thirty-two minutes past two o'clock.

The concourse of people assembled on this awful occasion was greater than at any former time in Plymouth and exceeded thirty thousand.

Four Executed.

James Bartlett, for an unnatural crime; Henry Edwards for highway robbery; and John Biggs and Samuel Wood, for burglary, were executed in London during April 1809 at the usual hour, on the top of the New Prison, Horsemonger-lane, in pursuance of their sentence. An excessive crowd had assembled for this melancholy occasion.

The unfortunate men met their fate with great fortitude and died acknowledging the justice of their punishment. Biggs sarcastically observed to the Executioner when he was pinioning him in the usual way, "I wish you had a better office." He, with the rest, died extremely penitent.

A hearse conveyed the body of Bartlett to Limehouse for interment. He was stated to have conveyed before his trial upwards of £1500 to his daughters.
In 1821 many crimes resulted in execution. Three men were executed in front of Warwick gaol before a vast assembly of persons. Their crime was manufacturing forged notes. This type of crime appeared to be so widespread that people were advised to moisten their banknotes. If the watermark remained in the banknote after the water had been applied, it was genuine. If the watermark vanished, it was a forgery. Presumably this precaution was advisable before accepting the banknote!

The following newspaper reports involving executions are typical of that period:

Towards the end of January 1821, another melancholy proof of the depravity of the times was exhibited in the execution of five unhappy persons in the Old Bailey.

Their names were Tobin, Davis, Martin, Johnson and Reeves. Another named White was originally included in the fatal mandate, but was subsequently respited during pleasure.

The unhappy culprits, with the exception of Tobin, were all convicted of street robberies, accompanied with circumstances of great cruelty and aggravation. The frequency of this species of offence within the last few months had excited much attention, and the necessity of an awful public example was generally felt. But that these scenes are viewed with almost total indifference by those who attend them, was never more strikingly exemplified than on this awful occasion.

The crowd, which was great, consisted chiefly of very young persons of both sexes, whose countenances exhibited a degree of hilarity more suitable to a scene of amusement. The youthful appearance of most of the prisoners appeared, for a moment, to excite a strong feeling of commiseration in the crowd, and there were murmurs of indignation, but the feeling was only transient.

When brought into the press-room to have their irons displaced, they appeared quite resigned and extremely penitent. Tobin was convicted upon the most satisfactory testimony, of extorting money from a respectable tradesman in Thames-street, by threatening to charge him with an unnatural crime, and the audacity with which he several times repeated his extortions have seldom been equalled. He was a young man of genteel appearance and insinuating manners and possessed talents, which, if well applied, would have rendered him an ornament of society. He displayed an uncommon degree of ingenuity upon his trial. His family, we understand, is respectable. He prayed very fervently both in the prison and on the scaffold and conversed cheerfully and earnestly with his fellow sufferers upon religious subjects.

Reeves, Johnson and Davis were not more than 16 or 17 years of age and did not evince so much fortitude as the others, but behaved with propriety. Davis was so much affected as to be scarcely able to stand when he came upon the scaffold.

Martin was a Jew and was attended in his last moments by a Priest of that persuasion. He conducted himself in a becoming manner. It was remarkable that he had lost a leg and an eye. He was a man well known about the metropolis, and stood daily for some years in Cheapside with a box of trinkets, by the sale of which he obtained a livelihood.

About eight o'clock the signal was given and the unhappy criminals died almost without a struggle.
We can state as an absolute fact, and it is a circumstance well worthy of remark, that the greater part of those spectators who were nearest the scaffold were old and practised thieves, and some of them of the most desperate kind.

A second report followed in the middle of February 1821.

Scarcely a fortnight has elapsed since it was our painful duty to record the execution of several unfortunate criminals at the Old Bailey. We now have to announce another awful occurrence of a similar description, which took place on Tuesday morning.

The names of the unfortunate objects were Bullock, Wootten, Elliott and Hemingway. The two former were both young men, neither of them being more than 20 or 21 years of age.

They were convicted the Sessions before last of a highway robbery on Mr. Hall, a Foreign Consul, in Drury Lane.

Elliott was convicted of a robbery of a similar description at the east end of the town, and Hemingway was convicted of sacrilegiously breaking into and robbing the parish church of Enfield.

Michael Harley was also reported for execution, but some favourable circumstances appearing, he was respited. His offence was highway robbery.

Bullock was the first brought into the press-yard, double ironed. He was a very fine young man, and his appearance excited the sympathy of all present.

Wootten was the next brought to the block. He was a resolute prepossessing young man, genteelly dressed, he appeared as if he expected a respite up to the last.

Elliott and Hemingway were next and conducted themselves with becoming firmness.

Bullock was conducted first to the scaffold and Wootten followed. They nodded to several persons in the immense crowd whom they knew. Whilst the executioner was putting the rope round Wootten's neck he exclaimed "I am innocent of the crime for which I am about to suffer." Several females were in the crowd and on the unhappy men being launched into eternity, piercing shrieks were heard from them and some fell into hysteric.

A female who had cohabited with Harley was so overjoyed at finding that he was reprieved, that she dropped to the ground and was carried away in strong convulsions.

At the end of February 1821, the apparatus for carrying out the last melancholy mandate of the law was again erected in the usual place in the Old Bailey. It was for the execution of George Barry for highway robbery, Joseph Kitsal for robbing his master, Mr. Chitty, of a large quantity of plate, James Pitcher for a similar offence, he living with Mr. Maltby, a respectable linen draper, in Holborn, and William Robinson, for a burglary in the house of Mr. Manton, at Salthall.

At a quarter before eight Mr. Sheriff Williams and his attendants entered the press-room, where the criminals were in fervent prayer with Mr. Cotton, Mr. Baker, and another dissenting clergyman. Mr. Devereaux, a Roman Catholic Divine, was in attendance on Barry, who was of that religion.
The culprits were then divested of their manacles, Pitcher first, who exhibited a cheerfulness not often witnessed on such occasions. Barry was equally firm, but Kitsal and Robinson were most deeply affected by the scene. The procession moved on towards the lobby, the Rev. Ordinary reading appropriate parts of the funeral service until they arrived at the debtor's door, where, after a short pause, the criminals were led to the platform, at the same time joining in the most fervent devotion with the clergymen. When Mr. Cotton proceeded to read that part of the service "In the midst of life we are in death," the drop fell, and the world closed upon the unfortunates for ever. After hanging the usual time, their bodies were delivered to their friends for interment.

Dawson, alias Hepburn, was to have been executed at the same time for uttering forged notes, but was respited at a late hour on Monday night. He had not been informed of it until the arrival of the Sheriff on Tuesday morning and was, of course, expecting death every minute. When the instrument was read to him by the Ordinary, the impression on the poor fellow was striking in the extreme. He was nigh sinking to the floor, and would have done so had it not been for one of the attendants present.

**Robbery with violence.**

On August 5, 1822, John Matthews was executed in front of Oxford County gaol pursuant to his sentence at the last Assizes for robbing and ill treating Joseph Thomas, the driver of a stage waggon, near Nettlebed on the evening of 28th of March last.

The unhappy man, since his condemnation, appeared very penitent and did not entertain any hope of mercy being extended to him on this side of the grave. The Rev. Mr. Brown, Chaplain of the gaol, paid the greatest attention to him, seeing him at least twice every day. The sacrament was administered to him for the first time in his life on Wednesday morning and on Sunday he heard an impressive sermon, and afterwards again received the sacrament.

On Monday morning at six o'clock, he was brought into the yard and after his irons had been knocked off, he went into the chapel and was engaged in prayer with the Chaplain for some time.

At eight o'clock (the hour of execution), the culprit expressed the wish that no delay might take place in the execution. At about a quarter after eight he ascended the scaffold and without uttering a word, was launched into eternity.

As there seemed some trifling doubt in the mind of the Judge in summing up the evidence on the trial of Matthews, as to the evidence being sufficiently strong to convict him, it will be satisfactory to the parties concerned in the prosecution, and in the minds of the Jury, to learn that the prisoner made a full confession of the whole transaction.

He had previously endeavoured to implicate another person, but before he received the sacrament he declared to Mr. Brown that such charge was unfounded and that he had no companion in his guilt.

**Prisoners Sentences.**

At the Old Bailey Sessions concluded on Wednesday, January 16,1826, seventeen prisoners received sentence of death. Two were ordered to be transported for life, twelve for fourteen years and forty-seven for seven years.
A Salutary Lesson.

Thomas Davis was convicted upon four indictments for horse stealing. The trial took place at Monmouth and he was executed there in April, 1826.

He had resided in Monmouthshire and was thought to be a respectable farmer. He had, however, been engaged for some time in stealing horses, or receiving them when they were stolen.

The sentence of death was calculated to give a salutary lesson to those engaged in similar pursuits. It was stated that he met his death with the greatest of fortitude.

Many executions took place during the year of 1827 and the crimes involved included murder, arson, highway robbery, horse stealing, forgery and stealing property.

An unusual execution for High Treason was detailed in news received from London.

On a morning towards the end of April, 1827, soon after nine o'clock, Daniel Buckley and Jeremiah Andrews, who had been convicted at the late Surrey Assizes for coining underwent the awful sentence of the law at Horsemonger Lane Gaol.

As is usual in all cases of high treason, the wretched men were drawn across the yard on a hurdle (the executioner standing behind them with a drawn sword), to the foot of the staircase leading to the scaffold and then conducted to the top of the prison on which it was constructed.

The Poachers.

White, Burnet and Field, the Sunning-hill poachers, who were convicted at the Berkshire Assizes for shooting at H. Mansel, one of Mr. Crutchley's keepers, were executed outside Reading prison in March, 1828.

They appeared hardened and callous, even when they last parted from their friends, and Field's father urged him to die like a man.

During the condemned sermon, Field and White were observed to laugh at each other. After the service Field lifted the pall of his coffin and remarked at the hardness of the sentence passed for a bit of poaching.

They continued to be impenitent to the last, nodding to some of their acquaintances in the crowd after the rope was round their necks and Field kicked his feet backwards in a sort of bravado.

Burnet appeared to die instantly, but the two others seemed violently convulsed for nearly ten minutes after the drop fell.

In June 1830 at the Old Bailey Sessions, the Recorder passed the sentence of death on William Norton for stealing goods above £5, Thomas Brown for maiming, John Crawley, Thomas Garland, James King and R. Denby, for stealing value £5 in a dwelling house, Thomas Smith, Lazarus Hart, Joseph Evans and George Froggett for house breaking, and Jeremiah Collins for robbing from the person (street robbery).
Altogether, there were sixty-one prisoners charged with street robbery offences.

The unhappy state of Kent.
Three were executed at Maidstone in December 1830. They had all been convicted of arson by setting fire to a stack and barn. Their names were John Dyke otherwise Field, who had protested his innocence since his conviction, and two brothers, William and Henry Packman, who were about eighteen or nineteen years of age, and who did not deny the charge.

The reason for the death penalty appeared to arise from the unhappy state of Kent for some time back.

The Forgery Act. - A Return was presented to the House of Commons in 1830 which gave details of the number of persons who had been executed for forgery or for uttering forged documents for the years 1820 - 1829 inclusive:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Executions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1820</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1821</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1822</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1823</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1824</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1825</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1826</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1827</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1828</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1829</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From these figures it would appear that this type of crime dropped dramatically after the terrible number of executions during 1820 and 1821. However, as the crime seemed to be increasing again, a reminder about the Forgery Act was inserted in some journals in 1830:

As some misapprehension exists as to some of the clauses of the Forgery Act, particularly as regards cheques, it cannot too soon be made known that the third clause expressly awards the penalty of death to all persons who shall forge an Exchequer Bill, Exchequer Debenture, East India Bond, Bank Note, Will, Bill of Exchange, Promissory Note, or any acceptance, undertaking, warrant, or order for the payment of money.

The New Police Force.
News received from London in June, 1830, contained information on the total number of the New Police Force.

This was given as 3314, of whom 17 were Superintendents, 68 Inspectors, 323 Sergeants and 2906 constables.

The population covered was 1,212,491 and the area was divided into seventeen districts.

Sir Robert Peel stated that the force could not be further extended without an Order in the Council. He expressed his conviction that similar forces would be established in large towns by the local authorities in connection with the inhabitants. A similar police force already existed in Brighton.

In December, 1830, orders were received from the Home Department by the Commissioners of the New Police to augment the number in the force.

Two extra divisions were created, each to consist of 200 constables, a Superintendent, and the usual number of Inspectors and Sergeants.
Ages of Offenders.
The comparative ages of prisoners committed for trial at the Old Bailey Sessions in September 1832 indicated that more than two-fifths of the number were Juvenile offenders:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Range</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Under 10 years of age</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Above 10 years of age and under 20 years</td>
<td>210</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Above 20 years of age and under 30 years</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Above 30 years of age and under 40 years</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Above 40 years of age and under 50 years</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Above 50 years of age and under 60 years</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Above 60 years of age and under 70 years</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Above 70 years of age and under 80 years</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>535</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Coroner's Inquests

Death due to Dog Bite.
The death of Jane Brown, aged fifteen years, was the subject of a Coroner's inquest during March 1799. The inquest was held at Ayton, near Scarborough, but no verdict was publicly announced.

On Friday, the 8th of March, a waggoner, who was a servant to Mr. Richard Jefferson, a common carrier between Scarborough and York, called at Mr. Thompson's Inn at Ayton, where Jane Brown was a servant.

The waggoner playfully attempted to kiss the girl and when she resisted, a slight struggle took place

A bulldog, which usually accompanied the stage waggon and was unmuzzled at the time, then furiously attacked her. The dog seized her by the thigh and inflicted two large wounds. Later in the month she died, a few days after gangrene commenced.

Death due to Flogging.
A death from flogging was investigated when an inquest was held at York on the 22nd July, 1822, on the body of John Furnell, a private in the second regiment of foot, who had been flogged at Hull, and within one week afterwards removed to the barracks at York, where he died.

H. Wering, Lieutenant and Adjutant of the 2nd regiment deposed that the said regiment was in garrison at Hull in June. On the 21st of that month the deceased was tried before a Court Martial for "highly irregular and unsoldier-like conduct, in having in his possession a silver spoon or spoons, the property of the Officers' regimental mess, between the 1st and 14th of June, and offering to dispose of same, knowing it or them to be improperly come by."

The man was found guilty and sentenced to receive 300 lashes and that the sentence being confirmed by the Commanding Officer (Lieutenant-Colonel Jordan), it was carried into effect on the 23rd June. No more lashes were inflicted than the sentence authorised, and that the
deceased was sent to the hospital, which is about a mile from the garrison. On the 27th June the regiment marched from Hull and arrived at York on the 29th. The deceased rode from Hull to York on the baggage cart, but walked from York to the hospital.

Mr. Alexander, the surgeon of the 2nd regiment, confirmed these details. He did not know of any medical gentleman (presumably army surgeon) under whose care he could leave the deceased and he was therefore taken to York. The deceased complained of having received a hurt on a baggage cart. The witness concluded by acknowledging that the weather was extremely hot during the march.

The Jury, after due consideration, returned a verdict - "That the deceased received 300 lashes; that he died of the same, and of the fever, mortification, and debility, arising therefrom."

**Pauper refused admittance to Hospital.**

At the end of May, 1826, a poor man named William Benwell, stated to be over 70 years of age, was run over by a chariot at the top of Queen Street, Oxford.

He was immediately taken to the Radcliffe Infirmary, but was eventually refused admittance because he was a pauper belonging to the United Parishes. He died in the workhouse where he received every attention.

At an inquest held in the Committee Room of the House of Industry, the Jury returned a verdict of accidental death, with a deodand of 10s on the carriage and horses. A severe animadversion was passed on the treatment the unfortunate man received at the Radcliffe Infirmary.

**Death before Marriage.**

An inquest was held during January, 1828, at the White Lion Inn, Fazeley, before H. Smith, Esq. Coroner, on the body of William Houghton. He hung himself at his house at Bonehill the day before he was to have been married.

The deceased, who was a tutor, was said to have got up, breakfasted, shaved and retired to his room.

When he did not come downstairs, the servant was sent to call him. She found the door of his room closed and when it was forced open he fell to the floor, having hung himself over the door.

The verdict was "Lunacy."

**Fatality at Hotel.**

A coroner's inquest took place in London after H. Gell, Esq. the coroner for the City of Westminster, had received details of a fatality. The death took place at the Royal Hotel, St. James's Street, Piccadilly, and the information given covered these circumstances.

William Whelan, a young man who had been employed for some time past as a porter at the Royal Hotel, was requested by a gentleman staying there to clean for him a pair of pistols.
For this purpose he went to the premises at the back of the hotel and while employed in cleaning one of them, decided to try it.

Unfortunately he was unconscious of both pistols being loaded with powder and shot. It snapped and the contents entered his right side and right arm, carrying away the elbow cap.

On hearing the report of the pistol several persons arrived and found the young man in great agony. He was taken to St. George's Hospital where he was put to bed and received every attention and assistance.

The surgeons advised amputation as the most speedy and effectual way of saving his life. However, he resisted this proposal and eventually died of his injury.

