

The unremarked disappearance of Dispensary Road¹

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Introduction

Well into the 1990s, tourists arriving by coach in the centre of Oxford and buying a street map would find on it a street leading from Gloucester Green to Worcester Street. Its short length made it tricky for the cartographers to find room for its name: Dispensary Road.

Anyone looking for the road itself would be disappointed: it now lies beneath a 1980s office block surmounted by Disneyesque turrets, facing the eastern end of Hythe Bridge Street.

Demolition of the eponymous dispensary started in the 1960s, but the last drugs had been dispensed in 1939. Dispensary Road has now gone from street maps too. Its site is not marked by any sign or plaque; it is ignored by guide books and tourist buses. The same is generally true of the whole quadrilateral now called Gloucester Green.²

In medieval times this area, outside the city wall, was scrub land, known as 'Broken Hayes' (ruined hedges). It was extensively built over in the 12th and 13th centuries but in the later middle ages, especially following the Black Death, when Oxford's population fell, land became cheap; and at the end of the 16th century, the City Council was able to buy up Broken Hayes and, eventually, let much of it for building. During the Civil Wars the area was used for exercising the militia (and later for the execution of Leveller mutineers). Anthony Wood called it a 'rude, broken and undigested place'.³

The area's economic and social importance dated from 1601 when the corporation was granted permission for a weekly market, with pie powder court and tolls, and three annual fairs. As Oxford expanded, particularly during the 19th century, what was by then renamed Gloucester Green became the centre of gravity for the town. For around 100 years, up to 1935, the cattle market was held there. Civic buildings (Town Hall, gaol, Corn Exchange, schools, Dispensary) and places of entertainment (theatre, public houses) sprang up, visible signs of Oxford's late Victorian municipal confidence.⁴

Gloucester Green's pre-eminence as a centre of commercial and civic activity was then quickly eroded in the 20th century. The cattle market moved to Oxpens, near the railway. The rebuilding of retail and office premises on Cornmarket, Queen Street and elsewhere, the shifting of political focus to the new town hall in St Aldate's, and the creation of a new centre

of employment and housing in east Oxford all helped undermine Gloucester Green's importance. Successive development plans from the 1940s to the 1980s seemed uncertain about Gloucester Green's history and its future role. Its main popular association seems to be with the (highly inconvenient) bus station, although the weekly market provides a link with the city council's original purchase of the site, and it remains surrounded by places of entertainment and refreshment.

This essay starts with a short history of the Dispensary, and puts its services into the context of health care in Oxford. It then looks more generally at how buildings like the Dispensary develop, change use, decay and vanish. Finally, it asks why the fate of some such public buildings rouses argument and passion, and why some, even after demolition, enjoy an after-life in print or in local folk memory.

The Dispensary

The Dispensary's full name was the Cutler Boulter Provident Dispensary. The building was erected in 1884 on city land, where Gloucester Green met Worcester Street. Photographs of it are hard to find, but it seems to have been a substantial three-storey gabled brick building, with stone lintels and doorways. The main entrance was on Dispensary Road itself, with another on Worcester Street. From the beginning of the 20th century the building also contained the office of the relieving and vaccination officer for the Oxford Incorporation (i.e. the parishes) - a post later the responsibility of the local authority - and the registrar of births and deaths.⁵

The upper two storeys were home to the caretaker and his family. The son of the family who lived there in the early 1930s, and another Oxford resident, daughter of a railway worker who subscribed to the 'Provident', each described to me the large hall, with wooden floor and long wooden benches, 'rather like one of the early cinemas', that occupied much of the ground floor. The aisle between the benches made a convenient practice track (presumably out of opening hours) for the youngster's tricycle. Having seen one of the doctors, patients waited to be called to a small window at the front of the hall where two or three of the Dispensary staff, in long white aprons, handed out the prescribed drugs.⁶

For 55 years the Dispensary provided a medical insurance service for its 'Provident' members and their families, most of whom lived in the working class areas of St Ebbe's and

St Thomas's to the south, and Jericho to the north. As well as railway workers they would have included those in the printing and publishing trades, retail and service industries - including ill-paid college servants. In its Edwardian heyday 'the Provident' had over 6,500 members - around twelve per cent of Oxford's total population. At that time members paid a penny per week or three pence for a whole family. This entitled them to consult one of the doctors either at the surgery or at home, and to receive free drugs.

For much of its life the Cutler Boulter Dispensary was virtually self-supporting, but in the decade before the dispensary closed numbers declined steadily, for a combination of national and local reasons. Total membership in 1938 was no more than 1,700 (a decline of around fifteen per cent on the previous year) while Oxford's population was approaching 100 000.⁷

Although the dispensary building was Victorian, the institution's origins go back to 1735, when Edmund Boulter, a Yorkshireman with property in Oxfordshire, made a bequest to the city of Oxford in memory of his great uncle, Sir John Cutler, a member of the London Grocers' Company. The money was to build almshouses in St Clement's, each of which would house 'a poor decayed honest man' from one of six parishes. Next to these almshouses was built a 'strong stone house', in which 'a good and skilful apothecary' was to be paid £50. to 'advise, assist and bleed gratis the sick and infirm poor of the county of Oxford'. In 1836 each resident received £7. per year in addition to the house and garden, and a good warm strong gown, plus every two years a silver badge inscribed 'J.C. Bart. and E.B. ARM'R'.⁸

In the second half of the 19th century, however, the trend was towards care in the community for decayed old men. In 1880 the trustees of Oxford City Charities petitioned the Charity Commissioners that Boulter's original intention had clearly been to help 'the sick poor' of Oxford in general and it was no longer appropriate to confine the benefits of the dispensary to St. Clement's. In October 1884 the Charity Commissioners duly made an order dividing the Cutler Boulter bequest into two branches, one of which would pay a pension of 12s. per week to each former resident, allowing him to live at home in his own parish. The second would help build and run a new city centre dispensary. The City Charities put the St Clement's almshouses up for sale; rent from the houses built in their place along what is now Boulter Street (the one tangible reminder of the 1735 bequest) contributed for many years to the funds of Oxford's municipal charities.⁹

The new dispensary building opened the same year, but attracted little attention: the modest announcement of the new scheme was heavily out-gunned by the columns of small ads for patent medicines (many of them masquerading as editorial copy) which regularly filled several columns of all the local newspapers. The editor of the (Conservative) *Oxford Times* approved the exclusion of 'the dishonest, the drunkard and the ne'er do well' from the new provisions, but suspected that the Charity Commissioners were effectively diverting money from the genuine poor to 'classes above them'; he also questioned the qualifications of some of the scheme's Oxford trustees.¹⁰

Nevertheless, by the end of the decade demand was such that a second dispensary had to be provided, first in rented premises at 7 Cowley Road, and then in another purpose-built dispensary at 4 Marston Street. By 1892, when the new building opened, the two dispensaries and their five medical officers served nearly 8,000 'Provident' members, around seventeen per cent of Oxford's population.¹¹

After its original purpose evaporated in 1940, for reasons discussed in the next section, the Dispensary Road building was put to a variety of uses, including those of bus company parcels office, Women's Voluntary Services (WVS, now WRVS) clothing store, and annex for the nearby Oxford Boys' High School. In the 1950s the building came briefly back into the public eye as a WVS club for US and other servicemen, where GIs could get information and advice about living in Britain and perhaps meet their girlfriends for a cup of coffee.

