

PERCY MANNING

THE MAN WHO COLLECTED OXFORDSHIRE



edited by
Michael Heaney

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Abbreviations

AM Ashmolean Museum

BL British Library

BM British Museum

Bodl. Bodleian Libraries

OAHS Oxford Architectural and Historical Society

OHC Oxfordshire History Centre

PRM Pitt Rivers Museum

Preface

Any published work relies on the good will and support of innumerable people and organizations. My task as editor of this volume was made easier by the fact that, time and again, when people become aware of the remarkable talents of Percy Manning they have been keen to contribute towards celebrating his life and achievements. My first debt, of course, is to my fellow authors, all of whom have fitted the work on their respective chapters into already busy and demanding schedules. Several of them are also working on other aspects of Manning's centenary: on exhibition displays and events, on the creation of digital resources, on lectures and workshops. Those people and institutions who have provided illustrations are listed formally in the Acknowledgements and Sources which follow this Preface, and my thanks are due also to them. In this regard I am pleased to acknowledge with gratitude the financial and in-kind support given by the Ashmolean Museum, the Bodleian Libraries, the Greening Lamborn Trust,¹ the Oxford Architectural and Historical Society, the Oxfordshire History Centre and the Pitt Rivers Museum.

The staff at the Bodleian Library in particular have had to cope over the past couple of years with unprecedented demand from me and my fellow authors for the dozens of volumes of Manning material in the Library, with the same volumes often being requested many times over as research progressed and facts were checked. The staff at the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford Institute for Archaeology, Pitt Rivers Museum, New College, Oxfordshire History Centre, Sackler Library and Vaughan Williams Memorial Library have been equally assiduous and helpful.

Michael Heaney

¹ The Greening Lamborn Trust's objective is to promote public interest in the history, architecture, old photographs and heritage of Oxford and its neighbourhood by supporting publications and other media that create access to them.

Contributors

Faye Belsey is a curatorial assistant at the Pitt Rivers Museum. She has worked at the Museum since 2008 and during this time has contributed to the documentation of objects from all over the globe. She has a keen interest in researching the histories of objects in Museum collections and a new-found enthusiasm for Percy Manning and local traditions and customs.

David Clark is a freelance architectural historian with a particular interest in vernacular buildings. His publications include articles on medieval shops, post-medieval roof structures in Oxfordshire farm buildings, and on timber framing in Berkshire (for the revised *Buildings of England* volume). In 2008 he co-wrote (with Antonia Catchpole and Robert Peberdy) *Burford: Buildings and People in a Cotswold Town*. Elected a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries of London in 2008, he is also an active member of the Vernacular Architecture Group and was its President from 2011 to 2014. He is also active in the Oxfordshire Architectural and Historical Society and the Oxfordshire Buildings Record.

Madeleine Ding is currently Curatorial Assistant and Volunteers Officer at the Pitt Rivers Museum, and she has worked in the Object Collections Department of the museum since 2008. She has a keen interest in all aspects of world cultures.

Brian Durham trained as a biologist before a 40-year career as a field archaeologist, investigating UK deposits from Neolithic to industrial, but concentrating on post-Roman towns. He retired in 2008 as Archaeologist to Oxford City Council, since when he has continued investigating the planetary carbon cycle, both terrestrial and atmospheric. His recent publications include wetland conservation, heritage presentation and the structure of water. He has enjoyed the privilege of draping his personal curiosity about early Oxford and its county over the figure of an accomplished predecessor in Percy Manning.

Michael Heaney is a well-known researcher into folk music and folklore who has published widely on the subject. He combines this with extensive knowledge of the collections in the Bodleian Library where he spent his professional career. He is a past Editor of *Folk Music Journal* (and continues on its board) and acts as adviser to and a Trustee of the country's leading research library in the field, the Vaughan Williams Memorial Library. He contributed the entries on Manning and several other folk music luminaries, including Cecil Sharp, Headington Quarry musician and dancer William Kimber and Bampton morris fiddler William Wells to the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*.

Alice Little has a BA in Modern History and an MSc in Material Anthropology and Museum Ethnography from the University of Oxford, as part of which she studied ethnomusicology and the history of collecting, specializing in collections of English musical instruments. She has worked as Assistant Curator of Musical Instruments at the Horniman Museum in London, as well as at the British Museum and at the Bate

Collection of Musical Instruments. She returned to Oxford in 2015 to begin her DPhil, this time in the Music Faculty, focusing on collections of English 'national music' from the late eighteenth century.

Maureen Mellor is an archaeologist with a special interest in the material culture of interiors and in medieval diet. She has over thirty years' experience, working with the products of English and European clay industries in field archaeology and in museums. She has recently written an overview on 'commerce and industry' for *The Oxford Handbook of the Archaeology of Late Medieval Archaeology in Britain* and acts as Reader for Historic England. She is a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries, London and sits on the court of the Worshipful Company of Arts Scholars, linking the art world and collections to scholarship.

Peter Millington is an Honorary Senior Research Fellow at the University of Sheffield, where he gained his PhD on 'The Origins and Development of English Folk Plays' in 2002. He has been researching mumming and guising plays for over 45 years, with particular interests in historical evidence and textual analysis. He runs the Master Mumpers website (www.mastermumpers.org), and inaugurated the Folk Play Research website (www.folkplay.info). More recently, he has been researching the customs and traditions of the remote South Atlantic island of Tristan da Cunha, and is actively involved in the Tristan da Cunha Association.

Julian Munby works for Oxford Archaeology and has a long-standing interest in the buildings and topography of Oxford, and especially in the work of artists who have recorded its vanished streets and buildings. He has used drawings by Buckler and others to reconstruct lost buildings and has published papers on these in *Oxoniensia*. He worked with Colin Harrison on the Ashmolean exhibition on John Malchair in 1998, and occasionally collects topographical drawings.

Alison Roberts is Assistant Keeper for European and Early Prehistory at the Ashmolean Museum and is also responsible for the manuscript archives held by the Department of Antiquities. She specialises in early Prehistory, lithic technology and the history of archaeology and antiquarian collecting. Her particular research interests include British Late Upper Palaeolithic and Mesolithic material culture, the early prehistory of Oxfordshire, and the antiquarian work of Sir John Evans (1823-1908).