Fatal Duel.

On Friday, January 8, 1830, at seven o'clock in the morning, a meeting took place near the Red House, Battersea, between Oliver Clayton and Mr. Lambreach, the former attended by Mr. Bigley and the latter by Mr. Cox.

The quarrel arose in consequence of some expression used by Mr. Lambreach to Mr. Clayton while in the West End. On a message being received from Mr. Clayton, the place and time were then decided.

Soon after arriving the opponents fired and Mr. Clayton was shot by Mr. Lambreach. He was immediately moved to the Red House but although surgical aid was forthcoming, he died later that day.

An inquest was held on the body of Mr. Clayton and the Jury brought in a verdict of "Wilful murder against Richard Lambreach, the principal, and Lieutenant Cox and Mr. Bigley, the seconds in the duel."

A coroner's warrant was then issued for their apprehension.

It was understood that the deceased was a literary man aged 32 years, and was tall and remarkably handsome.

Death due to Tobacco Pipe.

In September 1830 an inquest was held at Guy's Hospital on the body of W. Harris.

About three weeks previously the deceased and a man named Wells had been larking about in Deptford. The deceased, who had a pipe in his mouth, ran away and was pursued by Wells who, in endeavouring to catch him, struck the pipe with his elbow and it flew into pieces.

The deceased said that a piece of pipe had penetrated his tongue and some persons who had come to his assistance drew from his tongue a piece of pipe about an inch long. Later his tongue having swollen, he was taken to hospital and it was examined, but nothing was found in it.
After death it was discovered that a piece of tobacco pipe about three inches in length was imbedded in the tongue, about an inch from the surface. The wound had completely healed over it.

Medical evidence given suggested that if the tongue had been properly examined at the time of the accident, instead of the deceased having been taken to a chemist's shop where his mouth was washed with a lotion, the piece of pipe would have been discovered. A verdict of "accidental death" was recorded.

**Southampton Inquest.**

At an inquest held at Southampton in September 1830 on the body of John Clark of the Royal Marines, residing at Clifton, who had received severe injuries by the upsetting of the Celebrity Bristol coach at Hill on the 9th September, it appeared from the evidence that the coachman, B. Faulkner, had carelessly driven against a waggon load of coals when there was at least five or six feet of road to spare.

The Jury, after a patient investigation of two days, returned a verdict against him of "Manslaughter".

In the 1820s and 1830s numerous similar accidents were reported. Some were due to the coachman allowing the horses to get out of control on bends and others for failing to lock the wheel when descending hills. In a few cases the coachman was found to be intoxicated.

**Inquest verdict Challenged.**

On Wednesday, January 12, 1831, an inquest was held at the Workhouse, Oxford, before the Coroner, Mr. Cecil. The deceased, William Cadell, died suddenly in the workhouse yard.

Medical evidence was given that Cadell was brought into the House on Sunday, January 9, and was then very ill and complained about his throat. At first it was thought he had been drinking excessively. He was given some medicine, but died soon afterwards.

The jury returned the following verdict - "Died by the visitation of God, but we are of the opinion that Mr. Clark, the Master of the Workhouse, did not pay proper attention to William Cadell during the time he was in the House."

After the verdict was announced there was some astonishment. Nothing was included in the lengthy testimony of the witnesses that could justify the Jury in imputing blame to the Master of the House of Industry and whose conduct to the pauper appears to have been very humane. This opinion was confirmed by the testimony of several respectable Guardians of the Poor, who were witnesses of the transactions.

It was hinted that the Master gave offence to the enlightened body of Jurors from his inability to give them accommodation in the House suitable to their wishes. This, he said, he was prevented from doing by not having the least notice of an Inquest to be held.

Two letters were written about the verdict:

The undersigned Guardians, who witnessed the attention paid to the deceased, dissent to that part of the verdict that attributes blame or neglect to
the Master; and can assure the public more care, attention and kindness could not possibly have been shown, if the circumstances of the deceased had even allowed of ample remuneration.

(Signed) John Wilson, Joseph Pinfold, John Saunders, Thomas Green, Michael Lewis Brown.

The following is a testimony of Mr. Dickeson, the house surgeon:

It is my belief that every possible attention was paid by Mr. Clark to the late William Cadell. January 14, 1831

J. Dickeson, Surgeon.

**Long Verdict.**

An inquest in May, 1832, at the Plasterer's Arms, St. Clement's parish, Oxford, produced a rather inconclusive decision. The deceased was Mary, the wife of Joseph Gadney, a fisherman.

After the evidence was given the Jury's verdict was "That the said Mary Gadney died by the visitation of God; and the Jury are unanimously of opinion that great blame is to be attached to Joseph Gadney, the husband of the deceased, for his brutal and unmanly conduct towards her, which led to great suspicion in their minds as to his having been the cause of her death, but which suspicion has been done away by the evidence of Mr. Wingfield, the surgeon.

**Extraordinary Inquest.**

In November 1832 in the Worcester area, the death of an elderly gentleman was the subject of a coroner's inquest.

A doctor, who had attended the deceased for some years, gave evidence that his reading had been almost entirely confined to newspapers and his health had been good, but it was based on the amount of amusement he had derived from the newspapers.

From the close of the Session of Parliament his medical friend had observed a visible decline in his health.

The old gentleman would frequently complain in a querulous tone, "Sir, the papers contain no news." When his friend suggested that the ingenious editors were unable to invent news, the uniform reply was, "Pshaw! Sir, I don't want their long-winded and never-ending essays; I hav'n't known such a dearth of news these thirty years; why Sir, there has not been even a murder worth reading for I know not how long."

He gradually continued to decline until he was killed outright by receiving a Paper which contained a frank admission that "they had nothing of interest to communicate."

After the evidence had been considered the Coroner observed to the Jury that the case before them afforded another proof that they lived in extraordinary times.
"Perhaps" he remarked, "the deceased's great-grandfather did not see a paper once a month, and yet such had been the march of intelligence that his descendant had unquestionably died for want of the usual mental food derived from the Journals of the day."

The Jury were at first puzzled about their decision, but eventually returned a verdict of "Died for want of intelligence. Deodand 6d. on the Paper referred to."

**The Jury.**

In December 1840, during a trotting match, Mr. Lockyer, a respectable inhabitant of Bridgewater, fell in a state of apoplexy, and almost immediately expired. An inquest was soon held and a verdict was accordingly returned.

What makes this case more impressive than an ordinary one is that the gaoler was summoning a jury on another inquest, and summoned several persons who were with Mr. Lockyer when he died. These persons sat as jurymen at his inquest and he therefore really saw the summoning of his own jury.

**The Ringmer Union.**

The inquest upon the body of a boy, George Shoe smith, whose death was alleged to have been caused by want of proper nourishment while in the Ringmer poorhouse, was finally completed in Brighton. On some additional evidence being given, the Jury found a special verdict - "That he died by the visitation of God, and that his death was accelerated, if not caused, by the dietary ordered by the Poor Law Commissioners, it not being sufficiently nourishing for growing children. They are also of opinion that the case did not receive the medical attention at the Ringmer Union which it required.

**Accident at the Polytechnic Institution.**

The enquiry into the cause of this accident terminated at the end of January, 1859, with the following verdict - "Accidental death, caused by the falling of a stone staircase at the Polytechnic Institution on Monday, January 3, 1859, and which fall, we believe, was occasioned by the cutting away, for the insertion of the iron trellice works and brackets, and by the incautious manner of doing the work. The jury regret the adoption by the directors of the recommendation so to repair the staircase, instead of reconstructing it."

They also recommended that a person should be appointed by the Government to inspect all public buildings.

**Cricketer Killed.**

In August 1859, an Inquest was held at Gorton, Manchester, on the death of a young man named Richard Prestwich, aged 19, an engine fitter.

A cricket match was being played in a field near the Plough Inn at Gorton and he and a young man named Beckett were batting.

The ball passed to Prestwich and the wicket keeper ran after it. On returning he found Prestwich was slightly off wicket and, intending to get him out, he pitched the ball at the
wicket. Prestwich was at that moment picking up a piece of bone from the ground and the ball, instead of hitting the wicket, struck him on the left temple.

He continued to play although complaining of pain, which later in the day grew more intense, and he died in the early hours of the following morning.

The verdict was "accidental death."

Other Reports of Deaths

**Fatal Catastrophe.**

Early on a Friday morning in August, 1821, a man and his wife with a young child ventured on an attempt to cross the sands from Parkgate to Flint with a horse and cart loaded with herrings.

It was understood that this was sometimes done by persons who were particularly conversant with the track, though at the best it was an hazardous undertaking. In the present instance it proved fatally dangerous to the whole party.

Whether they were actually surrounded by the tide, or missing their proper direction had unawares suddenly plunged into deep water, was not known, but the man, woman and child, with the horse, were all drowned.

When the Flint boat passed up to Chester on Friday morning, the horse was seen floating on the water, and the body of the infant was found in the course of the day. The bodies of the parents were not discovered at that time.

**Suicide.**

News received from Louth in Lincolnshire in March, 1828, stated that the town had been thrown into a state of unusual excitement by the sudden disappearance of one of its most respectable and wealthy inhabitants under circumstances of a deeply criminal nature.

Mr. Phillips, a gentleman who for some time possessed the first business of the town, suddenly discontinued it and left his affairs in a most confused state.

Immediately after his departure his associates and clients were all in consternation at this distressing turn of fortune. Certain circumstances then became known which identified the unfortunate gentleman in transactions, sharing in extent and criminality those for which the London banker, Fauntleroy, was executed.

To enhance this scene of misery, the horror which this distressing revelation had caused was heightened by the receipt of a communication from Hull (to where the wretched gentleman had fled), detailing the dreadful account of his having committed suicide by cutting his throat. His associates were reduced to a state of distraction and many families to utter destitution by his unprincipled conduct.

Unbounded confidence had been placed in him by all classes and he was esteemed both in his private and professional conduct.
He was married with several children, the Rev. Mr. Phillips, brother of the deceased, endeavouring by every means in his power, to help the grieving widow.

**Awful Visitation.**

At the end of March 1828, a respectable woman named Smith living at No.2 Bedford-court, Angel-court, Strand, London, was informed that her sister, who had previously been in good health, had suddenly died.

The funeral of Mrs. Smith's sister had barely been performed when she received information of the sudden decease of her brother.

Mrs. Smith then intimated to her husband her intention of proceeding to see her brother before he was buried.

She was preparing for the journey when she was suddenly attacked with a fit and in less than ten minutes, she herself was dead.

**Climbing Boy's death.**

A most distressing accident occurred at the beginning of 1829 in the town of Dumfries.

A boy, about twelve years of age, went to clean a chimney in a two-story house occupied by more than one family. The boy, who was accompanied by his father, was only required to sweep the vent of the upper lodging. This part of the house was occupied by a Mrs. Bell who had, of course, put out her fire.

The boy proceeded to work in the usual way and was speedily at the top. There were two vents which united at the top and the other occupant of the dwelling, a Mrs. Walker, still had a fire burning in her part of the house.

For some reason the boy, in descending with his cap over his eyes, entered the wrong flue and due to the displacement of a large quantity of soot falling onto the open fire, was severely burnt.

Although medical aid was forthcoming, the boy died a few hours after being rescued and his death created a deep sensation in the town.

The practice of chimney sweeps using climbing boys was widespread at that time.

**Doubtful Identification.**

At the end of December in 1829 the body of a woman was washed ashore at Clachnaharry, near Inverness. On examination it was alleged to be that of Catherine Fraser, change-keeper at Bunchrew, and her relatives identified the corpse.

The body having been placed on a bier, a number of Clachnaharry fishermen hoisted it on their shoulders and proceeded to Bunchrew.

On arriving there, they were amazed to find the supposed deceased in her Sunday best. As soon as their surprise had subsided, Catherine Fraser said she had never had the slightest intention of drowning herself.
The body was then carried back to Clachnaharry and in a few hours identified to be that of Ann Downie, who had resided in Glebe Street and had been missing for one day.

**Fraud discovered.**

In September, 1832, John Gorman, a member of a society called the Hand of Friendship, was brought before the court at Union Hall in London on the following charge:- The defendant stated to the stewards that his wife had died suddenly of cholera, and they had paid him £4 for the funeral expenses according to the rules of the society.

It had been the custom for them to view the body of the deceased, but in this case it was not done due to the fear of catching the disease.

Gorman's wife, on hearing the news that her husband had publicly stated she was dead, came back to London thinking he was about to marry another woman. The fraud on the society was then discovered. He was committed for two months.

**Cholera in Oxford, 1832.**

In most other places in England it had been the practice to dilute the total cholerous cases by combining of cases similar or analogous to them. In Oxford, as in Scotland, it was the practice to exclude all but the clear, certain and fully developed cases of cholera. At the first establishment of the Central Board, it was required that cases resembling cholera should be returned, but the Oxford Board of Health pursued the truth, which was also the path of economy. None but the true, certain, and fully developed cases of malignant cholera were included in the schedules.

In Oxford during September, the total deaths from cholera in 1832 were given as 41, there having been 90 cases. In the St. Clement's parish, out of 66 cases, 32 were fatal.

In August 1832, the total deaths due to cholera in Scotland were given as 2,927 and the total cases as 5,771. The schedules of Edinburgh gave 480 deaths out of 839 cases, and of Leith, 127 deaths out of 218 cases.

At the time of St. Giles' Fair in Oxford, a printed caution was exhibited by the local Board of Health:

**ST. GILES'S FAIR**

**CAUTION AND REMONSTRANCE**

To all Drunkards and Revellers and to the thoughtless and imprudent of both Sexes

You were told by the Oxford Board of Health on the 5th of last December (about six months before the Indian disease had reached this city) that those had been the greatest sufferers from cholera who had been in the habit of indulging most freely in spirituous liquors, and that the habits of life should be regular and temperate. You were told by the Board the same salutary truth on the 27th of last July, when the disease began to scatter death amongst us.
You are now told for the third time, that death and drunkenness go hand in hand in these times of epidemic sickness. But you should consider the present warning more weighty and more impressive than either the other two, because it is given you after two months of sad and fearful experience. The Oxford Board of Health for the third time admonishes and entreats you to forbear and to abstain from all acts of intemperance and imprudence. Beware of late and long sittings, dancings, revellings, surfeitings, and such like. Beware of mixed, crowded and unknown companies in the distempered atmospheres of booths, show rooms, and canvas or boarded apartments. Infection lurks a long time in stone and brick buildings; it is impossible to say how long it may continue in the materials of wooden, woollen and hempen inclosures; and who knows where the booths of a fair were last erected, or how many of sick population may have been crowded within them? But especially beware of drunkenness, for it has been found to bit as a serpent and sting as an adder. Many who have raised their cup in merriment to their lips have in agony lamented their excesses, and at their deaths have left a last legacy and warning to the drunkard. Let all beware who think no cost too great for the purchase of present pleasure - Death smites with its surest and swiftest arrows the licentious and intemperate - the rash, fool-hardy, and imprudent.

By Order of the Board of Health.

VAUGHAN THOMAS, Chairman September 1, 1832.

WILLIAM THORP, Secretary

Mass Drowning.

A very deplorable event occurred in December, 1840, at St. Omer. A number of persons were skating on the river or canal when the ice gave way in the middle, and precipitated twenty-one unfortunate beings to futurity. There was not a possibility of saving any one of them, for it appears that their weight, added to the fall of the water beneath the ice, caused it to open only in the centre, and after swallowing up these devoted beings, reclosed, thereby rendering all assistance impossible. It is supposed that the sluices had been opened the day before, by which the waters were drawn off and the vacuum caused, which had produced this frightful calamity.

The Eliza.

A seaman, named George Johns, met his death the other evening towards the end of December 1858 at Gloucester, through his clothes catching fire while stealing rum.

The deceased was one of the crew of the Shamrock schooner lying in Gloucester docks, alongside another schooner named the Eliza, which had a cargo of rum. The deceased took a tea kettle and a gimlet, and with the latter he bored a hole in one of the rum puncheons, but as the rum did not run out sufficiently fast, he bored a vent hole in the top of the cask and endeavoured to catch the rum in the kettle. It, however, spirited over him, saturating his clothes, and as he had a light with him, he speedily became a mass of flame.
He rushed frantically on deck, and endeavoured to escape to his own ship, and was seen by the dock watchman, a frightful looking object scrambling about the ship.

The captain, who was below, was aroused by the noise and found that part of the ship on fire where the man had been. This was extinguished and also the clothes of the deceased. He was found to be insensible, apparently from having drunk a large quantity of rum, and was removed to the infirmary. He was shockingly burnt and lingered in great agony until the next evening, when he died.

**Circus death.**
In Bradford during December, 1858, a clown died from the effects of falling on his head instead of his feet.

He had attempted to jump from a gallery into the midst of the circus and during his descent, to turn three somersaults.

**Body Snatchers Success.**
News from London in January 1832, included an application to the court at Union Hall by a young man named Goodman. He applied for the assistance of an officer to trace the corpse of his father.

The applicant's father had apparently died a few days ago and the burial had taken place in the churchyard of St. John's Bermondsey.