Opening the club in the Spring of 1951, Mrs Walter Gifford, wife of the US ambassador, praised the work of the ladies in green tweed: 'There could be nothing more heart warming and welcome than that you should be interested in our boys, who are so far from home'. However, one survivor from the WVS 'volunteers' who worked at the club (she says she went under protest - her mother was already an officer) says that few US troops used it apart from, and probably because of, the white-helmeted Military Police, who sat in the window seat on the lookout for those who had missed the bus back to Heyford or Brize Norton. British national servicemen were more usual customers (one of them married the reluctant volunteer). She thinks that the Gloucester Green club was for Other Ranks whereas the English Speaking Union (ESU) club in upmarket Beaumont Street was preferred by officers. In any case, it soon became clear that American servicemen and their families

preferred to spend their leisure time either on the bases or in venues that they chose for themselves. The end of national service in Britain also hastened the decline of the club. Threatened by successive plans for the comprehensive development of Gloucester Green, the former dispensary building was doomed to demolition.¹²

No physical trace, no commemorative plaque and no photographs of the club exist; it has left even less of an imprint on local memory than has the Cutler Boulter Dispensary, or the Civic Restaurant in its prefab building across Dispensary Road (which was affectionately recalled by members of a pensioners' club on Gloucester Green during video interviews in 2002).¹³

Things would probably have been no different even had WVS organisers been able to acquire their first choice for the 1950s club - an 'old and attractive stone building' on the same side of Gloucester Green, and separated from the dispensary by the Greyhound public house (also now demolished). The sketch map drawn by the WVS scout at the time is not conclusive, but contemporary street maps suggest it might have been 10 Worcester Street; in 1884, when the Dispensary was built, this housed a paper-hanger's business. Later it seems to have been annexed by the pub, and perhaps the WVS were mistaken in thinking it had become surplus to requirements in 1950. Although, again, no photographs are to hand, it was almost certainly an early 19th century rubble stone house with sash windows similar to 1 Worcester Street, which does survive and is described as offering 'a poignant contrast to the smooth classical stonework of Worcester College' across the street. In the 1970s the Oxford Preservation Trust urged its preservation and eventually it was listed (along with the Randolph Hotel). No such lucky juxtaposition saved No. 10, the Greyhound, or the Dispensary.¹⁴

Unlike the Gloucester Green Dispensary, the Marston Street building survives. During the Second World War, after the Dispensary closed, it housed Air Raid Precautions (ARP) officers on the ground floor, and 'troops' (perhaps Home Guard) upstairs. It is now divided into private apartments. The words 'Cutler Boulter' originally carved above the front door have been replaced by its current name, 'Nicholas House', commemorating the building's brief post-War use as a Russian Orthodox church, rather than its longer service to the residents of east Oxford as a whole.¹⁵

The dispensary and Oxford's health

When I first looked into the story of the Dispensary, I assumed that its closure was associated with the birth of Britain's National Health Service in 1948. This was not the case. To show what did happen, and how the Dispensary contributed to medical care pre-NHS, this section offers a brief and necessarily partial history of Oxford's medical institutions.

The provision of capital and the underwriting of running costs by local philanthropic subscribers, who retained the right to nominate patients and lay down both medical parameters and moral standards (no treatment of venereal diseases, and no places for the indigent poor) was the key feature of the city's first major post-Reformation medical facility, the Radcliffe Infirmary, which opened in 1770. The same pattern applied to many smaller institutions, the predecessors and then competitors of the Cutler Boulter dispensaries.

The first of these that can readily be identified is the Oxford Medical Dispensary and Lying-in Charity (OMDLC), established in 1807. In 1829, having already treated some 15 000 patients, it moved to the recently completed building at 35 Beaumont Street, remaining in business into the 20th century; in 1883 it treated over 1,300 cases (the cumulative total for patients treated since 1807 was more than 90 000); in 1909-10 the figure was over 1,800. As with the Radcliffe Infirmary, to qualify for treatment, patients had to produce a 'turn' from one of the subscribers, who also visited the 'deserving poor' to distribute food, blankets, clothes and medicines. Such 'turns' were in effect a marketable commodity; in 1885 one Radcliffe subscriber wrote to the local paper asking if any fellow subscriber had 'turns' to spare, since he had used up his own allocation.¹⁶

The Radcliffe and OMDLC seem to illustrate what we now think of as 'Victorian values' – philanthropy, and the need to distinguish between the deserving and undeserving poor - although the Radcliffe of course pre-dated Victoria's reign. Self-help and mutuality were equally prominent themes in other contemporary institutions. An Oxford Self-supporting Medical Institution (OSMI) is traceable to 1836. Its first annual report recorded 700 'free' members (weekly subscribers) who between them produced an income of £75. 13s. 6d., with the (un-numbered) 'honorary' (philanthropic) members contributing £20. 16s. 0d. The fact that the 'free' members apparently paid little more than 10d. each in the course of the year was explained by the fact that the greater number

. . . belong to a class of Society who are in the habit of frequently changing their place of abode

[and] many would have quitted Oxford in the course of a year.¹

The 'honorary' members' money essentially paid for overheads - £14. 5s. 11*d.*, of which £8. went on printing and advertising. The product of the 'free' members' weekly subscriptions, on the other hand, was divided between ten medical officers, in proportion to the number of cases each had treated during the year; this pattern emerges in a more sophisticated form later.

