Oxfordshire lies to the north-west of London. It is bordered to the south by Berkshire, to the west by Gloucestershire, to the north by Warwickshire and Northamptonshire, and to the east by Buckinghamshire. In 1974 parts of Berkshire were transferred to Oxfordshire, which is why the modern county as illustrated on the left is slightly larger than the one on the right.

The major town is Oxford, where jurisdiction over weights and measures was in the hands of the University from medieval times, and was not formally transferred to the Corporation until 1868. The other Ancient Boroughs were Banbury, Chipping Norton, Henley, and Woodstock. All were active in the business of inspecting weights and measures, although Chipping Norton effectively handed over to the county in 1858, and Henley and Woodstock seem to have done very little. After the Act of 1878, only Oxford and Banbury continued to operate as Weights and Measures Authorities. The county itself was rather slow to obtain the new Imperial Standards, and there were several changes to the arrangements for inspection before the police force was set up in 1857.

As in some of the nearby counties, the work of regulating weights and measures seems to have been entrusted traditionally to local ironmongers, whitesmiths and braziers, until a specialist scale maker, Gale and Son, appeared in Oxford in 1850. In the 20th century there was a long-running competition between Avery and the local firm of Kirk & Co, which ended, inevitably, in victory for Avery in 1936.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Events</th>
<th>Marks</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1830</td>
<td>One set of standards [431] verified.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1834</td>
<td>Three more sets verified [472, 482-3]. There were four inspectors, each covering several petty sessional divisions.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1843</td>
<td>It was decided that there should be one inspector for the whole county. He was also responsible for the county bridges.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1851</td>
<td>The sole inspector was dismissed. A superintending constable was appointed for each petty sessional division between 1851 and 52 and, with the exception of Ploughley, was nominally the inspector of weights and measures. In fact the work was often done by a deputy or a local tradesman. One new set of standards [1075] was acquired. The five sets were supposed to be shared between the divisions, and some were to be kept by local tradesmen. W. Penbryton of Nettlebed, keeper for Henley and Watlington 1851-53. G. Whetton of Deddington, keeper for Banbury-Bloxham and Wootton N 1851-53.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1852</td>
<td>Inspection said to be impossible in some divisions due to lack of standards.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1854</td>
<td>Three short sets of standards [1116-8] acquired, and soon afterwards two more [1126-7]. There were now ten sets, one for each division.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Inspectors 1834-43**
1. Oxford (central area)  
   Frederick Sadler 1834-35  
   George Keates 1835-36  
   George Cook 1836-43  
2. Witney (north-west area)  
   Isaac Lawrence 1834-43  
3. Deddington (north-east area)  
   Daniel Hartley 1834-38  
   Benjamin Mason 1838-43  
4. Watlington (southern area)  
   Thomas Barnes 1834-38  
   William Barnes 1838-43

**Inspectors 1843-51**  
Pryse Agar Holloway 1844  
Thomas Fardon 1844-51
A 1lb brass weight stamped in Oxfordshire by one of the inspectors appointed in 1834. The other marks are stamped by the maker (probably a Birmingham firm) and indicate that the weight was made in the reign of William IV (1830-37) and conforms to the Imperial Standard.

A 1lb iron weight with a copper plug stamped in Oxfordshire, District 1. This probably refers to the central area from 1834 to 1844 but it may refer to Petty Sessional Division No. 1 (Bampton East), which was a WM division from 1851 to 1879,
**Inspectors 1851-57**