Although he had asked for a grave to be dug ten feet deep and had, after the funeral, watched the churchyard himself for four nights, the body snatchers had succeeded in exhuming the corpse.

An officer was sent with the applicant to several hospitals and dissecting rooms, but they were unable to discover the dead body.

**Deaths in 1825.**
The publication of the annual number of deaths in the 1820s appeared to be very spasmodic. However, in a return issued in April 1826, the annual number of deaths during 1825 was stated to be just over 332,000.

**The Cause of Suicide.**
This is a subject which has been investigated in depth during the twentieth century.

The reasons have varied over the years, but the ability to live with oneself and to be interested in life is the surest way to avoid such an unpleasant end.

A list of suicides in London between the years 1770 - 1830 contained some interesting information.

There was real poverty during this period and it will be seen that this, together with domestic upheavals, accounted for the majority of known causes.
### Indication of Causes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Causes</th>
<th>Men</th>
<th>Women</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Poverty</td>
<td>905</td>
<td>511</td>
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<tr>
<td>Domestic Grief</td>
<td>728</td>
<td>524</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reverse of Fortune</td>
<td>322</td>
<td>283</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drunkenness and Misconduct</td>
<td>287</td>
<td>208</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gambling</td>
<td>155</td>
<td>141</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dishonour and Slander</td>
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<td>25</td>
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<tr>
<td>Disappointed ambition</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>410</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grief and Love</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>157</td>
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<tr>
<td>Envy and Jealousy</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>53</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wounded Self-love</td>
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<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remorse</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The condition of being possessed</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hatred of Mankind</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown Causes</td>
<td>1381</td>
<td>377</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>4337</strong></td>
<td><strong>2783</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Comparative Mortality.**

During the first half of the nineteenth century many children died during the first year of life.

In August, 1832 an official paper ordered by the House of Commons was circulated, giving the comparative mortality of certain age groups in England from 1813 to 1832.

An extract is given below. In column One is shown the percentage of children born in the town or county and dying under the age of five years and in column Two those dying under the age of twenty years.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
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<th>Two</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Beeston</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bolton</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>61%</td>
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<td>53%</td>
<td>62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>London</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norwich</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rutland</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wigan</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>59%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It was found that in Essex, Rutland and the metropolis people lived to a greater age.

**A week of Mortality in London.**

The table of mortality for the week ending Saturday, September 5, 1840, gives a total of 820 deaths of which 457 are under the age of 15 years; 235 between the ages of 15 and 60 years; and 128 of the age of 60 years and upwards. These numbers show a weekly decrease in deaths of nearly 200, compared with the returns of two years back.

Of the 820 persons who died last week, 166 were from epidemic, endemic, and contagious diseases; 181 from diseases of the brain, nerves and senses; 190 from diseases of the lungs and other organs of respiration; 12 from diseases of the heart and blood vessels; 90 from diseases of the stomach, liver and other organs of digestion; 7 diseases of the kidneys; 3
child-bed; 6 diseases of the joints; 1 disease of skin; 94 diseases of uncertain seat; 46 old age or natural decay; 20 by violence, privation, or intemperance; and 4 from a cause not specified.

Casualties.
The casualties for the City of London from December 10, 1839, to December 15, 1840, were 78 drowned, 70 died by visitation of God, 8 excessive drinking, 18 found dead, 119 killed by accident, 1 murdered, 13 poisoned and 31 suicides. There were also 699 still-births.

8. Oxford Hospitals 1770-1983

Figure 14 Map of Oxford Hospitals

1. Radcliffe Infirmary
2. Warneford Hospital
3. London Road Hospital
4. Littlemore Hospital
5. Cowley Road Hospital
6. Local Board Hospital
7. Nuffield Orthopaedic Centre
8. St John's Home
9. Acland Hospital
10. Oxford Eye Hospital
11. Rivermead Hospital
12. Isolation Hospital, Headington
13. Osler Hospital, Headington
14. Park Hospital, Headington
15. Slade Hospital
16. Churchill Hospital, Old Road, Headington
17. John Radcliffe Hospital
1. Radcliffe Infirmary

It was John Radcliffe (1650-1714), who helped to provide funds for a County Hospital when a decision to build was made in 1758.

He was born in Wakefield, Yorkshire, qualifying in medicine in 1675. Elected a Fellow of Lincoln College, he practised as a Physician in Oxford. Removing to London in 1684, he achieved a successful practice and King William III and Queen Anne were amongst his patients.

When he died, apart from leaving large bequests to Oxford University, University College, where he matriculated, and St. Bartholomew's Hospital, he also left estate in trust for charitable purposes. From the capital accrued it was possible to build the Radcliffe Infirmary, the Radcliffe Observatory, later known as the Nuffield Institute for Medical Research, and it also allowed for a contribution to be made with the building of the Royal College of Physicians.

Thomas Rowney provided the site for the Infirmary, while the building and equipment was made available by the Radcliffe Trustees, and a clinical professorship endowed by the Earl of Litchfield.

All funds were in the name of the University, the Infirmary being a University institution until the granting of a Royal Charter in 1884.

The following Notice appeared in Jackson's Oxford Journal in 1770:
OXFORD June 2

RADCLIFFE INFIRMARY

Whereas the Trustees of the Will of Dr. Radcliffe, have, in Pursuance of the said Will, and at the sole Charge of the Trust, erected and furnished a spacious and commodious Edifice near the University of Oxford, with all convenient and proper Necessaries for a GENERAL INFIRMARY, which they have voluntarily offered for the general Use of the University and City of Oxford, and of the several Counties of Berks, Bucks, and Oxford.

We, therefore, whose Names are here under written, being desirous of promoting and carrying into Execution the laudable design of the Donor and his Trustees, have agreed to pay into the Hands of the Right Hon. Lord Craven, the Reverend the Vice Chancellor of the University of Oxford, William Drake of Amersham, in the County of Bucks, Esquire, and Robert Child Esquire, and Company, of Temple Bar, London, Or one of them, the several and respective Sums placed against each and every of our Names, subject to the Rules and Orders here under written, and subject also to such further Rules, Orders, and Directions, as shall be agreed upon and ordered by any Seven or more of the Governors, Contributors to this Undertaking, at any of their future Meeting or Meetings, for carrying the Intention of the said Dr. Radcliffe and his Trustees into Execution.

I. That each Contributor deposit in Advance the Amount of One Year's intended Benefaction at the Time of Subscribing.

II. That no Person subscribing under Three Guineas per Annum, or Thirty Guineas Once paid for life, shall be entitled to vote as a Governor in the Choice of any Officer, or in any Matter whatsoever relative to the Conduct of the Charity.

III. Every Person subscribing One Guinea per year may recommend One In-Patient in One Year.

IV. All Persons subscribing above One Guinea and under Five Guineas, may always have One In-Patient.

V. All Persons subscribing Five Guineas, or upwards, may have Two In-Patients.

VI. Ladies subscribing as Governors may vote upon all Occasions by Proxy under their Hand and Seal.

VII. That a General Meeting of the Governors will be held at the Hospital at Oxford on Saturday the Twenty-first Day of July next for opening the said Infirmary, and for nominating such Physicians, Surgeons, Apothecaries, Assistants and Officers, as they shall think proper, and for making such further Rules and Orders as shall be judged necessary and expedient.
VIII. No Recommendation to be taken from Persons whose Subscription is in Arrear.

All these Rules are liable to alteration and Amendment by the General Court of Governors.

A list of annual subscribers was included in the Notice. The Duke and Duchess of Marlborough each subscribed £21. At that time there had been twelve subscriptions of £10.10s, nine of £5.5s., and one of £3.3s.

A further Notice was printed in the local press at the end of July, 1770:

RADCLIFFE INFIRMARY, OXFORD

At a General Meeting of the GOVERNORS, held at the said Infirmary on Saturday the 21st Day of July 1770:

RESOLVED, That this Society shall consist of the President, Governors, Treasurer, Auditors, Physicians, Surgeons, and Apothecary, with such other Officers as shall here after be specified; as likewise a proper Number of Servants: and that this Society act and be distinguished by the Name or Title of

The President and Governors of the Radcliffe Infirmary, for the Relief of the sick and lame Poor from whatever County recommended.

The Right Honourable George Henry Earl of Litchfield, elected President.

ORDERED. That a Letter of Thanks be sent to the Earl of Litchfield and the rest of the Radcliffe Trustees; and that Mr. Vice Chancellor, Mr. Principal Nowell, and the President of Corpus, be desired to draw up the same and send it.

RESOLVED. That the following Persons, viz. The Vice Chancellor, Mr. Mayor, Sir James Dashwood, Bart., George Schutz, Esq., The Warden of New College, the Warden of All Souls, Mr. Principal Nowell, Mr. Principal Dennison, Francis Page, Esq., Thomas Walker, Esq., Sir William Stonhouse, Bart., Dr. Lewis, Dr. Smith, Dr. Vivian, Dr. Foulkes, Dr. Stonhouse, Mr. Nourse, Dr. Harrison and such other Governors as please to attend, or any three of them, be a Committee, to meet on Tuesday next at Eleven o'clock, and on every Tuesday and Friday at the same Hour, at the Town Hall, to draw up Rules and Orders for regulating the Infirmary.

At the above meeting Mr. Vice Chancellor was elected Treasurer for the coming year and Mrs. Elizabeth Wheatly was unanimously elected Matron.

Over eighty persons from Oxfordshire and the surrounding counties were present at the meeting.
On Thursday, 18 October 1770, at a meeting of the Governors of the Radcliffe Infirmary, the Infirmary was opened by the admission of seven patients.

It was ordered that on Thursdays at 11 o'clock precisely, any persons admissible and duly recommended would be examined and received.

During 1770 the charity accepted a large number of subscriptions from private individuals and these included many life subscriptions of £31.10s.0d.

Originally the hospital contained four wards and 68 beds were provided. A Staff of three Physicians, three Surgeons, an Apothecary, a Matron, four nurses, an assistant nurse, a night nurse, three household servants and a porter enabled the small infirmary to be run in a kindly and intimate fashion. Patients also helped with the more menial tasks.

A Notice appeared in Jackson's Oxford Journal:

March 14, 1772 RADCLIFFE INFIRMARY
A General Meeting of the Governors of the Radcliffe Infirmary will be held on Wednesday, the 8th of April next, at Twelve o'clock in the Forenoon.
N.B. Proposals for serving the said Infirmary with Butcher's Meat, Coals, Candles, Grocery, and other Necessaries, for the next Quarter, are desired to be delivered in to the Secretary by the 25th instant.
Benefactions and Annual Subscriptions, commencing Oct. the 10th, 1771, are received by the Hon. and Rev. Dr. Tracy, Warden of All Souls College; Treasurer, Mr Jackson Printer in Oxford; and by Child and Co. Bankers in London.

Mr. Jackson, Printer, mentioned in this Notice, was the proprietor and publisher of Jackson's Oxford Journal.

He had commenced printing this newspaper in 1753 and it was to continue to be published each week long after his death, which occurred on the morning of Wednesday, April 22, 1795.

A tribute to him read "In his public character, his loss will be long felt. In private life he was warm in his attachments and sincere in his friendship."

The size of the Infirmary remained the same for about 100 years, but between 1863 and 1877 the Chapel and several new wards were built. By this time the number of beds had risen to 166.

Henry Acland was instrumental in the purchase of a microscope in 1848 and a Pathologist was eventually appointed in 1903. The staff then continued to grow with the appointment of a Dermatologist and an Ear, Nose and Throat Surgeon in 1906.

An Out-Patient block was built in 1913 and in 1918 two further appointments took place - An Orthopaedic Surgeon and a Physician for Mental Disorders.

The appointment of an Obstetric Physician in 1919 was followed by the opening in 1921 of the Maternity Department in Museum Road.
Lord Nuffield, then William Morris, doubled the site of the Radcliffe Infirmary by the gift of land adjoining the observatory. This enabled a new Maternity Block to be built in 1931. The Maternity Department then moved to the new premises and became known as the Radcliffe Maternity Home, and later the Nuffield Maternity Home. Lord Nuffield had provided funds for this development together with the building in 1932 of two new wards, a private block and a Nurses' Home.

A children's block was completed in 1936 and the children's wards were then converted into an Ear, Nose and Throat Block.

In 1938 a further ward was opened bringing the number of beds to over 400.

In 1937 the announcement was made of Lord Nuffield's great charitable gift of £2,000,000 to the University, and the first Nuffield Professors appeared in the Infirmary.

During the 1939-45 war a new Pathological Department was constructed, but it was not until the mid 1950s that some reconstruction took place.

With the completion in 1979 of the second phase in the building programme of the new John Radcliffe Hospital, much of the work of the Radcliffe Infirmary was transferred to the new hospital.

By 1983 the Radcliffe Infirmary was specialising in Neurology, Eye, Ear, Nose and Throat conditions, and Plastic Surgery.

2. Warneford Hospital

![Figure 16 Warneford Hospital](image)
Built in 1826, this hospital was originally known as the Oxford Lunatic asylum.

It became known as the Radcliffe Asylum in 1828. Then, at a meeting held on 29 April 1843, a resolution was passed that this asylum be transmitted to posterity under the style and title of the 'Warneford Lunatic Asylum' in testimony of the gratitude of the Governors and subscribers to the Rev. Dr. Samuel Wilson Warneford, the faithful friend of the official patron of the asylum and the most munificent of all its benefactors.

The hospital had originated from plans placed before a meeting of the Radcliffe Governors, which was held in their committee room on 28 April 1813.

The active and comprehensive benevolence of some of the Governors of the Radcliffe Infirmary and particularly; Dr. Cooke, President of Corpus Christi College, who entertained the hope of being able, by means of a suitable building for the relief and cure of the insane, to study mental diseases, created the necessary atmosphere to bring these plans to fruition.

Financial support was given by the Radcliffe Trustees by four donations totalling £2,700. The University and City of Oxford, many Heads of Colleges, many of the Colleges themselves, Noblemen, Gentlemen and Clergy, both local and from other parts of the country, contributed. Three gentlemen of the Society of Friends gave the sum of £450, but declined to give their names.

Eventually nearly £20,000 was raised and ten acres of land purchased on Headington Hill.

On occasions entertainment was provided for the patients.

On Tuesday evening, 21 November 1871, they were entertained by an exceedingly clever and amusing performance called 'Our Second Floor' by Mr. and Mrs. Clifton and Mr. and Mrs. Booth who went through their performance in a right merry style.

They played, sang, and danced with a determination to drive dull care away, and they succeeded.

Soon after the commencement there was not a sad or serious face to be seen. As it advanced the fun grew fast and furious, and the audience showed their enjoyment by loud exclamations of admiration and delight.

No one who had witnessed the effect could doubt the beneficial influence of these lively representations upon the abstracted minds of the inmates, and no entertainment could have been better adapted to, re-kindle the decaying embers of intelligence, than the sparkling selection given by this talented 'Quartette'.

Eventually the Warneford Hospital became part of the National Health Service with its Professorial Department and Adolescent centre.

3. London Road Hospital

This Institution, built of plain stone, was erected in 1836 for use by the Guardians of the Headington Union as a workhouse.
About 250 inmates could be accommodated and an Infirmary with about 40 beds was provided. This was eventually increased to 60 beds.

The hospital stood in approximately 5¼ acres on the south side of London Road in the Headington Quarry Parish. It was taken over from the Guardians of the former Headington Union by Oxford City Council on 1 April 1930.

It was then administered by the City Public Assistance Committee. This arrangement ceased when the National Health Service began in 1948 and the hospital became known as 'The Laurels' and was transferred to Oxford City Welfare Committee.

By the early 1960s the building had become unoccupied and it was then demolished.

4. Littlemore Hospital
The Institution opened in 1846 and was originally known as the Littlemore Asylum.

Situated just beyond the village of Littlemore on what was then the main Oxford to Henley-on-Thames and London Road, it was the first to be opened in this part of England under the provisions of a new Act of parliament (8 and 9 Vic. c.126).

Eventually it comprised a Union of the Counties of Oxford and Berks, the City of Oxford, and the Boroughs of Oxford and Reading, for the maintenance of their Pauper Lunatics.

When the Asylum was first opened, Oxford City Council debated the issue of whether or not to be included in provisions for sending their pauper lunatics to the hospital. The debate continued throughout the summer of 1846.

In July 1846 the Committee of Visitors of the Oxfordshire County Asylum at Littlemore, advised the public that they had appointed Dr. Ogle, Clinical Lecturer, the Consulting physician, and Mr. Hitchings, the Consulting Surgeon of the Institution.

Dr. William Farr of the General Register Office, in his Report on the Returns of the metropolitan Asylums published in 1841, said of the ten years preceding that 18 in 100 pauper Lunatics died annually in the first year and a half of their malady, and 8 in 100 annually during the next six years.

The recoveries were 19% in the first case and only 3% in the second.

The Asylum's own experience over the first year closely agreed with Dr. Farr's statistical return.

Dr. William Ley was the institution's first Medical Superintendent (1846 - 1868). He was of the opinion at an early stage that mental conditions should be classified. He also felt that patients needed the moral control which experienced attendants were able to give.