A more direct precursor of Cutler Boulter was the Oxford Provident Dispensary (OPD), set up around 1876 by a group representing 'town' and 'gown'. At first it had premises in St Ebbe's and Cherwell Street, St Clement's – a few streets away from the almshouses and apothecary's house built with the 1735 Boulter bequest. It aimed to promote a method

. . by which those who are above the position of paupers and yet not able wholly to pay the expenses of Medical Attendance from their own earnings may be encouraged and assisted to make provision against. . .sickness [and] to discourage Mendicancy and . . . Pauperism.¹⁸

Membership was open to labourers and artisans not receiving Poor Law Relief, plus their families and servants; the weekly subscription was 1*d.* for a single man, 3*d.* for a family, or one halfpenny for a child. As with the OSMI, the founders' subscriptions paid for management costs, while the weekly 'provident' members paid the costs of the medical officers. In 1879 the OPD's total membership was around 3,400, nearly one-tenth of Oxford's population at that time. The annual report concluded that:

...this form of provident self help is within the reach of and as much valued by the labourer for himself and his wife and children... Membership of a Provident Dispensary is not found to be beyond the means of any who earn weekly wages.¹⁹

A correspondent in the local press also commended the Friendly Society dispensaries, then found in forty English towns, because they offered more economical purchasing of drugs and purpose-built premises, while putting members in control of the management.²⁰

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In March 1878 the OPD committee began to buy its own drugs, wholesale, and to employ a resident dispenser at 7 Friar's Entry, Gloucester Green; five years later the local press showed the dispensary occupying premises in George Street. This was the direct predecessor of the purpose-built Cutler Boulter Dispensary.²¹

The effect of the 1884 Charity Commissioners' agreement that the St Clement's almshouses could be abandoned was to add the stream of money from Edmund Boulter's bequest to the resources of Oxford's existing city charities. Cutler Boulter money was critical in providing the two new purpose-built dispensaries; the 1892 accounts of the municipal charities show £209 of Boulter money set aside to build the Marston Street dispensary. But in 1891 there had been no contribution from the bequest, and in other years for which records survive the bequest money represented only a small part of total income. In 1890, for instance, the bequest contributed £104 out of £1,571 total income. Three years later provident members contributed £1,506 of the total £1,592 income. Apart from these two sources there were only trifling sums from the 'honorary' (charitable) subscriptions, cathedral and church collections, and the Hospital Saturday and Sunday Funds.

In the early years of the 20th century, provident members' weekly subscriptions still made up all but a small percentage of the dispensaries' total income. The importance attached to the principle of mutuality is illustrated by a letter in the local press from one of the trustees, a year after the new Gloucester Green dispensary opened, urging provident subscribers to attend a forthcoming meeting in the Town Hall to elect a director, and so to ensure that their views were heard.²²

Two years before the First World War broke out, and before the 1911 National Health Insurance scheme had taken effect, a published review painted a rosy picture of health and welfare services in Oxford: 'There is so much cheap and free doctoring and the Provident Dispensary is on the whole so satisfactorily popular that there is . . . little demand for medical out-relief.' Nevertheless, in 1909, 270 patients went through the two workhouses in Oxford, most of them 'not of the class that would be suited to the [Radcliffe] hospital . . . often old or bedridden people, whom their relatives either cannot or will not nurse properly.' Having congratulated Oxford on supplying examples of nearly all methods by which medical attendance could be provided, from full fee payment, through partial payment and charity to complete provision by other payers of rates and taxes, the author claimed that so many

sources of help in sickness were to hand that there was 'not much incentive to foresight' among the poorest classes and, 'in spite of all', there was much 'quite unnecessary ill-health'.²³

Although the author of that 1912 report sounds puzzled, it is not difficult to visualize serious flaws in her picture of Edwardian healthcare in Oxford. Small though the weekly subscriptions to the Provident Dispensary or the MDLC may now seem, they could prove unaffordable even to a man in employment (for the unemployed, and for women, the situation was of course worse). Among the Radcliffe Infirmary's records is a bound volume with manuscript entries, perhaps compiled by the almoner, recording the names and addresses of patients, with notes about the nature of their illness and their circumstances. Many entries have the word 'Dispensary' written alongside them, almost certainly indicating that the patient was eligible for free drugs, first from the OPD, then the Cutler Boulter. One such entry illustrates how low-paid manual workers might fall through the net:

Eliza Cox (24) 8 Rewley Place (close to railway), husband a whitesmith. Man and wife, no children, both ailing, did belong to the provident Dispensary to [sic] poor to keep up their payments [sic] have done it for them now. 26 June 1878.²⁴

By the end of the 1920s, the proportion of the dispensaries' total income made up by the provident members' subscriptions had shrunk to seventy-five per cent. By coincidence, a second survey of social services took place just before the Second World War. This, too, congratulates Oxford for being 'unusually well supplied with schemes through which provision can be made against the expenses of illness', with the Cutler Boulter dispensaries exemplifying 'an ancient charity adapted to modern needs'.²⁵

The report also reveals a *local* reason (aside, that is, from the *national* impact of the 1911 Insurance Scheme) why membership of the Cutler Boulter scheme had declined so rapidly. In 1935 a group of general practitioners had set up the Oxford and District Public Medical Service (ODPMS). This aimed to provide medical attention for those with incomes of less than £250. per year, dependants both of uninsured people and of those covered by National Insurance, plus 'others of a like economic status.'

The scheme offered access to around seventy general practitioners. Its weekly subscriptions – 4*d.* per week for an adult, 7*d.* for an adult plus one child, 1*s.* for an adult plus three children – were similar to the Cutler Boulter's. It worked on a co-operative basis –

'increasingly popular' – pooling the administrative work, but not the funds. After deduction of administrative expenses ('which compare favourably with those of the commercial insurance societies') each doctor received the money subscribed by all who named him as their medical attendant. There were similar schemes in some eighty other British towns, but the ODPMS was said to be almost unique in collecting weekly subscriptions both through agents, paid on a commission basis, and through membership of a friendly society. In 1939, about 4,500 Oxford families were subscribing; by the end of the Second World War that number had increased to 6,750 direct subscribers, plus an estimated 10 000 who contributed via the friendly societies – altogether, between fifteen and twenty per cent of Oxford's population.²⁶

At the end of the 1930s, an income limit, agreed with the ODPMS, meant that many working people were no longer eligible for Cutler Boulter assistance, signalling the end of the Cutler Boulter dispensaries. In the light of all that was going on at that time it is perhaps not surprising that it is hard to find any record of these events in the local press.