* denotes superintending constable

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Division</th>
<th>Inspector 1851-57</th>
<th>Assistant 1851-57</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>*James Tyrrell 1855-57</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Bampton West (Burford)</td>
<td>*William Massey 1852-57</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Banbury &amp; Bloxham (Banbury)</td>
<td>*Joshua Burton 1851-57</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Charles Yates 1852 [Sbk]</td>
<td>Thomas Hawtin 1854 [Sbk, 1116]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Chadlington (Chipping Norton)</td>
<td>*David Smith 1851-57</td>
<td>T. Phipps, assistant 1852</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Joseph Lakin 1856 [Sbk]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Henley (Henley)</td>
<td>*Matthew Moran 1851-54</td>
<td>*Francis Knock 1854-57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>John Tomlinson, assistant 1851</td>
<td>Lewis Coates 1854 [Sbk, 1127]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Ploughley (Bicester)</td>
<td>Richard Castle 1851-57</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>[1852 G, 1854 K]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Watlington (Watlington)</td>
<td>*Job Smith 1851-54</td>
<td>*Thomas High 1854-57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>John Tomlinson, adjuster 1851-4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Charles Mason, assistant 1852</td>
<td>William Burton 1854 [Sbk, 1117]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Wootton South (Woodstock)</td>
<td>*James Race 1851-2</td>
<td>*James Edwards 1852-57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Joseph Bowen 1854 [Sbk, 1118]</td>
<td>Robert Jones 1854 [Sbk, 1126]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Events</th>
<th>Marks</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1857</td>
<td>County police force set up; police take over inspection. There were 10 police divisions (see below), and some of the inspectors of WM had previously served as superintending constables, or assisted in WM duties.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1867</td>
<td>10 police officers acting as inspectors.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1879</td>
<td>No.113 issued. It is often seen on weights with Bucks marks. It was used only 1879-1889, Nos. 367-375 issued.</td>
<td></td>
<td>The inspector of weights and measures was an officer of the county police force; the force was established with only three superintendents so that an inspector, or sergeant, was appointed but, increasingly, the superintendents assumed the role.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Police officers as inspectors 1857-90

The officers moved between divisions regularly. The ‘&’ mark before or after the date indicates transfer from or to another division. * indicates Superintendent of Police.

Several of these officers, Joseph Bowen, William Burton, Lewis Coates, Thomas Hawtin, Joseph Lakin and Charles Yates had assisted the Superintending Constables to perform their WM duties, before 1857.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Events</th>
<th>Marks</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1889</td>
<td>Oxfordshire CC formed.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1890</td>
<td>All numbers except 367 withdrawn; the ten police officers continued as IWMs for one year, with “expert help” from W&amp;T Avery, but the system proved impractical. Standards [2119] issued.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1891</td>
<td>Qualified inspector in post.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1925</td>
<td>The county inspector was appointed as inspector for Banbury, when the borough force was disbanded.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1974</td>
<td>New Oxfordshire CC takes over from Oxford CB.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Qualified inspectors:
- R. Doubleday (qualified 1890 in Bootle, 1891-1928)
- W. Slatcher (1928-51) [MR 51:172]
- H.W. Bishop (1964-72?-) [MR 64:59]
### B: Localities with separate jurisdiction in the County of OXFORDSHIRE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Locality</th>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Marks</th>
<th>Dates &amp; Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Banbury</strong></td>
<td>AncBo</td>
<td><img src="image" alt="BANBUR1873" /></td>
<td>s:1828 r:1868</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>MB:1835</td>
<td>qsb</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The non-uniform mark has been recorded with dates from 1828 onwards, when the standards [416] were obtained. Before this date, it had been the custom to appoint two local tradesmen as sergeants-at-mace, ale tasters, and inspectors of WM, and this practice continued for most of the 19th century. The persons appointed were: Robert Gardner and William Wise (1828-43), William Hutchings and William Wise (1844-51), William Hutchings and Daniel Dixon (1851-57), Thomas Ward Boss and Daniel Dixon (1858-80). From 1881 to 1889 Dixon held the post alone, and in 1890 the superintendent of police, Daniel Preston, took over. Number 547 was allocated at this time, and a new set of standards [2218] was issued.