Introduction

The genesis of this volume can be traced to a workshop on Percy Manning – “the man who collected Oxfordshire” – held at the Pitt Rivers Museum in Oxford in October 2014, which brought together the handful of people with a known interest in him and his collections, and a select group of key people who, it might be hoped, would be interested once they knew a little about him and his activities. The workshop itself was the outcome of a series of discussions starting in October 2012 about the possibility of a display of his collections in the Bodleian to commemorate the centenary of his death in 2017. These initial discussions soon expanded to include the Ashmolean and Pitt Rivers Museums, each with significant Manning holdings, and the idea of coordinated displays in all three institutions.

The workshop comprised a series of short presentations on aspects of Manning’s collections. Eleanor Standley, Michael Heaney and Alison Petch outlined the nature and scope of the collections at the Ashmolean, Bodleian and Pitt Rivers respectively, and this was followed by an outline by Peter Rivière of the societies and networks of people in which Manning participated. The remainder of the day was taken up by presentations about specific elements and object groups in the collections: the archaeological survey of Oxfordshire (Alison Roberts), local history (Simon Townley), the truncheons (Leigh Mellor), brasses (Jerome Bertram), pottery (Maureen Mellor); and about Manning’s research into activities, specifically morris dancing (Michael Heaney), mumming (Peter Millington) and sports and pastimes (Michael Heaney).

There were four main outcomes from the workshop. The first was the addition of the Museum of Oxford to the list of co-operating institutions, a welcome acknowledgement of the importance of Manning for town as well as gown. Next was the recognition of the inadequacy of the description and cataloguing of the Manning collection at the Bodleian. Third was the understanding of the continuing importance of Manning’s maps of the county. Fourth was the possibility of a book to bring him to the attention of a wider public.

The problem of the description of the Bodleian’s collections was addressed by the award of a grant from the Marc Fitch Fund to produce a detailed online catalogue, which was published in November 2016. A grant from Oxford University’s Aspire fund has enabled the digitization and georeferencing of Manning’s maps, linked to the collections.

This book is the fourth outcome of the workshop. It was obvious from the presentations that no one person could do justice to Manning and his collections as a whole. Although in one sense his focus can be simply described in the single word “Oxfordshire”, the range and catholicity of his interests required expertise in a range of disciplines, from archaeology and the built environment to art history and folklore. The book also combines a review of his life and work with chapters using his collections as a trigger for new study and research, demonstrating his continuing relevance today.

Although numerous scholars have used Manning's collections over the last century, many of them may not have been aware of their provenance or their context – particularly difficult where related material is spread across the institutions of the University of Oxford. This book addresses these issues by the use of a variety of approaches. A biography and bibliography are of course necessary prerequisites for any appreciation of Percy Manning's life. These are followed by Alison Roberts's chapter on the significance of his maps of the county and their continuing relevance today. David Clark's chapter on the undercroft of Ducklington's inn in St Aldate's shows how Manning's collections can be used in conjunction with other local history collections to throw new light on the history of the buildings of Oxford. It is followed by Maureen Mellor's related piece on the encaustic tiles collected by Manning from the site, in the context of his tile collection as a whole. These two chapters draw together material in the Ashmolean and Bodleian collections and illustrate how each collection can usefully inform the other.

Julian Munby's survey of the artworks and prints at the Bodleian highlights a comparatively neglected component of the collections. In one sense they are heavily used, depictions of individual locations being much in demand in illustrating the history of the city and the county; but the indexes available to guide users to them do not directly identify Manning as their source, and in the case of the prints their provenance can only be established by careful inspection of the objects themselves.

Perhaps Manning's most original contribution to the history of the county is his pursuit of folklore and custom. Three chapters examine this in some detail. In his role as a reviver and scholar of morris dancing Manning was, as he himself recognized, ploughing a lone furrow. Many modern researchers in this field learn of and use the information in his collection by way of the copy of them made by Cecil Sharp in 1912; Sharp as the High Priest of the revival of folk music and dance is much studied, but there remain parts of Manning's morris dance collection still neglected, and Michael Heaney's chapter sets his collecting activity in a chronological narrative and explores the development of his interest and activity. Peter Millington performs a similar service for his mumming plays. Here Manning's direct contribution is more circumscribed, but his interaction with the other scholars in the field – primarily Edward Binney and Thomas Ordish – shows the importance of personal connections and networks, and exemplifies the role which Manning often played as adviser and provider of resources in the background. Alice Little complements these with a study of the music and songs – as Manning himself was no musician, it is easy to ignore his work in this area, but Little shows how musical material forms a recurrent thread in many of the subjects of his folkloric interests.

The chapter by Faye Belsey and Madeleine Ding draws custom and material culture together again in an examination of perhaps the most neglected element of the collections, the gifts Manning made to the Pitt Rivers Museum. They supplement an overview of the collection by an in-depth study of the lighting implements in it and the light they shed – metaphorically! – on the rationale for his collecting.

The closing chapter by Brian Durham might be termed a think-piece imagining what Manning would make of the issues facing an antiquary of his bent today. It demonstrates that Manning's work and activities have continuing relevance today.

It has sometimes been said that Manning published little, though the bibliography reveals that over the years he did publish several tens of items (granted that many of them are small in scale). It is true to say that after the flurry of obituary notices that appeared in the local press and journals after his death, the number of items which have been published directly focusing on his life and work can be counted on the fingers of one hand. Even more is this true of his agent Thomas Carter: until 2016 the sum total of references to him in the published literature amounted to half a dozen sentences at most, the majority of them written by Manning himself. Carter certainly merits further study, and while this volume goes some way to redressing the neglect of Manning over the last century – and it is to be hoped awakens further interest in his life and work – there are still many aspects of his activity which would repay fuller attention. Our aim has been to celebrate this remarkable man, and to provide both the incentive for and the means to facilitate future research into and use of his collections.

Michael Heaney

1: Percy Manning – A Life

Michael Heaney

Introduction

The eighteen-year-old Percy Manning came up to Oxford from Clifton College in the autumn of 1888, and matriculated as a student of New College. Eighteen months later he gained only third-class honours in the Classical Moderations examination and in 1892, after warnings about his lack of academic progress, he sat for and failed a pass degree. When he returned for the Michaelmas Term in 1892 he was required to live out of college residence, and after further failures he was removed from the College books in December 1893.¹

Not a very auspicious start to a life in Oxford, and one that hardly held out any promise for a successful career as an antiquary in an academic city. Indeed, Manning never held any formal post within the University, but as a man of private means indulged his passion for the past by collecting and reading over a wide range, embracing not only archaeology but more modern material culture, buildings history, social history, sports and pastimes, customs and folklore. His approach was innovative, his influence in these fields was enormous, and his collections, now residing in the Bodleian Libraries and in the Ashmolean and Pitt Rivers Museums, are an unparalleled resource for local studies. For all that he remains relatively little known. His death at the relatively early age of 47, the modesty of his academic accomplishments, and the self-effacing modesty of the man himself, have allowed his story to go relatively untold until now.