Things might have turned out differently had the 1930s trend of local authority responsibility for health and welfare services continued. Although, through the decade, Oxford's press loyally maintained that there was 'no evidence that the voluntary hospital system. . . has become inadequate', it also recorded annual shortfalls in the income of Oxford's major healthcare centre, the Radcliffe Infirmary. In 1938, for example, this amounted to more than £5,000, raising 'the dreadful spectre of debt'.²⁷ Clearly, change was on the way, but in 1948, despite the advocacy by Herbert Morrison of the local government point of view, local authorities lost the partial control of hospital services that the Local Government Act of 1929 had offered them, and a new national and regional NHS hierarchy was established.

Vanished buildings and survivors

The Cutler Boulter Dispensary is not, of course, the only public building to have come, changed use and gone around Gloucester Green. Some yet more substantial ones have vanished without trace; their importance to the economic and social life of Oxonians is missing from most city guides.

Virtually the only building in the area that although long demolished can still be

identified, by a carved stone pillar in a garden wall at the west end of Beaumont Street (across the road from Worcester College), is the King's House (more properly 'Houses'), built by Henry I around 1130. The stone records the birth there of Richard I, but does not mention his brother John, whose birthplace it also was and who had rather more contact with Oxford. By the early 14th century the site was no longer in royal use: some buildings were decayed, the rest allocated to the nearby Carmelite Friary. The construction of Beaumont Street in the 1820s saw the final disappearance of the ruins of the royal residence.²⁸

The sketchy information on the stone, its unobtrusive situation in the middle of a garden hedge, and some uncertainty as to what the building should be called (guide books that mention it call it Beaumont Palace, although it seems *palatium* was never used to describe it in contemporary documents; historians are also dubious about the *beau mont* itself) undervalue its historic importance. Oxford's King's House was an important seat of royal power: Henry II, John and Henry III all held frequent councils in Oxford; during the 13th century baronial revolt Oxford was 'in the forefront of national affairs'.²⁹

The site of Henry II's hunting lodge seven miles away in Woodstock is in many ways similar; that too is now marked by an unobtrusive and heavily worn stone. Yet the Woodstock manor house features in every popular guide to the county, invariably coupled with the story of 'Fair Rosamund'. The Woodstock site falls within the Blenheim estate, whose marketing team can add the story of the errant king and his mistress to its list of attractions. By comparison, there is nobody with a specific interest in promoting 'Beaumont Palace', and its stone goes unremarked (save, of course, by peripatetic public historians!).

If former royal residences merit such casual treatment, municipal buildings can expect even shorter shrift. As well as the public Dispensary, there are several examples from the Gloucester Green area. Just north of the elusive *beau mont* was Rats and Mice Hill, mentioned by Antony Wood in the 17th century and close to the present Wellington Square. This was a rodent-infested hillock of refuse deposited by townspeople, and the site of Oxford's Workhouse, built in 1772 by the union of Oxford parishes formed the previous year to replace the mid 17th century workhouse opposite St Mary Magdalene church.

There was also a private enterprise workhouse, Gloucester Hall, on the north-west corner of Gloucester Green, which was owned by St John's College and leased to a contractor. Oxford parishes could, if they wished, send unemployed men to work for the contractor,

rather than bear the expense of having them reside in the union Workhouse.

Another prominent late 18th century landmark was the City Gaol, 'an elegant low building with a dome', designed by William Blackburn in 1789, and situated in the centre of Gloucester Green's open space, supplanting the medieval Bocardo prison at the North Gate. Its four wings, radiating out from that domed hub, accorded with the latest principles of control and public health.

The Gaol was demolished in 1878 and on the site was built, in 1881, a Settling Room for the dealers in the weekly cattle market which had, until then, fitted itself around the walls of the Gaol. This was a square building, largely open at ground level, with a steeply pitched roof giving it a vaguely oriental appearance. In the 1930s, when the market in its turn moved away and Gloucester Green became a bus station and car park, the Settling Room became a café. It was demolished in 1987, despite representations by the Oxford Preservation Trust and others, who cited its connection with the long-term economic life of the area.³⁰

The Workhouses, the Gaol and the market buildings have vanished without trace, although photographs and drawings of them are at least easier to find than those of the Dispensary. Of all the former economic and civic activity in the area, it seems to be the cheap food and cups of tea provided by the bus station café that stick in public memory.

The gaol's basic design of central hall and radiating wings is, however, replicated in miniature in the Victorian Central Boys' School, whose grouping of classrooms round a circular top lit hall was thought to be 'highly ingenious'. Now known simply as the School House, this was Oxford's first 'board school' - controlled by the local School Board under the provisions of the 'Forster' Education Act of 1870, and offering elementary education free to all. Built in 1899 on the site of a row of tenements, the school closed in 1936, after which the building was used for some years as a waiting room for bus passengers (today's travellers have even more Spartan accommodation), and is now mainly occupied by a public house.

The school's exterior design was 'carefully designed to harmonise with humble neighbours', the general effect being 'domestic in character and . . . conventional in its detailing'.³¹ The aim was, no doubt, to prevent the small boys from poor families living around the market from being overawed by their surroundings. Although the building has handsome bay windows in the front, few others were included, so that the pupils might be less distracted by the noises of the market; the solid stone face the School House presents to

the public on Gloucester Green is greatly at odds with the mean brickwork at the back of the building.

The Central Boys' School was a purely local responsibility. Its workaday architecture would hardly have done for the Oxford High School for Boys in nearby George Street, designed by Sir Thomas Jackson, architect of the University's Examination Schools in the High Street and a number of other buildings in the opulent style nicknamed 'Anglo Jackson'. Established in 1881, this school was a joint venture between city and University, 'to provide for the sons of Oxford tradesmen, at fees within their compass, the opportunities of a liberal education' and prepare them for university. After the school closed, in 1966, a plaque was placed under the front porch; it records the contribution of Thomas H. Green, fellow of Balliol College and White's Professor of Moral Philosophy, who was elected in 1876 as the first University Member of Oxford City Council and who helped found the school,

thereby completing the city's first 'ladder of learning' from elementary school to university, a project dearest to his heart. Thus were united town and gown in common cause.

I discuss later how 'united' 'town and gown' may sometimes be. Meanwhile, the contrast with the Central Boys' School is epitomized by the stone facing of the High School continuing round the building, which now houses the University's Social Sciences Library.