Frank Hatcher (CC 1900-13) qualified as a WM inspector in 1904/5. He was succeeded in both posts by Fred Wilson (CC 1914-25, q1909 in Rotherham). In 1925 the borough police force was wound up, and the county inspector of WM was appointed. The number 547 was still used, and this arrangement probably continued until the borough was formally disqualified as a WMA in 1965.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chipping Norton</th>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Marks</th>
<th>Dates &amp; Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>AncBo</td>
<td><img src="image" alt="BCN" /></td>
<td>s:1834 r:1863 [540]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>MB:1835</td>
<td>ncp</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The inspectors appointed under the Act of 1834 were Thomas Gulliver, ironmonger (who soon resigned), and George Draper, blacksmith, whose appointment was repeated in the Borough Council Minutes for 1836 [BOR/1/5/A1]. In 1843 the Council recommended that ‘the police officer’ be appointed as IWM. This was presumably the Mr Williams who was replaced by Charles Yates in 1847. In 1853/4 both Yates and David Smith, the superintending constable, were involved in WM duties, but Smith was said to be the IWM.

The Borough Police Force became part of the county force in 1857, and Thomas High, an officer in the county force, took over as IWM. He was dismissed by the county in 1858, as a result of ‘not satisfactorily accounting for monies received by stamping weights and measures’ [3]. It appears that the inspection was in the hands of the county police from this time onwards, and in 1862 the borough council agreed to dispose of their standards. In 1864 the adjustment of weights and measures in the Town Hall was said to be ‘injurious to the floor and the table’. The crowned initials WB and SG have been seen on weights stamped BCN, and may indicate that the local excise officers, William Bishop [1847 K, 1854 K], and Samuel Garrett [1863 DA] were acting as adjusters.

After the passing of the 1878 Act the borough formally decided to relinquish its authority for weights and measures.
2oz brass weight stamped BANBURY 1873. At this time the inspection in Banbury was done by the sergeants-at-mace, Thomas Ward Boss and Daniel Dixon.

1oz brass weight stamped in Banbury with the uniform mark adopted by the borough in 1890. The initials VR indicate that it was stamped before 1902. The chief constable of the borough police force was the inspector of weights and measures in this period.

4oz brass weight stamped B over C N, indicating the borough of Chipping Norton. There are also smaller stamps of a crown over WB and a crown above SG, which may be the initials of excise officers for the borough.
Henley Standards [234] were acquired in 1826 by the Lord of the Manor, W.W.P. Freeman. Henley was also an Ancient Borough, and an inspector, Robert Webb, was appointed under the Act of 1834. The borough was ‘unreformed’ in 1835. Authority was transferred to the county before 1867, when Philip Cope, superintendent of police for the Henley Division of Oxfordshire was the inspector.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Locality</th>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Marks</th>
<th>Dates &amp; Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Henley</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>University AncBo MB:1835</td>
<td>![Uniform Mark]</td>
<td>s:1826</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>CB:1890</td>
<td>![Non-uniform Mark]</td>
<td>n:1879-1974</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The University was responsible for Weights and Measures in Oxford from the 14th century onwards, an arrangement that led to many disputes. In 1771 a joint committee of the University and the Corporation was set up to supervise the market. Two members of the University were appointed annually as Clerks of the Market. They received the new standards [121] in 1826 and supervised inspection with the assistance of the Inspector of Corn Returns, John Castell. (See the notice opposite; also [1], [2]). The first mark shown above was used in the reign of William IV. John Castell still held this role in 1835 [OJ: 17/10/35].

William John Parker was appointed as Inspector of Corn Returns to the University and City of Oxford in 1837 [OJ: 4/2/37], and was listed as IWM in 1842 [P]. He continued in post, until his death in 1857 [OJ: 9/5/57], when he was succeeded by Henry Parker [OJ: 13/6/57]. The standards were formally handed over to the Corporation at the end of 1868. There was an inter regnum of fifteen months before Charles Head (CC 1869-97) was appointed IWM, for one year in the first instance [OJ: 26/3/70]. However, until the First World War, the University Clerks of the Market would meet the relevant police officer and together they would test the weights within the Market [2]; thus, Henry Parker was still listed in 1874 [MC], at the WM office in Broad Street and continued as Inspector of Corn Returns until his death in 1878 [OJ: 2/2/78].