During this period the Hospital Chaplain, Edwin W.R. Pulling, M.A., helped enormously in patient care and social activities. He opened a library which included a number of popular Journals and magazines, thus helping to make the patients well versed in current affairs. The patients also much appreciated his magic lantern shows and he appeared to have a large collection of slides.
A comparison of some of the salary scales in 1863 indicated the Medical Superintendent to be well ahead and receiving £450 p.a. The next highest paid person was the Hospital Chaplain with a salary of £180 p.a. The Clerk of Visitors received £126 p.a., the Clerk of the Asylum £120 p.a. and the Medical Assistant £100 p.a. The Head Male Attendant and the Head Female Attendant were receiving only £40 p.a. and 25 p.a. respectively, while the Male Attendants received £20 - £25 p.a. and the Female Attendants only £14 - £18 p.a.

The total payments for all items during 1863 amounted to £16,006.9s.0d.

With this salary scale it was not surprising that by the 1870s the Medical Superintendent was having difficulty in recruiting Attendants.

In February 1865 there was a suicide at the Asylum. An inquest was held on the body of George Lawrence, an inmate of the Asylum, previously a saddler at Abingdon.

The deceased, who was admitted into the Institution in November 1864 was in a melancholy mood and Mr. Ley, the Medical Superintendent, had thought it advisable to associate him with the best class of patients who dined, to the number of about forty, in the front hall, most of them being allowed the use of knives.

On the previous day the deceased ate his dinner and appeared in his usual state. The knives were collected into a basket and Henry Margetts one of the attendants, took the basket into the adjoining store room, set it down, and closed the door, which shut with a spring lock.

While his attention was directed another way the deceased was observed by Henry Hawes, a shoemaker, who was seated in the window seat, to go to the store room, open the door, and shut himself in.

Almost immediately the patients raised an alarm that he had cut his throat, the basket being turned over. He had apparently replaced the knife, but it was thought he had used a carving knife, He had died almost immediately.

Apparently the lock of the store room could be easily forced open with a spoon or any other article and patients had been known to open it.

When Dr. William Ley, retired from the office of Medical Superintendent in 1868, it was recorded that during his period of office he had rendered great service to the Hospital. His retirement was severely felt throughout the Asylum, involving as it did the loss of a kind and sympathising friend, as well as a judicious adviser.

Sir Henry Wentworth Acland, Baronet, M.D. K.C.B. Oxford, was Consulting Physician at the Hospital from 1860 until 1900.

In 1868 Dr. Richard Henry Heurtley Sankey became the Medical Superintendent and remained in the post until 1906.

Being a keen gardener, he substantially improved the grounds of the hospital. They became a credit to those responsible, being beautifully kept.

In January 1882 it was proposed that 3/4 of an acre should be used as a burial ground at the hospital, and it was to last for about 100 years.
The chaplain of the hospital at that time was George H. Elwell, and in his report dated 20 December 1882, he gave details of the burial of four deceased patients in the recently consecrated ground at the back of the Asylum buildings. Subsequently in 1883, he reported the burial of thirty-two patients in the asylum cemetery - twenty four males: and eight females.

The hospital cemetery continued to be used, but by the 1930's a decline in the number of burials was apparent and the majority of the patients who died in the hospital were being removed for private burial.

The number of patients in the asylum in 1846 was 92 and by 1863 this had increased to 501.

By 1958 the number of In-patients had reached an all time high which totalled 924, after which there was a rapid reduction to 317 in 1978. There were no day patients in 1958, but by 1978 there were several thousand.

Dr. Thomas Saxty Good was appointed Medical Superintendent in 1906 and in 1930 he was made President of the Royal Medico-Psychological Association. He was of the opinion that freedom from the restriction of locked doors was helpful to the patient and created a sense of responsibility and control. In this respect he has been proved to be correct and there are no locked wards in the Hospital.

In 1918 the War Office stepped in, taking over the hospital as a Neurological hospital and renaming it the Ashhurst Hospital, the name of the Chairman at that time.

The Ministry of Pensions arrived from 1920 until 1922, during which time there were few civilian in-patients and the Radcliffe Infirmary helped by having a large number of out-patients.

When the hospital was re-opened for civilians in 1922, once again regaining its identity as Littlemore Hospital, some wards were enlarged and other alterations were made. A Nurses' Home was also built. There were over 200 vacant beds which were soon filled by patients from other counties.

The fourth Medical Superintendent, Dr. Robert William Armstrong (1936 - 1958), also had to contend with war-time conditions when from 1940-46 well over 200 beds were used by the War Office as the Ashhurst Military Hospital. The Superintendent was faced with a difficult accommodation situation in that portion of the hospital still used for civilians and this continued until the withdrawal of the military in 1946.

Eight years later, Viscount Nuffield laid the foundation stone of a new admission block, this being officially opened in 1956 and named the Ashhurst Clinic.
5. Cowley Road Hospital

Originally constructed in 1865 as a workhouse, it then occupied an area of approximately 11½ acres.
Replacing the original workhouse in Oxford, it was erected at a cost of £20,000. No infirmary was at first provided, and this lead to a heated discussion about the increased cost involved.

Until the 1914-18 war Cowley Road Hospital was known as 'The Workhouse'. During this war the hospital was used by the 3rd. Southern General Hospital and military cases continued to be admitted until 1919.

The hospital then became known as Cowley Road Hospital and was administered by the Public Assistance Committee from 1 April 1930.

In 1948 the hospital became one of the United Oxford Hospitals. Much work was needed to bring the buildings to an acceptable state after a long period of neglect.

Recognising the increasing needs of the elderly sick and disabled, a Geriatric Unit was provided at the hospital in 1949. Adequately staffed, the hospital provided additional services in the form of Rehabilitation, Continued Medical Care, day Hospital Care, and Medical Social Case work.

Improvements at the hospital in dealing with chronic sick patients enabled their length of stay to be progressively reduced from over a year to just over a month.

In 1958, a new low-cost Unit named Hurdis House, was opened in the grounds of Cowley Road Hospital. Funds for this project were provided by the National Corporation for the Care of the Elderly.

For the first time in this country, the two new buildings introduced a method of integrating elderly patients with their families, thus enabling them to recover an interest in life. This was accomplished by rehabilitation and a day hospital which enabled part contact to be made between the families of the patients and the hospital.

Elderly Oxford people had always thought of Cowley Road Hospital as the Workhouse and when faced with being admitted to this hospital, were very apprehensive. However, after becoming a patient, they found the interior of the hospital to be pleasantly decorated and the staff, taking full advantage of improvements in medical care.

There was general regret when Cowley Road Hospital was closed in 1980, chronic sick patients being split between the Churchill Hospital and the Radcliffe Infirmary.

Cowley Road Hospital was demolished in 1986.

6. Local Board Hospital
   This was built in 1870 for temporary use as a smallpox Hospital.

   It continued to provide for the reception and treatment of cases of infectious disease until a new hospital, eventually re-named Rivermead Hospital became available in 1886.

7. Nuffield Orthopaedic Centre
   As the Wingfield Convalescent Home, the hospital was founded in 1871 by the Rev. J. Rigaud of Magdalen College whose benefactor was Mrs. Hannah Wingfield.
In the 1914-18 war, while Blenheim palace was being used as a Military Hospital by permission of the Duke of Marlborough, the Wingfield Convalescent Home became a Sectional Military Hospital. Both were under the 3rd Southern General Hospital, the Base Hospital being at the Examination Schools in Oxford.

In November 1914 there were about sixty beds at Blenheim palace and twenty beds at the Wingfield Hospital.

A turning point in the hospital's existence came when Gathorne Robert Girdlestone was posted to Oxford as a Captain in the Royal Army Medical Corps to join the Military Hospital. He persuaded the military authorities to enable him to develop a fresh air annexe in the grounds of the Wingfield Hospital. This was achieved with the help of Major General Sir Robert Jones, and Surplus huts were commandeered.

In 1918 the War Office took over the Hospital and in 1919 it was transferred to the Ministry of Pensions.

By the time that a new Wingfield Committee assumed responsibility from the Ministry of Pensions on 1 October 1922, the Wingfield Orthopaedic Hospital already had twelve clinics at work in three counties, and an Orthopaedic workshop and a Hospital School had been started.

Sir Robert Jones and Gathorne Girdlestone had suggested the division of England into a number of orthopaedic districts. In each district an open air country orthopaedic hospital was to serve as a centre for long stay patients, thus improving the methods of treatment. The districts eventually became known as regions.

Through the generosity and help of Miss Feilden, the Wingfield Orthopaedic Hospital began on this pattern.

By 1929 because of the dilapidated state of the wooden wards, it was decided to rebuild. Lord Nuffield, then Sir William Morris, originally named William Richard Morris and born at Worcester, came to Gathorne Girdlestone's rescue with £70,000.

With this gift it was possible to build new nurses quarters, seven new wards and a massage department.

The land on which part of the hospital was erected was bought from Magdalen College and the Prince of Wales officially opened the new buildings on 30 June 1933.

In 1931 the hospital became known as the Wingfield-Morris Hospital in consequence of the munificence of Sir William Morris.

In 1936 a new ward for polio was built by Lt. General Krishna Shumshere Jung, in memory of his daughter, Nani.

There were now 160 beds in the hospital and twenty-two clinics were scattered throughout six counties.

A new building for Medical Research, built at a cost of about £11,000 by the Committee of the Nuffield Medical Trust, was opened on Friday, 28 October 1938. It provided clinical
examination and demonstration rooms for the professor and his staff and waiting rooms for
patients. In addition, a research office, a small pathological laboratory, a medical museum, a
library and a reading room were included.

A speech was reported in the Oxford Times dated 4 November 1938 in which Professor G.R.
Girdlestone the Nuffield Professor of Orthopaedic surgery, said the building was really one
of the results of Lord Nuffield's benefaction to the Oxford Medical School and particularly to
the research and development of the clinical side of medicine in Oxford.

They all knew that the first idea had been that the Oxford hospitals should he brought up to
the highest possible level, so that they might match the scientific teaching in Oxford, and also
that the two could work together for research and better healing of patients and for an
administration which would make Oxford an example of all that medical work could do.

They hoped it would not only be an example amongst themselves, but to people who came
from overseas.

Lord Nuffield (who was present with Lady Nuffield) had particularly desired that this should
be so in connection with the orthopaedic hospital in which he had taken so much interest.

Lord Nuffield payed a tribute to the work of Professor Girdlestone and said it was really due
to his abilities and activities that the new buildings had been rendered necessary and
provided.

Further expansion took place when a new building was officially opened by H.M. Queen
Elizabeth, the Queen Mother. The building contained offices for the Consultants and new
Records and Out-patient departments on the ground floor. The first floor included a new
Radiology Department, a Lecture Theatre and Dining and Common Rooms for the medical
staff, scholars and trainees. The top floor of the building provided the laboratories and offices
of the Professorial Unit. The opening took place on 22 October 1958.

A grant of £35,000 from the Polio Fund in 1957 enabled the Mary Marlborough Lodge to be
built for the study and treatment of the permanently and severely disabled. It was opened by

In 1973 a new operating block was opened and the Oxford Orthopaedic Engineering Centre
was completed in 1976.

The out-patient Department has also been extended to accommodate separately the increasing
number of children.

8. St John's Home.

Originally named the National Hospital of St. John the Evangelist, the Home belongs to the
All Saints' Sisterhood for Women suffering from incurable diseases. The building is situated
on a site of four acres, the gift of the Rev. R.M. Benson.

The first stone of the building was laid by H.R.H. Prince Leopold, then a student at Christ
Church, in May 1873. The address given to the hospital at that time was Leopold Street.
The first meeting relating to the hospital took place at Dr. A. Clark's residence on 26 October 1869 and, according to the minute book, the following were present: the Rev. R.M. Benson (in the chair) a Miss Sandford (the Lady Superintendent), Dr. Lloyd Birkett, Mr. H. Hay Currie, Dr. J.W. Ogle, Mr. Edwin Pears, Mr. C. Tyringham Praed and Mr. Solly.

An extract from the minutes of the London committee stated:

That the following constitute the London Committee for the purpose of acting in concert with the Oxford provisional council and that the committee have power to add to their number

Lionel S. Beale, F.R.S., 61 Grosvenor Street
E. Lloyd Birkett, M.D., 48 Russell Square
G. Burrows M.D., F.R.S., 18 Cavendish Square
A. Clark, M.D., F.R.C.P, 16 Cavendish Square
Rev. Morgan Cowie, Vicar of St. Lawrence Jewry and Hon. Chaplain to Her Majesty
E. Hay Currie, Esq., Bromley, E.
Rev. A. Cotton, St. Paul's Church, Bow Common
G. Farr, M.D., J.R.S., D.C.L., Registrar. Somerset House
Rev. J.L. Fish, M.A. St. Margaret Pattens Rectory
E.A Fitzroy. Esq., 12 Camden Grove, Kensington W.
R.N. Fowler, Esq., M.P. 50 Cornhill
William H. Gull, M.D., F.R.C.P.
J. Hutchinson, F.R.C.S., 4 Finsbury Circus
G. Johnson, M.D., F.R.C.P., 11 Saville Row
Rev. J. Moorhouse, St. James', Paddington
John W. Ogle, M.D., F.R.C.P., 13 Upper Brooke Street, Grosvenor Square
James Paget, M.D., F.R.S., 1 Harewood Place
C. Tyringham Praed, Esq., 189 Fleet Street
Edwin Pears, Esq.,
Sec. to the Social Science Association,
1 Adam Street, Adelphi, Strand.

Rev. J.M. Rodwell,
70 Highbury Road, New Park

St. Thomas Watson, M.D., F.R.C.P.,
16 Henrietta Street Cavendish Square

Miss Sandford, Lady Warden

One of the Oxford Trustees will attend the meetings of the London Committee.

A letter was read from Dr. Farr (Statistician, twice commissioner of the census, and Deputy Registrar General) expressing his sympathy for the object which the committee had in view.

This was to supply the comforts of a bright and cheerful home, well regulated, and with careful nursing and attendance, to alleviate as far as possible those afflicted persons with incurable diseases.

The benefit of the hospital was to be extended to all persons, without regard to place of birth or distinction of religious creed.
Two extracts from the Fundamental Statutes and General Rules read:

1. The Hospital shall be called 'The National Hospital of St. John the Evangelist' and shall be governed by a President, a General Council, and a Committee of Management as hereinafter set forth.

29. The Trustees of the Hospital shall be four in number, all shall pay all capital and other monies and rents, dividends, and other annual income received by them from time to time, into the hands of the Bankers, for the time being, of the Hospital, to the account and credit of the Treasurer of the Hospital, and such payments shall be sufficient discharge to the Trustees for the monies so paid by them.

The balance sheet for 1877 gave details of contributions received by the hospital until it was ready to receive patients on 31 December 1876.

The first contribution was a gift from Mr. W.H. Whinfield in 1867 of £1000, and at his death he bequeathed a legacy of more than £2000. The late Mr. Hanks, also a native of Oxford, left £1000 to the hospital.

The first small building was designed to take eight patients. In 1877 three patients were admitted, and by the time the balance sheet was issued, the number had increased to five.

Subscriptions and donations given for the year 1877 totalled £46.6s.0d.

Initially the hospital was known locally as the National Hospital of St. John the Evangelist for Incurables. The word 'National' appears to have been used because subscribers were not all from the Oxford area.

In the hospital records for 1919 the building was still referred to as St. John's Hospital, but by 1921 the present name had partly emerged - St. John's Home and Hospital. During the next twenty years the use of the first part of this title was apparent and eventually the building was known by its present name - St. John's Home.

The All Saints Sisters were asked to take over the Home in 1881.

During the 1914-18 war, convalescent soldiers from the nearby requisitioned hospital in Cowley Road, came to enjoy the peaceful surroundings of the garden and tea parties were shared with St. John's patients.

St. John's Home is now a registered old people's home and there is a strong family atmosphere. But the sisters still rely on donations and fund raising activities for any major improvements and charges are kept to a minimum.

There are now about 45-50 beds in use. The garden is well tended and there are tree-lined walks.
9. Acland Hospital
At a meeting held in 1878 in Oxford it was decided to perpetuate the memory of Lady Acland by raising subscriptions to help in the nursing of the sick poor in Oxford. In 1879 subscriptions began to be raised for this purpose. This resulted in the establishment of a Home for district nurses and private nurses at 37 Wellington Square, Oxford.

At the end of October 1882 it was stated that a Medical and Surgical Home had been opened at 38 Wellington Square, Oxford, for the reception of patients who had no suitable accommodation in their own homes, and who came to Oxford for medical and surgical treatment.

At the same time it was stated that the fourth Annual General Meeting relating to the Sarah Acland Memorial would be held on Wednesday, 1 November 1882 in the large lecture room in Christ Church (by kind permission of the Dean), the City Council Chamber not being available on that day. An account was then given of the District Nursing in Oxford, and of the general state of the Institution during the past year. All who were interested in the subject were invited to attend. The Chair was taken by the Very Rev. the Dean, Christ Church.