Planning and 'history'

In the 1940s the two schools, so different in style, were due to share a common fate: both would be swept away in favour of roads and multi storey car 'stands'. The development plans, published as *Oxford Replanned* (1948), would have demolished these monuments to Victorian educational zeal, together with the Dispensary, the Corn Exchange and Fire Station, old market buildings and virtually everything else around Gloucester Green. Elliston and Cavell's department store (now Debenham's, its façade recently preserved at great expense) and the Oxford Union Society's gothic structure, famous among other things for its pre-Raphaelite murals, would also have gone: 'Neither', thought *Oxford Replanned's* author, Thomas Sharp, 'will be missed as architecture'. Also in the way of the proposed motor road was the medieval Frewin Hall,

one of the best historical domestic buildings left in the city... its destruction will mean a regrettable loss, but there is no way of avoiding it if [an] undeniably necessary new street is to be made.³²

Whereas Gloucester Green's civic buildings – Gaol, market, Town Hall, schools and Dispensary – exemplified Victorian municipal confidence, the 1940s plans were influenced by new factors, including the Labour government's Town and Country Planning legislation, and changes in public perception of and interest in the history of roads and buildings. However, in responding to the 1930s arrival of the mass-produced motor vehicle, the first priority was seen to be to lay down new roads to cope with the expected growth in traffic.

The 'Meadow Road' or 'Merton Mall' would cut from east to west across Christ Church Meadow. Two other roads were planned for the centre of Oxford. One would run roughly south-west to north-east, from the present Bonn Square to the junction of Broad Street and Cornmarket. A second, tentatively named 'The Friary' – a nod towards the area's medieval beginnings – would cut from east to west, obliterating 'the wilderness' of Gloucester Green – one of the 'less good' parts of the city.³³

Initially there was little public protest, except in the case of the 'Meadow Road', where colleges fought among themselves and against the city. The Oxford Preservation Trust (OPT) commented that there was 'something like general agreement on the main outlines' of the 'stimulating proposals of the Sharp Plan', especially on the perceived need to clear traffic from the High Street. Back in 1927 the Trust had urged the need to defend 'old domestic architecture' in Oxford, and produced a list of houses (including Frewin Hall) which ought to be preserved. Post-1945, however, it was slow to raise its voice in defence of the buildings around Gloucester Green.³⁴

Talking to an audience of Oxford businessmen, Sharp explained that he was essentially trying to redress the balance between Oxford as a university town, and as an industrial and commercial centre. The local press approved: 'Mr Sharp avoids falling into the danger... of putting the University before the City. Instead he wisely treats them as complementary.' The pseudonymous writer ('Omnia Vincit Ars') of a letter to the same newspaper praised the Sharp plan, invited those colleges facing 'Merton Mall' to come out in support of it, and said he would be happy to sacrifice his own house – 'and it is a remarkably

fine old house, too' – for the common benefit of future generations. A decade earlier, the editor had expressed his 'unease' about the city council's 'cavalier' attitude to Oxford's old houses, but in 1948 this seems to have been forgotten.³⁵

Arguments against wholesale road building and redevelopment emerged only slowly. A 1956 study raised doubts about the social implications of bulldozing neighbourhoods and transplanting hundreds of families to the outer suburbs (this, too, had been foreshadowed in the 1930s, when the Oxford Council of Social Service expressed its concern about the lack of 'community' facilities on the city's new housing estates).³⁶

In 1969 the Oxford Civic Society was founded to organize protest against 'the wholesale destruction of the city by those determined to strangle us with roads and destroy our heritage', but little specific attention was directed to Gloucester Green.³⁷ By 1980, Sharp's inner-city motor roads had been abandoned. The Oxford Preservation Trust now strongly supported the merits of Gloucester Green: 'The destruction of the Green would be an act of vandalism of historic dimension.' Even in its 'present unprepossessing state' the area was a 'historic feature of the city... as worthy of preservation and for equally important reasons as many of the famous historic buildings of Oxford.'³⁸

This change of heart came too late to save the Dispensary, the former market Settling Room, the 'handsome stone building' which the WVS had coveted in the 1950s, and many smaller buildings associated with the market. Gloucester Green is no longer an economic, educational or political centre. Ironically, the single use for which, from 1948 onwards, Sharp, the City Council and townspeople had agreed the area was worst suited, that of city bus station, survived and looks set to do so indefinitely.

Conclusions: the Dispensary in context

The way in which buildings vanish, are replaced, or remain but with new identities, as exemplified in this account of Gloucester Green, goes on everywhere: a London power station becomes an art gallery; Oxford's Victorian prison escapes demolition in the 1940s, to re-emerge in the 21st century as a hotel and 'heritage centre'. Names, too, get changed, perhaps because they are deemed to have undesirable connotations: people would surely prefer to live in Wellington Square rather than on Rats and Mice Hill?

But why do some buildings, although long demolished, continue to be recorded and

enjoy a virtual existence in guide books, when others do not? A preoccupation with food in wartime and the following 'age of austerity' may account for the way that civic restaurant and bus station café crop up in oral testimony. By contrast, the political climate has meant that the late 20th century portrayal of an omnipresent and envied NHS (an image recently challenged) may have pushed 'the Provident' to the far reaches of our collective memory.

The story of the Dispensary, and other buildings around Gloucester Green, illustrates how the politics of town planning, preservation and heritage changed in a few decades. The way that an optimistic preoccupation with planning, 'progress' and 'modernity' during the 1950s and 1960s was transformed into the urge to preserve and celebrate the past – Victorian brickwork included – has been well covered by historians.³⁹

At the time when this narrative begins - when the Cutler Boulter dispensary was built - the debate between progress and preservation scarcely touched the public: only a few, like William Morris, took up the cudgels on behalf of the unpretentious buildings on Oxford's Broad Street, although he doesn't seem to have found time to campaign for the houses in St Ebbe's or Gloucester Green. The Victorians cheerily knocked down buildings and replaced them piecemeal in order to make a more economic use of space in Oxford's constricted centre: the Workhouse, almshouses, and the city Gaol went unmourned, to be replaced by Wellington Square houses, the Dispensary, and the cattle market.

The year before the new Gloucester Green Dispensary opened, another pseudonymous correspondent ('Dum Spiro Spero') had written to the local press asking why it was taking so long to demolish the wall of the old workhouse – 'this mural relic'. He went on to suggest (I assume ironically) that it should be added to the Oxford guide book, 'for it would be a pity for visitors to bid adieu... without viewing a wall whose grim stones form such an eloquent commentary on the "annals of the poor"!'⁴⁰

The Victorians were also keen on road building (for instance, demolishing St Martin's church to widen the road at Carfax), but it was in the 1940s that planning on the grand scale appeared to triumph. A recent historian of the NHS could equally well have been referring to town planning when he wrote: '[an] obsession with ambitious schemes for peacetime reconstruction reflected a spirit of euphoria that took hold of the intelligentsia during the darkest days of the war'.⁴¹ In 1948 Morris of Cowley seems to have been on city councillors' minds, rather than Morris of Kelmscott; it was not until the 1970s that the tide turned

decisively, with the Civic Society and Preservation Trust campaigning against the road schemes which, they argued, would simply create more traffic.