The first qualified inspector (q1898/9) was C.E. Harriss, a police officer but not chief constable. He was followed by Alfred Appleyard, (1902-05), William V. Nicholas (1905-1911) [MR 05:152], and Herbert Hilton (1912-1915). From 1915-56 C.R.Fox (q1911 in Ireland, CC 1924-56), was the chief inspector of WM, although latterly there were several civilian inspectors under his command. In 1956 the WM office was removed from the police department and R.E. Dust, an inspector since 1938, became chief inspector [MR 56:151], continuing until 1972.
Announcement by the Clerks of the Market about the arrangements for the new standards of 1826 [QSW/24].

The Clerks of the Market give notice, that the Standard Weights and Measures verified at the Exchequer will be deposited, for the space of one month from the date hereof, in the hands of Mr. Bush, High Street, Oxford. All persons dealing by Retail, and by Weight and Measure, who may wish to purchase new Weights and Measures, or adjust and compare their Weights and Measures with the Standard Weights and Measures, are referred to Mr. Bush, who will regulate and supply them with the same; and also affix to the Measures the University Stamp, under the direction and inspection of the Clerks of the Market, and Mr. John Castell of Broad Street, lately appointed Inspector of Corn Returns.

John Gutch { WILLIAM BROWN } Clerks of the Market.

March 21, 1826.

A weight stamped in Oxford under the jurisdiction of the University. The University’s mark is stamped over a smaller maker’s mark, (WR) indicating a weight made in the reign of William IV (1830-37).

Detail of a weight with the Oxford City marks (VR CO, up to 1879, and VR 120 1880-1901). There are also earlier marks for Banbury Borough and Oxfordshire.
Woodstock: was an Ancient Borough, unreformed in 1835. It was reported that it had appointed two inspectors in that year, James Prior and Richard Morris, but there is no record of standards being obtained. It was reported in 1847 that the office of IWM for the borough was now vested in Mr T. Fardon, the County Inspector, [OJ: 27/11/47] and James Edwards, the County Inspector, was listed in 1854 [K].

From 1864 to 1874 Lewis Coates was listed in directories as the inspector of WM. He was the inspector in the county police force, stationed at Woodstock. After the passing of the 1878 Act the borough formally relinquished its authority over weights and measures.

¶ Advertisement taken from Jackson’s Oxford Journal, 18 May, 1850, p. 1

---

T. GALE and SON, Scale Makers and Manufacturers
of all sorts of Weighing Machines, 4, Market-street,
Oxford, and 2, North-terrace, Globe-road, Mile-end, London,
beg to inform their friends and tradesmen in general that they
have taken the above Shop in Oxford, and hope, by strict
attention to business, combined with the best articles, they shall
be favoured with their support.

T. Gale, sen., takes this opportunity of returning thanks for
the favours conferred upon him for the last 20 years.

Scales and Weights kept in repair by the year, on reason-
able terms.
### C: The trade in Oxfordshire

#### BANBURY

**Avery**  
First noted 1920 [K], at  
- 3 Horsefair <1920>  
- 8 Bridge Street <1924-60>  
- 5c George St <1965-73>  
Gone in 1974.

#### OXFORD

**Bush**  
According to a proclamation issued in 1826 by the Clerks of the Market ‘Mr Bush’ in the High Street had temporary custody of the standards. He would regulate and adjust the weights and measures of ‘persons dealing by Retail’, and also ‘affix the university stamp’ [QSW 24]. By 1830 [P], the firm was known as Bush and Pilcher, ironmongers, and in 1839, Charles Pilcher announced that he was taking James Gill, Jr, into partnership [OJ: 19/10/39]. The address in 1842 [P] was 5 High Street but, by 1870 [OJ: 7/5/70], the firm of Gill & Co, was trading as an ironmongers, at the same address. The firm of Gill & Co finally closed its doors in 2010, after trading as an “ironmongers for 480 years” [OT: 8/7/2010].