Family Background and Early Life

Percy Manning was born at Weetwood House in the Leeds suburb of Headingley cum Burley on 24 January 1870, the fourth and last child of John Manning, a railway engineer, and his wife Sophia. John Manning was a self-made man. He was born in 1830 at Orlingbury, Northamptonshire, the son of a farmer, also called John Manning.² John Manning senior's wife is named in the 1841 and 1851 censuses as Mary, and both were born c. 1807, being 44 in 1851. The farm was substantial – 510 acres, with 25 labourers working the land.

In June 1846 sixteen-year-old John Manning was apprenticed to the firm of W & J Galloway of Knott Mill in Manchester, manufacturers of steam engines.³ At the end of his apprenticeship in 1851 he became a partner with James Headly, of the Eagle Foundry and Iron Works, Cambridge, trading as Headly and Manning.⁴ It was during this period

¹ New College Archives, Warden and Tutors & Tuition Committee 19 Jan 1886-Dec 1901, ff. 42, 111,133,139; New College Archives, Warden Sewell's Register, opening 119.

² 1841 census HO 107/807/13, p1; 1851 census HO 107/1743/707, p. 2.

³ 'John Manning' in *Grace's Guide to British Industrial History*, http://www.gracesguide.co.uk/John_Manning.

⁴ 'J. and E. Headly' in *Grace's Guide to British Industrial History*, http://www.gracesguide.co.uk/J._and_E._Headly.

that he met Sophia Youngman, born in Waterbeach, Cambridgeshire in 1833, daughter of the miller Robert Youngman. In the 1851 census she was staying in Cambridge with James Gotobed, who was probably the son of Sophia's grandfather of the same name, and by the time she married John Manning in the first half of 1854 she was calling herself Sophia Gotobed Youngman.⁵ Their first son, Henry John Manning, was born in 1855, Sophia returning to her parental home for the event.⁶

His partnership with James Headly being dissolved in 1858, John Manning moved to Leeds in 1859, becoming a partner in the Boyne Engine Works with Charles Wetherell Wardle and Alexander Campbell. He became a member of the Institution of Mechanical Engineers in the same year.⁷ The Boyne Engine Works produced locomotives, tapping into the railway boom of the mid nineteenth century and concentrating on specialized locomotives for industry. Campbell had worked for the locomotive firm E.B. Wilson & Co. at the Railway Foundry in Leeds, which closed on the death of its owner; first Wardle and then Manning were brought in to provide capital to take over the assets of the Foundry and to establish the new company, known as Manning, Wardle & Co. Manning also, of course, brought his own engineering experience to the company. The Boyne Engine Works were established in Jack Lane in Hunslet, which became a centre for several such railway works.⁸

The family lived at first at 11 Blenheim Terrace in Leeds, where their daughter Jessie was born in 1861 and son Arthur in 1866.⁹ By 1870 they had moved to Weetwood House on the Otley Road in Headingley, and it is here that Percy was born on 24 January. The house is a substantial Victorian detached dwelling, and in the 1871 census the family (apart from Henry, presumably at school) was living there with three domestic servants.¹⁰ The families of both John Manning and his wife were obviously well-to-do, each having households of four servants in the 1841 census,¹¹ and equally obviously, John Manning was becoming a man of substance, reaping the reward for his engineering skills in the railway boom.

On 31 March 1874 Percy's father died, aged 44, after developing diabetes. In his will, made on the day of his death, he left a little under £40,000, equivalent to about £3 million in 2016. After bequests of a £400 p.a. annuity to Sophia and £5,000 in trust for his daughter Jessie, John Manning's will put the remainder in trust for his three sons until they reached the age of 21. It is this which apparently enabled Percy to devote his adult life to his interests, purchasing vast amounts of material, as a gentleman of leisure.¹²

⁵ 1841 census HO 107/69/14, p. 19; 1851 census HO 107/1760, p. 19; Marriage registers 1854 Q2 3B.756 Cambridge.

⁶ 1881 census RG 11/1437, p. 10.

⁷ 'John Manning' in *Grace's Guide to British Industrial History*; 'John Manning' in the 'Memoirs of Members Deceased in 1874', *Proceedings of the Institution of Mechanical Engineers* 1875, p. 29.

⁸ James Lowe, *British Steam Locomotive Builders* (Cambridge: Goose, 1975), p. 454.

⁹ *Post Office Directory of the West Riding of Yorkshire* 1861 and 1867; 1871 census RG 10/4770, p. 46-47. The family has not been traced in the 1861 census.

¹⁰ 1871 census RG 10/4770, pp. 46-47.

¹¹ 1841 census HO 107/807/13, p. 1; 1841 census HO 107/69/14, p. 19.

¹² Death certificate and will of John Manning, 1874 09b p. 379.



Figure 1.1: Weetwood House, Headingley.

The family remained in Leeds for a few more years but at the end of the 1870s moved to Watford, for reasons which remain unclear. The family base remained there until Sophia Manning's death in 1914; first at 8 High Street, then moving sometime in the 1890s to Beechfield in Langley Road.¹³ Another mystery awaiting resolution is that in the 1881 census Sophia Manning, described as the head of the household, lists her 'mother-in-law' Sarah Manning as also resident; but Sarah was only 61, so born around 1820 and just ten years older than Sophia's late husband. John Manning senior's wife Mary had died in 1860, but there is no indication in the 1871 census (the last in which he appears) that he had remarried, though a John Manning did marry one Sarah Wright in 1868.¹⁴

Meanwhile Percy was sent to boarding school: first to Lyndhurst preparatory school in Hove, and from 20 September 1884 – following his brother Arthur – to Clifton College.¹⁵ In December 1884, just three months after his arrival, his record sheet at Clifton records the impairment that undoubtedly affected his later progress: 'Stammers terribly'. In

¹³ 1881 census RG 11/1437, p. 10; 1891 census RG 12/1119, p. 8; 1901 census RG 13/1322, p. 14; 1911 census RG 14/140/6 7738.