It is easy enough with hindsight to condemn local politicians for thinking that a couple of new roads through the centre of the city would cope with the potential increase in motor traffic. But at the same time some credit must be given for the continuing urge of central and local government to put right the consequences of 19th century jerry-building, over-crowding and under-provision of infrastructure – notably drainage and water supply. Sweeping away close-packed and ill-ventilated tenements, and replacing them with spacious suburbs or new towns, was at the heart of town planning and public health thinking for the best part of a century, persisting long after the 'miasma' theory of epidemic infection had been discredited. In Oxford the Victorian cholera epidemics and the long battle for a clean water supply were not far from living memory.

The scale of Oxford's local health schemes – charitable or mutual – must also be put into context. As employment in the motor and other new industries increased, so did the numbers of relatively well-paid workers who could afford to join the private health insurance schemes, such as the Oxford and District Provident Association, admired by the local press as being 'one of the very few organisations which exist for the benefit of that much tried section of the community, the middle class!' ⁴²

As I have already suggested, none of the local schemes was genuinely open to all: the modest weekly subscriptions could be out of reach of the lowest paid (and the unemployed). At the end of the 1930s the Oxford National Health Insurance (NHI) committee provided for about 38 000 insured people – more than twice as many as benefited from Cutler Boulter and ODPMS combined. Throughout the decade, questions about the intricacies of NHI were answered virtually every week in the 'Information Bureau' column of the *Oxford Times*. Throughout the period covered by this essay, the only truly universal provider of health care was the workhouse.

Perceptions of class not only differentiated one scheme from another, they coloured relationships within the same scheme: philanthropic governors of the Infirmary or Provident Trustees saw themselves as one class, weekly subscribers as another. There was overt and apparently unembarrassed class rivalry between the two fund-raising organizations which helped prop up the precarious finances of the Radcliffe Infirmary, the Saturday and Sunday

funds. The former was avowedly working-class; its secretary, F. J. Tyler, wrote to the local paper in reply to a (pseudonymous) attack from a Sunday Fund supporter implying that working class generosity was waning. Far from it, Tyler pointed out: the size of collections was encouraging, especially in view of 'the great numbers in the building trade' being laid off at the time. A few weeks later the Saturday Fund advertised a spelling bee (a favourite late Victorian fund-raising activity) 'exclusively for the working classes (except printers)'.⁴³

Finally, there is the issue of 'town' versus 'gown'. By late Victorian times, street brawls between undergraduates and young citizens were rarely fatal. Individual academics played key roles in modernizing Oxford's local government (many of their successors are active in local politics today); University wives served on many of the committees supervising health and welfare services. But until well into the 19th century, colleges only contributed reluctantly to the cost of municipal improvement; they jealously maintained their own fire brigades and were suspicious of innovations such as the inspection of lodgings and the electrification of the tramways; only by a narrow majority in 1864 did heads of houses agree the establishment of a Local Board under the provisions of the Public Health Act 1858.⁴⁴

But the 19th century also saw obstruction and procrastination within 'town', caused, for example, by disputes between the City Council and the Board of Guardians. Here too there were class divisions: the Guardians were accused of being dominated by the 'wish to protect the interest of the propertied classes'.⁴⁵

It would be simplistic to portray 'gown' as a cohesive entity, harmonious and single-minded; in the 1950s, for instance, the 'Meadow Road' split the colleges into at least two warring factions. But, when compared to the shifting constituency of (historically) part-time local politicians, Oxford colleges are long-term, well organised, well-educated and well-endowed corporations. Disputatious as they may be among themselves, members of academic bodies share common aims and interests, over-riding their concern with local politics. Councils' elected members, on the other hand, must try to represent a variety of interests; preservation of Oxford's built heritage is only one among many such concerns.

Most relevantly to the theme of this essay, those colleges blessed with large endowments (and skilful managers) control large swathes of land in Oxford. When the opportunity arises, they can move quickly to add to their holdings. At the beginning of the

21st century, for example, Jesus College acquired the freehold of much of the commercial property between Cornmarket and Turl Street, giving it a key role in development around the city centre. The colleges' stewardship has (or appears to the local community to have) the single aim of maximizing revenue for their continuing educational and research functions.

The City Council's opportunistic purchase of Broken Hayes, on the other hand, is unlikely to be repeated; today's financial restrictions mean that few local authorities could move swiftly enough, or command enough capital, to acquire much by way of land and buildings on their own initiative.

Colleges and University departments snap up city buildings when opportunity arises, converting them to their own uses or demolishing them as necessary: while the Boys' High School survives as a University library, the Girls' High School, in nearby New Inn Hall Street, was taken over and partially demolished by St Peter's College. On the rare occasions that city centre sites become vacant, gown rather than town is likely to be the beneficiary. Not far from Gloucester Green, the Rewley Road railway station site, after a protracted but typically poorly co-ordinated campaign by conservationists, eventually emerged not as the city bus station that Thomas Sharp planned, but the University's Said Business School. The last medical department serving the citizens of Oxford in the Radcliffe Infirmary will shortly quit the 18th century building, to be replaced by University departments.

A few years before Sharp's plans were published, John Johnson, printer to the Oxford University Press, hit on what seemed to him a bold and imaginative piece of planning: a new Technical University, located in the heart of the city for the benefit of city youth. Its buildings would stand on the site of the canal wharf, close by Gloucester Green. Nuffield College, the rival bidder for the site, could, Johnson argued, be more appropriately located just outside the city boundaries, on land recently acquired by the Oxford Preservation Trust (OPT) at Wytham village.⁴⁶

Johnson's vision of undergraduates and dons strolling in Wytham Woods, within sight of the dreaming spires, came to nought; Nuffield College duly arose on the old canal site. His proposal, although published by the OPT, might not have been to the taste of that body, whose stated aim was, and is, 'To preserve for the benefit of the public the amenities of the City of Oxford and its surroundings.' Its sub-clauses are significant:

- to acquire land *in the vicinity of* Oxford
- to encourage public co-operation in the protection of natural beauty and interest
- to assist the development of *rural* community life.⁴⁷

The protection of Oxford's rural environs against bungaloid sprawl, ribbon development or industrialization, and the need to acquire and care for open spaces affording famous views of the city, are constant themes of OPT reports. In 1950, the Warden of New College was reported as saying: 'Within the City there was much to delight the eye. It was the invasion of the countryside surrounding Oxford that gave rise to despair.'⁴⁸

The influence is apparent of those academics who have, over the decades, given time and energy to the work of the Trust (as to other city social and welfare bodies). It does not seem too fanciful to detect an inheritance from Victorian bachelor dons who strode each afternoon across Boars Hill, Shotover or Wytham Woods.