A good attendance included the Warden of New College (Dr. Sewell), The Rev. Canon Slatter, Canon Heurtley, W.B. Duggan, J. Rigaud (founder of the Nuffield Orthopaedic Centre, then known as the Wingfield Convalescent Home), L.L. Sharpe, R.W.M. Pope, G. Lewis, and M.H. Noel, Major-General Rigaud, Dr. Acland, Mrs. Liddell, Mrs. Turner, Miss Acland, Mrs. Combe, Mrs. Hughes, Mrs. Lightfoot, Mrs. Lowe, Mrs. Prestwich, Miss Smith, the Hon. Mrs. Talbot, Mrs. Perry, Mrs. Ince, Mrs. Ashhurst, Miss Rigaud, Mr. and Mrs. H.P. Mallam, Mr. and Mrs. W.H. Walsh, Mrs. Papillon, Miss Cotton, and many other citizens of Oxford.

Dr. Liddell presided at the meeting. He said that four years ago he had the honour of taking the chair at the meeting which inaugurated the foundation and origin of that most excellent society and institute, the Sarah Acland Memorial Home.

He had great pleasure in doing so, both from the regard to her whose name it bore, but also from the contemplation of the benefits they expected it would confer upon the city and which, he believed, had been fully realized.

They had arrived at the end of the fourth year of its existence, and although he had watched the institution when it was a baby and had seen it grow for four years, it had not attained its majority, but he thought he might say it was a very thriving and vigorous child. When he talked of its attaining its majority, he did not reckon the majority of such an institution by years, but he hoped that in much less than 21 years it would have reached its majority, by which he meant that the institution would have become self supporting.

Extracts from the report given at the meeting stated that part of 38 Wellington Square had been opened. It was only for cases of non infectious disease and seven patients had been admitted into the Home. The committee had been enabled to supply this additional medical and surgical help through the liberality, of Mr. Mason of Eynsham Hall.

District Nursing was free of payment because of the interest on the money originally subscribed for the foundation of the Home, and any donations that might accrue for that purpose.
There had been great advantage and usefulness of the institution for the sick poor. As far as private nursing was concerned, during the past year 26 nurses had been in the employment of the Home, the average number being 20.

Sir Henry Acland, who was the founder of the modern School of Medicine in Oxford, and was Regius Professor of Medicine in the University of Oxford from 1858-94, was constantly supported by his wife, Sarah, until she died in 1879.

At this meeting Dr. Acland said he found, as they would believe, a difficulty in speaking, though he had been asked to say a few words, but also far more difficulty in remaining silent.

At the time of this meeting in 1882 it was within a few hours of just four years since the proposition was started, he believed, in that college, and afterwards in his own house, by one or two ladies, to found the institution of which they had heard the account. That account must, in every sense, fully justify the affectionate and benevolent intentions of those admirable ladies who on that occasion founded the work in Oxford.

If he took a more dry business view of the institution, which as a physician he desired to do, he saw in it a work, the character of which was so high that one could not exaggerate it in saying this.

He had only to refer to Mr. Mason, who at the railway station the previous day, said to him that he was delighted to give to the Nurses Home the small sum, he was pleased to call it (£200), because he was a business man, and he looked out and saw what little he could give would be of the utmost service, and he had satisfied himself that there was no way in which he could spend any money he had to spare more usefully to the public than in giving it to the Sarah Acland Home. That was the conclusion of the whole from a very estimable and business man, and the account they had all heard showed that fact.

Mr. Mallam had said what he had no doubt was in the hearts of many of them, that they hardly knew how they used to get on before the Home was instituted. Mr. Mallam said he spent many hours in seeking a nurse, but he (Dr. Acland) had spent a whole night.

Now, as a matter of fact, generally speaking, the rich or poor could in any acute or serious case, obtain the kind of assistance which he would not venture to describe after all that had been said - that kind of assistance which, whether viewed from the Christian or Medical side was all they could desire.

It must be a pleasure and comfort and satisfaction to them to feel that they had initiated the work - it had been their hopes and prayers for the sake of the poor, and for the sake of their friend (Sarah Acland) whom they loved and honoured, that it might increase and do more and more work as time went on.

Therefore he thanked the Dean as far as he might, for the poor and sick, for presiding at this meeting, as they all did the ladies who had initiated the Home and now carried it on, as well as those who served them as faithfully, the Superintendent and the Nurses.

The Dean, in acknowledging the compliment, said he wished to repair a very important omission he had made, viz., to express on the part of the committee the sense of the excellent conduct and the excellent reports they had received, almost without exceptions, of their nurses, from the different families they had been in. Their kindness and attention and the
systematic regulation of all their duties had been beyond praise, and he was quite sure everyone would sympathise with these women who devoted themselves to this good work in the way they did.

When Sir Henry Acland retired, a subscription to commemorate his services produced £3000. This he gave to help with the transfer of the Nursing Home to its present site in Banbury Road, Oxford. It subsequently became known as the Acland Home.

The new building was opened by King Edward VII, then Prince of Wales.

Florence Nightingale had been interested in the project and had helped in the planning of patient's rooms.

Prior to this she had corresponded with Mrs. Mills, Sir Henry Acland's sister. In a letter sent to her in 1862 when she, herself, was recovering from an illness, Florence Nightingale gave her address as 'The Pig Sty, 9 Chesterfield Street, W.' This ensured others would know of the very dilapidated condition of the building which was her home for a short period.

The Letter dated 8 April 1862 was mainly about Paris Hospitals. In it she contrasted a children's hospital well worthy of a visit for the extreme care in occupying and amusing the children with that wretched place in Gt. Ormond Street.
Figure 20 Second page of letter written by Florence Nightingale about Paris Hospitals
Figure 21 Third page of letter written by Florence Nightingale about Paris Hospitals
the great merit of Paris hospitals.
The two hospitals,
like the rest of the
ancient country.

Ever your sincerely,
Florence Nightingale.
Figure 23 Fifth page of letter written by Florence Nightingale about Paris Hospitals

Mrs. Mills' friend is then asked for any notes he may have upon the hospitals. He is not to be 'taken in' by the accounts of their systems of artificial ventilation, as it 'was their greatest flaw'. To support this she quotes Lady Faukerville - 'open your windows and poke your fire'.

Further funds enabled the Acland Home to be extended and an operating theatre was added in 1906.

A new wing was built, which included the present front of the building and some reconstruction of the existing hospital took place, after a gift of £30,000 from Lord Nuffield during 1936-38.

In 1964 the hospital was closed for four months and £85,000 was spent on its modernisation, of which £15,000 was raised in the Oxford area.

The Acland Home became known as the Acland Hospital and so the original Sarah Acland Nursing Institution, which provided trained nurses for medical, mental and fever cases has grown over the years to complement other Oxford hospitals.
10. Oxford Eye Hospital
An Eye Dispensary was established in 1886 by Robert Doyne. Two houses in Wellington Square were used until 1894, when the hospital moved to buildings, which had previously been fever wards, within the Radcliffe Infirmary complex.

The Nuffield Laboratory of Ophthalmology was built in the grounds of the Radcliffe Infirmary in 1942.

In 1948-50 the main buildings of the Eye Hospital were enlarged and extensively modernised.

11. Rivermead Hospital
When first built the hospital was named Cold Arbour Isolation Hospital.

There had been considerable opposition in 1882 to the Oxford Local Board's plan to site the new hospital one mile from the centre of Oxford on the Abingdon Road. Objections were made about the site being liable to flooding. The amount of £200 to be paid by the Oxford Local Board for a water meadow was frowned upon. The main disapproval was extended as the land was required for the erection of a pest house.

Notwithstanding these objections, the hospital was opened to patients in 1886 and for some time was carefully avoided by local people!


With the decline in numbers of acute specific fevers in the 1950s, the hospital became known as Rivermead Hospital and in 1955 it was established as a Rehabilitation Centre. In 1964 there were 55 beds. It had a newly built Physiotherapy department, an Industrial Workshop and Occupational Therapy and Social Service departments. A new recreational building was erected in the mid 1960s.

By the 1980s the Centre was specialising in taking people who had suffered damage to the brain from head injury or stroke. Patients within the ages of 15 to 65 years could stay from two weeks to several months and during this time receive treatment from a comprehensive team led by a Medical Consultant.

12. Isolation Hospital, Headington
Built in 1906 by the Headington Rural District Council, the hospital contained about ten beds. It was situated on the east side of Bayswater Road.

Continuing to be used as an Isolation Hospital throughout the 1920s, it was closed for this purpose in the early 1930s when most of Headington became part of the City of Oxford.

13. Osler Hospital, Headington
Originally named the Osler Pavilion, the foundation stone was laid by Lady Osler in 1925.
The hospital was situated in Manor Road, renamed Osler Road, and was for patients suffering from tuberculosis. It became known as the Osler Hospital in 1955.

Closely associated with the hospital was the Sunnyside Convalescent Home, which was named from the house known as 'Sunnyside' given to the Radcliffe Infirmary by Dr. Ivy Williams in 1922. Medical staff flats for the John Radcliffe Hospital have been built nearby and what was the approach to Sunnyside and the Osler Hospital has been renamed Ivy lane. Sunnyside ceased to be a convalescent home in 1954 and was merged with the Osler Hospital in 1956.

The Osler Hospital was closed in the late 1960s to enable building to commence on the new John Radcliffe Hospital, which now occupies the same site.

14. Park Hospital, Headington
Located in old Road, it first opened as a Neurosis Unit of the Warneford Hospital.

It then became a local and regional child psychiatric hospital.

It also served as a Diagnostic Assessment Centre and a Special National centre for the treatment of epilepsy, as designated by the Department of Health and Social security.

Children are admitted from other areas of the country and a Family Unit of three rooms for mothers and children is a unique and significant feature. In addition to the family having their own room, together with washing, laundry, and bathing facilities, the Unit has a common room, a dining room and a kitchen.

The hospital can accommodate thirty children, and in addition the Family Unit accommodates three families. From the children's point of view, it does not appear to be a hospital.

There are a variety of playrooms, a large occupational therapy department and a school which, although essentially part of the hospital, is separately administered by the Local Education Authority. Oxfordshire County Council equip the school and provide the teaching staff. Usually there are about twenty to twenty-five pupils on the roll, varying from five to sixteen years of age, and in ability from the severely subnormal to the very gifted. The school remains open for about forty-five weeks in the year, but the teaching staff still have the same holiday entitlement as their colleagues in other schools. Over 200 admissions a year are made at the hospital, but the duration of stay can range from a few days to twelve months.

On 29 April 1965 extensions to the hospital were opened by The Rt. Hon. The Lord Brain, D.M., F.R.C.P., F.R.S.

This experiment has proved itself, but how did it begin?

An attractive, friendly, domestic type of building with extensive grounds was an essential ingredient which already existed.

The year was 1957 when Dr. Christopher Ounsted was appointed as Medical Director of the hospital, which was then a Neurosis Unit for adults.
Having undertaken extensive work in children's psychiatry throughout the whole of the Oxford Region and being particularly interested in working with children with brain handicaps, he was aware of a large group of children who would benefit from in-patient care and study.

He therefore asked to change the use of the building to that of a children's hospital.

The opportunity to converse with the founder of a hospital does not often present itself.

I was favoured in this respect when I met Dr. Ounsted.

He was made Medical Director of the Park Hospital after nine years in Paediatric Neurology and he felt there was an absolute need for something of this sort. He was confident of the outcome and his idea expanded better than even he had originally intended.

Over the years he received every assistance, both financial and otherwise, from a national level down and the hospital is unique in this country.

He has seen a lot of things become preventative, which is very good as the hospital is for children to get well in. Over the years there has been great progress with technical knowledge.

The children are very little trouble, but good manners is a necessary priority.

Sometimes parents can be over anxious about a child. Seven per cent of children who come to the hospital have some difficulty in learning and this is not so, they are exceptionally intelligent. It can be a matter of finding the right subject.

The children sleep in bedrooms and every effort is made to ensure as normal an environment as possible.

In some cases a brain operation can be beneficial. This is performed at the Radcliffe Infirmary only after considerable investigation, which can last over several years. After the operation, the intelligence of the child can gradually improve.

On Tuesday, 5 July 1983, the hospital had been in existence for thirty-five years. There is a Human Development Research Unit in the grounds. The Variety Club gave a mini-bus to the hospital and trips in this are enjoyed by all.

Dr. Ounsted ended his reminiscences by recalling a conversation he had with an old don, prior to taking up his post as Medical Director of the Park Hospital.

"Tell me, doctor," said the don, "Am I mad?"

"Yes!" I replied.

He then said "Thank God, I thought it was me!"
15. Slade Hospital

Figure 24 Slade Hospital

The buildings were situated between the Slade and the Eastern By-Pass.

Specifically designed as the City Fever Hospital, it was opened in February 1939.

Later, due to the decline in fevers, part of the hospital was allocated to skin diseases and tuberculosis.

By 1983, the main function of the hospital had become the treatment of skin diseases. This treatment was then transferred to the Churchill Hospital and the Slade Hospital subsequently demolished.

16. Churchill Hospital, Old Road, Headington

Figure 25 Churchill Hospital (artist's impression)
This hospital was built by the Ministry of Health early in the 1939-45 war.

It was first occupied by the Civilian American Hospital in Britain for six months in 1942, and later in that year it housed the 2nd and 91st American Military General Hospitals until 1945.

With the cessation of hostilities the hospital became the property of the Corporation of Oxford. However, the Churchill Hospital was administered by the Radcliffe Infirmary until 5 July 1948, when it became one of the United Oxford Hospitals.

A Maternity Section was included in the hospital and this was closed when all maternity services moved to the new John Radcliffe Hospital on completion of Phase I of the building programme in 1972.

Between 1976 and 1979 several new Units were brought into use. These included an artificial Kidney Unit and a Continuing Care Renal Unit.

In 1976 Sir Michael Sobell House was opened for the relief of patients suffering from cancer. The help this provided led to the opening of a Day Unit on 5 July 1983. Money for the new unit, which cost in the region of £300,000, was raised in the Oxford area.

Ritchie Russell House, a new Disablement Unit was completed in 1976, but was not opened until Monday, 5 March 1979. It is specialising in Neurological Disablement.

When Phase II of the new John Radcliffe Hospital was completed, a gradual alteration was made in the use of the Churchill Hospital.
In 1979 Neurology, Plastic Surgery, Paediatrics and Oral Surgery were moved to the Radcliffe Infirmary.

The Chest Clinic was relocated and Chest Wards were made available in the hospital.

With the closure of Cowley Road Hospital in 1980, over 200 geriatric patients were equally distributed between the Churchill Hospital and the Radcliffe Infirmary. A Body Scanner Unit, for which contributions had been received from Oxfordshire and many neighbouring counties, opened in July 1982.

The main isolation ward at the Slade Hospital was moved to the Churchill Hospital in the spring of 1983.

17. John Radcliffe Hospital

Figure 27 John Radcliffe Hospital

Named after John Radcliffe (1650-1714), plans for the construction of this hospital were being considered in the mid 1960s. A new hospital had been decided upon on the site of the Osler Hospital at Headington.

Phase I of the building programme was a large new Maternity Department. It incorporated the Nuffield Maternity Home from the Radcliffe Infirmary complex and the Maternity Section from the Churchill Hospital.

The first births at the new hospital were on the 4th and 6th of July 1972. There are 167 maternity beds and the Special Care Baby Unit can cope with 23 cases.

Soon after the opening of the Maternity Department facilities were provided on Level 5 for the registration of births and this proved to be a popular measure.

Phase II, the General Hospital, opened in July 1979 and there was a gradual transfer of patients from the Radcliffe Infirmary and other Oxford hospitals.
The General Hospital has over 640 beds.

At the end of 1979 the Blood Transfusion Service moved from the Churchill Hospital to the John Radcliffe Hospital.

9. The Poor and the Weak

The Poor Law
The Poor Law appears to have been founded on the principle of the statute of Elizabeth, for the relief of the old and infirm. The able-bodied who applied for relief needed a test to distinguish whether or not they would be willing to work, if it was found for them.

Mr. Pitt's Bill for the better support and maintenance of the poor was passed in Parliament in 1796 and the Act commenced on 10 July 1797 with certain exceptions to regulations where a particular commencement was especially provided and appointed.

The Act was divided into four main clauses:

I. Provisions for the effectual Relief of the Poor.
II. Provisions for the better employment and instruction of the poor.
III. Provisions for the superintendence of schools of industry, and of the poor in different districts.
IV. The General Clause.

Some idea of the Act can be obtained by reading a small number of extracts which show the attitude to the poor at that time.

Clause I commenced: Whereas it is become necessary that provision should be made for amending and enforcing the laws for the relief, instruction, and employment of the poor; in order, as far as may be, to improve their condition, and to ensure a more comfortable maintenance and support to them and their families, to encourage the general habits of industry and good order, and thereby gradually to reduce the excessive amount of the poor rates.

The Act then specified people entitled to benefit by it.