¹⁴ Northamptonshire Burials B0385/0319, 9 June 1860; 1871 census RG10/1500.73, p. 29; England & Wales Marriages 1837-2008, Northamptonshire 3B.157.

¹⁵ 1881 census RG 11/1095, p. 50; Clifton College, K2 Record Sheet, 1888, Manning, P.; *Clifton College Register from September 1862 to July 1887* (London: Rivingtons, 1890), p. 324.



Figure 1.2: Percy Manning at 18.

1887 Clifton reports that he ‘lacks energy’ and is ‘sluggish in form – easily satisfied’, though these terse, somewhat negative comments are standard for that time and should not be taken as comprehensive assessments of his character.¹⁶

Clifton College has a portrait of Percy which seems to have been taken at the point of departure from the school: he sports an incipient moustache which is not present in the general school photograph taken in July 1888, and he is not in school uniform, but the date written beneath the picture is ‘1884-’ indicating his association with the school had not yet ended.

Percy was the only one of the Manning brothers to go to university: his brother Henry became a barrister, while Arthur went into business, becoming a company secretary.¹⁷ Percy was accepted as a Commoner at New College, Oxford on 20 April 1888 subject to passing the matriculation examination. His mother wrote to the college in May enquiring on his behalf about rooms, and was

reassured that this would be taken care of.¹⁸ Entering the academic environment of the University of Oxford was evidently new and uncertain territory for the Mannings.

Percy arrived as a student at New College in October 1888.

University and the Pursuit of Archaeology

We have comparatively few details of Manning’s university career. He gained a pass in Sacred Scripture in at the end of his first year.¹⁹ At the beginning of his third year (Michaelmas Term 1890) he was given leave of absence for the term, for reasons unknown.²⁰

¹⁶ Clifton College, K2 Record Sheet, 1888, Manning, P. I am grateful to the Clifton College Archivist Dr C. S. Knighton for making this and other Clifton College material, including photographs, available to me.

¹⁷ 1891 census RG 12/1119, p. 8.

¹⁸ New College Archives, Warden and Tutors & Tuition Committee 19 January 1886–December 1901, f. 42; Correspondence Mod. Arch 435, f. 49.

¹⁹ New College Archives, Warden Sewell’s Register, opening 119.

²⁰ New College Archives, Warden and Tutors & Tuition Committee 19 January 1886–December 1901, f. 84.

The next time Manning appears in New College records (apart from payments for his battels in the Junior Bursar's ledger) is on 5 April 1892:

It was also agreed that as the report on Mr Manning's work was most unsatisfactory he be not allowed to reside unless he get honours in the schools in the summer, that he be examined in Greek History at the end of the vacation, and that a weekly report on his work be sent to the Warden and Tutors during the Summer term.²¹

We can presume that matters did not improve and that he failed Finals in the summer of 1892 and again in 1893, as in the records for 12 July 1893 there is a despairing resolution that :

...if Mr Manning ^again^ enters his name for Examination in the Final Schools without passing, his name be removed from the book.²²

Events duly took their course. In December 1893 Manning sat and failed in the Pass Schools and his name was removed from the College books.²³

Manning's failure in the examinations is probably best explained by his intense interest in pursuing practical archaeology. Many of the objects from his collections now in the Ashmolean Museum have find dates from 1888 and even earlier, but in the absence of evidence to the contrary these are dates of discovery and not the dates on which Manning acquired them. His first acquisition datable with any degree of confidence is in fact a flint core and arrowhead found in 1891 not in Oxfordshire but at High Peak, Sidmouth, Devon in 1891. By chance, Manning was on holiday with his mother and sister in Sidmouth when the 1891 census was taken, so we can place him there with certainty on 5 April 1891 and it is unlikely that this – the only find from Sidmouth in the collections – came to him at any other time.²⁴

He had rapidly become involved in the Oxford Architectural and Historical Society, joining in his first term at Oxford (on 20 November 1888: proposed by A.J. Evans),²⁵ and through it met his contemporary at New College, J.L. Myres.²⁶ By the end of 1891 he was already Secretary of the Society, and Myres joined him in that role in 1892. In 1892 he spent much of the spring with Myres excavating the Roman site at Alchester.²⁷ Myres describes in vivid terms the approach Manning took, and its consequences:

He gave his whole time to local antiquities. But, having an extreme aphasia, he took little part in College life or even in converse with the dons. When we were doing a little digging at Alchester Camp, near Bicester, near the end of term, he arrived for Collections [examinations] about midday, pleading that the train from Alchester was late. He soon showed up a blank

²¹ New College Archives. Warden and Tutors..., f. 111.

²² New College Archives. Warden and Tutors..., f. 133.

²³ New College Archives. Warden and Tutors..., f. 139.

²⁴ AM Accessions Register, AN.1921.40; 1891 Census RG 12/1673, p. 5.

²⁵ OAHS, Minutes of General Meetings 1876-91, Bodl. Dep. d.515, p. 313 .

²⁶ OAHS, Lists of officers 1834-1939, Bodl. Dep. c.593.

²⁷ OAHS, *Proceedings* new series 5 (1886-95), p. 355.

sheet and, when asked why he was going so early, he replied 'the train to Alchester'. In the afternoon he did not appear at all. This upset the College, and there was talk of sending him down, but I persuaded Percy Matheson, who was Dean, to come out to Alchester, where he wielded a vigorous but untutored pickaxe and gave us a subscription. We still had a few days' work so, at Collections, when the Warden asked Manning 'whether he wished to go down', he replied 'N'n'n'no', and the Warden said 'That is just as well for we have decided to keep you in residence till you have finished your work'. This punishment fitted the crime and was a great relief to Percy.²⁸

The subsequent events show that he continued to put the pursuit of his interest in archaeology ahead of his formal studies. Myres himself graduated with first-class honours in 1892 and became a distinguished archaeologist and Wykeham Professor of Ancient History.²⁹ The 'little digging' is a modest statement; photographs show a sizable undertaking, and Ashmolean accession records described Manning as superintending the dig when he presented the Museum with fifteen items from it at the end of the year, including several Roman coins and fragments of vessels.³⁰ The dig lasted six weeks; Myres published a brief report of the finds.³¹ Few records of the dig survive, other than Myres's account. It may be that Manning was more interested in the acts of finding and collecting than in analysis. Certainly he did not, in future years, become a significant actor in major archaeological excavations in the county.