It would be unfair to paint either the Oxford Preservation Trust, or the newer Civic Society, as concerned solely with the social and artistic preferences of the University and colleges. Both bodies did eventually put forward robust criticism of development plans for Gloucester Green, expressing concern for the preservation of vernacular architecture.

Nevertheless, for whatever combination of economic, political and social reasons, the overall impression is that the history and aesthetics attaching to 'gown' buildings are seen as somehow higher, more rarefied, than those of the 'town'. Insofar as the buildings examined in this essay, and others like them, can be called as evidence, it is hard not to see the city as usually coming off second best. The idea of a road across college open space causes immediate uproar; 'inner city relief roads' across Gloucester Green and elsewhere do not: opposition to them takes longer to surface. The outcome of 'town' campaigns is not always successful: 1 Worcester Street, owned by the college across the road, does survive, but the equally 'handsome stone building' coveted by the WVS at number 10, on municipally owned land, does not.

Colleges manage land and buildings skilfully, marketing them intensively to tourists, film and TV companies; representations of them in oils, watercolours and photographs are on sale everywhere. By contrast, Oxford's Jacksonian town hall rarely gets a second glance from most tourists, and its unique collection of paintings of the city by William Turner ('the Oxford Turner') is tucked away in an unidentified upstairs corridor. As a municipal concert hall, the

building does not enjoy the prestige of the (famously uncomfortable) Sheldonian Theatre.

As this essay began by stating, city buildings, certainly those round Gloucester Green, get sparse treatment in most books about Oxford. At the end of the 1970s, a book written by a local architect argued fiercely against the replacement of domestic scale architecture by monolithic designs and inappropriate materials, bringing up to date Morris's plea for Oxford's old houses: 'It is most important to preserve these small, domestic buildings to act as foils to the more spectacular college buildings'. The author emphasized that:

Oxford is not just the University area with its magnificent historic buildings. It consists of many suburbs and established communities, each with its own character.⁴⁹

However, a few pages further on he seems to reveal his true priorities: 'Central Oxford is not Carfax. It is the area around Radcliffe Square', whose buildings, he argues, would enable one to reconstruct all European architecture if all else were destroyed. The minor domestic buildings, whether in Broad Street, Gloucester Green or elsewhere, only gain true value (as with 1 Worcester Street) from proximity to the colleges. In passing, he supports the feeling that ownership of land is a key factor in deciding which buildings get noticed and preserved: 'It is significant that Oxford's first Conservation Area was in North Oxford', owned by St John's College and colonized by academic families.⁵⁰

Published a few years later, *Unbuilt Oxford* is a study of buildings planned, but never constructed, 'a series of case studies in the academic patronage of architecture'. The author explains he has

. . . written nothing about the road and town planning schemes of the 1940s and 1950s . . . such indications . . . as were afforded at the time show buildings of a banality that does not encourage further investigation.⁵¹

The author deplores the 20th century use of rubble stone for new college buildings, which was because of the mistaken idea that 'colleges had some affinity with Cotswold barns and farmhouses, whereas in practice they had invariably been built of properly dressed ashlar': architecturally, 'town' and 'gown' have nothing in common. One of the few city buildings to get a mention is the Boys' High School, that product of 'town' and 'gown' *entente*, where

Jackson's eclectic Jacobethan style was chosen in preference to 'old doctrinaire Gothic revivalism' designs. Even so, the book spends noticeably less time on these plans than, for instance, on those of Jackson's competitors for the Examination Schools.⁵²

Books like these underline the suspicion that when it comes to institutions, buildings and roads, university and college interests have, over the past two centuries, carried more clout than those of Oxford's citizens. As of Autumn 2003 the balance may have shifted. The local authorities, despite their parlous financial situation and the electorate's apparent lack of interest in local politics, show signs of wanting to reverse the trend. There are plans to enhance and promote the town hall as a superior entertainment centre and meeting place for Oxonians.

The Civic Society's blue plaques now identify buildings associated with townspeople – William Morris, car-maker; Sarah Cooper, jam-maker; Felicia Skene, prison visitor – as well as university idols like Pater and Tolkien. Other proposals include the floodlighting of city buildings, starting not, as might have been expected, with Radcliffe Square, but with St Michael's church and others in the Cornmarket-Carfax area.

In healthcare, coincidentally, there is also debate, local as well as national, as to whether the monolithic national scheme funded by general taxation is best. A conference organised by the Oxford, Swindon and Gloucester Co-operative Party concluded that

In health care, mutuals in particular could return to the importance they had before nationalisation of provision in the last century. Mutuals could reintroduce enterprise and local ownership . . . as part of a national system.⁵³

Practical politics almost certainly mean Oxford will see Radcliffe's inheritance transformed into a 'foundation' hospital, with cosmetic local responsibility, rather than a resurrection of the mutual 'provident' spirit. As to buildings, there is little left to floodlight around Gloucester Green, nor is there much sign at present of local authorities wishing to draw attention to the histories of buildings that played such important roles in the lives of working people in the area – whether market, Workhouse, Gaol or Provident Dispensary.