In Clause II mention of the Overseers in the Act is worth recording as they helped in the taking of the first census in 1801: That the Overseers of the poor of any such parish, or the persons to be appointed by the management of the poor of any parish or parishes to be united by virtue of this Act, after the receipt of such order of Justices as aforesaid, shall in the manner and under the authority hereby limited and prescribed, hire, purchase, or build, a house or houses, for the purpose of establishing a School or Schools of Industry in and for the same parish, or in any parish united therewith by virtue of this Act, and for the said united parishes, towards carrying into execution the purposes of this Act.

Clause III provided that every Guardian of the Poor should take the following oath:

'I do swear that I will truly, faithfully, and impartially, according to the best of my abilities, execute and perform all and every the duties, trust, powers and authorities, required of and vested in me as a Guardian of the Poor, by virtue of an Act of Parliament intituled, an Act for amending and enforcing
the laws, for the Relief, Instruction and Employment of the Poor. So help me God.’

Guardians of the Poor elected under this Act were required from time to time, and at least once in each year, to transmit copies of all reports, etc. made by them, to one of the principal Clerks of His Majesty's most honourable Privy Council to enable a general abstract to be inspected by Parliament each year.

In Clause IV - the General Clause - it was indicated that all laws in force relating to the poor at the time of the Act should continue in force 'except they are herein expressly altered, or are repugnant to this Act, and the regulations and provisions therein contained.'

The Acting Overseers of the parish of Fordingbridge, Hampshire, were in August 1797 tried at the Quarter Sessions for causing suffering to a pauper.

One of them named Hall was sentenced to pay a fine of £100 and to be imprisoned for seven days. The other, whose name was given as Pope, was ordered to pay a fine of £50.

An Act concerning Vagrants came into operation on 1 September 1821. The vagrants left large towns, only to cause problems in rural areas, where country officials were urged to take such persons before the magistrates.

An account of an instance of imposition was in 1821 reported from Worcester: a woman applied to a Magistrate for relief stating that she had three children (one blind) at a lodging house, and that she had a very bad foot.

The Magistrate told an officer to accompany the applicant to the lodging house and see the children. He did so, but after passing through several streets, the woman said she could not recollect where the house was. The officer told her that if she did not produce the children, she must be taken to gaol as an imposter.

Upon this declaration, the lady took to her heels, her 'bad foot' being as useful to her as her good one.

In July 1822, the public in Oxford were warned about the Vagrant Act:

The New Vagrant Act punishes as offences various acts not hitherto considered to come within the legal meaning of acts of vagrancy.

It is important, therefore, that it should be generally known, more especially as great encouragement is held out for apprehension of offenders, the Magistrate being empowered to direct the payment of 5s. to any person or persons apprehending any offender under this Act.

By the 3rd section of this Act (3d Geo.IV. cap.40), it is enacted that all persons going about as gatherers of alms, under any false pretence, all bear-wards, all persons not authorised by law, who shall perform for hire any entertainments of the stage, all persons pretending to be gypsies or tell fortunes, or using any subtle means or device to impose on his Majesty's subjects, or playing or betting at any unlawful game; all persons who run away and leave their wives or families chargeable to the parish; all petty chapmen or pedlars, wandering abroad, not being duly authorised by law; all
persons lodging in the open air, or in barns, carts, etc., and not giving a good account of themselves; all persons exhibiting any indecent exhibition in any public place, or indecently exposing their own persons; all persons placing themselves in the public streets to beg, or causing any child or children so to do, or endeavouring by the exposure of wounds or deformities, to effect the same purpose; all persons apprehended with implements of housebreaking in their possession, or found concealed upon any premises, and not able to give any good account of themselves; and persons endeavouring to impose upon any overseer, or charitable institution, or private individual, by any false representation, either verbally or in writing, with a view to obtain money or other benefit, shall be deemed rogues and vagabonds within the meaning of this Act.

And by a subsequent clause, all persons convicted under this Act may be committed to the House of Correction for any time not exceeding three months, nor less than one month, and kept in hard labour during their imprisonment.

By the provisions of the above Act, it will be seen that persons bathing near the public walks render themselves liable to the punishment therein inacted, and we understand that the Oxford Magistrates are determined to enforce the same, if the nuisance in the vicinity of Christ Church Meadow and Magdalen Walk, complained of by many, be continued.

The Monkey.

In September 1822, Marmaduke Lawson, Esq., a Magistrate for the County of York, being examined before a Committee of the House of Commons on the Vagrancy Laws, was asked if he had ever known an instance of anything except a vagrant having been included in a pass. He replied "Yes", and related the following circumstance: "A man who had a monkey, which was the means of his subsistence in going up and down the country, was taken up for begging. He had a regular pass made out for Scotland, with the usual allowance of 8d. per day. The man said he could not maintain himself and his monkey on that sum and the consequence must be that he must dispose of him."

"The Clerk, having been much amused and pleased with the tricks and grimaces of the monkey said we will pass him too!"

"Accordingly a blank pass was filled up for the monkey under the name of John Strange, also with an allowance of 8d. per day, and by which he was passed out of the North Riding into Scotland."

The first Workhouse in Oxford was built in the 1770s to the North of Walton Street and occupied a site which was eventually to become part of Wellington Square. The poor were often medically attended at this workhouse which was situated quite close to the Radcliffe Infirmary.

Much information about it can be obtained from a number of notices and advertisements inserted in Jackson's Oxford Journal and five of these are re-produced.
NOTICE is hereby given, That Plans, Sections and Elevations, made for building a General House of Industry, for the Poor of the several incorporated Parishes in Oxford, with a particular Description of the same, are left at Mr. Taunton's office in Oxford, where the same may be seen and examined any Day between the Hours of Nine and Two in the Afternoon. Any Person or Persons willing to undertake to carry the same into Execution, are desired to deliver in their Proposals, in Writing, sealed up, to Mr. Taunton, specifying in what Time they will engage to compleat the same, on or before the 26th. of March next.

February 27th, 1772.

2. GENERAL HOUSE OF INDUSTRY, OXFORD
(March 11, 1780)

WANTED, a single Man, as MASTER, or a married Man and his Wife, as Master and Mistress of this House, to undertake the Management and Employment of the Poor. - The Master must be capable of Instructing the Poor in the Sacking Manufactory, in all its branches, and will not be treated with without good Recommendations as to his Ability, Honesty and Sobriety.

Any Persons willing to serve the House in the above capacity, are desired, immediately to send their Proposals to Mr. Taunton, attorney at Law, in Oxford. N.B. It will save much Trouble if the Persons offering to serve, will send, with their Proposals, a Scheme in their own Hand-writing, for the Management of the Poor, and keeping the Accounts of the House, from whence the Guardians may form some Judgment in their Abilities for the Duties of the Place. Many healthy Boys and Girls belonging to this House,

Figure 28 Oxford General Workhouse
will be put out as Servants or Apprentices. - Applications may be made any Friday Afternoon to the Committee, who attend at the House for that Purpose.

3. HOUSE OF INDUSTRY, OXFORD

NOTICE is hereby given, That there are in the House of Industry belonging to the Incorporated Parishes within the City of Oxford, several strong, healthy GIRLS, fit for SERVICE or APPRENTICESHIPS. - Any Person or Persons wanting such, may have them by applying to Mr. Guiden, Governor; or at the House of Industry.

By Order of the Guardians. 15th. February, 1782.

JOHN WALKER, Clerk.

4. GENERAL WORKHOUSE, OXFORD

ALL Persons willing to contract for the Maintenance and Cloathing, and also the Work and Labour of the Poor in this House, for one Year, are desired to send their Proposals, sealed up, to the Workhouse, on or before the 3d Day of October next.

By Order of the Guardians. September 18th, 1782.

JOHN WALKER, Clerk.

N.B. There is a large Sacking Manufactory carried on in the Workhouse, and a great Number of Hands employed therein. - And whoever undertakes the Farming of the Work, Labour, Maintenance and Cloathing of the Poor, must give good Security for doing the same to the Satisfaction of the Guardians.

5. OXFORD GENERAL WORKHOUSE

The Corporation of Guardians of the Poor within the City of Oxford hereby give notice that the Office of Master of the House of Industry is now vacant, and that the Election of a new Master will take place at a Special Court, to be holden on Monday the First day of June next, at the hour of Six in the evening. Security by bond with sureties will be required for the due performance of the Office.

Candidates are required to send the names of their proposed sureties to Mr. William Dean Dickeson, the Governor of the Corporation, on or before Saturday the 30th of May inst. The salary will be £60 per annum; and the duties of the Office and other particulars may be known on application to the Governor.

Oxford. May 21, 1829

A Guardian of the House of Industry informed Jackson's Oxford Journal in 1827 that the town expected to have an unusual number of Poor Rates, owing to the impoverished state of the House.
In the accounts for the last year, it was stated that the debts of the House amounted to the sum of £724.17s.0d.

The Board of Guardians, however, found a trifling difference - claims on the House having been sent in to the amount of nearly eleven hundred pounds!

No articles of clothing were found in the store room.

Indeed, the House was empty in all departments, with the exception of the paupers.

All the horses, hay, cows, and the materials which enabled the Guardians to contract with the city to sweep the streets, had been disposed of.

This deprived the existing Guardians of the means of turning the labour of the paupers to a source of profit.

The Poor Rates throughout England and Wales were considered to be too great an expenditure for the year ending 25 March 1827.

The funds levied by parishes under the poor-rate system amounted to £7,800,000.

In November 1829 at the Magistrates Chamber, between twenty and thirty poor people of Aylesbury, chiefly labourers employed by the parish, complained of the insufficiency of the allowance,

A scale was produced and it was considered to be as much as any parish could afford.

It was stated that if things did not alter, farmers would become paupers. The tradesmen in London and over the whole country were in a depressed state.

The scale of the allowances per week was:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pensioners</th>
<th>Old men</th>
<th>3s.6d.</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Old men and wives</td>
<td>from 5s. to 6s.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Widows</td>
<td>Old Widows</td>
<td>from 3s. to 3s,6d.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>with four children</td>
<td>8s.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>with three children</td>
<td>7s.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>with two children</td>
<td>6s.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Surplus labour</td>
<td>Boys</td>
<td>2s.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>from 10 to 14</td>
<td>2s.6d.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>from 14 to 16</td>
<td>3s.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>from 16 to 18</td>
<td>3s.6d.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>from 18 to 20</td>
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<tr>
<td>Young men, 20 years and upwards</td>
<td>4s.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Widowers</td>
<td>4s.6d.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Man and wife</td>
<td>5s.6d.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Man and wife</td>
<td>with one child</td>
<td>6s.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>with two children</td>
<td>7s.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>with three children</td>
<td>8s.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>with four children</td>
<td>9s6d.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>with five children</td>
<td>10s.6d.</td>
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Severe Winter.

Since the hard weather commenced in January, 1830, the Bow Street Office in London has been principally confined to applications by paupers for parochial relief.

The number of people daily and nightly presenting themselves to the notice of the Magistrates is said to have exceeded that of any other winter for several years past. It has been difficult for the bench to discriminate between that of assumed and real distress.

Two women came before Mr. Minshull and asked to be sent to the House of Correction as they were not likely to be admitted to the workhouse. Mr. Minshull humanely complied with their desire, sending them as vagrants to the House of Correction with an order that they should be sent to their respective parishes after their term of imprisonment.

In Oxford at a meeting of the inhabitants held in the Town Hall on Thursday, 21 January, 1830, a discussion took place as to the best way of relieving the poor during the inclement weather.

The meeting was attended by the Vice-Chancellor, the two Proctors, the Principal of Magdalen Hall, Dr. Barnes, the Provost of Oriel, The President of Corpus, Dr. Barnes and other notable citizens. Sir Joseph Lock, the Mayor, acted as chairman.

It was the prevailing opinion of those present that the most eligible plan to be pursued would be to find employment for all those who were able to work, either in clearing the streets of the immense quantity of snow and ice or such other work as should be considered proper, and to relieve the aged and infirm by distribution of provisions and money.

For this purpose a committee was appointed consisting of the Ministers and Churchwardens of the respective parishes, together with a number of respected gentlemen.

Subscriptions received at the several banks in the city amounted to over £600. James Morrell, Esq., of Headington Hill, distributed a quantity of coal and wood to the poor of the parish of St. Clement and also gave soup twice a week.

Owing to the intensity of the frost and the heavy fall of snow, the river Thames was blocked in several places on 3 February 1830, and navigation was stopped for a time.

Comparison of Wages 1732-1829

In 1829 the wages of agricultural labourers were seven to nine shillings a week. The price of wheat was from 6s.6d. to 8s. a bushel, and malt from 8s. to 9s. a bushel.

The working classes were generally impoverished and a comparison with the wages and prices prevailing in 1732 shows that in 1829 the labourer could only procure one half of the quantity of bread and one fourth of the quantity of beer, while the rent was four times as much as in 1732.

Comparative wages of agricultural labourers in 1732 were from six to seven shillings a week, while the price of wheat was 2s.9d. per bushel and malt 2s.6d. per bushel.

An unusual case involving transportation was decided at Lambeth Street, London, during December, 1831, by Mr. Walker.
A woman named Crosby had become chargeable to the hamlet of Mile-end Old Town. The overseers discovered her husband to be a man in respectable circumstances living in Cornwall and applied to him to support his wife, or indemnify the parish, both of which he refused to do.

The husband attended in person and stated that his wife had been convicted and sentenced to fourteen years transportation.

She had fully served this time and had been returned to England, but he considered himself no longer liable to support her.

The woman did not contradict the statement, but complained that it was hard for her to be deserted by him in her old age.

Mr. Walker decided that the husband was not liable to the parish. He expressed a hope that the overseers would do no more than they could avoid for the woman, as she had been distressed through her own misconduct.

Board for the Administration of the Poor Laws.

In 1834 this Board became the most powerful and extraordinary Board ever established.

The Board consisted of three persons who were called the Poor Law Commissioners for England and Wales. It had all the protection and indemnity of a superior Court of Record. It could administer oaths, call for books and papers at its pleasure and could commit persons for contempt of its authority for one month.

It had a common seal and could appoint nine assistant Commissioners, together with a secretary, assistant secretary, clerk and other officials. The assistant Commissioners all had the power of the Commissioners, although they could not make bye-laws or commit for contempt. All were Justices of the Peace and persons giving false evidence before them were to be held guilty of a misdemeanour.

The Commissioners were able to make rules, orders and regulations for the poor, workhouses, etc. At that time the sum levied as Poor Rates was £6,000,000 a year.

A Circular was issued at the beginning of October, 1834, from the Central Board of the Poor Law Commissioners in which it was pointed out to parish officers that it was their duty "to continue to administer the existing laws for the relief of the poor of the parish or place for which they act."

The 54th section of the Poor Law Amendment Act was at that time considered to be the most important for their guidance (4th and 5th of William IV. c.76).

Included in this section was "And it shall not be lawful for any overseer of the poor to give any further or other relief or allowance from the poor rate than such as shall be ordered by such Guardians or Select Vestry, except in cases of sudden and urgent necessity, but not in money, and whether the applicant for relief be settled in the parish where he shall apply for relief or not."
The section also included a provision which allowed it to "be lawful for any Justice of the Peace to order the said overseer, by writing under his hand and seal, to give temporary relief in articles of absolute necessity, as the case shall require, but not in money; and in case such overseer shall disobey such order, he shall, on conviction before two Justices, forfeit any sum not exceeding five pounds, which such Justices shall order."

Included in the new Act were many difficult and almost unintelligible clauses and it was the public hope that the learned trio, the Poor Law Commissioners, would give the necessary clarification. Notwithstanding this Circular, there still seemed to be much misunderstanding about which parish should offer relief.

Subsequent Case at Bow Street.

At the end of October, 1834, one such case at Bow Street, London, concerned two women who had travelled a long distance on foot and who were anxious to join their husbands who were soldiers stationed with their regiments in Gibraltar. The War Office had refused their application and referred them to the parish in which they had last slept. This was in the parish of St. George, Hanover Square, but here they were refused relief and were then referred to Bow Street.

At Bow Street Mr. Halls regretted that he had no power to order them the slightest relief and expressed his surprise that the parish officers of St. George, Hanover Square, should send them on a fool's errand, as they must have known they would not be relieved by the Magistrates at Bow Street.

The Magistrate then directed that the poor women should receive 1s. each and, referring them back to the parish of St. George, Hanover Square, advised them not to mention that they had been relieved by him.

Serious Poor Law Riots in Bedfordshire.

On a Monday in May, 1835, Mr. Osborne, the Relieving Officer of the Western Division of the Ampthill Union, commenced his duties.

On riding over to Lidlington, a village in the Union, to arrange with the Overseer respecting the paupers, he was attacked by a mob of men and women.

The ring leaders cried out, "We don't want you here, we'll have money or your blood, and before you leave this place, we'll have either the money out of your pockets or the blood out of your veins."

He remonstrated in vain while they still cried, "Blood or money." Ultimately he was compelled to give the women £4, which was all the money he had on that day.