Figure 1.3: The dig at Alchester, 1892. Manning's head is visible behind the man with the spade in the trench.

²⁸ John Linton Myres, *Praeterita: The Memoirs of the Late Sir John Linton Myres Kt OBE* (Privately printed, 2012), p. 15.

²⁹ John Boardman, 'Myres, Sir John Linton (1869–1954)', rev. *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, September 2010 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/35180>].

³⁰ AM Accessions Register, AN.1892.2640-2654.

³¹ 'Recent discoveries', *Archaeologia Oxoniensis* 1 (1892): 32-36 (p. 34).

Manning had already made his first donations to the Ashmolean Museum in April 1892, a few days after the escapade at Alchester. This was a motley assemblage of objects found during (non-archaeological) diggings at various sites within Oxford: typical are ‘Two curious iron keys thought to be Roman’ found in Broad Street, Oxford, and Godstow; and ‘Two other iron keys, the first dug up in Queen’s College gardens, the second found in pulling down the Three Tuns Public House, St Ebb’s Street, Oxford’.³² There was also a small Roman urn which Manning had found in Chalfont Road, Oxford:

Shortly before Easter [i.e. before 17 April 1892]...Mr. Harrison and Mr. P. Manning were making search for potsherds...from the foundations of a house immediately opposite Chalfont Road, not only were shards and flints collected, but also some fragments of a skull. Mr. Manning subsequently recovered a number of other bones; and also a small Roman pot, which one of the labourers informed him came from the foundations of the house first alluded to [in Chalfont Road], and which has since been presented to the Ashmolean Museum.³³

The following year Manning acquired some corbel heads from Osney Abbey discovered during house demolition and roadbuilding at Hollybush Row in Oxford.³⁴ The process of acquiring them was somewhat acrimonious. It seems that the labourer who found them had sold them along with other stones to H. Ayers, who describes himself as a ‘New and second-hand furniture dealer’. Manning apparently asked his fellow antiquary Herbert Hurst to act on his behalf, and after being in correspondence with Ayers since January Hurst wrote to Manning on 2 March 1893:³⁵

I explained to him [Ayers] at first that I was acting for you and that anything ‘reasonable and fair’ would be paid for the stones. £3 would be ample to repay him for everything and he has ‘a conscience’ to ask for £5 and a ‘confounded cheek’ to ask for £10.

The dispute over payment dragged on, and on 27 March Ayers threatened to put the matter in the hands of his solicitors. Hurst wrote to Manning the same day, somewhat aggrieved:

I have already told him that he must not apply to me about them as I was merely your agent for a time in the matter and that I had explained all to you. Perhaps you have written to this effect and he is on the dodge of ignoring you in the matter.³⁶

Ayers wrote direct to Manning on 3 April:

I am obliged to write to you again in respect of the old stones from St Thomas’s [sic], as I have not been able to settle with Mr Hurst the gentleman you send to me, I have delivered about 20 stones at the Museum and have also 100 more in my Yard now, which Mr Hurst does not think of any value, Mr Hurst promised to pay me and wrote for the Bill I sent him a Bill for 10£

³² AM Accessions Register, AN.1892.10, 13-26; quotations from items 20-23.

³³ ‘Recent discoveries’, *Archaeologia Oxoniensis* 1 (1892); 32-36 (p.32); AM Accessions Register AN.1892.14.

³⁴ ‘Recent discoveries’, *Archaeologia Oxoniensis* 2 (1893): 91-92.

³⁵ Bodl. MS Top. Oxon d.181, ff. 211-214.

³⁶ Bodl. MS Top. Oxon d.181, f. 217.

which he said was out of all reason, so I agreed to accept 5£ ... I should have been better off if I never had seen them, still he considers that 5£ is too much and sends me an offer of 1£ ... has advised me to settle with you, or fetch the stones away again which I must do, unless you can make me a much more liberal offer.³⁷

Manning remained intransigent and Ayers capitulated in his next letter:

I am sorry you cannot offer me the 5£ which I can assure you is very moderate considering the trouble I have had, still I am willing to leave it to you as I shall be glad to have the matter settled.³⁸

Maybe Manning asked Hurst to act on his behalf in the negotiations because of his stutter, but once the negotiations were conducted by correspondence there was no obvious reason why Manning should continue to hide behind Hurst, apart from his shyness. Whatever the case, defending an entrenched position is a character trait that Manning continued to exhibit throughout his life. Manning had announced to the OAHS committee he would be absent during the early part of 1893 and temporarily relinquished the Secretaryship, but was certainly available for this correspondence.³⁹ In May 1893 he offered the Osney Abbey stones to the Society, a donation which was accepted with thanks.⁴⁰

At the beginning of 1894, having left college, Manning took up lodgings at 44-45 Broad Street. He enrolled at Marcon's Hall, a Permanent Private Hall of the University which catered among other things for students who had failed their examinations.⁴¹ When he finally re-sat and passed his final examinations in February 1896 he was awarded his BA as a New College student.⁴² Having already resided in Oxford for the requisite number of terms since his matriculation in 1888, he was able to proceed to MA soon afterwards and collected it on 23 May 1896.⁴³

Thereafter Manning sought no academic study, qualification or position but contented himself with the independent pursuit of his interests, while at the same time maintaining a wide circle of academic and academically inclined friends and colleagues in the University and city.

Folklore and Custom

During 1893 Manning continued to collect antiquities; while most of the material remained in his possession, he did give a large medieval iron stirrup to the Ashmolean

³⁷ Bodl. MS Top. Oxon d.181, f. 219.

³⁸ Bodl. MS Top. Oxon d.181, f. 220.

³⁹ OAHS, Committee minutes 1885-1892, Bodl. Dep. d.523, p. 176.

⁴⁰ OAHS Committee minutes 1893-1899, Bodl. Dep. d.524, p. 5.

⁴¹ Maureen Mellor, *Pots and people* (Oxford: Ashmolean Museum, 1997), p. 56. Though now primarily institutions with a religious affiliation, the defining characteristic of Permanent Private Halls is the lack of a charter and a governing body of fellows, and several secular Halls were in existence at the time.