- ¹ This article is based on a guided walk during the 2002 Public History conference. I am grateful for help and advice from fellow walkers, and from Ruskin College's inextinguishable librarians, the staff of the Bodleian Library, the Centre for Oxfordshire Studies, the Oxford Preservation Trust, and the WRVS archive in Abingdon.
- ² An honourable exception is C. and E. Hibbert (eds.), *Encyclopaedia of Oxford* (London: Macmillan, 1988). 'Gloucester Green' originally referred to open space opposite Gloucester College, now Walton Street.
- ³ H. E. Salter, *Medieval Oxford* (Oxford: Oxford Historical Society, 1936) pp. 75, 78, 87.
- ⁴ A. Howe, 'Intellect and civic responsibility: dons and citizens in 19th century Oxford' in R. C. Whiting (ed.), *Oxford: studies in the history of a university town since 1800* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1993) p. 31.
- ⁵ Centre for Oxfordshire Studies (CFOS), *Kelly's Directory, Oxford*, 1908 et seq.
- ⁶ Private letters from Dennis Young and Connie Ward to the author, Oxford, Feb-Apr 2002.
- ⁷ CFOS OXFO 362.1; V. Butler, *Social Conditions in Oxford* (London: Sidgwick & Jackson, 1912) p. 199.
- ⁸ CFOS OXFO 361.7 CUTL, *Charity Commission Report*, 1836.
- ⁹ Bodleian Library (Bod) GA Oxon c.107, *Charity Commission Report*, 1884.
- ¹⁰ *Oxford Times (OT)*, 3 May 1884; *Oxford Chronicle (OC)*, 8 Nov 1884.
- ¹¹ CFOS OXFO 361.7 CUTL; J. Parfitt, *Health of a City: Oxford 1770-1974* (Oxford: OUP, 1987) p. 132. As the almshouses were being demolished, residents wrote to the press complaining about losing the services of the apothecary (*OT*, 16 May 1885).
- ¹² Women's Royal Voluntary Services archive (WRVS): Folder SW15; English Speaking Union (ESU), *English Speaking World* (London, 1942 various issues); *OT* 23 Mar 1951; telephone conversation with Glenice Gray, Oxford, Feb. 2001. WRVS memos support the idea of an 'Officers/Other Ranks' divide but ESU records show no overt 'Officers Only' policy.
- ¹³ Yvonne Gosling, *Memory Video recording* (Oxford, Apr 2002).
- ¹⁴ WRVS SW 15; Oxford City Council, *On Foot in Oxford* (Oxford, [1982]); Oxford Preservation Trust (OPT): Minutes 1978.
- ¹⁵ F. Courtney-Thompson, *Just By Chance: the story of Marston Street* (Oxford: for the author, 1997), *passim*.
- ¹⁶ Bod GA Oxon c 107: OMDLC Reports 1834-1864; Parfitt, *Health of a City*, p. 7; N. Selwyn, A Crossley, C.J Day, M Jessup 'Public Services' in A. Crossley ed. *Victoria History of the County of Oxford iv (VCH Oxon. iv)* (Oxford: 1979, OUP) p. 360; Butler, *Social Conditions*, p. 202; *OC*, 2 Feb 1884. See also I. Loudon, *Medical Institutions of Oxford* (Oxford: BMA, 1986).
- ¹⁷ Bod. GA Oxon c 53 (138): OSSMI Annual Report 1837; VCH Oxon iv p.360.
- ¹⁸ CFOS OXFO 362.1.
- ¹⁹ *Ibid*
- ²⁰ *OC* 5 May 1883
- ²¹ *OC* 22 Dec 1883.
- ²² *OT* 26 Sep 1885
- ²³ Butler *Social Conditions*, pp 198-199, 201, 205
- ²⁴ Oxfordshire Health Archive, R1 24 A1.
- ²⁵ A F C Bourdillon, *Survey of Social Services in the Oxford District* (Oxford: OUP, 1940) II, p.224. A less rosy picture is in E Peretz, 'Infant Welfar(e) Between the Wars' in Whiting ed. *Oxford Studies*, pp.131-143. And Loudon (*Medical Institutions of Oxfordshire*, 1986, p.7) thinks that Oxford was 'if anything, backward in the provision of charitable care [and] clinical teaching in the 18th and 19th centuries.'
- ²⁶ CFOS OXFO 362.1; Bourdillon, *Survey of Social Services*, pp. 118,222; *OT* 11 Dec 1936.
- ²⁷ *OT* 11 Dec 1936, 16 Dec 1938.
- ²⁸ Salter, *Medieval Oxford*, p.75; J Cooper *Medieval Oxford* (Oxford: Oxon CC, 1991) pp. 24, 14.
- ²⁹ Salter, *Medieval Oxford* p. 79. The 'King's House' stone, accidentally demolished in summer 2003, has now been restored by the Oxford stonemasons Knowles & Son for Worcester College, owners of the house in whose garden it stands.
- ³⁰ G Tyack *Oxford, An Architectural Guide* (Oxford: OUP, 1998) p. 174; A. Crossley, C. Colvin 'Parish Government and Poor-Relief' in VCH Oxon. iv, p. 346; OPT Minutes.
- ³¹ Tyack, *Oxford*, p. 265; P Howell 'Architecture and Townscape', Whiting ed. *Oxford Studies*, p. 74.
- ³² T Sharp, *Oxford Replanned* (London: Architectural Press, 1948) p. 50.
- ³³ *Ibid*, pp. 119, 138, 142. Sharp's plan also envisaged the demolition of the Victorian county gaol.
- ³⁴ OPT Annual Reports 1927, 1936, 1937, 1949, 1951.
- ³⁵ *OT* 7 Aug 1936; 20, 27 Feb, 5 Mar, 7 Apr 1948.
- ³⁶ J M Moge, *Family & Neighbourhood: studies in Oxford* (Oxford: OUP, 1956) *passim*; *OT* 1 May 1936.
- ³⁷ Oxford Civic Society, *Let's LIVE in Oxford* (1970).
- ³⁸ CFOS OXFO 711 GLOU; OPT Minutes 1978 onwards.
- ³⁹ E.g. R Samuel, *Theatres of Memory* (London: Verso, 1994) 51 and *passim*.
- ⁴⁰ *OC* 7 Apr 1883.
- ⁴¹ C Webster, *National Health Service, a political history* (Oxford: OUP, 1998) p.7. Webster quotes Titmus, *Problems of Social Policy* (London, 1957) p.474: 'when human lives are cheapest, the desire to preserve life and health is at its

highest.'

⁴² *OT* 28 Oct 1938.

⁴³ *OC* 1 Jan, 22 Feb 1876. Presumably the printers were excluded because they would always have won.

⁴⁴ Parfitt, *Health of a City* (1987) pp. 17-18. Oxford never did get electric trams; indecision about electrification left the door open for William Morris to step in with 'buses.

⁴⁵ Parfitt (1987) p. 60.

⁴⁶ OPT, *Oxford and Industrial Education* (Oxford: private, 1943) esp. pp. 18-19.

⁴⁷ OPT Annual Report 1927, emphasis added.

⁴⁸ OPT Annual Report 1959.

⁴⁹ J S Curl, *The Erosion of Oxford* (Oxford: Oxford Illustrated Press, 1977) pp 77, ix.

⁵⁰ *Ibid* pp. 47, 159.

⁵¹ H Colvin, *Unbuilt Oxford* (London: Yale University Press, 1983) pp. viii, 135.

⁵² *Ibid* pp. 146-149.

⁵³ *Contact*, Oxford, Swindon & Gloucester Co-operative Society publication (April 2002).