On proceeding on his duties to Millbrook on Tuesday he was met with a similar reception and was so grossly assaulted by the mob that he was compelled to seek shelter in the house of the Rev. G. Cardale, a County Magistrate, who addressed the mob and requested them to disperse quietly. Mr. Cardale and his son then accompanied the Relieving Officer down the village, but the mob continued their threats so violently that the three gentlemen were obliged to take shelter in a house.
The paupers having collected in such numbers and making outrageous threats, Mr. Osborn did not venture to appear again on that day. After remaining concealed until nightfall, he stealthily went home.

On Wednesday about six constables went to Lidlington to take two women and some men into custody. When they had succeeded in this task, they were met by about 200 paupers threatening instant revenge unless the women were released. Seeing the hopelessness of resistance, the constables allowed the women to escape.

A large number of special constables were sworn in during the middle of the week, but between twenty and thirty respectable men preferred to pay the full fine of £5, rather than risk becoming involved in the rioting.

On Thursday at 12 noon, the Guardians assembled at the Ampthill House of Industry for their usual meeting.

After a short time paupers - men, women and children - came flocking in from all quarters. Many of the men were armed with bludgeons and sticks. Several told the Guardians that they wanted work and money and would not take relief in bread alone.

On being told that their demand for money could not be complied with, they commenced a most desperate attack upon the windows with stones and other missiles.

Many of the Guardians attempted to address the mob, then estimated to be between 300-500 people, but were unable to make any progress. Stones continued to shower against the windows of the room in which the Guardians were assembled and many were severely hurt, one being injured in the eyes by broken glass.

At twenty five minutes past one o'clock, H.M. Mugrave, Esq., a Magistrate and President of the Board of Guardians, boldly advanced into the mob and read the Riot Act. This was only partially successful and when the Guardians left the House of Industry and proceeded to the King's Arms Inn, a large mob followed shouting abuse.

Opposite the Inn, in the middle of the Market Place, a violent fight took place between the special constables and the mob. As soon as prisoners were taken, the mob rescued them.

As the numbers collected were such that the local authorities were unable to contain them, assistance was sent for from the Government, and a body of metropolitan police requested.

Twenty two arrived on the Friday morning and together with a number of special constables on horseback, a search was made for the ringleaders. They returned in the afternoon with several of both sexes in custody. The Government had promised to send the Household Troops from Windsor, if required.

Charges were immediately proceeded with before five magistrates, when Mary Walker, Amelia Gulliver, Hannah Reed and Elizabeth Henman were fully committed for trial, charged with riotously and tumultuously assembling at Lidlington on Monday. John Taylor, Henry Reed and James Waters were fully committed for rioting at Ampthill on Thursday. John Burgoyne and William Letting were also committed on the capital charge of continuing to riot beyond the hour after the Riot Act had been read.
With the coming of registration in 1837, some relieving officers were also appointed Registrars of Births and Deaths. Superintendent Registrars were appointed as such because they already held the post of Clerk of the Guardians for a particular union.

In a news item received from London in December 1840 it was stated that His Royal Highness, the Duke of Cambridge, although absent from Kew, was not unmindful of the poor in that parish. He commanded Dr. Scard to supply all the poor families of the parish with a good dinner on Christmas day and also the poor in the union workhouse belonging to the parish.

The children in the Queen's Free School were regaled on New Years day with roast beef and plum pudding at the Rose and Crown Hotel. He also, at his own expense, supplied them as required with clothing during the inclement weather.

News included in the Morning Herald in 1841 gave information about the amount of maintenance awarded and compared it with the cost of running the relief of the poor:

The New Poor Law has undoubtedly been most successful in its primary object, it has diminished the rates; but at what a fearful national cost, at the expense of what dreadful suffering, of what ruptures of natural affection, of what imprisonment of the poor, of how great a number of deaths, of how much popular discontent, of what subversion of good old English feeling, it has been our duty, with sorrow and shame, from time to time to acquaint the public.

Some important Poor Law statistics have just been published, by order of the House of Commons, on the motion of Mr. Escott; through them the public may partially learn some of the miseries of the new law.

This paper is entitled "Return of sums expended in every union in England and Wales, for the year ending Lady Day, 1840; with the aggregate amount expended in the year ending Lady Day, 1834."

By this document it appears that the amount expended for the relief of the poor in the districts now under the operation of the union system in the last year before the passing of the Poor Law Amendment Act was £5,520,924; and that the sum expended in the 576 unions formed up to the 25 March 1840, during the preceding twelve months was £3,850,040 showing a reduction in the poor-rates, in spite of the increased population and greater distress than was ever previously known, of the enormous sum of £1,670,884. This fact does indeed demonstrate that the new law has done its work. The grinding system has reduced the rates; but the reduction has been dearly bought.

The public must not, however, think that in the year ending Lady Day, 1840, any such sum as £3,850,040 was expended in maintaining paupers. No; nearly one-fourth of it was spent in paying for the local machinery thought necessary for doling out, in infinitesimal doses, the other three-fourths.

The cost of the union establishments and the union salaries was no less than £748,222; and though the Commissioners grudge every farthing that is laid
out in supporting pauper life, they have no idea of under-paying the establishment and salaries.

There is the most abject meanness in this respect, contrasted with an extravagance perfectly reckless.

In the union of Leighton Buzzard, the expenditure of £3858 in maintenance and out-relief can only be accomplished at the cost of £1322.

In Cookham union, a similar expenditure of £1872 is with difficulty achieved at an expense of £1120.

In Cambridge union, the poor cost £5097 and the establishment and salaries £3661.

In North Witchford union the former are fed, clothed and housed for £4070, but the union officers can only exist on £3258.

In Tewkesbury union, the poor cost £3620, but the expense of laying out that sum is £1087.

In Lewisham union the pauper expenses are £3274, the union charges £2213.

In rural Lutterworth union the tables are completely turned, for while the paupers cost only £738, the union officials eat up £1218.

In peaceful Holborn union (composing partly liberal Finsbury borough), £6338 are expended on the poor at the trifling cost of 10s. in the pound for union charges.

In suburban Brentford the charge is about 9s. in the pound.

In classic Whitechapel it is about 8s. in the pound.

In Bath union £10,240 are laid out on the poor by the aid of £8652 spent in auxiliary assistance.

Pure Stafford outrivals happy Lutterworth, for there £2202 expended on the poor costs £5034.

Sporting Epsom is not distanced in the costly race. £5316 is the total expended in maintenance and out-relief, while £2074 are spent on establishment and salaries; and though superior economy is generally observable as the Return progresses northwards, the west riding of York may be proud of Ecclesall Bierlow union, in which £4101 spent on the poor, produce union charges to the amount of £1781.

These sums, it must be recollected, are quite independent of remuneration of the Commissioners, assistant Commissioners, secretaries, counsel, solicitors, clerks, messengers, porters, etc. at Somerset House, these pretty pickings constitute a charge on the nation.
Decrease in Pauperism.
In the last week of March, 1859, there were 855,753 paupers in receipt of relief in England and Wales.

This figure, when compared with the number receiving relief in March, 1858, - 952,201 - shows a decrease of nearly 100,000.

Mallam v. the Guardians of the Poor.
In an action in 1859 the plaintiff, an attorney at Oxford, sued the Guardians of the Poor within the city to recover the amount of a bill of costs incurred in connection with the preparation of a special case.

This was for the opinion of the Court as to the liability of the University, Colleges and Halls of Oxford to be assessed to the poor-rate of the city.

The plaintiff's claim for £209.17s, which was accepted, was whether it could be recovered from the existing Guardians.

The decision was dependent on the wording in several sections of a Local Act - the 17th and 18th of Victoria for the maintenance of the poor in Oxford.

Mr. Justice Hill delivered the judgment of the Court in favour of the plaintiff.

At the next meeting of the Board of Guardians, an order was made for the payment of £209.17s, which with the costs of £135.11s. made a total of £345.8s.

Mr. Walsh's bill of £133.3s. extended the total payment to £478.11s.

A Year's Pauperism.
An Official Return giving the number of paupers on the 1st day of January 1882 stated that in the nine Unions in Oxfordshire having a population of 181,504, there were as in-door paupers:- 107 males, 118 females and 195 children, all able-bodied. Not able-bodied - 422 males, 175 females and 273 children.

Classed as lunatics, etc., were 49 males, 80 females and 3 children and 83 vagrants were relieved in the workhouses, making a total of 1505 in-door paupers.

As out-door paupers there were 262 males, 515 females and 1490 children, all able-bodied. 1162 males, 2257 females and 405 children were not able-bodied and 220 males, 272 females and 4 children were classed as lunatics, the total being 6587.

When compared with the 1st day of January 1881, there was an increase of 1.4 per cent.

The Casual Poor Act, 1882.
This Act provided that a pauper could not discharge himself from a casual ward before 9 a.m. of the second day following his admission, nor before he had performed work which had been prescribed for him, and if he should have been admitted on more than one occasion
during one month into the casual ward of the same Union, not before nine in the morning of
the fourth day after his admission.

A Comparison between England and Europe.
In the 1880s there was a pretty general impression that other nations were more thrifty than
the English and notably the French, even though their average earnings were smaller than
ours.

How then were their poor relieved when in want and has the method of relief anything to do
with thrifty habits?

It greatly surprised the average Englishman to be told that there were many countries in
Europe in which the destitute had no claim to relief as their legal right. Denmark was the only
one which like England provided for the relief of pauperism by a special tax. The Danish
poor-law closely resembled that of England. The older Danish legislation indicated three
classes, to each of which a specific kind of relief was assigned:-

(1) Old and infirm persons, who are to receive aid in kind, or money, clothing,
    lodging and medical attendance.
(2) Orphans, or children whose parents cannot maintain them, are to be
    boarded with suitable persons, or otherwise properly brought up.
(3) Persons or families who are in need of partial help are to be assisted to find
    work, and if this cannot be obtained, are to receive the necessary assistance.

There were only three countries, Denmark, Sweden and Prussia, in which there was a
legislative declaration of the right of every destitute person to be supported by the State,
though Denmark was the only State of the three that taxed the community for that purpose.
France and Belgium shrank from admitting any such right, fearing that by a compulsory
poor-law, they would open the door to communism and socialism. Except in cases of lunatics
and of deserted children, there was no compulsory relief in France. All relief that was given
professed to be given in charity.

Russia and Turkey, at that time alike in agreeing in little else, had no poor-law.

Italy, Spain and Portugal left the poor to public charity.

Austria, several of the German States, and Norway, assisted voluntary contributions by grants
from local administration or the State.

From this it followed that there must have been sufficient uncertainty for the provision in
sickness and old age in European States generally, which induced people to be provident,
whether they were so or not.

The Local Government Act, 1929.
This Act abolished the Boards of Guardians and transferred the responsibility of the poor to
Local Authorities. Under this Act an Administrative Scheme was drawn up for the County
Borough of Oxford.

The Constitution of the Public Assistance Committee was interpreted as follows:
3 - (1) There shall be constituted a Committee of the Council to be called the "Public Assistance Committee," consisting of 24 persons of whom 17 shall be members of the Council and the remainder persons who are not members of the Council. At least three of the persons who are not members of the Council shall be women.

(2) The first members of the Public Assistance Committee shall be appointed by the Council at the first meeting of the Council held after the approval of the Scheme and thereafter the Public Assistance Committee shall be appointed at the quarterly meeting of the Council held for November of each year.

(3) The members of the Public Assistance Committee shall hold office until the date on which their successors are appointed.

Para. (5) stated that "A member of the Committee may resign his membership by sending to the Clerk of the Council notice of his desire so to do."

Under the "Functions of the Public Assistance Committee" para (3) reads

In particular the Public Assistance Committee shall, where necessary, in co-operation with other committees of the Council
(a) arrange for the proper care and maintenance of all persons requiring relief in a poor law institution;
(b) define the classes of persons requiring relief in institutions for whom the several poor law institutions belonging to the Council are suitable;
(c) arrange for the visiting, inspection, and management of poor law institutions;
(d) arrange for setting to work able bodied persons who were granted outdoor relief;
(e) arrange for the supply of relief in kind either from the Council's own stores or by means of tradesmen or otherwise;
(f) keep a register of all persons who have received assistance from any committee or sub-committee of the Council;
(g) arrange for the relief of the casual poor and for the due observance of the regulations in force in regard thereto;
(h) arrange in suitable cases for the rights and powers of parents in respect of children being vested in the Council under section 78 of the Poor Law Act, 1927;
(i) arrange in suitable cases for children to be boarded out;
(j) arrange for the apprenticing and placing out of children of suitable age;
(k) arrange for the emigration of suitable persons who are desirous of emigrating;
(l) once a month submit to the Council a report on their proceedings.

The first meeting of the Oxford Public Assistance Committee was held on Tuesday, November 19, 1929, and the responsibility for the poor and for the institutions (Cowley Road Hospital and London Road Hospital) was taken over on the 1st of April, 1930.
In a Report by the Public Assistance Committee for the year 1930-31, the total expenditure on Institutions (this included salaries, uniforms, repairs, etc.) in Oxford City amounted to approximately £25,605.

Other Institutions including Poor Law Hospitals and Certified Schools, and Maintenance of Lunatics in Asylums came to approximately £45,315.

The last meeting of the Oxford Public Assistance Committee was held on the 2nd. of July, 1948. The last item is as follows

**Termination of Poor Law**

Resolved to RECOMMEND that on the termination of Poor Law and of the Public Assistance Committee which has administered it, Council be asked to place on record its appreciation of the faithful service of the Public Assistance Officer, the Master and the Matron of the two Hospitals, the Superintendent of the Children's Homes, and all the staff in the various sections of the Department, and to express to them the Council's thanks for the good work which they have done.

**10. Small Pox: The Solution**

**How to prevent smallpox?**

That was the question that had eluded the medical profession. It was in 1796 that Dr. Jenner, an English physician, made a scientific investigation into vaccination. On being satisfied with the results, he introduced vaccination into this country in 1798.

Vaccination was in the news in May, 1808, when, at the last quarter Sessions for the County of Stafford, a report was presented to the chairman from the directors and guardians of the poor of the parish of Stone.

It consisted of 269 poor children, with their names and ages, who had been vaccinated in that parish during the last three months, all of whom had taken the infection and gone through the disease in a most satisfactory manner.

It was hoped that this laudable example would be followed by other parishes and that the Court would shortly be favoured with similar accounts of the beneficial effects of this valuable discovery.

**Dr. Jenner's Letter.**

In 1821 the following letter on the interesting subject of vaccination, was addressed by the celebrated Dr. Jenner to a lady resident of Devizes:

> My dear Madam, You ask me if I have any reason to doubt the efficacy of Vaccination as a certain preventative of the infection of smallpox. Various, you tell me, are the opinions on this subject; I beg pardon for opposing your declaration; be assured there is but one opinion among Medical Men who have conducted the practice with the attention which it requires, according to the rules I have precisely laid down.
This island might have been entirely freed from the pestilence many years ago, if its wisdom in this respect had kept pace with many of the Continental Kingdoms where small pox has been entirely unknown for many years; and for ages previously to the introduction of the new practice, it had frequently raged with uncontrollable fury.

I do not know how its merits can be set out in a more intelligible, or convincing point of view, than by giving you the substance of a quotation from a very recent publication on the subject by Mr. Cross, an eminent surgeon of Norwich, where through the folly and absurdity of the people, the small pox lately committed great havoc. He tells us the 10,000 of this population who had been vaccinated, lived in the midst of a contaminated atmosphere, and the exceptions to complete protection, after perfect vaccination, were so few as not to be worth detailing; on the other hand, out of 3,000 who had rejected to be vaccinated, 530 individuals died, and some who had been inoculated with regular small pox, caught the disease a second time,

What you have heard respecting my opinion of re-vaccinating in seven years, has no foundation in truth. Perfect vaccination is permanent in its influence. It is quite terrible to see the obstinacy of the people, but the basis of it rests with the superior orders, coercion, however, has never a good effect, but quite the contrary.

It is shocking to contrast the conduct of people at home with that of those abroad. Let the country be ever so extensive, ever so populous, where vaccination has been solely and universally propagated, small pox has been wholly got rid of, and never brought back again, even after periods of years have elapsed in most instances. I am sorry to find the poor people around you are so infatuated, but does the fault lie with them? I remain, dear Madam, very faithfully yours,

EDWARD JENNER
Berkeley, Jan. 11, 1821

A tribute to Dr. Jenner.
In January, 1823, Dr. Jenner died in the 74th year of his age at his home at Berkeley after a short illness. Dr. Jenner was the discoverer of Vaccination and was a Fellow of the Royal Society.

Nature had given him great genius, vast sagacity, much inclination and great ardour in the prosecution of his subjects of Natural History, Physiology and Pathology. His researches were consistent and connected.

At an early age he was destined to the study of one department of the medical profession-Surgery.

He was offered employment in his professional and physiological pursuits, but he preferred a residence in his native place-Berkeley. Here he acquired not merely high local reputation, but from the public observation and discoveries which he promulgated, great estimation in the superior ranks of philosophers and medical professors.
He was also the discoverer of the internal diseased structure of the heart, which produces the
disease called Angina Pectoris and which was previously unknown and conjectural.