⁴² 'University intelligence', *The Standard* 7 February 1896, p. 6.

⁴³ 'University intelligence', *The Standard* 23 May 1896, p. 2.

in June.⁴⁴ But in May of that year he encountered something which was to give his life and his research a new and original direction. On 1 May he was staying with his mother in Watford (although it was University term at the time) and came across local children perambulating the borough carrying garlands and singing a May song. He transcribed the song and its variants and proceeded to publish a brief note of them, with a description of the custom, in the September issue of *Folk-lore*.⁴⁵ This was in fact his first published work.

It is also the first evidence we have of his interest in folklore and custom, and it may have been this event that sparked his interest. However, there is no firm evidence of his actively seeking out this kind of material until 1894, when he enlisted the aid of Thomas James Carter. Carter was a working man in the brickmaking industry who evidently had an eye for antiquities – geological, palaeontological and archaeological – that he encountered in his work or on excursions around Oxford. Manning says that rheumatism meant that he could not do the heaviest work in the brickfields so took to searching for such antiquities, and it was in that capacity that Manning first met him: then ‘on turning my attention to folklore, it struck me that I might avail myself of his rambles over the country’.⁴⁶ He was also described as a ‘fossil-hunter’ and in the 1901 census he describes himself as a ‘geologist’.⁴⁷ In the 1850s and 60s he had supplied James Parker (President of the OAHs when Manning joined) with fossils which were afterwards given to the University Museum,⁴⁸ and in 1892 Myres and Manning brought him from Oxford to assist in the dig at Alchester.⁴⁹

Although Manning certainly knew Carter in 1892, the first evidence of his using him directly as an agent to collect materials on his behalf comes from 1894. (A few documents have subsequently had dates of 1892 or 1893 ascribed to them, but internal evidence indicates a later date for these.) Carter often left his notes undated, but of those with dates (or transcribed by Manning at the time with date added) the earliest is a note from Carter on 29 January 1894 about finds of pottery and bones at Drayton near Banbury in the 1880s, and further finds of bones in 1893.⁵⁰ In February 1894 Carter provides Manning with information about ghosts, the first folkloric information that we know he supplied.⁵¹

That the initial impetus may have been provided by the Watford May songs is supported by the numerous May songs and customs that Carter collected for Manning during 1894: from Charlbury, Drayton, Warborough and Blackthorn in June, Clifton (near Deddington)

⁴⁴ AM Accessions Register, AN.1893.132.

⁴⁵ Percy Manning, ‘May-Day at Watford, Herts.’ *Folk-lore*, 4.3 (September 1893): 403-404.

⁴⁶ Percy Manning, ‘Stray Notes on Oxfordshire Folklore’, *Folklore* 13.3 (September 1902): 288-295 (pp. 288-289).

⁴⁷ Bodl. MS Top. Oxon d.200, f. 62; 1901 census RG 13/1380, p. 7.

⁴⁸ James Parker Daybooks, Oxford University Museum of Natural History, Daybook 1, p.17; Daybook 3, pp. 72, 76; Daybook 4, pp. 10, 13, 47, 48, 51-54, 62, 68.

⁴⁹ Carter is identified in the photograph reproduced in this chapter, AM Archives 1648/MANN/1/MS/102/28.

⁵⁰ AM Archives 1648/MANN/1/MS/160/4.

⁵¹ Bodl. MS Top. Oxon d.191a, ff, 107, 113.

and Charlton-on-Otmoor in August and Thame and Spelsbury in September.⁵² Several other May songs collected by Carter are, unfortunately, undated.

Carter collected information about May Day in Bampton from an 80-year-old resident Hannah Wells, and she may have been his first informant about morris dancing, being central to the dancing tradition in the village: her second husband, her three sons and two grandsons were all dancers.⁵³ Manning's interest and activities in the subject of morris dancing are explored elsewhere in this volume (see Chapter 7), but the general circumstances of the occasion are worth exploring. In 1894 Manning acquired some pot sherds dug out from gravel pits at Calais Farm in Bampton, now in the Ashmolean, and reported that bone pins had been found with them.⁵⁴ It is very likely that Carter found out about these on his several trips to the village. In May 1894 Carter had obtained ghost stories from Hannah Wells (on that occasion she used her maiden name, Radband).⁵⁵ When he went back in July and asked about May songs and garlands, we have Carter's notes relating to the list of questions that Manning had evidently asked him to pursue:⁵⁶

Bampton May Day - I find this to be the Club Feast day namely Whit Monday - not May Day.

Question

1. *Is it Still Kept up - yes*
2. *How are the Children Dressed - Mostly in White with the Ribbons the Colours of the Club Red White & Blue*
3. *Can you get a Mace - yes*
4. *What is the Garland Like - two hoops Crossed and Covered with Moss Flowers &c Ribbons & Carried With a Stick Passed through them by the Lady and her Maid*

I here explane Some of the School Children Like Other Places Go Round sometimes on May Day) Formerly Jack in the Green as Well but now it is Mostly Confined to Whit Monday.

So Carter has gone to Bampton primed with a list of questions about May Day customs but in the course of the conversation is alerted to events on Whit Monday, which is when the morris dancers appeared. Manning is keen to pursue the acquisition of objects – the mace (a decorated pole, which Carter subsequently obtains, and more). But written along the edge of Carter's page of jottings is an additional note:

What is the Name of the Farm where the burial Pins where [sic] found - Calis Farm on the Aston Rd

Carter is simultaneously pursuing a variety of agendas relevant to Manning's interests, and opening up new lines of enquiry. Manning is employing him in both archaeology

⁵² Bodl. MS Top. Oxon d.199, ff.151-159, 162, 167, 179, 185, 186.

⁵³ Bodl. MS Top. Oxon d.199, ff. 141-143; Keith Chandler, *Morris Dancing at Bampton until 1914*. (Eynsham: [The author], 1983), pp. 6-8.

⁵⁴ Percy Manning, 'Notes on the archaeology of Oxford and its neighbourhood', *Berks, Bucks & Oxon Archaeological Journal* 4.1 (April 1898): 9-28 (p. 11); AM Accessions Register, AN1921.100 .

⁵⁵ Bodl. MS Top. Oxon d.191a, ff. 89-92.