**Gale**  
In 1850, Thomas Gale and Son advertised [OJ: 18/5/50] that they had taken premises at 4, Market Street, Oxford, alongside those in Globe Road, Mile End, London. Thomas Gale senior took the opportunity to thank his clients for their support over the last 26 years. Thomas Gale junior, ba.1828 in London, is recorded as a scale maker [1851 Census] and must be the ‘Son’ in Gale and Son, scale makers [1852 G]. In 1851, the firm was advertising for an apprentice in Oxford [OJ: 28/6/51]. A Thomas Gale is also recorded as a scale maker in *Marlow, Bucks* in 1854 [K, Bucks].

The firm was at  
- 4 Market Street <1850-1854>.  
Subsequently the firm was listed under the name of Thomas Gale jnr or his wife (widow?) Sarah Gale, at  
- St Ebbe’s Street <1861-1868>,  
- Thames Street [1876 H], 1877 [OJ: 12/5/77]

**Humm**  
James Humm, ba 1837 in Essex, scale maker [1880-85 Va] [1881 Census], at  
- 11 Pensons Gardens <1880-1891>.  
James Humm is listed as a scale maker at the above address in the 1891 Census. In the 1901 Census he is at  
- 46 Paradise Street,  
but he does not reappear in directories until 1905-1910 [KO].  
Gone by 1912.
| **Kirk and Latimer** | Kirk Latimer & Co., scale makers [1894 Va], at  
• 24 New Inn Hall St 1894-1895  
• 1 Corn Exchange Bldgs, George St 1896-99.  
Succeeded by **Kirk & Co.** 1899. Frederick M. Latimer ba.1868 in Newington, London, scale maker, was with Kirk Latimer & Co. [1895 K]. In 1898/9 he took on the firm’s branch in *Reading (Berks)*, but by 1901 [Census] he was working as a scale maker in *Stroud (Glos)*. |
|---|---|
| **Kirk** | Kirk & Co., scale makers [advt 1900 KO] successors of **Kirk & Latimer**, agents for *Bartlett* of *Bristol (Glos)*, [advert 1905 KO], at  
• 1 Corn Exchange Bldgs, George St 1900-1930>  
• 46 George Street (same premises?) <1932-36>.  
In receivership as W.J. Kirk & Co. 1936, acquired by **Avery** from the receiver. Also in *Reading (Berks)*. |
| **Avery** | First noted 1905 [KO], at  
• 79 George St <1905-1926>  
• 22 St Ebbe’s St <1930-1969.  
• Harrow Road, Cowley 1970-76> |
| **Smith** | Adolphus R. Smith, scale maker [1932 KO] at  
• 5 Bulwarks Lane <1932-58>.  
Gone by 1962. |
Advertisements for Kirk & Co. taken from directories: 1900 [KO], 1903 [K], 1905 [KO] and 1926 [KO].
References for Oxfordshire

Published works


Directories

R. Banbury List and Directory (N612, ST1152) 1824-1881.

P. Pigot’s Directory of … Oxfordshire (N73, 76) 1830, 1842.

V. Vincent’s Oxford University, City and County Directory (N613) 1835.


S. Slater’s Directory of Oxfordshire (ST28) 1850.


L. Lascelles’ Directory of the County of Oxford (ST1149) 1853.

B. Billings’ Directory of … Oxon (ST115) 1854.


MC. Mercer & Crocker’s Directory of Oxfordshire (ST54) 1874.


Po. Potts’ Banbury Almanack (ST1154) 1890-1901.


Original documents

OJ. Jackson’s Oxford Journal 1826-1900.


Oxfordshire Record Office


BOR/2/XXI/I. Banbury Manorial court rolls -1816-37. Annual appointments of WM examiners, breadweighers etc.

BOR/3/A. Includes record of receipt of standard weights for the Borough of Henley in 1805.

QSC/VIII/1. Oxfordshire Quarter Sessions WM Committee Minute Book 1843-1856

QSW/**. Miscellaneous WM documents 1826-1854. Including: QSW/23, list of places in the four districts 1834; QSW/24, notice regarding new WM in the University and City, 1826; QSW/26, notice of new regulations, with details of inspectors and their places of attendance, 1834.