The sums voted to him by Parliament and his general renumerations were moderate in the
extreme. The pure and liberal feelings which he possessed caused him to spurn and reject
what could have been immense emoluments.

Committee's Report.
In 1833 the Vaccine Committee in this country ascertained the security which had been
derived from vaccination.

Before the introduction of vaccination, out of 1000 deaths (within the bills of mortality) 102
were, on an average of ten years, caused by small pox, whereas on an average of the three
years 1829 - 1832, only 26 deaths out of every 1000 have been attributable to this disease.

The ravages of small pox in 1833 were only about one-fourth what they were before
vaccination commenced.

Out of 1785 cases of small pox, 619 occurred after reputed vaccination and 1166 were
unvaccinated.

Of the vaccinated 40 died, or at the rate of about six per cent. Of the unvaccinated 694 died,
or at the rate of about sixty per cent.

An extensive experiment had been made in Paris in which 102 children who had previously
been vaccinated at intervals varying from eight months to a year were inoculated with small
pox. Of these 84 escaped every appearance of the disease and the remaining 18 had only
slight local indications of it.

This experiment appeared to provide conclusive evidence of the preventative power of
vaccination.

Vaccination Act.
A paragraph was generally circulated in the newspapers stating that all persons whose
children are vaccinated under the provisions of the recent Act of Parliament would be
considered as having received parochial relief, and would consequently be disfranchised as
voters.

This exposition of the Act has been publicly contravened by the Poor Law Commissioners,
who contend that the benefit of vaccination is not conferred by the Act as a relief of the poor,
but is extended to all residents, whether rich or poor; and that to accept the benefit is not to
accept relief in any sense, and therefore, no such consequence as disfranchisement is to be
apprehended.

The Royal Assent was given to the Vaccination Bill on July 23, 1840.

The Act therefore provided for free vaccination, but it was not until 1853 that all babies were
required by law to be vaccinated.
In 1898 it was decided to allow parents to claim exemption if they thought the health of their child might be affected. Vaccination forms were issued by registrars at the time of the registration of children's births to enable parents to object, if they so wished. This ended in 1948 when compulsory vaccination ceased.

The Vaccination Act of 1840 necessitated the insertion of some notices in newspapers. Two such notices appeared in Jackson's Oxford Journal:

**TO THE MEDICAL PROFESSION BICESTER UNION.**

ANY Medical Gentleman, duly qualified, desirous of contracting with the Board of Guardians to Vaccinate the persons resident in the following parishes:- Bletchingdon, Charlton-on-Otmoor, Fencot and Mercot, Frittwell, Upper Heyford, Islip, Kirtlington, Noke, Oddington, Somerton, Souldern, and Weston-on-the-Green, in the above Union, under the provisions of an Act of Parliament passed in the third and fourth years of the reign of her present Majesty, intituled "An Act to extend the practice of Vaccination" are requested to send in Tenders to me, the undersigned, before Ten o'clock in the morning of the Ninth day of October next, stating the names of the parishes, and how much per case they will contract for. Each person so contracting will be required to sign an agreement to keep the several books and forms, and make the returns required by the Poor Law Commissioners, all of which may be seen at my Office previous to the said 9th of October. By order of the Board of Guardians. Bicester, Sept 29, 1840 EDW. W. JONES, Clerk.

THAME UNION - VACCINATION MEDICAL gentlemen willing to contract with the Guardians for all persons within this Union who may be desirous of availing themselves of the benefits and provisions of the Act of Parliament for the extension of vaccination, are requested to transmit Tenders to the Clerk of the Guardians, at his office in Thame, previous to the Weekly Meeting, on Wednesday the 23d of December instant, stating the sum at per case they will undertake to vaccinate such persons resident in either of the three Districts of the Union, or any one or more of the sub-divisions of the same, agreeably to the instructions issued by the Poor Law Commissioners. The contractors will be required to attend at each station once in every month for the purpose of vaccinating, and once for the inspection. The other terms and conditions of the contract, and the several stations appointed by the Guardians, and any further particulars required, may be known on application to the Clerk at Thame.

By order of the Guardians. Thame, Dec 10, 1840 JOHN HOLLIER, Clerk.

The Weekly Meeting mentioned in this advertisement was that at which a notice of marriage, given to the superintendent registrar for the district, was required to be read by the Superintendent Registrar, or by the Clerk of the Guardians, at three weekly meetings of the Guardians.
Clarification Required.
News received from London dated May 13, 1841, clarified the original intention of the Vaccination Act. Most Acts of Parliament need amendments as soon as any weak points become apparent. This Act was no exception and, as has been seen, was being misinterpreted to the disadvantage of the public.

A Bill was therefore introduced into the House of Commons to amend the Act of 1840. As no express provisions had been made in that Act to defray the expenses of carrying the same into execution, the Bill authorised the Guardians to defray these out of the poor rate, and at the same time declared that the vaccination or the surgical or medical assistance incident to vaccination of any person in any Union or Parish should not be considered parochial relief.

Method of Compulsory Vaccination
The Act dated 20th August 1853 which further extended and made compulsory the Practice of Vaccination stated that the Father or Mother of every Child born in England or Wales after the First Day of August 1853 should within Three Calendar Months after the birth of the said Child, take or cause to be taken the said Child to the Medical Officer or Practitioner appointed in the Union or Parish in which the said Child was resident, - for the purpose of being vaccinated. If the parents had died or were ill, the person having custody of the child was allowed Four Calendar Months to have the child vaccinated.

There was provision in the Act for any Medical Officer or Practitioner who was of the opinion that any child was not fit and in a proper state to be successfully vaccinated, to issue a Certificate free of charge indicating the fact, and this was to remain in force for two calendar months from the date of issue. A further certification was required if the child was still considered to be unfit for vaccination. The production of such a Certificate enabled a parent to prevent any complaint concerning non-compliance of the Act.

The Registrar of Births and Deaths in every sub-district in which the Operation had been performed, was required to keep a Register of the Persons of whose successful Vaccination a Certificate should have been transmitted to him, as provided under the Act, by the said Medical Officer or Practitioner.

He was to allow searches to be made in the Register Book in his keeping and could supply a certificate copy of an entry. A fee of 1s.6d. was payable for each search and 6d. for each certificate.

If any parent neglected to have their child vaccinated, the Registrar was required to give notice to the Father or Mother within seven days after the registration of the birth to ensure proper observance of the Act.

All penalties recovered under the Act were to aid Funds applicable to the Relief of the Poor in the Parish or Place maintaining its own Poor wherein the offence may have been committed.
Vaccination in Oxford

In December, 1871, a letter was received by the Oxford Board of Guardians from the Local Government Board requesting them to appoint a Public Vaccinator, under a recent Act of Parliament which was to come into force on the 1st of January, 1872.

The Vaccination Committee accordingly complied with these instructions and in order to show the work involved, the following information was given:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of Births</th>
<th>Number of Children vaccinated in that year.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1866</td>
<td>619</td>
<td>285</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1867</td>
<td>639</td>
<td>436</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1868</td>
<td>661</td>
<td>752</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1869</td>
<td>642</td>
<td>388</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1870</td>
<td>656</td>
<td>426</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1871</td>
<td>655*</td>
<td>907*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complete totals</td>
<td>3872</td>
<td>3194</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Revised figures.

In connection with revised figures being issued, it was also stated that 240 persons had been re-vaccinated.

Vaccination Act Amendment

This was entitled An Act to Amend the Law in respect to Vaccination and was dated 12th of August 1898.

There was a period of six months allowed from the date of the birth of the child within which the parent or other person having custody of the child should cause the child to be vaccinated instead of the period of three months mentioned in section sixteen of the Vaccination Act of 1867.

No parent or other person was to be liable to any penalty under section twenty nine or section thirty one of the Vaccination Act of 1867 if within four months from the birth of the child he satisfied two justices, or a stipendiary or metropolitan police magistrate, in petty sessions, that he conscientiously believed that vaccination would be prejudicial to the health of the child, and within seven days thereafter delivered to the vaccination officer for the district a certificate by such justices or magistrate of such conscientious objection.

The Vaccination Act of 1867 stated that the Registrar General for England and Wales shall, when he deem it necessary after the passing of this Act, frame and provide appropriate Books, Forms and regulations for the Use and Guidance of Registrars in the exercise of their duties.
The Registrar of Births and Deaths of each district was required within one week after the first day of January and the first day of July in each year, to make a list of all cases in which Certificates of Vaccination had not been duly received by him during the last preceding half year.

Any Parent or Person having the custody of a child who neglected to have it vaccinated was liable upon conviction to pay a penalty not exceeding Twenty Shillings.

11. Transport and the Theatre

A journey to a baptism, wedding or funeral in the eighteenth century must have been a very uncomfortable experience. Roads were bad and transport even worse. Luckily, most people married locally, but the occasional guest from foreign parts must have had plenty of patience.

A stage coach would normally have taken several days to cover the ground from London to Bristol and the trip was far from pleasant if a highwayman was encountered.

In 1742 the Oxford stage coach would leave London at 7 a.m. and reach Uxbridge at 12 noon. After arriving at High Wycombe at 5 p.m., it rested for the night.

It then proceeded to Oxford at the same rate on the following day. Ten hours to travel 27 miles and nearly two days for the whole journey.

By 1833 this had been reduced to six hours and the time allowed for changing the horses was one minute for fast coaches. This was frequently done in fifty seconds when five horse keepers were at hand to do the work. At the beginning of the nineteenth century this task took half an hour or more, leaving plenty of time at each change for tea or coffee.

Most accidents occurred when stage coaches were descending hills. The coachman needed to check the velocity of his coach at the top of every hill which, in the language of the road in those days, was termed taking a hill in time.

This was to be preferred to the drag chain, by which hundreds of heavily leaden coaches had been pulled over.

Even on level ground the coach may have begun to swing due to two horses at wheel taking unequal strides in their gallop. Passing over a small stone may then have upset the coach, as the faster it went, the more weight was thrown upon the front wheels. It had been found that the harder the surface of the road, the more danger there was, as there was nothing to hold the wheels to the ground.

Steam Coaches.

By the 1830s it may have been possible for a bridegroom to journey to the place of his wedding by steam coach. The following is an account of one such journey:

During the morning of Monday, September 3, 1832, a new steam coach belonging to Messrs. Ogle and Summers started from Oxford. There were twenty-two passengers and a large quantity of luggage. It was steered by Mr. Ogle and he was assisted by his partner, Mr. Summers.
St. Giles' Fair was held on the same day and as the starting of the steam coach had previously been announced, it created considerable interest.

The coach ran through Oxford at the rate of 10 m.p.h. amid the cheers of a large crowd. When it reached the suburbs it was allowed to accelerate to about 14 m.p.h.

Numerous horsemen followed as far as the turnpike and the coach then proceeded to Woodstock, covering the eight miles in 39 minutes.

On leaving Woodstock, insufficient water was put into the boiler and on ascending the first hill, it overheated.

After a considerable delay it proceeded to Chapel House, where the coach party dined and stayed the night.

**Figure 29 Chapel House**

The following day it reached Birmingham, coming to a standstill at the foot of the hill opposite the church.

By that time all the coke had been consumed and a clutch to one of the wheels had been lost on the road.

However, the good people of Birmingham came to the rescue and helped the coach to the Hen and Chickens Inn, so completing an eventful journey.

**The Railroad Train.**

By the mid 1830s the train was fast becoming the accepted form of transport and the stage coaching industry collapsed.
Many marriage parties travelled by train and with long journeys becoming less tedious, more people arrived on time!

Love, Marriage and Tragedy.
Theatrical performances have always tended to include these events. Three highly admired comedies were seen at Mr. Barnett's theatre at the Racket Court in Oxford during August, 1831. The Clandestine Marriage was followed by the Honey Moon and The Way to get Married and these gave great satisfaction to the audiences.

This little theatre was fitted in an elegant and comfortable manner, and it was hoped that the enterprising manager would continue to receive the encouragement which was justly due to his liberal and spirited endeavours.

The opening of the theatre was advertised by a Notice which appeared in Jackson's Oxford Journal on Saturday, July 9, 1831:

BY PERMISSION
THEATRE
Tennis Court, St. Aldate's, Oxford
MR BARNETT respectfully informs the public his Season will commence on MONDAY NEXT, July 11, with an address, written expressly for this occasion, by Miss Mitford, to be delivered by Mr. Cathcart - God save the King, by the vocal strength of the company, after which Shakespeare's Tragedy of

HAMLET,
TO CONCLUDE WITH
23, JOHN STREET, ADELPHI.

On Tuesday, Sheridan's Comedy of The SCHOOL for SCANDAL; with A DEAD SHOT.
On Wednesday, Cumberland's Comedy of THE WHEEL of FORTUNE; with THE LITTLE JOCKEY.
Tickets may be had, and places for the Boxes taken, at Mr. T. RANDALL'S, hatter, High-street. N.B. The Theatre will continue open each evening. Particulars will be given in the Bills.

The theatre opened to a crowded audience and the following address, written expressly for the occasion by Miss Mitford, was admirably delivered by Mr. Cathcart and highly applauded:

Romantic Oxford! 'mid thy cloister'd bowers,
Thy tapering spires, bright domes and fretted towers,
Thy world of antique beauty, throned high,
Sits the proud muse of Grecian Tragedy;
From prostrate Athens long condemn'd to roam,
Thy sons her worshippers, thy halls her home.
Well may they worship; visions more sublime
Ne'er rolled effulgent down the stream of time,
Than those which shew the wrongs of Pelops' line,
The woes of Thebes, the fall of Troy divine.
Helen, the charmer of two thousand years,
and sad Electra, eloquent in tears.
Well may they worship a mysterious glory
Shines round the bards, entrancing as their story
Unletter'd woman feels, she knows not why,
Even in a feebleer tongue their potency;
And the boy poet in his day dream sees
Wreaths such as crowned majestic Sophocles,
Bold Æschylus, or sweet Euripides.
Yet boast we one, immortal though they be
Whose single name outvies that mighty three -
Shakespeare! our Shakespeare! ill might we presume
To strew fresh laurels o'er his honoured tomb;
Enough that we to-night attempt to shew
One thrilling form of gentleness and woe;
To body forth his sweet yet pregnant sadness,
His melancholy mirth, his wisest madness;
Whose every word, with truth intensest fraught
Strikes at some secret cord of human thought;
Hamlet the Dane! oh! but to follow well
The lessons which he gives were to excel
In our great art - the very rules we tell
Might we but practice, little were our need
For your indulgence even now we plead:
Yet plead we must, though hopefully, for here
In this fair circle, small our cause of fear;
Kind were ye ever! and our greeting blends
Warm thanks to past with hope of future friends.

Later in the same year - 1831 - Miss Mitford's celebrated tragedy of Julian was performed at the theatre to a fashionable and packed house.

The interest in this splendid production was heightened by the presence of its distinguished and talented authoress. Most theatrical productions portray real life situations. Some are outlandish, some controversial and some partly authentic.

But what of three occurrences, two or more of which affect us all. I refer to the theme running through my story - births, deaths and marriages. It may be the marriage of two political parties, or the birth and death of a nation, of a planet, of a sun.

Birth, death and marriage appear to be common throughout the universe in this context, but these are other stories.

The end.
Quotes
All news items researched from Jackson's Oxford Journal and the Oxford University and City Herald and Midland County Chronicle.

The Royal Archives -

reference to King George III by John Brooke (Constable, 1972) and Volume I of The Later Correspondence of King George III, edited by A. Aspinall (Cambridge University Press, 1962)

Reference to:-

Medical Superintendent's Reports - Littlemore Hospital Oxford Medical Officer's Returns
Oxford Public Assistance Committee's Minutes
Acts of Parliament
Historical Notes from Oxford Hospitals

Addenda
The General Register Office is now at the Office of National Statistics, Family Records Centre, Myddelton Street, London EC1R 1UW.

All Oxfordshire Records are now held at the Oxford Register Office. New provisions came into force on 1 January 2004 concerning Citizenship Ceremonies and local registration services are now required to conduct these ceremonies.

Oxfordshire County Council has introduced ‘Naming Ceremonies’, ‘Commitment Ceremonies’, ‘Civil Renewal of Vows’, and ‘Civil Funerals’. These are non-statutory ceremonies, but ‘Commitment Ceremonies’ will most likely be made statutory.

Marriages will be modernised with a central database which will enable marriage notices to be given anywhere within England and Wales. Notices of marriage for all civil and church marriages will be given not less than 15 days and not more than 12 months prior to the proposed date of the marriage providing that the bride and groom have had a residence for 7 days in England and Wales. A schedule will then be issued which, unless it is a civil marriage, will be returned to the registration authority within which it was issued within 7 days of the ceremony.

Eventually a ‘Through Life Record’ electronic system will be introduced which will enable marriages and divorces, etc., to be added to the record when necessary.

Oxford Hospitals
7. The Nuffield Orthopaedic Centre at Headington has been completely rebuilt.

9. The Acland Hospital is moving from the Banbury Road site to a new building in Headington, near to the John Radcliffe Hospital, and will be know as the Manor Hospital.
17. A Children’s Hospital is being built on the John Radcliffe Hospital site at Headington.