⁵⁶ Bodl. MS Top. Oxon d.192, f. 93.

and the collection of folklore. In addition to the mace from Bampton, Carter also acquired for Manning the tabor used by a renowned morris musician, Joseph Woods of Deddington, in August 1894.⁵⁷ In the following year Carter went on a protracted but ultimately successful hunt for peeling-horns or whit-horns, home-made musical instruments used in association with the annual deer hunt in Wychwood Forest.⁵⁸

During 1894 Manning also acquired his first police truncheons (dated in some cases by inference – the notes associated with them indicate that their former owners are alive in 1894) from Bampton (but from a source in Oxford, not apparently from Carter on his visits to there), and also from Filkins, Forest Hill, Marston and Swerford.⁵⁹ Manning's interest in the truncheons may well have been as objects which had gone out of use as and were becoming rarities: until its replacement by the warrant card in the 1850s the truncheon was the symbol of a policeman's office, and was often ornately decorated at its owner's expense.⁶⁰ The collection eventually grew to 83, but we can infer acquisition dates only for these and for eight acquired the following year.

Oxford Architectural and Historical Society and Other Activities

Towards the end of 1894 Manning played a major part in organizing a brief exhibition on 'The History and Antiquities of Oxford, and of the Neighbourhood' held at the Randolph Hotel on 7-8 November. The exhibition was announced in May, and potential contributors to it were invited to contact the OAHS's secretaries for the exhibition, Manning and Miss E. Swann.

In general it is difficult to date Manning's acquisitions as a collector, but the exhibition gives an overview of some of what he had achieved by November 1894. The exhibition catalogue lists four hundred exhibits, though this is but an approximation, as the listing is rather amateurish – in some instances collections of

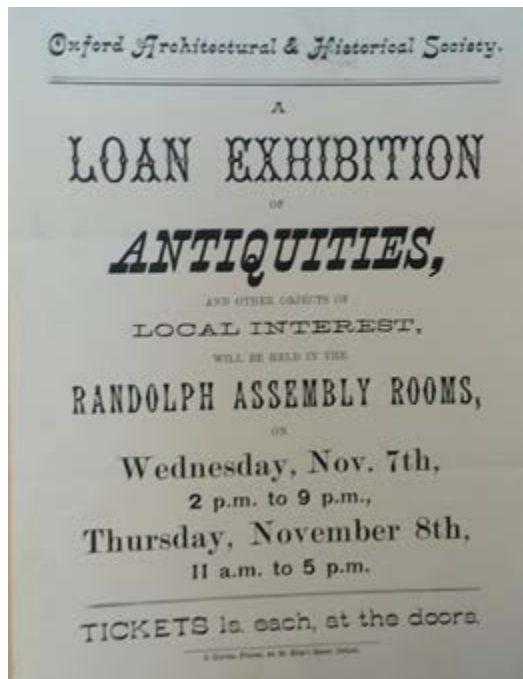


Figure 1.4: Advertisement for the Randolph Exhibition.

⁵⁷ Bodl. MS Top. Oxon d.199, ff. 141-143; MS Top. Oxon d.200, f. 173.

⁵⁸ Bodl. MS Top. Oxon d.200, ff. 176-177.

⁵⁹ Bodl. MS Top. Oxon d.182, ff. 52a-52l; AM Accessions Registers AN1921.382, 407, 408, 428, 438.

⁶⁰ Leigh Mellor, 'Manning's Truncheons', presentation at a workshop on Percy Manning, Pitt Rivers Museum, Oxford, 3 October 2014.

items are listed individually under their collective heading, in other cases not.⁶¹ The exhibition was arranged under six heads:

1. Prehistoric and Early British antiquities found in Oxford and the neighbourhood;
2. Roman and Romano-British antiquities, &c., found in the neighbourhood of Oxford;
3. Medieval antiquities found in or connected with the City and University of Oxford;
4. Medieval antiquities found in or connected with the neighbourhood of Oxford;
5. (a) Drawings and (b) engravings illustrating the City and University of Oxford;
6. (a) Drawings and (b) engravings illustrating the neighbourhood of Oxford.

Of the 400 separately listed displays, Manning supplied 183. The next most prolific contributor was the OAHS President James Parker with 68. No other contributor supplied more than 15. The profile of Manning's contributions is shown in Figure 1.5.

	Percy Manning	James Parker	Others	Total
Antiquities: Prehistoric	6	7	8	21
Antiquities: Roman	15	11	21	47
Antiquities: Medieval: City	14	36	33	83
Antiquities: Medieval: County	9	3	31	43
Illustrations: City	95	11	47	153
Illustrations: County	44	0	9	53
Grand Total	183	68	149	400

Figure 1.5: Contributions to the Randolph loan exhibition.

Parker had been collecting for over thirty years in contrast to Manning's nine at most. We do not know how Manning acquired nearly 140 drawings and engravings. Most must have been purchases, but the only record of his buying anything at a sale at this point is his acquisition of a spearhead (now in the Ashmolean) 'Bought at sale of effects of G.A. Rowell of Oxford, Oct. 30. 1891'.⁶² They include pictures by John Malchair and by Joseph Fisher (sometime Keeper of the University Galleries, who died at the age of 94 in 1890), now in the Bodleian Libraries (see Chapter 6 for more details of the pictures).

The exhibition was very successful: over 600 tickets were sold at 1s. each, realizing a profit of £17 15s., which the Society used to pay off its all debts, keeping the rest as a working balance.⁶³

⁶¹ *A Catalogue of Objects Illustrating the History and Antiquities of Oxford, and of the Neighbourhood: Loan Exhibition held in the Assembly Rooms of the Randolph Hotel, on Wednesday, Nov. 7, and Thursday, Nov. 8 1894* ([Oxford]: Oxford Architectural and Historical Society, 1894).

⁶² AM Archives 1648/MANN/1/MS/342/2 = Accessions Register AN 1921.77.

⁶³ OAHS, Committee minutes 1893-1899, Bodl. Dep. d.524, p. 20; admission ticket and printed report, Dep. c.593.

The eclecticism of Manning's interests is already evident in the range of items he provided for exhibition; and at meetings of the OAHS he frequently exhibited new finds and acquisitions. At the Annual General Meeting on 26 November 1895:

*Mr P. Manning then exhibited a number of articles illustrating some bygone Oxfordshire Industries and Customs, including flint-working in Neolithic times, Roman pottery making, Woodstock steel-work, lace-making, and straw plaiting, local police administration, deer-hunting in Wychwood, etc.*⁶⁴

The relics of local police administration were the truncheons he had been collecting; and those of deer-hunting the whit-horns Carter had assiduously pursued earlier in the year.

Manning remained Secretary of the OAHS until 1898, being elected one of the Vice-Presidents thereafter, a position he held for the rest of his life.⁶⁵ He was a contributor to many of its deliberations and exhibited dozens of finds and acquisitions at the Society's meetings, from palaeolithic implements to eighteenth-century caricatures.⁶⁶ He and Myres as joint secretaries negotiated with the noted antiquary P.H. Ditchfield in February 1895 on the prospects for publishing a journal.⁶⁷ The same month he exhibited two palaeolithic implements found at Wolvercote (given to the Ashmolean later in the year) and a bronze spearhead found near Shotover, in May he guided the Society's members around North Leigh Roman villa, and, as noted above, in November exhibited 'a number of articles illustrating some bygone Oxfordshire industries and customs'.⁶⁸ These will almost certainly have been largely the fruit of Carter's activities.

In May 1893 he had founded the Oxford University Brass-rubbing Society, becoming Vice-President in 1895 and being re-elected annually for many years thereafter.⁶⁹ The society was renamed the Oxford University Antiquarian Society in 1901. It published its own journal and Manning contributed several articles in it describing brass rubbings from churches in Oxfordshire and beyond;⁷⁰ and he was also instrumental in instigating the inclusion of its reports in *The Berks, Bucks & Oxon Archæological Journal* under the editorship of P.H. Ditchfield with the Society as one of the supporting societies.

Meetings of the Brass-rubbing Society were often held in Manning's rooms, first at Broad Street and from 1898 in his new lodgings at 6 St Aldate's. Both of these quarters were furnished lodgings comprising three rooms, but the latter were evidently more capacious or better appointed, commanding a rental of 35s a week compared with the

⁶⁴ OAHS, Minutes of General Meetings 1891-1903, Bodl. Dep. d.516, p. 106.

⁶⁵ Obituary notice, *Oxford Chronicle* 9 March 1917, p. 7.

⁶⁶ OAHS, *Proceedings* new series 6 (1894-1900): 19, 167 and *passim*.

⁶⁷ Correspondence between P.H. Ditchfield and the OAHS, Bodl. Dep. c.592.

⁶⁸ [Printed reports of proceedings of the OAHS, 19 February, 19 May and 26 November 1895], Bodl. Dep. c.593, and AM Accessions Register AN1895.46, 47.

⁶⁹ *Oxford Journal of Monumental Brasses*, 1.1 (February 1897)-2.2. (December 1900), Officers of the Society listed inside back cover.

⁷⁰ See bibliography, Chapter 2.

25s a week that Manning was paying in Broad Street.⁷¹ The rooms at Broad Street were rented from H.E. Abrams, a dealer in antiques, who may have been the source for some of Manning's acquisitions.

Manning had already had a paper read on his behalf at the Society of Antiquaries' meeting on 24 January 1895,⁷² and at the end of that year he was put forward for membership of it (the proposers including fellow Oxford archaeologists Francis Haverfield, Myres and Arthur Evans). The proposal was formally made on 16 January 1896 and successfully balloted on 4 June.⁷³ Manning's first act on becoming a member seems to have been to go up to London and work his way through the Society's library, publishing 'Manuscript materials for the topography of Oxfordshire in the Library of the Society of Antiquaries' in January 1897.⁷⁴

During 1896 Manning seems mainly to have been acquiring items found in city excavations. He writes in his notes 'I have a small brass of Valentinian I found in 1896' in Catte Street; 'I have small brasses...dug in drainage work in 1896' in Hayfield Road; and 'I have a 2nd brass of Nero found in the spring of 1896 during drainage at Messrs Hanley's Brewery in St Ebbe's'.⁷⁵ From drainage work at All Souls College he acquired brass dog-collars, a pear-shaped bottle, another bottle, ladle and pewter vessel fragment.⁷⁶ From excavations of the city ditch in Broad Street he acquired iron implements and a flask, and from Jesus College a ceramic vessel and a curfew (bell) found 24 feet deep in excavations for new college buildings in Ship Street.⁷⁷ He published a list of these and others in 1898.⁷⁸

In 1896 the City Council was considering the redevelopment of Carfax Tower, the former St Martin's church, in the centre of Oxford. In June the OAHS had registered its objections to the initial proposals but in September some more radical proposals were put forward and the Society reacted strongly. The President James Parker called an emergency meeting, which unfortunately neither of the two Secretaries, Manning and Myres, was able to attend. Both were attending the British Association meeting in Liverpool on the Society's behalf, though Manning was staying in Manchester and Myres in Southport.⁷⁹ Though Myres initially objected, they both later approved the

⁷¹ Oxfordshire History Centre, City of Oxford Electoral Register, EL/2/A1/56 1897, p. 119 and EL/2/A1/58 1899, p. 15.

⁷² 'A Late-Celtic Dagger Sheath found in Oxfordshire: Exhibited by Percy Manning, Esq., and communicated to the Society of Antiquaries by Charles Hercules Read, Esq., Secretary, January 24th, 1895', *Archaeologia* 54 (1895): 497-498.

⁷³ Society of Antiquaries, proposal slip ('Blue paper') for Manning, 10 December 1895. I am grateful to David Clark and to the Society of Antiquaries' Librarian Alana Farrell for supplying the information.

⁷⁴ Percy Manning, 'Manuscript materials for the topography of Oxfordshire in the Library of the Society of Antiquaries', *The Berks, Bucks & Oxon Archaeological Journal* 2.4 (January 1897): 99-106.

⁷⁵ AM Archives 1648/MANN/1.MS/246/46, 58 and 109.

⁷⁶ AM Accessions Register AN1921.184,185, 226, 250, 275, 276.

⁷⁷ AM Accessions Register AN1921.191, 192, 235-237.

⁷⁸ Percy Manning, 'Notes on the archaeology of Oxford and its neighbourhood', *Berks, Bucks & Oxon Archaeological Journal* 4.1 (April 1898): 9-28; 4.2 (July 1898): 39-49.

⁷⁹ OAHS. 1896 Carfax Committee papers, letters of Manning to James Parker 20 September 1896 and J.L. Myres to Parker 1 October 1896, Bodl. Dep. c.586.